

AJR Information

Volume LI No. 8

August 1996

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Don't miss . . .

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Goldhagen**
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**Perpetuating
an untruth**

Audrey Salkeld's *Portrait of Leni Riefenstahl* (Cape) glibly quotes Joachim Fest's dictum 'had Hitler died at the end of 1938 few would have hesitated to call him one of the greatest German statesmen, the consummator of Germany's history'.

Fest's is a monstrously one-sided reading of events. In 1938 Hitler annexed Austria, swallowed half of Czechoslovakia and unleashed the *Kristallnacht* pogrom, the dress rehearsal for the Final Solution □

Where do we stand on England v Germany?

Eurosepsis and other poisons

The impact of Hitler's War reverberated in the refugee psyche long after 1945. *Anne Frank's Diary*, the capture of Eichmann, the Dering case, the Auschwitz trial, the Barbie *affaire*, the extradition of Priebke have intermittently, over half a century, reawakened traumas we shall take to our graves.

Paul Celan, a survivor so traumatised that he couldn't go on living in the postwar world, memorably characterised death as 'a master from Germany'. And it was through that poet's horror-filled eyes that many of us continued to view Germany long after the war. We looked askance at attempts to turn 'Desert Fox' Rommel and the Wehrmacht high-ups around Stauffenberg into examples of military chivalry, and deplored the invasion of the British car market by Volkswagen. Naturalised Britons, we cheered for more than narrowly patriotic reasons when England beat Germany in 1966.

Now, thirty years on, the England *v* Germany battle has been joined again at Wembley – and beyond. The tabloids have dusted off the term *Kraut*, while at a more elevated level Eurosceptic journalists and MPs battle Brussels by whipping up EU-wide xenophobia with anti-Germanism as its main ingredient.

Coincidentally the camp survivor's son Daniel Goldhagen has published *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, a book purporting to show generations of Germans as lethal antisemites. In rebuttal of this thesis prominent refugees like George Clare (see p3) have gone to the opposite extreme of ascribing a no-greater-than-average guilt for the Holocaust to the Germans.

Comparisons of genocidal Germany with other countries, such as the France of Count Gobineau, the anti-Dreyfusards and Vichy, are inept; after all, the Dreyfus case destroyed the government that brought it. As for Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot – not even those megamonsters eliminated their victims in a manner that left no offspring alive.

But the uniqueness of the Holocaust, a massive 'operation' dependent on the (at least tacit) acquiescence of many Germans, must not make us project the pervasive lethal Judeophobia of the Nazi period back into the Weimar years and beyond.

Germany was once on the verge of evolving into a liberal country and today shows encouraging signs of wanting to purge itself of past poisons. Since 1945 xenophobic nationalism has gradually given way to Europe-mindedness, and the spectre of a power-hungry Fourth Reich could easily turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy if the disparate parts of Europe refuse to cohere into a larger entity.

From Heine onwards Jews have always been acute critics of boneheaded nationalism infecting their host countries. It is therefore with some astonishment that one sees the likes of Sir James Goldsmith and Michael Howard chipping away at the laboriously constructed foundations of a United Europe. Those who jeer at *Krauts* are probably not too finicky about using terms like *Wog* or *Yid* either; is it pure coincidence that Bill Cash, the chief anti-European MP, has a journalist son whose description of Hollywood as 'Jewish-controlled' gave grave offence in the USA? □



Glenda Jackson MP at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre with Ernest David, AJR Director, and Andrew Kaufman, Chairman.

Profile

Wurst case scenario

Hugh Rank was born Ewald Rosenthal in 1913 in Vienna, and despite early traumas – the death of his father in the Great War, and his mother's remarriage – progressed smoothly through school to university. There he started off in the German faculty but, stage-struck, left to go to drama school. At the highly selective Reinhardt Seminary he received tuition from the likes of Otto Preminger and Ernst Lothar, Director of the prestigious Josefstadt.

In early 1938, with the Nazi takeover looming like a poison cloud, the entire student body witnessed an emotion-charged incident. When Ernst Lothar saw the school administrator and the playwright Josef Gregor (sometime librettist of Richard Strauss) enter the rehearsal room sporting swastika badges, he banged his fist on the table and shouted 'The Reinhardt theatre! The Seminar! You owe it all to the Jew Max Goldmann from Bratislava!', got up and left amid deathly silence.

In mid-'38 Hugh escaped into Switzer-



Hugh Rank

land by jumping from a moving train. This landed him in hospital for five weeks, but at least the Swiss didn't send him back – as they did his teen-age sister some time later.

Banned from working, Hugh somehow obtained a UK permit to train as a maker of sausage casings. In London he combined menial day jobs with acting on the Free German League of Culture's handkerchief-sized stage in the evenings. Amateur dramatics also helped him while away two years' internment in Australia; after release and a return journey through U-boat infested seas he monitored Ger-

man broadcasts for the Associated Press and, the day's work over, acted at the Latendl and the Blue Danube Club.

In the late 1940s he married and started a family. Though fulfilled in one sense, he now felt increasingly frustrated over his interrupted education. He wrote to every Oxbridge institution, and finally got an acceptance from Fitzwilliam College – the Cambridge counterpart to Oxford's Ruskin College – where he spent three idyllic years as a near-middle aged undergraduate and obtained a degree in modern languages.

Thereafter he taught at diverse schools and polytechnics, finishing up as Senior German Master at Charterhouse. By this time he had also obtained a PhD, and started publishing commentaries on German plays – e.g. Frank Wedekind's *Frühlingserwachen* – for Heinemann.

In retirement Hugh became active in a related sphere, writing regular features on continental theatre for *The Guardian*. He is still an active octogenarian today, taking several classes for the University of the Third Age in Surrey.

As from next term Hugh will even be running a course on Jewish history in Farnham, heart of the stockbroker belt!

□ RG

Two-capital syndrome

Owing to the world's reluctance to recognise Jerusalem as capital of Israel, most foreign embassies are located in Tel Aviv, over an hour's drive away. To spare Palestinian, and general Muslim, susceptibilities the majority of the UN would prefer Tel Aviv to be the Israeli capital – while to all Israelis (and most Jews), Jerusalem is *the* focal point of their national (or religious) identity.

But there is another Tel Aviv-Jerusalem polarity which actually exists in the Israeli public consciousness. Within the national self-perception, Jerusalem figures as a history-encrusted stronghold of orthodoxy away from the bustling mainstream of national life, while Tel Aviv looms as a go-getting New York-on-the-Mediterranean.

Politics add to the polarity: Jerusalem inclines towards Likud, while (largely middle-class) Tel Aviv paradoxically leans towards Labour.

In other words Israel has, so to speak, two capitals. This type of 'schizophrenia' is not as unusual as might be

thought. Russia, for instance, shares the two-capital syndrome – with Moscow representing the ancient link between nationhood and the Orthodox Church, while St. Petersburg stands for cosmopolitanism and *Weltoffenheit*. (Characteristically the Bolsheviks, for all their claim to being internationally-minded modernisers, moved the capital back from Tsar Peter's 'window to the West' to landlocked Moscow on the periphery of Europe).

Then there is Germany. Here the two would-be capitals actually 'changed places'. Under the Kaiser, Munich – the city of bohemian artists, cabaret and the satirical weekly *Simplizissimus* – represented a sort of counterweight to self-aggrandising Prussian Berlin. 1918/1919 saw a role reversal: Munich metamorphosed into the cradle of Nazism, while Berlin was still (at least on the Kurfürstendamm) vouchsafed its Golden Twenties before it, too, succumbed to the brown plague. In some ways, it could be said, Munich actually took over Berlin in 1933.

In that very same year, incidentally, some German Jews benefited from the

switch of capitals in another country, Turkey. Here the postwar moderniser Kemal Ataturk had shifted the seat of government from ancient Constantinople to newly-built Ankara.

Any self-respecting capital requires a university, and Ataturk was only too happy to staff Ankara University with prestige-laden refugee academics.

In several instances the motive for constructing a new capital has been purely geographical. Philip II 'created' Madrid at a point equidistant from Spain's Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines. Brasilia was founded to shift the country's centre of gravity from its port cities to the rural interior. In 17th century Poland the substitution of Warsaw for Cracow as seat of government, likewise, was a move from a Southern province to the centre.

In fact, given that Athens wasn't always the (modern) Greek capital, Rome the Italian one, Beijing the Chinese, nor London the capital of England (in Anglo-Saxon times the capital was Winchester), Paris may be quite exceptional as an 'eternal' capital city.

□ Richard Grunberger

Questioning the Goldhagen thesis

Extracts from George Clare's talk to the June AGM

The crucial problem is whether Goldhagen's contention in *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, that anti-semitism was more deeply ingrained in the collective German psyche than in that of any other Western nation, is justifiable. If we accept it, as many do, then why, with centuries of rampant Jew hatred in their souls, didn't the Germans carry the Jew-hater-in-chief Adolf Hitler into the Wilhelmstrasse long before January 1933?

In fact the Nazis never got more than two and a half per cent of the German vote at any general election until that of 14 September 1930, when they suddenly obtained eighteen per cent. This, however, was one year after the 1929 Wall Street Crash, with over two million Germans unemployed. In mid-1932, when six million Germans had no jobs, Hitler's share of the vote rocketed to thirty-seven per cent. But then, at the second general election that same year, on 6 November, the Nazi vote declined to thirty-three per cent. To speculate if Hitler, but for von Papen's intrigue, would ever have become Chancellor is one of the fascinating, albeit useless, 'ifs' of history.

The worldwide economic depression, the Germans' tendency to see blackest black when darkish grey will do, and, above all, their lack of democratic traditions, not anti-semitism – swept Hitler into the *Reichskanzlei*.

Was Hitler's anti-semitism typically German? If it was typically anything, then it was Austrian. According to Sebastian Haffner, Hitler's anti-semitism was an East European growth. "In western Europe", Haffner wrote "and also in Germany, anti-semitism was on the decline at the beginning of this century. Not so in Eastern Europe, where Jews, voluntarily or involuntarily, existed as a separate people within another people. The deadly pogrom anti-semitism of Eastern Europe reached right into the Habsburg capital where the young Hitler snapped it up".

The groundwork of racial, as opposed to religious anti-semitism, was laid by the French Comte Gobineau and further pseudo-scientifically expanded by his English disciple Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Not a German, but a French writer, Eduard Drumont, suggested at the

time of the Dreyfus trial that all Jews be drowned in the Seine.

Many Germans saw Hitler, before January 1933, as a somewhat vulgar politician, but voted for him because he led a party which, unlike all the others, had not yet been tested and found wanting. And after January 1933 he was the miracle worker who transformed everything he touched.

What about the 1935 Nuremberg laws? Their introduction bothered a few Germans, delighted many, while the overwhelming majority shrugged its shoulders and looked after Number One.

That's how it was in Germany, that's how it was in Lenin and Stalin's Soviet Union, that, only still worse, was how it was to be in Mao's China, and their peoples cheered.

The universal lesson is that any criminal government – from Hitler via Lenin and Stalin to Mao, Rasfanjani and Saddam Hussein, to name but a few – will always find its willing executioners.

Incidentally, at the moment there are 809 extreme racist and antisemitic, and mostly armed, organisations in the USA alone – ready mercenaries for any criminal government.

I would be happy if *AJR Information* devoted less space to Germany's well documented dreadful past and told its readers more about contemporary developments in what Daniel Jonah Goldhagen recently called 'a totally different country' □

Impact of Compensation Payments on Income Support and/or Housing Benefit

Under current legislation, compensation payments made to victims of Nazi persecution by Germany and Austria can affect eligibility of persons on low income, or with low capital, for Income Support and/or Housing Benefit.

As we do not know whether this is a real problem or a theoretical problem, we would like to hear from people whose Income Support and/or Housing Benefit has been affected by such payments.

Please contact Mrs Agi Alexander, in full confidence, at the AJR on 0171-431-6161 □

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Reviews

Objectivity carried to excess

Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *THE JEWS; HISTORY, MEMORY AND THE PRESENT*, Columbia University Press, £24.00.

As befits the classical scholar, Vidal-Naquet begins his voyage of historical and historiographical discovery in the ancient world with a new look at Flavius Josephus and his writings. In examining Josephus' 'eyewitness account' of a critical period in Jewish history he throws new light on the peculiarities of Jewish statehood in antiquity. He is not, of course, the first to suggest that *The Jewish War* contains some propaganda elements; but it may come as a surprise to note that he attributes similar motives to the distinguished archaeologist and Israeli politician, Yigal Yadin, in respect of the latter's description of his Masada excavations. "Masada", declares Vidal-Naquet, "is not a memory resting on an ongoing tradition, but instead a modern myth created by Zionism".

This theme, with variations, is carried forward into Vidal-Naquet's reflections on the modern Jewish state. Reflections, as he puts it, "at the margins of a trag-

edy". The 'tragedy', as he sees it, is what he believes to be the attitude towards the Arabs of the great majority of Israelis. His passionate restatement of the Palestinian case does him credit: his understatement of the Israeli case does not. He does not, maybe does not want to, see a future peaceful Middle East enjoying an Israel-led high technology economy: others do (and they include his compatriot Servan-Schreiber). He is, of course, entitled to his own opinion: but he does, to use his own phrase (albeit in a different context) "lay it on a bit thick".

If, as Vidal-Naquet claims, Zionism has failed to 'resolve' the Jewish problem, does he believe that emancipation and assimilation did? He looks at this phase in Jewish history, with particular reference to France, and throws some highly intriguing light on the true price of Jewish emancipation in the country which, with England, was first to drop the barriers of civil rights discrimination.

'The present' and its 'memory' figure as the key to the third of Vidal-Naquet's fields of investigation. Here he brings together several connected themes, each in its own way bearing witness to the terror of the Nazi era. In powerfully emotive terms, but never less than strictly fair, he analyses a number of Holocaust histories. The comparison which he draws between the massacre of Armenians in the First World War and the Jewish genocide of the Second is one of the most interesting aspects of this section. Most moving of all is

the author's personal testimony: the outline of his father's life, whose career as a French Jewish lawyer ended with his debarrment and deportation; and his own experiences as a schoolboy in Vichy France and his debt to French Protestants – another minority community in a largely Catholic country.

The Jews is a brilliant presentation of deeply held opinions and it argues its case with fascinating eloquence. It has to be said, though, that a good many of his readers will remain unconvinced by some of Vidal-Naquet's conclusions.

Some may dislike what they see as his neo-Marxist leanings, others his reappraisal of treasured memories of history which he regards as 'myths' – could this not be revisionism in disguise?

One further question troubles this reviewer: can altruism go too far? As a member of the French Jewish intellectual bourgeoisie, Vidal-Naquet pursues idealistic pluralism. But are there not occasions when the idealist's vision can become blurred by excessive objectivity?

Surely the author of the much-acclaimed *Assassins of Memory* (see May issue 1993) and the surviving son of Holocaust victims knows that, in the real world, political decisions are based on partisan considerations and the high ground of moral purity is rarely occupied by politicians – not even those of whose ideological motivations Vidal-Naquet approves.

□ David Maier

The soldiers' tale

Alexander Baron, *FROM THE CITY, FROM THE PLOUGH*, Robert Hale, £16.99, 190pp

Soldiers don't tend to get a very good press these days. They're seen as louts in uniform, tools of their rulers, carrying out genocide in Bosnia or helping military regimes stifle democracy in countries as far apart as Burma and Nigeria.

But it wasn't always like that. Fifty years ago British and Allied soldiers – everybody's fathers, husbands, sons – were seen as liberators, carrying the weight of the people's hopes for victory over the Nazi war machine.

From the City, From the Plough is about that struggle. In particular about the invasion of Europe in June 1944 by the allies – the famous second front, the

assault that took a long time coming, but which, when it did, sealed the fate of the German armies in the West.

When this book first appeared in 1948 it was hailed by one critic as the finest British novel written about the Second World War – a judgement that was probably true at the time and is still not all that wide of the mark.

Admittedly it's had relatively few contenders in British fiction. It was left to the Americans to dominate the war book scene with such heavyweights as Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* and Heller's *Catch 22*. But although a major work like Waugh's *Sword of Honour* trilogy is a greater literary achievement than Baron's book, it has far less to say about the face-to-face realities of combat that we have come to expect as the major ingredient of a war book.

The First World War established the

central images – the trenches, the constant shelling, the stumbling advance against machine gun fire and heavily defended positions.

The Second World War was more complicated, the weapons more sophisticated. But when all the machines had finally done their work it was still the job of the infantry to take the ground from the enemy, and Baron's book is essentially about that traditional and bloody task.

Its title does it no favours. Sociologically correct it may be, but it's hardly calculated to pull the customers in. The book also has too large a cast of characters for its modest length. But if you want a taste of what it felt like being a soldier in a British infantry battalion going into action on D-Day and after, then no novel does it better than this one.

□ Frank Hilton

Comfortable alienation

Silvia Rodgers, *RED SAINT, PINK DAUGHTER*, Deutsch, £17.99

This is a story shot through with paradox: Silvia Rodgers' mother (the red saint), a lifelong communist and atheist, joined a synagogue to achieve burial beside a husband she consistently quarrelled with and left several times. (Having fled her native Poland to avoid arrest she had transferred her activities to Berlin, where she met her husband and gave birth to two children).

Silvia, the pink daughter, vividly describes her mother's political involvement, with housework delegated to a crippled skivvy - actually a relative - and her coldness towards herself. The book, nonetheless, features pictures of Silvia elegantly dressed, and an account of a muff she was given, which item would have been the envy of less fortunate children. She dredges up memories of meals in restaurants, theatre outings, resort holidays and lavish birthday parties. She also poignantly recalls a visit to Poland where her grandparents gave her the love she was missing.

Ignoring the steadily intensifying antisemitism, the family lived a near-nor-

mal life until Kristallnacht. Then, after frustrating delays, they were all lucky enough to get entry permits to England. Here again, despite being disorientated refugees, the parents made sure their daughter went to good schools.

Psychologically, Silvia seems to have grown up in limbo, uncertain whether she was Jewish, Polish, German or English. A troubled adolescence was followed by entry into King's College Dental School and a taste of independence. Against a background of increasing family dissension, she found a haven in the Fabian Society, where she met her husband Bill Rodgers, who became a Labour Cabinet Minister and later co-founder of the SDP, and now sits in the House of Lords.

The author writes about her feelings with frankness and honesty. In the most moving passage she expresses grief about the fate of her Jewish classmates in Berlin (of whom only two out of twenty-five survived) and her Polish relatives. Her present outlook can best be described as a state of comfortable alienation. At House of Lords functions, decked out in tiara and gown, she still manages to feel she doesn't belong.

Nevertheless, with its shrewd analysis of people and situations, her book tells a fascinating story in clear and simple style.

□ Martha Blend

Kindertransport documentary

Melissa Hacker, *MY KNEES WERE JUMPING*, Kinder Productions, New York; Jewish Film Festival, NFT

"We hadn't been to concentration camps, so nobody knew that we suffered," says one of the protagonists in Melissa Hacker's *Kindertransport* film. Melissa's mother was one of the 10,000 children aged five to fifteen who made the trip out of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia to escape Nazi persecution.

This film is an important historical document. The facts it gives redound to Britain's credit; neither the US nor Canada relaxed immigration quotas to rescue Jewish children.

By-now familiar images of the destruction of Kristallnacht and of the Archbishop of Canterbury's appeal for funds are followed by pictures that evoke

real heartache: parents waving goodbye to their children and the children disembarking at Harwich. One puts on a brave smile for the camera, another droops wearily over her suitcase, another clutches a precious doll.

Children in the Dovercourt hostel are shown having their meals at long trestle-tables or writing letters home. One former *kind* recounts that their physical needs were fairly adequately catered for, but cannot recall ever being hugged or kissed throughout this institutionalised childhood.

Several ex-Kindertransportees are featured in the present, *en famille*. They appear to have paid a price for their rescue in panic attacks and excessive protectiveness towards their own children. However, now that their traumas can be talked about more openly, the sharing of memories with the younger generation is helping to release long repressed feelings.

□ MB

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Letters to the Editor

EXPLAINING THE INEXPLICABLE

Sir – As the Reformation gave rise to the Counter-reformation so the emancipation of the Jews led to counter-emancipation movements. These were strongest where the emancipation was most successful, notably in Germany, but they also existed in France and Russia. There was also a widespread feeling of blind hostility in the air which culminated in World War I. Civilisation and its discontent is perhaps the most likely explanation for the latter.

A combination of circumstances led to one man coming to power in Germany – until then, a civilised country, not least in its behaviour towards Jews. This man, Hitler, had at his disposal a highly developed industrial potential. What pogroms and the starving of entire population groups brought about in Russia, one man's phobia achieved in Germany via industrial processes. Undeniably, he had helpers. But to adduce from it that Germany was emotionally more predisposed to it because of its 'self-created cultural climate' seems to me a pernicious idea.

Why were there no extermination camps in Germany for Jews from France, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands as well as from Germany? So much closer than Poland. And why were we deported at night?

I must also take issue with you on some points of fact. The Tolpuddle Martyrs did not enjoy 'constitutional opposition status' in this country. More importantly, racial antisemitism was not 'mainly a German invention': the Spanish Cardinal Juan Martinez Siliceo promulgated the statute of *Limpieza de Sangre* (Purity of Blood) in the 15th Century.

Aberdare Gardens
London NW6

Ezra Jurman
(Riga Ghetto survivor)

Sir – As a linguist, I draw a line when it comes to using faulty translations for the purpose of proving a point '*Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*' does not translate, roughly or smoothly, as 'the subject's first duty is to conform'.

When the King of Prussia issued the ap-

peal in 1806 after the crushing defeat at Jena, his main concern was to stop people taking the law into their own hands, thus precipitating further confrontation with the French occupation forces, which could only have ended in disaster. 'The citizen's first duty is to keep calm' is what he said. There was no mention of "subject" (*Untertan* in German) nor was there a request "to conform" (*sich anpassen*, or *einfügen*).

East Hill
Wembley Park
Middx

RWillers

Sir – Do leave poor old Richard Strauss alone, *per favore*. He gave protection and help to many Jewish musicians, including his own daughter-in-law who loved him dearly.

To mankind he gave aesthetic delight and musical miracles such as only a handful of composers have ever been able to. He was the most loyal friend of Stefan Zweig and, before him, Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

Herbert Anderson

BAYREUTH-FIXATED BERNARD

Sir – It would have been more appropriate for Bernard Levin to berate Elisabeth Schwarzkopf for joining the Nazi party than to berate her biographer for mentioning it.

Abercorn Road
London NW7

Marie Sackin

CZECH TREASURES

Sir – A report in *The Guardian* newspaper of 18th April 1993, revealed that rows of silver goblets and tens of thousands of other sacral and secular items seized by the Nazis lay quietly mouldering in a disused synagogue in Golcuv Jenikov, a small town outside Prague.

Would any member of the AJR know what happened to these treasures?

Wiener Library
4 Devonshire Street
London W1

Ralph Bergman

AUTHOR AUTHOR

Sir – Your correspondent is correct in thinking that his poem is by Heine. It occurs as preamble to the second book of *Romancero* (*Lamentationen*) and runs:

Das Glück ist eine leichte Dirne,
Und weilt nicht gern am selben Ort,
Sie streicht das Haar dir von der Stirne,
Und küsst dich rasch und flattert fort.
Frau Unglück hat im Gegenteile
Dich liebefest ans Herz gedrückt;
Sie sagt, sie habe keine Eile,
Setzt sich zu dir ans Bett und strickt.

Brim Hill

P M Cohn

London N2

Sir – 'Das Glück is eine leichte Dirne' can be found on page 82 of volume 3 in the 10-volume edition of Heine's collected works, (Insel Verlag, Leipzig, 1913).

Leinster Avenue

Ms Ursula Price

London SW14

BOUQUETS

Sir – I find *AJR Information* not only informative but valuable.

Cherry Hinton Road

Dr J Brieger

Cambridge

Sir – Your paper is doing an excellent job and is always very interesting for us 'old ones'.

Carisbrooke Road

Henry Mortimer

Leicester

CHERCHEZ LES FEMMES

Sir – About a year ago I appealed to former refugee members of HM Forces to assist me in my researches concerning their actions then.

The response has enabled me to establish a register of names approaching the 1,000 mark. However, whilst interest amongst the male sex is considerable, ladies are still distinctly shy in coming forward.

Apparently, between 1940 and 1942 there existed fourteen ATS platoons consisting entirely of (then) enemy aliens. The women in these platoons were employed as cooks, orderlies and storekeepers.

So far not a single ex-member of one of these platoons has contacted me. Could I, through your columns, appeal to any of your readers, who were in one of these platoons to let me know about themselves?

Neumarkt 3
64625 Bensheim, Germany
Telephone 0049-6251-62308

Peter Leighton-Langer

WITHOUT COMMENT

English version of correspondence between AJR and the President of the Austrian Parliament.

9 May 1996

Dear Herr Nationalratspräsident,
I have previously expressed the appreciation of the members of this organisation for the statements by the Bundeskanzler and Bundespräsident, recognising that many, though not all, Austrians participated in Nazi crimes.

While we felt it was too little and too late, we also appreciated the establishment of the *Nationalfonds* as a means of providing some tangible form of recognition of the sufferings of refugees from Nazi persecution. We believed that Austria had, at last, come to terms with its past and had accepted the payments as a fulfilment of a moral obligation on the part of today's Austria.

We also believed that one of the main objectives of the *Nationalfonds*, given that it took 50 years after the war to establish, was to create a fast, feasible and unbureaucratic administration for making

payments.

We are shocked to discover that as a result of budgeting constraints, many people will not be paid their AS70,000 until 1997 and 1998, when the value will be greatly reduced by inflation.

It is very cruel to raise expectations among a group of people who had to flee Austria when they were young, but who now are old. Why should they have to wait even longer – until they are close to death, to receive recognition of their suffering.

I realise that Austria, like many other countries, is trying to reduce its public expenditure, but having aimed at the moral high ground, your apparently reluctant implementation of the *Nationalfonds* payments gives an impression which negates your stated good intentions.

Yours sincerely,

Ernest David

Director, Association of Jewish Refugees

23 May 1996

Dear Mr David,

I am pleased to acknowledge your letter of 9th May.

I am, of course, happy that the majority of responses which I have received in connection with the *Nationalfonds* are in the same vein as the two enclosed letters which arrived on the same day, i.e. quite different from your own.

However, I would like to make the following comments on your concerns:

First of all: there are no 'budgetary limitations'. On the contrary, Parliament has unanimously put aside a budget of 600 million Schillings for the *Nationalfonds* for the 1996 calendar year (in spite of economies).

Since administrative costs of the Fund amount to scarcely 1%, 99% of this amount is available for payments. With a current estimate of approximately 22,000 approved applicants, it would of course have been possible to make payments in the order of 27,000 Schillings to each applicant during 1996.

However, as you are aware, the Committee has, after many conversations with representatives of the group of persons concerned, unanimously decided to pay out a higher amount, i.e. 70,000 Schillings each. Naturally this means that

payments will be spread over 1996/97 and 1998. We thought it only fair that the oldest age group should be the first to benefit and, in addition, it was decided last week – again unanimously – to pass an inheritance rule, to counter the fears that payments were being drawn out over several years in order to effect savings by not paying applicants who would die in the interim.

Since we have been repeatedly assured, and continue to be assured, that the most important element in connection with the Fund's establishment is the moral gesture and specific commitment on the part of the Republic, there is really not the slightest justification to speak of a reluctant execution of the *Nationalfonds* payments. We are endeavouring to serve the *Nationalfonds* idea with maximum commitment and are pleased with the widespread welcome it has met with.

I remain, with cordial greetings, yours,

H Fischer

Präsident des Nationalrates

AJR

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The AJR at Work



Jules Ruben and Jack Davidoff entertaining at the Day Centre with violin and piano duets.

Jules and Jack

Virtuoso veteran jazz pianist Jules Ruben was joined by violinist and day centre regular Jack Davidoff to receive an enthusiastic reception when they entertained members at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre.

Jules has been rippling over the keys since he first began playing professionally at the Shoreditch Music Hall as a lad of 15 claiming to have memorised 1,000 classical pieces! From 1945 through the '50s he was pianist with the Hermanos Deniz Cuban Rhythm Band, playing the Latin American rhythms and melodies popular at that time. The band was resident at the famous Coconut Grove in London's Regent Street, moving to the Grosvenor House Hotel opposite Sidney Lipton's Orchestra and then were much in demand for the West End's many Sunday functions. Jules formed his own seven-piece broadcasting band, the Latinairs, which had a wide following on BBC radio.

With 40 piano compositions to his credit and many recordings, at the age of 86 he still plays, teaches and records. This month he'll be playing in the restaurant of the Victoria & Albert Museum and re-

leasing the latest CD recorded by his jazz trio.

Jack Davidoff began playing classical violin in 1935 at the comparatively late age of 11, but only four years later his obvious musical talent won him a scholarship to the Royal College of Music. When he graduated to join the London Symphony Orchestra as its youngest player he was only 19 years old! Called up to do his war service, Jack was transferred to ENSA, the services' entertainment company which boosted the morale of the troops. Back in civvy street he returned to the LSO and then played freelance for London's leading symphony orchestras.

Life as a professional musician was never easy, so Jack put his violin aside and joined the family's furrier business. In the 1960s some of his friends persuaded him to take his violin out of its case and join them as a group of entertainers for good causes, the Kendalls. Ever since, Jack has brought musical pleasure to countless people, especially those who love his playing in the Jewish tradition and his sense of humour. Today he even makes his own violins. May Jules and Jack's music continue to entertain for many years to come!

□ Ronald Channing

House of Peace

Members of AJR's Northern Group spent a day at *Beth Shalom*, the new Holocaust Memorial Centre at Laxton near Nottingham on a visit organised by Werner Lachs.

Stephen Smith, the Centre's director, welcomed the group and explained his concept and how he had set about making it into a reality. As a Christian he and his family had visited Israel 18 years previously where the seeds of the idea were first sown. He answered questions frankly, revealing his own background and motivation.

Designed by a local architect, the Temple, which accommodates the lecture hall, is beautifully proportioned with graceful arches and a vaulted ceiling culminating in a lantern. Near the museum's entrance is a star filled with passport-sized photographs of camp inmates. The exhibition is divided into sections with photographs and written texts, testimonies of survivors and pictures of famous Jews and infamous Nazi leaders. Disturbing as the subject is, thoughtful displays allow the visitor to absorb their information calmly.

There is a library, video library and a cafeteria serving light refreshments and vegetarian dishes. *Beth Shalom* is set in extensive gardens with benches for visitors' comfort. The day was regarded as being a very valuable one by everyone.

Garden party

Hosts Sonja and Ken Shindler welcomed members of Midlands AJR to a garden party at their home in Solihull. Enjoying the perfect weather, guests were able to admire the colours and variety of blooms and plants in their beautiful garden.

A new member, who made the journey from Gloucester to join us, spoke of his moving experiences when he returned recently to Hamburg, his birthplace, at the invitation of the city council.

Earlier this year members were impressed by their visit to the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Nottinghamshire, though many others who would like to have joined us had a prior obligation to another communal function. Further coach outings are being planned by the group.

□ Edgar Glaser

Message from the Director

I recently attended a seminar organised by the Wiener Library and the Parkes Centre at the University of Southampton, on the subject of 'The Holocaust and British Museums'. Although the topic was addressed from a number of different angles, the underlying theme related to the proposal for establishing a Holocaust Exhibition in the Imperial War Museum which intends to devote 14,000 square feet of space to the project.

One speaker and one member of the audience were against the idea of such museums anywhere, largely on the ground that they perpetuated the view of Jews as victims, but the general view was that Holocaust museums served a most valuable educational purpose.

There was some discussion on how the Holocaust should be seen in centuries of Church-led antisemitism. An Anglican clergyman expressed the view that it really did not matter that Martin Luther and others were antisemitic, because they preached their views before the age of mass communications and thus very few people were affected by their views on the Jews. Not surprisingly, Stephen Smith, Director of Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre near Nottingham, demolished this argument, but the problem still arises as to how all the constituent elements of the Holocaust, including the background and the aftermath, can be adequately covered.

In Washington the museum is called the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, thereby stressing that its role is to memorialise as well as to educate. Although the aim of the Imperial War Museum is to educate, it does recognise that an exhibition of this nature must also include an area where people can silently contemplate the enormity of the horrors they have just seen exhibited and described.

I learned a lot from this seminar and realise why the project will take about four years to achieve. While it will not have the throughput of the Washington Museum, which has reached an annual rate of two million visitors, it will still be the most important museum of its kind in Europe. Its location as part of the Imperial War Museum will give it a status and credibility that will strengthen the message and ensure that the Holocaust is never forgotten.

While not forgetting the past, we look forward to a brighter future.

□ Ernest David

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Sunday 2 pm - 6.30pm.

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Afternoon entertainment -

AUGUST 1996

- | | | |
|-----------|----|--|
| Thursday | 1 | A PARTY
AFTERNOON -
Dorothy Sayers (Piano
& Accordion) |
| Sunday | 4 | DAY CENTRE OPEN
- NO
ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 5 | THE GEOFFREY
STRUM & HELEN
BLAKE DUO |
| Tuesday | 6 | MUSICAL GEMS
FROM THE PAST -
Bernard Wilcox (Tenor)
Julia Benenti (Soprano)
accompanied by Ron
Wilson (Piano) |
| Wednesday | 7 | PAUL MOSBY (The
Oboe Man) with Pianist
HISAYO SHIMIZO |
| Thursday | 8 | VIVO VOCE - Hilary
de Santos (Mezzo)
accompanied by
Geoffrey Whitworth
(Piano) |
| Sunday | 11 | OPEN DAY |
| Monday | 12 | AN HOUR OF MUSIC
WITH DEBBIE
O'BRIEN (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 13 | SUMMERTIME WITH
VIENNESE MUSIC -
Claude May (Baritone
with Self
Accompaniment) |
| Wednesday | 14 | SUMMER
MISCELLANY -
Valerie Hewitt (Soprano
- Guitar & Piano)
accompanied by Anne
Berryman (Piano) |
| Thursday | 15 | TWO VOICES & A
PIANO - Eddy
Simmons & Helen Blake |
| Sunday | 18 | DAY CENTRE OPEN
- NO
ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 19 | CONCERT - |

- | | | |
|-----------|----|--|
| | | CABARET - Primrose
Powell (Soprano)
accompanied by Rustom
Battiwalla (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 20 | GUITAR & VOICE -
Ronnie Goldberg |
| Wednesday | 21 | PIPPA REID
ENTERTAINS ON
GUITAR |
| Thursday | 22 | MUSIC FOR
PLEASURE - Abigail
Gorton (Soprano)
accompanied by Sandra
Smith (Piano) |
| Sunday | 25 | DAY CENTRE OPEN
- NO
ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 26 | CLOSED - BANK
HOLIDAY |
| Tuesday | 27 | A SUMMER MUSICAL
MEDLEY - Charlotte
Mathews (Soprano)
accompanied by Angus
Cunningham (Piano) |
| Wednesday | 28 | A LATE-SUMMER
MUSICAL BOUQUET
- Ann Kenton-Barker
(Mezzo) & Basil Taylor
(Baritone) accompanied
by Marian Hartman
(Piano) |
| Thursday | 29 | SHOW-STOPPER -
Nikki van der Zyl
(Soprano) accompanied
by Sheila Games (Piano) |
| SEPTEMBER | | |
| Sunday | 1 | GREETINGS FROM A
NEW TRIO - Antonia
Kendal (Mezzo) &
Anthony Hawgood
(Baritone) accompanied
by Geoffrey Whitworth |
| Monday | 2 | a) Tea & Tour of
House of Commons
Outing
b) <u>Day Centre</u> : - A
SPECTRUM OF
MELODIES -
Robert Brody (Tenor)
accompanied by
Geoffrey Whitworth
(Piano) |
| Tuesday | 3 | THE GEOFFREY
STRUM & HELEN
BLAKE DUO |
| Wednesday | 4 | MUSIC TO SOOTHE
THE SOUL -
Guyathrie Peiris
(Mezzo) accompanied
by William Patrick
(Piano) |

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Freyhan. Hans Walter, aged 86, on July 7th. Greatly missed husband of Kate, father and father-in-law of Peter and Kathie and of Michael, and grandfather of Daniel.

Nussbaum. Dr Henni Nussbaum, a very special person. Much loved, missed and mourned by her son and daughter-in-law Gerry & Enid, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews and a host of friends. Unforgettable for those who knew her.

Diamond Wedding

Cassell. Rabbi Curtis and Cecilia Cassell are happy to announce the 60th anniversary of their wedding, consecrated by Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck and Ober-Kantor John Jacobson at the Synagogue, Lützowstrasse, Berlin, on 26th August 1936.

Congratulations

Honour for AJR member Congratulations to Mrs Jo Kessler, a member of the AJR Management Committee, who was appointed an MBE for services to the community in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Thankyou

Ludwig Spiro would like to thank all his friends and acquaintances for the good wishes which he has received following his recent accident.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition till 18th August is the most popular contemporary art show in the country, whose range and diversity make it an unparalleled visual feast. This year some 11,000 works were submitted, of which 1,300 are on show. Among our friends on display are Josef Herman RA with five lithographs, Jack Goldhill with two oils, a Pat Schaverein etching, a Hans Feibusch oil, and five Phillip Sutton watercolours.

At the *National Gallery*, Degas, *Beyond Impressionism* (until 26th August) is not to be missed.

Marlborough Fine Art is showing contemporary Spanish realists until the 31st of August, and also John Piper's rare prints until, the 9th of August at the *Marlborough Graphics*.

Collyer-Bristow Gallery at 4 Bedford Row, WC1 is having a summer exhibition to 19th September under the title of *St. Ives Now*. It assembles abstract and figurative paintings by 16 artists, all of whom have studios by the sea.

From 9th September to 4th October *Spink* will be showing *Augustus John*. *Annelly Juda Fine Art* are exhibiting paintings and sculpture by European avant garde artists Max Bill and Georges Vantongerloo until 14th of September.

The *Mayor Gallery* is showing works on paper by Hans Bellmer, Max Ernst, Ferdinand Leger, Rene Magritte and Kurt Schwitters.



Two seated figures, Leon Kossoff, 1980. Tate Gallery.

This summer the *Tate Gallery* present a major retrospective exhibition of paintings by Leon Kossoff. East End-born in 1926, and a pupil of David Bomberg, Kossoff has been recognised as one of the most distinctive British artists of the post-war period. At last year's *Venice Biennale* he was the United Kingdom's principal representative and sole occupant of the British pavilion □

SB's Column

Genius without any doubt. Argentine-born Daniel Barenboim moved, via Israel, to Europe where he received his musical education. An outstanding pianist as well as conductor, he is to-day *Generalmusikdirektor* of Berlin's *Staatsoper unter den Linden*, and first conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Whilst his appointment at the Paris Bastille Opera ended prematurely because of artistic disagreements, his work at Bayreuth since 1989 has been highly praised; he will conduct *Tristan und Isolde* and *Meistersinger* there during this summer. Nonetheless he shows understanding for those Israelis who still mentally connect the atrocities of the

Hitler regime with Wagner's music.

Alma. Joshua Sobol's new play *Alma* examines the life of Alma Mahler-Werfel, who met Gustav Mahler in 1902 at Purkersdorf Sanatorium near Vienna where Berta Zuckerandl entertained. During Vienna's *Festwochen* the work was given its première at the very same spot nearly a century later. Sobol confronts the audience with the enigmatic personality of Alma who – he maintains – never understood the men in her life: Zemlinsky, Mahler, Gropius, Kokoschka and Werfel.

Chichester Festival. This highly successful and most prominent drama festival of the South of England will conclude its summer season (August 21 to September 14) with two exciting productions: *Fortuna's Fool* by Turgenev, a British

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première starring Alan Bates, and *Beatrix*, adapted from the writings of Beatrix Potter with Patricia Routledge, Television's popular 'Hyacinth'.

The Ifflandring, highest award to a German-speaking actor, last held by Josef Meinrad (see our May issue), has been given to the Swiss Bruno Ganz who, according to the renowned producer, Peter Stein, deserved the honour after being pronounced a fascinating Peer Gynt and sensational Prinz von Homburg. Ganz is, in the producer Peter Stein's words 'unique in grasping the roots of the art of acting'.

Obituary. Former UFA star Brigitte Helm has died at 88. Her many successes during the thirties and forties included *Im Geheimdienst* with Willy Fritsch, and *Die Gräfin von Monte Christo* in which she was partnered by Rudolf Forster □

11,135 names



Eleven thousand one hundred and thirty-five steel blocks, symmetrically aligned in rows of five, protrude from the cream-coloured wall enclosing Frankfurt's oldest cemetery.

Eleven thousand one hundred and thirty-five names bear witness to Frankfurt's once flourishing Jewish community.

On Sunday, June 16, this wall of remembrance was inaugurated by the Mayoress in the presence of local high dignitaries. Eloquent speeches saluted the cultural contribution of the city's former Jewish inhabitants, abhorred their victimisation and condemned the perpetrators of the Final Solution.

Fine words echoed round the Börneplatz, site of the synagogue burnt down during Kristallnacht. However, these sentiments had not prevented the incumbent Mayor in 1987 – despite a large number of protests – from approving plans to excavate the foundation of the synagogue and part of the Jewish ghetto. The reddish, brown and ochre bricks, now numbered, were stacked in cube form in the middle of the square to make room for a modern municipal building, out of tune with the sanctity of the hallowed ground. The 300 metre-long wall served as a compromise, so we were told, for the second desecration of the House of God.

Sitting in the midst of descendants, old grey-haired children, middle-aged grandchildren with their offspring from all parts of the globe, I sensed a feeling of togetherness which briefly united us strangers. After the speeches, some lengthy, others pertinent, the rabbi of Frankfurt's congregation requested us to stand. And as he intoned the *Kaddish*, the mourners, tears moistening solemn faces, recited the prayer for *their* dead.

Among the eleven thousand one hundred and thirty-five names there are two which belong to me. As long as one living soul remembers them, they live.

□ Helga Wolff

New services at Day Centre

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre in West Hampstead has introduced new medical services for the benefit and convenience of its members. Eye examinations (under the NHS) are available by appointment with optician Dr. Howard Solomons PhD BSc FBCO. Similarly, chiropody treatment is now being made available at the Centre by Trevor Goldman, State Registered Chiropodist.

Both these services can be booked with Sylvia Matus either at the Day Centre, or by telephoning her on 0171 328 0208.

We look forward to members improving their sight and walking more comfortably in the months ahead □

AUSTRIAN NATIONALFONDS

New provisions for inheritance of claims

The AJR has received information from the Austrian Embassy about a new inheritance rule agreed on 15th May 1996 in respect of the Nationalfonds.

This provides that, in the event of a claimant's death *after* having submitted a properly completed and documented claim, but prior to receiving the payment due, his legal heir or heirs may make application for such payment, supported by a death certificate and certified copy of probate □

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – AUGUST 1996

Sun 4 Bertha Leverton: talks to AJR's Northern Group on *Kinder Stories Old & New*. Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester, 2.30pm, £2

Sun 4 Rabbi William Wolf: 'Present German Jewry', Stanmore Community Centre, Honey Pot Lane, 2.15pm, £2.50. Booking 0181 882 1638/452 9681

Sun 11 Der Yiddisher Mikado: a Yiddish/English comic operetta performed by the Yiddish Light Opera Company of Long Island. Steiner Theatre, Park Road, NW1. 2.30 & 8pm. Tickets £10 & £15, Spiro Institute, Tel: 0171 431 0345

Sun 18 Der Yiddisher Mikado: details as above

Ongoing: Yiddish Theatre in London until 10th November. Jewish Museum, Camden Town, Sun-Thurs, 10am-4pm, £3

September

Tue 3 JACS Belsize Square: autumn programme commences 2pm

Thur 5 South London AJR: Michael Hamburger talks about translating Paul Celan's poetry. South London Liberal Synagogue, Prentis Road, SW16, 2pm

Mon 9 Club '43: first meeting of new programme, 8pm

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Spiro Institute, Kidderpore Ave., London NW3 7SZ.

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Club '43, meets at Belsize Square Synagogue.

Hans Seelig 01442 254 360

Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1. 0171 636 7247

Sternberg Centre for Judaism, 80 East End Road, Finchley, NW3 2SY.

Tel: 0181 346 2288

Jewish Museum, either Sternberg

Centre (as above) or at:

129/131 Albert Street, Camden Town, NW1 7NB. Tel: 0171 284 1997

University of Sussex Centre for German-Jewish Studies. Diana Franklin 0181 455 4785 or 01273 678 495

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Memories of Vienna's Yiddish Theatre

Molly Picon made her first guest appearance with the ensemble in 1921. However multi-talented, the company still needed a big name as a box office draw, and young Molly Picon was already a star in America; in addition she brought scripts of new plays with her which she asked my father to adapt for the Viennese taste.

Just as Molly's fame as an actress had preceded her, so her husband/manager's fame for miserliness had preceded him. True to type he paid my father a mere pittance.

Molly was very successful in Vienna and returned time and again. In the thirties she acted there en route to Poland, where she was due to film *Yidl mit'n Fidl*. Realising that the *Yidl* script was poor, she asked my father to accompany her and carry out the necessary improvements. My father, who was always ready to travel – all he needed were his pen, toothbrush and razor – instantly agreed. However, on his return it transpired that Molly's husband had, as usual, fobbed him off without proper payment.

The following year Molly again visited Vienna prior to shooting another film – *Mammele* – in Poland. Again she wanted my father along as a 'script-doctor', but this time my mother put her delicate foot (shoe size 2) down, insisting on back payment for *Yidl* plus a proper fee for the new film. Though the skinflint had to pay up, he wouldn't talk to mother for years afterwards.

I last saw Molly Picon in 1949 in New York, where she appeared on the last remaining Yiddish stage (At one time there had been a dozen of them). Later she scored a big hit as the matchmaker in *Fidler on the Roof*.

During the First World War the Yiddish actress Salza Weinberg, who was very beautiful with an hourglass figure and peaches-and-cream complexion, became a pin-up for the Austrian soldiers.

One night an Austrian officer came to see the show, was very impressed and sent her a note backstage, asking her for a dinner date. She replied that she was a married woman, so he invited her husband too. The husband passed her a slip of paper on which he had written in Yiddish. "*As mir wellen acheln, wet der Yold zulen?*" The officer requested to see the note, looked at it, took out a pen and

Volunteers' Co-ordinator looks to youth

Young psychology graduate and former member of Jewish Care's northwest social work team, Debbie Picker, has been appointed Volunteers' Co-ordinator for the AJR. Debbie first became aware of the particular health and social problems often faced by elderly people when a student.

After a study year in Israel and organising events for Jewish sixth-formers, she took up a post as psychology assistant at London's Middlesex Hospital, interviewing and assessing patients with neurological and mental health problems before spending the following two years teaching psychology to medical students.

Debbie joined Jewish Care in 1995, going out-and-about to help clients manage at home, taking them on visits to doctors, hospitals and the shops, and introducing them to day centres – practical experience invaluable for her work with AJR.

Several of AJR's long-serving volunteers have already met her, and she has begun interviewing new volunteer recruits to establish the contribution they would be most happy and successful in making. To match up volunteers with the needs of AJR members she liaises closely with AJR's Social Services Department.

A Jewish community volunteer since

continued from col. 1

wrote "*Ihr kent acheln, der Yold wet zulen!*"

A stage-struck lover of the Yiddish theatre by the name of Weissberg pleaded to be permitted to appear on stage. He didn't want any payment – simply the glory of standing on the other side of the footlights. Since it is always useful to have someone who could be cast in small parts and help fill the stage in ensemble numbers, he was accepted.

Unfortunately Weissberg had a propensity for making *bulbes*. If the script required him to say '*der Rebbe geht*' he would say '*der Rebbe fuhr*' – and so forth. To avoid any further slip-ups he was eventually given the non-speaking part of a Catholic *galach* who visited a Jewish household in his clerical vestments. All he had to do was sit at a table while the others spoke. However, when rising to leave the stage, he stopped at the door and kissed the mezzuzah affixed to it.

□ Ruth Schneider



Debbie Picker

childhood, Debbie knows the personal rewards which make people give of their time and experience to help others. At the age of 25 she detects a need for young Jewish people – an age group of which she has high hopes – to fulfil themselves by being of service to their community, and calls on today's grandchildren of the refugee generation to lead the way.

"I want to see a revival of the community spirit and in our care and concern for each other," she said. The daughter of a Viennese father, she appreciates the special qualities and needs of Jewish refugees and hopes people of all ages will join her to provide them with comfort and companionship in the years ahead.

□ Ronald Channing

50 YEARS AGO

THE KIELCE POGROM

The recent pogrom in Kielce has once more brought into the open the plight of the Jewish survivors in Poland. Out of the pitiful remnant of 120 Jewish people who had returned from the concentration camp to the township of Kielce, 45 were murdered and scores more injured.

"Even when all allowances are made for the disturbed state of Poland and the effects of German propaganda, even if it is true (as the prosecution suggests at the trial) that the pogrom was instigated by criminal terrorists who are deliberately trying to discredit the Polish Government, the facts are sufficiently ugly... The facts speak for themselves.

It is fair to add that the Polish Government took prompt and stern action, but that, of course, was too late. After this, advice to the Jews to stay in Poland and help in the task of rebuilding democracy must ring a little hollow. Is it really surprising that the Jews of Eastern Europe dream of the promised land?" □

From a leader in *The Manchester Guardian*
AJR Information, August 1946

Cooking with Gretel Beer



Cucumber soup

Serves 4

Gustav Lugerbauer is a wonderful chef and for years people would come from far and wide to his Weisses Kreuz at Mondsee to enjoy his cooking. He is now firmly installed at the Erlhof at Zell-am-See, no doubt creating new delicacies, but I hope guests can still savour his cucumber soup which is one of his 'star turns'. He serves it hot, but I find that it is equally good cold and that a touch of finely chopped dill greatly enhances it. It is a rather extravagant dish, using a whole cucumber for each portion, but well worth while.

- 4 cucumbers
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 scant tablespoon plain flour
- 6 fl.oz (1/6 litre) double cream
- salt, white pepper, finely chopped dill

Do not cut the rind off the cucumbers, cut into chunks. Put the chunks into a blender and reduce to a *purée*, then push through a hair sieve. Melt butter, stir in the flour and blend to a very light roux. Add cucumber juice and *purée*, bring to boil and simmer for one minute. Add cream, bring to boil, season with salt and pepper and serve at once, sprinkled with finely chopped dill □

Austrian wines

Hafner Wines, produced at Mönchhof in Burgenland under the supervision of Vienna Rabbi AJ Schwarz, are now available in this country. There are six varieties ranging from a dry *Welschriesling* to an *Auslese* and the selection also includes a semi-sweet red and semi-dry sparkling wine at recommended retail prices from £4.99 to £8.99 (for the sparkling wine).

Stockists include Sussers of Golders Green, Amazing Grapes of Hendon, L'Chaim of Edgware and many kosher food shops in north and northwest London, and in Manchester □

MEMBERSHIP GROUPS

Association of Children of Jewish Refugees

The ACJR was formed a little over ten years ago, on the initiative of Lilly Allen, a refugee from Czechoslovakia and a member of the AJR.

The small group of founding members, ostensibly strangers to each other in the summer of 1985, felt an immediate warmth and familiarity that today still marks the general atmosphere of the group. The shared background, whether as the child of a survivor or a refugee, continues to forge a strong bond. Organised primarily along social lines, for many the group has developed over the years into something of a replacement for the extended family that they never knew. The appetite to meet and welcome new members seems insatiable!

A monthly newsletter provides details of some six to eight social events each month including buffet suppers, theatre, cinema, art galleries, restaurant and similar visits, picnics, walks, poetry readings, talks, discussions groups and so forth. Highlights of the year include a very popular Seder, Summer BBQ and Chanukah party.

The group now has 126 full members. The emphasis is on a light touch helping us to enjoy the many positive aspects and sometimes hilarious quirks of our unique cultural backgrounds. If you would like to know more, and receive a complimentary newsletter, please telephone Anne on 0181 579 9906 or Ian on 0171 976 6691 □

Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners

The Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners (AJEB) is seeking to welcome new members, both ex-Berliners and their friends. The AJEB holds regular quarterly meetings on Sunday afternoons in Stanmore, Middx, typically with an 'Any Questions', musical or other entertainment. The AJEB also publishes regular newsletters and magazines to which the members contribute.

Information on membership can be obtained from Manfred Alweiss on 0181 455 0115 □



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Obituaries

WALTER SCHWAB

Walter Schwab, who has died aged 82, had his roots deep in German Jewry and in the English liberal tradition. His parents having come to Britain around 1900, he was born in Hampstead and attended one of London's foremost public schools, St. Paul's.

He gave up his medical studies in Cambridge in the mid-1930s to live on a kibbutz in Palestine. He drove an Egged bus and taught mathematical calculus to schoolchildren in Haifa before his mother Anna, a legendary figure at Bloomsbury House, persuaded him to come home and help train young German Jews for *hachsharah* in Palestine.

When war was declared he volunteered for the British army. Evacuated from Dunkirk, he saw service in North Africa and Italy, and rose to the rank of major.

He spent the next thirty years in the civil service. There he helped to shape Britain's post-war planning and new towns policies and retired as an Assistant Secretary. He still found time to write the history of the B'nai Brith First Lodge, to serve the Jewish Historical Society over decades, and the West London Synagogue as a warden and religion school teacher. After retirement he spent five vital years, from 1985 to 1990 as chairman of the Ben Uri Art Society, wrote a learned dissertation on Lewis Carroll, and worked for the Society of Wood Engravers and the Bookplate Society.

He is survived by his wife Alice, who writes our Art Notes, and their daughter Rabbi Julia Neuberger. His was a life which John Stuart Mill could have described as fruitful and fulfilled, and Leopold Zunz and Abraham Geiger would have declared blessed.

□ Rabbi William Wolff

BORIS BRAININ

Boris Brainin died in Vienna aged 90. Russian-born, he had come to Austria as a child, studied German literature and embarked on a writing career. During the 1934 civil uprising, he fled to the USSR where he had been offered work. In 1937, accused of subversive activities, he was arrested, tried and sentenced to 20 years hard labour in Siberia.

After his rehabilitation in 1963, Boris moved back to Moscow and became editor of a German language paper '*Neues Leben*'. He also did translation work, and published (heavily disguised) satiric verse.

In 1992, with the support of Austrian journalist friends, Boris was able to return to Vienna, where he lived happily in a Jewish Old Age Home. There he continued his translations, including works by Sholom Aleichem.

□ RG

SEARCH NOTICES

Ralph Frank Levy of Johannesburg, South Africa, would like to contact his female cousin, approx. 50 years of age, born in London. Her mother was a sister to Fritz Levy and the daughter of Betty, all originally from Germany. Anyone with any knowledge of them please contact Ralph Levy by Fax in South Africa on 2711-786-9015.

Frieda Badrian/Brinnitzer. Kurt Walter Badrian, born 5/5/34, (now Courtenay Bradley Harris) is seeking to discover if Frieda Badrian, née Brinnitzer, and her husband Adolf Badrian, who were known to be living in Berlin in 1939, were his parents. Any relatives or others with any knowledge of them are asked to contact CB Harris, 30 Cheviot Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 4FU.

Hans Gál. Dr. Deborah-Judith Vietor-Engländer, of the Technical University of Darmstadt, wishes to trace anyone who was interned with Hans Gál in England in 1940. She is editing a previously unpublished text written by Gál at this time called '*Music behind barbed wire*' (*Musik hinter Stacheldraht*) for a series entitled *Exil-Documente*, and is seeking contributors to a foreword. Please contact Dr. D. Vietor-Engländer, Am Finther Weg 8, D 55127 Mainz, Germany. Tel. 06131-477119 Fax. 06131-479772.

Community information

A computerised data base, containing information on a comprehensive range of events and organisational activities across the community, has been launched. 'Jewish Community Organisation' can be accessed through the central enquiry desk at the Board of Deputies and is funded largely by Jewish Continuity.

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One fell to the bullet,
One to the ballot.
Few mortals are gifted
To turn stone into bread.
The diners, ill-counselled,
The only course cancelled.
Now amid the smashed crockery
Not one knife is returned.

□ RG

NEWSROUND

Too few

Pope John Paul II, during his visit to Germany, told Ignatz Bubis, head of the Central Council of German Jews, that although many priests had opposed Hitler's genocide against the Jews, too few Roman Catholics had done so.

Holocaust denial

Legislation to make Holocaust denial illegal has again been called for by the Board of Deputies. If the UK became the only European country to lack such laws, it could unwittingly provide a base for denial propagandists.

War criminals

Scotland Yard currently has nine suspected Nazi war criminals under investigation, it has been reported. So far only Szymon Serafinowicz, accused of murdering Belarus Jews, has been charged.

Asylum Bill

Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies and former Home Office official, Neville Nagler, criticised the Government's Asylum Bill for withdrawing welfare benefits from asylum seekers. Had this been the law at the turn of the century, he observed, most intending Jewish immigrants would have been sent back to central and eastern Europe.

Holocaust education

Professor Robert Wistrich has compiled a Holocaust education pack for schoolchildren. *Understanding the Holocaust* is published by the Spiro Institute. British representatives of the 'Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation', established by film producer Steven Spielberg, have already interviewed and recorded the experiences of 120 people living in Britain.

Discontinuity?

Jewish Continuity, founded in 1993 and inspired by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, has entered into merger discussions with the Joint Israel Appeal. Continuity, which gives financial support to community-strengthening projects, was criticised for a lack of accountability and strategic policy in Professor Leslie Wagner's review of its operations.

□ RDC

One Man's War**Part 12****Meyer's story**

Meyer had a great sense of humour. He played a day-long game of chess for 'a chocolate'. He lost, produced a bar from his pocket, broke off a piece about the size of a pea and handed it over. An argument broke out, but Meyer maintained that the pea was all chocolate – not wood or paper – and that's all the winner was entitled to as nobody had specified the exact amount of chocolate before they started.

Franzl Meyer had left Vienna for Palestine in 1934. Why? A non-Zionist, he was not religious at all and really too young to plan to be buried in the Holy Land; besides, Hitler's rantings were not being taken seriously in Austria in 1934. He never gave us an explanation, but confessed that he had been married and divorced several times. He was once married to an Orthodox woman for only six weeks. Meyer was very pedantic, but his religious wife was exactly the opposite. Every time he opened a cupboard an avalanche of books, shirts, clothes, shoes and tools would cascade down on him, and after six weeks he could not take it any more. The conclusion we came to was that Meyer had left Austria because none of the Vienna marriage agencies would keep him on their books. Meanwhile he had completed his building complex with great success and much praise.

That winter the first Russian POWs arrived at the camp and brought with them lice, and with the lice transferred typhus. In spite of the fact that we had absolutely no contact with the Russkies, the lice must have spread via the German sentries. Since lice thrived on body hair, everybody had to shave everywhere – I repeat everywhere – and we had to undergo a daily inspection. In the cold, and total absence of hot water, it was all very unpleasant. Our medical orderly had a nervous breakdown and cried that he had seen enough anuses to last him the rest of his life.

In February 1941, thanks to Meyer's machinations we were assigned to farm work on an estate near Lubowitz (birth place of the poet Eichendorff). The local population were nearly all ethnic Poles, who had been under German domination for a few hundred years. But they still

spoke a Polish dialect among themselves and were unable to add up seven plus eight in German and had to refer back to Polish. Most of them were blessed with a Polish heart and hated the Germans on the quiet; some were non-committal but a minority had become Nazi collaborators. The boss, i.e. the lessee of the farm, spoke no Polish, having been born in West Germany.

Our farm manager, the Herr Inspector, an educated man with a degree in agriculture was a fanatical Pole, whose brother-in-law, a well known lawyer in Cracow, had been arrested in the round-up of the Polish intelligentsia in 1939 and never seen again.

The farm was a square surrounded by large buildings which included the inspector's house, stables, cowshed, piggery, barns, stores, a forge with workshop and other houses.

The farm labourers lived just outside the gate in terraced houses, free of rent, got all their food and fuel free, were allowed to keep some animals and received small salaries. But if they chose to work elsewhere they had to vacate their houses.

They were poor and ill-educated, but they were not stupid. They had their Sunday best, but the men's working clothes were so heavily patched that the original material could not be seen any more. The womenfolk only wore shoes in winter.

About fifty cows never left their cowshed and had to be milked by hand every 8 hours, 365 days of the year. Pigs were bred in large numbers. The inspector and the blacksmith were the only men under fifty freed from military service, food production being rated as important as armaments in wartime. The blacksmith had become a Nazi party member for reasons of personal expediency. He had failed his masters examination and should actually not have been allowed to shoe horses, but during wartime this ruling had to be ignored. The boss hated him, he knew that he stole and that he spied on him, but he could not dispense with him – yet.

(to be continued)

□ H P Weiner

AJR

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