

AJR Information

Volume XLVIII No. 2
February 1993

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

Claims conference announcement p3

Won't you join the dance? p8

Black and blue p16

Satanic prose

Israel's deportation of 400 Hamas activists prompted a letter to *The Independent* evoking the death throes of mandated Palestine. It read 'Britain might have been tempted into retaliatory mass deportations – most Jews had known countries of origin, and many were in the country illegally'.

This is satanic prose, given that those countries of origin were Dachau-Germany, Mauthausen-Austria and Auschwitz-Poland. Illegal immigrants squeezed through between the upper millstone of genocide and the lower one of British appeasement of the Arabs. *The Independent* should bar poison-pens! □

Is there a geography of evil?

Locating the roots

It is a more than academic exercise to ask where precisely in the large spaces between Rhine, Vistula and Alps the source of the 'German infection' can be located. 'German infection' in this context means the pathological condition known at different times as Prussianism, Kaiserism, Hitlerism and Fourth Reichism.

Listing the four isms in chronological sequence is not to suggest that they followed *inevitably* from one another (or are, indeed, of similar importance). It could be argued, though, that Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Wilhelm II and Ludendorff point forward to Hitler as much as do Luther, Fichte and Wagner. Frederick the Great's influence on the deformation of German history was summed up in Count Mirabeau's quip 'Other countries have armies – in Prussia the army has the country'. The military mindset – war as the 'father of all things' – lay behind the transformation of Prussia into the Reich in 1871, and motivated the Kaiser's War in 1914. Halfway through the latter conflict Ludendorff became supreme warlord. This mattered in several ways: he rejected a compromise peace, invented the stab-in-the-back myth and, as a non-Junker, helped switch the centre of gravity from

Prussia to Alpine Germany. Settling in interwar Munich, he coalesced with Hitler who carried Austrian-incubated ideas (Schönerer's Pan-Germanism, Lueger's antisemitism, Lanz von Liebensfeld's zoological racism) in his mental luggage.

Thanks to their joint impact Bavaria swung so quickly to the far Right that in 1925 Lion Feuchtwanger fled North to Berlin. 'Southern' Munich, Nuremberg, Bayreuth and, by extension, Vienna became the nerve centres of Nazism till Hitler's installation in the capital, Berlin, in 1933.

In post-1945 Germany neo-Nazism flitted about for decades like a will-o'-the-wisp without taking firm root in any particular region. For all that, reactionary Bavaria showed greater receptiveness to rightwing ideas than other parts of the Bundesrepublik. Its governing party, the CSU (Christian Social Union), has consistently stood to the Right of the CDU. The late Franz Josef Strauss' fiefdom was also the launchpad for Franz Schönhuber's *Republikaner*, growing competition from whom has recently pulled the CSU even more rightwards.

Overshadowing this, the (partly officially condoned) antics of neo-Nazi firebombers have now swung the spotlight onto East Germany. Is it probable that the five new Länder, with their post-Unification hangover, obsolete factories and high unemployment, will provide fertile soil for the seeds of neo-Nazism?

This is a question about which it would be foolish to hazard a guess; however, given the dynamic way West Germany set about its postwar reconstruction it is hardly conceivable that the East will stagnate ad infinitum.

If the ex-DDR and Haider's Austrian Fourth Reichism disappoint the expectation of neo-Nazis, they can possibly still fall back on Bavaria. A CSU junior minister was only too ready to attend the (subsequently cancelled) anniversary junket at Peene-munde, launchpad of the V2. Passau is, pace the film *The Nasty Girl*, an unreconstructed Nazi stronghold. Pottenstein Spa in Franconia displays a memorial tablet to a local 'benefactor' who as an SS officer used forced labour to improve its tourist facilities.

One could go on – but even in Bavaria a sea-change may be on the way: in early December Munich staged the largest anti-xenophobia demonstration in the whole country.



Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), whose role is analysed on page 12.

Misrepresented 'Representative'

Professor Pinchas Lapide, a Vienna-born Jew, claims to have discovered evidence of an early pro-Jewish initiative by the subsequent Pope Pius XII (who was pilloried for failing to speak out against Nazi genocide in Rolf Hochhuth's *The Representative*). As Papal emissary in Munich during the Great War Nuncio Pacelli allegedly heard that the Turks, having massacred their Armenian minority, were contemplating similar action against Palestinian Jewry. He thereupon contacted the Reich government in Berlin, who ordered their military representative in Turkish Jerusalem, General von Falkenhayn, to prevent the contemplated ethnic cleansing. □

GATTegorical denial

Helmut Pieber, press spokesman for the Styrian (Austrian) Chamber of Agriculture denied antisemitic intent after a lecture in which he spoke of the threat posed to Europe's farmers by four Jewish grain dealers on the U.S. delegation at the GATT talks. □

Municipal initiative

After the desecration of Jewish graves in Karlsruhe in October the Burgomaster wrote to all emigrated Jewish ex-residents on the anniversary of Kristallnacht expressing the town council's abhorrence of that act of vandalism. In his letter he announced the arrest of the miscreants and listed two anti-Nazi exhibitions in the town that had drawn large crowds. □

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Profile

A life in pictures



Alice Schwab.

Photo: Newman.

The contents of the Schwab household would put many a small art gallery to shame. This is hardly surprising as the walls bear the fruit of half a century of collecting. Alice Schwab loves her pictures and, for those favoured with a guided tour of this private gallery, her enthusiasm can imbue even the most philistine observer with a sense of appreciation for the finer things in life.

The author of *AJR Information's* regular 'Art Notes' column was born in Heilbron am Neckar in 1915. Her parents, the Rosenthals, were in the wine trade. She yearned to be an artist but, as she says, 'even before 1933 it wasn't all honey in Germany', and harsh reality made a regular pay-packet an imperative. So Alice trained as a bookseller (becoming a member of the *Reichsdriftungskammer*) before coming to Britain in 1938.

Her first position in England was as *au pair* to a Quaker family in Birmingham. She recalls them as being sophisticated and intellectual, as well as warm and loving. Although she spent only a few months with them it sufficed to leave her with a respect for members of the Quaker community that has lasted a lifetime.

Upon coming to London to live with relatives Alice found work at Woburn House. Her superior there, Anna Schwab, had no idea that her new assistant would, in the course of time, become her daughter-in-law.

By 1939 Alice had become a trainee manageress with Marks and Spencer. War-time conditions permitting, she spent her days off roaming around London's great art galleries. Walter Schwab was in the army and in 1942, three days before he was posted overseas, they got married. She continued to work at Marks and Spencer, and continued to indulge her interest in art, amassing catalogues of every type of art collection. In 1950 her daughter Julia was born; she grew up to become somewhat of a celebrity herself under the name of Rabbi Neuberger.

The birth of a child did not signal the beginning of a slow fade into domestic obscurity. Within a very short time Alice was working for the AJR's Employment Bureau, alongside Doctors Levy, Reichmann and Rosenstock. By 1953 she had also become heavily involved with Children and Youth Aliya, with Miriam Warburg. In 1975 the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) was the beneficiary of the Schwab mixture of energy and expertise in their Over 60s Employment Bureau. Very soon after this *AJR Information* gained an arts correspondent.

For the past 20 years she has been a driving force behind the Ben Uri Gallery. She is a friend of the Royal Academy and of the Tate Gallery. The Art Notes column in this journal is only a small part of her workload. As busy and well-respected as she is, however, there is still a sparkle to Alice Schwab which must be reminiscent of the young girl who, on her days off from Marks and Spencer, would stand for hours in a draughty art gallery hugging herself with delight in front of her favourite pictures.

□ M.N.

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German pensions applications rejected

The German Federal Pension Office (*Bundesversicherungsanstalt fuer Angestellte*) has now decided that the European Court decision of February 7, 1991 *Rechtssache 227/89*, does not have the effect of enabling Nazi victims resident in Britain who had not made contributions to the German social insurance prior to emigration, to make such contributions now in order to obtain a German old age pension. The Federal Pension Office is therefore rejecting the applications to make voluntary contributions for this purpose, believed to number approximately 3,000.

Background

In a communication to the German Welfare Council in London of November 1991, and in subsequent letters to a number of applicants, the Federal Pension Office had indicated that the effect of the judgement of the European Court may well be to establish the entitlement to a German pension by the payment of voluntary contributions, subject to further examination and decision. The Federal Pension Office even recommended that applications be submitted in order to be within certain time limits of December 31, 1991 and March 31, 1992. The article in

our February 1992 issue was based on these communications.

The Federal Pension Office has now come to the conclusion that the judgement of the European Court cannot be applied to establish insurance entitlement for the applicants in question. It holds that an EEC Regulation which denies British citizens resident in Britain the right to pay voluntary contributions takes precedence over regulations of the earlier, more beneficial, Anglo-German Social Insurance Agreement which enabled them to do so. The Federal Pension Office considers that the judgement of the European Court concerning the calculation of a German old age pension under the regulations of the German-Danish Social Insurance Agreement, relates only to that particular case and not to a different set of facts, such as the question of the admittance of the voluntary insurance contributions, without prior contributions, in the German pension insurance.

The applicants have a right of appeal (*Widerspruch*) against a negative *Bescheid* which would enable them to fight their case before the German courts (the first instance will be the *Sozialgericht Berlin*). Reasons for the appeal must be given. Prior legal advice would have to be obtained from German lawyers. It is very likely that any such appeal would be an uphill struggle and result in considerable expense. □

CLAIMS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) announced that after extensive negotiations between the German Federal Republic and the Claims Conference, the German Government agreed to provide funds for the benefit of severely persecuted Jewish Nazi victims who received no compensation or only minimal indemnification. These funds will be distributed by the Claims Conference 'Article 2 Fund' within the framework of a German hardship fund.

Eligible are Nazi victims who can prove that they were at least 6 months in concentration camps, or 18 months in ghettos, or 18 months in hiding under inhumane conditions. Such Nazi victims are also eligible even if they received one-time payments of up to DM 5,000 under the German Federal Indemnification Law (BEG) or from the Claims Conference Hardship Fund, or payments in excess of DM 5,000 for extended incarceration.

Individuals who receive pensions under the German Federal Indemnification Law or under the Israeli Law for Invalids of Nazi Persecution are not eligible. Nazi victims who never left their original countries of residence or returned to these countries are also not eligible.

Eligible claimants will receive monthly payments of DM 500 beginning 1 August 1995, and a limited interim payment.

Applications, together with detailed instructions, may be obtained by writing to:

1. CLAIMS CONFERENCE ARTICLE 2 FUND, P.O. Box 74, Tel-Aviv 61 000 (for residents in Israel)
2. CLAIMS CONFERENCE, 15 East 26 Street; Room 1303A, New York, NY 10010 (for residents in the United States)
3. CLAIMS CONFERENCE - ARTICLE 2 FUND, Wiesenau 53, 6000 Frankfurt am Main 1, Germany (for residents in all other countries) □

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Tuesday 9 February. 8.00pm. 'Women in the community': talk by Rosalind Preston - League of Jewish Women/NNLS.

Wednesday 24 February. 8.00pm. Launch of 'Augustus Rex' by Clive Sinclair. MHS.

Details from:

The Sternberg Centre for Judaism,
The Manor House,
80 East End Road, London N3 2SY.
Tel: 081-346 2288

Reviews

Man Friday to Kafka's Crusoe

STREET OF CROCODILES by Bruno Schulz
(adapted by R. McBurney), Cottesloe Theatre

'All art aspires to the condition of music.' I used to think Pater's dictum a bit pretentious till I saw *Street of Crocodiles* at the Cottesloe Theatre. Though billed as a play, this adaptation from Bruno Schulz's stories has the fluidity of a piece of music.

The musical analogy holds good both with regard to form – in the overlap of scenes – and content. Having no plot as such, the 'play' also lacks a narrative line. Such dialogue as is there, is made deliberately obscure by switching between English, Spanish, German and pidgin-Polish.

Alternative world

The title refers to the main street of the provincial town in which the protagonist's father has a drapery store. Just as Josef's school-teaching is vitiated by a soulless curriculum and loutish pupils, so the father finds little satisfaction in his work. He compensates, not to say overcompensates, for the frustrations of provincial shopkeeping by living largely in the imagination. He makes bolts of cloth cascade from the top shelves of the store to create an alternative world of mountain ranges and valleys; inspired by romantic-sounding place names like Honduras and Nicaragua listed in a stamp album he fills his attic with exotic birds.

The quite unservile maidservant who, exasperated at the resultant mess expels the birds from the household, has an ambivalent effect on Josef. She both attracts him sexually and fills him with foreboding of his father's death. When the father dies Josef's subconscious mind refuses to accept it, and he has a recurrent dream of searching for him.

GERMAN BOOKS BOUGHT

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In the final scene death catches up with Josef, too. After being shot he regresses to childhood: dressed only in vest and underpants he climbs into his father's lap – only to be carried offstage by the maid.

Bruno Schulz was himself shot by an SS man in 1942 during a round-up of Jews of Drohobycz. He was then 50 years old and had spent his working life as a teacher in the local school. A gifted artist as well as author, Schulz had belonged to the Polish *avant-garde*, on close terms with the writer Gombrowicz and the composer Szymanowski.

Despite a measure of literary acclaim he chose to remain in a provincial backwater below whose stagnant surface he glimpsed a rich inner life. He can be likened to Kafka, with one important proviso: whereas Kafka's style was as austere as his view of the world, Schulz wrote a sensuous prose.

On stage the tension between this sensuousness and the atrophy of Josef's emotional existence is movingly articulated by *Théâtre de Complicité*; there can be few ensembles in the world today who can rival them for inventiveness or skill as actors, mimes, singers or acrobats.

□ R.G.

Hidden legacy

Geniza Exhibition, Sainsbury Arts Centre, Norwich, February–April 1993

Genizot are 'unconsidered trifles' (to quote Shakespeare) that have taken on archaeological significance. Written in Hebrew script, and either in Hebrew Language or West Yiddish, they give an astonishing insight into the mundane aspect of Jewish life in rural Germany.

A *genizah* exemplar was first spotted by a German historian who, watching a building operation, noticed the Hebrew writing on tatters of paper amid more substantial rubble.

The literary fragments are mostly from the attics of synagogues where they were stuffed after they seemed to contemporaries to be of no more use. They were not disposed of because they often included prayers or religious homilies, and, containing the name of God, had to be preserved.

How did those village synagogues of Southern Germany survive? Sometimes the Nazis were afraid that *Kristallnacht* incendiarism would destroy neighbouring buildings and transferred erstwhile prayer houses

to profane use. A few of the finds were actually made during renovation intended to commemorate the November pogrom.

The exhibition (which started at London's Goethe Institute) does not illuminate Jewish high culture; instead it shows the tastes and preoccupations of the country Jews, the cattle dealers, pedlars and money lenders.

On display are religious books of the simpler kind (for women and children) bills, calendars – some with Zodiac signs – and quarter days reminders; also a Yiddish report of the execution of Marie Antoinette in the French Revolution. And there are books of romances like that of *The Lasting Love of Floris and Pankefeler*, and the story of *Hertsog Erinst* (Duke Ernest). Unsurprisingly in the 'dark ages' before Emancipation – finds date from the late 17th to the early 19th centuries – people had a taste for such texts prettily illustrated with woodcuts.

Unsung Jews

The Hidden Legacy Foundation has assembled a body of evidence for the life of unsung 'lower class' Jews, who may have lent a farmer ready cash to buy a cow even if they did not help Amerigo Vespucci to discover America.

In her preparations, Eveyln Friedlander, the organiser of the exhibition, came across two interesting items not directly connected with *genizot*: in Freudental the locals bake *barches* (plaited bread) on Fridays, and in Schopfloch, near Feuchtwangen, they speak a dialect called Chudisch. How one wonders will they like the obvious interpretations placed on these phenomena?

□ John Rossall

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TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT, adapted from
Graham Greene, Wyndham's Theatre

As a seasoned traveller through Greenland I thought I knew what to expect: suspense, exotic locales, the stench of corruption and a sense of evil I had forgotten that Greene wrote frothy entertainments as well as 'heavy' tracts like *The Power and the Glory*; according to a programme note *Travels with my Aunt* conflates both genres. It takes the form of the retired bank manager hero's journey from a life-in-death as a suburban dahlia grower to an existence filled with danger and shady glamour. Guidance on this journey is provided by the eponymous aunt, a sprightly septuagenarian who has tasted life to the brim as a prostitute, receiver of stolen goods, smuggler and Nazi collaborator's moll.

Such a bald summary makes the play appear as little more than a diverting farrago but Greene, being Greene, invests even this somewhat schematic tale with a message. The message is a sort of health warning: obeying the moral code can seriously stunt your emotional growth – conversely, to lead a full life, just keep travelling till you finish up beyond the pale.

This message rings romantically false. My suspension of disbelief finally expired with the denouement where the 'reformed' ex-bank manager happily adopts a mafioso life style in a CIA-run South American banana republic. The implausible happy ending in Uncle Sam's backyard sorts ill with all one knows about the author's deep-seated anti-Americanism. But then Greene was always a bundle of contradictions – a Catholic divorcee, and a pro-Communist whose *The Power and the Glory* had pilloried the leftwing government of prewar Mexico.

A spirit of contradiction also permeates the way the play is staged. With a possible

nod in the direction of Christmas pantomime the producer has handed over the part of the aunt to male impersonators. These, four in number, also play all the other multifarious protagonists. They not only have to keep slipping in and out of character, but change from dialogue into narrative and back again. The quartet, especially Simon Cadell and John Wells, acquit themselves surprisingly well; for all that, they could not persuade me to join the Greene Party.

□ Richard Grunberger

Fear and loathing in Waldheimland

Thomas Bernhard *ELIZABETH II*, Gate Theatre, London W11

No one acquainted with 'deconstruction' in literature will be surprised that this play has nothing to do with our Queen. And no one who knows anything about the playwright will be surprised to encounter a piece riven by internal contradictions. Herrnstein, the main protagonist, is both filthy rich and poor: an octogenarian cripple, he has spent the best part of his life in a wheelchair. The combination of wealth and immobility has made him both a capricious, foulmouthed tyrant, and helplessly dependent vis-a-vis his servants. He specially depends on his taciturn butler, whose company he values while simultaneously suspecting him of homicidal tendencies, and the intention to seek other employment. To tie the butler to himself for the remainder of his moribund existence he tries to bribe him with ever larger inheritance offers at the same time as promising his thuggish pro-Nazi nephew that he will make him sole legatee.

The most crucial contradiction, though, lies in the fact that the wheelchair-bound tycoon is both a cantankerous sadist possessed of huge and tainted wealth – arms deals are hinted at – and a clear-sighted truth-sayer. As such he homes in on the moral miasma of contemporary Austria – a country that in 1945 switched effortlessly from hunting with Nazi hounds to running with democratic hares – like a laser beam. In Herrnstein's clouded vision the allegedly pure Alpine air of Bad Gastein and Alt Aussee is so polluted by Nazi germs that anyone frequenting those spas for his health will only choke to death there.

In *Elizabeth II*, as in most of his *œuvre*, the late Thomas Bernhard took splenic, self-lacerating pleasure in what his detrac-

tors called *Nestbeschmutzung* (fouling the nest). The most remarkable thing about this scourge of his compatriots may not be widely known: convinced that Austria was irremediably mired in hypocrisy and bad faith, his dying bequest was that none of his plays should be performed there till they run out of copyright.

□ Richard Grunberger

Singer of our song

Lotte Kramer, *FAMILY ARRIVALS*, Poet & Printer, 1992, £2.50

Lotte Kramer – see 'Poet of internal exile' (*AJR Information*, May 1992) – is not unknown to our readers. Her poems come warmly recommended by Jim Burns (in *Tribune*) and Dick Davis (in *PEN Review*). The paperback – beautifully produced by Poet & Printer – is a reprint of one that first appeared in 1981.

Most of the poems here are based on the Jewish experience in Nazi Germany – not an easy subject – and Kramer is at her most effective when she deals with the experience in a gently oblique way rather than in a more explicit manner. Particularly successful is her delightful poem about her grandfather who was *The law of God behind his butcher's apron*.

*He smelt
of sausages and fresh air,
And he grew out of his small town
As naturally as a Black Forest pine tree.*

This is a poem of celebration, and all the stronger for its laconic end: *They barricaded his shop and house, / he, like an angry god, turned away from the living.*

Another vivid picture is conjured up in her *Strasbourg: The air smells of childhood. / The mansard roofs / Let down their grey aprons.*

These are finely evocative poems as is her *Threnody for a Piano Teacher* who chose *The Rhine's bed for her last chord*. One immediately recognises that stuffy, shuttered, room *That murmured grief and loneliness...*

*And always when I left I felt
The staircase stretch
Its long lament into the street.*

Lastly, her poem *Chess* is a poignant description of eccentricity – of a man who *sits all day and plays his game of chess. / Alone – a champion of retirement – who at the end roars Check Mate... across the empty chair.*

□ Gerda Mayer

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REGULAR VISITS TO LONDON

Letters to the Editor



COMPOUNDED GUILT

Sir – Your brief remark about Syberberg's Hitler film omits a material point: the film traces the long decline from a once high German tradition into a barbarity that allowed Hitler to present himself and his minions as executants of a 'Germanic mission' claiming superiority over other nations and races. Feelings of involvement in this 'mission' outweighed shame of misdeeds and impelled, or gave excuse to, many persons to collaborate in crimes, or to applaud or look away.

This gruesome film, understandably not yet shown publicly in Germany, warns that traces of the almost two centuries old mission ideology may be harder to eradicate – and to replace by a new, acceptable, non-aggressive, national pride – than is generally believed in Germany and elsewhere. Present events in Germany justify the warning.

Alleyn Road
London SE21

M. L. Meyer

BACKS TO THE WALL?

Sir – May I point out to Mr Stanhope that it is not economists who are agreed that the recent Sterling crisis and subsequent devaluation are the result of high interest rates in Germany. Had he used the term 'politicians', he would have been much nearer the mark, because they were responsible for concocting this unlikely story in the first place.

Any economist worth his salt knows perfectly well that the only criterion to determine the value of Sterling is Britain's economic performance. In this context Mr Stanhope may perhaps remember that in 1945 one pound Sterling bought 20 Swiss Francs, whereas today's rate of exchange is: £1 = Sfrs 2.20!

Holland Park Avenue
London W11

J. Rotter

SCHILLER'S ODE TO JOY

Sir – When I first heard on Radio 3 that Schiller was supposed to have substituted 'Freude' for 'Freiheit' to avoid censorship trouble, I blew the dust off my Oxford Book of German Verse to look up the poem. Indeed, the first verse sounds even more intoxicating with 'Freiheit' as the first word. But the second verse and most of what

follows – with the possible exception of verse four – is positively *Biedermeier*. So Schiller either reworked the poem, leaving behind a Curate's Egg, or the substitution proposition, fascinating as it is, is apocryphal.

Incidentally, I asked several Germans, one of them a youngish Germanist, about this alleged substitution. None of them had ever heard of it.

Raby Place
Bath

B. H. Hackel

Sir – It has occurred to me that if every 'Freude' were changed to 'Freiheit' the poem would, in effect, say that everyone will be free when everyone is free. This is not exactly a great improvement!

May I, therefore, suggest that in some cases the word 'Freude' was originally 'Freiheit' and leave it as an exercise for anyone sufficiently interested to divine which are the right ones.

White Ledges
London W13

Dan Gold

ASKING THE WRONG QUESTION

Sir – Not only Israelis, but many Diaspora Jews regard Mordechai Vanunu as a traitor who tried to make money by selling information gained during his employment at Dimona, and likely to benefit the enemies of his country. His claim that he was ideologically motivated is about as valid as that of Burgess, MacLean, Blake, Fuchs and others who betrayed Britain to the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Peter Grunberger seems to have taken his cue from Amnesty International, but overlooks the fact that Vanunu is being kept in solitary confinement because of concern felt by the prison authorities that he might otherwise be attacked by fellow prisoners. It is no secret that all over the world certain categories of prisoners are kept in isolation for the same reason. Furthermore, when he was recently offered a cell mate, he turned down the offer because (as the *Sunday Times* editor put it on Spectrum Radio) he feared that an informer would be planted on him.

Amnesty has persistently condemned Vanunu's conditions of imprisonment in the strongest possible terms, although he is serving a comparatively short sentence. This

practice seems most peculiar, considering that similar attention and publicity has not been given to Jonathan Pollard, who is serving a life sentence and has been in solitary confinement for over seven years, in conditions much more degrading and inhuman than those of Vanunu. Although Amnesty has hotly denied that double standards are being applied, I cannot help feeling that Vanunu is simply being used as a stick to beat Israel.

Now that Vanunu's supporters have had their say in *AJR Information*, may those campaigning for Pollard please claim the same privilege?

Wembley Park
Middlesex

Ruth Willers

Sir – Solitary confinement is undoubtedly a severe, although of course not the ultimate punishment for treason.

However, what a delightful bit of hypocrisy for the *Sunday Times* to launch a 'Morechai Vanunu Clemency Appeal' years after cashing in on the crime by revealing that man's undisputed treachery.

May I now also plead for the *Sunday Times* to launch an appeal on behalf of the descendants of 'Lord Haw-Haw', whom, instead of more humanely detaining in solitary confinement, we executed.

Or is treason against the State of Israel less serious, and the traitor more deserving of our sympathy, than one who commits similar crimes against us?

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Süd-Tyrol time warp



Das Sissi Denkmal.

Photo: Joan Samet

Süd-Tyrol (Alto Adige) was disputed between Italy and Austria for centuries. Since 1919 the area has been Italian, and about six months ago the Austrian government finally renounced its claim to it. In many aspects the region is totally Austrian – scenery, architecture, cuisine, language – but it isn't 'Waldheimland'.

Meran is a lively, bustling town living in a time-warp. Apart from things like motor cars we are in the era of Franz Josef. At our hotel, for instance, the entrance hall displayed the proclamation of Franz Ferdinand as heir, starting *We, Franz Josef, by the Grace of God Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary*, and listing all 22 of the Kaiser's titles. One of Meran's most beautiful statues is that of the Empress: inscribed simply 'Elisabeth', it is shown on the map as *Das Sissi Denkmal*. Bookshops sell the 1992 *Kaiserin Elisabeth Kalender* and the *Memories of the Visit to the Area by the Heir, Franz Ferdinand*. The Kursaal, beautifully restored to its pre-1914 glory,

has twice-daily concerts. Nothing composed after 1918 is performed – I wonder whether there is municipal bye-law about this.

Noah's Harp

There is a small Jewish community. The synagogue, an elegant building in Schillerstrasse, is only used for high festivals now. To my surprise, I saw posters advertising a concert of Music in the Hebrew Tradition by 'Noah's Harp', so I went along. Noah's Harp turned out to be two young men from Trieste who sang rather well, accompanied by guitar and flute. Their programme ranged from *If I were a rich man*, to Yiddish songs originating from the *shtetls* of Austro-Hungary. I sat next to a lady who left Cologne in 1939, went to London, then New York, and finally retired with her husband to Meran. She told me that almost the whole community was at the concert.

Will we go back? You bet.

□ Paul Samet

Last of the red hot mummies

Yiddish theatre and the Yiddish language are part of my life. I inherited a love for them from my father, a tailor, whose only education was the *cheder*. Unable to read English, his introduction to world literature came from Yiddish theatre which, apart from the classic works of Goldfaden, Gordin, Sholem Aleichem and Anski, performed translations of Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Dumas, Strindberg, Ibsen, Sardou et al. I grew up in Manchester. My father's love for the theatre was matched only by his devotion to the Central Synagogue, where I became a chorister at the age of seven. A visiting theatre company required four boys to sing in the prologue of a play entitled *Bar Mitzvah* and I was one of the four chosen. I acquitted myself fairly well, quickly cornering the market for child parts in the Yiddish repertoire, particularly where there was a song or a duet to be sung. I had the privilege of being coached by, and playing alongside, some of the 'greats' – whom I will not list lest I be guilty of an error of omission. This was a wonderful training; the musical side was catered for when, promoted to alto soloist at *shul*, I sang duets with the famous *chazan* Mischa Alexandrovitch. By this time I was irredeemably stagestruck and, invited to appear in other provincial cities, I was once again cast in the play in which I made my debut, *Bar Mitzvah* – but in the lead!

The coming of the war finished Yiddish Theatre in Manchester. On completing military service, I found the lure of London – and the Yidish Theatre – too great to resist, and 1948 found me in the East End of London. Most of the actors at the Grand Palais remembered me as a child actor and as they needed a 'second juvenile' I was engaged without the necessity of an audition.

Divine tremor

This was a magical time for me in spite of the hard work and frequent heartaches; on reflection, I would not change one day of it if I could live that time again. In the main, we changed plays weekly, the first performance being on Saturday night. The eager anticipation of the audience coupled with the feeling backstage, described by the American Yiddish actor Boaz Young as *der hayliker tzitter* – or divine tremor – created a very special, indefinable atmosphere. The many factors which forced the Grand Palais to close in the 1960s have been documented elsewhere, so I will not trouble the reader with the details.

The ensemble was then forced to become a touring company, under my administration. With old age and death taking its toll, we were eventually reduced to appearing as a trio, and later, a duo. Finally I worked solo in a one-man show entitled *The World of Yiddish Theatre – in Story and Song*. Approached by the Spiro Institute in London to form an amateur Yiddish Group I mounted several productions and am still regularly engaged by the Oxford

Programme in Yiddish to appear before an audience of academics.

When I decided to make my home in Bournemouth, the public seemed to think that I had retired. But actors never retire – unless there are no engagements forthcoming! Since Bournemouth has a vibrant Jewish community I was somewhat disappointed to find that Yiddish and Yiddish culture does not rank very high – indeed, some way below bridge and coffee mornings; my arrival was a distinct non-event in the cultural diary.

However, undeterred, I decided to form a Yiddish theatre group in response to a suggestion by the local U3A. After being eyed with a great deal of suspicion and disrespect, I now find myself at the helm of a very dedicated team who work hard and happily; the fruits of our labours are about to be on display in a full-scale production.

I was also approached by the Rabbi of the Reform Synagogue to give lessons in the Yiddish language. We learn a little, chat a little, I perform an item from my repertoire which is then taken to pieces and put back together again. In fact, we have more of a 'Yiddish Evening' than a lesson. A happy band of eager pupils attend each week.

You can imagine that the above activities (coupled with my solo appearances in London and the provinces) for someone who is in the teatime of life can prove to be very arduous. So why do I carry on? The answer lies in my opening sentence: Yiddish theatre and the Yiddish language are part of my life. . . .

□ Bernard Mendelovitch

The AJR at Work

Won't you join the dance?



The tea dance: still an elegant way to spend an afternoon.

Photos: Newman.

In the fashionable Paris salons of the pre-Great War era a new kind of social event evolved that has, in varying degrees, survived to this day. The Tea Dance (*Thé dansant*) is still an elegant way to spend an afternoon.

In late December the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre held one of its own, rather special, tea dances. These events are not made special by virtue of being more elegant than others held elsewhere. Nor is the expertise of the dancers extraordinary – although there are some very slick movers. No, it is the intangible, but distinct, feeling of continental sophistication which makes these gatherings unique. The decor and menus, all carefully designed to impart a Central European flavour do not engender this atmosphere on their own. It comes from the members who, even after 50 years, retain the cosmopolitan air of true Europeans. Their inbred talent for feeling at home with the products of many cultures was reflected in the music which moved with ease from the Military Two-Step to the Czardas via the Waltz with a brief, but exhilarating, detour into the Hora.

The dance took place on the first day of Chanuka, an occasion marked by Dr Arnold Horwell's lighting of the candles.

Dr Horwell is no longer a young man and his voice lacks the strength it must once have had. Yet, as he intoned the *B'rocha* he imbued it with an intense depth of feeling that evoked awareness of the countless times it had been sung before and of the thousands of places in which this ceremony had been celebrated around the world. Simply being in company to share this

moment put everyone present into the larger company of the worldwide Jewish community. When the *Maoz Tsur* was done the moment vanished and the assembly returned to the more earthy, and parochial, delights of supper and dancing.

□ M.N.

Sing along at Cleve Road

Why not get your week off to a swinging start? The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre singers are looking for new recruits at their Monday morning sessions between 10.30 and 11.30.

The weekly programme consists of well-known favourites, old and new, from around the world. In the course of one morning a whistle-stop tour of the world can see you savouring the delights of Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin and the East End of London. The singers are nothing if not versatile! The great show tunes give the U.S.A. a look-in as well – *Oklahoma*, *Showboat*, *Kiss me Kate*, the list goes on.

Our resident pianist, Gerard Tichauer, provides the accompaniment whilst the regular conductor, Angela Arratoon, gives expert direction. (Angela has trained in many forms of music from madrigal to Grand Opera.) The enthusiasm and volume are supplied by you! If your vocal chords need a good airing at least once a week contact Sylvia Matus at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre on 071-328 0208 between 9.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Monday to Thursday. □



Dr Arnold Horwell.

Photo: Newman.

MEALS ON WHEELS

WE ARE NOW ABLE TO OFFER A LIMITED DELIVERY OF MEALS ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS TO MEMBERS LIVING IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

**Cricklewood, West Hampstead/
Finchley Road, Hampstead, Golders
Green, Finchley, Edgware,
Stanmore and Harrow**

The cost for a kosher 3 course meal is £2.00. Delivery charge 50p. Payment for meals to be made to the Driver.

Meals can still be collected from 15 Cleve Road on weekdays (Mondays – Thursdays) for £2.00 per meal.

Members who feel they may qualify for delivery because of mobility problems, or other reasons, should contact Mrs Ruth Finestone for further details and an assessment interview on: 071 328 0208

Bridge that gap

Old Bridge players never die, they simply become teachers. At this time some novices are benefitting from the great experience of 83 year-old Edith Caplan at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Beginners' classes commenced about four months ago, following suggestions from members attending the afternoon sessions.

Although Bridge is a serious business, requiring much concentration and, initially, a certain amount of learning by rote, the learners seem to be having a rather jolly time. Two young ladies who make up part of the class recounted the tale of the lesson which dissolved into tears of laughter as the whole group came, as one, to the conclusion that there were just too many rules.

The ultimate aim of these beginners is to move from the card 'school' upstairs to the conservatory, where the serious players get down to business. After 20 lessons some pupils feel confident enough to make the transition, whilst others wish to hone their skills a little more before crossing the divide. In either case it is heartening to see people working so hard at enjoying themselves.

If you are interested in learning to play this queen of card games contact Bobbi Spencer at Cleve Road on: 071-328 0208 on Tuesday or Thursday between 9.30 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. or on Sunday between 2.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m.

□ M.N.

Diagnosing dementia

Towards the end of last year some of those volunteers who visit people in their own homes gathered at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre to hear a talk by Clive Evers of the Alzheimer's Disease Society. (Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, which is not a disease in itself, but a term used to describe the signs and symptoms that are a result of the progressive loss of mental functions.)

It is important for volunteer visitors to understand how dementia affects the elderly since, particularly in the case of Alzheimer's, there is no single, simple diagnostic test. Diagnosis largely proceeds from a

process of elimination. It is the carers' knowledge of the case history of their charges which provides much of the information needed to provide an accurate diagnosis.

Mr Evers described the three classic phases of dementia. The earliest symptoms in the first phase are loss of short-term memory. This mild dementia can lead to an inability to make decisions and carry out practical tasks. (Symptoms can vary in individuals and may be mistaken for signs of depression.) In the second, or 'moderate', stage there is an increasingly poor attention span and confusion of time and space. With the onset of severe dementia the sufferer is no longer able to care for him/herself alone.

Summing up, Mr Evers stressed that dementia is not a part of the natural aging process, nor is it caused by stress or under or over use of the brain. Alzheimer's is a disease and research is being undertaken to establish its real causes in order to work towards establishing more useful treatments. The Alzheimer's Disease Society can offer a wide range of information and advice from its main office and branches throughout the country. The head office address is: ADS, Gordon House, 10 Green-coat Place, London SW1P 1PH. Telephone: 071 306 0606. □

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

We are delighted to inform members that the AJR will be holding a Second Night Seder on Tuesday 6 April at 15 Cleve Road NW6 3RL.

Cantor Marshall Stone will officiate.

Seating will be limited to 100 members. If you wish to attend please complete the booking form enclosed in this issue and return it to Lydia Lassman at Hannah Karminski House, 9 Adamson Road, Swiss Cottage NW3 3HX with your payment of £15 Per Person.

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

15 Cleve Road, London NW6 3RL
Tel. 071 328 0208

Open Tuesday and Thursday 9.30 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday and Wednesday 9.30 a.m.-3.30 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m.-7 p.m.

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

Afternoon entertainment -

FEBRUARY

- Monday 1 Gerard Tichauer Entertains At The Piano
- Tuesday 2 'Melody Hour' - Carole Staff (Soprano) and Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano)
- Wednesday 3 Talk and demonstration on reflexology - Marie-Ange Gonzalez
- Thursday 4 'The Roussel String Trio'
- Sunday 7 'Enjoy an Hour of Music with Debbie O'Brien at the Piano'

- Monday 8 Concert by Students of the Trinity College of Music
- Tuesday 9 'Piano Duets' - Judy Magnus and Gillian Sonin
- Wednesday 10 Hans Freund: 'Sing and Live Longer'
- Thursday 11 'Take A Quick-Step Back In Time' - Geoffrey Strum and Johnny Walton (Piano)
- Sunday 14 'St Valentine's Day with The Longford Singers' with Margaret Eaves (Piano)
- Monday 15 A Concert given by Florence Dguere (Soprano) with Peter McCarthy (Piano) of LIVE MUSIC NOW - the Scheme which brings music into the Community
- Tuesday 16 'Musical Gems' - Pamela Kolirin (Soprano) and Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano)
- Wednesday 17 'Four Hands On The Piano' - Marion Grant and Lorely Teppich with Miriam on Violin
- Thursday 18 'Songs Old - Songs New - Songs You Will Always Remember' - Eddy Simmons with Piano Accompaniment
- Sunday 21 Rosa Butwick and Nikki van der Zyl Entertain
- Monday 22 'Ex-Directory Variety Group'

- Tuesday 23 'Well-Loved Classical Favourites' - Joan Cohen (Piano)
 - Wednesday 24 'Four Strings Each' - Light Classical Entertainment with Violin and Piano - Lucy White and Juliet Davey
 - Thursday 25 'Viennese Cocktail' - Emmanuel Emerich (Violin) and Jason Brooks (Piano)
 - Sunday 28 'Lieder and Operetta' - Helene Wold (Soprano) and Jeremy Cooke (Piano)
- MARCH
- Monday 1 PURIM SONGTIME - Solos and Duets - Lola Rand and Francoise Geller with Irene Wallis (Piano)
 - Tuesday 2 PURIM with Geoffrey Strum (Tenor) and Johnny Walton (Piano)
 - Wednesday 3 THE AJR SINGERS AT PURIM - Conducted by Angela Arratoon accompanied by Gerard Tichauer
 - Thursday 4 We Celebrate PURIM - Joe Gordon (Tenor) and Rosa Butwick (Piano)
 - Sunday 7 Hans Freund: PURIM IS HERE

FAMILY EVENTS

Birth

Kester A healthy little boy, Joseph Felix, born to Sophia and David on 10 December 1992. Delighted family, especially great-grandmother (Omi) Paula Leyser.

Birthday

Leverton Bertha Leverton, founder of ROK (see profile in April 1992 issue) celebrated her 70th birthday on January 23 in the company of friends and relatives from all over the world.

Deaths

Benson Ruth Benson, born in Berlin, died 28 December 1992. Sadly missed by her brother Leo Dorffmann, family and all who loved her.
Faktor-Lehrer Dr Marie Faktor-Lehrer died suddenly, aged 82, on September 25, 1992. Her husband Ing. Otto Faktor died peacefully, aged 92, on November 18, 1992.
Sheldon Gerda Sheldon, nee Polack (Breslau), widow of Walter Sheldon, died peacefully on January

3, aged 83. Irreplaceable to her sons Peter and Ron and their families.
Singer Charlotte Singer, widow of Dr Robert Singer, mother of Eva, Alfred and Vera and grandmother and great grandmother, died on January 7, 1993, in her 97th year.
Wolosker Henry Wolosker, our dearest Heini, died 27 November 1992. He will be desperately missed by his wife Eva, two adored daughters, their husbands and four beloved grandchildren.

enced, versatile continental lady available Sundays and some afternoons. Phone: 081-348 9674 evenings or early mornings.
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Miscellaneous

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

Mosheh Oved was a colourful character and many Londoners will recall his Cameo Corner, a little shop full of delightful treasures, little pieces of silver and jewellery, in Museum Street near the British Museum. Born Edward Goodack in a small village in Russian Poland, he eventually came to England, and at first earned his living as a watchmaker's assistant. His subsequent career as jeweller, designer, sculptor and author, is fully described in his book *Visions and Jewels*, originally written in Yiddish, and published in English in 1952. Rings made by Mosheh Oved were recently shown in Spink's Antique and 20th century Jewellery exhibition.

Mosheh Oved was, incidentally, a fervent supporter of the Ben Uri Art Society, now in its 76th year. And he would no doubt have participated in its Annual Picture Fair on 7 February. All the pictures have been donated by artists, dealers and friends and can be seen from Monday to Thursday in the preceding week (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and on Sunday, 7 February from 3-7 p.m. Tickets are priced at £55, and each ticket secures a picture.

England is the home of watercolours and the Royal Academy's *Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880* (until 11 April) will show some 300 works including paintings by Turner, Constable, Blake, Palmer, Cotman and David Cox. A fully illustrated catalogue is available at the exhibition.

Also at the Royal Academy is an exhibition of *paintings by Sickert* on the 50th anniversary of his death (until 14 February). Sickert was born in Munich, the son of an artist of Danish descent, and during his life made many visits to the Continent. He was very fond of Dieppe; his many views of the town have earned him the sobriquet 'the Canaletto of Dieppe'. He also painted many scenes from the British music halls, including the old Bedford Theatre in Camden Town.

Just a reminder of Christie's German and Austrian week (17-21 May). They will be selling paintings, sculptures, furniture, silver and scientific instruments. Entries for these sales are now invited and can be accepted until the end of February.

The Manor House is holding an exhibition (until 25 February) about the Jews of the Ukraine: a photographic testimony to a vanishing community. The photographs are



Walter Richard Sickert *Ennui*, 1914. Oil on canvas, Tate Gallery, London Photo: John Webb

by Rita Ostrovskaya who studied in Leningrad and now runs a photographic workshop in Kiev for young people. Having exhibited in Vilna, Leipzig, Moscow, Chicago, Tel Aviv and Amsterdam, this is her first U.K. showcase.

The Tate Gallery is showing *Robert Vernon's Gift: British Art for the Nation, 1847* (15 March-late October). This exhibition of about 70 18th and 19th century British paintings includes landscapes by Turner, Constable, Bonington and Callcott, as well as works by Wilkie, Mulready, Ward and Landseer.

Another Tate activity is *New Displays 1993* (opening 3 February) which is the fourth re-arrangement of the Tate Gallery collection since 1933 and offers fresh insights into the extensive permanent collection. □

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SB's Column

Statistics. Figures published annually by the 'Deutsche Buehnenverein' show which dramatic and musical works reached 'Top of the Pops' rating during the year in question. Including, as it does, the repertoire of the most prominent theatres in Germany, Austria and Switzerland it makes interesting reading. The section 'opera' shows that Mozart is still leading with *Magic Flute*, *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Cosi* among the first six. The musicals have Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*, as No. 1, followed by *Cats* and *Starlight Express* in 4th and 5th position, whilst *My Fair Lady* ranks as No 2 and *Fiddler on the Roof* is in 6th place. Among the first six in the dramatic field are Kleist's *Der zerbrochene Krug*, Goethe's *Faust* and *Die Dreigroschenoper* by Bertold Brecht.

The Vienna Volksoper, known for presenting a very varied programme of works from the Golden and Silver Era of Viennese operetta, will this month add Lehar's last work *Giuditta* (first performed in 1934 with Jarmila Novotna and Richard Tauber) to its repertoire. During the spring Benatzky's *White Horse Inn* will have a revival in which senior 'Burg' member Fred Liewehr will appear as Emperor Franz Josef.

75 years UFA. UFA was founded 75 years ago. As part of the anniversary celebrations some of their most successful films were shown on Bavarian Television. Stars included Sybille Schmitz, Anny Ondra, Henny Porten, Siegfried Arno and Conrad Veidt.

Birthdays. Josef Greindl, Munich-born bass, equally well known in Berlin, Munich, Vienna and Bayreuth, where he sang most Wagner bass parts between 1951 and 1970, attained the age of 80. He was also a famous Sarastro, Osmin and Komtur, and took modern rôles in Berg's *Lulu* and Schoenberg's *Moses and Aron*. After retiring from the stage, he became professor of singing in Saarbruecken. - Hilde Zadek, who specialised in Verdi parts, member of the Vienna State Opera since 1947 and later a teacher at the Vienna Conservatoire, is 75 years old.

Obituary. Russian-born Nathan Milstein who has died in London a few days before his 88th birthday, was, together with Fritz Kreisler and Yehudi Menuhin, one of the great violinists of this century. He left Russia in 1927 and lived mainly in the United States although his concerts took him to all parts of the globe. □

A history of the Jews in the German-speaking lands

Part 7: Moses Mendelssohn and the Haskalah

The Enlightenment

Among the intellectuals of the Gentile world fundamentalist Christian doctrines came under powerful attack during the Age of Reason or the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century. Because French thinkers were at the forefront of the Enlightenment, these intellectuals were known as the *philosophes*. A few of them were actually atheists; some were Deists, believing that God was a Principle, responsible for (or even identical with) the laws of nature but wholly impersonal and unconcerned with human behaviour. But most of the *philosophes* were Theists – that is to say they believed in a personal God who cared for the world He had created and took an interest in the way human beings behaved. The theists, however, stressed that what was important was what all religions had in common, and not the various dogmas which divided them. Since they thought that none of the dogmas held by the different religions mattered very much, they naturally thought it wrong to persecute anyone on account of them, and they were, therefore, exponents of religious toleration.

The Enlightenment also spread to Germany, where its leading luminaries were Christian Wolff (1679 to 1754), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729 to 1781), and Immanuel Kant (1724 to 1804).

The Jews of Germany had been forced by the savage persecution of the medieval period into physical and cultural isolation. For centuries they had been denied all contact with the intellectual developments of the Gentile world; and their own learning had been almost exclusively confined to talmudic studies. But during the 17th and 18th centuries an increasing number of Court Jews and Protected Jews were brought into contact with Gentile society and became influenced by the secular ideas of that world. For a few, new intellectual horizons were opening up. Some began to

absorb the ideas of the Enlightenment and to relate these to their own situation. *Haskalah* is the Hebrew name given to this Jewish Enlightenment; the Jews involved in it are known as the *maskilim*. Their most famous representative was Moses Mendelssohn (1729 to 1786).

Moses Mendelssohn

He was born into an orthodox yiddish-speaking ghetto family in Dessau, where he grew up a devoted follower of the rabbi of Dessau, David Fraenkel. Fraenkel was a distinguished talmudic scholar, but he also valued the philosophy of Antiquity, and he inspired Mendelssohn to study widely. In 1743 Fraenkel was appointed chief rabbi of Berlin, and Mendelssohn followed him to that city. One of the Protected Jews of Berlin, the owner of a silk factory, took him into his employ so that he could qualify for residence; but Mendelssohn had enough time to pursue his scholarly interests. He was a brilliant linguist, adding a knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, English and Italian to his Hebrew and his perfect German. He read widely in the literature of these languages and soon made his own theoretical contribution to the Enlightenment. He attracted the attention of the Jewish and Gentile *philosophes* in Berlin, many of whom would meet regularly at his house.

In 1754 he met Lessing who became a life-long friend. That year Lessing had published a play called *Die Juden*, in which for the first time Jews were portrayed as more virtuous than their Christian persecutors. In 1779 Lessing was to make Mendelssohn himself the model for the central character in another play, *Nathan der Weise*, who is presented as the spokesman for all the Enlightenment ideals of tolerance and the love of humanity.

Mendelssohn also became friendly with Immanuel Kant, whom he first met in 1777. Unwittingly they had been rivals in 1763, when both had submitted entries for a Prize Essay set by the Prussian Academy of Sciences on the question 'Whether philosophical truths are capable of the same clarity as mathematical truths'. Mendelssohn was awarded the prize, and Kant was placed second. This success also won Mendelssohn the status of Protected Jew, and with it the privilege of settlement in his own

right; though in 1771 Frederick the Great vetoed his election to of the Academy.

German, Hebrew, Yiddish

What may have contributed to this veto was that, some years before, Mendelssohn had respectfully taken issue with the King for writing poems in French rather than in German: Mendelssohn was part of that movement of German intellectuals who campaigned to free their countrymen from subservience to French literature. Frederick the Great, on the other hand, would in 1786 still be capable of delivering a lecture to the Berlin Academy under the title *De la littérature allemande!*

At the same time Mendelssohn wanted to encourage his fellow Jews to take an interest in German culture and the German language. He disliked Yiddish as a corrupted and degraded form of German which typified the physical and cultural isolation of the Jews. But he also had every respect for Hebrew, both as a sacred and as a literary language and wanted to promote it alongside of literary German.

Two undertakings illustrate this double approach. On the one hand he encouraged his friends to bring out a Hebrew language magazine – *Ha Me'assaf* (The Gatherer) in which Enlightenment ideas were expounded; and on the other, he published a German translation of the Torah, though the German was written in Hebrew characters, which were sometimes the only script with which Yiddish-speaking Jews were familiar. This translation was accompanied by his own commentary, the *Be'ur*, which was written in Hebrew. Though the commentary was largely traditional, it did suggest that the essence of the Bible lies in its ethical message, to which the ritual was secondary. He did not intend to disparage the ritual, and, indeed, remained an observant Jew throughout his life. But as an adherent of the Enlightenment he laid most stress on those aspects which all religions have in common. Like Moses Maimonides five hundred years earlier, he thought that what was true in all religions is based on Reason, and that divine revelation could not be contrary to Reason.

These views were, of course, challenged by the orthodox. The traditional rabbis banned both his translation of the Bible and the commentary. He escaped *herem* (formal excommunication); but as it was, he also wrote against the *herem* as a weapon of intolerance and a restriction of intellectual freedom which no follower of the Enlightenment could accept.

□ Ralph Blumenau

To be continued in the March issue.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

A visit to Weimar

Sprechen Sie Deutsch als Muttersprache?' Many years ago an O-level examiner nearly floored me with this question. Yes, I suppose I do, I thought in English, but replied in German 'ja'. German was indeed my first language, but as I had come to England at the age of nine without my mother, I had forgotten a good deal. (Perhaps repressed would be a better word.) I was surprised when my form mistress suggested I might take it up again. When I did so, I soon realised that I could recall the stems of many common words, but the endings had vanished. I also found I had a much smaller vocabulary in German than in English. I had then, along with the first-time German scholars in my class, to learn the case-endings and conjugations and some new words. The fact that I managed this successfully encouraged me to go on to Advanced Level.

Now I was in contact with the giants of German *Kultur*: Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Herder, etc. Much of their work centred on Weimar, but whereabouts in Germany Weimar was I had no idea; my teacher didn't think it important to enlighten me. For many years I kept this knowledge in a drawer of memory which I had no cause to open.

Notorious camp

I can still remember the stab of pain and incredulity I felt when, chancing to listen to a radio programme, I heard that the site of the notorious concentration-camp of Buchenwald, where my father was killed, was close to Weimar. My teacher had omitted to tell me this too!

Now that my curiosity was aroused, I studied maps of Germany to find out where Weimar was. I located it in East Germany, not far from a bigger town called Erfurt. At this time, Germany was already reunited, and, travel to the former DDR now being possible, I decided to go there this summer.

The German tourist office supplied an information-sheet which gave details of the sights of Weimar and, surprisingly, included a page on Buchenwald. Walking downhill from the station towards the town-centre one passes block after block of drab grey buildings whose exteriors have not seen a paintbrush for many years. Then one comes to a pleasant pedestrian precinct with elegant and expensive shops. The precinct leads to a leafy square with a fountain at its centre and at the far side of the square is the Goethehaus. This is a low-slung building with a rather plain facade covered in an

attractive colour-wash. Inside, the house has unfortunately been gutted to form a museum. Here there are letters, manuscripts and some remarkably fine drawings done by Goethe during his visit to Italy.

Kennst du das Land Wo die Citronen blüh'n?

Ode to Joy

The Schillerhaus, similarly arranged, has exhibits from his plays – costumes from *Die Räuber* – and models of contraptions for flying stage-entrances and exits. On a wall in the middle of one room sure enough are the words of the 'Ode to Joy':

Alle Menschen werden Brüder Wo dein sanfter Flügel weihet.

Fine words! Walk on a little and you can see a page of the *Völkische Beobachter* dated 1936 showing Hitler and his swastika-emblazoned crew claiming the two poets as their heritage. I asked one of the two attendants about this curious juxtaposition of liberal philosophy with the doings of the Nazis nearby. She gave me the usual German stock-answers:

(a) 'That's a philosophical question'. (b) 'I was only a child at the time'. (c) 'So many innocent people suffered'.

'Ah', I countered, 'but the Germans were the ones who started it all'.

Silence. She would be drawn no further on the subject.

We had now spent some days exploring the sights of Weimar including the pleasant

park by the river Ilm where Goethe's summerhouse is to be found and the low-slung but extensive house of Frau von Stein. Tuesday was one of the days when Buchenwald was open, so with some trepidation I enquired how to get there. Yes, I was told, there's a bus service – from a stop marked 'Buchenwald'. Surely the horrific made commonplace! I wondered who would make use of such a service, and for what reason. Soon a small knot of people appeared at the stop, but my questions remained unanswered.

Endless ascent

The camp of Buchenwald is on the Etterberg just behind Weimar. You drive past some newish residential apartments and then up and up the hill on a road flanked by trees. You can't help thinking of the unfortunates who made the journey as prisoners and what must have been their thoughts at each stage of the ascent which seemed endless. Eventually the bus stopped at a memorial to the victims. From there it went on again to the camp itself. This occupied a vast area. The entrance-gate is still intact, but most of the huts are gone. There are enormous expanses of gravelwalks like some night-marish no man's land punctuated by a few buildings. One of these was the camp-commandant's, another has been made into a bookshop, another houses a museum and a pointer indicates the crematorium. The museum shows the camp's history from its beginnings as a place of incarceration for opponents of the Nazis to the last phase of the prisoners' rebellion and the liberation by the Russian army. From the vantage point of the hill you see, ironically, a most beautiful view of Weimar below.

Here and there are memorials – to the Russian soldiers killed there, to Communists, and one to the Jews who were detained here after Kristallnacht, 600 of whom were said to have been killed at that time. I felt that this was an incomplete and misleading picture of Jewish suffering. However, I dropped my bunch of flowers there, shed a few tears and prepared to leave.

Earlier, to my surprise, I had noticed that the camp site was thronged with visitors: families, groups of children, student parties. What, I wondered, had brought them there on a hot summer's day? I spoke to one family about this. The husband, startled by my interrogation, replied 'because it's part of our history. To make sure it doesn't happen again'. Encouraging words, but how representative of Germany today?

□ Martha Blend



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THIS ISRAEL

Vital statistics

Population: 5.1 million (4.2 million Jews). The largest Jewish subgroups are 650,000 from Russia, 500,000 from Morocco and 260,000 each from Romania and Iraq. The average Jewish family has 2.6 children. (Moslem average 4.7 children). 50 per cent of all Jewish marriages contracted since 1960 ended in divorce. 1,200 out of 72,000 births in 1991 were to one-parent families. 562,000 Israelis live below the poverty line. The average daily calorie consumption is 3,080. Average life expectancy for men is 74 years, for women 78 years.

Religion

Infertile ultra-Orthodox Jews wanting children are now allowed to use non-Jewish imported sperm to avoid the danger of their offspring unintentionally committing incest.

Medicine

A new drug that constitutes the basis for solving one of the most difficult problems in medicine – thrombosis – has been developed by two Jerusalem doctors and successfully used on lab animals. Thrombosis is a blood clot, which can cause serious damage to tissues by halting or reducing their blood supply.

The drug fights oxidation and removes harmful 'free radicals' and metallic substances released during a heart attack.

The discovery was called a breakthrough by the Hadassah School of Medicine.

Oceanography

Dr Bella Galil, a scientist at the National Institute of Oceanography in Haifa, is part of a team of pioneers researching the scantily explored Levant Basin.

Roughly 70 kilometers off Haifa port, the waters and the entire ecosystem of this underwater mystery, dramatically differ from other deep sea habitats in their severely impoverished food supply, high salt content, and abnormally warm waters.

Galil's crew brought up a wealth of new data, as well as seven new, previously unknown creatures. 'There is tremendous water pressure', says Galil. If you put a styrofoam cup down there, it will surface the size of a thimble. In fact the creatures which have adapted to living under this pressure, die a number of hours after being

brought up for study. There is absolutely no sunlight or nourishment. Consequently, the creatures are generally less than 30 cm in length, few in number, predatory, and eat their own bodily wastes.

Industry

Israel's innovative and imaginative diamond industry has created a unique niche for itself in the competitive world of diamond manufacturing. Although commonly known as a primary manufacturer of traditional cuts of small- to medium-sized stones, the Israeli diamond industry has developed a huge sector devoted entirely to fancy cut diamonds, including baguettes, marquises, pear and heart shapes, triangles, ovals, and more. About \$1 billion of Israel's net diamond exports, or 35–45 per cent, is comprised of fancy cut diamonds.

After significant research and financial commitment, one manufacturer recently developed a new line of fancies called the 'Royal Cuts'. These stones are modified versions of the pear, marquise, and oval cuts. These cuts create an optical illusion, making the stone appear 50 per cent larger than it actually is.

Nuclear Waste

The feasibility of using geologically isolated pockets of water deep inside the earth as disposal sites for nuclear waste is being studied in Europe, aided by a refined method of dating groundwater developed at the Weizmann Institute.

The technique, introduced by Professor Emanuel Mazor of the Institute's Department of Environmental Sciences and Energy Research, enables the experts to determine with greater certainty whether a given aquifer, or groundwater repository, is ancient or relatively recent. This distinction is critical in evaluating the safety of these sites as potential storage depots for nuclear waste. □

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Birthdays

Werner E Mosse, 75

Congratulations to Werner E. Mosse, Professor Emeritus of the University of East Anglia, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, on his 75th birthday. He was born in Berlin-Charlottenburg on 5 February, 1918. The Chairman of the London Board of the Leo Baeck Institute for some 15 years, he has, since his retirement from his Chair of European History in 1983, thrown himself into the furthering of German-Jewish studies with enthusiasm, a field in which he has occupied a prominent position for some thirty years. An indefatigable researcher and prolific author he has more recently added to his *Jews in the German Economy. The German-Jewish Economic Elite 1820-1935* (1987), a companion volume *The German-Jewish Economic Elite... A Socio-cultural Profile* (1989); though writing on other subjects as well. Werner Mosse organises seminars and conferences on the history of German Jewry in the United Kingdom and abroad; and a German *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* of the Leo Baeck Institute, now flourishing in the *Bundesrepublik*, was his conception. The co-ordinating editor of *Second Chance. Two centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, a volume of a 1988 conference in Cambridge, which has already made its mark; he is also the driving force behind an international conference to be held in Rome in November 1993, comparing the Jewish experience in Italy and Germany from the Enlightenment to Fascism. Mosse is a

hard-working scholar. Jewish historiography is much in his debt. □

Berthold Goldschmidt, 90

On 18 January, 1993 Berthold Goldschmidt, one of the few remaining direct links with musical culture in pre-Hitler Germany, celebrated his 90th birthday. 'Celebrate' is the right word since his appearance and undiminished vigour completely belie his age. His position among the select group of present-day prominent composers is fully established, with his work, both old and new, being heard ever more frequently.

He has just returned from Berlin where his Opera *Der gewaltige Hahnrei*, composed in 1929/30, was given a most successful concert performance; it is hoped that, following the issue of some of his chamber music, the opera will shortly be available on CD. More important, he has, during the past 5 years, written a number of major works including a string trio and two string quartets, his 3rd and 4th. The latter will receive its 'premiere' on the occasion of Lübeck's 800-year celebration in May. The string trio was first performed in Berlin in January 1992. An extract from a review says it all: 'The trio sounds like the work of a man at the summit of his life.'

Dear Berthold Goldschmidt - we extend to you our heartiest congratulations and best wishes on your 90th. We are proud of you and look forward to many more years of creative activity for the benefit of ourselves and the enrichment of music generally.

Obituary

Sarah Roberts

Sarah Roberts, who died last November, aged 92, was the widow of the painter William Roberts. There have been many Jewish women who, lacking the power to express themselves creatively, have played the role of muse to their artist or writer husbands. For William Roberts, the noted British artist who died in 1980, she was helpmate and support in his lifetime and fierce defender of his name and reputation after his death.

However, she was no mere 'wife of'. Born in Leeds to an impoverished but artistically-talented immigrant Russian-Jewish family, as a beautiful 15-year-old schoolgirl she had sat as model for her brother, the artist Jacob Kramer (whose centenary last year was marked by exhibitions in Leeds and London). It was he who introduced her to his

friend Roberts, a fellow student from the Slade, and she was to sit as model for her husband, whose many portraits of her show the varying aspects of her character: her strength and courage, her wit, her originality and her defiant zest for living - a life that was by no means easy. It was a life full of friendships, she attracted young and old, enchanted by her conversation and by the vitality which she retained almost to the last days of her life - it must be rare to find a woman travelling rough with her son in Spain and Morocco in her 90th year.

There was a warm Jewish quality in her looks which comes across in many portraits though: 'he never flattered me', she said. Perhaps the most moving is a double portrait, painted in old age: The Artist and his wife, 1975, now in the National Portrait Gallery.

□ Pauline Paucker

40 Years Ago
this Month

OLD ACQUAINTANCES

Marilyn Monroe and Max Reinhardt: While Heinz Herald in Munich gave lectures about the life and work of the late Max Reinhardt and the world still waits for a biography of the 'great magician', his widow Helene Thimig instructed her solicitor in Hollywood to sell her husband's property in order to settle some outstanding bills. Only through big advertisements in the 'Los Angeles Times' his two sons, Gottfried and Wolfgang, got to know that 'an important auction... formerly the property of Max Reinhardt, internationally famous theatrical and motion picture producer', would take place in the first three days of December. Most precious amongst the furniture, pictures and books offered were 178 'Regiebuecher' - in fact all his productions except 'Everyman' which Helene Thimig used in Salzburg until Ernst Lothar took over that job - partly in his own handwriting. Reinhardt's daughter-in-law went to the auction, but had to stop bidding when the price for the 'Regiebuecher' alone went up to over a thousand dollars. Also a bookseller who was bidding for the priceless collection on behalf of the 'University of Southern California' lost out against Hollywood's Pin-up Girl No. One, Marilyn Monroe. She got the manuscripts for 1,300 dollars, and said in an interview that she would give them to 'some university', so they will not be lost to future students of European theatrical history. But the whole incident is not quite clear. Why did not one of the better-off continental directors, actors or writers try to buy Reinhardt scripts, as the auction did not take place secretly? P.E.M.

AJR Information February 1953.

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Black and Blue

- Gilbert (pointing to newspaper article): You see, Mr Allen
 Allen: See what?
 G: One of them – your word, not mine – won the Nobel Prize.
 A: You mean Derek Walnut.
 G: (with emphasis): Walcott – as in cottage.
 A: What did he get it for?
 G (reading the newspaper): An epic poem in the style of Homer.
 A: Homo?
 G: No – Homer!
 A: ... and *shvartz*. He's not crippled as well, is he?
 G: Ah, you're a Jewish Alf Garnett.
 A: What d'you mean a Jewish Alf Garnett? Alf Garnett is Jewish. Warren Mit ...
 G (cutting in): Alright, point taken. But tell me, why are you so bigoted?
 A: Bigoted, my foot! I speak as I find.
 G: And what d'you find so terrible about 'them'?
 A: For a start they didn't take their place in the queue.
 G: What queue?
 A: They got preferential treatment over older immigrant groups.
 G: That's new to me.
 A: When we Jews first came here we had to make do with the East End – but they moved up West straight away.
 G (incredulous): Up West?
 A: Sure. Don't tell me Notting Hill is not West!

Search Notices

Can somebody help me, please, to find the present address of Willy Tag whose family was well-known in Munich and whose mother was member of the Guggenheim family. Some years ago, he was in business in Hong Kong in partnership with a Mr. Yu and he may still be there but I cannot trace him.

Information will be greatly appreciated.

Eric Walters
 61 Holders Hill Drive
 Hendon NW4 1NN
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For academic publication, biographical information from friends/relatives about Grete Salzer, born Vienna 1882, unmarried, emigrated to London 1939. Garden specialist. Box No. 1236.

Sylvia von Harden (von Halle), Journalist, born in Hamburg 1894, died in London 1963 and Ilse Falkenfeld (known as Katta Lounisch or Polly Tieck) Journalist, born 1897 or 99, last known address Berlin-Charlottenburg, Droysenstr. 15. Might have emigrated to USA in 1938.

Any information to Anna Rheinsberg, Wehrdaer Weg 43a, D-3550 Marburg/Lahn 1.

- G: It's West Eleven. Not exactly Mayf ...
 A (cutting in): And look at the fuss the media make about the Notting Hill Carnival year in year out, while the Stamford Hill *Purim* doesn't get a look in! There's no B.B.C. outside broadcast, no Channel Four documentary on cross-dressing, no Keith Floyd baking *hamantaschen* on the telly.
 G (chuckling): Reverse apartheid, eh?
 A: The same in music. Every time you turn on the radio you get an earful of rap – but when d'you ever hear *Klezmer*?
 G: So you allege a media conspiracy.
 A: I certainly do. Look at the exposure that Trevor Macdonald gets ...
 G: So what about that John Suchet?
 A: You can't compare the two. Macdonald shows his blackness openly, but all the man in the street knows about Suchet is that it's a Swiss make of chocolate.
 G: Don't you mean Suchard?
 A (vehemently): And then there's all the pinching they've done from us.
 G: Pinching?
 A: Sure, They've turned our *pejes* into dreadlocks, our *yarmulkas* into woolly hats, our *khrain* into ganja, Chassidim into Rastafarians and the Lubavitcher Rebbe into Emperor Haile Selassie. And another thing. D'you remember the scandal when the Kashrut Commission busted Morrie's Milk Bar in Aldgate after one of their agents had sneaked a saltbeef sandwich into Morrie's fridge?
 G: You're making this up ...
 A: Well, the Mangrove Restaurant Notting Hill filed a copycat complaint against the police saying they had planted marij ...

- G: Leave Mary out of it, or we'll get into a religious argument!
 A: And all this had made them terribly *chutzpedik*. Take the film *White men can't jump*. Which Jew would ever have given a film the title *Goyim can't do accountancy*?
 G: So – let me ask you this: which non-Zionist would ever have had Sam Spiegel's *chutzpah* and called a film about Bedouin warriors *Florence of Arabia*?
 A: And isn't it typical: the local council found money to reopen the Hackney Empire for Lenny Henry. But would they reopen the Grand Palais in the Commercial Road? Not in a month of *shabbeses*!
 G: But who would they open the Grand Palais for?
 A (astounded) Who for? Rabbi Blue, of course.
 G (taking a deep breath): I didn't know he was in showbiz.
 A: You didn't? (Shakes his head) Talking of showbiz reminds me of their biggest pinch of the lot. It's from Rabbi Blue's *chazanut* that the *shvartzes* got their most famous type of music. You can guess which, can't you?
 G: No, I can't.
 A: The Blue, you dolt!
 G (rising from his chair): Well, I must say talking to you has been an education (He reaches for the door handle).

□ R.G.

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