

ACTION MEETING

You are invited to attend a meeting on Tuesday 12 February 1991 at 7 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. at the AJR Paul Balint Day Centre, 15 Cleve Road, NW3. Refreshments will be served.

Our objective is to give you a progress report on the AJR's £4 million Residential Care Appeal and to enlist your personal support and involvement in an Action Committee to galvanise the appeal.

Please telephone the AJR office, not later than Wednesday 6 February on 071-483 2536, if you are able to come.

We appreciate that not everyone will be able or wish to serve on the Action Committee, but look forward to your contribution of good constructive ideas to further the appeal.

Do not underestimate what each individual can do. Come and join our brainstorming session.

Wednesday 23 January 1991 at 7 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. at the AJR Paul Balint Day Centre, 15 Cleve Road, NW3. Refreshments will be served.

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Don't miss . . .

Admirable Music Man p2

Shaking hands across the abyss p12

Restitution claims p16

Justifiable change

Regular readers of *AJR Information* will be noticing a slight change in our regular format. Justified columns have been introduced in order to allow us more space for editorial copy. This move will, we hope, add to your enjoyment of the magazine. As always, we are very interested in your feelings about how *AJR Information* fulfils its role within the refugee community and would be pleased to hear from you on this subject. If you have any comments on the new format, please drop us a line at the usual address. □

Seasonal reminder

May we take advantage of the 'season of goodwill' to remind readers to pay their subscriptions promptly when they fall due in 1991. □

This is an easy answer – especially something very near Residential Care Appeal respond with, 'Well The appeal for £4 million to refurbish the residential homes for elderly refugees is now one year old. Whilst a not inconsiderable sum has been received so far, the response from AJR members has been somewhat less than we had hoped.

Throughout the country, facilities for old-age homes are under-funded whilst at the same time the demand for such places increases as members of the community live longer.

The demand for the specialised services that the AJR provides increases continually. The AJR Paul Balint Day Centre literally hums with activity involving hundreds from the refugee community every week.

The beginning of this year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain. It is appropriate to stress that throughout these years the AJR has provided

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We hope this special appeal will confirm our underlying conviction that the majority of you, AJR members and readers of *AJR Information*, do care enough to take action now!

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The prospect of a future with residential care accom-

AJR Information

Volume XLVI No. 1
January 1991

£3 (to non-members)

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The AJR Residential Care Appeal Who Cares?

This is an easy question to ask. When it comes to obtaining an answer – especially if it relates to something very near to 'home' like the AJR's Residential Care Appeal – one is tempted to respond with, 'Well, who *does* care?'

The appeal for £4 million to extend and refurbish the residential homes for elderly refugees is now one year old. Whilst a not inconsiderable sum has been received so far, the response from AJR members has been somewhat less than we had hoped.

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our 'special' community with very 'special' services. We envisage the need for these continuing well into the 21st century.

This is a clarion call to everyone to consider the AJR Residential Care Appeal, rather than look away. The very inception of the AJR is the greatest example of the way the refugee community rallied round in the dark days of 1941.

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AJR RESIDENTIAL CARE APPEAL

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Language problems

Eliezer Ben Yehuda founded the Hebrew Language Association exactly a hundred years ago. This 'linguistic Herzl' who, in indefatigable labour, fashioned a modern vehicle of communication – *Ivrit* – out of a stagnant language of prayer, has had one of Tel Aviv's main thoroughfares named after him.

Although Ben Yehuda's achievement is recognised, his inheritance is in dispute. Being widely spoken by immigrants, Modern Hebrew is inherently in danger of turning into a pidgin tongue – a danger compounded by the constant absorption of foreign technical terms. There is one school of thought in Israel which wants to fight this danger by excluding loan words from the language; why use 'centre', they say, when we already have the perfectly servicable Hebrew word *merkaz*. The other school of thought warns against imitating France, where the *Académie Française* acts as a gendarme in matters of linguistic usage. They argue that Hebrew should not be confined in a straitjacket designed by academics. These anti-purists have even published a slang lexicon – a device which may facilitate the acculturation of the thousands of Russian immigrants currently streaming into the country. □

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Profile

Admirable Music Man

Monday 15 October 1990: The rain drizzling miserably from a grey West Hampstead sky did not appear to dampen the spirits of the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre Choir as they banged out a cheerfully noisy version of *Stormy Weather*, accompanied on the piano by Gerard Tichauer.

Mr Tichauer travelled far to get to the Cleve Road Centre. It was a long journey which started in 1933 when he left Wedding, the famous working class stronghold in the Berlin suburbs, where he had been born in 1909.

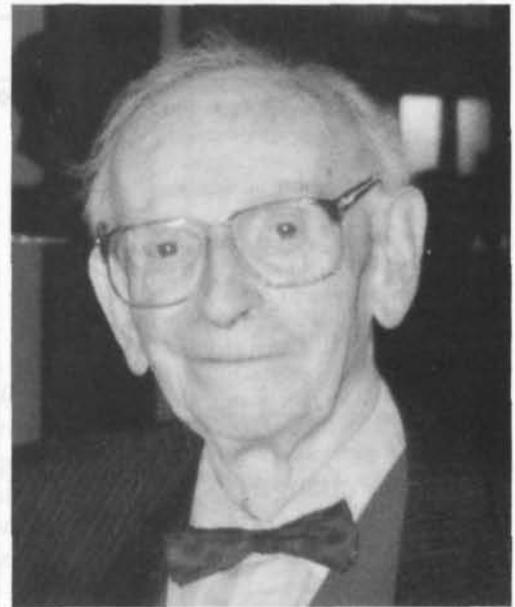
By 1931, a hardworking youth with a natural ear for music, he had earned an engineering degree and was employed by AEG as a research engineer. He filled his evening by taking classes in sociology and political history at Berlin University, becoming head of the Socialist students' group. His political activities made him a prime target for the Nazis. Early in 1933 he lost his job and fled Germany, taking his mother with him.

They went to Rotterdam, where Jewish relief agencies were already established, and quickly found work teaching in a commercial college. Aware that Dutch Jewry was ill-prepared for absorbing the refugee influx, he knew that he and his mother would soon have to leave Holland.

On a visit to London in 1934 Mr Tichauer met Otto Schiff, a key figure in organising help for refugees, who arranged passage for the Tichaurs on a ship bound for Cape Town. Soon after arriving in South Africa Mr Tichauer became a Development Engineer at Stellenbosch University.

Within a year he had a new job with HMV, remaining with them until he became a naturalised citizen on the eve of the outbreak of war. When hostilities were declared he volunteered for the South African army. Invalided out of the army, he returned to Cape Town where he became a pianist with the Cape Town Ballet (whose choreographer at this time was the famous John Cranko).

1946 saw Mr Tichauer on the move again. 'Wangling' a berth on one of His Majesty's aircraft carriers he returned to



*Gerard Tichauer – entertainer and intellectual.
Photo: Neuman*

Britain, where he enlisted in the U.S. army, who used him as a translator first in Berlin, and later Nuremberg. There he met his wife Hilda, who had also been in American employ. They returned to Britain in 1948, got married and had a child, Lydia, in 1958. Thereafter the couple stayed in England. From 1950 to 1974 Mr Tichauer was the technical manager of a telecommunications group, consisting of 33 companies, at the same time running a company of his own. When the group was sold off in 1974 Mr Tichauer became a freelance lecturer at the London Polytechnic until his retirement in 1984.

Since then he has been a regular at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. In addition to entertaining visitors and accompanying the choir, he chairs regular discussion groups which are lively and cover a wide variety of topics. He is well qualified for this work. As well as being a lecturer with much experience, he has, throughout his life, immersed himself in all the major philosophers (particularly Spinoza). The list of academic institutions of which he is a member is impressive, and he is still in much demand.

Mr Tichauer's journey continues – his thirst for knowledge far from quenched – and every day is a new adventure. His appetite for debate and the spirited exchange of views remains healthy. The glint in his eye should be warning enough for the unwary not to argue with him unless they are very sure of their ground – and even then they may find it crumbling beneath their feet. □ M.N.

Reviews

Compressing ash into diamonds

David Grossman *SEE: UNDER LOVE* (Translated by Betsy Rosenberg)
Jonathon Cape

This work – book is too slight an appellation – should be accompanied by a warning: don't expect an easy read. Even allowing for the difficulties inherent in this subject, the Holocaust and its aftermath, the reader enters a maze right from the start, and though he finds open ground from time to time, is soon plunged into a thicket again.

Grossman's story is overlaid with the 'magical realism' that originated in Latin America, and whose best known European exponents are Günter Grass and Salman Rushdie.

On the face of it, the work is well structured. It divides into four parts, plus a 'Glossary' of the language of 'over there', Yiddish, Polish and German words used by characters lacking fluency in the Hebrew they are supposed to speak in Israel, where they now live.

Despite the outer structure the story is deconstructed (as they say nowadays) in the extreme. The reader – like Ariadne and Theseus in the myth – should hold on to the thread of the tales of Anshel Wasserman known as Scheherazade, who was once a writer of children's stories in Poland and translated all over the world. He invented *The Children of the Heart*; when young, victims and exterminators alike had been weaned on those liberty-loving kids who were a latter-day Robin Hood band. In an unspecified extermination camp Anshel becomes a Jew they could not kill. He is picked out by the commandant, an erstwhile 'Children of the Heart' fan, to invent more of those stories he – the SS officer – once loved. Anshel, whose daughter was killed before her father's eyes, accepts, the rules of the 'game' being a Scheherazade situation in reverse: if Anshel has pleased the SS officer the latter is to kill Anshel, who wants to die. The result is that the officer, reluctant to keep his part of the bargain, misses every time he tries to execute the 'eternal Jew'.

Anshel, until his 'elevation', was a latrine overseer (my euphemism). He had been rigged out for this edifying function in a

celebrated rabbi's silk gown and equipped with a huge stopwatch to help him prevent time-wasting, and in this garb he first entertains, and then undermines the morale of the commandant. In the end the SS man addresses him as *Herr Wasserman* and Anshel drops the *Herr* when *he* speaks. The very conclusion of this particular story line is so bizarre and so desirable that I will not give it away.

There is also much gold in the first part called 'Momik'. This Momik is a boy living in Jerusalem with parents who have survived what they circumscribe as *over there*, about which they and a few similarly placed neighbours, marooned in a sea of Oriental and North African Jews, will not talk. So Momik constructs his own history of the disaster *over there* from snatched bits and pieces, for all the world like children who, not properly told, misconstrue the mysteries of sex. Some of this, believe it or not, is hilarious.

But then great-uncle Anshel Wasserman arrives from an asylum, and all he ever says is *Herrneigle*. In the course of time Momik grows into Schleimeleh, Shlomik and Shlomoh; in fact he becomes a poet and novelist, and sets out to pierce Anshel's secret. And behold, it is revealed in this book, *Herrneigle* becomes *Herr Neigle*, the SS officer with whom Anshel never ceases to debate. I personally tend to the view that Anshel never said anything more than *Herrneigle*: the rest grew in the brain of Momik-Shlomik-David Grossman.

More puzzling still is the section called 'Bruno'. This has the Polish-Jewish writer Bruno Schulz jump into the sea at Danzig when the Nazis come and live on as a salmon, travelling the seven seas. Reminiscent of Günter Grass and his flounder this is, perhaps, meant to illustrate that the Jews can and will survive anywhere.

Other fictive creatures, 'Children of the Heart' grown old, also play a part in the struggle for survival. All in all, Mr Grossman spins a magnificent tale, but it did not bring me any closer to comprehending the Jewish tragedy of fifty years ago.

□ John Rossall

Jewdunit

Piers Paul Read *ON THE THIRD DAY*
Secker & Warburg, 1990. £13.99

Piers Paul Read's new novel welds together a religious/political thriller, a love story and theological arguments. In the course of an often thrilling narrative a number of skeletons tumble out of their hiding places; most of them are metaphorical but one – the skeleton of Jesus – is 'real'.

It was found in a broken storage jar under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem by world-famous Israeli archaeologist Michal Dagan. That 'fact' is the real subject of the book: what would happen to the Catholic Church, to Christianity in general, to Western civilisation, if the find were genuine? For if Jesus did not rise bodily from the dead, the New Testament, the Covenant which, orthodox Christian theology holds, replaced God's compact with the Children of Israel, would be null and void. And who would benefit? Why, the Jews in general, and present-day Zionists in particular.

What we have here is one of the nightmares of pre-Hitlerian antisemitism. Literary constructs such as Guy Thorne's *When It Was Dark*, have been built around it in the past. Let me hasten to state that Read does NOT indulge in any form of vulgar antisemitism; on the contrary, the love story which counterpoints the political conspiracy involves a young novice monk and a very worldly, sceptical, Jewish girl. And here the plot becomes complicated, for the latter is the daughter of Dagan. (Jewish readers may suspect a, perhaps unconscious, hint at Shylock's daughter – the pretty, and redeemable, offspring of the ugly Jew.)

The monk is secretary to a Professor of Biblical Archaeology collaborating with Dagan in Holy Land excavations. And there you have it: if Dagan's find is genuine, gone is the faith of these dedicated clerics. No risen Christ, no sense in the sacrifices and restraints of celibacy. The monk finds the professor hanging from the window frame of his cell – suicide, the never-forgiven sin!

You may think 'sufficient unto the plot is the thickness thereof'. But no, at this stage the real thriller starts, for he does not believe that the professor was his own executioner. He cannot prove it, but suspects murder.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Pied Piper in reverse

KORCZAK: Multi-European film co-production (including BBC). 1990



Wojtek Pszoniak as Dr. Korczak.

KORCZAK is, undoubtedly, one of the most powerful, moving and thought provoking films released this year. It is also one of the most difficult to watch.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The action moves to Israel. A Church commission views the skeleton and finds it horribly convincing; definitely a crucified man, nails through the feet, scratches on the skull (from the crown of thorns). The commissioners are liberal theologians, and they prepare to come to terms with the non-risen Jesus. The author obviously dislikes liberal Catholics.

Still, the reader has long realized that the skeleton was a fake. The guilty are brought to book, but not to earthly justice; their actions are explained but not excused. Six million dead are not a good enough reason for a Piltdown-type fraud.

Nonsense – the lot of it? Of course, but literary plots often are, particularly those of thrillers. *Dangerous* nonsense? No, the author has mitigated the more unpleasant implications. Well written, though tending to buckle under the weight of complications, it's a good read that shows again how old aspersions never die.

□ John Rossall

Admirable Music Man

Dr Korczak was the Head of the Warsaw Jewish orphanage in the pre-war years. He had two hundred children in his care. The film follows the journey of the doctor and his charges from their pre-war idyll (only slightly tainted by indigenous Polish anti-semitism) to the Warsaw ghetto and on to Treblinka.

The difficulty in watching the film does not lie purely in the tragic subject matter. It stems from the intense hope for the future which Korczak maintains for mankind, a hope which we, after the event, know to be forlorn. This retrospective knowledge tinges even the happiest scenes with sadness.

Yet, viewed coldly, this is not a dark, tragic film. The leading actor, Wojtek Pszoniak, lends great humour and humanity to the character of the doctor, and the acting of the children is excellent. The director, Andrej Wadja, has drawn a most moving portrait without having to resort to any von Trapp family type manipulation to affect the audience. The use of black and white gives the film an almost tangible feel of the period. At the same time Wadja manages, in masterly fashion, to avoid the stretched, silent sequences which less talented directors mistakenly believe convey deep emotion. For all its grim subject matter and the irrefutable knowledge of the viewer that it can only end in tragedy, the film has great pace. An amazing achievement.

Although the blow is softened by portraying death as a 'gentle thing' the doctor's choice of death with 'his' children rather than freedom touches the viewer deeply. One asks oneself the question 'Would I have done the same?' The uncomfortable answer is 'No, I would not have the courage'.

Dr Korczak was murdered in Treblinka in 1942. *The film is on limited release around the country.* □ M.N.

JEWISH LIFE IN EASTERN EUROPE

Heiko Haumann *GESCHICHTE DER OSTJUDEN Deutscher Tagebuch Verlag, Munich, 1990*

With the publication of this relatively slim volume, the author has succeeded in presenting not only a highly erudite but also a very readable history of the Jews of Eastern Europe from the beginning of the Diaspora to the present day.

The centre of gravity of such a study must, as Dr Haumann sets out in his introduction, be Poland: the Poland which welcomed Jews with open arms in the thirteenth century, but vented on them its frustrations ever after, and which to its disgrace, could not prevent outrageously dishonourable conduct by some of its citizens towards the pitiful survivors of the Holocaust.

It was, of course, a Greater Poland in which Jews settled, from Cracow in the West to Kiev in the East, and from the Baltic to the Black Sea coast, and where, in spite of the almost endemic enmity of their surroundings, they found themselves able to hold on to certain rights and privileges and to develop a specifically Jewish social structure and a distinctive cultural identity.

Their numbers grew. By 1648 they had reached 500,000, or five per cent of the total population. And in that year the Cossacks came; when they had gone, they had murdered 100,000 Jews.

Albeit slowly, the stricken community picked itself up and grew again in size, reaching 750,000 within the next hundred years. But, though it regained its cohesion, it never quite recovered its former self-confidence and self-esteem and its members hankered after new and compensating certainties: chassidism, kabbala, pseudo-messianic movements – religious mysticism to be sure, but not infrequently tinged with

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down-to-earth perceptions of the daily needs of ordinary people. These developments resulted in a self-contained cultural personality, characterised by use of Yiddish as the mother tongue and often, but by no means universally, by distinctive dress and strictness of ritual observance. Certain occupations became typical: the Jewish pedlar became the catalyst of cultural exchange between town and country, peasant and aristocrat, Jew and non-Jew, as did the Jewish innkeeper, street trader, landlord's agent, cobbler, tailor.

It was a remarkably vibrant society, able to withstand for centuries the stress of internal dissension and the strain of having to adjust to the realities of a basically hostile environment. But having flourished, it declined. The basic reasons for its decline were socio-economic, beginning with the expulsion of the Jews from the trade in alcohol which they had for so long conducted as a virtual monopoly. While there was a tiny group of inordinately wealthy merchants and bankers, mostly living in Warsaw, the vast majority became completely impoverished. By the turn of our century, mass emigration westward was in full swing. In truth, these Jews on the move were not always welcome strangers on new shores: 'Litvaks' in Poland, 'Polaks' in Germany, they were 'different' from the indigenous populations, Jews included.

Those who did not leave remained for the most part faithful to their traditional concepts and customs, and the author describes in interesting detail the situation in the years up to the First World War as regards the centrality of the family, the position of women, education and religious observance at home and in 'shul'.

Dr. Haumann brings to his subject not only the authority of the professional historian — he is Professor of Modern and East European History at Freiburg University — and the skills of a talented writer, but also a firm commitment to 'remembering for the future'. He points out that, as a culture, a way of life, a nationality, *Ostjudentum* was never accorded equal status in the countries of its origin. The combined hostility of the religious, economic and social forces relentlessly opposed to Jews, as well as the political immaturity of a host population itself underemancipated, saw to that.

□ David Maier

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MAN AND LEGEND: A 'RECONSIDERATION'

Ernst Pawel *THE LABYRINTH OF EXILE. A Life of Theodor Herzl. 1989 Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York US\$30.00 (554pp, including index and bibliography: illustrated).*

Some biographies read like scholarly monographs, some like exciting novels. This one of political Zionism's founding father does both. It is a tribute to the author's academic competence and his narrative skills.

Such qualities are, of course, essential attributes for anyone undertaking a task of this nature given the extensive literature, ranging from the sycophantic to the hostile, which the life of men like Theodor Herzl inevitably inspires.

Ernst Pawel, (a child refugee from Germany, and author of a successful biography of Franz Kafka) sets out to solve the enigma of his subject's personality, to establish who Herzl was, what he was and how he came to be 'the first Jewish leader in modern times' — indeed, in Pawel's opinion, 'thus far the only one', since 'those who came after him were politicians.' That they were 'Jewish politicians in a country of their own' is, in essence, the measure of Herzl's historic accomplishment.

To be sure, no one was, on the face of it, less qualified than he to become in his own lifetime the 'uncrowned king of the Jews'. An undistinguished school career in his native Budapest was followed by an equally undistinguished 'brush with the law' at the University of Vienna. He was (like many others at the time) unconsciously prone to a kind of embarrassed Jewishness which caused him to seek conformity at almost any price with perceived bourgeois 'goyishness' whose outward signs included gambling, drinking, duelling.

He took up writing as a way of life. As a playwright he was, at best, run-of-the-mill; but as a journalist he was a genius and a great success, a fact not lost on the proprietors of the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse*.

Throughout the book, the author's skilful treatment of the relationship between Herzl's life and Herzl's times allow the reader to experience, almost at first hand, the 'feel' of contemporary events and the effect these had on his thoughts and actions. Nowhere is this more successfully achieved than in the dramatic account of Herzl's time as his paper's Paris correspondent when he was overtaken by his destiny in the shape of *L'Affaire Dreyfuss*. The sudden realis-

ation that emancipation was illusory and assimilation no guarantee for the demise of active anti-Semitism, even in the most sophisticated of advanced Western societies, the discovery of the truth that Jews were now imprisoned in 'a ghetto far more terrible than that from which they could escape by exile or revolt' gave him the irresistible urge to abandon himself for the rest of his short life to 'the voluptuous pleasure of a great idea.'

The great idea in question was not, of course, new. Throughout the centuries of exile, the Jews had dreamt of a return to Zion, 'soon, and in our days.' But Herzl was the first to take up the idea with any realistic hope of success within those parameters.

Pawel handles Herzl's 'ideological evolution' from worldly romantic to impassioned activist with knowledge and understanding. His analysis of the Dreyfuss scandal itself, and its effect on Herzl's life from then on, is impressive. So, too, is the painstakingly objective history of Herzl's frenzied quest to end the millennial dream and bring into existence a Jewish mass movement capable of achieving tangible results in the context of international power politics.

From his return to Vienna in 1895 to his death nine years later at the age of 43 he belonged to the cause, body and soul. He published *Der Judenstaat* — in spite of its imperfections regarded by Pawel as a masterpiece — which with near-miraculous speed allowed 'the literary editor of the *Neue Freie Presse* [to] establish himself within a matter of months as the leader, spokesman and standard-bearer of secular Jewish nationalism.'

From here on, the milestones are well-known: his meetings with crowned heads and power brokers, his unexpected rapport with the Jewish masses, his triumph at Basel and the Uganda crisis, *Altneuland* and the controversy with Ahad Ha-Am. With his gift for flowing narrative and his meticulous research, the author makes the reader a participant in Herzl's breathtaking climb to the peak of his remarkable achievement.

Pawel's achievement is that, by insisting on a portrayal of his subject as a fallible human being, he underlines his singularity and his greatness. The book, with its wealth of information presented in scholarly fashion, but in the language of the educated laymen, delightfully interspersed with subtle shafts of well-placed irony and satire, is surely destined to become a classic of its kind. □ D.L.M.

Letters to the Editor



SILVER JUBILEE

Sir - In November 1990 Leo Baeck House celebrated the 25th anniversary of Mrs Gertraud Dick as Matron.

I wonder how many similar establishments can boast of a matron having been in the post for such a long time. This clearly reflects on her outstanding capabilities, extraordinary for a non-Jewish lady originating from Germany.

The Bishop's Avenue
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Fred Durst
Chairman,
House Committee

GRIZZLY REMINDER

Sir - Further to your editorial comparing Saddam with Hitler.

When Edward Heath, and others, went to Baghdad with 'lists' I was reminded of Oskar Schindler with his lists from which names were likewise taken off and others added.

Rehov Mohl
Netanya, Israel

Ernest J. Sicher

BOOKS SOUGHT

Sir - We are the Institute of the Holocaust Research. Part of our department specialises in books published in German in the last 100 years. We are very interested in receiving some of the books published by Schocken Verlag, Berlin (Bücherei des

Schocken Verlags), during the years 1935-38. These books are of great value to us as they were published by a Jewish publisher during the Nazi regime.

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Ruth Berkley
Librarian

EXPLORING THE WALDHEIMAT

Sir - The otherwise fair review of *Conquering the past. Austrian Nazism yesterday and today*, edited by me, is marred by the introduction of three red herrings.

(1) The 'reluctance to admit that the murder of Dollfuss by Nazi terrorists makes him a fellow Nazi victim' may be a well founded charge against some embittered Socialists. However, no such sentiments are to be found in the book under review. On the contrary, the editor complains that Austrian school textbooks are loath to admit Nazi involvement in the Dollfuss murder.

(2) Your reviewer suggests that many former Austrians living abroad 'overlook the fact that the atrocities blamed on the *Kleriko-Faschisten* are not nearly comparable with those perpetrated by the Nazis, ... but that the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg regime fought as long as it could against the Nazi take-over'. Is there any evidence whatever of such an outrageous statement

having been made anywhere in the volume under review? The pejorative and ideologically tainted term *Kleriko-Faschisten* has not been used once.

(3) Your reviewer had better get his facts right before accusing Professor Bruce Pauley of ignoring that 'superior forces of the German Legion in Styria' which the Austrian army and gendarmerie supposedly had to face during the attempted July *Putsch* of 1934. There never was a 'German Legion' anywhere in the 20th century. Your reviewer probably got confused with the so-called 'Austrian Legion' of about 4,000 Austro-Nazi refugees stationed in Bavaria, and is quite wrong in his belief that reinforcements were sent from that quarter to Styria.

London W4

Professor F. Parkinson

KALISKI SCHULE, BERLIN

Sir - From the letters received in response to mine in the October issue I have learnt: (i) There have been reunions in the U.S.A., (ii) Prof. M. Daxner of the University of Oldenburg is writing a book about the school, (iii) A list of ex-pupils and addresses, as well as a list of ex-pupils whose addresses are still sought, is maintained by Inge Forstenzer, 69 Argyle Road, Alberston, N.Y. 11507, U.S.A. So far we have discovered 27 ex-pupils in England, and a reunion, possibly early next year in London is being considered. Please contact me with any ideas or if you are a still *verschollener* Pri-Wa-Ki-ist.

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A small town in East Germany

My sons and I arrived in Gardelegen and made our way to a nearby village, Kloster Neuenburg. There, in a partly derelict 750-year-old Cistercian monastery, lives a devoted lady, Frau Gisela Bunge, widow of the pastor of the church. Shortly before his death he decided to research and record the history of the Jewish inhabitants of Gardelegen. (Jews settled there as far back as 1344, the last ones being deported in 1942.)

Frau Bunge determined to carry on and complete her late husband's project, and made contact with me and a few other Jewish ex-citizens who survived by emigrating and now live in various parts of the world. During a previous visit to Gardelegen I had noticed the neglected state of that part of the municipal cemetery on which about 12 Jewish tombstones had been re-erected. These came from the old Jewish cemetery, which was destroyed in wartime and built on, the stones being left lying about. After the war, the undamaged ones were salvaged and re-erected, but became totally overgrown. I mentioned this state of affairs to Frau Bunge and a few weeks later was sent a photograph showing how she and other helpers had cleared

and restored the area to a respectable condition. She also decided on that occasion that a suitable monument to commemorate the murdered Jewish citizens should be erected adjacent to these tombstones. She motivated others, collected funds, had a monument erected and made arrangements for its consecration, in the presence of civic and religious dignitaries, on the 50th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. Concurrently, by dint of endless correspondence, research and interviews Frau Bunge produced a document spanning the centuries which listed the names of Jewish residents and the fate of families who could not save their lives by emigrating. She lectured on this information to schools, clubs and religious organisations. In appreciation of Frau Bunge's efforts, I had offered to make an appropriate gift to her church. At her suggestion, it was to be a *menorah*, which I had brought along, suitably inscribed, to be handed over.

Some 400 congregants were awaiting our arrival at the old Marienkirche, headed by the mayor and local clergy. After a peal of churchbells and playing of organ-music, Frau Bunge introduced me and my sons, and explained the purpose of our visit. I was then called on to make an address, which I ended by handing over the brass *menorah* – for it to be prominently displayed as a reminder of the victims of Nazism. Next

Frau Bunge read out the names of seven Jewish families martyred in the Holocaust; after each, one candle was lit by an old friend who had helped that family. I then recited *kaddish* which was repeated by the priest in German. Finally three Christian dignitaries expressed regret at the churches' indirect complicity in the tragic events of the Hitler years. (It is only recently that such views have been publicly voiced in the Eastern part of Germany!) The ceremony ended by all present filing by the lit candles of the *menorah*, paying their silent respects.

Afterwards I met many residents informally. From the questions put to me it was very apparent that information on the fate of Jews during the Hitler regime had intentionally been suppressed, and I hope that my replies and other recent revelations established the true facts. Likewise, I hope to have corrected the East Germans' knowledge of the State of Israel, until recently portrayed by official media as a capitalist dictatorship allied to the West. It was rewarding to be asked by some younger people how they could assist the Jewish state in its task. The time had now arrived for us to return home. I felt that I had achieved what I had set out to do: to let my sons see the environment in which their parents and forefathers had grown up, and pay our respects to those who did not survive. □ A. J. Behrens

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Afternoon entertainment –

JANUARY

Tuesday 1	CLOSED
Wednesday 2	'Is There Life After A Bus Pass?' – Humour with Thelma Keisner
Thursday 3	Songs and Arias with Piano Interlude – John Freeman (Baritone) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano)
Monday 7	AJR Choir conducted by Edie Klempler
Tuesday 8	'Singing for Fun' – The Longford Singers with Margaret Eaves at the Piano
Wednesday 9	'Music for You' – Maria Arakie (Soprano), Glenn Wilson (Baritone) accompanied by Carol Wells (Piano)
Thursday 10	Songs – New and Old – Hans Freund
Monday 14	'Music for a While' – Joanna Campion (Contralto) accompanied by Susan Allan (Piano)
Tuesday 15	'An Hour of your Favourite Songs' – Barbara Lincoln and Irene Sara accompanied by Rex Sara
Wednesday 16	One-Man Music Hall Show – Mickie Driver
Thursday 17	'It seems I've heard that Song before' – Jack Harris and Happy Branson
Monday 21	Music by The Bagatelles – Francoise Geller
Tuesday 22	'Sophie Tucker – Her Life in Words and Music' – Sylvia Dombey
Wednesday 23	'We've come from the Trinity College of Music to Entertain You' – Sharona Applebaum (Soprano) accompanied by Robert Douglas (Piano)
Thursday 24	'An Afternoon of Schubert Lieder' – Angela Tilley (Soprano) accompanied by Stephen Baron (Piano)
Monday 28	Light Classical Entertainment – Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano) and Robert Smith (Baritone)
Tuesday 29	The Battle of the River Plate – Eye witness talk by Rolf Weinberg
Wednesday 30	'Melody Hour' – David Jedwab (Tenor) and Avril Kaye (Soprano) accompanied by Rosa Butwick
Thursday 31	'Romantic Songs and Arias' – Anya Kelly (Soprano) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth

FEBRUARY

ISRAELI WEEK

Monday 4	'Strolling through Israel with Song and Guitar' – Ron Goldberg
Tuesday 5	'Blue and White' – Malka Shinar
Wednesday 6	Hans Freund: 'Tseina Tseina'
Thursday 7	'Rifka's Rhythms' – Sheila Karminsky

The AJR at Work



The first floor roof garden nearing completion at the new Balint House.

Photo: Newman

Balint House

a significant move

Later this month the 20 full-care residents of Otto Schiff House will transfer to the newly-built Balint House where every room is equipped with its own toilet facilities. The head of Home, Mrs Loni Rieger, and her staff will continue to look after them in their new environment with the same love and care they have been accustomed to for many years.

GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION

This is the first stage in the planned upgrading and refurbishment of the homes for refugees to be funded by the AJR Residential Care Appeal. The underwriting of the initial cost by the AJR Charitable Trust made this early realisation of Balint House possible.

The new home is named Balint House in honour of the Balint family and to acknowledge their great interest in our affairs and their more than generous contribution to our appeal.

The residents will have the benefit of participating in social and other functions of the many other homes in The Bishops Avenue. We hope they will settle down well in their new surroundings and enjoy the Home's modern facilities for many years to come.

An official opening ceremony of Balint House will take place in the Spring. □

Volunteers meetings

During November two meetings were held at Hannah Karminski House for groups of those volunteers who visit members in their own homes. Mrs Vera Morris, a retired child psychologist, and herself a volunteer visitor, talked briefly about her experiences in visiting the very elderly. This was followed by a wide-ranging discussion.

MAINTAINING DIGNITY

It was clear that the role of the visitors varied greatly according to the state of health and mental alertness of those visited, but all agreed that their main function was to listen, often to reminiscences, sometimes to complaints and fears. Participants talked about the need to help the old to maintain their dignity; about the difficulty of giving the right amount of help in an acceptable way; about financial problems, real or imaginary, short or long term.

No conclusions were reached, but that was not the purpose of the meetings. However, the feeling of satisfaction that the volunteer visitors gain in carrying out these tasks came across very strongly indeed.

□ V.M.

If you would like to enquire about volunteer community work please contact Laura Howe, Volunteers Coordinator, Hannah Karminski House, 9 Adamson Road, Swiss Cottage, London NW3.

Till a hundred and twenty



Edith Meyer - 100th birthday celebration. Photo: Newman

An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Whether she keeps to this rule or not is unclear, but Mrs Edith Meyer has managed to avoid seeing the doctor quite successfully during the past decade since she became a resident of Leo Baeck House. At the party to celebrate her 100th birthday the Home's doctor in attendance, Dr Wayne, said 'She is cheerful, independent and remarkably free of health troubles'.

Mrs Meyer certainly looked in fine form for her birthday celebrations. Between accepting gifts and tributes from the many visitors who attended the lunchtime sherry reception she found energy to pose for photographers from the local papers, a process which can require a great deal of effort.

ROYAL TELEGRAM

Later in the afternoon a tea party was held for which the guest list contained some very distinguished names. Joining the residents

and staff of the Home were the M.P. for Hendon South, Mr John Marshall, and the Mayor of Barnet. Members of the executive committees of the AJR and the CBF Residential Care and Housing Association were also at the celebration. Between the speeches and cake cutting, Mrs Meyer again posed for photographers - this time from the national press. During the tea party three postal greetings were on display: a letter from the Minister of Health, another from the German Ambassador to Britain and, of course, a telegram from Her Majesty the Queen.

When all the excitement of the day was over and the visitors had drifted away I found Mrs Meyer in the 'winter garden' of the Home chatting with a few of her closest friends. She was gracious enough to allow one more photograph to be taken, which appears above.

SURVIVORS

Leaving the Home, shortly afterwards, something else that Dr Wayne had said came back to me. 'There are quite a few residents here approaching their centenaries—more than in many other residential homes. This is not due only to the strong constitutions of the residents, nor is it solely due to the standard of care which they receive here, which is very high. It is the personal attitude of these people. They are survivors, and they do not give in'.

Mrs Meyer's inner strength shines through her frail exterior and we hope that she will be with us for many more years.

□ M.N.

Spirit of the Blitz

A minor fault in the LEB's electricity generating sub-station in Cleve Road plunged the AJR Paul Balint Day Centre into darkness for a day last month.

Unfazed by this inconvenience the staff ensured that it was 'business as usual', with the aid of five boxes of candles. The candle-lit kitchen provided an excellent three course lunch, well up to the usual standards, albeit in a slightly more romantic setting than usual.

All the day's activities continued on schedule and those who were present agree that the staff, full-time and volunteers alike, did sterling work in ensuring that no-one's enjoyment was spoiled by this minor setback. In fact, some of the regular visitors enjoyed the day so much that they are hoping that the candle-lit lunch will become a regular feature on the Centre's calendar.

□ M.N.

Otto Schiff
Housing Association

A new name to remember

The CBF Residential Care and Housing Association has been renamed Otto Schiff Housing Association.

The organisation's present name goes back to 1985, when it separated from the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief. In it are vested the properties comprising the homes providing full care and sheltered accommodation for refugees, originally established with monies obtained by the Jewish Trust Corporation for heirless property in post-Nazi Germany. The Housing Association administers the homes and is fully supported in its work by the AJR, who deal with admission procedures and provides welfare services for the residents.

DEEP CONCERN

The new name perpetuates the memory of Otto Schiff (1875-1952) who was so active in facilitating the immigration of Jews to this country during the 1930's, and at all times deeply concerned with their welfare.

The change takes effect on 1 January 1991. □

Bouquet for two

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation for a wonderfully organised outing to Bournemouth thanks to the work, skill and *charm* of Madams Sylvia and René. Everything functioned with clock-work precision.

Can we have some more, please.
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Quotes of the month

Warum bin ich in ein Volk hineingeboren das aus Wagneropern Geschichte macht? ... 24 Jahre bewusst Zeitgenosse von A. H. lehrten mich nicht ihn, sondern unser Volk zu verachten.

Erich Kuby, Author.

This terrible prejudice against Israel again came to the fore in the reaction to Temple Mount in the same week when hundreds were killed in Lebanon; prisoners mutilated and killed, with their hands tied behind their backs; nuns violated and raped; and Danny Chamoun's family, including small children, wiped out.

But not a word from the UN, no call to the Security Council to deal with the matter and a muted response by the European Community against Syria.

President Chaim Herzog

If Rabbi Kahane was a pariah, outlawed beyond the pale of Israeli public life by the Knesset and the Supreme Court, what was the Sephardi Chief Rabbi, Mordechai Eliahu, doing delivering the principal eulogy?

Rabbi Eliahu is a civil servant, paid by the State, as well as the spiritual leader of half the population.

Was it his job to honour a proclaimed racist?

Eric Silver, J.C. correspondent.

'Piece of paper'

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of Nostrae Aetate – the Vatican document absolving Jews of the charge of deicide, and affirming God's covenant with the Jewish people – Nobel Prize winner and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel called it a 'piece of paper', largely on account of the Holy See's refusal to recognise the State of Israel. □

Remigranten honoured

At a ceremony in Berlin the octogenarian journalist Alfred Joachim Fischer received the Order of Merit of the Bundesrepublik for his work in fostering postwar German-Jewish reconciliation.

The Municipality of Vienna's Julius Tandler Medal – for public service in the area of health care – has been awarded to Ingenieur Erich Herzl. □

VERSE AND WORSE

MUGGERIDGE

He thought himself a sixties' Swift
And sought in faith felicity,
God gave his supplicant short shrift
And granted him: publicity.

THATCHER

She had chemistry as well as law,
Seized all her chances to the full,
Mistook Europa for the Bull
And over sterling threatened war.

HESELTINE

A near-teenage tycoon
Aimed his shot at the moon,
Grew a mane, swung a mace,
Left the pack, took the flak –
To the swift is the race.

KALIM SIDDIQUI

Come kindly bombs and drop on Slough
Doktor Siddiqui lives there now
Who dubs the West a cultural bog
And spurns the thought of dialogue.

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Remember the AJR

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

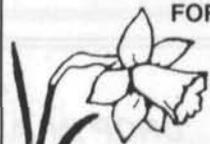
- (a) where it will be appreciated,
- (b) where it will do some good,
- (c) where it is needed.

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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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

The recent death of Margaret (Greta) Marks, née Heymann, ends the career of an important potter and painter.

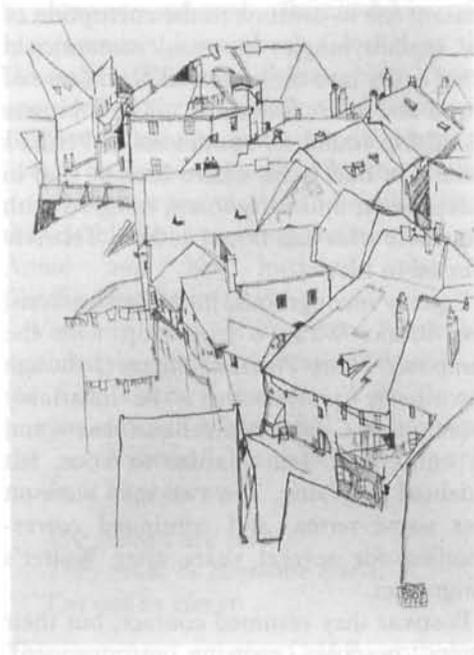
Born in 1899 in Cologne, Greta showed early talent and studied at Düsseldorf, and then at the famous Bauhaus in Weimar. In 1923 she acquired an old pottery at Marwitz, east of Berlin, jointly with her husband Gustav Loebenstein. The firm 'Hael Werkstätten für Künstliche Keramik' employed 120 workers in its heyday. After the factory was forcibly sold under the Nazis Greta emigrated to England. She settled in Stoke-on-Trent, where she taught and worked with Mintons to found a modern department. During the war Greta did much more painting and was always happiest with watercolours and gouaches. She also established a studio pottery, finding many buyers amongst collectors and friends. Examples of her work are in the Stoke-on-Trent Art Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Bauhausarchiv, the Brohan Gallery in Berlin and in the collection of the Ben Uri Art Society.

An important Anglo-Jewish artist is Bernard Meninsky (1891–1950). His work has recently been shown at the Belgrave Gallery and at Blond Fine Art and some of his pictures can still be seen at these galleries. Meninsky had brilliant draughtsmanship and a vibrant sense of colour. A book on him by John Russell Taylor has recently been published by the Redcliffe Press (price £12.95).

Suzanne Lackner, born in Berlin in 1908 and formerly a teacher at the Francis Holland Girls School, has recently been showing her sculptures in her home, 49 Eton Hall, Eton College Road, NW3. I saw some lovely pieces including a little squirrel in koa wood, a snake in elm, as well as an owl in Portland Stone. She can be contacted on 071 722 1263.

Jack Bilbo, artist-cum-impresario, opened his Modern Art Gallery (1941–48) as a show-case for modern artists. It immediately became a great success attracting both young British and refugee artists, including Schwitters, Adler, Heckroth, Herman, Dachinger, etc. England & Co have now mounted an exhibition 'Jack Bilbo and the Moderns' at their gallery.

Not to be missed is the 'Egon Schiele and his Contemporaries' exhibition at the Royal



Egon Schiele: Part of the Krumau. See below.

Academy (until 17 February). Schiele (1890–1928), was a controversial figure, intensely interested in sexuality. He was accused of exhibiting pornographic drawings, one of which was burnt by the judge in the courtroom during his trial.

The National Gallery in London is showing 'Art in the Making: Impressionism' (until 29 April). The exhibition comprises 15 pictures from the gallery's own collection to demonstrate the development of Impressionism in its formative period.

Gillian Jason is mounting her third Bomberg exhibition (until 11 January) to mark the centenary of the artist's birth. It concentrates on his drawings and more than 50 works on paper are being shown. A public reading of Bomberg's poems written as a gunner in the trenches during WW1 was held in the gallery on 2 December.

The exhibition of the work of the eminent designer Abram Games, sponsored by the *Financial Times*, will be on display at the Hampstead Arts Centre (9–13 February). An exciting exhibition of his specifically Jewish work will be shown at the Ben Uri Gallery in April.

I have recently heard from our old friend Lily Freeman who is having an exhibition of her work at the Roca de Togoros gallery in Alicante (until 13 January). She faced an overwhelming task in single-handedly transporting over 50 paintings there. We wish her every success.

Finally, nostalgic memories, some less than pleasant, are awakened in the newly renovated Second World War Gallery at the Museum of London. Somewhere to take the children! □

SB's Column

The Mozart Year 1991 – 200 years since the death of one of the world's greatest composers: reason enough for festivals all over the world led by his home town of Salzburg, closely followed by Munich, Vienna and Prague. Equally in the foreground stands the Dresden Semper Opera, starting the year with *Don Giovanni* and *Magic Flute*. The latter is also on the fixture list of London's Royal Opera House, while the English National Opera contributes *Così fan tutte*. Glyndebourne will this year perform Mozart operas exclusively during the annual festival season.

Researching Johann Strauss Junior Although his waltzes and polkas are played on every continent, no complete register of the waltz king's work has ever been attempted. This is now to be rectified in the form of a biographical work-compilation sponsored by the Austrian insurance company Elementar. The work, called 'Strauss Elementar Register', and started in 1988, is to contain the full Strauss literature, original scripts together with newspaper cuttings of the time, as well as origins of the melodies (over 400 music sketches). There will be three volumes, the first of which is to be published towards the end of this year.

Fritz Lang exhibition Vienna's film museum held an exhibition in honour of Fritz Lang, born in Vienna 100 years ago. Fritz Lang achieved worldwide fame with the films *M* and *Metropolis*.

Birthdays Wilhelm Kempff, one of the world's leading concert pianists, now retired, celebrated his 95th birthday. Helen Hayes, known in Europe as the 'American Paula Wessely', is 90 years old. German boxing world champion Max Schmeling who won the title in 1936 by beating Joe Louis, for many years married to the late Anny Ondra, attained the age of 85. Austrian actress Jane Tilden, who first came to prominence in the charming comedy *Unentschuldigte Stunde* in the Thirties, one of the most vivacious personalities on stage and in films (also a Vienna 'Burg' member since 1957), is 80 years old.

Obituary Helli Servi who has died, aged 68, was not an actress of international repute, but a comedienne who entertained generations of Viennese audiences for well over 50 years. Having made her debut as a 10-year old in 1932, in the female title role of Erich Kästner's *Pünktchen und Anton*, she endeared herself to the public by the warmheartedness of her characterisations, and was a 'Josefstadt' member up to her retirement several years ago. □

Shaking hands across the abyss

In 1949 Thomas Mann visited Germany for the first time since his emigration sixteen years earlier. The 'homecoming' proved far from harmonious. The visit was mired in controversy – about Mann's support for Germany's wartime enemies, about the relative merits of exile and 'inner' emigration, about the legitimacy of the DDR, and so forth. An appropriately sour footnote to the whole affair was provided by Wilhelm Furtwängler. The latter wanted to meet Mann, who, considering him to have been a Nazi collaborator, returned a frosty answer. The conductor reacted to this rebuff by commenting 'Some of us don't change our nationality like shirts'. This non-meeting of minds shows how wide an abyss Nazi Germany had opened up between its citizens and the civilised world. Interestingly some Jewish emigrants found it easier than Thomas Mann to shake hands across the abyss.

A case in point was Hannah Arendt. A magisterial figure in later life, Hannah Arendt had been a 'free spirit' in her student days and let herself become involved in an amorous relationship with her PhD supervisor Martin Heidegger. The fact that the renowned philosopher was married doomed their *affaire*, and Hannah transferred to another university. Postwar she resumed contact with Heidegger despite his discreditable record as Rektor of Nazified Freiburg University; however, Frau Heidegger would only permit the erstwhile lovers to meet in her presence.

Then there was the Prague-born Leo Perutz, a prewar emigrant to Palestine, who postwar spent the best part of each year in the Austrian Salzkammergut. In this White Horse Inn atmosphere he held intimate discourse with his literary colleague Bruno Brehm. The latter belonged to a German-Austrian school of writers who rhapsodized about the naturalness of

peasant life in contrast to the corruption of the asphalt jungle; his rural romanticism fitted easily into the preferred Nazi *genre* of blood-and-soil literature. The bizarre friendship found its apotheosis at Perutz's funeral in Bad Ischl, where Brehm, clad in loden jacket and *lederhosen*, mingled with mourners who had flown in from Tel Aviv dressed in black.

Equally incongruous, in the last analysis, was Bruno Walter's friendship with the composer Hans Pfitzner. Pfitzner, though notoriously quarrelsome – he invariably pronounced Gustav Mahler *malheur* – and an antisemitic Teutomaniac to boot, felt indebted to Walter. The two men were on first name terms, and continued corresponding for several years after Walter's emigration.

Postwar they resumed contact, but their letters bespoke growing estrangement. Walter was aghast at Pfitzner's dismissal of reports on Nazi death camps as 'Allied atrocity propaganda similar to the First World War' and proposed that, for the sake of their friendship, they henceforth restrict themselves to musical topics. Even then Pfitzner struck a curmudgeonly note. Walter's first conducting tour of postwar Europe prompted him to write 'I don't begrudge you your triumphal tour through German-free Europe in any way'. Replying, Walter noted with regret that an abyss had opened up between them. Shortly afterwards Pfitzner died, and Walter entered into correspondence with his widow without ever mentioning the estrangement that had marred their last exchanges.

Finally: Marianne Hoppe, an actress in her own right, but spuriously famous as the wife of the gay actor Gustav Gründgens whom talent – and Goering's patronage – had propelled to the top of Nazi German theatre. (Gründgens' first wife had been Erika Mann, whose brother Klaus had memorably pilloried him in *Mephisto*.) In Weimar days Marianne Hoppe had had a Jewish sociologist as a lover, and counted Therese Giehse among her friends. A few short years after mingling with the leftwing

Jewish intellectuals of the Adorno-Horkheimer circle, she took tea with Goering at Karinhall and was invited to the Reich Chancellery. The German vox pop, aware that Gründgens had married her as an insurance policy in the homophobic atmosphere of the Third Reich, meanwhile intoned '*Hoppe, hoppe Gründgens, wo bleiben Eure Kindgens?*'

Postwar Gründgens divorced Hoppe. In 1950 she met Therese Giehse again. When that nonpareil actress returned from Switzerland the two women became near neighbours in the same Munich apartment house; after Giehse's death Hoppe inherited some of her furniture.

These days the octogenarian ex-star restricts herself to one role only, that of the tinnitus-afflicted heroine of Bernhard's play *Heldenplatz* who still hears the roars of 'Sieg Heil' resonating through her brain fifty years after the Anschluss. If this is an expression of penitence – *Trauerarbeit* – for her, and her ex-husband's, pact with the devil, then it might become possible to shake hands across the abyss again.

□ R.G.

Dichtung and Wahrheit

Else, Motti Lerner's play about Else Lasker-Schüler which *Habimah* has been touring in Germany, has rekindled discussion about how Jewish Palestine treated the exiled poet.

The current view in the Bundesrepublik is that Lasker-Schüler, who died insane in 1945, suffered total neglect in wartime Jerusalem – the implication being that her co-religionists treated the once-acclaimed writer of the *Hebräische Balladen* hardly better than her fellow Germans.

This version does not accord with the facts. While living in Jerusalem the poetess had a large circle of friends and admirers, and although never financially secure, received regular subventions from the Jewish Agency and the publisher Salman Schocken. Last, but by no means least: the collection *Mein blaues Klavier*, Else's poetic swansong, was printed in Jerusalem in 1943 – in German! □

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Small is beautiful

In 1988, Anschluss' 50th anniversary year, this journal published Mary Hutterer's poem *Vienna Revisited*. Our readers' response could aptly be described as underwhelming: Mary received exactly one fan letter, which, in turn, consisted of only one word. But the word was *Bravo!*, and the sender turned out to be Leo Baeck House resident Annie Bloch. Living only a short car-ride away, Mary felt moved to call on her 'fan'. Out of this encounter grew something resembling a mother-daughter relationship – though with interchangeable roles: at times late-fiftiish Mary mothers octogenarian Annie.

Mary Hutterer – a cousin of Norbert Brainin's – is an aspiring poet, and Annie Bloch a published one. She, too, comes from an artistic family. Her actress mother was

a long-remembered Rautendelein (in Hauptmann's *Versunkene Glocke*) at the Deutsche Theater, Brünn; her sister appeared in the screen classic *Mädchen in Uniform*. That film was to save the family's lives. The sister, in London for the English premiere, met and married a British citizen; this enabled her to bring the mother, and Annie and her husband, out of Czechoslovakia in 1939.

Virtually since arriving here Annie has attended 'writing for pleasure' courses at the City Literary Institute. A poetic exponent of 'small is beautiful', she has made the seventeen-syllable *haiku* a favourite mode of expression.

*My dreams are lucid,
They must be someone else's;
I'm not so clever.*

This appeared in the O.U.P. anthology *Dreams*, sandwiched between poems by

Robert Graves and Emily Dickinson.

While rubbing shoulders with such Anglo-American greats on the printed page, Annie Bloch in real life consorted with fellow refugee writers Fred Uhlmann (of *Reunion* fame), and Mascha Kaleko. Like the latter she possesses great humour, which combines neatly with an appealing dryness of tone. Nowhere is this more evident than in the heartstoppingly emotion-drained *haiku*

*A pied-à-terre!
That may well be what the dead
Call our earthly life.*

Half-smiling stoicism may not be to everybody's taste, but few will deny its bleak grandeur. □ R.G.

AJR Information is happy to have been the, however inadvertent, *shadchen* at the marriage of two poetic minds.

Embarrassment of riches – but not only

Autumnal London has been awash with Jewish art, from the Chagall, Bomberg and Nussbaum canvasses at the Barbican via *klezmer* music to the Solomon Sulzer concert at Smith's Square – and from *Korczak*, and other films, at the NFT to Sholem Alechem in Yiddish at the Bloomsbury Theatre. While this marvellous embarrassment of riches was on offer the protracted debate about whether Jewish art was more than art that happened to be produced by individual Jews rumbled on in the background.

No such heartsearchings, or critical disagreements, are prompted by Sholem Alechem. His work quickens into life thanks above all to the medium in which it is cast: the Yiddish language. In his plays the common tongue of a pariah population, a tongue derogated as *jargon* by its neighbours – and fellow-Jews elsewhere – reveals itself as more than a means for daily discourse and sublimation of anguish through jocularly; it articulates longings and life-affirming hope.

Thus it is in *Shver tsu zein a Yid*, a tragic-comedy that uses the age old device of two protagonists exchanging roles to fresh theatrical effect: one is a bright Jewish student denied university admission, the other the son of a Russian general. In consequence of exchanging identities the general's son learns that it is, indeed, hard to be a Jew, while the Jewish lad receives confirmation of his belief that Jewish destiny is inescap-

able, but nonetheless far from ignoble.

I left the Bloomsbury Theatre warmed by the glow of Sholem Alechem's humane vision (and gratified that an Israeli company had put on the play as part of a widespread revival of interest in Yiddish).

I wish I could be equally enthusiastic about the offerings – other than *Dr Korczak* – at the Sixth Jewish Film Festival.

Sunset, conceivably among the last products of the state-subsidised Soviet film industry, was a real curate's egg. Its Jewish director draws heavily on Isaac Babel's tales of the Odessa drayman Mendel Krik and his gangster son Benya. My own understanding of the Krik saga is that Babel, a self-consciously puny intellectual, saw Benya as a flawed Jewish hero of whom fellow gangsters, and even the police, stood in awe. If little of this came across in the film it may have had something to do with the director's inclination to conflate the Kriks with

Dostojevski's Karamazovs. On the credit side *Sunset* offers a series of striking images, including a balletically choreographed shoot-out, as well as an excellent soundtrack; even so, it is too reminiscent of Fellini (or Greenaway) to rank as a real original.

From a *glasnost*-inspired art house film to an unashamedly commercial one: the Franco-Israeli-Russian *Passport*. Its protagonists are two half-brothers – one a footloose Georgian taxi driver, the other a half-Jewish married musician. The taxi driver takes his Israel-bound brother to the airport where the two – surprise, surprise? – get their identities mixed up. Though *aliyah* literally means 'going up', the wrong brother's move to Israel makes the film inexorably go down; the end is reached when the involuntary emigrant, while wading through a shallow river, pronounces a curse on all state frontiers. A borderline case, in more senses than one. □ R.G.

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FAMILY EVENTS

Deaths

Bingham Lilly Bingham (nee Birnbaum) formerly of Vienna, was torn from us suddenly on 13 Kislew (30th November). A devoted and selfless wife to Walter, adored Mother to Sonja and most special Omi. To know her was to love her – we will miss her forever.

Kafka Hilde Kafka died with tragic suddenness on Tuesday 11th December deeply mourned by her sons, Tommy and Edward, daughters-in-law Susan and Frances, and grandchildren Debbie, Judy, Nicholas, Peter and Steven.

Kahn Leo Kahn died on November 25. Sadly missed by his family and friends.

Steiner Hilde Steiner (nee Kohn) died December 3rd 1990. Sadly missed by many friends and members of the AJR Club.

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Miscellaneous

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Obituaries

Herbert Berghof

The Vienna-born drama teacher Herbert Berghof has died in New York, aged 81. He had appeared as an actor at Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater, Berlin, and, post-1933, at Stella Kadmon's Der liebe Augustin, Vienna. After emigrating to the U.S.A. he worked with Ernst Lothar, Fritz Kortner, Walter Slezak, and as a drama coach at Erwin Piscator's studio. Later, aided by his wife Uta Hagen, he set up an acting school whose pupils included Geraldine Page, Anne Bancroft, Al Pacino and Robert de Niro. Berghof also earned renown as director of the first American production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in 1956. □

Clive Schmitthoff

Sir – May I add to your obituary of Clive Schmitthoff December 1990. I met him many years ago at the City of London Polytechnic. During the time we worked together he held the highest academic grade available to a teacher. He leaves behind him the largest legal department at any Polytechnic, the *Journal of Business Law*, which he edited for many years, and the Mansfield Law Club, which still meets regularly.

□ Henry Toch

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Hilde Spiel

The death of Hilde Spiel, at the age of seventy-nine, snaps the last link with inter-war Vienna, the culturally *verjudet* city of Literatencafés and psychoanalysis. Born into a highly assimilated Jewish family Hilde Spiel was a Catholic. She studied philosophy under the renowned Moritz Schlick and published two novels in her early Twenties. Living in England from 1936 she, (like her husband Peter de Medelsohn) contributed to the British and emigré press, worked for the BBC and supported the activities of International PEN. She also wrote novels on the refugee theme, and in 1962 published the biographical study *Fanny von Arnstein oder die Emanzipation*, her major work. Her return to Austria long after the war was motivated partly by nostalgia, and partly – as she revealed in her autobiography *Welche Welt ist meine Welt* – by non-acceptance into English literary society. In Vienna, alas, politics kept rearing its ugly head. As a Liberal Hilde Spiel fell foul of her fellow returnee Friedrich Torberg, a Cold Warrior who agitated for a ban on Brecht's work. More recently she received hate mail, and even death threats, for boycotting the Salzburg Festival in protest at President Waldheim's role as Festival patron. □

40 Years Ago this Month

Times Change

At the beginning of a new year, in the very centre of a century, it seems difficult to avoid the trite thought of how time passes. Things are not what they used to be – to which observation Mr Punch returned the rather obvious answer: They never were! Some of the melancholy changes were wittily described by the Grand Old Man of Anglo-Jewry, Lord Samuel, who remarked the other day that the wealthy having become the indigent, there was now a new social class – the 'indigentry'.

A very different development was noted in Jewish life by Mr Percy Cohen, C.B.E., a distinguished member of the Board of Deputies as well as an important official in the Conservative Party. He thought the centre of gravity in the Jewish community had shifted from the old-established families of the 'Grand Dukes', and we were now being ruled by the plutocracy of the new industrialists. It was the wistful reflection of one who by origin and upbringing is entitled to feel a nostalgic regard for the ancient regime.

Actually British Jews have passed through their Great Revolution which began in 1917 when, aroused by the Balfour Declaration, the people overthrew the anti-Zionist aristocrats in the Board, and which reached a memorable stage in 1939 when Prof. Brodetsky was chosen head of Anglo-Jewry. *AJR Information January 1951.*

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I am currently researching the question of whether there remains in Switzerland money belonging to holocaust victims which they deposited there before the war. I am looking for specific examples of individuals who made such deposits and whose families have been unable to recover the funds. Please contact me, Lawrence Lever, Financial Editor, Mail on Sunday, Temple House, Temple Avenue, London EC4Y 0JA, Tel: 071-938 6000

Dr Rosa Stern. Born 5/3/1891. Came to London from Vienna in April 1939. She was a pioneer in the field of microanalytical chemistry. If anyone has information about whether she continued to work in Britain, in which year she died or if she has any surviving descendants please contact: Peter Voswinckel, M.D., Institute für Geschichte der Medizin der RWTH Aachen, Wendlingweg 2, FRG – 5100 Aachen.

Freud's slip

Aggression often elicits two totally divergent responses – resistance on the one hand, appeasement on the other. Thus it is in the Gulf Crisis, and thus it was under the shadow of the Swastika. In the 1930s the sterile enterprise of trying to appease Hitler had not only been essayed by the likes of Chamberlain and Stalin; Thomas Mann, too, sat on the fence for several months after the Nazi seizure of power before, responding to his daughter Erika's entreaties, he took up the stance that was to make him the voice of the Other Germany.

An equally illustrious European culture hero teetering on the edge of appeasement, who – however much one hesitates to pronounce judgement – needs to be named, was Sigmund Freud. For Freud the overriding concern in the early stages of the Nazi

regime was to avoid the proscription of the *Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft*. The DPG was, in fact, allowed, thanks to the 'voluntary' resignation of its Jewish members, to continue a shadowy existence until its merger with the *Deutsches Institut für Psychologische Forschung und Psychotherapie*, directed by a cousin of Goering's.

All the Jewish rank and file had agreed to resign for the good of the DPG. But there was one leading member of the Society, also a Jew, who vehemently dissented from its appeasement tactics: Wilhelm Reich. This *enfant terrible* with a fateful propensity for turning today's friend into tomorrow's enemy, enjoyed notoriety in the final years of the Weimar Republic primarily for advocating sexual promiscuity and, to a lesser extent, for urging the enlistment of psychoanalysis in the anti-Fascist struggle.

To Freud the politicisation of the discipline he had founded was absolute anath-

ema. He therefore got his son Martin, head of the Vienna-based *Internationale Psychoanalytische Verlag*, to cancel the publishing contract for Reich's *Character Analysis*. He also decided, in league with the President of the International Psychoanalytical Association, Ernest Jones, that Reich should be expelled from that body. Expulsion, however, seemed too drastic a procedure for a movement whose self-proclaimed purpose was combatting all forms of repression. Ernest Jones therefore announced that Wilhelm Reich had resigned from the Association of his own accord.

The International Psychoanalytical Association held its Thirteenth Congress at Lucerne in 1934. Reich was present, but demonstrated his outsider status by sleeping in a tent on the lakeshore while all the other delegates – whom he derogated as *bourgeois* – spent their nights in hotel rooms. As a camper Reich also carried a knife, and this encouraged rumours about his threatening behaviour, which some analysts attributed to incipient schizophrenia.

Reich eventually died in a U.S. mental institution. Freud, when allowed to leave Nazi-occupied Vienna in 1938, wrote 'I can recommend the Gestapo to everybody'. Sarcasm was certainly a more creditable stance vis-a-vis the Nazis than appeasement. □ R.G.

Claims concerning assets in the former DDR and East Berlin

The following is a summary of the first official guidelines issued by the Federal Ministry of Finance in Bonn concerning claims for the recovery of assets in the territory of the former DDR and East Berlin.

1 Claims can be made by such persons as were deprived of assets through forced sales, expropriation or otherwise during the period 30 January 1933 to 8 May 1945 by reason of racial, political or religious persecution or on similar grounds. In the event of the victim having died, claims can be made by his or her heirs.

2 The following is a list of assets which may be made the subject of claims:

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- Businesses and capital invested in businesses.

(b) Balances on bank accounts and claims against debtors resident in the former DDR or East Berlin.

3 Claimants must supply precise information concerning assets claimed, e.g. in the case of land or buildings the precise address and, if possible, an extract from the Land Register ('Grundbuch').

4 If the claim is made by heirs of a victim of expropriation a Certificate of Inheritance ('Erschein') must be produced.

5 A full account must be given of the occurrences which resulted in the expropriation.

6 The claim for restitution must reach the **Bundesminister der Justiz, Heinemannstr. 6, D-5300 Bonn 2**, not later than 31 March 1991.

7 However, failure to observe this time limit is *not* fatal to a claim and will *not* result in the claimant losing his or her claim for the recovery of the property claimed. But the person in control of the property or asset in respect of which no claim is made before 31 March 1991, is at liberty to deal with it by sale or mortgage or otherwise and any claim made after that date will operate only in respect of the proceeds of any sale. The purpose of the imposition of the time limit is to protect the claimant.

8 There are additional provisions dealing, for instance, with the consequences of a sale of a property after 18 October 1989 about which, in a given case, a claimant should seek further legal advice.

Owen Franklyn, Board Member of the United Restitution Organisation

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