

Don't miss ...

**Germany's
Holocaust Memorial**
Ronald Channing p3

**Development of
Community Identity**
Dr Anthony Grenville p14

Bicentenary Mirage
Prof Otto Hutter p16

Diamond celebration

The Sixtieth Anniversary Reunion of Kindertransportees was an event steeped in poignancy. A staggering twelve hundred septuagenarians – out of the original ten thousand Kinder – came from America, Australia, Israel and Britain to a venue not far from Bloomsbury House of blessed memory. They gathered to remember martyred parents, and to give thanks to Britain and the British individuals – Christian and Jewish – who had succoured them in their hour of need. Adding special poignancy to the occasion was its coincidence with the end of the Kosovo conflict □

Reflections on peace hopes at the end of a war-torn century

Intra-Jewish peace precedes Arab-Israeli amity

As we enter the home stretch towards the year 2000 we can congratulate ourselves on having survived the bloodiest century of human history (The fourteenth century may actually have seen a larger proportional decrease in population – but that was mainly due to the Black Death).

Four megalomaniacs – Wilhelm II, Stalin, Hitler and Mao – each piled up hécatombs of corpses to dwarf Everest. After them came run-of-the-mill maniacs e.g. Khomeini, Saddam Hussein and Milosevic, whose body count 'merely' takes them into the Himalayan foothills. Happily of that trio Khomeini is now dead, Saddam pinned down and Milosevic moribund.

We can also take comfort from the fact that such potential flashpoints of conflict as South Africa, Northern Ireland and the Middle East are further away from erupting than seemed possible a few years ago.

In South Africa the fault line ran between members of different races and in Northern Ireland between adherents of different faiths. In Israel, alas, the fault lines of race and religion cut across each other.

The religious fault line there is not between Islam and Judaism; that conflict is already subsumed under the Arabs v Israel heading. The religious caesura in the Jewish State separates rigid Orthodoxy from Secularism. Would-be Ayatollas pit Holy Writ against the Constitution and the Legal Code. For instance, when Rabbi Arye Deri, ex-leader of the Sephardi Shas Party, after lengthy investigation and due process of law received a four-year sentence, Shas militants blithely accused the High Court – the most august tribunal in the land – of perverting justice for the advantage of the Ashkenazi élite. Nor did the Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Joseph scruple to stigmatise over half a million Russian immigrants as 'mafiosi, pimps and pork butchers'. (It is, of course, true that not all olim from the former USSR are halachically Jewish – but one would

have thought that a relative minority of goyish Russians would eventually integrate fully into the majority population.)

Such bigotry, poisoning the political atmosphere in Israel, could have had the most calamitous results. Fortunately Ehud Barak's landslide victory has completely transformed the political climate. His election triumph is to be welcomed not only because it will thaw out the deep-frozen Arab-Israeli peace process initiated at Oslo, but also because it bids fair to damp down the simmering *Kulturkampf* inside Israel.

The new Israeli Premier, already on record as deprecating military exemption for yeshiva students, may well remove that major irritant to the secular majority from the statute book. But he will have to walk a tightrope. He cannot afford to burn his bridges with the traditionalist Sephardi working class, the constituency of Shas. In planning to effect a sea change in Arab-Israeli relations he is embarking on a perilous enterprise for which national unity is an absolute prerequisite. In other words: to bring about peace with the Arabs he needs to banish the spectre of war between the Jews forever □



Speaker Betty Boothroyd, centre, unveiled a plaque in the House of Commons commemorating the arrival of the children of the Kindertransport 60 years ago, with Bea Green, left, Bertha Leverton, centre right, and David Jedwab, organisers of an international Kindertransport conference in London.

Ronald Channing

Profile



Gary Italiaander, left, his father Michael and sister Bernice Krantz.

Family portraits

Michael Italiaander, his son Gary and daughter Bernice are, each in their own sphere, portrait artists of extra special merit. Michael is a painter and illustrator whose work is known and appreciated in Europe, Israel and the United States. The portrait of Prince Edward, which hangs in the Queen's private collection at Buckingham Palace, gives him particular cause for pride.

Gary has earned an exceptional international reputation for the quality of his work as a photographer specialising, like his father, in portraiture. For the past four years his gallery was to be found within Harrods, the prestigious Knightsbridge department store with its most discriminating clientèle, which means, of course, that Gary's portraits are to be seen on the walls of some of the most splendid houses in the world.

If the secret of a great portrait is to convey successfully a real understanding of the subject, then Bernice has earned her own well-deserved reputation for creating portraits of a somewhat different kind. As volunteer national organiser for Britain of Steven Spielberg's *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation*, Bernice, with her colleague Sharon Tyler, has for four years recruited, trained, managed and led a dedicated group of 40 interviewers in this country to place on

record the testimonials of some 900 Holocaust refugees and survivors.

Each interview was in itself a major undertaking with Bernice often having to reassure the interviewee as well as book the interviewer and the video-cameraman and provide continual advice and backup. When the subjects were guided through their former lives by a skilled and sympathetic interviewer, they recalled their families and friends, their harsh experiences and route to survival, thereby enabling future generations to continue to call on their powerful and irrefutable eye-witnesses accounts.

With similar interviews having been conducted in the US, Canada, Israel, Australia and in many other parts of the world in which survivors have rebuilt their lives, in all the Foundation has now preserved 50,000 testimonies for posterity.

Copies of the interviews are being lodged at Yad Vashem in Israel, at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and in three further US centres, in London's Imperial War Museum and in several other institutions which together will allow free access to scholars and researchers. Most of these portraits are emotionally draining; they recall Jewish ways of life in countries from which Jews and Judaism have long been banished, but Bernice's portraits will probably be the most vivid, lifelike and long-lasting memory of them all.

□ Ronald Channing

Van Gogh restored to owner

Gerta Silberberg, a member of the AJR living in the Midlands, is to have restored to her a drawing by Van Gogh which her late father-in-law was forced to sell in one of the so-called 'Jew auctions' of artworks, the proceeds from which were confiscated by the Nazis.

Max Silberberg was an industrialist from Breslau (now Wroclaw in Poland) whose outstanding collection included works of French and German Impressionists, among them Van Gogh, Manet, Pissaro, Matisse, Degas, Cezanne and Delacroix, valued today at £20 million. His business was 'aryanised' and he was ordered to sell his furniture, books, ceramics and the paintings. Hundreds of such auctions were held between 1933 and 1938.

Max Silberberg perished in a concentration camp, but his son Alfred and daughter-in-law escaped to England, arriving penniless in 1937. Alfred died in 1984, but Gerta, as her father-in-law's only surviving relative, determined to recover the drawings and paintings from Max Silberberg's collection.

Records only came to light after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, in which year German law recognised these forced sales as equivalent to theft and further documents were declassified two years ago.

Gerta Silberberg employed art historians to track down any works that were in her father-in-law's collection and it was they who discovered both the Van Gogh and Hans von Maree's *Man with Yellow Coat* in Berlin.

The President of the Foundation for Prussian Cultural Heritage, the body with responsibility for Berlin's museums and art collections, has announced that the Van Gogh sketch *L'Olivette*, which is currently on display in the National Gallery of Berlin and valued at more than £3 million, is to be returned to Gerta Silberberg. The Foundation's trustees are to be commended for having taken the decision to restore property to Holocaust survivors and their families without protracted and costly court proceedings. It opens up the possibility of the return of hundreds of other artworks to their rightful owners.

□ RDC

Germany's Holocaust Memorial problem

Just how can the citizens of today's Germany grapple successfully with the design and construction of a memorial to their former Jewish co-nationals, whom their parents' and grandparents' generations successfully dispossessed and annihilated?

This seemingly insoluble paradox was discussed by Prof James Young of Amherst University, Mass., a leading authority on Holocaust memorialisation and author of a seminal work, *The Texture of Memory*. At the Wiener Library Prof Young analysed the rationale behind the design of Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin and, when delivering the James Parkes Memorial lecture at the University of Southampton, he described the process of commissioning, evaluating and recommending a Holocaust memorial for Germany's restored state capital.

Ironically Berlin's first Jewish Museum, opened in 1933 one week before Hitler was made Chancellor, continued to mount exhibitions until the imposition of the Nuremberg Laws' severe restrictions and its subsequent recognition as a depository of 'decadent art'. Plundered on Kristallnacht 1938, after the war 400 of its paintings were recovered and lodged in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

In 1988 an architectural competition was launched for the design of a Jewish Museum for which the drawings submitted by Daniel Libeskind were at first recognised as being brilliant but architecturally unbuildable. Empty spaces within its structure represented the void brought by the removal of Berlin Jewry. Possibly, suggested Prof Young, it represented contemporary German culture coming to terms with the void at its own centre.

With the breaching of the Berlin Wall in 1989, despite most other state funding being put on hold, the \$100 million for the Jewish Museum was reinstated as a priority and the museum building was duly completed last year.

"How do the perpetrators commemorate the crime their nation committed?" Lea Roth, quoted by Prof Young as having posed this question, was the moving spirit behind the 1988 proposal to erect a Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. With the fall of the Berlin Wall the following year, a large empty site was identified in the heart of the city near the Reichstag and

the project received the full support of Chancellor Kohl.

A design competition in 1994 brought 528 submissions. The 'winner' conceived a gigantic slab inscribed with the names of 4.5 million victims and strewn with boulders from Massada, but a public outcry forced a reconsideration of its design and scale. James Young was among those who criticised the scheme. It made him uneasy and he called it "a burial slab for the 20th century" which would "unshoulder the Germans' burden." Chancellor Kohl voided the competition's result.

In best poacher-turned-gamekeeper tradition, Prof Young was invited to join the committee of five burdened with the task of arbitrating on the selection of a memorial – the only foreigner and the only Jew – and soon found himself thrown in at the deep end.

The committee created a conceptual plan which stipulated that: the memorial would provide a space in Germany's capital that would be "a deliberate attempt to remember"; it would only honour Jewish victims (but not to the exclusion of others' memorials); the memorial's purpose and the Holocaust would be clearly defined and include the role of the perpetrators.

In 1997 a new competition was announced, incorporating the nine previous finalists and including sixteen additional architects. From the nineteen designs submitted, eight finalists were invited to make presentations and a short list of four selected. Peter Eisenman, whose original design required the erection of 4500 pillars on the site, was asked to undertake a redesign to fall within certain restricting parameters.

Eisenman's modified project incorporates 2700 stone pillars, from waist to head high, penetrated by clear sight-lines. This preferred project was submitted to Chancellor Kohl. Although with a change of Government, SDP Culture Minister Michael Naumann opened up the possible addition of a library and documentaion centre, it is Eisenman's modified project which is being put before the Reichstag for approval.

Prof Young was confident that many people would learn what Germany perpetrated on the Jews of Europe from the memorial. The sadness is that it commemorates Hitler's one lasting victory – European Jewry was practically wiped out.

□ Ronald Channing

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Reviews

A backward glance

Peter Gay, *MY GERMAN QUESTION*, Yale UP, £15.50

Born in 1923, in Berlin, the author, Peter Fröhlich, is now an American academic called Gay, a surname he adopted before it acquired a certain connotation.

He writes in beautiful, concise and clear English, with only mild American overtones. He fights shy of calling it an autobiography, making his subtitle *Growing Up in Nazi Berlin*. It is a thin dividing line, this mixture of, as it were, the political and the personal; autobiographical elements do come in, and they are engagingly and interestingly presented. For instance, he ardently defends the German Jews against the, in his view, unfair attacks on their too-long maintained belief in Germany. He castigates the 100 per cent hindsight of their critics. Yet this is well mixed with stories of his school days, tales of his relatives, in particular his adored parents, who also escaped, first to Cuba and then to the US.

The family atmosphere in which he grew up, was liberal and agnostic to the point of atheism. But it took him until 1961 before he could gear himself up to pay an anguished visit to his erstwhile fatherland. There he found that he could never trust most of those who had been grown-ups during the war, yet rejoiced when some old friends were found to have behaved splendidly.

But apart from these weighty matters there are amusing tales of continued support for the football club Hertha BSC, almost obsessional stamp-collecting and feeble anti-Nazi jokes carefully whispered into safe ears.

The family's emigration was long delayed because the father's glassware business at first actually prospered under the Nazis. He had an 'Aryan' associate by the name of Pelz. Ludicrously, Nordic-looking Fröhlich senior was advised to get rid of 'the Jew Pelz'. At this readers can either laugh or shed tears.

Fröhlich senior did not prosper in America; he died relatively young, and Peter's mother lived on with her psychological and physical health much impaired. Peter progressed from strength to strength in academe, publishing many books. He does not boast about this, it emerges in passing and from the usual

publicity material on the dust jacket.

One can safely recommend this memoir. It is full of mature insights, in which many readers will recognise their own situations and reactions. They may agree or disagree, but interest will not flag.

□ John Rossall

Star-crossed lovers

Paul Morrison, *SOLOMON AND GAENOR*, at selected cinemas

Rabbi Shmule Boteach describes this film, rather irreverently, as "six uses for a tallis": it figures as a prayer-shawl, a wrap against the cold, a cast-off and a shroud. Nevertheless, the film is a serious portrayal of two totally separate communities in Wales at the turn of the century. It makes fascinating, if excessive, use of local scenery: the bare cottages of the miners, rainsoaked cobbled streets, snowy mountains and slagheaps. It also touches on a real historic event: the Tredegar riots against the Jews. The Romeo and Juliet aspect is moving, if inadequately explored. We get no other motive for the attraction than sex, a powerful one, it is true, but what goes on in the minds of the lovers is a mystery. The Welsh side are shown in their chapel-rigidity – the heroine is denounced in church for being pregnant with Solomon's illegitimate child – and the Jews are equally, if more quietly, unforgiving.

Parts of the dialogue are in Welsh and in Yiddish, but whereas the Welsh speakers utter their words with conviction, the Yiddish speakers, including Maureen Lipman, mumble their lines in a monotone. The idea seems to be that nobody is going to understand them anyway, so let the audience rely on the subtitles. A pity, as this does scant justice to the feeling behind the rhythms of their speech.

Despite its longueurs – some parts are endlessly stretched out, including a brutal scene in which the hero is thumped to within an inch of his life – the film has many moving moments and raises serious issues.

□ Martha Blend

In the melting pot

Benny Barbash, *MY FIRST SONY*, Review, 1999, £9.99.

You have here a slice of history of the State of Israel as recorded by a very idiosyncratic historian: a ten-

year-old boy given a tape recorder as a present.

So don't be misled by the aforementioned term 'history'. This little eavesdropper records all the goings-on in a pretty dysfunctional family. Its core is Dad, a somewhat blocked writer *manqué* who when not blocked, ghosts the reminiscences of Shoah survivors which exacerbate his depression. Mom, in her own view, and that of some admirers, is a brilliant architect. They are ill-matched but love each other. Dad is a typical East European and Mom is a fiery Latin-American. Both are convinced Jewish secularists. Mom's mother lives with them and speaks Spanish to her daughter. For good measure Dad's father is an ardent right-winger, and his older brother is an ultra-Orthodox born-again Jew. On top of that, Dad leaves home from time to time after heated circular arguments, and nor is he faithful to Mom. Imagine when this lot, which also includes batty aunts, get together at Jewish festivals honoured by one section for historic meaning and by the other for literal religious significance. The prophet Elijah is dragged into the arguments, together with Ben-Gurion, Karl Marx, Herzl and Jabotinsky, for Grandpa was an enthusiastic follower of the last-named in 'the old country'.

All this is faithfully recorded by little nosey parker Yotam, and is mixed up with Mom's crying in the night and some laughable scenes at a mass circumcision establishment for former Russian-Jewish assimilationists. Over it all lie the serious threats to the State of Israel, as well as the tragic recent past of the Jewish people.

It all adds up to a page-turning story.

□ John Rossall

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REGULAR VISITS TO LONDON

University centre named for pioneer of Christian-Jewish understanding

The University of Southampton has named its main faculty of arts building in tribute to the late Reverend Dr James Parkes, a severe critic of Nazi Germany and a tireless worker for Jewish refugees. The centre houses the University's Department for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations which also carries his name.

Dr Parkes, an Anglican clergyman, was among the first to recognise the threat posed by antisemitism and extreme racist nationalism and a pioneer in acknowledging and researching the Christian roots of antisemitism. He was the author of several important works on Jewish history as well as a founder of the Council of Christians and Jews. He also helped in the rescue of Jewish refugees and spoke on behalf of European Jewry during World War II.

Parkes began his collection of early printed books and contemporary pamphlets on the history of Jewish communities and their relationships with their host countries in the 1930s. He presented what had become an extensive collection



The Parkes librarian opens a record book of the Jewish Board of Guardians dating from 1901 for, left to right, Prof David Cesarani, research student Sarah Kavanaugh, Mike Whine and Monty Kolsky of the Board of Deputies, Dr Tony Kushner and head of special collections Chris Woolgar.

to the University of Southampton in 1964 and, as the Parkes Library, its continued expansion has made it one of the largest Jewish documentation centres in Europe.

The Parkes Centre for Jewish/non-Jewish Relations, established in 1996, with the benefit of the Library and archive, has earned international recognition under its director, Dr Tony Kushner, Prof David Cesarani, director of the Wiener Library, Dr Jo Reilly, who also holds complementary posts in both institutions and other

leading academics.

A major benefactor of the University, Ian Karten, who came from Germany to study in England in 1938, unveiled a dedication plaque in the new building in the presence of deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Alistair Ulph, Dean of Arts, Prof Katharine Crouan, academic staff and guests. Professor James Young delivered the Parkes Memorial Lecture on 'Germany's Holocaust memorial problem'.

□ RDC

Malicious cucumbers

On arrival in the UK I needed to acquire one-and-a-half new languages. I had to learn English because the whole country spoke it – and Yiddish because my host, and my fellow sweatshop workers, peppered their speech with pungent Yiddish phrases. (*Pace* their less-than-benign comment on my rather halting progress: *Az er nejt gejt a roich*, or, when he sews he causes smoke to rise.)

Every reader will know the pitfalls English presents for the native German-speaker. Take GIFT, which means a present in one language, and poison in the other – or MIST, which transmutes from fog into rubbish. (By the same token similar-sounding words also provide material for bilingual puns such as Er-and-Sie Rescue as the name for a

dating agency.)

On the surface learning Yiddish was easier, because around eighty per cent of all the words come from German. But looked at from the pedagogic aspect Yiddish was harder, because I had to learn it purely by word of mouth, without any printed material – not to mention dictionaries – as teaching aids.

Certain Yiddish words or phrases took me ages to fathom out. One such was *geb a shmeichel*. Since *schmeicheln* means to flatter in German, it could only have been a vague similarity of sound that led to the phrase acquiring the meaning of 'flash a smile'.

Then there was the word *beimish*, as in *beimische cucumbers*. In German *bämisch* means malicious – but how, outside the pages of Lewis Carroll, could cucumbers be malicious? Eventually I realised that *beimish* derived from *der beim*, or the old country – ergo *beimische cucumbers*

were gherkins pickled in the Polish manner.

The trickiest problem that presented itself to me related to the term *yiddified*. On the analogy with the word *Frenchified* I assumed that it denoted someone who had adopted Jewish mannerisms – but I was 180 degrees out, because the person most frequently described as yiddified was Oswald Mosley. After weeks of mental agony the Pfennig dropped: it came to me that *yiddified* derived from *Judenfeind*, the German compound noun for enemy of the Jews.

I hope that even cynics will be impressed by my youthful feat in deconstructing the particular mini-Tower of Babel. For me at any rate it was the first step on the road that led ultimately to an editorial – though, alas, not a professorial – chair.

□ RG



Letters to the Editor

AUSTRIA: SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Sir - I was immensely impressed by your editorial about Austria. On the 13 March 1938 I saw literally thousands of swastika flags waving in greeting of Hitler. After the War, the Austrians closed their eyes to the past. Requests for restitution, rehabilitation or at least an apology never materialised.

However, another generation has now discovered their dreadful past and has decided to make amends. The National Fund for the Victims of Nazi Persecution commenced operations in 1997 under the outstanding leadership of Mrs Hannah Lessing.

Another interesting feature is that suddenly the Austrian archives have opened and released documents not previously available. There is therefore a little bit of light. It can never eradicate the past but it can make life a little easier for the minority of Austrians who decided that something had to be done to improve the image of their country.

Cascais, Portugal

Peter Frankel

Sir - Haider's recent election success in Carinthia was partly due to our, *ie* the Austrian Jewish emigrants', unforgiving attitude towards present-day Austria. The taxpayers of Austria, *ie* most of the population, have tried hard to atone for their grandparents' crimes. Most of us get an Austrian pension, even if we had been quite young when we left. Pensioners suffering from disabilities get a reasonable supplement. Last year most of us got a *Wiedergutmachung* payment. Confiscated goods and businesses have been returned. The Austrians have done much to re-establish normal and cordial relations with their former Jewish compatriots.

However, as far as I know, these efforts at reconciliation have never been officially acknowledged and certainly not by the AJR. In history there have been quite a number of historical crimes for which the victims were never compensated.

The Austrians say to themselves: "Why should we keep on paying these people who do not respond to our generosity? Let us vote for somebody who promises

us to restrict our generosity and save our taxes." I hope that the AJR is big-hearted enough to rectify the situation before somebody much worse than Haider appears on the horizon.

Surrey

AW Freud

Sir - It is quite true that Austrian Denazification was inadequate, but it is not true that there wasn't any. Austria established in 1945 some people's courts for Nazi criminals which over the next three years or so handed out about 30 death sentences. There was nothing like it in Western Germany.

Deddington

Francis Steiner

RICH MAN, POOR MAN

Sir - Mr Channing (May issue 1999) wrote a moderate, serious query concerning what one may call "the paradox of poverty amidst growing prosperity". Ms Annette Saville's reaction can only be described as arrant nonsense. It is certainly not Mr Channing who lives "in cloud cuckoo land" but she, who harks back to Victorian policy differentiating between deserving and non-deserving poor.

The problem of poverty is one of the worst *causal* problems worldwide. What Ms Saville claims to have witnessed "spend, spend", etc. is most certainly not the cause, but the effect of former or earlier parenting problems. Even more ridiculous is the idea of "shiftless, thriftless" and worst, "unintelligent" causality of poverty.

Let Ms Saville learn that all that is needed for poverty is a major incident depriving you of your career, business or the support of your children. It is even more unthinking when such a person is a survivor of the Shoah.

Reading

Friederike Wilder-Okladek,

Berkshire

Sir - Ms Annette Saville (Letters, June issue) seems to have caught the "I am all right, pull up the ladder, Jack" bug.

It is, of course, true that the redistribution of wealth as carried out today, does not work, but blaming the poor for their

own misery is a bit much. Globalisation of the economy results in the globalisation of poverty, while the owners of hard currencies or credit produce conditions of growth for themselves.

A society consisting of part-time, mainly low-paid female labour cannot alter this.

Only when we grasp the nettle of guaranteed, lifelong full-time employment for heads of families, male or female, can we create a reasonable, democratic society.

South Croydon

Ulrich Pick

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

Sir - I much value Gloria Tessler's report in AJR Information, June 1999, on *Life is Beautiful* and its comparison with *Candide* and fully agree with her interpretation.

The film's depiction of German behaviour in the camp appeared to me more realistic in my experience of Buchenwald in November/December 1938 than anything else I have seen in other attempts to present it. No doubt Benigni has made good use in his presentation of that behaviour from material he has taken out of the factual reports by his excellent compatriot Primo Levi.

London SE21

ML Meyer

BRADFORD BOYS

Sir - I read the profile in the June issue with great interest, since I was also at the Bradford Hostel for a short time. My late brother, Egon Katz, was there for a much longer period. He, too, joined the British army and called himself Jack Wayne. I can still remember the rabbi in charge, a Mr Auerbach.

Bexley

Kent

Karl Katz

Sir - Thank you for publishing the photo of the Bradford Boys (June 1999 issue).

My refugee family lived in Bradford during the war and my parents were personal friends of the "refugee couple". On many summer Sunday afternoons we ladies (community and refugee) would sit in the Hostel gardens and mend those boys' socks!

I wonder if anyone remembers?

London N4

Rita Kahn (née Poznanski)

Sir - Hanna Ruth Simmonds of Harrogate is amused that you should ascribe to her the position of 'in loco parentis' in your

otherwise excellent article on The Bradford Boys (June 1999). It was her parents, Mr and Mrs Herbert Eger, who were that. Ruth was younger than the boys!

Bradford

Rudi Leavor

CLERIHEW

Sir – Although I guess Leo Wolff (Letters, June issue) is not being too serious, I must take issue with even the thought that we Goys should be annoyed that God was odd enough to choose the Jews! On the contrary, many of us are full of delight because He chose them to be, *pace* Isaiah, "A light to the Gentiles and my salvation unto the end of the earth".

I suggest the cleriheiw should read: How odd of God to choose the Jews? Not so! His choice inclusive love expressed: "In thy seed all the nations shall be blessed".

I feel immensely indebted to the Jews for the concept of a God whose astonishing ingenuity as revealed in this universe is matched by His character as shown in His redeeming love for all mankind. I have also the great joy of a much-loved AJR wife and two fine sons.

East Midlands

Ernest CE Willis

SECOND GENERATION'S NETWORK

Sir – It almost seems as if survivors' families are expected to need some sort of treatment. If they are told this long enough they might eventually believe that they do.

Incidentally, am I right in assuming that the Second Generation's Network is identical with the Second Generation Trust? If not, does the change of name indicate a change in its aims?

London NW3

Herta Reik

THANK YOU BRITAIN FUND

Sir – I am sorry that Anne Pisker imagines that she owes nothing to this country (Letters June issue): 'I haven't forgotten...my internment on the Isle of Man.' Had she been interned in Auschwitz, she would, presumably, have been in a state of happy oblivion for over half a century, by now.

Incidentally, refugees who joined the British or Allied forces escaped internment.

London E4

Gerda Mayer

GREAT DANE

Sir – There is a version of the Canute story different from that in the *Historia Anglorum* quoted by Mr Mikkelson (June issue).

According to this version King Canute was being pestered by some of his nobles to take certain actions he deemed impossible. When they persisted the king appears to have lost his patience and decided to demonstrate the folly of the peers' demands. He asked for his ceremonial chair or throne to be placed at the water's edge, sat down and in a loud voice he ordered the rising tide to recede; with the obvious non-result, of course. And, since this had no effect, he went one step further, he asked some of his minions to 'punish' the waters by beating them with chains – naturally without effect. And then, turning to his entourage, he said something on these lines. "There you are, my Lords; there are certain things which simply cannot be done, no matter how powerful you may be and they are best left alone." They grumbled, but ultimately withdrew their request.

Had Canute lived a little later he might conceivably have borrowed the old saying: "*Gegen den Wind kann man nicht Klavier spielen.*"

Richmond
Surrey

CP Carter

WRONG UNIVERSITY

Sir – Someone at your end slipped up. I was at the University of Surrey, not at Sussex, as stated in Letters to the Editor.

London NW11

Gerald Fleming

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Routes to antisemitism

Christianity and the Enlightenment

Images of the Holocaust still pervaded our culture, said Prof Schleunes in his address on *Controversies and Problems in Explaining the Holocaust* at Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre. Despite the memory of Auschwitz being forgotten, even suppressed, for several decades after World War II, today it had become a household word.

Both Christianity and the Enlightenment had brought "glorious achievements", said Prof Schleunes, but had also produced a darker side. The lack of opposition to Hitler and his Aryan legislation from the churches, particularly Pope Pius XII's failure to protest, was well known. But among much deeper problems for consideration were the power of good over evil and the role of Christianity in the promotion of anti-semitism.

While the Roman Empire adopted Christianity, the Jews maintained their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The accusation that Jews were responsible for his crucifixion led to the charge of deicide and demonisation by Christian theologians. Crusaders had no compunction in slaughtering Jews in the Rhineland as 'agents of the devil' and even by 1543 Luther happily expounded on "the Jews and their lies".

The eighteenth century's Enlightenment sought a better world through respect for fundamental human rights, justice and the application of scientific principles. In contravention of traditional Christian teachings, emancipation and political participation found favour. However, it was anticipated that Jews would assimilate into the mainstream of western culture from which they had previously been excluded.

The late nineteenth century's fascination with pseudo-sciences, such as eugenics, helped to turn Jews from followers of a religion into a race, in Prof Schleunes' view. The Nazis determined to negate every ideal generated by the Enlightenment and used the combined force of centuries-old prejudices against the Jews to the ultimate.

□ Ronald Channing

AJR Reports



Ronald Channing

Enjoying a day's good company at AJR's Kard & Games Klub

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS Pinner

At short notice Gideon Fiegel gave Pinner AJR members a blow-by-blow account of the battle for Acre in the 1948 War of Independence in which he served as a captain in the Israel Defence Forces. Courageously fighting to relieve three outlying settlements against entrenched Syrian positions, his soldiers' success had the fortuitous consequence of liberating the whole of the Galilee.

The group welcomes Elizabeth Feldman as joint co-ordinator with Vera Gelman who will continue to arrange its programmes.

□ Walter Weg

Enjoy the wonders of a 'Trip to China' with George Vulcan at the next meeting on Thursday 8th July at 2pm at Pinner Synagogue.

South London

Monica Lowenberg of Sussex University spoke to South London AJR on the skills brought to Britain by German-Jewish refugees. While Jewish students had been able to study at German universities they could enter the legal and medical professions, but after Hitler came to power in 1933 these opportunities soon began to be removed. Jews in small towns felt extremely isolated, though those in cities

were not much better off.

The ORT School in Berlin, which provided vocational training in manual skills, was transferred to Leeds in 1937, saving the lives of both staff and children who were able to make their livings as plumbers, electricians, joiners and the like. The Jewish School in Cologne, though very short of funds, taught in English which proved a considerable advantage when, in 1938, this school also was transferred to England. Both the girls, who were settled in Willesden and the boys, sent to Liverpool, were able to earn their living when they left school at the age of 14.

□ Ruth Leggett

At SLAJR'S next meeting on 15th July at 2pm at Streatham Liberal Synagogue, Prentis Road, Pam Schweizer will talk on 'Reminiscences'.

Brighton & Hove

At the invitation of the AJR and with the full co-operation of Jewish Care and its local representative Mrs Fausta Shelton, fourteen participants met to discuss the formation of an AJR group in the area, while several others promised their support. Though most were residents of Brighton and Hove, others came from Eastbourne, Lewes, Worthing and Arundel.

Myrna Glass, AJR's Outreach Worker, pointed to the success of similar groups in other parts of the country and sug-

gested a number of activities, including speakers, discussions and outings. It was agreed that monthly meetings would be arranged and a committee of four volunteered to organise the programme for the coming months with the support of AJR's office.

□ Frank Goldberg

For more information on the group and its planned activities, please contact Myrna Glass on 0171 431 6161.

West Midlands

A garden party and luncheon, by kind invitation of Mr Leon Jessel, is to take place on Sunday 18th July at 12.30pm. To accept please call the Hon Secretary on 0121 705 5396 as soon as possible as numbers have to be limited with priority being given to AJR members and their spouses □

AJR 'Drop in' Advice Centre at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6 3RL
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following dates:

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Tuesday	13	July
Thursday	22	July
Wednesday	28	July
Tuesday	3	August

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A If you are 65 or over and you satisfy **one** of the four 'disability conditions' and have done so for the **LAST SIX MONTHS**, or if you are terminally ill – then you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

Q What are the 'disability' conditions?

A You must be so severely disabled physically or mentally that you require from another person:-

- 1) **During the day** frequent attention throughout the day in connection with your bodily functions or
- 2) Continual supervision throughout the day in order to avoid substantial danger to yourself or to others or
- 3) **During the Night** prolonged or repeated attention in connection with your bodily functions or
- 4) in order to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others another person has to be awake for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals for the purpose of watching over you.

Q Does anything affect what you get?

A Attendance Allowance is not taxed and not means tested. It can, in fact, trigger extra help with means tested benefits such as Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits.

Attendance Allowance is paid at two rates. The higher rate is paid to people who need help both day and night. The lower rate is paid to people who need help either day or night.

Q How do I apply for Attendance Allowance and how do I get more information.

A Contact the Welfare Rights Adviser in the Social Services Department of AJR.

□ Agi Alexander

... Viewpoint ...

Wargames

For nearly half a century continental Europe has been virtually free of military conflict. The ending of World War II ushered in a period of unprecedented wealth-creation accompanied by a totally unanticipated rise in the expectations of the common man.

The price paid for Europe's emancipation was a high one. While the casualties sustained by the military forces of the Allies were nothing like as horrendous as those of World War I, the human cost remains etched on British war memorials throughout the land as bulwarks against ever-fading remembrance.

Civilian casualties, however, were a totally new development. After a bloody rehearsal for German dive-bombers in Spain's civil war, in World War II the Luftwaffe set out to destroy the enemy's men, women and children in their homes and workplaces, in their schools and hospitals, making non-combatants equally vulnerable as those wearing the distinguishing garb of the warrior.

A civilian caught up in any contemporary conflict faces by far the greatest

risk of a violent death, injury or dispossession – in today's euphemistic jargon, 'ethnic cleansing'. Speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd, when unveiling a plaque in the House remembering the saving of 10,000 mostly Jewish children who found refuge in Britain, rightly called it mass murder.

What of Kosovo and the Serbs? The war from the air, which armchair generals predicted would have little serious effect, did apparently secure the surrender of Yugoslavian forces. While casualties were sustained by Yugoslav soldiers and paramilitaries, there are reports of their 10,000 Kosovar victims and a further 1,200 civilians killed by Nato. Yet, in a war conducted from a height of three miles and viewed through the dispassionate computer displays of state-of-the-art technological warfare, prior to the entry of Nato forces into Kosovo not one Allied pilot or soldier was lost in battle. Paradoxically, at the end of the twentieth century, rather than remain a non-combatant, it appears safer to join the armed services.

□ Ronald Channing

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

Afternoon entertainment programme –

JULY/AUGUST 1999

Thur 1	Nicola Smedley accompanied by Jan Cunningham, piano	Wed 21	The Frowde Family accompanied by June Moore, piano
Sun 4	DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT	Thur 22	DAY CENTRE CLOSED – TISHA B'AV
Mon 5	KARD & GAMES KLUB	Sun 25	DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Tue 6	Angela Arratoon accompanied by Anthea Weale	Mon 26	KARD & GAMES KLUB
Wed 7	Armand d'Anjour, cello, accompanied by Isobel Koprowski, piano	Tue 27	Antonia Kendall, soprano, accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth, piano
Thur 8	Debbie Bright, mezzo, accompanied by Nicholas O'Neil, piano	Wed 28	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton accompanied by Malcolm Cottle, piano
Sun 11	Carmen Lasok, soprano, accompanied by Marek Dabrowski, piano	Thur 29	Cheryl Enever, soprano, accompanied by Nicholas O'Neil, piano
Mon 12	KARD & GAMES KLUB	Sun 1	DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Tue 13	Amanda Palmer, opera	Mon 2	KARD & GAMES KLUB
Wed 14	Rebecca Smith, soprano, & John Taylor, baritone, accompanied by Charlotte Ellis, piano	Tue 3	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton accompanied by Peter Gellhorn, piano
Thur 15	The Sing-Alongers	Wed 4	Jeanette Wainwright, soprano, accompanied by Yeu-Meng Chan, piano
Sun 18	DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT		
Mon 19	KARD & GAMES KLUB		
Tue 20	Helen Blake, voice and piano		

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Riesel. Oscar Riesel, born in Vienna, passed away on 3 April 1999. Deeply mourned and missed by his devoted wife Bobbi, son Nicky and daughter Tania.

Jacoby. Alice Jacoby died suddenly and it was a great shock for all her friends. She was a longstanding member of the AJR and voluntarily took care of the library. She was a sweet and gentle person and is very much missed by everyone and her old friend Marianne.

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Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners. Please contact Peter Sinclair 0181 882 1638 for information.

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Many former refugees have found their association with the AJR a rewarding one. This is an opportunity to support the AJR Charitable Trust.

New Recorder

Margaret Ruth de Haas has been appointed Recorder. Last year she was appointed Q.C., the first Jewish woman in Liverpool so honoured since Dame Rose Heilbron in 1949. Margaret is the granddaughter of the late *Landes-rabbiner* Dr Philip de Haas of Oldenburg □

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East Midlands (Nottingham)	Bob Norton 01159 212 494
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Art Notes

Rembrandt created a long series of self-portraits, dating from the early years of his youth, when he felt somewhat insecure, to the self-confidence and prosperity he enjoyed in mid-career and finally to the mature and deeply moving self-portraits of his late years. The exhibition **Rembrandt by Himself**, at the National Gallery until September 5, assembles for the first time, some 30 self-portrait paintings, 8 drawings and all 29 of the etchings, presenting a powerful vision of images that bear witness to a spiritual journey and to an extraordinary grasp of the art of portraiture. Unmissable.

A Brush with Nature, also at the National Gallery, shows small-scale oil sketches on paper created by 18th and 19th century artists working out of doors. Drawn from the collection of John and Charlotte Gere, such sketches were not conceived as finished works of art, but were painted quickly in order to capture subtle atmospheric effects and the fleeting play of light. Most instructive. Until August 30.

The Popular Print in England, at the British Museum until August 30, consists of a vast selection of ephemera produced from the 16th to the mid-19th century, sold cheaply in the streets and pasted on to cottage and tavern walls. The subjects of these prints mirror those of today's tabloids, such as crime, royalty, politics, war, sex and comedy. Religious prejudice is well to the fore, especially against Roman Catholics and to a lesser extent Jews. Taste among the masses has evidently changed little over the centuries. Also at the British Museum is a small display of drawings and etchings by **Castiglione** (1609-1664), one of the most innovative printmakers of the Baroque age.

Turner's frequent travels to Paris and along the Seine, particularly in the 1820s, are reflected in a superb exhibition **Turner on the Seine** at the Tate Clore Gallery until October 3. Brought together is the complete set of 40 gouache and watercolour views that were originally published as line-engravings, as well as 50 lively coloured studies. Turner's distinctive approach is seen in these images,



Rembrandt, *Self Portrait at the age of 34*, National Gallery, London

which demonstrate his understanding of the essence of things and his power to create an overall expressive impression. A rare chance is provided to see Turner's dramatic view of a destructive tidal wave in *The Mouth of the Seine 1833*, on loan from the Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon. To place Turner's Seine works in its proper context, works by his contemporaries, such as Cotman and Girtin are also included in the exhibition.

Hans Feibusch's ramshackle London studio has now been re-created and is open to visitors at the Palant House Gallery, Chichester. Many works never before exhibited are on view.

□ Barry Fealdman

SB's Column

Memories of Theresienstadt. Vienna's Schönberg Centre recently devoted three evenings to chamber music composed at the camp by Gideon Klein, Pavel Haas, Victor Ullmann and others. The moving spirit behind these performances was conductor Gerd Albrecht who for years also set himself the task of reviving music by Zemlinsky, Hindemith, Schreker and Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Books. A diary written by Victor Klemperer, a relative of the famous conductor, has been published by the German Aufbau Verlag. The author meticulously lists events of his life from 1945-1959 in well over 1800 pages (2 volumes). Having survived the Nazi era with the help of

his 'Aryan' wife, he remained in the DDR after the war, getting ever more disillusioned as he witnessed the reawakening of antisemitism and the almost nihilistic attitude of the 'proletarian' intellectuals then in vogue. Much more edifying is *Christiane Hörbiger* (Langen-Müller Verlag), a vivid picture of the life of Paula Wessely's and Attila Hörbiger's middle daughter. Christiane is to-day at the centre of screen and TV activities all over Europe. A member of the Zürich Schauspielhaus for 17 years, where she worked with Ernst Deutsch, Fritz Kortner and other ex-refugee actors, she now seems at the zenith of her career and has homes in Zürich and Baden. Her international celebrity status gives great pleasure to her ailing mother, now aged 92, who is living in self-chosen solitude in Vienna.

A Memorial Tablet for Hermann Leopoldi has been affixed to the house in Vienna's Schönbrunnerstrasse where he used to live. Composer of scores of song hits and top cabaret performer Leopold (né Kohn) emigrated to the States, returned after the war and once more attracted large audiences. He died in 1959 □

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SEARCH NOTICES

Helene & Anni Knobel. The office of the Bürgermeister of Hennef in the Rhineland is researching the history of the local Jewish community and wishes to trace Helene Knobel, born 12.4.1920, arrived in the UK 27.8.39 and Anni Knobel, born 3.6.1921, arrived 11.8.1939. The latter subsequently changed her name to Orbell and was last heard of in 1950. Any information should be communicated to Frau Rupprath, Staatsarchiv, Beethovenstrasse 21, 53773 Hennef (Sieg) Germany.

Schmulewitsch Family from Leipzig arrived Middlesborough 1936/7. Their 'Guisborough Shirt & Underwear Factory' sold to Burton group 1952. Also **Lina and Peter (Adolf) Rochman.** Lina on last transport from Leipzig to Riga concentration camp February 1942. Peter (3 Humboldtstr, Leipzig) lived in Middlesborough, Leeds and Manchester after arrival in 1939. Any information appreciated by Chaim Rochman, PO Box 40017 Mevasseret, Israel 90805. Tel: 0972 2534 4452 Fax: 0972 2522 3402.

Mid-European Art Exhibition, Leicester 1944, sponsored by the Freie Deutsche Kulturbund, containing works from collections of local emigré community.

Courtauld Institute MA student seeks information for dissertation. Please contact Lucy Williams, 4 Lapworth Close, Orpington, Kent BR6 9BW. Tel: 01689 833 769.

Lesser, Weiss & Stevens. Information is being sought on S/Sgt Lesser (German), Sgt Weiss (German) and L/Cpl Stevens (possibly Austrian) who served as interpreters in Germany 1945-48. Please contact Henry Morris, Archivist, AJEX, East Bank, Stamford Hill, London N16 5RT. Tel: 0181 800 2844.

Heinz Flachs/Henry Fletcher who served in the Pioneer Corps, born Berlin c.1915 where his father was a kosher butcher in Bötzwow Str., please contact R. Golden, Tel: 0171 435 9215.

Dresdners, 293 former slave labourers at Goehle Werk ammunition factory, lived in Hellerberg camp November 1942 to March 1943, deported to Auschwitz and 10 survived. Film researchers offer relatives in UK information and copies of documentation. Known UK residents included **Martha & Rina Dawid, Margarethe Arndt, Amalie Goldmann, David & Feiga Steiger.** Contact Ingrid Silverman & Ulrich Teschner, Schuetzallee 45, 14169 Berlin, Germany. Tel: 030 802 59 11□

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – JULY 1999

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|--|
| Thur | 1 | Lunchtime Recital: Anna Safonova, violin, & Alvin Mosey, piano, play Grieg, Szymanowski & Bloch. Sternberg Centre, 1.15pm, £2 | Synagogue, Grove End Road, NW8, 8pm |
| Sun | 4 | Psychology & Jewish Tradition: Stuart Linke & Rabbi Jeffrey Newman. Sternberg Centre, 8pm | Tue 13 Three Salonikan Life Histories: Bea Lewkowicz. Jewish Museum, Finchley, 8pm, £2 |
| Mon | 5 | 'Gemütliches Beisammensein' with music & refreshment: Club 43, 8pm | Thur 15 Lunchtime Recital: Timothy Peake, piano, plays Schubert & Villa-Lobos. Sternberg Centre, 1.15pm, £2 |
| Tue | 6 | Jewish Magic & Kabbalah: Judith Weill, Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 8pm, £4 | |
| Thur | 8 | Zion Mule Corps at Gallipoli: Martin Sugarman, AJEX. St Johns Wood | |

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club '43, at Belsize Square Synagogue. Hans Seelig 01442 254 360
Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 129/131 Albert Street, NW1 7NB. Tel: 0171 284 1997 and at Sternberg Centre
Sternberg Centre for Judaism/Jewish Museum, Finchley, 80 East End Road, N3 2SY. Tel: 0181 346 2288/349 1143

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Stent's remembrance of times past

Berlin, Summer 1935

I had spent the summer of 1934 in London to test the waters and see whether I would like to make a permanent break. However, the emotional umbilical cord binding me to my Germany was still troubling me and I decided to return home for the time being.

In March 1935 Germany introduced – in flagrant breach of its solemn undertaking at Versailles – general conscription. The first call-up was for those born in 1914 – my generation. To my utter surprise I received papers to submit myself to a thorough medical examination, at which I was found to be in fine fettle. In my birthday suit I was then conducted into a large room, where I faced seven or eight military gentlemen in full regalia and decorations.

The senior officer, a full colonel, welcomed me politely. He did not seem to have noticed the tell-tale sign on my lower anatomy showing the essential difference between myself and the other conscripts when congratulating me on my physical state. He asked whether I had any preference as to what arm of the services I wanted to join. I was naturally gobsmacked and pointed out to him that, as far as I knew, as a full Jew I was disqualified. He looked somewhat puzzled and shuffled his papers. He then replied in a firm but friendly voice: "Don't you believe everything that the newspapers tell you. *Hier bestimmen wir, wir brauchen solche strammen Kerle wie Sie.*" He continued: "I see now that you would have to apply to be accepted. I am sure you will do so, won't you?" With that he shoved a piece of paper in front of me. By then I was more befuddled and obediently put pen to paper. The Colonel once again asked whether I had any preference. I said something about the *Luftwaffe*. "Fine", he said, "but that would mean an engagement for five years." I stuttered something about family responsibilities and we then agreed that, because of a driving licence recently acquired, the *Leichte Tankwaffe* (Armoured Corps) would be a suitable berth. We shook hands, he wished me good luck, I got dressed and tottered out.

In due course I received a letter from the authorities stating that, in accordance

with paragraph so-and-so of Law such-and-such I was ineligible for service in the Forces of the Reich.

This was the final push that I needed. Three months later I was back in London for good, feeling like the King of Saxony who, when told in 1919 that he had to vacate his throne, is supposed to have said "*Macht euch nun euern Dreck aleene*" (in future dig your own dirt).

Who knows? If the Colonel had prevailed, I might have had to fight the war on the wrong side – Heaven forfend!

□ To be continued

Child survivors to meet in Prague

The 12th international conference of Jewish children who survived the Holocaust, entitled *Bridges to the Future*, is to be held in Prague from 2nd-5th September. It is supported by the Federation of Child Survivors of the Holocaust and by the Hidden Children Foundation.

The participants are those who in their childhood survived in hiding, in ghettos or concentration camps, as well as those who emigrated or were on children's transports. An extensive programme will include seminars and workshops (with translation into English, French, etc), tours of Prague and a ceremony at Terezin.

Registration is shortly to close, but anyone wishing to attend should contact: Hidden Child Praha, Slavikova 6, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic. Tel: +420 2 627 2135/2136. Fax: +420 2 627 5721.

□ EH Strach

50 YEARS AGO

THE SECOND GENERATION

Persons who are in the main the products of a single society tend to accept as 'natural' most of the things that are done there. As most of our parents' lives were spent within one of the Continental patterns of culture, we must expect them to live more closely in accordance with that pattern than with a new one to which they were later transplanted. It is only too natural that they should speak German around Swiss Cottage.

In our predominantly middle class immigration, the new arrival's status in society is often lower than in his old country, for reasons quite independent of his personal merit.

□ Kenneth Ambrose, *AJR Information*, July 1949

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51 Belsize Square, London N.W.3

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NEWSROUND

Codebreakers' museum

Bletchley Park, the secret World War II codebreakers' centre which was said to have shortened the war by years, is to house a museum commemorating its intelligence gathering, computing and cryptology work. It was here that Colossus, the world's first programmable electronic computer, was developed and cracked highly secret German military codes.

Polish Crosses removed

On the orders of Poland's Interior Minister, 300 crosses placed by Catholic nationalists in Auschwitz in the past year have been removed and a 100 metre-wide protective zone established. The main instigator, Kazimierz Switon, was arrested and charged with inciting racial hatred and possessing explosives. The papal cross from Birkenau, at which Pope John Paul II celebrated mass in 1979, was not removed.

Child murder charges

Prominent Austrian neurologist, 83-year-old Dr Heinrich Gross, is being charged with participation in the murder of some 700 children at a wartime children's clinic in Vienna. Gross still possesses a collection of 400 of the victims' brains.

Pius' 'sainthood'

Critics of any move to canonise Pope Pius XII recall that the former papal nuncio in pre-war Germany failed to condemn Nazi genocide against the Jews despite having unrivalled sources of information.

Slave labour talks

A Washington DC conference on slave labour compensation, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*, was attended by representatives of Germany, Israel, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia and the Ukraine, and hosted by the United States. Representatives of Daimler-Chrysler, Volkswagen, Dresdner Bank, Deutsche Bank, Siemens, BASF and Allianz also attended. German firms have already established a \$1.7 billion Holocaust compensation fund.

B'nai B'rith's generosity

The Leo Baeck (London) Men's Lodge has agreed to set aside a budget of a quarter of a million pounds in the coming year from which to support worthy charitable causes in Israel, the Ukraine and in the UK.

□ RDC

Bicentenary mirage

Two hundred years ago Napoleon Bonaparte, having just conquered Egypt, led his army across the Sinai desert. By mid-March 1799 he had taken Gaza and Jaffa and laid siege to Acre. On April 16 in the Emek Jezreel – where Gideon and his three hundred trumpeters put the host of Midian to flight – a small French corps drawn up as three squares routed a Turkish army sent to relieve Acre. After that famous victory Napoleon was confident Acre would soon fall. From the summit of Mount Tabor he laid plans to march on Damascus and to overthrow the Turkish empire.

Six years earlier the National Assembly in Paris had finally decreed the emancipation of the Jews in France. Thereafter as the revolutionary army, led by the youthful Bonaparte, advanced into Italy it tore down the gates of the ghettos. This was no more than part of an enlightened policy towards all oppressed by which Napoleon secured popular support. But for Jews to be treated like the rest of humanity was a most welcome departure.

Wherever he led his troops, as into Egypt, Napoleon proclaimed his respect for the religion and customs of those he sought to bring under his dominion. So when he anticipated an imminent conquest of Jerusalem he issued, on the first day of Pesach 5559, a proclamation *"To the Rightful Heirs of Palestine: Israelites, unique nation, whom in thousands of years conquest and tyranny were able to deprive of the ancestral land only, but not of name and national existence!... Arise with gladness ye exiled!... A great nation (France) hereby calls on you not indeed to conquer your patrimony, nay, only to take over that which has been conquered and, with that nation's warranty and support, to maintain it against all comers."*

Alas, the walls of Acre withstood the French cannons, and the plague claimed 3000 of Napoleon's men. In May 1799 he raised the siege of Acre, withdrew his army to Egypt and himself returned to France, covering his thwarted eastern ambitions. But for a short report in the official "Moniteur" before Napoleon's return, his proclamation to the Jewish nation might have vanished from the historical record. Indeed, the full text of the proclamation, probably issued in only a few copies, was lost until 1940. Then a contemporary translation fell into the

hands of Franz Kobler, a Vienna-born refugee historian in London. That astonishing discovery is described in Kobler's well-documented book (*Napoleon and the Jews*, Schocken Book, 1976) the principal source of this account.

Napoleon's proclamation was a mirage that vanished before the Jewish nation was put to the test. Whether the time was ripe is questionable. In the West assimilation was rife, driven by the "Enlightenment", and to the Chassidim in the East Napoleon was no Moshiach. History repeated and fulfilled itself in 1917 when Allenby set out from Egypt to conquer Palestine. By then the Jewish nationalism which Napoleon sought to harness had been reborn.

□ Otto Hutter

Emeritus Professor, University of Glasgow

Duisburg consecration

The new synagogue was built close to a derelict harbour basin at a cost of eleven million Deutschmarks. At first one is taken aback by the sheer starkness of this futuristic 'cold' concrete block construction with five concrete 'fingers' depicting the Five Books of Moses as seen through the eyes of its Israeli architect Zwi Hecker. (A far cry from the old Duisburg synagogue, torched in 1938.) Cantor Raphael Cohen, especially summoned from Paris for the occasion, sang with consummate artistry.

After the fixing of the mezuzah, the carrying of three Torah scrolls, more prayers and music, the 300 guests were ushered into the adjacent communal hall for speeches by diverse VIPs. To me the speeches seemed carefully honed between memories of the holocaust and aspirations for the future. The increase of Jews in Germany from 30,000 to over 80,000 in recent years, was taken as evidence of further reconciliation between Jews and Germans. The Duisburg congregation had increased from fewer than 140 souls to well over 2000 in recent times. Its president, Jacques Marx, expressed the wish to create a community more 'open' towards its Christian neighbours and to bring about a renaissance of German-Jewish culture. Most of his congregants are immigrants from beyond the erstwhile Iron Curtain, where they were persecuted and denied religious freedom. To them present-day Germany must be a welcome alternative.

□ Werner Abraham