

AJR Information

Volume XLVI No. 9
September 1991

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

AJR and the Residential Homes p3

Converso playwright p15

Outing à la juive p16

Dragon's teeth

So far the Serb-Croat conflict has killed hundreds, but the tally could grow larger. Neither side engages much sympathy. Serbs were wont to ride roughshod over their neighbours—Croats slaughtered theirs. 50 years ago the Ustashe matched the genocidal Nazis in everything bar *Vorsprung durch Technik*. Because the present Croat leaders failed to disown this legacy unequivocally their independent aspirations lack compelling moral force. Meanwhile let's be grateful for one thing: if Yugoslav Jews are imperilled Israeli planes stand ready to fly them to safety. □

New Year reflections on a world in flux

On the Threshold

Publication of this issue coincides with the advent of a new year – 5752 – in the Jewish calendar. Rosh Hashanah ushers in the Days of Awe and it is with a due feeling of awe that we look back upon the events of the past year.

Just as the previous twelve months had witnessed profound change in Eastern Europe, so 5751 has virtually transformed the configuration of the Middle East. A year ago, Saddam Hussein, self-styled Nebuchadnezzar of our time, stood poised to rain down fire on Israel; today he resembles a poisonous snake whose fangs have been drawn. Behind the self-aggrandizing Saddam loomed, we were told, a milliard Moslems bent on 'liberating' Jerusalem; in the interim their *jihad* has dwindled into a display of sound and fury signifying nothing. (Nothing, that is, beyond the brutal murder of two hapless translators of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*.)

At the time of going to press it also appears that Arab-Israeli peace talks, the mirage of the Mid-Eastern desert for the last 40 odd years, are about to assume palpable form. The opportunities, as well as

the dangers, the mooted conference represents for the Jewish State are truly awesome and we can only hope that this fraught enterprise will not be shipwrecked.

In Europe the past year has seen some diminution in the strength of our enemies. Three notorious Nazis – the Germans Kühnen and Sonntag, and the Russian Smirnov-Ostashvili – have died, none from natural causes. The German extreme Right, despite its headline-grabbing outrages, is in disarray. Kurt Waldheim has decided that one six-year stint as the 'prisoner in the Hofburg' was enough for him, and Jörg Haider, proponent of another Anschluss, had to step down from the governorship of Carinthia. The Russian *Pamyat* movement prompted a massive Jewish exodus (which, on balance, should strengthen Israel) but has been sidelined by the advent of Yeltsin-style reformers. In France Le Pen continues to derive some advantage from stirring the racial pot, but is not appreciably nearer to wresting power from the established parties. In Poland President Walesa seems ready to make spiritual and material restitution to Jews. However, in two other East European countries blatantly regressive tendencies can be observed. The Romanian Chief Rabbi had to ask for police protection, and in Slovakia proponents of independence pay homage to the unspeakable Joseph Tiso, wartime priest-President who sent sixty thousand Jews to their deaths.

Lastly what of Britain? This country 'boasts' no counterpart of Le Pen or Schönhuber, just a scatter of skinhead thugs politicised by tinpot *Führers*. Consequently political antisemitism is virtually non-existent – though its social variant cannot be written off. There has, undoubtedly, been fall-out from the Guinness trial and the Ronson 'rehabilitation', not to mention the unfavourable media representation of Israel, but, overall, the situation is less fraught than last year's cemetery desecrations seemed to portend.

Let us also take comfort from the fact that violations of human rights, of which Jew-baiting is a prime example, no longer meet with the indifference that prevailed at a time when national sovereignty was sacrosanct. Recent events, from Iraq to Yugoslavia, have taught the world community that we are all one another's keepers.



Neue Synagogue, Berlin 1866.

Relapsed Catholic

The long-drawn-out Anderl von Rinn debate in Austria smoulders on. While Reinhold Stecher, the Bishop of Tyrol refuted the medieval blood libel his Viennese colleague Kurt Krenn has described the alleged ritual murder case as 'unsolved'. □

Streetwise in Damascus

An article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on Syrian attitudes to the United States ended with the apocryphal Arab proverb 'The hand that cannot be chopped off needs to be kissed'. □

Ravensbruck scandal

German authorities have agreed to scrap a supermarket on the edge of a concentration camp where 90,000 women and children died. □

Hunt for hidden Nazis

New Zealand has launched a hunt for Nazis after claims that the thousands of Baltic refugees who settled in the country could include up to 41 war criminals. The attorney-general, Paul East, said that preliminary investigations left the distinct possibility of Nazi war criminals being in New Zealand. □

Profile

Guide, philosopher and friend



Frank Falk.

Frank Falk was born in Düsseldorf in 1907, the son of a respected banker who was to become lay leader of that city's sizeable Jewish community in the fateful years 1938 to 1941. Unable, despite his doctorate, to practise law in Germany, he worked for some time in commerce and then became a communal official, first as head of the Hamburg office of Keren Hayesod, then as director of the Palestine Office. In November 1938 he was arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Released specifically to organise German-Jewish emigration, he stayed on until June 1939. After arrival in the UK he continued organising passages to Palestine for some of the 3000 inmates of Kitchener camp. At the outbreak of war he joined up at once. His status as an 'enemy alien' delayed his actual call-up, but in due course he found himself posted to Devon as a Pioneer Corps Private. In August 1940 he married Lilo Kaufmann who had come to visit him with special permission in what was then a 'defence area'. He transferred to the Intelligence Corps in 1943; and when the war ended he returned to civilian life. Once more he sought to make his way as a practising lawyer. But, notwithstanding his Army service, the Law Society refused him admission on the grounds that technically he was still an enemy alien. Fortunately the Institute of Chartered Accountants facilitated his entry into that profession. He studied to obtain the necessary formal

qualification, joined a City firm of Chartered Accountants and soon became an acknowledged specialist in the field of taxation. In 1972 he retired; but he still practises privately from his home.

Almost since boyhood, Frank Falk has been prominent in diverse Jewish organisations. He was a leader of the Theodor Herzl Society (composed of refugee Zionists) and served on the Zionist Federation Executive for the last fifteen years.

Other institutions he served, in a leading capacity, include Leo Baeck College, Belsize Square Synagogue and the Leo Baeck (London) Lodge of B'nai B'rith. He is one of only two Life Members of the B'nai B'rith National Executive. From 1979 to 1986 he represented it on the Board of Deputies of British Jews where he became known for his statesmanlike approach to the solution of difficult problems.

He joined the AJR in 1946 and was soon elected to its Executive. He was Treasurer from 1962 to 1977, then served as Vice-Chairman until 1987 when he retired (under the age limit rule). He has a long and distinguished record as Joint Chairman of the Council of Jews from Germany, the umbrella organisation of Jewish refugee associations in the UK, the USA, Israel, France and Belgium.

The most far-reaching of Dr Falk's many achievements, however, relates to German and Austrian pensions. In 1956 he obtained complete and retrospective tax relief on compensation annuities under the *Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*. But the bulk of retirement pensions and civil servants' pensions (for this purpose former employees of Jewish organisations were regarded as German civil servants) was still subject to tax in respect of amounts remitted to this country. Denis Healey's 1974 Budget proposals provided for the taxation of all income from abroad declarable by UK taxpayers. Dr Falk intervened on behalf of the AJR and that year's Finance Bill was duly amended to give 50% relief. Dr Falk kept up the pressure and wrote annually to the Inland Revenue Commissioners until, at last, in 1986, Nigel Lawson introduced complete exemption from UK taxation for all German social security payments and civil servants' pensions.

Throughout his crowded life Frank Falk has given unstintingly of himself to serve the cause of Jews and Judaism. To fellow refugees he has been, and still is, 'guide, philosopher and friend'. □

David Maier

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Reviews

Tales of two cities

Veza Canetti: *YELLOW STREET, A Novel in Five Scenes* (translated by Ian Mitchell), Peter Halban, London 1990, £11.95

Giorgio and Nicola Pressburger: *HOMAGE TO THE EIGHTH DISTRICT, Tales from Budapest* (translated by Gerald Moore), Readers International, London and Columbia 1990

Yellow Street is set in 1930s Ferdinandstrasse, the busy street of the leather merchants in the Leopoldstadt district of Vienna where Veza Canetti lived. Elias Canetti says in his foreword. 'She was not interested in invention, that she left to me . . . But something very remarkable happened: all her characters give the impression of having been invented.'

One of the most powerful characters is Runkel, *The Monster* of the first scene. She is a cripple, physically helpless, yet alert and sharp-tongued, owning two shops in the street. Customers flock to the tobacconist's, and to Lina who runs it, much to the annoyance of the owner, who watches from her dark perch in her empty soap shop across the street. It is only when Lina is threatened with dismissal that customers crowd into the soap shop to protest. Then Runkel knows happiness, for their anger makes them forget her deformities and, for once, look her straight in the face.

The strength of the novel lies in the truth of the characters. Some are drawn vividly with a few strokes of the pen, such as the coal woman with the roving eye. Others are explored in greater depth and developed as the scenes progress; fastidious Herr Vlk is so obsessed with himself that he sees nothing around him other than the filth which will eventually rule his life. Each scene introduces new characters while allowing us a glimpse or revealing a new facet of the old ones. We are touched by perceptions which are universal: in *The*

Fixer Runkel's family, gathered at her funeral, give generously when little Hedi rushes up with her collection box, 'so glad were they all to be alive and not to have grown up like the one who was lying in the coffin.'

If there is a theme running through the book, it is one of power – and how those who wield it may sometimes be thwarted. Frau Hatvany controls the lives of the poor girls she places as domestic servants – unless they risk throwing themselves into the canal in the hope of being saved. Marriage gives Herr Tiger power over his wife and her dowry, enabling him to be affable and generous in public, while treating her abominably in private. Although cruelty, despair and indifference abound in these pages, there are also moments of high comedy when the victim fights back: Herr Tiger advances on Frau Andrea 'as if every pound of his flesh was hung with gold', certain of seducing her – until she puts him off his stroke by calmly winding skeins of wool.

Homage to the Eighth District takes us into the heart of the poor Jewish quarter of Budapest where in 1937 the Pressburger twins were born. There they lived until the 1956 Hungarian uprising when they fled to Italy. They describe the district from the perspective of child as well as of adult. *The Shadow* is the title of the first story, and refers to Zilla, the narrator's young cousin, with whom, during the ritual Sunday visits, he falls innocently and hopelessly in love. However, a much greater shadow hangs over the whole collection of stories: that of the Holocaust. All the characters are survivors. And their lives seem all the more precarious for being lived against a backdrop of such recent horror.

Not surprisingly, awareness of being Jewish pervades these stories, together with the gnawing fear of antisemitism. Most haunting is *The Temple*, where the adult narrator revisits the synagogue which sheltered him and other children in terrible conditions in the last months of the war.

Biblical turns of phrase emphasise the stories' fatalism: Nathan on his mystical quest 'spent thirty days and thirty nights . . . without rest or sleep'. Rachel retreats with the aid of tranquillisers into her inner world; with a cruel mother, what chance did she ever have? 'The plant produced bad fruit, as far as the second and perhaps the third generation.'

A trigger will set memory in motion and so heighten the story's poignancy. An East European tourist in Italy waves at the narrator a tin of *Sciolet*, the food for the Sabbath, and unleashes the tale of Tibor Schreiber, gambler, womaniser, wheeler-dealer; he lived on the edge of society and challenged the narrator to hit back when attacked, thereby tapping his deep-seated fears as a Jew.

Yellow Street and *Homage to the Eighth District* give vibrant pictures of two cities, both once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, the cloud which hangs over postwar Budapest is absent from pre-war Vienna, even though Veza Canetti was writing during the rise of Nazism. As narrators, the Pressburgers are bound up in the lives of their characters and affected by them. Their stories are a personal and moving testimony. The author of *Yellow Street*, on the other hand, remains in the background. Through the skilful guiding of her characters she admirably succeeds in making her novel 'the story of a street'.

□ Jackie Kohnstamm



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Star-crossed love

A LOVE DIVIDED, Broadcast 3 June, Channel 4

In this *Romeo and Juliet* drama of our time the lovers were a Palestinian Arab and a Jewish girl. That really says it all; one knows from the start that the difficulties must be insurmountable. We watch this attractive couple grapple with their troubles against the background of Jerusalem and a not-too-distant village where Muslims, Christians and Druze live side-by-side. The mood, as the couple tell their story, mostly in duet, is one of 'love conquers all'. He, Farouk, puts it this way: Young people do not merely want the familiar, they like differences. She is white and red-haired, he is dark; she is a townee, he was born a countryman with a huge extended family. Quite unconsciously he refers to Jews in general as 'the enemy' (not in respect of himself but as they are conceived even, or especially, by his kith and kin). She, Etti, admits to having been brought up with all the prejudices in the book against Arabs; her own brother was killed in one of the Arab-Israeli wars. But as this duologue continues on the soundtrack we see them wander hand-in-hand through the environs of Jerusalem, that simultaneously wonderful and terrible city of destiny.

When she introduced Farouk to her family they were shocked, but her aged mother soon came to like this personable young man. He is a university graduate who has taught Hebrew to Arab students and

worked as a radio announcer. Etti is a social worker. Both speak fluent English, in which cultural dimension the similarities are actually greater than the ethnic differences. At this stage, then, it does seem as though love could conquer all. We see him helping to prepare a meal and uninhibitedly joining in Hebrew song. Etti hopes that the barriers between Jew and Arab will follow those which used to exist between Sephardim and Ashkenazim in coming down. Alas, for Farouk and Etti the path of love does not run smooth. They cannot marry... not in Israel, at least not unless one or the other converts. Neither is prepared to do this, although he appears minimally less unwilling. But he cannot bear the thought that any child of his born in the Jewish faith would have to serve in the Israeli Army. Also, conversion to Judaism is a long and difficult process whereas Islam makes it quite easy, particularly for the woman. There are other difficulties, Etti has been abused, even threatened, by fellow-Jews.

The upshot is that, after five years, Farouk feels that they have to part. The Intifada has made it impossible for him to keep his radio job or his teaching post in Jerusalem. He feels he can now only live among his own people. Etti is somewhat more hopeful. She believes that they will remain friends; she wants children, but only if Farouk is the father. Above all, she is certain that her simple love for this fine man has proved that Jews and Arabs *can* live together in peace and amity.

□ John Rossall

Mister Palestine

John & Janet Wallach, *ARAFAT: IN THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER*, Heinemann, 1991, £17.50

He is 62 years old, and almost all his adult life he has been a fighter in the cause of the Palestinian Arabs. That is his story and he sticks by it. Yet even at its inception there is a 'mystery': Arafat's birth certificate states that he was born in Egypt on August 24, 1929, while he maintains that his birthplace was Jerusalem and the date August 4, 1929. One can see why he prefers the latter version.

Though the joint authors are journalists, their book can be described as scholarly. It contains a useful glossary of organisations and personalities for quick reference, chapter notes and an excellent index. But potential readers need not fear being faced with a dry-as-dust work. On the contrary, the authors have actually erred on the side of being overly colourful in some of their descriptions.

This is not an authorised biography, and yet the publicity-conscious Yasser Arafat gave the Wallachs a great deal of assistance.

Some of his lieutenants talked fairly freely to the writers, and their doubts – as well as their factionalism – emerge clearly from the book. So does the picture of the 'Old Man', the personality behind the ostensible Palestinian countryman with his scruffy beard, tablecloth headgear and sloppy 'revolutionary chairman' uniform. The Wallachs see him as a shrewd operator, a leader whose charisma lies in his reputation of stubborn adherence to his cause, a man who will get up and fight on, no matter how many times he is knocked down. They are aware that this is not how the Jews, or any of the other manifold enemies of the 'chairman' see him. So convinced is he that his life is constantly in danger, not least from other factions of Palestinians, that he goes about with a gun on his hip. Apart from the descriptions of personalities, the book is a very useful historical survey of the events that have shaped the Middle East since the First World War. In such contentious matters nobody can be absolutely impartial, but the Wallachs strive to be as even-handed as possible. Their book will not please the totally committed on either side. Zionists will nonetheless find the case fairly represented; Israel's Right and Left both have their viewpoints comprehensively explained. All who read this book, or even just dip into it selectively, will be the better able to clarify their standpoints.

□ J.R.

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For further details please write to YAKAR or telephone Ruth Barnett on 071-431 0837 or Judith Eikan on 081-455 8845.

NOTICE

The message from Sir Geoffrey Finsberg in the July edition of AJR Information contained a printing error. The second sentence was printed as: 'I came to Hampstead...'. It should have appeared as: 'It (the AJR) came to Hampstead...'. We would like to apologise to Sir Geoffrey for any irritation this misprint may have caused.

TSEDAKAH

The Jewish Museum of Frankfurt (Germany) is preparing an exhibition on 'Tsedakah – Jewish Charity in Germany – on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the ZWST'.

If you have any information concerning the above topic; documents, photos, drawings, leaflets, handbills, posters, books or other items, please contact:

Jüdisches Museum
Mr Klaus Werner
Ms Esther Alexander-Ihme
Untermainkai 14–15
6000 Frankfurt am Main 1
Germany
Tel: (069) 2123-3959



Letters to the Editor

MEMORIAL

Sir – I am currently putting together the story of Ilja Frischmann – a dentist – who came to England as a refugee from Germany in July 1939, and was at the Kitchener Camp at Richboro.

He eventually had a successful career, and on dying recently, left his estate to three Jewish Charities.

I intend to include a group photograph taken in December 1939 at Kitchener Camp in the publication. I would like, however, to identify as many people as possible, and would be glad to hear from any of your readers who might have been in the camp at that time.

I shall be pleased to send them a copy of the photograph.

276 Ecclesall Road South Edward Isaacs
Sheffield S11 9PS

TOP OF THE LIST?

Sir – I ask myself in which field of endeavour the contribution of continental refugees to British life has been the greatest.

Is it in science, fashion, the plastics industry, medicine or commerce? Reading the name of Victor Ross I imagine that publishing must be high on the list: Neurath, Foges, Weidenfeld, Deutsch, Rosenthal, Hamlyn and Ross are some of the names that spring to mind. Particularly the last two have changed the face of British publishing – the former with his ubiquitous colour books that have entered nearly every British household over a period of forty years; the latter (as chairman of Reader's Digest, I believe) revolutionizing the marketing of books by mail in a way that has found a thousand imitators.

Isn't AJR just the journal to tell us something about how they did it?

Spruce Road Anthea C. Cohen
Biggin Hill
Westerham
Kent

OUT OF THE ASHES

Sir – With reference to your article in the June issue, I came across a further Judaica Museum in the former synagogue in Michelstadt (in the Odenwald-Kreis).

Gartcows Place Bernard Sarle
Falkirk

TANGIBLE APPRECIATION

Sir – Due to prior engagements I am unfortunately unable to attend the 50th Anniversary Dinner on 15th October, 1991. I would like to show my appreciation for the good work of the AJR by donating £65.

I echo every word the famous personalities say about your work in the July issue. I myself use every possibility to praise your immense efforts not only in Britain, but also in the United States of America and Europe.

Wishing you every success.

Chelsea Farm House H. J. Glaserfield
London SW10

TRIBUTE

Sir – Having read, in the July issue, the well-deserved tributes to the many members who, over the years, made the AJR what it is today, I would like to add one:

Ruth Anderman was an active member of the Management Committee for a number of years, and chairman of the Eleanor Rathbone House Committee where she did sterling work. Above all I should like to mention her brainchild, the Meals-on-Wheels service which she started, organised and ran tirelessly for the 20 years of its existence (and which, incidentally, became the nucleus of the meals service provided now for the users of the Paul Balint Day Centre). She was in the Hannah Karminski kitchen almost every day, making menus, ordering, supervising, and co-ordinating the many volunteers in a completely selfless and dedicated way.

Beechwood Avenue Milena Mautner
London N3

EMIL LUDWIG

Sir – I read your article in the June issue and found it of great interest. Permit me, however, to correct two statements.

Emil Ludwig was born in Breslau, not in Dresden, and he died in 1948, not in 1958. His father, the famous Ophthalmologist Hermann Cohn (the pioneer of ocular hygiene for schoolchildren) was, from 1874 to his death in 1906, Professor at the University of Breslau. Emil Ludwig's mother, by the way, was the sister of the industrialist Fritz von Friedländer-Fuld.

N. Sheridan Rd Dr Kurt Schwerin
Chicago, Illinois

EVEN-HANDED APPROACH

Sir – During my last visit to Germany I was most generously wined and dined by one of our suppliers, when the conversation, as so often, turned once more to the Nazi era. I must have been in a particularly mellow and conciliatory mood when I insisted that I could understand young Germans objecting to having their noses constantly rubbed into the dirt for what their fathers or grandfathers may have perpetrated.

Without hesitation my host responded that he thought I was quite wrong in that 'If we, the German people, take pride and glorify in our ancestors such as Schiller, Goethe, Beethoven, Wagner etc., all of whom have been dead a lot longer than Hitler, then we must also demonstrate the integrity to feel genuine shame for what took place in Germany's more recent history and darkest hour!'

Sutton Coldfield W. E. Abraham
West Midlands

GIVING HYPROCRISY A BAD NAME

Sir – I was under the impression that hypocrisy had a bad name. How wrong one can be. Obviously CND wants to 'ban the bomb' because they want to stop people's enjoyment watching it explode. Nasty CND, nasty Tony and nasty Claire, not to mention Vanessa. Spoilsports all of them!

I am applying to the AJR social fund for a loan to purchase top hat and tails, so as to be properly dressed when I meet you next. May I suggest a better title for your article? Giving specious rodomontade a good name.

Florence Road Henry Adler
Ealing

Sir – I am sure I am not alone in objecting to the way you have turned *AJR Information* into a political journal. Surely it is not part of the purpose of the AJR to heap abuse on politicians and newspapers that do not share the editor's rightwing views. Some of us agree with *The Guardian's* concern for the plight of the Palestinians, do not feel that war was the best way of dealing with Iraq, preferred the Sandinistas to the Contras, and do not think that all those on the left of the Labour Party are hypocrites.

Rowlands Avenue E. H. Plaut
Hatch End, Pinner

Sir – How many CND members have you met? Do you know any personally? It seems you have deliberately chosen to repeat the slur fabricated by our government that they are USSR-controlled. Those that I know

well, are mainly mothers, and grandmothers of families, who hold the passionate belief that the death of *anyone*, friend or foe, by nuclear force is an evil not to be contemplated.

I also know many non-CND pacifists on religious grounds, amongst them Quakers, who believe that every possible attempt at peace must be made by negotiation. How often has this been done? We, as ex-refugees, have cause to remember their work. More than any other religious body, the Quakers endeavoured to help us. Two members of my immediate family were rescued by them. They know that nothing engenders hatred as much as wanton death and destruction. Were they so wrong? How long will the Iraqi population, already cowed by Saddam Hussein, hate the West for reducing their country to rubble?

Shanklin Drive
Leicester

Ruth Finch

SIR YEHUDI AT 75

Sir – Mr Rotter's article invites a pun on his name – why did you allow this almost insulting epistle to be published? However, I have to thank him for stimulating me to read Sir Yehudi's autobiography. I quote: *In the intervening years I did what I best could do. Between 1942 and 1945 I gave hundreds of recitals for Allied Troops and Relief Organisations, first in the Americas, later in the Pacific theatre, ultimately in Europe. All for P.R.?*

Hallam Gardens
Hatch End
Pinner, Mdx.

Mrs A. Schweitzer

Sir – J. Rotter's distasteful and inaccurate asides should not be allowed to pass without comment. Sir Yehudi is manifestly elite, hence the media, to their credit, seek him out – not vice versa, as J. Rotter asserts. As to his many public-spirited and creative activities, it is surely ill-natured to endow them with the epithet 'feverish'.

Personally, I would rather see Sir Yehudi stand on his head than J. Rotter on his feet.
Ventress Farm Court
Cambridge Irene Salinger (Mrs)

Sir – The views expressed in my profile of Sir Yehudi in the April issue of *AJR Information* are based on experience from concerts and records over a period of nearly 60 years, and also on impressions gleaned from Menuhin's own writings (his 14th book has just recently been published in the United States), as well as from master classes attended over the years at summer schools and seen on TV.

They are entirely based on facts and on comments published in the serious press. If Menuhin's addiction to publicity has been criticised, this was done out of conviction that classical music and its star performers should not need 20th century hype. Menuhin has succeeded in convincing the public of his greatness to such an extent that any adverse comment is regarded as *lése majesté*.

In the recent, much discussed, TV feature *Lady Diana*, almost by way of a Freudian slip, was heard to admonish her husband: 'Oh, come! You sound like Elijah going up to heaven!'; this brought to mind another image that Menuhin likes to create of himself: that of the saint.

Those who have criticised the profile are, of course, perfectly entitled to do so. Nevertheless, people ought to be able to agree to disagree. When they accuse those who hold different opinions from their own of malice and envy, they suggest an attitude dangerously close to the suppression of free speech.

J. Rotter

SINGULAR POWER, MULTIPLE GUILT

Sir – It is quite wrong to describe the German people as 'complicit with the Führer' as regards the extermination of the Jews. Martin Gilbert's standard work on the Holocaust is full of examples of Germans risking their lives to save Jewish people, the most famous instance being Oscar Schindler who saved several thousand. The German diplomat von Duckwitz was instrumental in the saving of the entire Jewish population of Denmark. Ordinary Germans had no idea as to what was happening and could not have stopped it, just as ordinary Russians could not stop Stalin's crimes. The theory of national complicity with a dictatorship's crimes is a slippery slope leading to collective guilt and Himmler's *Sippenhaft*.

Bishop's Cleeve
Old Coulsdon

G. Schmerling



AJR



50th Anniversary

A Celebration Dinner

Tuesday 15 October 1991 is the date when the AJR will mark its Golden Anniversary with a celebration dinner.

Guest of honour and speaker at the dinner will be Sir Claus Moser, prominent academic, Government advisor and statistician.

Full details and a booking form for this special event (£65.00 per person) can be obtained from Mrs Lydia Lassman, Administrator, AJR, Hannah Karminski House, 9 Adamson Road, London NW3 3HX.

Please note this important date in your diary. It will be an unforgettable occasion.

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Tuesday 3	Opera You Love – Sara Meadows (Soprano) accompanied by John Feild (Piano)
Wednesday 4	Musical Moments – Sybil Michelow (Mezzo) accompanied by Malcolm Miller (Piano)
Thursday 5	Hans Freund: Yom Tovim Melodies
Monday 9	CLOSED
Tuesday 10	CLOSED
Wednesday 11	Recital of Light Classical Music – Clare McCourt (Soprano) accompanied by Nigel Foster (Piano)
Monday 16	Me – My Music and You – Linda Roth (Mezzo) accompanied by Norman Sydee (Piano)
Tuesday 17	CLOSED AFTER LUNCH
Wednesday 18	CLOSED
Thursday 19	A Selection of Light Classical Music – Siobhan Grealy (Flute) and Karen Suter (Piano)
Monday 23	CLOSED
Tuesday 24	CLOSED
Wednesday 25	The Richmond String Quartet
Thursday 26	An Hour of your Favourite Songs – Barbara Lincoln and Irene Sara accompanied by Rex Sara
Monday 30	CLOSED

OCTOBER

Tuesday 1	CLOSED
Wednesday 2	Recital by Students from The Trinity College of Music
Thursday 3	From Russia with Love – Alla Sharova (Violin) accompanied by Lynn Hendry (Piano)

The AJR at Work

A la carte menu



The Latino beat comes to West Hampstead.

Photo: Newman.

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre continues to provide a varied diet of entertainment for its many regular attenders. The July events calendar contained a rich mixture, ranging from the Dulwich Piano Trio to the Wizo Ladies Choir via flower arranging exhibitions and Flamenco dancers. (Pictured above is Del-

phine, one half of the Flamenco dancing duo Delphine y Domingo, entertaining some of the Day Centre members.) A glance at the events calendar (far left) clearly illustrates that this interesting mixture is no 'flash in the pan'.

Hannah Goldsmith, who arranges the entertainments, is always on the lookout for talented performers. Details of how to contact her are given in the advert on page 3 of this issue. □

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OCTOBER

Monday 7	Let me Sing and I'm Happy – Jack Harris accompanied by Happy Branston
Tuesday 8	Love Duets – Francoise Geller and Gordon Griffin accompanied by Rosa Butwick

WHO IS WHO IN THE AJR OFFICE

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

Volunteers tea-party



Laura Howe (left) Volunteers Co-ordinator and guest.

Photo: Newman.

Members of the AJR's volunteer force gathered at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre recently for a tea-party hosted by the volunteers coordinator, Laura Howe. The party was organised in order to provide her with an opportunity to thank the volunteers personally for the wonderful job they do in all spheres of the AJR's operations. Amongst the thirty-five guests were voluntary office workers and members of that special band of domiciliary visitors

who find the time to call on, and befriend, elderly people in their own homes.

In a short address Mrs Howe expressed the gratitude of all AJR members for the selfless work performed by the volunteer force. Needless to say, the guests did not dwell for long on these words of thanks but, as is always the case at these get-togethers, proceeded to eat, drink (tea) and be merry. And why not? That is what they had come to do. □

Day Centre day out

On a particularly sunny July day a coach full of Paul Balint AJR Day Centre members took a trip to Loseley Farm. The Elizabethan Manor House contains many pieces of ancient artwork and an excellent collection of period furniture. The landscaped gardens offer some of the most pleasing views of the English countryside to be found anywhere.

All members of the group had a splendid lunch as part of the day out. The meal was topped off with some of the ice-cream which is produced on the farm and fresh coffee.

Some of the more adventurous members tackled the narrow Moat Walk. Everyone present agreed that it was a fine day out and look forward to the next opportunity to take the air outside London. □ (With thanks to Mrs Ruth Gee).

AJR Club on the move

On the 17th of July, 42 members of the AJR Club visited Sissinghurst Castle in Kent. This magnificent building was the home of writers Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson. It is famed for its beautiful gardens.

After a two-and-a-half hour tour, which included a visit to Vita Sackville-West's study and, for the bold, a steep climb up to the roof, a sumptuous English cream tea was provided. A delicious end to a most successful day. Our thanks go to Hilde Baban for organising the whole affair.

□ A.A.

The Executive Committee and Staff of the

AJR

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Making a will? Remember the AJR

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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.

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FAMILY EVENTS

Birth

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Engagement

Morland/Platt Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Paul, son of Ingrid and Henry Morland of Wembley, to Claire, elder daughter of Janet and Michael Platt of Wimbledon.

Deaths

Astfalck It is with great sadness that we would like to let you know that Nora Astfalck, beloved matron and housemother, from 1934 to

1945, of Stootley Rough School, Haslemere, passed away on the 12 June 1991, aged 90.

We are so glad that she was able to enjoy and participate fully in the reunion of November 1990. On behalf of the Stootley Rough School Committee, Ilse Feldstein.

Broch Walter Broch. My darling died suddenly at the Whittington Hospital. I shall miss him terribly after 57 years of marriage, his sad wife, Ille, son Melvyn, daughter-in-law Vanessa and grandchildren Amy, Tahlia and Bradley.

Hertz Trudi Hertz died suddenly on 12 August 1991. Sadly missed by daughter Coco, sister, family and many friends.

Stern Irma Stern died, aged 91, on 2 August 1991. She is missed by her many friends.

Tribute

Nussbaum We wish to pay tribute to Henni Nussbaum, a 90 year 'young' blind lady who worked for many years at the JBS (Jewish Blind Society) as both social worker and editor of 'Listen', a magazine for the blind, produced by the blind.

May she enjoy many more years giving pleasure and help to her family and many friends. W. & E. Goddard.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

The new **Sainsbury Wing** at the National Gallery is a credit to its architect Robert Venturi and a worthy addition to the appearance and cultural life of our capital city. After considerable controversy and long gestation, it is to everybody's credit that this new building has emerged so successfully. Quite apart from the exterior, the interior design lends itself magnificently to its purpose. The display is both visually and intellectually very exciting. Room 63 is devoted to German 15th century painters such as Michael Pacher and Albrecht Dürer. The first major exhibition in the temporary exhibition galleries of the new Sainsbury Wing will be *The Queen's Pictures* (2 October 1991 to 19 January 1992).

The National Gallery has recently been given two Dutch 17th century paintings, *Vanitas Still Life* by Jan Treck and *Rebekah and Eliezer at the Well*, by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, a Rembrandt pupil. The latter was donated by Mr Herman Shickman in gratitude for the hospitality shown to his mother, a refugee from Germany.

From Reynolds to Lawrence: *the first sixty years of the Royal Academy and its Collections* is a somewhat mixed bag, though very enjoyable, for all that. It includes works given by members on receipt of their diplomas as Royal Academicians and there are other works acquired mainly for the purpose of teaching. Gainsborough and Turner are there, as well as a near-contemporary full-scale copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

At the Camden Arts Centre we can look forward to *Mark Gertler: Paintings and Drawings* (17 January to 8 March 1992). They are at present showing *Michelangelo Pistoletto: The Minus Objects* (until 3 November, followed by Kathy Prendergast (15 November to 12 December).

Jolán Polatschek Williams was born in Poland and after marriage settled in England. Having studied art in Vienna, she continued in London. An exhibition of her work at the John Denham Gallery (6–18 October) ranges from early figurative pieces to the pure abstraction of later years. Great strength of colour and form is discernible in her landscapes of Hampstead and St John's Wood. Jolán was also a master of wood-engraving and lithography.



The National Gallery Sainsbury Wing at night.

Photo: Starling.

The Annual Open Exhibition at the Ben Uri will take place from 6–20 October (Sending In days 1–3 October). This varied show provides an opportunity to see works by many artists of promise and accomplishment. The Zena Flax exhibition at the Manor House has been extended until 28 September so that more people can see the accomplished etchings of this fine artist.

The Rhine, Meuse and Mosel: *Turner's Rivers of Europe* exhibition at the Tate (11 September to 12 January 1992) is the result of two years research by Dr Cecilia Powell, winner of a Turner scholarship endowed by

Volkswagen. The exhibition contains some of Turner's famous Rhine watercolours, including many being shown to the public for the first time. Also being shown are a series of small gouaches on blue paper depicting the Meuse and the Mosel, painted in the 1830s. The Tate's collection of more than 150 watercolours, drawings and prints by William Blake (1757–1827) are being shown this summer in the Lower Galleries (until 3 November). In Room 19 of the Tate (until 5 January 1992) there is a display of 14 twentieth century works by Bomberg, Lanyon, Middleditch, Minton, Piper and Mary Potter.

Marks and Spencer are always in the news as pioneers. Watercolours by Malcolm Morley are being shown at the Tate Gallery, Liverpool (until 29 September). Now Courtauld Leisurewear have produced a range of four summer T-shirts (100% cotton) using Morley's images, which are available at major branches of Marks and Spencer (price £10.99).

The National Portrait Gallery is celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Michael Faraday (1791–1867) with an exhibition of portraits, manuscripts and original scientific apparatus (until 18 January 1992). Faraday's accomplishments in the fields of chemistry and physics changed our understanding of the natural world, and continue to influence the way we live today.

A Zdzisław Ruzkowski (1907–1991) memorial exhibition is being staged at the Jillian Jayson Gallery from September 11 to October 4. □

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Russian accents in the Knesset?

The 300,000-plus recent Russian *olim*
already form a tenth of the Israeli
electorate; augmented by further
immigration, they could conceivably decide
the complexion of the next government in
Jerusalem.

The Soviet immigrants provide both the
Likud administration and the Labour opposi-
tion with justifiable – if contradictory –
hope of enlarging their constituency at the
next election. Likud are confident that the
term Socialism featured in their opponents'
programme is like a red rag (no pun
intended, *Ed*) to a bull to people who
experienced grim Soviet reality. Labour, for
their part, take comfort from the fact that
most of the newcomers are secular-minded
and look upon (the vaguely Left-leaning)
Nathan Scharansky as their mentor.

Scharansky owes his influence to personal
charisma, and to his chairmanship of the
Zionist Forum of Soviet Jews, umbrella
body of two dozen immigrant organisa-

tions. (As such he has disbursed a \$10
million donation from a millionaire phil-
anthropist among olim seeking accom-
modation, and gained additional
popularity.)

Actually, what most Russian immigrants
would ideally like to happen in the political
arena is the formation of a separate Immi-
grants' Party with Scharansky at the helm;
such a party, they think, would exert the
leverage necessary to turn the illusory
prospect of jobs and homes for everyone of
them into a reality.

Whether such a party will come into
existence – and whether it could actually
implement the Russians' jobs and homes
desiderata – is anybody's guess. If it does,
Israel will not only be a 'light unto the
nations' but begin to resemble the United
Nations. In reality, what the Knesset needs
is not one party more, but a few less – and
that will only be achieved by replacing the
Weimar-derived model of proportional rep-
resentation (within one country-wide con-
stituency) by the Westminster model of
first-past-the-post MPs. In other words,
Israel needs more of an English accent in its
political deliberations. □

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The prophet motive

Nothing massages the ego more satisfyingly than awareness of occupying the moral high ground. Some time ago the dispersal, by police, of a solstice celebration at Stonehenge prompted a letter in *The Guardian* which quoted Pastor Niemöller's warning words at the Nuremberg Trial: 'I turned a blind eye when the Gestapo came for the Communists, and then for the Jews – till in the end they came for me'. The writer obviously saw the police action as presaging a Thatcherite dictatorship which all its potential victims needed to oppose jointly, lest they be picked off one by one when it was too late.

It is amazing how many Jews prominent in public life are prone to similarly inappropriate and highfaluting, sentiments – and, since ego-massage easily turns into self-dramatisation, Jewish dramatists are among the worst offenders.

The refugee-descended Tom Kempinsky (who would not allow his plays to be performed in 'apartheid-ridden' Israel) saw the activities of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland as a curtain-raiser to a military takeover of mainland Britain. The

even more apocalypse-inspired Arnold Wesker, when young, advertised his unlawful refusal to pay a part of his income tax proportionate to the percentage HM Government spent on nuclear weapons. Of late, the middle-aged Harold Pinter has attracted more and more attention with similar gestures. Playing host to likeminded literati at his Camden Hill Square home he announced defiantly 'We are going to meet again and again until they break all the windows and drag us out'.

Since articulating that particular hallucination the playwright has made the phrase 'a new world order' (which occurred in one of President Bush's Gulf War speeches) the tongue-in-cheek title of a new dramatic offering. In the mercifully brief *The New World Order* theatre-goers encounter the eternal Pinteresque triangle – two torturers and one victim – familiar since *The Birthday Party*. Though Pinter made his reputation by constructing dialogue of teasing, and occasionally mindnumbing, obscurity, here the message is painfully clear. One of the torturers says to the other 'You're right to feel pure because you are keeping the world clean for democracy'.

I rest my case.

□ R.G.

SB's Column

A new Jewish Museum for Vienna is planned, designed to commemorate and display the achievements of the City's Jewish citizens and their contribution to Austrian culture. Director-to-be of this substantial project is Danielle Luxemburg, manager of Sotheby's branch in Israel; her efforts are to be actively supported by the international auction house.

40 years ago. In the light music genre 1951 made its mark: from America Cole Porter's *Call me Madam* and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* triumphed in Britain, and the Swiss composer Paul Burkhard came to the fore with the musical *Feuerwerk* from which the simple tune *O my Papa* survived the musical itself. Octogenarian Oscar Straus, no longer occupied with operetta returned to the limelight with the *La Ronde* waltz for the film of that name which was based on Schnitzler's *Reigen*.

KZ composers. Munich's Carl Orff-Saal was filled to capacity when the Concertino Ensemble played works by Hans Krasa, Gideon Klein and Victor Ullmann, all of them composers who endured incarceration in Theresienstadt, the antechamber to Auschwitz. Interspersed between the musical offerings, were readings commemorating the horrible events of the Shoah.

The Hamburg Shakespeare prize (value approximately £10,000) was awarded to British actress Maggie Smith.

Birthdays. Actress Alice Treff, who studied with Max Reinhardt and played scores of rôles in theatres from Hamburg to Munich until finally settling in Berlin, has reached the milestone of 85. A late discovery for film and Television, at present filming a new TV series, she remains astoundingly active. Carlo Menotti, Italian-born American composer, is 80. After the last war, his short operas *The Medium* and *The Telephone* seemed to rival the famous bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci*. His most popular work, first performed in Britain in 1951, is the opera *The Consul* which encapsulated the traumatic experiences suffered by refugees under a dictatorial regime.

Obituary. Werner Kraft, German-Jewish author and critic, has died in Jerusalem at the age of ninety-five. □

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23 October 8 p.m.

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Self-perception and deception

Chancellor Vranitzky's recent admission of Austrian co-responsibility for the Holocaust throws two disparate aspects of the same scandalous state of affairs into stark relief. One is that Austria's postwar leaders denied the truth for forty-six years. The other derives from the bizarre circumstance that the internationally best-known of those leaders was Chancellor Kreisky, a Jew.

Of course, if Kreisky were alive he would not thank me for calling him a Jew. Having already formally seceded from the Jewish community as a young man (on Socialist Party orders) he subsequently cast doubt on the existence of the 'Jewish people'. 'Wenn die Juden wirklich ein Volk sein sollen' he told an Israeli journalist after an acrimonious exchange on Dutch TV 'sind sie ein mieses Volk'. (If the Jews are really a people, they're a people of rotten character.)

Such a contracting-out from the Jewish community of fate should not surprise one unduly; Kreisky, after all, described his escape from Nazified Austria to Sweden not as the flight of a Jew, but as an act of political emigration.

The notion that it is possible, nay desirable, to opt out of Jewishness is more widespread among people of our background than one might credit, and involves those who entertain it in the most convoluted thought processes. An even more left-wing returnee to postwar Vienna than the Socialist Chancellor heatedly informed me that the Zionists vilified Kreisky not as a PLO sympathiser, but because he refuted their thesis that a Jew cannot integrate into Gentile society. She went on to say that the World Jewish Congress targeted Waldheim precisely because he had not been a Nazi; they calculated that their anti-Waldheim campaign would provoke a country-wide backlash and panic Austrian Jews into *aliyah* – thereby proving the Zionist case.

The construction of a personal mental universe that at no point intersects with the Jewish community of fate is not confined to *Remigranten*. A German-born Cambridge historian with whom I discussed the situation in postwar Palestine expressed greater anger about the murder of the two British sergeants than about Foreign Secretary Bevin's pro-Arab stance. An Austrian-born scientist once told me that he held 'the Jews' in high regard because, like the Welsh, they put a high premium on education. A

Hungarian-born publisher evinced no more than tepid interest in the brouhaha surrounding *Perdition*, a play that charged the wartime leaders of Hungarian Jewry with collaborating with the Nazis in pursuance of Zionist goals.

I asked an Austrian-born woman doctor if her children had problems of identity because they were offspring of a mixed marriage. 'Not really' she said 'though they're aware of my Viennese roots.' 'What about Jewish identity?' I queried. 'Oh, I discarded that in primary school when they wouldn't let me play an angel in the Christmas play'. Strange, but true. And now – to end on a lighter note – here's the real *pièce de résistance*. There is a German-born businessman (and occasional visitor to the editorial office) who thinks we were mistaken in fostering the anglicisation of the refugee community. Every time he calls he tells me that Britain is: (a) on the slide; and (b) riddled with antisemitism. The mistake made by first-generation refugees was to bring up their children in ignorance of German. Had we not done so the second generation could now be back in the Bundesrepublik enjoying its prosperity and tolerance – instead of enduring racism and recession in Britain.

There's nowt as queer as folk, they say in Yorkshire. Maybe we should vary it to 'there's nowt as queer as victims of the Herrenfolk'.

□ R.G.

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ALL LEGAL WORK UNDERTAKEN

Frederick Schiller a nonagenarian

The actor Frederick Schiller, who has been equally at home in straight plays, musicals, films and TV features recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Vienna-born, he attended the Reinhardt Seminar in the mid-Thirties, and then obtained employment at the Josefstädter Theater. Arriving in Britain in 1938, he worked as a waiter. Later he joined the Pioneer Corps. He also 'trod the boards' at the Laterndl, the German-speaking theatre in Swiss Cottage. Helped by Emlyn Williams and Michael Redgrave he eventually embarked on an English acting career. In this he was rarely out of work having chalked up fifty stage and eighty screen appearances.

His favourite screen role was in *Mister Emmanuel*, the film based on Louis Golding's novel. His most popular parts were in *The Dirty Dozen* and *The Colditz Story*. Even so it has been said that the real highlight of Frederick Schiller's career was his farewell performance before our AJR Club in 1984. □

Self-deception

Erhard Busek, Austrian Minister of Science, told a meeting commemorating the liberation of Mauthausen Camp by American troops: 'Austria has still not fully admitted its share in Nazi crimes. The Moscow Declaration of 1943 was used to exempt us from blame. This amounts to quarantine through self-deception.' □

Desider Friedmann-Platz

This is the name given to a square in the First District of Vienna to commemorate the martyred leader of the Jewish community. Friedmann happened to be on a visit to London at the time of the Anschluss but instantly returned to Vienna whence he was deported to Auschwitz via Theresienstadt. □

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Obituaries

Isaac Bashevis Singer

Isaac Singer was born in Leoncin, a Polish *shtetl*. His father was a local rabbi. The young Singer spent several years studying at *Yeshivas* in Warsaw. However, he abandoned the vocation of his ancestors for the vanity of art.

The abandonment of orthodox Judaism was not an easy decision and its consequences haunted Isaac Singer until his dying day.

Helped by his brother, Israel Joshua, and other established writers Singer began to earn a living as a journalist and translator in Warsaw. He also began work on his first novel, *Satan in Goray*.

In the early fifties Saul Bellow translated the beautiful story, *Gimpel The Fool*, from the Yiddish. This was the beginning of his fame in the English-speaking world culminating in the award of the Nobel Prize in 1978, which he accepted on behalf of Yiddish literature.

He followed his craft into heretical regions but never ignored his responsibility to his religion, nor his debt to his parents.

(A full appreciation of the life and works of Isaac Bashevis Singer will appear in the October edition of AJR Information.)

Lazar Kaganovitch

The death, in Moscow, of the nonagenarian Lazar Kaganovitch refocuses attention on the second most tragic aspect of recent Jewish history, namely the disproportionate involvement of Jews in the Bolshevik Revolution and the horrors that flowed from it. Kaganovitch served Stalin in many capacities without any regard for human life (even that of his own brother Mikhael). Masterminding the purge of Old Bolsheviks, enforced industrialisation, and the collectivisation of the Ukraine that resulted in widespread famine, he caused deaths on a vast scale.

The monument to his modernisation of transport in Moscow is the famous Metro – but also the erasing of several religious landmarks from the Muscovite cityscape. Russian Judeophobia has, of course, venerable religious roots, but Kaganovitch's destruction of churches was grist to its mills.

This, plus the tally of his victims, places Kaganovitch alongside Trotsky and Zinoviev in the demonology of current Russian antisemitism. □

Henry Koerner

Henry Koerner, the Austrian-American painter, died near Vienna, where he was born 75 years ago.

In 1938 he escaped to the United States and quickly established himself as a commercial artist in New York City. During the Second World War he designed posters for the Office of War Information and his poster, *Someone Talked*, won an award from the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

He did a series of sketches of the Nuremberg trials for the American Military Government, but he really made his name with portraits of John F. Kennedy and Maria Callas for the covers of *Time* magazine in the fifties and sixties.

His favourite portrait showed several people with their backs to the viewer walking along separate paths in the Vienna Woods. It was a memorial portrait entitled *My Parents*. □

Converso playwright

The year 1492 witnessed three major events in Spanish history: the conquest of Moorish Granada, Columbus' discovery of America, and the expulsion of 170,000 Jews. (That figure might acutally err on the low side: single entries represented entire families on some documents.) There were many more Jews in Spain than the number exiled, however. There had been for many years Jews who had converted to Christianity. These were the *conversos*. They were allowed to lead productive lives as long as there was no 'falling back on the old ways'. To help them remember who they were the Holy Office of the Inquisition was started in 1478. The Inquisition's purpose was to deal with all 'new Christians' who might relapse.

About a year after the expulsion order, a young man from a landowning family entered the University of Salamanca to study law. His name was Fernando de Rojas. He was a *converso* whose future as a lawyer was almost assured since the crown was encouraging men of humble birth to become dedicated legal functionaries with no ties to the nobility. Hence, de Rojas earned his Law degree, settled down in Talavera, and eventually became Lord Mayor.

De Rojas, however, is not remembered as a lawyer but as the author of *La Celestina*, a 21 act (!) play that prefigures the 'Golden Age' of Spanish drama in the time of Lope de Vega. *La Celestina* is an immense hybrid derived from Latin and Italian comedies (which de Rojas probably saw at university since the Italian acting troupes ranged far and wide). It has been called a dramatic *novel* in dialogue form and pronounced unstageable. In fact *Celestina* has been successfully staged (almost certainly in edited form) in Europe well into our own century. Since lust and deception are ageless, the play lends itself to modern interpretations as well as period staging. *Celestina* is the all-knowing bawd of the river slums who emerges from her hovel to dispense wisdom, admonish rogues, concoct potions, and make money off feckless aristocrats. The play was read more than performed in de Rojas' lifetime. However, his reputation as a lawyer was unchallenged until a particular incident that made him all too aware of his *converso* status.

In 1525 de Rojas' father-in-law, Alvaro de Montalban, requested that his son-in-law represent him before the Holy Inquisition. Montalban, a man in his seventies, had been declared *judaizante* (relapsed *converso*). What was his crime? It seems

that he had remarked in company that 'one had better make the most of this life, since we know nothing about the next'. This innocuous observation put him in jeopardy, so he sought the expertise of his son-in-law. However, de Rojas was not allowed to defend him, and Montalban was sentenced to perpetual house arrest. De Rojas' rejection by the Inquisition presumably stemmed not from lack of ability, but his status.

Fernando de Rojas, to his colleagues, was a successful *converso*. He had covered all traces of his past and had not directly offended the authorities. What had happened to his father-in-law, though, may well have left an unspoken hurt – a hurt that told him that to be a *converso* was to forever be an alien in the eyes of authority, liable to punishment for any unpremeditated remark, and needing to practise self-effacement in order not to appear 'different'. Such problems of self-deception, conformity, and identity range through *La Celestina* (completed in 1503). Early in his career, then, de Rojas let his free thoughts flow through the familiar characters of Renaissance comedy. The rest of his life was devoted to the drama of law – where free thoughts were suspect when that law was applied to *conversos*.

□ John R. Lyston

Outing à la juive

The Committee for Counteracting the Demographic Decline of Anglo-Jewry—CCDDAJ for short—was holding its monthly meeting. 'The one and only item on the agenda' announced the chair 'is *outing*'. 'Oh yes, where to?' asked a member. 'Not *an* outing' said the chair 'Outing in the sense of making someone come out of the closet'. 'What closet?' asked another member. 'Where Jews' said the secretary tetchily 'who won't admit to being Jewish hide out'. 'If they all' added the chair 'came out, we'd be twice as many!'. The secretary nodded 'And it's not only numbers. The quality counts as well. D'you know Archbishop Coggan's real name was Kogan like Alma's, I wish we'd outed him!'. 'Do you mean to say' asked a member 'that you want to embarrass people publicly?'. 'And why not!' countered the secretary 'Good ends justify questionable means'. 'I wouldn't put it as crudely as that' opined the chairman. 'Coming out can be a matter of pull or push; I prefer the former, myself'. 'You speak in riddles' complained a member. The chairman apologised. 'I thought we might have communication problems. That's why I asked the PR man from the Hidden Persuaders Agency to come along. Would you care to say a few words?'. The PR man nodded 'As long as it's understood that there is no such thing as a free lunch'.

'Lunch?' a member grumbled 'What's lunch got to do with it?'. 'Forget lunch' snapped the secretary. 'We're talking outing'. 'Exactly' said the PR man.

Search Notices

Adler: Dr Oskar (1875–1955) and Paula Adler escaped Vienna in 1939 to London and Ambleside. He was a renowned musician and scholar of philosophy and metaphysics. She was a pianist and niece of Sigmund Freud. Please contact: Amy Shapiro, P.O. Box 7092, Gloucester, MA 01930 U.S.A.

Alec Sluszný – originally came from Poland and is believed to have changed his name to Alec Wiseman after arrival in the U.K. Please contact Heather Salmon, Jewish Refugees Committee, CBF World Jewish Relief, Drayton House, 30 Gordon Street, London WC1H 0AN.

Descendants of Gershon Suchowolski born in 1891 in Odessa. Came to U.K. from Antwerp in 1939, or any other member of Suchowolski family related to Georges and Regine Suchowolski and their parents Meyerwolf and Sabine Suchowolski who originated from Bialystock, Poland.

'Outing—the pull method thereof. It's easily explained. Instead of embarrassing hidden Jews into dropping their mask—the push method, so to speak—we show them how many role models were Jewish. This makes it attractive for them to come out'.

'What role models, for instance?' asked a member. The PR man paused for effect. 'Twenty-four carat royals like Queen Victoria' he finally said while a frisson of surprise rippled round the table. 'Have you got proof of this?' gasped a member. 'Not exactly proof, but overwhelming circumstantial evidence' said the PR man. 'Look how she treated young Eddie. Overfeeding him on the one hand, and not trusting him with the family business on the other. And do you think it was an accident that her favourite piano player was Mendelssohn, and her pet politician Disraeli? Young Eddie turned out a chip off the old block: his bosom pal was Ernst Cassel, known to one and all as Windsor Cassel'.

Mezuzah on the doorpost of Buck House

The PR man took a swig of water. 'Right—that's nailed a *mezuzah* to the doorpost of Buck House . . . Now, what's the next great British institution after the royal family? Football, of course. In this area we are going to bamboozle the fans with series of punchy, and at the same time puzzling, slogans. Let met just run up two on the flagpole and see who salutes. Here's one: Send Gazza to Gaza, signed Samson, the skinhead . . . And another, targeted specially at Liverpool fans: Brain surgeons do it at the Kop'.

This prompted desultory chuckles. The PR man continued 'And now for a more literate target audience, the so-called ABs. We shall simply dazzle them with role models. You didn't know that Thomas Hardy was Jewish, did you? Why otherwise would he have put the word *Jude* into one of his titles? It's the same racial subconscious

that made Edward the Seventh speak with a thick German accent. And what about Hardy's other titles, like *Meir of Casterbridge*, and *Under the Grünwald Tree*?

Lord of the Flies a trouser manufacturer

The other literary role model is a living author: William Golding. Is he Jewish? Why—wasn't Louis Golding, his uncle? And look at his titles! *The Lord of the Flies*, the story of a trouser manufacturer. What, I ask you could be more overtly Jewish than *Rites of Pessach*—for all that Golding makes it rhyme with message.

Next: Benjamin Britten. Proof of his Jewishness? Overwhelming. His mother Vera had so many rows with the family that she wrote three different testaments. And Benji himself was a *gefilter* fish addict. Had to live by the sea, wrote two operas about fishermen, and made a herring the hero of a third, even anthropomorphised the herring into a person with a name. Lastly—still with an eye on the ABs—painters, one living and two dead. The living one is David Hockney. Proof of his Jewishness? His name, for a start. Hockney conflates 'in hock'—i.e. in the pawnshop—with Hackney, the poor Jewish area where he was born. And if that doesn't convince you, look at his work: all those *mikveh* paintings!

The PR man took another swig at the glass of water. 'Secondly Rubens. The name is already a give-away. And then the mould-breaking achievement of the *milchig/flajshig* effect as a counterpoint to Rembrandt's *tenebrismo*. Thirdly, Francesco Goya. The name, derived from *goy*, is of course protective mimicry—as was the pseudonym Bacon which Shakespeare assumed in his Jewish mode. But never mind the name. Goya made Jewish communal dignitaries the subject of two of his most important paintings; I refer, of course to the *Dressed macher* and the *Naked macher*. The chairman coughed loudly. 'Thank you. I think we're in the picture'. A titter went round the table 'I move' said the secretary 'that we give the outing campaign the green light. All those in favour . . .'. 'Just a moment' interrupted the PR man 'I think in all fairness that I should point out a fact not always taken on board: there's no such thing as a free launch!'. □ Richard Grunberger

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Stop press

News of the sensational change in the Soviet Union broke on the eve of publication. Our comment on this event will appear in the next issue.