

# AJR Information

Volume XLVI No. 8  
August 1991

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

**Important  
announcement p3**

**Pedaller on  
the roof (of the  
world) p5**

**Gilt by  
association p12**

**Two steps  
forward . . .  
one back**

The hoary myth of Austria as 'Hitler's first victim', sedulously peddled by every postwar administration in Vienna, has at last been disavowed by Chancellor Vranitzky. His disavowal coincided with the arraignment of Franz Schwammburger, yet another Austrian war criminal. Both, though long overdue, are steps in the right direction. In stark contrast secessionist Slovaks are rehabilitating Josef Tiso, the genocidal priest who headed their wartime Nazi state.

## Selling Hitler

Selling Hitler has taken many forms, from the ludicrously crude to the subtle. The most ludicrous provided the subject for the recent TV satire. Even here laughter would be out of place, however. The huge original interest in the forged diaries surely indicated – alongside straightforward sensationalism – a (probably unacknowledged) unhealthy desire to see the 'human' side of Hitler.

Just as ludicrous, and even more ill-intentioned, an attempt at selling Hitler was undertaken by David Irving. This British-born revisionist historian, who cultivates links with Neo-Nazis in Germany, argued that the absence of Hitler's signature from documents ordering the genocide of the Jews 'proved' that the Final Solution was carried out behind the Fuehrer's back.

A less blatantly noxious construct was the brainchild of Ernst Nolte, disputatious instigator of the German *Historikerstreit*. Nolte reduced the Shoah to a mere link in the chain of 20th Century atrocities (akin to the Armenian massacres and the liquidation of the kulaks) and, with convoluted logic, interpreted

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the establishment of Auschwitz as a 'response' to the Soviet Gulag. Nolte had a British forerunner of sorts in A. J. P. Taylor who asserted that Hitler lacked a precise blueprint for conquest, but had merely been a brilliant opportunist acting, like his German predecessors, in pursuit of national self-aggrandizement. This perverse interpretation of the monster's doings caused dissension in Oxbridge: David Cecil dubbed Taylor the 'last Shavian – ever ready to sacrifice truth to a paradox' and Alan Bullock, the nonpareil biographer of Hitler, severed all links with him.

But selling Hitler has hardly been just the preserve of the media and academe. There has never been a dearth of postwar Germans with the kneejerk response 'This would never have happened under the Fuehrer' to any blot on the social landscape from drug addiction to hippiedom. Currently, of course, we see East German skinheads murderously assaulting 'racially inferior' types with minimal interference from the police.

Across the border in Austria, Freedom Party leader Haider has held up Hitler's employment policy as a model, and been deprived of the governorship of Carinthia for his pains. This is a long-overdue development – as is Kurt Waldheim's decision not to seek a second presidential term. Waldheim's 1986 election campaign had, by mobilising the aggressive parochialism and Judeophobia in the Austrian national psyche, amounted to no less than selling Hitler in his original homeland.

But as the market for selling Hitler contracts in Western Europe it expands in the East. The racist mayhem in the streets of Dresden, the antisemitic libel purveyed by sections of the Romanian press and the Protocols of Zion undertones in the Russian election all show that selling Hitler still promises a good return in a market where Stalinism was the only ideological commodity on sale till the day before yesterday.



## Award to Dr Arnold Paucker

Dr Arnold Paucker, Director of the London Branch of the Leo Baeck Institute and Editor of the Institute's Year Book, was awarded the Federal German Order of Merit. In the course of his 30 years' work for the L.B.I. he has established contacts with many German universities and research institutes and forged personal links with German scholars. We congratulate Arnold Paucker on this well deserved award which recognises the achievements of the Leo Baeck Institute in the field of German-Jewish historiography. □

## Community work

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Association of Jewish Refugees. Set up as a self-help agency, the AJR represented Jews torn from their roots in Hitler's Europe. Now our members are old, frail, often without family and need the help of the wider community to transform the quality of their lives.

If you can spend a few hours a week befriending a former refugee, visiting someone at home or in a Residential Home, shopping or escorting people to hospital out-patient appointments, we would be delighted to hear from you. These survivors of the Holocaust need your help.

Please ring LAURA HOWE, AJR Volunteer's Co-ordinator on 071-483 2536 between 9.30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday to Thursday, and 9.30 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday. □

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ABTA IATA

## Profile

## A pillar of our society



Werner Rosenstock

Photo: Newman.

**D**r Werner Rosenstock, now in his early eighties, is not so fast on his feet these days. But his sedate pace disguises an active and agile mind, able to recall the faces and events of a lifetime with consummate ease.

The son of a Berlin textile merchant, he was born in 1908. At the age of 18 he entered Berlin University to read law. He became a *referendar* in 1931. While completing his training that year he met his future wife, Susanne, who remains by his side to this day.

When Jews were banned from the civil service in 1933 Werner and some of his colleagues from the Centralverein (C.V.), with whom he had been associated since his student days, petitioned for the rights of Jews dismissed from their jobs to statutory periods of notice. After taking one such case to court he was 'lifted' by Nazis upon leaving the building. He recalls, seemingly without rancour, that the many uniformed police present simply looked the other way. He was taken to an S.A. post. Within three days he was marched out of the headquarters by two S.A. men, apparently at the behest of worried C.V. staff. 'To this day, however,' he recalls, 'I don't know whether those stormtroopers were motivated by idealism or money'. He was taken to the Berlin Police Presidium, from where he was remanded in custody at Moabit prison for three months, after which time the public prosecutor found that there was no case for him to answer.

Although the Nazis were already in power he was admitted by a professor at Freiberg University to study for his doctorate, which he gained in 1934. Shortly

afterwards he married Susanne and a year later his son, Michael, was born.

Now working full-time for the C.V., Dr Rosenstock spent four years helping to defend such rights as Jews still enjoyed. He became a specialist on the Nuremberg Laws, specifically the sections pertaining to the classification of households as Jewish homes. He refers to this work, humorously, as 'kitchen jurisprudence'.

The dissolution of the C.V. after the November pogroms of 1938 put great pressure on the *Reichsvertretung*, the Nazi-authorized umbrella organisation for Jews. Werner went to work for the *Reichsvertretung* as an administrator, under the then Director, Dr. Otto Hirsch. It was a terrible time, when many parents came to beg to have their children saved. He left Germany three weeks before the outbreak of war, one of the last to see those colleagues who had volunteered to stay behind. All, with the exception of Leo Baeck, perished. Werner's parents were sent to Auschwitz.

For two years after arriving in England Dr Rosenstock did voluntary and part-time work for Jewish organisations. 'But', he says, 'it was in 1941 that my career began, with the formation of the AJR'. He became the Secretary of the newly founded organisation - and held that position for the next 41 years.

Werner Rosenstock watched over, tended and cultivated the AJR for half of his life. Now he takes great satisfaction from its continuing activities. The expanding social work, the establishment of the Day Centre and the support of the Homes all give him reason for pride. In the 50th Anniversary issue of *AJR Information* last month the Editor used the phrase *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. Werner Rosenstock's monument is clearly visible. □ M.N.

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## Our Annual General Meeting

As a seasoned reporter of AGMs I cannot but start off by remarking on the unprecedented turn-out of members on 6 June. The threat of 'standing room only' notices going up long before 7.30 p.m. was only narrowly averted by pressing a large number of garden chairs into service. The reason for the crush? Presumably the combination of a uniquely popular speaker, in the person of Rabbi Hugo Gryn, and the Golden Anniversary mood demonstrated by the applause that greeted the presentation of a certificate to AJR founder member Hans Feld.

The customary business part of the AGM – the Chairman's report, the Hon. Treasurer's report and the election of the Executive Committee – was handled with dispatch. Then AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro gave a succinct and moving address in support of the £4 Million Residential Care Appeal.

The item before the guest speaker's 'slot' concerned the change of rules 3 and 8 of the Association Rules. For amended rules see next column. This, as Mr Colin Dunston, solicitor, explained had been necessitated by the requirements of the law governing bequests, and was unanimously approved. The last item on the official agenda was Rabbi Gryn's talk: 'Revisiting the Past' (see page 9). Mrs Hannah Finsburgh proposed the Vote of Thanks.

There followed an item not listed on the printed agenda: Mr Marx's emotion-tinged plea to all present to persuade younger family members and friends to enrol in the ranks of the AJR so that the foundations laid in its first half century of existence may be built upon in future years.

*The following members of the Executive Committee were unanimously elected.*

### Election of Executive Committee

- Mr C. T. Marx: Chairman
- Mr M. M. Kochmann: Vice-Chairman & Honorary Treasurer
- Mrs K. Gould: Honorary Secretary
- Mrs E. S. Angel
- Mrs M. Brooks
- Mr J. Dunston
- Mr A. C. Kaufman
- Mr H. E. Levy
- Mr W. D. Rothenberg

### Amended rules 3 and 8:

#### Rule 3: Objects

The Society is established for the benevolent purpose of representing and assisting all those Jewish refugees who have come to this country from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary after 30 January 1933, irrespective of any intermediate residence and for whom Judaism is a determining factor in their outlook on life, and the widows and widowers and dependants of such persons whether or not they are Jewish.

#### Rule 8: Benefits

(1) Subject as hereinafter provided those eligible for benefits are Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and the widows and widowers and dependants of such persons whether or not they are Jewish.

(2) The Executive Committee of Management shall be entitled where it is satisfied that a charitable trust has purposes or objects which are so closely similar to those of the Society that a re-direction of funds or property given to the Society by any will would in fact operate so as to confer charitable benefits where appropriate on members of the Society and no other persons to determine by resolution that such funds or property shall be treated as paid for the benefit of members eligible for benefit by being re-directed to such a charitable trust.

(3) Benefits in money or kind may only be granted by resolution of the Executive Committee. Benefits by way of gratuitous advice may be given without formal grant by any member of the Executive Committee or any person in the employment of the Society in accordance with prior instructions of the Executive Committee. □

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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

### Admissions to Old Age Homes

Our readers will be aware that the administration of the old age homes in The Bishops Avenue is the responsibility of The Otto Schiff Housing Association. Full details of these arrangements were published in the February 1989 issue of AJR Information.

Ever since the opening of the homes some 35 years ago AJR, through its homes department, has been responsible for the pre-admissions procedure. Applications for admission were submitted to AJR, whose personnel interviewed and advised applicants and cared for them until they were settled into their new surroundings. Even thereafter they maintained contact and continued to assist them in various ways.

The Housing Association has now decided that they wish to take over all aspects of the admissions procedure. It is a change which, we believe, will not be in the best interests of prospective residents and is likely to have a detrimental effect on the relationship between two organisations serving the same group of people – organisations which should at all times work closely together. However, our pleas for continued co-operation in this matter, which proved successful over many years, were to no avail.

In these circumstances we still recommend intending applicants for full care, and their families, to contact AJR in the first place as before; the staff of our homes department, which continues to be headed by Mrs Ruth Finestone, will be happy to advise on how best to obtain the accommodation they seek.

AJR will continue to provide its wide-ranging services to our members to the best of its ability. □

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## Reviews

## Dis-figured landscape

CHASING SHADOWS, Broadcast Easter Monday, Channel 4

Carpathia has, to English ears, as outlandish a ring as Bram Stoker's Dracula-haunted Transylvania. And just as Transylvania was a real place with real people – many of them Jews – so Carpathia really existed, albeit in forest-girt isolation.

Single-track railways and fast-flowing streams, down which logs floated to saw-mills, served to counteract this isolation. Jews of entrepreneurial disposition had pioneered much of the timber trade and railway construction.

Little did they know to what use the railways would be put one day. In 1944, 150,000 Carpathian Jews entrained, in cattle trucks, for 'agricultural work' in the East. A handful returned. Last year one former teenage survivor of the Shoah, Rabbi Hugo Gryn, revisited his birthplace, accompanied by his film-maker daughter Naomi. In *Chasing Shadows*, a pictorial record of that visit, father and daughter evoked – the one in words, the other in images – a bygone world that once encompassed a vast swathe of Eastern Europe extending from Baltic to Black Sea, and from Burgenland to the Bukowina. Here teeming Jewries lived in close economic interdependence with Catholic or Orthodox villagers and townsfolk, without ever engaging in social intercourse.

Carpathia, though more cut off and impoverished than most of rural Eastern Europe, existed under the benign dispensation of Masaryk's Czechoslovak Republic between the wars. Jews enjoyed political representation in the Prague parliament; the regional capital, Munkacz, had a *gymnasium* with Modern Hebrew as language of instruction; Berehovo (Hugo Gryn's home-

town) was alive with street markets, kosher slaughterers, mazzot bakeries, synagogues, yeshivot and chedarim.

Today one near-derelict synagogue caters for the thirty-odd families constituting the Berehovo community. Rabbi Gryn prayed with them. He also chatted – amicably – with the present occupants of his parents' house, as well as with eyewitnesses of the Gestapo roundup in 1944. In the voice-over commentary he mentioned that no inhabitant of Berehovo helped save a Jewish neighbour. He said it matter-of-factly, without bitterness.

In fact the whole documentary was remarkable for its – unavoidably elegiac – note of bitter-sweetness. For all that it dealt with unassuageable pain it left a life-affirming afterglow.

□ R.G.

## Claire soup

Claire Rayner *POSTSCRIPTS*, Michael Joseph, 1991 £13.99

Claire Rayner, prolific writer and outsize public personality, has essayed a novel mixing present-day concerns with the traumas of a unique disaster. Naturally she, and others in the field, write not for Jews alone, and if authors opt for fiction as their medium, they must use plot and character as a 'bait'. The danger of this approach is bowdlerisation and cheapening of the tragedy.

Mrs Rayner pursues her main theme singlemindedly. Her protagonists are an idealistic, youngish American-Jewish art film maker and an English girl, both of whose lives were affected by reverberations from the holocaust. Abner's parents, survivors of the camps, will not speak of their experiences, thus shut him out from their embittered after-life. Miriam is the daughter

of a recently deceased Oxford historian of Nazism, whose assistant she had been since the death of her Jewish mother. The mother had done the opposite of Abner's parents, tormenting her child with the constant repetition of horrific memories. Unsurprisingly the paths of Abner and Miriam intersect and a love story develops.

His upbringing and gifts to compel Abner to attempt a film about Shoa survivors (with the same title as the fiction Rayner puts before us). The affair between the Yank in Oxford and Wardour Street, and the daughter of the Feminist Revolution, English style is that of a puppy with a porcupine. Still, their meeting is fruitful with a useful spin-off in historical research.

But this is only one of three major strands of the novel. Since Abner has no money, we follow him into the murky depths inhabited by the London wheeler-dealers. The latter, alas, are not only an unlikeable lot, but nearly all Jewish. En route Abner and Miriam get involved in a search for the betrayer – for a bag of apples – of a group of Jews who had sought refuge in the sewers of Cracow. This was 40 years ago when the betrayer was a mere boy; now, power and rich, he is being blackmailed by another Jewish crook, one a group of ghouls who extract treasure from surviving 'Gestapo Jews' (i.e. informers).

The author has elected to treat all this as a whodunnit. Nothing wrong with that: Dostoevsky and Dickens utilised the *metier* of crime. Claire Rayner, however, lacks the skill to weld such a daring method to a theme which might have defeated even those two giants. I had to curb the uneasy thought of what a non-Jewish writer would be accused of were he or she to portray such a heap of Hebrews. However, provided one sidesteps the nagging question of 'what will Gentile readers make of this?' one can enjoy an adventure story of our time.

□ John Rossall

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## Pedaller on the roof (of the world)

The quotes in this piece are taken from the journal of AJR member Gerd Ledermann who was interviewed on his mountain home above Kathmandu by Judith Harries. He is a regular reader of AJR Information, which he receives by Air Mail.



Gerd Ledermann with some of his Nepali pupils.

**S**ilence of dawn broken by the first notes of birdsong. A brilliant burst of sunrays on the crest of the mountains due East. Bright pink hues on the white peaks due North. The Himalayas on the edge of the Tibetan plateau, from my perch Kathmandu lies, crystal-clear, every house defined, almost 3000 feet below.

Gerd Ledermann, the only child of Silesian parents, left Germany in 1939, aged 11, on a Kindertransport. Originally sponsored by a Glaswegian family he spent several years in orphanages on the Clyde Coast of Scotland. In 1949 he graduated from Glasgow University with a degree in electrical engineering. Shortly after graduation he went to Israel, on a bicycle, via Yugoslavia. He stayed in Israel for 8 years, 3 of which were spent in the defence forces.

8 a.m. Radio Nepal – with hilarious news in colourful English – the daily activities of the benevolent King, the gracious Queen, the august Prince and the noble Queen Mother exchanging felicitations with valued foreign guests or expressing glorious wishes to the Prime Minister, President or Noble (!) Dictator of this or that country – while I munch my muesli with brown bread and honey.

Leaving Israel on his trusty bicycle Mr Ledermann worked his way to Scandinavia. Over the next couple of years he did many jobs: in Lapland he taught the Old Testa-

ment and tended reindeer, later he worked on the docks at Helsinki. Eventually he returned to Scotland to do engineering work. In 1959, taking his pushbike with him, he headed for Canada.

### Mexican Wedding

By 1960 Gerd had moved on to California, where he met his wife, also a Kindertransportee, from Berlin. They married in Mexico, where they stayed for two years. Deciding it was time to settle they bought land in Australia. Investing in a jeep they drove through Central America to Panama, where they boarded a ship bound for Sydney.

Mid-morning Ganesha arrives. He is a weatherbeaten, mostly toothless Nepali of uncertain age and is worried about his future, meaning today and tomorrow: is there any work? how long will it last? and, most importantly, are there any 'Cheeroot' (cigarettes). Over the months we have become friends – but I cannot prevent his inborn 'Sahib', the redundant by-product of decades of conditioning.

However, en route for Australia the Ledermanns were offered work in Pakistan. Unable to resist the temptation they accepted. It was to be four years before they reached Queensland, where they established a stud farm on the property which they had purchased. For the next ten years

the business thrived but, in the end, the Ledermanns parted company, amicably.

'Ek bhujo! Aunus!' (One o'clock! Come down!) Bread, crackers, cheese, dates and coffee make an interesting meal for the workers, accustomed to twice daily bowls of 'dahlbat' (rice, lentils and vegetables). I join them and, on my small tape recorder, play Mozart and Beethoven – which is also a novelty for them. In the end, though, I have to tune the radio to their more familiar chants, flutes and drums.

Mr Ledermann returned to Britain. Searching for what he considered to be really worthwhile employment, he approached Oxfam and the VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) organisation. Eventually he joined the 'Ockington Venture'. This project seemed tailor-made for a one-time refugee. His own experiences were put to good use helping Vietnamese Boat-People to settle in Britain. He is credited with organising the re-settlement programme for these latter day refugees in Britain. He remained with the Ockington Venture for six years.

### Hong Kong bound

In 1983 Gerd's uncle in Israel became very ill. Gerd returned there to nurse him. Two years later, when his uncle died, Gerd returned to Britain. Soon afterwards he boarded a train at Liverpool Street Station, bound for Hong Kong. The journey lasted 21 days.

In the afternoon a rather scruffy lady appears, tied to her back is a squalling infant, another in tow. Her quest: a packet of cigarettes. In her favour – a bright smile. By the time the cigarette-addicted lady departs the infant is quiet, suckling.

From Hong Kong Gerd Ledermann entered China, travelling along the borders as far as Pakistan before going to Tibet and Lassar. It was a hazardous journey, the trip from the Tibetan border to Kathmandu alone taking a full week. He decided to make Kathmandu his home. The restless Gerd Ledermann seems to have found peace on the mountain which he now owns and where he has built his house. As well as working his small farm he teaches, in English, at a local school. His lessons are about organic farming. He loves the land and wishes only for peace of mind and quietness.

Evening is the time for letter writing. The BBC World Service brings news, mostly sad, and music. Outside, distant Kathmandu, civilisation, is brightly illuminated while the moon lights the massive Himalayas. Sixteen hours of fullness culminate in peaceful slumber. □



## Letters to the Editor

### ONE WAY CHANNEL CROSSING

Sir – David Maier states that refugees who arrived in Britain in the thirties could identify few obviously German-descended Jews to whom they could turn for help, because they had anglicised German-sounding names.

Of my relations, there were the Japhets, Sussmans, Fontheims, Carlebachs, Heinemanns and Feuchtwangers – all pre-1914 UK residents. A host of others associated with helping refugees included Epsteins, Raus, Schwabachers, Friedenhaus, Freudenbergers, Kunstlers and Strausses.

I fear that Mr Maier has been misinformed on this point.

61 Antrim Mansions  
London NW3

Walter Schwab

### ISLE OF MAN REVISITED

Sir – My father, the late Kurt Wagener, was interned on the Isle of Man for about a year, and was I believe, a 'house father'. He befriended Kurt Schwitters who later visited our house in London. Schwitters painted a portrait of my father in oils during internment, which my father brought home with him.

In later years my father became rather eccentric and lost all his possessions, including the painting. I would be very interested to learn of the whereabouts of the portrait and could identify it. I would also like to hear from any former camp inmate who remembers my father.

Wright Street  
Wallasey, Merseyside L44 8BE

Mario Wagener

### ENCHANTING 'DREAM'

Sir – In Berlin, in about 1935, I was taken to see a performance of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with the incidental music by Mendelssohn. It was performed by Jewish artists who had been dismissed from German theatres. I was only about 13, but was enchanted.

Could any of your readers, or contributors, tell me more about this production? Who were the artists, in what theatre did they perform, etc?

Ryefield Close  
Solihull

Henry D. Koppel

### HUMAN SINGER, GODLIKE SONG

Sir – J. Rotter not only attacks Mozart's hagiographers, who may well deserve his strictures, but the composer, who is unable

to defend himself. The article seems to follow in the footsteps of Shaeffer's play *Amadeus* which represented Mozart as a clown and social misfit. Surely, nothing could be further from the truth, or Haydn would not have mourned him. Other contemporaries, such as the singer Michael Kelly and the composer Adalbert Gyrowetz, have left testimony in Mozart's favour which is far more trustworthy than 20th-century debunkers' muckraking.

For a sober account of Mozart's funeral, based on proper scholarly research, I recommend J. Rotter to consult Alec Hyatt King's *Mozart* (1970), whose first chapter begins with a refutation of the legend surrounding the funeral – and Constanze's absence – evidently resuscitated by Wolfgang Hildesheimer, and uncritically perpetuated in Mr Rotter's article.

Having belittled first Menuhin, and then Mozart, Mr Rotter might do well to seek for his next victim in his mirror.

Barnaby Mead  
Gillingham, Dorset

(Mrs) Anna E. C. Harvey

### EXODUS – THEN AND NOW

Sir – You state 'the crucial difference between immigration into the Jewish State and any other on earth' is that 'no one is going to tell the newcomers to go back to their own country'. How sadly wrong you are! We retired to Israel from England four years ago to be near our daughter and her family – and we hear this jibe continuously. Admittedly, it comes mainly from our brethren of non-European descent (who, however, form the majority of the Israeli population).

Leb-Yaffe Street  
Herzliya, Israel

Dora Vernon

### BEFORE THE DELUGE

A German friend sent me a postcard of Liebermann's *Lady watering the flowers of the Wannsee garden*.

I did not know the picture, but I knew Max Liebermann. He used to wander down the 'Linden' from his house near the Brandenburger Tor to visit his nephews the Veit Simons, owners of the Gebrüder Veit bank where I worked. He enjoyed the latest jokes from the Stock Exchange, and animatedly talked the Berlin jargon which he liked to exaggerate.

He knew me. *Sie ist so tüchtig wie ein junger Mann* he told the nephews. Once

when I arrived at the office in a dirndl he said *Wenn man ihr zusieht, denkt man, man ist bei Kroll auf dem Alpenball*. For some time I had to phone him every afternoon about the quotations of his shares and he called me *die 5Uhr Freundin*.

Gebrüder Veit, the second-oldest Berlin bank, had been established in 1767 by Simon, the son-in-law of Moses Mendelssohn. Dorothea, Mendelssohn's eldest daughter, 1763–1839, left her husband and lived in Rome with the poet Friedrich Schlegel; they married later and translated Shakespeare into German. In the strong-room of the bank we still had the letter she wrote from Rome to the Berlin husband.

Leo Baeck House  
The Bishops Avenue

Charlotte Singer

### ISLE OF MAN REVISITED

Sir – I much enjoyed K. E. Hinrichsen's article, but I feel that it missed out an important item of Hutchinson camp life: the Technical School. This was run by Messrs Warschauer and Ramer with subsidies from the Quakers and the support of the commandant. It taught electrical engineering to prepare 'enemy aliens' for the War effort. As teacher of electrical installation I had much satisfaction when some of the older internees – many well into their Sixties – busily made notes on how to replace English fuses (as distinct from continental ones). What eager students they were!

Beechcroft Avenue  
London NW11

Richard R. Simon

### TREASON OF THE CLERKS

Sir – Has it occurred to you that you are branding Jewish intellectuals like Noam Chomsky and Harold Pinter as traitors merely because they hold left-wing views? It seems to me that your own ultra-right wing views are blinding you to any reasonable argument anybody to the left of you might put forward.

Quarry Park Road  
Cheam, Surrey

Inge Trott

Sir – The Greeks, by coining the related terms *democracy* and *demagogy*, indicated that it was not the philosopher-king of Plato, but the silver-tongued orator who would rule. Socialism and Communism have given rise both to the idea of an elite – the Communist Party – and to the notion that manual workers possess a mystic insight into social reality. (A recent court case revolved around the disputed claim of the Labour Party's Michael Meacher that he had working class parents.) In Max Beer-



bohm's *Zuleika Dobson* an intellectual duke offers marriage to his landlady's daughter: a castigation of intellectual Oxford contrasted with the simplicity of ordinary people. Observation suggests that involvement in politics can become an end in itself, and does not necessarily imply an involvement in the problems of society.

Teignmouth Road  
London NW2

T. L. Lukes

#### VICTIMS' SELF-HELP

Sir - In the framework of an ongoing study of Self-Help and Mutual Assistance among Jewish women during and after the Holocaust, I am looking for testimonies about, documents on, and information of such phenomena. These include assistance among pairs, trios and groups of women and girls in Germany during the 1930's, in occupied Europe during the Holocaust (in ghettos, hiding, camps, partisans, etc.) and among DPs in liberated Europe. Any information received, in any language, will be treated with the utmost confidence.

4 Tabenkin Street Dr Judith Tydor Baumel  
Ramat Gan 52302 Israel

#### A BENEDICTION OF BENITO

Sir - Your remark that a writer 'courted infamy by acting as PR man for a Fascist dictator' (Mussolini) is astonishing. Some of us consider Mussolini a great statesman, who probably saved Italy from a Communist takeover. Like Franco, Mussolini was not anti-Jewish, and had Jewish ministers and even Jewish admirals. No Jews were deported from Italy until Germany occupied the North of Italy in 1943. The AJR should be politically neutral and only oppose anti-Jewish movements. During the last war, it was the Fascist countries of Europe (Italy, Spain, Hungary, Finland) where most Jews were saved.

Bishops Close  
Old Coulsdon

G. Schmerling

*The argument would be just as cogent if Stalin were substituted for Mussolini, and Communist for Fascist.* Ed

#### GIVING HYPOCRISY A BAD NAME

Sir - Fair comment is a process nobody should deny you, but comment based on dubious 'facts' is a different matter. You claim that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament wanted the West to disarm unilaterally in order to 'shame' Khrushchev and Brezhnev into giving up their nuclear weapons. CND has never supported such an idea. Its policy has always been that the U.K. (and not the West) is more vulnerable owning nuclear weapons than not. Our

possession could invite a nuclear attack which would reduce us all to a smoking ruin.

Personally I prefer to be in the company of *useful idiots* like Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell, rather than of supporters of nuclear 'deterrence'.

Altrincham, Cheshire  
WA15 9NT

Lionel Cowan

#### RESEARCH PROJECT

Sir - Under the leadership of Professor Karin Hausen, Ph.D., we are working, at the History Department of the Technical University of Berlin, on a research project about women's resistance to the Nazis.

The project will include material from the Gestapo Headquarters in Düsseldorf and will include autobiographical material and interviews with women and men who were in Düsseldorf and Essen in the 1930s.

We would like to ask any Jewish women, or men, who were in these cities at that time to contact us. We are interested in any information which may be relevant to our project.

Solinger Strasse. 4  
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Dr Christl Wickert

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#### SEPARATED BY A GULF

Sir - O. Bleier's letter in your May issue reminded me of a saying by Lady Violet Bonham-Carter: 'He has a first-rate mind until he makes it up'.

I'm damned if I can see any justification for the controversial statements made by him regarding the Gulf war, the creation of the State of Israel and injustices meted out to Arab nations. I suppose he has access to information denied to me regarding the effectiveness of sanctions applied against Iraq.

Alyth Gardens  
London, NW11

Albert Adler

Sir - Regarding O. Bleier's letter, I do not wish to take issue on the 1st paragraph, as I am sure others will comment on it.

However, the 2nd paragraph about sanctions biting deeply into Iraq requires an explanation. The contention, as I understand from O. Bleier, is that it was only a matter of time before Iraq would collapse under the impact of sanctions. Can he then explain how Saddam Hussein managed to crush two apparently quite serious uprisings, one in the south by Shiite rebels, and one in the north by Kurds, using an army impaired by the biting of sanctions, and additionally reeling from the staggering defeat inflicted by the Allies?

I shall await the considered reply by O. Bleier with great interest. I hope his imagination is at least equal to that of Frederick Forsyth!

Church Drive  
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F. Gordon

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- Thursday 8* A Sentimental & Zany Afternoon – Patricia Powers (Mezzo)
- Monday 12* A Romantic Soiree – Armand D'Anjour (Piano)
- Tuesday 13* Duo Kinnor plays for your Entertainment – Madeleine Whitelaw (Piano) & David Richmond (Violin)
- Wednesday 14* Crime Prevention – Be Safe, Be Secure – A Talk & Video presented by West Hampstead Police Station Crime Prevention Officer
- Thursday 15* The AJR Singers
- Monday 19* Popular Classical Music – Maurice Isaacs (violin) accompanied by Isobel Isaacs (Piano)
- Tuesday 20* A Singer & A Song – Geoffry Strum (Tenor) accompanied by Johnny Walton (Piano)
- Wednesday 21* A Life of Music with Piano Illustration – Doris Samuels (London Ladies Choir)
- Thursday 22* A Celebration of Songs & Duets with Yoko Tamada (Soprano) & Avril Kay (Mezzo) accompanied by Rosa Butwick
- Monday 26* CLOSED
- Tuesday 27* Musical Entertainment by the Ex-Directory Group
- Wednesday 28* Jerusalem Songsters Entertain – Conducted by Margot Landes

# The AJR at Work

## Day Centre Open Day



*The best dressed couple in town. Ticket sellers extraordinaire.*

*Photo: Newman.*

Despite the stormy weather and grey skies there was a fine turn-out of intrepid souls who braved the elements to attend the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre's annual Open Day. Guests were greeted on arrival by the best dressed couple in town who did a roaring trade in raffle tickets.

Gerard Tichauer, whose talents are well

known to Day Centre regulars, provided musical accompaniment that modulated from the energetic to the lyrical.

As is always the case at these get-togethers the volunteers manning the refreshment stalls went about the work of distributing tea, cakes and sandwiches with great gusto. The other stalls, with such an abundance of goods that anyone could find something useful, were ably run by many of the regular volunteers and guest helpers. Everything was reasonably priced, so that bargain hunters could make inexpensive purchases.

This yearly event owes much of its success to the hard work and dedication of the Day Centre organiser, Sylvia Matus, who is ably assisted by Renee Lee. Together they lend a high spirited air to the proceedings.

Those who attend also do so in a spirit of jollity, knowing in advance that long faces would be entirely out of place. In the words of the proverb: time flies when one is having fun. No matter how long the Open Day lasts, it always seems too short.

*With thanks to Miss G. Greenfield* □

#### AUGUST

- Thursday 29* Crime Prevention – Be Safe, Be Secure – A Talk & Video presentation by West Hampstead Police Station Crime Prevention Officer

#### SEPTEMBER

- Monday 2* The Beaufort Ensemble
- Tuesday 3* Opera You Love – Sara Meadows (Soprano) and Cyril Foley (Baritone) accompanied by John Feild
- Wednesday 4* Musical Moments – Sybil Michelow (Mezzo) accompanied by Malcolm Miller (Piano)
- Thursday 5* Hans Freund: Yom Tovim Melodies

#### NOTICE

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre will be open on Monday 5 August and not closed as stated on the July edition calendar.

## OPEN DAY

Heinrich Stahl House

Sunday 1 September

at 2.30 p.m.

Entrance £2.00 and £1.00 children



## Founder members

In its Jubilee Year the AJR paid tribute to those founder members who joined the association in 1941. Each has been presented with a specially commissioned certificate to commemorate this occasion. Each of these documents has been personally made out in the name of the recipient and signed by the Chairman of the AJR, Mr Theo Marx. We sincerely hope to see all our founder members receiving honours on the occasion of our Diamond Jubilee in 2001. □



Photo: Newman.

Left - Mr Fred Dunston and Mrs Lotte Freedman with the Chairman in the garden of the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Above - Dr Hans Feld receiving his certificate at this year's AGM.



Photo: Newman.

## Revisiting the past



Rabbi Hugo Gryn.

Photo: Newman.

The affable Rabbi Hugo Gryn delivered a most entertaining talk to round off the AGM. Before giving an account of his recent trip to his home town in interwar Czechoslovakia, he expressed his admiration for the work being done by the AJR. He also spoke of the AJR's mandate to care for the vulnerable in our midst and its rarely expressed responsibility

to preserve the cultural identity of its members for future generations.

It was the drawing back of the Iron Curtain which enabled Rabbi Gryn to return to his home town. Since the war it had been 'out of bounds' to visitors from abroad because of a military base sited in the area. Hugo was accompanied on his return by his children, one of whom was making a filmed record of the trip which was shown on television recently. A number of anecdotes were recounted, some amusing, as many poignant. Funny: experiences with customs officers at the Czech border. Sad: a story of a town with a rich Jewish heritage which is now virtually *judenrein*.

The Rabbi has a rare oratorical gift. When he speaks of sad things one can sense the laughter in the background, when he tells a joke, one can feel the tears.

Our thanks go to Hugo Gryn for sharing his experiences with us.

□ M.N.

See p. 4 for the review of 'Chasing Shadows', the film of Rabbi Gryn's journey to his home town which was held over to coincide with this report

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**FAMILY EVENTS**

**Birthday Greetings**

**Käte Krone** To my very dear friend on her 90th birthday very best wishes, good health. With much love, Hilda and many friends

**Deaths**

**Clay Walter Clay** died suddenly on 12 July in his 86th year. Sadly missed by his family and many friends.

**Dresner Rolf Hermann Dresner**, aged 66 years, died suddenly on May 23rd 1991. His wife Irmgard, and children Colin, Barbara, Martin and Helen, love and miss him.

**Goldenberg Jack Goldenberg** died, aged 90, on 8 July 1991. Missed by his friends and remaining family.

**Stern Lotte Stern** (nee Loewenthal), beloved mother of Hanna Singer, died 30 June 1991, aged 87. Sadly missed by family and friends.

**Sternberg Miss Zilla Sternberg**, a long time resident of Osmond House, passed away on May 27th, 1991, aged 76. She will be much missed by her family and many friends.

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Alice Schwab

## Art Notes

**I**n their new premises in Dering Street, W1, Annelly Juda Fine Art have chosen 'Russian Constructivism and Suprematism 1914-1930' for their summer exhibition (until 14 September). This was an important period for Russian avantgarde Art in the 20th century. As usual there is a superb 88-page catalogue with 51 illustrations to accompany the exhibition.

**The Karl Friedrich Schinkel exhibition** at the Victoria and Albert Museum continues until 27 October; while there, it is worth visiting the 20th Century gallery to see *Like a One Eyed Cat*, photographs by Lee Friedlander (until 25 August).

**The 223rd Royal Academy Summer Exhibition** (until 18 August), sponsored by Guinness, is an annual event that should not be missed. This year's show is strong in colour and abstract works are not prominent. Many of our old friends are showing, including Josef Herman, Jack Goldhill, Irene Scheinmann (who did so well last year, selling fifty of her etchings) and Willi Soukop RA. Other familiar names are Kitaj, Ben Levene, Michael Rothenstein, RA and Pat Schaverien.

**There is much to see at the Royal Academy.** *Fauve Landscape: Matisse, Derain, Braque and their Circle 1904-1908* is in the new Jill and Arthur M. Sackler Galleries (until 1 September). This new gallery is a delight and the exhibition itself is so thrilling that it removes all the minor cares of everyday life.

**The B.P. Portrait Award 1991** continues at the National Portrait Gallery until 1 September. The first prize was awarded to Justin Mortimer, for his *Three Seated Figures*. Amongst the artists specially commended was Nicholas Bernstein who graduated from Cambridge in 1981.

**Paul Wunderlich**, aged 63, is acknowledged as one of Germany's leading artists and sculptors. A recent exhibition of his work at the Redfern Gallery prompted a long article in *The Times Saturday Review*.

**Women artists** is the theme of *Echo* at the Tate Gallery, Liverpool (until 20 September). The exhibition comprises 25 works by women artists, including Natalie Gontcharova, Vanessa Bell, Dame Ethel Walker and Gwen John.

Next January we can look forward to a major Mark Gertler exhibition at the



Self-Portrait: Nicholas Bernstein

Camden Arts Centre, before it goes on tour around the country.

**At the British Museum** the new permanent gallery (Room 71) is showing *Italy Before the Roman Empire*, with special reference to Etruscan art, including magnificent gold jewellery and tomb paintings. The new Wolfson Gallery of Roman Antiquities is now laid out so as to give an impression of what it was like to be a Roman citizen.

**Monika Eversfield** has recently been showing her work in short exhibitions at the Ridley Art Society at the Orangerie, Holland Park and with the United Society of Artists at the Central Hall, Westminster.

The John Constable exhibition at the Tate Gallery (until 15 September) has as its main feature long-lost works which have now come to light. They include *The Wheatfield*, not seen publicly since 1817, *Flatford Mill from the Lock*, *Wivenhoe Park*, and the Louvre's *Weymouth Bay*, making its first return to Britain since 1872.

**Berlin-born Klaus Meyer** came to England in 1938 and studied at the Central School under Meninsky and Kestelman; his later teachers were Gotlib, Gross and Ceri Richards. Woodcut and other forms of relief printing have long been his special interest. He has taught at the Hornsey College of Art and at Kilburn Polytechnic, held several one-man exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions. He has also published two books of prints *Urworte*, *Orphisch* and *Prepositions*. Primrose Hill Gallery holds a number of his relief prints from a recent exhibition for sale.

**An exhibition of etchings in colour** by Zena Flax, whose previous showcases have included the Ben Uri Art Gallery and the Camden Arts Centre, will run at the Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, N3 until 29 August. □

## SB's Column

**C**ould it happen over here? The Greater Miami Opera introduced a unique innovation during their current run of Verdi's *Falstaff*. Ticket-holders, who pay between (the equivalent of) £8 and £12 per seat, can ask to have those sums refunded if they feel dissatisfied with the performance. In all only four have made use of the concession to date.

**A small town with many plans** St. Pölten, now the provincial capital of Lower Austria, is preparing its Stadttheater to accord with its new-found importance. The season, which will open with Lessing's *Nathan* comprises a varied programme ranging from Milnar's *Liliom* to modern comedy and classical ballet.

**Birthdays Louise Rinser** has just celebrated her 80th birthday at her house near Rome. Dismissed from a teaching post at Munich for allegedly plotting against the Nazi state, she was tried on a treason charge in 1944, barely escaping execution. Her postwar marriage to the composer Carl Orff collapsed because – in her own words – 'it is impossible to live with a genius'. Now she is one of Germany's most popular authors with a readership numbered in millions. **Susanne Almassy** who had her 75th birthday, is one of Vienna's top actresses. Ever since her prewar debut as Ingeborg in the play of that name by Curt Goetz, she has enriched the Austrian theatre scene as an elegant 'femme fatale' exuding charm, wit and esprit. **Hans Beirer**, who has just turned 80, is one of the all too rare Wagner tenors. For a long time he was an unrivalled Siegfried and was acclaimed in many European opera houses.

**Obituary Wolfgang Reichmann**, who has died in Zürich at the age of 59, was a very versatile actor of stage, screen and television. Although his domain were classic rôles (Othello, Falstaff), he also scored a great success as Tevje in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Three giants of the piano died recently: the Marlborough School in Vermont mourns its president **Rudolf Serkin**, a US resident since 1939, who directed the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia for years. **Wilhelm Kempf**, the German pianist and composer, died in Positano aged 95. He appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic until 1979. Kempf's Beethoven courses, and school for pianists in Positano, were known worldwide. The death of **Claudio Arrau** in Austria, at the age of 88, will stir memories of the unique virtuosity with which he performed the classical repertoire. □

## Gilt by association

In his notorious essay *Judaism and Music* Richard Wagner asserted that Jewish composers – and, in fact, all Jews – lacked genuine creativity. The only work they were capable of producing, he claimed, was either derivative or second-rate.

Anyone having the slightest acquaintance with the arts, or the sciences, knows that the very opposite of Wagner's creativity libel holds true. What is not widely known, though, is that, in addition to having produced a disproportionate number of creative spirits, Jews have time and again provided a nurturing matrix for the world's limited stock of cultural luminaries.

Here is a random sample of writers who had Jewish (or half-Jewish) spouses: Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Vladimir Nabokov, Virginia Woolf, Andre Malraux and Colette. (The last-named saved her Jewish husband from the clutches of the Gestapo.) In several instances Jewish wives directly inspired works of literature: Louis Aragon's *Les Yeux d'Elsa*, Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde*, Malcolm Cowley's *Under the Volcano* and Lawrence Durrell's *Justine*.

Jews have also figured prominently in the *affaires* of renowned literati. The complex amour between Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre was at different times 'supplemented' by Nelson Allgren (author of *The Man with the Golden Arm*), Claude Lanzmann (director of *Shoah*), and the Algerian Jewess Arlette Elkaim. In post revolutionary Russia Lily Brik, wife of a trade emissary, acted as Mayakovsky's wayward muse. Famous *jüdisch versippte* painters were Diego Rivera, husband of the similarly talented Frieda Kahlo, and Max

Ernst (whose father-in-law presciently described the soon-to-be-divorced Surrealist as an 'irresponsible dauber'). The Orthodox in-laws of the critic F. R. Leavis went one step further: when their daughter Queenie married him they sat *shiva* for her.

By neat inversion two famous Christian proselytizers had Jewish wives. The Anglican C. S. Lewis' marriage to Helen Joy Davidman formed the highly theatrical subject of *Shadowlands*. The French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain's Russian-Jewish wife Raissa actually helped him build a chapel in their own home.

Interwar France provided an even more bizarre conjunction in the marriage between the Jewess Colette Jeremac and the (subsequent) Nazi collaborator Drieu le Rochelle, who committed suicide in 1945. *Pari passu* Martin Heidegger, Nazi Rektor of Freiburg University, had once had an *amour* with his PhD student Hannah Arendt.

Of course the Jewish encounter with cultural mould-breakers can also take forms that have nothing to do with relations between the sexes. It was said of Gerhart Hauptmann that he was surrounded by Jews – from publisher Samuel Fischer and theatre director Otto Brahm to his lawyer, accountant and literary agent. Bertolt Brecht's composer-collaborators were Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau; his philosophical soul-mate was Walter Benjamin. James Joyce's best Triestino friend was Italo Svevo (quasi-model for Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*); his closest advisor in Paris was Leon Edel.

Ringing the changes one can also cite Greta Garbo, her early mentor Moritz Stiller and her Hollywood *confidante* Salka Viertel. (Salka Viertel's husband, Berthold, in turn inspired Christopher Isherwood's *Prater Violet*.)

With *Herr Issyvoo* we have arrived at 'the

love that dare not speak its name'. Marcel Proust's famous childhood trauma sublimated into literature was a goodnight kiss denied him by his Jewish mother. Benjamin Britten's mother substitute was Elisabeth Mayer, his 'housemother' in wartime New York where she had fled from Nazi Germany. Others among Elisabeth's charges included W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, co-librettists on the Stravinsky opera *The Rake's Progress*. (A more conventionally 'mixed' couple involved in the creation of a modern operatic classic were Prokofiev and Mira Mendelson, joint begetters of *War and Peace*.)

Lastly – what of politics? Had a British general election gone the other way 30-odd years ago Dora Gaitskell would have been mistress of Number Ten. By the same token the U.S.A. would have had a Jewish First Lady had Governor Dukakis defeated George Bush in 1988. On the other hand, the Kremlin did once accommodate a Jewish first lady of sorts. She was Polina, wife of Vyacheslav Molotov, Soviet Prime Minister in the 1940s. Having earlier incurred Stalin's wrath by befriending his suicidal wife, Polina was sent to the Gulag after a Yiddish conversation with Israeli Ambassador Golda Meir. During her five years' 'absence' Molotov conducted government affairs, and received foreign dignitaries as if nothing had happened.

Mercifully that long Orwellian interlude in Russian history is now over. If any one man deserves credit for having brought about that sea-change it is the late André Sakharov. He, too, had a Jewish wife – who, though ill herself, sustained him through his life-shortening exile in the forbidden city of Gorky.

Fortunately this particular Jewish wife – Yelena Bonner – is still with us.

□ Richard Grunberger

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## Unfinished business – unguarded remarks

Operation Desert Storm', asserts the Committee for a Just Peace in the Middle East, 'has produced neither victory nor peace.' The Committee goes on to say, in time-honoured fashion, that the denial of Palestinian rights is the root cause of instability in the whole region.

As ever the pronouncements of the sanctimonious Bennite tendency amount to a travesty of the truth. If there is much tragically unfinished business in the Middle East, part of the blame lies with the Committee (and its supporters) whose anti-US clamour since the beginnings of the Cold War has powerfully stimulated American isolationism. A Pentagon eager to pull its soldiers out of a Vietnam-style quagmire in Iraq – at the inevitable cost to the Kurds – represents the final wish fulfilment for all those who have been inveighing against 'dollar imperialism' for close on half a century.

As for the imperilled Shias of Southern Iraq they are paying the price for the *guerre à outrance* long preached in Teheran and Qom. The inflammatory bloodcurdling rhetoric of Shiite fundamentalism has not seriously harmed the 'Great Satan' in Washington – but it has sufficiently alarmed the Saudis to make them prefer Saddam's Iraq to an independent Shia state across their Northern border.

The third group in the Middle East who face an uncertain future are the Palestinians. Their problems, too, partly stem from a *guerre à outrance* mentality. Bombastic PLO rhetoric about driving the Jews into the sea compounded by sickening terrorist

outrages against civilians has left the Israeli public deeply sceptical about the possibility of peaceful coexistence with an independent Palestinian state. The mindboggling ineptitude of the PLO leadership in championing Saddam's cause has left Palestinians massively victimised in Kuwait, denied passports by Egypt and *personae non gratae* in previously Arafat-loving Greece. Of course, it is not their leadership alone that has put the Palestinians in bad odour; there was also widespread sadistic gloating over Scuds hitting Israeli population centres and the kangaroo court 'justice' meted out to alleged collaborators.

The running sore of Israeli-Palestinian relations lies at the heart of the controversy stirred up by the Chief Rabbi's *Evening Standard* interview. On this issue we should refrain from taking sides. However, the maintenance of a harmonious relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry calls for a rare admixture of moral certitude and farsighted pragmatism. The use of intemperate language in the dialogue between the two components of the Jewish people can have far-reaching consequences. We should know better than most that every word uttered in public needs to stand the test of truth. We are appalled when the Pope laces his anti-abortion diatribes with Holocaust metaphors for rhetorical effect, or when Elizabeth Taylor likens the registration of HIV sufferers to the J for Jew stamped in German passports.

Let us therefore choose our words circumspectly. For a wealthy bookmaker – however public-spirited – to call the Chief Rabbi 'ignorant' is to stretch the rules of debate to breaking point. The tradition of the People of the Book surely enjoins us to have bookish – rather than bookie – spokesmen. □ R.G.

## 40 Years Ago this Month

### BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE

The state of war between Germany and the three Western Allies has ended. A political process which had been going on for the past years has thus been brought to its logical conclusions. For us Jews from Germany, however, the news is bound to create conflicting feelings. Has the war against us which started on January 30, 1933, come to an end? Thinking of the wounds inflicted upon our community we are reminded of the words from Heine's hymn: 'Victory – but wherever we look, we see the bodies of our nearest ones.'

Nobody can revive our martyrs. But the least we could have expected was a historical manifestation in the name of the German people against the horrors of Nazi Germany. For more than six years, we have been waiting in vain for such a declaration. There have been individual statements by statesmen, politicians and Church leaders, but neither the Government nor the Bonn Parliament have taken an opportunity to say what ought to be said on behalf of a nation in whose name mass murder of unsurpassed dimensions had been committed. This silence cannot be explained as an organisational failure – it would not have been kept if the emotional and spiritual conditions for a spontaneous act had existed. Painful as this may be for the victims of the catastrophe, it may also be fatal for the German people itself. 'Even if the whole world were silent, it would be our duty to speak . . . a crisis cannot be overcome if we remain silent about the origin, symptoms, development and after-effects of the plague,' says the German poet Hans Carossa in his latest work.

Meanwhile, as remnants of exterminated families, we gratefully remember the love we received from those who were not permitted to see the end of this war; as members of a people which has lost one third of its men, women and children, we mournfully celebrate the first Tisho be'Aw after a war which has ended but not yet led to peace.

AJR Information August 1951.

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## Kook's Home Tour

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'British West Hampstead' jokers bold  
Would quip in shelter nights of old  
Since when on time's swift whirligig  
We switched from waltz to rap and jig.

### East London

The Tower and Canary Wharf –  
Twin edifices meant to dwarf  
Habitations on a human scale,  
But Bow bells peal still without fail

### Oxford

Some graduates seek Downing Street  
Some free from corns iambic feet  
Church spires dream, the Thames runs pure  
The eternal Jude still stays obscure

### South London

Shabby-genteel, by turns, and smart  
It stretches from a fringe of art  
Through redbrick anonymity  
To warehouse-fringed infinity

### Liverpool

Magnet to Taffy, Mick and Spade  
Turned theme park of Victorian trade;  
To stop the Scousers feeling bad  
Why not rename it Lennongrad?

### Stratford

Will power here holds total sway  
(T'was ever thus, says Hathaway)  
Half-timbers gleam and thespians strut  
The Bard is Britain's Pharaoh Tut

## De mortuis nihil

The ex-SS officer and major war criminal Walter Reder, whose reception, on release, by the Austrian Defence Minister Friedenschlager caused a furore in 1985, has been buried at Gmunden. The number of mourners present – 1500 – almost equalled the number of Italian civilians Reder had ordered to be massacred at Marzobotto. □

## Israel's standing

In the global league table of 'scope for human development' gauging living standards, health care and educational opportunities of UN member countries Israel ranks twenty-first. She is second in Asia after Japan – and ahead of all East European countries, as well as of three West European ones (Ireland, Portugal and Greece). □

## Relatively superlative

The City of Frankfurt has hosted visits by former Jewish residents for the last 12 years. In an address to this year's visitors the local Jewish community leader Ignatz Bubis described the Bundesrepublik as 'the most democratic state that ever existed on German soil'. □

## Memo to Tauber fans

To mark the centenary of Richard Tauber's birth the National Film Theatre in London will be screening *Das Land des Lächelns*, *I Pagliacci*, *Blossom Time* and *Land without Music* between 23 September and 4 October. □

## Well-earned retirement

Karl Baum, Hampstead-resident founder of the World Council of Jews from Czechoslovakia, and indefatigable editor of its newsletter, has retired at the age of 84. □

## Mrs Berthe Kahn

Mrs Berthe Kahn née Essinger, who is a resident at Osmond House, Bishops Avenue, was 95 years old on July 16th.

Mrs Kahn and her children joined her sisters Anna and Paula at Bunce Court School, Kent in 1935. She acted as matron in charge of all domestic arrangements until the school closed in 1948.

She is in good health, has eight great-grandchildren and still enjoys the visits of 'old pupils' of the school from England and abroad. □

Dr H. Alan Shields, M.B., Ch.B., B.D.S.,  
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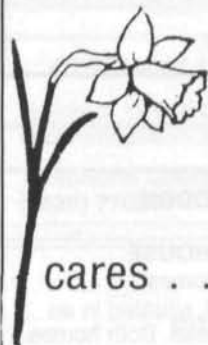
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## Obituaries

## Brigitte Fischer

The death of Brigitte Fischer in Tuscany, at the age of 86, snaps one of the last remaining links with the civilisation of pre-Nazi Germany. She was the daughter of the legendary publisher Samuel Fischer whose list, extending from Gerhart Hauptmann to Thomas Mann, read like a *Who's Who* of German Letters. After his death Brigitte administered his estate with an aplomb that earned her the nickname *der kleine Herr Sami*. Helped by her husband Gottfried Bermann, she preserved the imprint by moving the locus of publishing operations over and over again – first from Berlin to Vienna, and then to Stockholm and New York.

After the war the couple recreated the Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt, which occupies a leading position in the German publishing scene to this day. Their other significant contribution to the revival of German culture was the publication of *Bedroht, Bewahrt* (1967) and *Sie schrieben mir* (1978) – volumes of literary reminiscences of the most turbulent decades of our century. □

## Dr J. J. Halpern

The restitution lawyer Dr Jan. J. Halpern died after a long illness at the age of 81. Many Nazi victims owe the settlement of their claims to his proficiency and expertise, linked with a personal interest in their situation. He was a longstanding member of the AJR and for many years a member of its Board. □

## Ernst Mezger

Ernst Mezger, who died, aged 81, a few months ago in Paris, was an authority on both the German and French legal systems. At Berlin University he was considered to be one of the most promising students of his generation. Having lost his position as *'referendar'* in 1933, he recommenced university studies in France, receiving his *licence en droit* as early as 1934 and specialising in international and comparative law.

Having survived the War in hiding, he became, in 1948, one of the leading lights in the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation. For 25 years he taught at the Institute for Comparative Law of the University of Paris. His published writings, both in German and French, are legion. In 1978 he

received the German *'Bundesverdienstkreuz'* 1st class. In a memorial service at the Palais de Justice, Paris, he was called the Grand Old Man of French/German law.

His intelligence and his general knowledge were outstanding. Yet, as I know from my school days, he was a particularly friendly and helpful, but at the same time unusually modest, colleague.

Ernst Mezger was an outstanding member of the ex-German Jewish community whose death is a great loss to all who had the privilege of knowing him and his work. □ C.F.F.

## Dr Erwin Rosenthal

With the death of the orientalist Erwin Rosenthal in Cambridge, at the age of 86, the community has lost another outstanding representative of the German-Jewish cultural symbiosis that figures so prominently in modern scholarship and the arts. After studying Semitics, as well as medieval Jewish and Muslim intellectual history, at several German universities he took over the Hebrew department of University College London in 1933. From this part-time post he moved, in 1936, to a full-time lectureship in Semitics at Manchester University. Following army service and educational work with German PoWs, he took up the newly created post in Hebrew at the University of Cambridge. While there he published studies on the political thought in Islam, and the interplay of Judaism with Islam. A volume of colleagues' essays, entitled *Interpreting the Hebrew Bible*, was published to mark his 75th birthday.

An AJR member, Dr Rosenthal was closely associated with the Cambridge community and the Leo Baeck Institute. □

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## Search Notices

**Gisela Altman**, formerly of Vienna, would like to hear from cousin Otto Biss (Bisk), also of Vienna. We arrived in London 1939. Box No. 1206.

**Susi Berghauer** from Cologne born 1926, arrived in England aged about 14, please contact Brigitte Adelheid Heise of Hegelstrasse 60, 6500 Mainz. Mutual friends were Dr Scharff of Rydal Mount, formerly India and Lady Burn.

**Otto Sammy Hess**, brother of Adolph Rashid, son of Henry (Inspector of languages, Berlitz). Mother Fortunee (nee Arditti). Grandfather Maurice. Anyone with information please contact Mauricette Fortunee Hess, White Lodge, 10 Castle Road, Sandgate, Kent CT20 3AG. Phone: 0303 53175.

**Peter Rockman**, I am looking for information about my father who lived at 15 Reginald Terrace, Leeds, in May 1939. He also resided for some time at Harrogate at the house of Mrs Alexander. His name at the time was Adolf Rochman, which he later changed to Peter Rockman. He left Leipzig on May 15, 1939. His address there was Humboldt Strasse 3.

I am also looking for any information about the Schmulewisch family, owners of the Guisborough Shirt and Underwear Co, Yorkshire. I believe that family also came from Leipzig, in 1937.

I'd welcome any information about Carol Katz who was manager of British Dolls and Toys Ltd, in Thorpe St, Hartlepool.

Please reply to H. Rockman, POB 332, Mevasseret Zion, Jerusalem, Israel.

**Räderscheidt**, information sought on the whereabouts of paintings by Anton Räderscheidt for completing an oeuvre catalogue. Please contact Gisèle Räderscheidt, 11 Pilgrims Lane, London NW3 1SJ. Tel: 071 435 5790.

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## Homage staves off dotage

Soon it will be 60 years since Germany's relapse into Stone Age barbarism. Astonishingly, some personalities who played a part in the turbulent last phase of the Weimar Republic are still among the living. One such is the writer Hans Sahl who, after decades of neglect, is enjoying belated recognition in his late eighties.

Born in 1902 into a prosperous Jewish family at Dresden, Sahl had an adolescence that overlapped with the wartime defeat and postwar upheavals of Germany. He

identified with revolutionary innovation, even on the personal level, to the extent of severing all contact with his banker father – though he respected parental wishes sufficiently to attend university. His studies over, Sahl worked as a reviewer for the *Berliner Börsen Courier* and *Das Tagebuch*, getting to know literati of the eminence of Thomas Mann and Bertold Brecht. Emigration in 1933 took him via Prague, and acquaintance with Egon Erwin Kisch and a very young Stefan Heym, to Paris. A lengthy stay in France ended with wartime internment and escape to New York. By the time of his arrival in the States the erstwhile left-winger had become an *engagé* anti-Communist. His comment that little differentiated Stalin from Hitler made the US-resident Brecht show him the door; the similarly left-leaning Kisch dubbed him a 'fanatic for truth'.

In the wartime U.S.A. Sahl earned his living as a technical translator – primarily of captured German aeronautical documents. When peace caused that source of income to dry up he was fortuitously rescued from penury by Thornton Wilder's commission to translate *Our Town* into German. This was the beginning of a lucrative, as well as artistically satisfying, career as adaptor of the work of leading Anglo-American playwrights – Tennessee Williams, Arthur

Miller, John Osborne – for the German stage. At the same time Sahl wrote his own German-language memoirs and essays: *Die Wenigen und die Vielen*, *Memoiren eines Moralisten* and *Das Exil im Exil* (wherein he settled scores with the Communists).

At first these books remained almost unnoticed in Germany, but by the 1980s the now octogenarian author attracted a growing readership.

A few years ago Sahl re-migrated and remarried, settling in Tübingen. Now aged 89, partially blind, he still writes with the aid of amanuenses. Earlier this year he received the Goethe medal at a ceremony in Frankfurt's historic Römer palace. The citation called him a 'seer and thinker of our disaster-prone century'. □

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## 50th Anniversary

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