

AJR Information

Volume XLIX No. 8
August 1994

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

A hierarchy of victims p5

Planting the seed of awareness p13

As time goes by p16

Continental drift

The Anglo-American special relationship – still intact at the time of the Gulf War – is, alas, no more; Germany has taken the place of Britain as America's closest European ally. The reasons: greater economic clout, larger size and population. Presumably Washington has also grown disenchanted with London forever blowing hot and cold on the issue of European integration. As for today's Germans, they now have a once-in-a-national lifetime opportunity to partly repair the damage earlier generations did to Europe and humanity. As Jews we shall observe their conduct with vigilance tempered by optimism. □

Kohl's Germany – and other test cases

A gallimaufry of curate's eggs

In June the newspapers carried two disparate, yet connected, items of great interest. One, computing the human losses inflicted on Russia by the Nazi invasion, suggested a colossal total of 48 million fatalities, or children left unborn in consequence of the war. The other reported Chancellor Kohl's unveiling of Germany's new Museum of National History in Bonn.

The Museum displays artifacts – from Montgomery's beret to shoes worn by the so-called rubble women clearing up bomb damage, from Adenauer's shiny black Mercedes to a chunk of the dismantled Berlin Wall – that encapsulate the country's postwar history. Since this history is a record of mindboggling economic achievement under conditions of enviable political stability, one newspaper report was headed "Bonn's pride museum opens".

Only an unreconstructed Germanophobe would deny that the *Bundesrepublik* has much to be proud of. Alas, national history did not emerge from a vacuum in 1945. The CDU Chancellor, who nurtured the museum project, apparently wanted to show the country rising like a phoenix from the ashes of Year Zero.

It was only pressure from the opposition parties that led to the incorporation of a section on the Holocaust – labelled "The everpresent past" – into the exhibition. In this instance the opposition were

effective, but that is by no means a general rule. A case in point was the long-drawn-out controversy over the erection of a Holocaust Memorial at Steglitz on which the names of all local Jewish deportees were to have been inscribed. The town council's decision to sweep the "everpresent past" under the carpet received the support of CDU representatives voting together with their Republikaner colleagues.

One needs to bear in mind that the governing CDU presents a different image at the national (and international) level than it does at the grass roots. This does not detract from Chancellor Kohl's achievement in having marginalised the Republicans at the elections to the European Parliament. (During the election campaign would-be Fuehrer Schönhuber accused Jewish community leader Ignaz Bubis of stirring up antisemitism.)

For all that, the actions of Chancellor Kohl need to be looked at with unsleeping watchfulness. The author of the insensitive phrase "I was blessed with a belated birth", the stage manager of the Bitburg ceremony and the prime mover in the diplomatic recognition of Ustasha-nostalgic Croatia, is also the man who wanted a sanitised Museum of National History next door to his Chancellery at Bonn.

According to him, German postwar history is one of gratifying progress from rubble-strewn townscapes and Allied occupation to prosperity and European pre-eminence. The Chancellor's blueprint for the museum didn't actually convey an untruth, it simply failed to tell the whole truth.

So much for Germany. What about Europe's other danger spots? For once Austria and Hungary are marching in step – with the Europhobic Haider defeated and Czurkas marginalised. In France a respectable anti-Maastricht party has stolen some of Le Pen's thunder. In still-volatile Russia Zhirinovskiy's rightwing monopoly is similarly threatened by Ruts-koi and the newly returned Solshenytsin. Belgium has seen worrying gains by the Far Right, but the new sick man of Europe is, without a doubt, Italy. Not only does the Berlusconi cabinet contain devotees of the Duce, but Senate Speaker Pivetti is a Jew-baiting militant Catholic. If the Church were to censure Signora Pivetti it would demonstrate that it really has turned over a new page in the blood-bespattered relationship with Jewry. □



Spoils from the Temple. Relief from the Arch of Titus, Rome.

No Name Change

Thank you for the many interesting suggestions for a possible renaming of *AJR Information*. However, the Committee of Management, while recognising that the journal goes far beyond the mere provision of information, decided that *AJR Information* had been in existence with that title for almost fifty years, and that no useful purpose would be served by changing the name.

Accordingly, *AJR Information* will remain *AJR Information* and will continue to cover a wide range of subjects of interest to our readers.

As a token of appreciation to those of you who took the trouble to make suggestions, we have held a prize draw. The lucky name pulled out of the hat is R F Jaray of Harrow, to whom a £25 Marks & Spencer voucher has been sent. □

Questionnaire

Many thanks to all of you who have completed the questionnaire enclosed with the June issue. We would like those of you who have not responded to do so, even at this stage. In view of the excellent response, it will take us some time to analyse the replies, so please bear with us. As soon as we can, we shall publish statistical results, and individual requests will be discussed, where appropriate, with the persons concerned. □

CITIZENSHIP, NATIONALITY AND MIGRATION IN EUROPE

A conference organised jointly by the Centre for European Studies, UCL, and the Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library, in conjunction with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

21-23 September 1994

Bringing together international experts from a range of disciplines, this conference explores key questions concerning patterns of migration, different national policies and their relation to political, social and cultural policies. The focus is on four selected countries - Britain, France, Germany and Italy - within the broader European context.

For further information please contact:
The Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street,
London W1N 2BH.
Phone: 071-636 7247/7248

Profile

Green-fingered Matron



Margaret Goldschmidt.

Photo: Newman.

“Your work in Heinrich Stahl House...is beyond praise, and you leave it with the knowledge of having earned not only the admiration of all in the AJR and the CBF, but the love and deep attachment and gratitude of all residents.”

The above paragraph was penned, twenty-four years ago, by the late Dr C I Kapralik on the occasion of Margaret Goldschmidt's retirement as Matron of the Home. It was not simply a paean of praise, composed for a public occasion, but is contained in a personal letter still treasured by its recipient. All those who remember Miss Goldschmidt's time as Matron recall her with similar affection.

Born in 1904, in Bielefeld, where her father was a leading member of the Jewish community, she came to Britain in April 1939 on a domestic permit, to work for a family with three children. The mother, the two boys and Margaret were evacuated to Hampshire in the early stages of the war. The inhabitants of the small village were suspicious of this foreign lady who stayed up late at night, using a typewriter. They thought she might be a spy. Eventually, the local vicar, with whom she made friends, acted as arbitrator and convinced people otherwise, and she became an established part of the village scene.

Soon afterwards, the father of the family, a doctor who had remained at home in Kent to run his surgery, recalled her from darkest Hampshire. He needed a receptionist/housekeeper, and Margaret filled the bill. Although scared of the bombs which “fortunately, didn't hit us” she enjoyed this

period and learned first-aid, as well as honing her gardening skills. By the end of the war she had become very much a part of the family. (Her own, apart from one of her three brothers, was lost in the Holocaust.) By 1958 the family had grown - with the addition of a little girl who was, sadly, severely autistic. Having shared the heavy burden of caring for this child for five difficult years, Margaret felt that it was time to move on. She was offered, and accepted, the post of assistant matron at Leo Baeck House. Here she stayed for over four years.

At the end of this time, Margaret was appointed Matron of the newly opened Heinrich Stahl House. Over the next eight years she established the Home's personality and set the standards for providing the levels of individual care which have become the hallmark of OSHA homes ever since.

Her willingness to take on any job in the Home, from cooking to changing light bulbs, and encouraging others to do the same, cheerfully, helped to create a family atmosphere between the staff and the residents. She still speaks with great affection of those with whom she worked, and those who were in her care.

Another of her achievements was the creation of the beautiful gardens around Heinrich Stahl House. In those first days, in 1962, the gardens resembled a building site, which, until recently, they had been. One afternoon, as she stood amongst the rubble, trying to establish some kind of order, a passer-by stopped to offer a comment about the great potential such a site held for a gardener. She agreed, and hired the man on the spot. Together they created the gardens as they still, largely, appear today.

Having moved, on her retirement, to a sheltered flat at Eleanor Rathbone House, Margaret is still growing flowers, albeit, these days, indoors. Visitors to the house are always struck by the beauty of the surrounding gardens; its flowerbeds were lovingly tended by Margaret for over 20 years. Although too frail now to work in the gardens, the apartment is full of greenery. Exotic, and not so exotic, plants are everywhere.

Margaret Goldschmidt has just turned 90. She is still a powerful personality, commanding love and respect from her friends and neighbours. We hope she will continue to enjoy her flowers for many years to come.

□ M.N.

Gathering of the clan

The resilience of the Rothschild family is one of the most remarkable phenomena of modern Jewish history. No less than 75 members of the family (from London, Paris, Geneva and New York) assembled in late February in Frankfurt for the 250th anniversary of Mayer Amschel's birth.

What struck me most forcibly during the two-day series of events was the emphasis which both Lord Rothschild and Guy de Rothschild, the heads of the English and French houses respectively, laid on their own Jewish identity. It would be interesting to determine how many of the seventy-five who participated were halachically Jewish, but who would question a Rothschild who wishes to identify with us?

The anniversary meant a great deal to Frankfurt, which has much to atone for. The Mayor, Andreas von Schoeler, stressed the town's debt to the Jews. They had first come in the year 1150 and been expelled no less than four times, with the fourth and most painful expulsion taking place under the Nazis. Now there is a fifth renewal: some 5,000 Jews – numbers are growing daily thanks to the Russian influx – have re-established themselves.

The glamourised Frankfurt ghetto was, on the whole, an appalling place. Built to accommodate 100 persons, it accommodated 3,000 by the time Napoleon blew it apart in 1796. In it the great wealth of court suppliers co-existed with abject poverty. Mayer Amschel was reputed to have gone about at night to dispense charity anonymously.

In his speech at the Römer (the old Town Hall of Frankfurt), Lord Rothschild referred to his ancestor in the following terms:

He lived for most of his working life in the Judengasse, that long, narrow street whose inmates were locked up every night and confined to the ghetto on Sundays and public holidays. According to Goethe "The filth, the dirt, the multitudes, the accents of a strange language altogether made an unpleasant impression." Goethe was not prejudiced, but simply describing what he saw.

Mayer Amschel had a vision of a network of European countries collaborating and improving their communal lot. He had a vision of the emancipation of the Jews with his five sons as the successful promoters, the emblem of European and personal prosperity. The founder of the Rothschild EEC and his sons, based their highly successful enter-

prises on some well-defined virtues. His son, N M Rothschild, who went to London, once wrote to his four brothers: "After dinner I usually have nothing to do. I do not read books, I do not play cards, I do not go to the theatre, my only pleasure is my business and in this way I read Amschel's, Solomon's, Jacob's and Carl's letters." Fortunately, Lord Rothschild went on, no one in the present generations would expect similar dedication, and indeed, the family, over the last two-hundred years, has spent as much energy on philanthropy and the arts as on business.

We have records of Mayer Amschel's grandparents' graves in the old Jewish cemetery which served the community from 1240 until 1812. It presents a sorry sight. Where once there was a dense forest of tombstones, all with Hebrew lettering, there is now a green lawn. The stones were removed by the Nazis and used for building purposes. A few, among them Mayer Amschel's, miraculously survived and they are huddled like an evocative Jacob Kramer painting in one corner of the cemetery.

Arthur Fried, Chief Executive of the Rothschild Foundation in Israel, and an orthodox Jew, led the Kadish at the old cemetery.

Jacob and his brother Amschel from London, Guy and Elie from Paris and Edmond from Geneva stood behind him in silent prayer. The occasion was made mov-

ing by the tragic desolation of the cemetery as well as the immediately adjacent ghetto excavations. It was at this very spot that the Judengasse started where the old Boerneplatz Synagogue once stood.

When the town council decided in 1985 to build an office block and excavations started, the remnants of the old ghetto were discovered. The citizens of Frankfurt protested and occupied the site to preserve it. A compromise was reached and a new Jewish Museum which includes two Mikvaot and remnants of the old buildings was created under the office block.

We visited the "new cemetery" in the Rat-Beil-Strasse in which Mayer Amschel's wife and son were buried. Gone were the days of the plain, Hebrew-lettered tombstones such as the one which was placed over Mayer's grave. By now the rich Jews had assimilated to the custom of elaborate catafalques over family tombs.

This cemetery also houses the remains of many of Frankfurt's most prominent Jews, including Samson Raphael Hirsch, the Nobel Prize winner Paul Ehrlich, Leopold Sonnemann of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and Leopold Casella, the founder of the small chemical firm which ultimately became IG Farben. My grandfather was one of the last to have been buried there.

The town's Book of Honour signing ceremony by twenty-one male members of the family at the Römer in a way symbolised the return of the Rothschilds to Frankfurt. Sir Evelyn and his French cousins established a new branch in 1989 after a pause of 88 years. (The last of the Frankfurt Rothschilds, Baron Willi, had passed away in 1901.)

What distinguished this weekend was the simplicity of the celebrations. Whilst we lunched at a couple of former Rothschild residences, the principle venues were the two cemeteries and the Jewish Museum, which is entirely financed by the municipality and housed in the former family Palais on the River Main, facing the cultural mile of the town's many museums. (In October of this year the Museum will feature an Exhibition *250 years of Rothschild* which promises to attract worldwide attention.)

The celebrations came to a climax with a musical soirée in the course of which Chancellor Kohl emphasised the historic contributions of the Rothschilds to Frankfurt and, indeed, the economies of so many European countries.

A new era has begun. For the fifth time Jews have resettled in Frankfurt; the Rothschilds have also returned. Will history repeat itself?

□ Fred Worms

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Reviews

Real life on the Rialto

John Gross, *SHYLOCK*, Chatto and Windus. £18.

"Shylocke the Jew, a man of extreme crueltie..." thus ran Shakespeare's own description of his contribution to the corpus of antisemitic literature. England's, perhaps the world's, greatest playwright had created an archetypal usurer who – together with his predecessor, the traitor Judas, and his successor, Fagin, Dickens' "fence" and child exploiter – has plagued the image, and even the self-image, of the Jewish people.

John Gross, in this marvellous book, considers that aspect, but also the possibility that "Our Will" meant *The Merchant of Venice* to be anti-antisemitic. Gross deploys astonishing knowledge and evocative descriptions of the performances of great actors who often gave hair-raising interpretations of the role amid the jeers and ravings of their audiences. Nor does he neglect the changes in hearts and minds between the seventeenth century and the present.

The Shylock early audiences loved to hate was a red-haired, hook-nosed, becaftaned monster, hissed even before he had uttered a word. Any subtlety was eschewed, but Gross makes it clear that such performances often abounded in frightening power. Yet the more humane interpretations also elicited applause.

The differences in the portrayal of the Jew can be briefly highlighted by the performance of Charles Macklin in 1741 and that of the great Henry Irving in 1879. Macklin gave a trenchant portrayal of Shylock the villain; Irving, who had taken the trouble to inform himself of Jewish life, presented the victim of hatred and obloquy. He avoided histrionics such as wielding the knife in the pound of flesh scene and reaped great critical acclaim.

It is possible that Shakespeare meant Shylock to be seen like that, that he deliberately showed the Christians' carelessness, snobbish churlishness and abject cringing when caught out in business failure (like Antonio, the merchant of the title). But I doubt it: Shakespeare was too great a playwright not to balance carefully the weights in the thespian scales. He wanted a villain, but not a total monster such as Marlowe's contemporaneous *Jew of Malta*.

Jewish actors have tackled the part. As early as 1817 "Mr Sherenbeck of Rochester" tried his luck at Covent Garden. He

gave Shylock a lisp and thus added yet another burden to those already borne by Jews. He was harshly criticised for his linguistic contortions; otherwise his performance sank without a trace. In the 1930s Maurice Moscovitch played Shylock in Yiddish at the Pavilion Theatre, Whitechapel. The audience laughed. (In extenuation it could be said that the Bard had never meant it to be a tragedy.)

Anthony Sher played him in a way that emphasised Gentile prejudice and villainy. The actor wanted Shylock to be the epitome of a victim of generalised racial hatred.

Among the attempts to alter the time factor the most outstanding recent example was Jonathan Miller's production with Olivier as the Jew in Victorian garb (National Theatre, 1970; TV 1973). It created a stir, but one commentator wrote, rightly, that outside of their place and time all those involved in the wager would have been either sent to prison or the lunatic asylum.

□ John Rossall

Israel's finest hours

Herman Wouk, *THE HOPE*, Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99

In the final analysis this book, by the world famous author of *The Caine Mutiny*, is a historical novel. But it seems to me that almost every Jewish reader will see it as a breathlessly narrated tale of all our yesterdays.

The epic starts on the eve of the proclamation of the State of Israel and ends in the aftermath of the Six Day War. And epic it is, though, as befits a skilful novelist, Wouk involves us in the lives of some otherwise commonplace personalities whom history lifted out of the ordinary.

The great players on the stage of history, the political leaders and military captains, are also there – some of them still on the stage now – and they are portrayed warts and all: the wilful, but self-sacrificial Ben Gurion, the hesitant Eshkol, the vain, self-promoting and madly courageous Dayan and the tense, nervous Rabin (who still guides Israel's destiny). Golda Meyer prefaces her leap into fame by struggling with her slipping bloomers just before a vital cabinet meeting.

Wouk shows that brilliance of invention and improvisation, combined with sheer guts, were constantly undermined by mud-

dle (*balagan*) and a contentiousness which often endangered the gains. But the great motivation that overcame all was the resolve to end two thousand years of suffering.

One cannot fail to be moved by the heroism of the refugees from the camps who were rushed into the battle of Latrun. The Jewish "warriors" did not understand the Hebrew orders to retreat and so advanced into withering fire. A youth called Yossi Blumenthal earns the nickname "Don Kishote" by arriving on the battlefield on a commandeered donkey, he distinguishes himself again and again in many battles. By the end he is a national hero, Lt. Col. Nitzan (a translation of Bloom) but is still Kishote to his men. Although the characters are fictitious, I suspect real persons lie behind the fictions.

Another "invented" character is Zev Barak, formerly Wolfgang Berkowitz from Vienna. He is at the centre of the difficult and delicate negotiations with the Americans via a special relationship with Cunningham, a fundamentalist Christian CIA man who has the ear of Presidents. Through Barak the reader experiences the unbelievable, dizzying twists and turns at the United Nations, Congress and the ante-chambers of the White House.

Some critics have baulked at the (too) frequent use of Yiddish and Hebrew words. But there are no more foreign words than would be found in an equivalent novel about India or China. Either way, this would hardly spoil the enjoyment of readers of this periodical.

□ John Rossall

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A hierarchy of victims

Some years ago we went to Crete for our holiday. We stayed in a pleasant hotel in a small town on the Northern coast not far from Soudha Bay, where a British Fleet still lies rotting at the bottom of the sea.

The owners of the hotel turned out to be quite different from those one normally meets in an industry which makes its living from foreign tourists. They were well-educated, intelligent and articulate people who had been children during the German occupation. Consequently, they were not insensitive to the legacy of grief that still lingers, even after all that time. Not surprisingly, we learnt a great deal about the history of Crete from them and they expected us to visit places on the island that they considered important. We did our best to comply.

One of the most significant to them was not Knossos or Phaestos, or any of the famous Minoan sites, but a place called Arkadi, a monastery where a massacre had taken place during the last century, when Crete was part of the Ottoman Empire.

After one of the many nationalist uprisings a number of Greek men, women and children who had taken refuge there were brutally slaughtered by the Turks. Our hosts supplied us with literature in English and with copious verbal explanations. Eventually we went there, on a rickety bus which barely managed to drag itself up the steep mountain roads.

The memorial was an intensely private place. No concessions were made to non-Greek speakers and no captions, descriptions or explanations were given in any other language. Exhibits of all kinds were distributed almost haphazardly throughout the various rooms and the courtyard outside. There were old newspapers, pictures, some relics and also, in a dreadful ossuary, a collection of skulls and bones derived from the corpses of all ages and sexes, showing signs of torture, mutilation and execution.

Slowly, the horror of it seeped into my consciousness. I had read about it and knew the history, but up to that moment it was something that had happened to other people. Now it became real and personal and, though I was an outsider, I felt what anyone coming to this shrine of remembrance might feel. I was shaken to the core.

The aspects of human joy and happiness may be infinitely varied, but the faces of extreme suffering and anguish are always, tragically, the same. Who could tell the difference between one smashed skull and another – and who would want to?

One could so easily draw distinctions between different persecutions one way or another; Jews, Greeks, Black Slaves and all the others and perhaps rank them in some order of severity, or tragedy, or ghastliness and that would be absolutely right.

However, to those involved, to those who have actually suffered in any such atrocity these differences must seem quite academic. It feels the same and the outrage is the same too for those who are left, whatever the occasion, whoever has suffered.

With these sober reflections we returned to the hotel. Our hostess was anxious to learn our impressions and we told her how reminiscent everything was of all the horrors and atrocities one had ever heard of, against Jews, or Armenians, or Blacks, or anybody. She answered harshly and dismissively: "I don't know about those others," she said, "but we suffered most."

I was rather shocked by her intolerance, but, I asked myself, could it not have been a Jewish woman talking, or an Armenian, or a Vietnamese, or any other of that endless family of grief who haunt the pages of history? And would not all of them have been right, each in their own way, within their perceptions and experiences and the folklore and belief handed down within their tradition – no matter what any outsider might say?

□ Manfred Landau



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Letters to the Editor



NURTURE, NOT NATURE

Sir – I really do not know what prompts you to dub a case like Peter Zander's a *friendly fire casualty*? (Letters, June issue) My case is very similar to his and, like him, I almost became a casualty, not of any *friendly fire*, but of Nazi hatred for three of my grandparents. And the fire we faced while serving in the British Army was anything but friendly.

So – where I do differ fundamentally from Mr Zander is this: I believe that each of the four monotheistic religions – Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism – impart moral ethics with different emphases, with varied results, the best-known example being the attitude of Jewish educated girls. They never, ever, "dethrone" their parents as Christian educated girls are inclined to do, in favour of their husbands – no matter how good the marriage. Jewish mothers demand obedience from their children-in-law almost to the same extent as from their own, and if mixed marriages have a bad reputation as to their durability this is often the cause.

There is a group difference between Jews and Christians, and this is where biological racists make their most blasphemous blunder: the difference is not in the genes, but in the received culture and passed-on tradition. A new baby can be turned into either Jew or Christian, Moslem or Buddhist and the *Erbgut* (Nazi-speak for biological inheritance) has nothing at all to do with it.

Connaught Ave
Grimsby

E H Kenneth

INTERNMENT RECALLED

Sir – An exhibition *Living with the Wire* at the Manx Museum, Douglas, Isle of Man will continue until October. It is a fascinating record of civilian internment on the island during two world wars.

For those of your readers who were internees it offers more than nostalgia or a chance to re-live a, possibly painful, part of their past. It also provides an opportunity to understand the individual experience in a wider context.

Those who are interested, but cannot go to the exhibition, can get a copy of the book about the exhibition from the Manx Museum and National Trust, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 3LY.

Corringham Road
London NW11

Mrs Edna Sovin

A REPUBLIC WITHOUT REPUBLICANS

Sir – No statistics can conceal the fact that, between the end of World War I and the advent of Hitler in 1933, Germany was a "Republic without Republicans". Of course, there were politicians who regarded democracy as an ideal, but their influence on public opinion was scant.

For those of us who entered school after 1919, it soon became abundantly clear that the German high schools were hotbeds of chauvinism and antisemitism. German youth was purposely brought up in accordance with the gospel of the stab-in-the-back. At the same time, anti-republican tendencies were being fostered in the universities.

While the working classes would generally vote for the parties left of centre, the education of the middle classes was targeted towards rearing the next generation in a spirit of ultra-nationalism. The suffering of millions of war victims was conveniently ignored. I never heard expressions of guilt for Germany having waged a war of aggression. On the contrary: Germany was the victim – the country had been betrayed.

Holland Park
London W11

J Rotter

FRIENDLY FIRE CASUALTY

Sir – Mr Zander will recall an earlier riposte in which I deplored anyone giving Hitler a posthumous reward.

Assimilation did not save many Jews in Germany. Prof. Einstein, no orthodox believer, stated that a Jew is happier remaining a Jew.

Jews never refer to anyone as *infidels*, and spiritual ghettos are terms attributable to such noble souls as Luther. I earnestly hope that Mr Zander may never – in similar circumstances – need the haven offered by Palestine/Israel when many assimilationists were saved by its existence.

Lindsey Drive
Kenton, Middx

H Needham

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PETER C. RICKENBACK

ZIONISM NOT OK

Sir – I read your leader *Poisoned Springs of Vichy Water* (May issue) with interest. This discussed, quite rightly, the antisemitism which to this day infects every walk of French life, and disgraces both Church and State.

However, your adjacent article, *Strasbourg Encounter*, is quite another thing, for what you are saying is that Zionism is OK, so long as it doesn't go too far. Well, Zionism isn't OK, as any of the millions of Palestinians, many displaced, will tell you.

Far from being an honourable and humanitarian creed, Zionism is nothing more than a nationalist Ashkenazi movement which has attempted to solve the Jewish problem in Europe by colonising Palestine.
Belgrave Street
Rochdale, Lancs

Stefan George

COME CLEAN, ANON

Sir – I write to express puzzlement and sadness regarding *Anon's* rather peculiar letter (June issue). Peculiar for my inability to classify either letter or writer. What kind of person (and with what kind of expectations) would pen such a letter. Constructive criticism....yes. Nonsense like that....no. Perhaps *Anon* would tell us what he wants.

Wembley Park Drive
Middlesex

Stephen Batkin

VIENNA MUSEUM

Sir – On 18 November, 1993, the new Jewish Museum of the city of Vienna was opened. A number of temporary exhibitions are being shown until a permanent collection of Judaica will be displayed in 1996.

One of the main goals of this museum is to communicate basic knowledge and information on the Jewish people and their culture. Next year, the 50th anniversary of World War Two, our museum will open a new exhibition based on a collection of 5,000 antisemitic objects, publications, manuscripts, oil-paintings, prints and Nazi Propaganda materials. Our curators have specifically chosen to open this exhibition in 1995, in order to acknowledge the Nazi policy of persecution and annihilation, and to communicate information to the younger generations on the Shoah.

We are aware of the important work of your Association. So many Austrian citizens emigrated to Great Britain and thrived in their new homeland. We wish to contact these Austrian emigrés and inform them how modern, democratic Austria has changed for the better.

Jüdisches Museum, Wien
Trattnerhof 2/101, A1010 Wien

Annette Eisenberg

Was the Shoah singular?

I write to take issue with Dr. Birnbaum (letter in the April Issue) over his claim that the Holocaust was unique as a co-ordinated, organised plan to eradicate an entire people.

I am an AJR volunteer (non-Jewish) and married to an Armenian. My friends among the older generation include Armenian and Jewish survivors from both genocides.

In all charity, I hope that Dr Birnbaum, and others, who claim that the Jewish Holocaust was not only unique in its scale and organisation, but also in its intention and outcome, are simply ignorant of the tragic historical events which have also been visited upon millions of non-Jews.

Obviously, in some ways the Holocaust was unique: its sheer scale and comprehensiveness; the level of organisation and application of technology; the meticulous documentation by the perpetrators themselves and the relentless media coverage

which keeps the Holocaust before our eyes.

However, these details do not compare with the more profound similarities which exist certainly between the Armenian and Jewish genocides, and I suspect others too.

First and foremost, the most fundamental moral similarity is that of *intention*. There is absolutely no doubt at all that the intention of the Turks in 1915, under the leadership of Enver Pasha, was the liquidation of all Armenians throughout Turkey, and especially in Eastern Turkey. Ideals of Turkish racial purity combined with the aim of establishing a pan-Turkish empire, from Constantinople to the coveted oil-fields near Baku, to focus attention on a culturally different racial minority who stood in the way, and whose talents, especially in business, finance and the arts bears such resemblance to the Jews. Centuries of pogroms culminated in 1915 in organised massacres which have left Turkey virtually free of Armenians to this day.

As with the Jewish Holocaust, to quote Dr Birnbaum, "every single man, woman and child was targeted, and none was exempt". It was thought that at least a

million Armenians died – 25% of a total world population of four million.

Hitler was confident that he would never be called to account for the slaughter of six million Jews because of the way the world had ignored the Armenian genocide. "Who now remembers Armenia?", he is said to have boasted.

It is quite right that Jewish survivors should wish the world to remember, through Holocaust museums, centres for Holocaust studies, *Schindler's List* and other books, films and TV programmes. But please remember how offensive it is to others when it appears that Jewish survivors would wish to deny them that same right.

To this day Turkey does not acknowledge the Armenian genocide, and has censored from its historical accounts and tourist information all mention of the ancient Armenian civilisation which once existed in what is now Eastern Turkey. Woe betide any tourist who dares ask who built the thousand-year old, somewhat Romanesque churches which are now crumbling to ruins throughout Eastern Anatolia.

A recent TV programme about the possible site of Noah's ark showed the remains of many stone crosses, indicating the sites of early Christian shrines. The style and the inscriptions were clearly Armenian and yet not once was this fact mentioned – a condition, no doubt, of the Turkish authorities allowing anything to be filmed at all.

□ Angela Arratoon

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The AJR at Work

Fund-gap bridged



Madeleine Brook (Left) and Hannah Goldsmith – Bridge Party organisers.

Bridge players of all standards joined together for the first ever card-playing extravaganza at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre on 19 June. The Sunday evening event, which was arranged with great style by Madeleine Brook and Hannah Goldsmith, attracted ninety-six guests who, between them, raised over eleven hundred pounds for the Day Centre. The money represented income from entrance fees, a raffle and table money.

Before settling down to the serious business of card-combat, all the guests enjoyed a mini garden party in the Cleve Road

grounds, where drinks were served. Sustenance, in the form of sandwiches and strawberries with cream, were delivered to players' tables. The kind ministrations of the volunteers who selflessly gave of themselves to make this event possible prevented any of the outbreaks of gunplay and violence usually associated with big-time card schools.

The social success of the evening, combined with the not inconsiderable donation to the Day Centre's funds, make the likelihood of a repeat performance very high indeed. □ M.N.

Message from Ernest David

While there are no practical benefits to be gained, it is sometimes agreeable to speculate "what if". I felt this way when, recently, my wife and I visited Prague with a tour organised by the Belgian "Hidden Children" committee. There were 74 of us, most of the party having been hidden as children in occupied Belgium and France.

Prague is one of the most beautiful cities I have visited in a lifetime of travel. The architecture is superb. The absence of a major Jewish presence in a city whose pre-war cultural life was largely based on Jews, is chilling. There is a small Jewish community struggling to maintain its identity, but the main interest is now historical.

It is sad to contemplate that almost 50 years after the end of German occupation and brutality (5000 Czechs were killed just between 5 May and 8 May 1945), there is still a general air of shabbiness, although there is much evidence of progress into a modern society.

However, there is an old-world feel to the city, and I speculated that had there been no war, I might have been a frequent visitor from my native Vienna, to relax, take in the sights and listen to music in the charming atmosphere of the queen of European cities, where Mozart was loved and appreciated in his day. □

AJR 'Drop in' Advice Centre

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6

between 10 a.m. and 12 noon on the following dates:

Thursday 4 August

Monday 8 August

Tuesday 16 August

Wednesday 24 August

Wednesday 31 August

and every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at:

AJR, 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Frognal,
London NW3

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

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If you live in North or North West London and wish to take advantage of this service phone Joanne Botsman on 071-328 0208 for details and an assessment interview.

Meals can still be collected from 15 Cleve Road on weekdays (Mondays–Thursdays) for £3.00 per meal.

AJR Social Service Department update 51st Amendment of the Austrian Social Security Act

We have heard that there is a possibility that people applying for an Austrian pension under the 51st Amendment (those born between May 1930 and December 1932), are being granted a pension on terms less advantageous than those who applied under the 48th Amendment.

If we are to make any kind of formal approach to the Austrian Pension Authority we need to have evidence that there are indeed discrepancies.

Anyone who has been offered an Austrian pension under the 51st Amendment and asked to pay significantly greater contributions than earlier recipients under the 48th Amendment, should let us know so that, if appropriate, we can build a dossier of evidence. If for example, you were requested to pay in excess of £3000 in contributions, we should like to hear from you in writing. □

Healthcare Charges deducted from Austrian pensions

It has been brought to our attention that some people who receive Austrian pensions have had certain deductions (*Krankenvers. Beitrag*) made from their pensions to pay for Healthcare. Inquiries have been made through the British Department of Health and they have given us the following information:

“Under Austrian law pensioners resident in Austria have to pay a contribution from their pension for Healthcare cover. However, where a European Economic Area national, living in the UK, receives both an Austrian and a UK social security pension, he or she has title under EC Law to healthcare in the UK at UK expense. No deductions from the Austrian pension should be made.”

If any deductions for healthcare are made from your pension it is recommended that you write a letter of complaint to the relevant pension authority, making refer-

ence to the information above. It is most important that you quote your Austrian Insurance number (VSNR) in all correspondence with the pension authority. Enclose with your letter a photocopy of the front of your British Pension book and if this is not possible make sure you quote your British Pension number.

If deductions of Austrian Social Security contributions continue, say, 3 months after your initial complaint to the pension authority please write to Mrs Markey, Austrian Embassy, 18 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU, enclosing copies of all previous correspondence.

If you require any assistance with writing a letter please contact the AJR. □

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AUGUST

<i>Monday 1</i>	THE JACK DAVIDOFF QUARTET – With Nostalgic Music
<i>Tuesday 2</i>	MORE VIENNESE WHIRLS – Miriam & Kathleen Gilbert accompanied by Bridget Marshall (Piano)
<i>Wednesday 3</i>	SONGS & ARIAS IN AUGUST – Geoffrey Strum accompanied by Bob Eves (Piano)
<i>Thursday 4</i>	A PARTY AFTERNOON – Dorothy Sayers (Piano & Accordion)
<i>Sunday 7</i>	DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT

<i>Monday 8</i>	WELL-LOVED CLASSICAL FAVOURITES – Carmen Lasok (Soprano), Louise Langston (Mezzo), Amen Boldy (Tenor), Stephen Bowen (Bass) accompanied by Kirsty Purves (Piano)
<i>Tuesday 9</i>	A LITTLE LIGHT MUSIC – Sarah Cooper (Soprano) accompanied by Stuart Wild (Piano)
<i>Wednesday 10</i>	MELODY HOUR – David Jedwab (Tenor) & Avril Kaye (Soprano) accompanied by Mabel Witztum (Piano)
<i>Thursday 11</i>	(a) OUTING TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE (b) AN HOUR OF MUSIC ON AN AUGUST AFTERNOON – Helen Blake (Soprano) accompanied by Graham Wheeler (Piano)
<i>Sunday 14</i>	OPEN DAY
<i>Monday 15</i>	CANTORIAL GEMS & MENDELSSOHN PIANO MUSIC – The Two Marshalls – Cantor Stone & Bridget
<i>Tuesday 16</i>	CAMERATA TRIO
<i>Wednesday 17</i>	SATYA BARHAM (Soprano) & GEOFFREY WHITWORTH (Piano) ENTERTAIN
<i>Thursday 18</i>	LA VIE FRANCAISE – Shirley Smart (Cello) accompanied by Catherine Summerhayes (Piano)
<i>Sunday 21</i>	DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT

<i>Monday 22</i>	PRIMROSE AND PENELOPE ENTERTAIN – Primrose Powell (Soprano) and Penelope Spurrell (Piano)
<i>Tuesday 23</i>	GREEN THOUGHTS – Rona Israel (Soprano) accompanied by Charlotte Matthew (Piano)
<i>Wednesday 24</i>	MUSICAL SHOW PARADE – Stephen Norbert (Piano) & Eugen Kurti (Violin)
<i>Thursday 25</i>	SUMMER SONG & MUSIC – Sue Kennett (Soprano) accompanied by Gordon Weaver (Piano)
<i>Sunday 28</i>	DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
<i>Monday 29</i>	CLOSED – BANK HOLIDAY
<i>Tuesday 30</i>	GEOFFREY STRUM & JOHNNY WALTON ENTERTAIN
<i>Wednesday 31</i>	SONGS OLD – SONGS NEW – SONGS YOU WILL REMEMBER – Eddy Simmons with Piano Accompaniment

SEPTEMBER

<i>Thursday 1</i>	CONTINENTAL COCKTAIL – Helen Mignano (Soprano) accompanied by Sylvia Cohen (Piano)
<i>Sunday 4</i>	CLOSED – AJR CONCERT
<i>Monday 5</i>	CLOSED AFTER LUNCH – EREV ROSH HASHANAH
<i>Tuesday 6</i>	CLOSED – ROSH HASHANAH
<i>Wednesday 7</i>	CLOSED – ROSH HASHANAH

FAMILY EVENTS

Birth

Benedyk Karen (née Morland) and Martin are delighted to announce the safe arrival of **Joseph Aaron**; a brother for Daniel and Alex; another grandson for Ingrid and Henry Morland and Pamela and George Benedyk.

Deaths

Gruenwald Edith Gruenwald (née Lendvai) died on 14 May, aged 79. Missed by husband Ernest and friends.

Letchner Gerda Letchner (née Glück), born Sweden 1902, has died at home after 60 happy years in the UK. Her enthusiasm, love of life and people and her active interest in the world around her was characteristic of her agelessness and ongoing dialogue with family and friends both

Search Notices

Joachim and Ingeborg Danielsohn, born between 1920-1924 children of Arthur and Marianne of Rathenow. Please contact old friend Egon Kornblum, Scheinstrasse 32, 45359 Essen, Germany. Phone: (Germany) 02 01/68 48 10.

Professional screenwriter writing a fictional cinema film about Jews in **Lisbon** around 1938 would like to speak **urgently** to anyone with memories/information of Portugal 1938-45. Please contact: Charles Harris, 17 Langland Gardens, London NW3 6QE.

Researcher investigating mixed marriage, specifically Jewish-Christian couples who remained in Germany during the last war, would like to speak to anyone who knows of a partner in such a marriage who is still living. Please contact: Peter Prager, 17 Roy Gardens, Ilford, Essex, IG2 7QG. Phone: 081-590 5203.

L Werner Philippi, born 3/8/1908, and his sister **Lore Philippi**, born 7/4/1920, both in Berlin, the children of Martin Philippi and Marie, née Lewisson. Information urgently required in connection with an inheritance matter. Do you know the date of Werner Philippi's death and his last address, possibly outside London? His sister's address after leaving England, probably for the USA? If so, please contact: P. Wertheim, Siemensstr. 3, D-12247 Berlin. Any costs will be refunded.

young and old. Her presence is missed by all who knew and loved her, particularly two daughters and sons-in-law and five grandchildren.

Stone setting

Gerrard The stone setting for the late Hilde Gerrard, a long-standing AJR member who died last year, will take place on Wednesday 24 August, 1994 at the Western Cemetery, Cheshunt.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

A newly updated edition of the Ben Uri Art Society's catalogue, edited by my husband Walter Schwab and Julia Wiener, has recently been published (£18 – £16 to members). It expands on the information in the original catalogue of 1987 to take account of 188 items acquired in the interim.

The major acquisition during the period was a magnificent oil painting by Lesser Uri (1861 – 1931), who worked in Berlin, entitled *Two Girls Walking Along the Street*. This, and other pictures, was bequeathed to the Society by Stephanie Ellen Kohn in memory of her family who perished in the Holocaust. Another major acquisition has been four etchings donated by the Berlin-born artist Frank Auerbach. Also of great interest are two etchings, *The Palms of Sakkarah* and *Samaritan High Priest*, by Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874 – 1925), the gift of the artist's family.

Of the 124 artists represented in the addition to the catalogue, no less than 30 were German or Austrian born, and of the 33 born in Central or Eastern Europe, many, such as Walter Trier, worked for long periods of their lives in Germany. Though many famous names are missing – the Society depends on generous contributions, bequests or gifts to add to its collection – the catalogue provides a broad, well-informed survey of work by Jewish artists and is deserving of a place on the bookshelves of any home. (Copies are available from the Ben Uri Art Society, 21 Dean Street, London W1.)

The Manor House Society present (until 16 September) *White Sky*, recent watercolours from Israel, Egypt and Sinai by Moish Sokal. Sokal grew up in Haifa, studied graphic design in Australia and took up painting full-time in England.

The British Museum is showing (until 21 August) a selection of 72 Indian paintings and drawings from the collection of Howard Hodgkin, the well-known British artist.



Head of peasant by Adolph von Menzel.
The Oskar Reinhart Foundation.

The paintings reveal the enormous vitality of Indian artistic life during the 16th to 19th centuries. Also at the British Museum (until 23 October) is an exhibition of *Greek Gold – Jewellery of the Classical World*, drawn from the Hermitage, St Petersburg, the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York and the British Museum.

Many of our old friends can be seen at the *Royal Academy Summer Exhibition* (until 14 August). Joseph Herman is showing an oil painting *Tulips*, Willy Soukop exhibits pieces in terracotta, wood and bronze, Philip Sutton is showing both watercolours and oils and Jack Goldhill is represented by two pieces.

R B Kitaj, born in 1932 in Cleveland, Ohio, is the man of the year. Of Jewish parentage, he studied in New York, Vienna, Oxford and at the Royal College in London. He had his first solo exhibition at the Marlborough in 1963 and is now considered one of the world's finest living artists. A Print Retrospective of his work is at the Victoria and Albert Museum (until 9 October). A retrospective exhibition of his paintings is at the Tate Gallery (until 4 September), from where it goes to New York and then Los Angeles. Marlborough Graphics are showing *Recent Pictures and Graphics 1974–1994* (until 20 August).

The National Gallery is exhibiting paintings and drawings from the Oskar Reinhart Foundation, Winterthur (until 4 September) featuring the lovely oil painting *Head of a Peasant with Three-Cornered Hat*, by Adolph von Menzel (pictured above).

Pels Leusden is holding its Summer Exhibition of works by Beckmann, Corinth, Ernst Kirchner, Macke, Marc and others at Kampen/Silt (until 20 August). □

SB's Column

Switzerland. Late summer is the time for lovers of serious and classical music and one would be hard-pressed to find a fuller concentration of top orchestras and conductors than during the *Lucerne Music Weeks* (August 17 to September 10). Here, Maazel, Abbado, Barenboim and Menuhin will cater to all tastes with orchestras from Berlin, Vienna, Pittsburgh and Cleveland.

Berlin. The city's top stage, the *Deutsches Theater*, pre-eminent since the closure of the *Schillertheater*, maintains high levels of performance and regularly stages revivals of the German classics. It concluded its season with a Kleist week which included *Amphytrion*, *Zerbrochener Krug* and *Kätchen von Heilbronn*.

Austria's Castle Grafenegg, famed since Metternich's days (as mentioned in this column in the January issue) is now featuring a special exhibition in memory of Oskar Werner, the versatile actor who died ten years ago. His international career is documented in posters, film journals, programmes, texts, reviews and photographs. He was most famous in Britain and France for his film roles in such pieces as *Jules et Jim* and *The spy who came in from the cold*.

100 years ago. Robert Katscher was born in Vienna in 1894. He belonged to that group of operetta composers of the nineteen-twenties and thirties who were undeservedly forgotten when the Nazis took power. His early hits included *Lou Lila* and *Wo hast Du denn die schönen blauen Augen her?*, sung by Marlene Dietrich. In the musical comedies *By Candlelight* and *Die Wunderbar* he collaborated with Karl Farkas. Their Foxtrot tune *Wenn die Elisabeth* was sung and whistled everywhere from Hamburg to Budapest and beyond. Katscher died in the USA in 1942.

Birthdays. Ephraim Kishon, the popular Hungarian-born author, humorist and lecturer, is 70 years old.

Klaus Maria Brandauer, the Austrian actor who portrayed Don Carlos and Mephisto and established a record by playing Hamlet at the *Vienna Burg* more than 100 times, has regrettably withdrawn from the stage after the untimely death of his wife. He has just celebrated his 50th birthday. □

NOTICE

Due to a printer's error the word *Moshiach* was mis-spelled on the front page of our July issue. Please accept our apologies for any upset or confusion caused.

AJR

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Before the anticlimax

A W Freud with the special Operations Executive in Austria

When I left for Italy I was physically perfectly fit and could handle explosives and any type of firearm. I could drive trains, open locks, transmit and receive wireless messages and even manufacture my own explosives. I had learned how to drive cars and motorcycles and could arrive gracefully at the end of a parachute.

After we had settled down in Fasano, our training continued, albeit in a less organised fashion than in Britain.

Mountaineering was a talent I had not previously acquired, so I was sent on a climbing course in the Abruzzi Mountains, east of Rome. There is a precipitous mountain in that range called Piccolo Corno, which I was required to conquer with the aid of ropes, crampons, pitons and snap-rings. I confess, I did not enjoy the experience and never took to mountain climbing again after the war.

At around the same time I was also sent on a course to learn the art of mule-driving. I could not imagine any circumstances under which I would have to drive a train of mules across the Austrian Alps, and rather felt that the authorities did not know quite what to do with me. It seemed as if they were sending me on any course available, whether it was relevant to my future employment or not, simply to keep me occupied.

Towards the end of 1944, my mental state began to deteriorate. One can only remain "keyed up" for a limited period, and my time was apparently up. I wanted to get on with it, do something useful, instead of doing more and more useless training. I was also out of tune with some of my new colleagues. These were not, like our original group, Jewish refugees from the Nazis, but German POWs of Austrian descent who had volunteered to fight for their captors. Who could tell if they were not Fifth Columnists, trying to infiltrate the Special Force? My fears were not groundless; after the war it was revealed that the Dutch Section had been completely undermined by the Gestapo and many brave lives lost through carelessness in London. The absence of security checks on messages from agents in Holland at the Baker Street Headquarters of the force led to a state of affairs where the Gestapo seemed to be running Special Forces Holland. British Intelligence prided itself on running most of the German spy rings in this country;

unfortunately, the Gestapo were doing the same with our men in Holland.

In Fasano I waited and waited, becoming progressively more unhappy. Our administrative officer was, in my opinion, a crook and I had a violent row with him. The dry batteries of my radio set were as precious as gold-dust, I had managed to get three from America and packed them in the luggage container which was to be dropped with us. When I checked, I found that he had removed them for his own use, without my permission. I suspected that he had used them for black market deals.

Our Commanding Officer in Italy was called Colonel Peters. His real name was Peter Wilkinson, the future British Ambassador to Austria. He had been parachuted in to Tito in Yugoslavia and was an experienced senior member of the Special Force. The trouble was that he was too distant. He seemed to have other, more important things to worry about than our supernumerary lot, and only visited us at Fasano rarely. I can only remember one or two visits, and to me it seemed that our well-being was not his first priority. However, it should also be stressed that he did not send me on a hopeless suicidal mission in order to earn glory for himself, as so many First World War Generals had been prone to do.

At long last, in early spring 1945, the time for action arrived. The Special Force Authorities had decided to send two parties simultaneously into Austria, one of four men, the other of two. I was to be the radio operator of the smaller party.

My companion, and boss, was Hans Schweiger, an ex-Austrian lawyer quite a few years older than myself. He was a very correct and somewhat finicky person, and not the most agile of men. (He dropped his rucksack during the operational jump.) But he was reliable, careful and thoughtful.

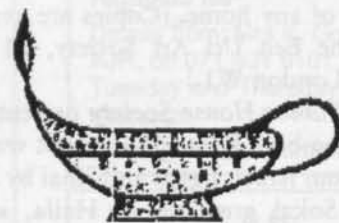
The other group was led by George Bryant, born Breuer, the grandson of Dr Joseph Breuer who, two generations earlier, co-operated with my grandfather on their first book *Studien Über Hysterie* of 1895. He, too, was an ex-Viennese lawyer. His wireless operator was Frank Kelly, born Koenig in Germany. The two other members of his party were Fred Warner (Werner) and Eric Rhodes, both from Hamburg. I had not changed my name. I am proud of it and I believed it quite pointless. If the Nazis caught one blowing up their railways etc., the result would be execution – no matter what the name of the perpetrator. At least I would perish under my true identity.

Only once was I ordered to change my name temporarily, and that was during

training. The village near one of our Special Training Schools had to be kept in ignorance of our foreign nationality; ex-nationality, I should say, as we were all stateless. Our laundry was sent to the village and we were told to mark the bundles with British names. I felt I could not do better than to call myself "Corporal Metherell". The inevitable happened: I got Major Metherell's laundry and he got mine. The next day, in addition to a severe ticking-off, Special Force Orders contained the following item: "Nobody in Special Forces is permitted to use the name Metherell."

We six jumpers knew each other well, having trained together for over a year and, in some cases, having been together in the pioneer corps. As usual, at my departure, there was a last minute rush; the wireless schedules (times for making contact) had to be agreed and the frequency of the radio crystals checked. The equipment had to be packed; we contemplated carefully every single item we took with us. I took too much, considering I had to carry every ounce of it. Later, in Austria, I would repack my rucksack at the end of each day's march and take out that which I considered too unimportant to carry any further. Did I really need all these rolls of toilet paper? As I hardly had anything to eat, I thought it safe to throw most of them away. Did I need more than one spare pair of socks? No, out they went. At the end of the mission, my pack was, at last, light enough to be carried comfortably.

To be continued...



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Planting the seed of awareness

A morning in February found me driving through streets I had known as a child refugee in the East End of London. I recognised some landmarks: Bethnal Green Town Hall, Gardiner's Corner and, in the Mile End Road, a building that used to be Wickhams' department store. Further on was the Roxy cinema where I'd seen my first English film – Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz*. I could see in my mind's eye the back streets full of Victorian villas with railed-off basements and the labourers' cottages with front doors opening straight onto pavements. Inside there would be a narrow passageway leading to the parlour and here would be displayed, on the "best" furniture, photographs of brides in sepia, courtesy of Boris the photographer. Today, highrise flats dominate the scene.

However, I was not making the journey for sentimental reasons, but to talk to a class of pupils in Langdon Park School at the invitation of the head of Humanities and Religious Studies. My visit was part of a scheme to use survivors of the Holocaust as witnesses to the events of the Nazi period. We are aware that on account of our age we are a diminishing resource, and this makes us all the more determined to tell our story. With this in mind, a group is meeting at the Holocaust Survivors' Centre to learn about effective ways of putting our message across to young people in schools and colleges. We know that others are also engaged on this task either through their own initiative, or through other organisations, but the need for speakers seems to be growing, especially now that Holocaust Studies feature in the A-level syllabus. Many schools are also attempting to tackle the subject in their Personal and Social Education programmes.

It might seem strange to volunteer for a task which inevitably brings up painful memories. However, I do feel that it is vital that the truth be told and that the younger generation, who have no personal memories of these events, should have access to it. This is especially necessary now that the reality of the Holocaust is being denied in some quarters.

I have had experience of talking to schoolchildren on this subject both in assemblies and in small groups as their teacher. In spite of this, I felt apprehensive as I approached the school and wondered what sort of response I would get as an outside person. I drove round the building

for some time and found all the entrances locked, no doubt for security reasons. Then, seeing a woman who looked as though she was a local, I asked her how I could get into the school. She turned out to be the other speaker and knew no more than I. We had a good laugh over my mistake. Eventually, we found the front entrance.

We were shown into the headteacher's room and, over coffee, met the teacher who had invited us. Later, we were joined by three thirteen-year-old girls who had been chosen to welcome us. One of them surprised us by telling us that she had seen, and videotaped, a recent TV programme about four Jewish people who had escaped extermination by being hidden in different occupied countries as children. She had obviously been moved by this account.

My colleague and I then went to different rooms to tell our stories. Mine was the headteacher's class. It contained a mixture of pupils of British, Asian, Afro-Caribbean and Chinese origins. A fairly typical inner-city class. I had wondered how I would convey my message to young people so remote in time and place from the events which had had such an impact on my life. I decided to concentrate on the aspects which might ring a bell with them: the unfairness of not being allowed to do what other people take for granted: sit on park-benches, go to cinemas and swimming-pools or be taught in the same class as

everybody else. Another point I thought they would understand is the anguish of parting from parents you had never left before, and having to learn a new language and adapt to a new culture. This paralleled some of their own experiences, though theirs would have been much less stressful than mine. Also, assuming that they would have little or no knowledge about the German occupation of Europe, I had brought copies of a simple map on which they could trace the progress of the Nazi forces. I hoped this would help them to understand how Jews were deported to the extermination-camps from so many different countries.

The pupils listened with rapt attention as I gave them a brief outline of the rise of Nazism and then went on to tell my story. My colleague had a different approach: she decided to start off with a role-playing exercise. She acted the part of her own mother coming back from the station after seeing her off. The class were the neighbours, asking questions about the parting. Personally, I would have found this approach too painful, but, apparently, it worked well with her audience.

In my class, some of the pupils asked thoughtful questions. One girl wanted to know whether *Schindler's List* (she had just seen it) was a true account of what happened. I replied that on the whole it was, but that it was impossible for actors who had never known that degree of brutality, fear and hunger to look anything like the real prisoners. Nevertheless, if the film gave some idea of the horrible atrocities that were committed, it served a useful purpose.

Another question was *Do you hate all Germans?* I replied that I thought the actual people who had carried out the atrocities were vile and hateful, but that a lot of otherwise ordinary people were pressurised into accepting things which they would not have done under normal circumstances. One also has to draw a distinction between them and the present generation who were not born when these deeds were done and can't be held responsible for them. However, I said that it was necessary for them to face up to the events of the Nazi period, so that lessons can be learned from it. I pointed out the need to be aware of the evils of racial and religious intolerance which we thought had been banished forever, but which are now, unfortunately, surfacing again.

I hope my talk did something towards making these young people aware of the dangers of a resurgence of Fascism, and the part they can play in avoiding it.

□ Martha Blend



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Ingredients

1 lightly heaped plateful of summer vegetables – young carrots, peas, beans, cauliflower, celery stalks – all diced or sliced except, of course, for the peas and the cauliflower which should be broken into small rosettes.

- Salt and pepper
- Butter and flour for the pudding basin
- 3 eggs
- 1 heaped teaspoon butter
- 1 scant tablespoon flour
- 9 fl. oz. (250 ml) milk
- Grated nutmeg
- 1 heaped tablespoon grated cheese (Cheddar, Parmesan or Caerphilly)
- Melted butter

Cook the vegetables in boiling, salted water until just tender – they should still have some "bite" to them. Drain – keep the water for stock – and sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper.

Butter and flour a pudding basin. Separate egg yolks and whites. Melt the tablespoon of butter in a saucepan, stir in the flour and gradually add the milk. Cook over a gentle heat until the sauce has thickened. Add salt, pepper and a little grated nutmeg. Stir in the cheese. Remove from heat and beat in the egg yolks one-by-one, then add the vegetables. Whisk the egg whites until stiff and fold into the mixture. Pile into the pudding basin and steam for about 1 hour. Turn out the pudding on to a heated serving dish and either pour a little melted butter over it, or hand it separately. □

SISTER-IN-LAW

She never met my eye,
talked to her brother.
I used to search her silences
for reasons. Childless,
perhaps her wasted pregnancies
still swam between us.
I would have shared my sons.

Waiting in the corridor
I knew her ward was serious,
women moving stiffly, wearing socks
soundless on polished floors,
their feet met river images
themselves submerged, world upside-down
in pitted shiny vinyl.
Two sat outside to smoke death closer.

The bad seemed high
and washed with yellow light,
her bones a complication
on white sheets.
Her eyes were gentle,
first time ever.
Those rings that were their mother's
loose on her fingers.

I saw her plastic wrist-band
name and number
and thought of Majdanek's
uncounted dead,
blue lettering on skin,
their mother's grave.

□ *Jill Bamber*

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The Magyar merry-go-round man

Few people realise that *Carousel*, the Rogers and Hammerstein musical recently in the West End, is based on a Hungarian play called *Liliom* by Ferenc Molnar.

Molnar himself is little known in the West today, but for much of this century he enjoyed an international reputation and, forty years after his death, he is still the most successful author Hungary has ever produced.

He was born into a prosperous Jewish family called Neumann in 1878. After studying law in Budapest and Geneva, he went into journalism. By the age of 20 he had his own popular column in a leading Hungarian daily. He went on to publish highly accomplished short stories and atmospheric novels, describing life in Budapest which was turning from a provincial backwater into a capital city. At the time, Molnar's sympathies lay with the poor who eked out a living behind the glittering façade of society life. His novels were uneven but one of them, *The Paul Street Boys* (1907) became a children's classic and was translated into many languages.

During the First World War Molnar became Hungary's leading war correspondent. While other reporters risked life and limb combing the battlefields for stories, Molnar resolutely stayed out of danger obtaining his copy by hobnobbing with high ranking officers behind the lines. His moving reports appeared in a book called *War Correspondent's Diary* (1916). *The Times* published extracts from it. Since he wrote in a minority tongue, from the wrong end of the war, this must be a unique achievement.

All this marked Molnar out as a man of talent/local hero. Nobody could have foretold that international fame and fortune would come his way once he turned to writing plays.

With an early play, *The Devil* (1907), a witty Faustian tale, Molnar hit the jackpot. Having seen it on a flying visit to Budapest, Ermete Zacconi, a distinguished Italian actor/manager of his day, produced it in Milan. By August 1908 different translations were showing simultaneously in two Broadway theatres, soon to be followed by German and Yiddish versions.

All told, Molnar wrote 43 plays, of which half a dozen achieved international success.

Liliom (1909) is considered his finest. It concerns a good-for-nothing fairground barker who knocks his sweetheart about.

After taking part in an abortive hold-up he dies and goes to the next world. He is sent back to earth to redeem himself, where he runs true to form by smacking his daughter's hand.

The play failed when first shown in Hungary. The audience was unused to such changes of locale, the blending of naturalism and fantasy. Revived ten years later, it became a triumphant success, reaching New York in 1921. In London a version failed in 1920 but another, with Fay Compton, Ivor Novello and Charles Laughton in the lead, thrived in 1926.

Happy new ending

Before the war, Puccini considered and rejected the idea of turning the piece into an opera. In 1944/5, not without heart-searching, Rogers and Hammerstein transformed it into an immensely successful musical, moving the milieu from Budapest to New England and giving it a happy ending, all with Molnar's blessings.

Molnar's other major plays are *The Guardsman* (1910) and *Play in the Castle* (1924). P G Wodehouse made an excellent adaptation of the latter, a sophisticated comedy, and changed the title to *The Play's the Thing*. A few years ago the National theatre produced a somewhat unhappy version called *Rough Passage* by Tom Stoppard.

WHAT LIES DEEP IN YOUR HEART

In Hungary, 1994 is held as a year of remembrance for victims of the Holocaust. The KUT (Well) Foundation, the European Israel Forum and the Bar Kochba Foundation are organising a meeting for Hungarian-speaking survivors of the Holocaust and their families in Budapest on

OCTOBER 14-16, 1994

The main focus of the meeting will be a series of discussions, led by experienced professionals, in groups of 10-12 people. They will centre around: "The Revival of the Past", "How to Tell Your Children", "To Speak or to Forget" and others.

There will also be opportunities to visit Jewish memorial sites around Budapest. Enrolment fee is 500 US\$, including accommodation with full board. Application forms from:

Dr Rudas János Fax: 36 1 161 1088
H-1116 Budapest
Hengermalom u. 15
Hungary.

The plays are characterised by outstanding theatrical technique with rapid twists and dazzling dialogue. He amazed the spectator, made him laugh, moved, instructed and made fun of him by turn. Once established he abandoned his earlier attempts of being a serious writer and wrote simply to entertain. He was often accused of being superficial. His plays became salon pieces which sparkle but lack fire.

Molnar's works had frequently been adapted for the screen; *Liliom* in 1930 and 1934 (in France with Charles Boyer); *Carousel* itself, not too successfully, with Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones in 1956; Grace Kelly and Alec Guinness took the lead in *The Swan*, an upper crust story, in the same year.

The great Billy Wilder adapted Molnar's *One, Two, Three* for a film of the same title in 1961. In divided Berlin James Cagney, a Coke executive, has to speedily transform an uncouth Communist who secretly married the daughter of Cagney's boss into an acceptable son-in-law.

In Hungary *Liliom* is regarded as a classic and Molnar's plays are frequently revived. He is still the only Hungarian playwright who fills seats with fair certainty. In German speaking territories his plays are highly popular and often played. The Austrians regard him as one of their own.

Once the money started to flow, Molnar spent a great deal of time outside Hungary, specially on the Riviera. Due to growing antisemitism and fascism he did not return to his native land after 1937.

He settled in New York in 1940. For the rest of his life he lived in room 835, Plaza Hotel, near Central Park. Molnar disliked New York, hated its hustle and bustle and seldom moved outside the block he lived in. In his last work, *Companion in Exile* (1951), he expresses his dislike of American ways and laments the loss of his lady friend Wanda who committed suicide. The original manuscript was lost and the book had to be translated into Hungarian.

Something of a misanthrope and a cynic, Molnar had a sharp tongue and regularly fell out with people. After a lengthy feud someone tried to reconcile him with an acquaintance by saying that he was a much changed man. "A much changed man?" Molnar said, "Say the elephant lost a couple of kilos."

Late in life, following a heart attack, he wrote to a friend, "Last night the Lord called me to Him but I didn't go." He answered the summons that came on April Fools' Day, 1952.

□ Andrew Merkler

As time goes by

Every Friday evening, in an upstairs lounge of Balint House (one of the residential homes administered by OSHA) a Shabbat service is held. It is not unique: all the homes hold such services. On this particular evening, as on many others, the service was conducted by Cantor Marshall Stone. Cantor Stone himself is no stranger to Friday evenings in the homes. After performing one service at Clara Nehab House in Golders Green, he has to make his way, hot-foot, to The Bishops Avenue, Hampstead, for the next.

Services in the homes are, however, rather special. The average age of the congregation is in the region of 90 years. At Balint House on the Friday I attended, the combined ages of the 24 congregants came very close to 2000 years. Being conscious of this fact added something to the service. In this room stood a small group of people brought from all over Europe, by the most cataclysmic events in history, who between them had a collective memory of the same prayers, sung in the same language, spanning two millennia. Although your reporter is no philosopher, something about this evening brought home the importance of continuity.

One of the ladies in the congregation, an irrepressible nonagenarian, fast approaching the full century, enquired, as she always does, about the health and happiness of our children. The ninety-five year age gap between this lady and the children she only meets occasionally is bridged by a question which her grandparents would have asked her parents nearly a hundred years ago: "How is your eldest? saying the brocha yet?" This lady, whose closest family observed at first hand such seemingly distant events as the accession of Kaiser Wilhelm and the sacking of Bismarck is now happily enjoying her shabbat services in Hampstead. She asks after children who will, hopefully, experience at first hand the technological miracles of the twenty-first century. And the music, on this Friday evening, remains the same now as it was then – the same words, the same meaning.

□ M.N.

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A name to conjure with

Steven Spielberg is, without a doubt, the biggest ever name in motion picture history. In addition to being the commercially most successful film director of all time (*pace Jaws, ET, Indiana Jones, Jurassic Park*) he has also received a clutch of Oscars for *Schindler's List*.

Obviously, Spielberg's is a name to conjure with – but where does the name itself come from? I doubt that it was a conflation, dreamt up by a highbrow, of the names of the Austrian-Jewish novelist Hilde Spiel and of the famed Austrian composer Alban Berg.

Still on the Third Programme wavelength, one might conjecture that Spielberg is a contraction of Spiegelberg, the vaguely Jewish character in Schiller's prentice drama *Die Räuber*.

Another possibility is that it can be traced back – as frequently happens with Jewish surnames – to a placename.

There was, in fact, a place called Spielberg in Hapsburg Czechoslovakia: the Moravian capital Brünn/Brno comprised a hilly area termed the Spielberg. 18th century prints show it as picturesquely wooded, but it acquired a sinister significance after 1848 when the Hapsburg Empire earned the disparaging soubriquet "the prison of

nations". A fortress on the Spielberg served as the main jail for anti-Hapsburg insurrectionists from disaffected areas like Northern Italy and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the Spielberg had the same connotation for Italian patriots or members of the Serbian IRA-style Black Hand as Siberia had for Russian revolutionaries in Czarist times. As regards Italy this is made abundantly clear in Stendhal's novel *The Charterhouse of Parma*. Its application to Bosnia-Herzegovina is a footnote to world history: the pan-Serb patriot Gabriele Princip, who triggered the First World War by assassinating the Austrian heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, ended up in the dungeons of the Spielberg. Though sentenced to death by the Austrians, the 19-year old assassin had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment on grounds of age, but succumbed to tuberculosis not long after his incarceration.

It would be unfortunate, though, if Brünn/Brno only impinged on the world's consciousness as the home (jointly with Enfield) of the Bren gun and the location of the most notorious Hapsburg prison. To remedy this undeserved association of ideas I, who have Moravian family connections, concocted the theory that another Hollywood "great", the bald-as-a-coot Yul Brynner, derived his name from Brünn. *Si non e vero, bene trovato*.

□ Richard Grunberger

Art after eighty

Most of our readers will already be aware of the five homes for the care of refugees now run by the Otto Schiff Housing Association (OSHA); some are residents themselves. However, not everyone is aware that for some years now several groups of residents have been producing spirited and colourful paintings which have been exhibited, and attracted publicity, in Berlin, Cologne and Nuremberg as well as here in London.

Most people's first, and totally normal, reaction to being asked to paint, usually for the first time in seventy-odd years, is along the lines of: "I am not at all talented, I can't draw a straight line", or "I was dismissed from the art class at school – but my mother (or brother or cousin or uncle) was a wonderful painter!" The single biggest bar to producing art is people's low self-estimation. But art teachers at the OSHA groups are prepared to deal with this problem. They say "Yes, it is a bit daunting, and you may not be able to produce

portraits in oils to start with, but come in, play around, suspend disbelief in yourself and who knows? You may well find yourself not only having fun, but actually producing pictures which give pleasure to yourself and others – value whatever there is in yourself to express, and let the results look after themselves."

The work of the OSHA groups is characterised by strong design, bright colour and narrative appeal – in no way redolent of frailty or old age. Often the budding artists refer to their early upbringing and the terrible events which followed. Yet the vibrancy of their work testifies to their continuing courage and zest for life in the face of past tragedy and present frailty. The relationship between memory, loss and creativity becomes stronger in later life, when the need to make sense of the past becomes paramount. The release of creativity can endow the last stage of life with new meaning and deepened pleasure. □

For further information about the OSHA art groups contact: Marlene Rolfe, 12 South Villas NW1 9BS. Tel: 071-482 2038