

AJR *Information*

Volume LIV No. 9
September 1999

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss...

Snobbery in Arcadia
Richard Grunberger p3

The high cost of giving
Gloria Tessler p13

Progress of sorts

With a near-fatal stabbing in a Moscow synagogue and carnage at a Californian community centre – all within a few days of each other – the end of the Millennium seems to differ little from its beginning.

However, the Moscow outrage seems more symptomatic of Russia's current political malaise, with its almost routine acts of lethal violence, than it is of the imminent demise of Jewry in that country.

In California the psychopath who termed the slaughter of Jewish toddlers a 'wake-up call to America' is undoubtedly destined for a padded cell (or the electric chair). In 1930s Germany the cry *Deutschland erwache!*, which had the same sub-text, smoothed Hitler's path to the Wilhelmstrasse □

Varieties of xenophobia

Xenophobia – hatred of the stranger – is a force which opinion in the West long underestimated at its peril. This underestimate flawed the thinking alike of the architects of postwar peace treaties (especially in 1919) and of the founders of the League of Nations.

We refugees were of course hardly likely to fall into that particular trap.

The German-Jewish experience vividly illustrates the changing pattern of xenophobia. When we arrived in Britain sixty years ago anti-German sentiments, expressed by the likes of Sir Robert Vansittart were music to our ears. Today many ex-refugees would view anti-German diatribes, such as AA Gill's recent *Sunday Times* article, with the same distaste as Lord Weidenfeld expressed in his rebuttal.

In the 1930s Nazi antisemitism was the cutting edge of Hitler's drive for world domination. Contemporary anti-Germanism is, likewise, part of a larger agenda – namely to abort the creation of a united Europe.

For months now Euro-sceptics have elevated the pound sterling into the emotive symbol of British separateness. (Actually the word sterling, with all its positive connotation, may well derive from 'Easterlings', as Hanseatic merchants were called in medieval England. These German traders from the Baltic, or Ostsee, enjoyed a reputation for total probity.)

Of course, anti-Europeanism among the Brits also has other components – immemorial dislike of the French, doubts about Italian financial integrity, disgust at fat cat Eurocrats etc – but anti-'Hun' feeling still has pride of place.

A probably equally powerful sentiment is anti-Americanism. Ever since the coming of steam made transatlantic mass migration possible, America has been the near mythic land where the Statue of Liberty gazes down on streets paved with gold.

Just as we cannot conceive of light without shade, so the image of the *goldene medina* has of necessity been counterpointed by the perception – spread by such famed practitioners of the art of fiction as Graham Greene and Harold Pinter – that America is brash, ignorant, materialistic and power-crazed.

Compounding this negative picture, a whole

native American 'culture of complaint' has grown up in the last decades. Injustice done to indigenous Indians, to Mexicans and in particular, to Afro-Americans has prompted clamorous demands for redress in all spheres of public life.

A few years ago Islamic spokesmen began adding their particular concerns to the culture of complaint. They claimed that America looked upon Arab countries as no more than providers of cheap oil, connived at Israeli oppression of Palestinians, derogated Muslim culture and so forth. The Islamic lobby's condemnation of Washington's action in Somalia, Lebanon and the Gulf was positively deafening compared to the subsequent pipsqueaks of praise for US military action in defence of Muslim rights in Bosnia and, above all, Kosovo.

Just as anti-Germanism promotes the anti-Europe agenda, so anti-Americanism threatens the cohesion of the West. Let us not forget that the Western coalition has driven Saddam Hussein and Milosevic back into their respective lairs and that it may yet help to turn Middle Eastern peace from mirage – into reality □



'Jacob's Dream'. Relief on a Sephardic tombstone in Altona.

Profile

A remarkable lady

Herta Friedemann was born in 1909 in Orsoy, near Düsseldorf, where her parents ran a general clothes and linen store. At 17 Herta joined the staff of a large department store in Hamborn and on completing her apprenticeship three years later she moved to Berlin. There she became politically active on the left and met Karl Rosenberg whom she married in 1934.

In June 1936, with Herta already pregnant, both were arrested by the Gestapo. After a spell in Cologne prison, Herta gave birth to their daughter Ruth, but was returned to prison while the baby was taken into her parents' care. Karl was sentenced to eight years of the harshest labour, but at a subsequent hearing Herta was declared not guilty and freed. She was allowed to visit Karl just once every two months and to write a monthly letter. On Kristallnacht her parents' store and living accommodation in Orsoy were ransacked and most of the family interned.

During a prison visit Karl insisted that they escape to England with the help of his cousin Walter Kaufmann and two-year-old Ruth accompanied Herta to their very last meeting. Despite delays in obtaining visas, she and her daughter flew from Cologne airport on 19th June 1939. Intuitively, Herta knew that she was unlikely to see her parents again.

Walter Kaufmann arranged for her to live and work in Northwood, Middlesex. After the outbreak of war they were evacuated to Somerset, returning to Northwood for the bitter winter of 1939/40.

In 1943 Herta became a bookkeeper with the firm making Colibri lighters and met the proprietor Julius Lowenthal. At war's end it was learned that Herta's husband, parents, brothers and sister and many other close family members had perished. In 1946 Julius Lowenthal's wife died and in the following months a more personal relationship developed between Julius and Herta, though his eventual proposal came as a mild shock! They were married in January 1947 and Herta was introduced into a wide family circle which included two stepsons.

Julius drew Herta into his Zionist activities and she joined the B'nai B'rith Women's Lodge and was a founder member of its meals-on-wheels service in Stepney. She also headed the house com-



Herta Lowenthal

mittee at the Jewish Blind Society's largest home, Rokefield, in Surrey.

While at Edinburgh University, in 1956 Ruth met her husband to be, Barry Fluss, and established a flourishing Israeli branch of the family. After Julius passed away during a visit to Israel in 1969, Herta made new friends among the St John's Wood community, paid regular visits to Israel and also travelled a great deal.

Herta celebrated her 80th birthday in London, spent her 85th in the Canadian Rockies and Alaska and has just celebrated her 90th among her many friends and family, as active as ever and indeed a remarkable lady.

□ Ronald Channing

50 YEARS AGO

FORTRESS BRITAIN

The second volume of Winston Churchill's story of the late World War, *Their Finest Hour*, begins with the fateful days of the battle of France in May 1940 and ends at the new year of 1941, when England stood alone.

In June 1940, after the fall of France, Churchill's main concern was to set the British garrison in Palestine free and transfer over 20,000 men to the 'Island Fortress' of Britain.

Churchill wrote to Lord Lloyd, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies and renowned for his anti-Zionist bias, "The failure of the policy which you favour is proved by the very large numbers of sorely needed troops we have to keep in Palestine. This is the price we have to pay for the anti-Jewish policy which has been persisted in for some years".

□ AJR Information, September 1949

HOLOCAUST VICTIMS' ASSETS LITIGATION

Have you applied?

Enclosed with the August edition of *AJR Information* was a questionnaire, prepared by the United States District Court Eastern District of New York, inviting all victims of Nazi persecution and their heirs to apply for compensation.

The AJR wishes to urge all of our members who suffered any of the losses and injustices listed in the criteria to apply, even if they are unsure whether or not there is a 'Swiss' connection with the loss or injustice suffered, or even if they had no connection whatever with a Swiss bank account.

The closing date for submitting the completed questionnaire is 22nd October 1999, so please act as soon as possible and send off your form in the addressed envelope provided with the pack.

If you have any doubts at all, please contact the AJR Head Office (0171 431 6161) for clarification □

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New Year

*The Chairman, Management
Committee and Staff wish all
AJR members A Happy, Healthy
& Peaceful New Year*

Snobbery in Arcadia

A walk through the grounds of English Heritage-administered Kenwood House – aka the Iveagh Bequest – usually puts me in a contemplative mood. Several trains of thought start running. One leads from Lord Iveagh-Guinness' Bequest all the way back to Emperor Josef II's conversion of the royal Augarten into a Viennese park. Another takes me forward from Lord Iveagh's 1928 Bequest, via the Guinnesses 1930s involvement with Mosley and subsequent link to the rightwing Monday Club, to their employment of Ernest Saunders, a baptised Jewish refugee, as managing director of the 'family firm'.

It has been asserted that at the notorious Guinness Trial Saunders was left to 'take the can back', but the ingenuity with which he contrived to serve only a fraction of his five-year jail term rather belies the picture of him as anybody's fall guy.

These ruminations come to an abrupt halt as I emerge from a well-shaded avenue of trees to catch a first glimpse of Kenwood House itself. Alas, the view is quite blotted out by a mammoth-sized marquee, whose construction cannot but damage the beautiful lawn adjacent to the 18th century house. The marquee, I learn, will be the setting for the wedding reception of the daughter of King Constantine of Greece. I also learn that on the wedding day members of the public will be barred from the entire Kenwood estate.

This regression into the feudal past has been decreed by Sir Jocelyn Stevens, head of English heritage – and naturally himself a guest at the royal wedding shindig. (Already at nineteen, Master Jocelyn – a student contemporary of his in 1950 informs me – would attract attention by roaring around Cambridge in an open topped sports car. Some decades later he was still energetic enough, whenever the mood took him, to hurl typewriters out of windows of office blocks. He obviously belongs to those wellborn masters of the universe of whom Jonathan Aitken is such a spectacular contemporary example.)

As I reach this point in my ruminations I remember an occasion when ex-King Constantine appeared – at least to me – as much more attractive than simply the upper crust playboy responsible for the Kenwood junket. We were on holiday in

Greece when that country was in thrall to the demagogue Papandreou and PASOK, his xenophobe Socialist Party. PASOK graffiti in red paint attacking NATO, the US, Turkey, Israel etc, decorated every wall. Occasionally, though the eye alighted on an oasis: a lonely blue painted slogan calling for the return of King Constantine (who had been ousted at the end of the Colonels' rule).

Suddenly it is time to quit the arcadian environs of Kenwood. As I crunch along the gravel drive to the exit inspiration strikes. If Habsburg Austria, I adlib, was a despotism tempered by slovenliness, then Blair's Britain is a democracy vitiated by snobbery.

□ Richard Grunberger

The Stootley Rough School Association

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Tickets £12.50
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Felden, Hertfordshire HP3 0BG.

SEARCH NOTICES

David Oberman arrived in London from Leipzig in 1937/8, married **Lily** and had a son, **Joey**, now approx 45 years old. If anyone knows of them, please contact: Chaim Rockman, PO Box 332 Mevasseret Zion, Israel 90805. Tel: 00972 25 34 4452 Fax: 00972 25 33 2402 Email: rockman@netvision.net.il

Kurt Becker. Information sought about Kurt Becker, wife **Friea**, daughter **Ellen**; lamp business and apartment at Mathieu-str, (Berlin). Please phone: 0181 891 4535.

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Reviews

A glittering picture

Dorit Rabinyan, *PERSIAN BRIDES*,
Canongate, 1998, £14.99

If you want to lose yourselves in a kind of Persian, rather than Arabian, Nights, read this book which is translated from the Hebrew by Yael Lotan. Although it is "historical", I suspect it to be a tale that has come down to the author from grandmothers and great-aunts.

The events depicted occur circa 1900 when Persia was ruled by the grandfather of the last Shah. Reforms are in the air and are quietly evaded by the majority inhabitants, the Shiah Muslims and their fellow "citizens": Jews, Armenians, Zoroastrian natives.

The Jews live in a kind of voluntary ghetto, known as the Jubareh. It would seem that at the time they could have lived where they wished: they just felt safer there. The particular habitat is the country town of Omerijan at the foot of the Alborz mountains. The heroes, or rather heroines, are the Ratoryan women. They are as superstitious, gossipy and greedy as the Gentiles and often more so, only in a Jewish fashion of a type one does not always recognise.

Miriam Hanoum, the mother of two girls and a young man, is perfectly capable of cursing and hexing her neighbours if things don't go her way; she is feared, even hated, but she is also looking after a niece, half spoilt and half exploited as maid of all work. She is Nazie, all of eleven years old and eager to get married to her cousin Moussa. The older of Miriam's daughters is a cripple, yet they have found her a husband. But the central personage is Flora, a fifteen-year-old super-nubile virgin.

Now this novel is not really feminist, but the men are on the whole pretty brutish. At any rate, Flora nets an itinerant Jewish trader, who bears the nickname goat stealer. He stays just long enough to make her pregnant, then loads his mule for further trading ventures with Chinese silk in mind and disappears. Despite her tragic situation, Flora remains a mischief; she laughs too much – like our archmother Sarah – to the annoyance of brother Moussa, who is not beyond beating her.

Little Nazie pursues her quest for pre-nubile marriage with great determination.

In the end she gets the permission of a Muslim divine (illegally) and the ensuing wedding is an awful fiasco. All the other witches in the community take their revenge on Miriam Hanoum who was once an envied beauty.

Meanwhile Flora, notwithstanding her advancing pregnancy, goes looking for her aberrant husband in the general direction of China and finds him in the next country town where he is married to a Muslim woman. This is OK by the new wife's custom, but is illegal under the Shah's law and abhorred by Flora. After a wondrous scene in front of most of the neighbours Flora agrees to be "wife one-and-a-half".

This is only the frame of the picture which glitters in strong colours under the bold brushstrokes of author Dorit. It struck me as far from depressing, but rather exotic. Judge for yourselves – you won't regret it.

□ John Rossall

Irresistible force?

In a recent Radio Three programme on Richard Strauss's conduct vis-a-vis the Nazis the old truism 'under dictatorship all resistance is impossible' was trotted out again. While largely true, this is not the whole truth. There have been several proofs to the contrary, both under the Nazi and Soviet system. The smuggling out and publication in the West, of the MS of *Dr Zhivago* had no immediate physical repercussions for Boris Pasternak – although the KGB subjected his mistress to intolerable hardships.

In wartime Germany the Bishop of Münster, Count von Galen's, denunciation of Nazi euthanasia from the pulpit had no personal consequences for the prelate – but several monks who distributed leaflets with the text of his sermon were sent to concentration camps.

Both dictatorships clearly regarded certain critics of the regime as so high profile that making martyrs of them would be counter-productive. The Gestapo, as well as the KGB, therefore persecuted the critics' more anonymous helpmeets, calculating that their arrest would prompt little comment.

On one notable occasion, though, even anonymous protesters against Nazi meas-

ures suffered no repercussions. During the 1943 roundup of Jewish compulsory factory labourers in Berlin for deportation, their Aryan wives staged protest demonstrations and came to no harm.

The last mentioned event, admittedly has little relevance to Richard Strauss's conduct vis-a-vis the Nazis – but the cases of Boris Pasternak and Bishop Galen certainly do. Had Strauss made a public gesture whereby he distanced himself from the regime, is it really conceivable that the Gestapo would have carted him – the greatest living German composer – off to a concentration camp?

The crux of the matter is that Strauss had a far less complicated (or to be brutally frank, more compliant) relationship with the barbarians set in power over him than his 'colleague' Shostakovich had with their counterparts in the Kremlin.

□ RG

Warmed-up anti-Zionism

Jim Allen, *PERDITION*, Gate Theatre, London W11

This fictional play, set in a London court room, is based on events in Israel in 1954. The leader of the Hungarian Jewish community is accused in a pamphlet of co-operating with the Nazis by a former Jewish colleague and he is bringing a libel action against her. She charges him with wartime collaboration in order to save his friends and family, in return for keeping silent about the deportation and killing of fellow Jews. He stands accused of being more concerned with the creation of a post-war Jewish State and misleading the community than of attempting to try and save them. In his defence he argues that he had no option but to work with the Nazis and that he at least saved some 1,800 people from deportation.

In 1987 the play had to be cancelled 48 hours before opening night at the Royal Court Theatre after protests by Jewish organisations and claims that it was antisemitic and anti-Zionist. With the author's approval changes have now been made by the 25-year-old Elliott Levy, the play's director. This time there were no demonstrations, only members of the Union of Jewish Students distributing leaflets criticising the historical content of the play.

□ PF

KRISTALLNACHT ORATORIO

The Crouch End Festival Chorus, together with the National Sinfonia, will be performing Tippet's *A Child of our Time* and Will Todd's *The Burning Road*, on 9 October at 7.45pm in Westminster (Methodist) Central Hall (Pre-concert talk at 6.45pm)

Tippett's oratorio was inspired by Herschel Grynszpan's assassination of a German diplomat in Paris and the Kristallnacht pogroms that followed. Todd's work is about the Jarrow March.

Tickets may be obtained direct from Central Hall or from Prof. Leslie Baruch Brent 30 Hugo Road, London N19 5EU (0171 609 4214). If ordered through him please make out your cheque to Crouch End Festival Chorus and write before 4 October. Ticket prices are £15, £12, £9 and £7.

Cabaret in purgatory

In one of Richard Strauss' letters to his grandson the composer notoriously asserted that the première of Gluck's opera *Iphigenie en Aulis* in 1759 was an event which outweighed the concurrent Lisbon Earthquake – which left fifty-five thousand inhabitants dead – in importance.

It is a bizarre aspect of the Holocaust that in addition to encompassing unimaginable carnage it also fulfilled Richard Strauss' criterion of being artistically significant. The Shoah snuffed out a huge potential talent like Anne Frank, the representative figure of the million and half child victims; it also obliterated established writers (Georg Hermann) playwrights (Bruno Schulz) poets (Mordechai Gebirtig) painters (Felix Nussbaum, Peter Kien) and composers (Viktor Ullmann).

The two lastnamed collaborated on *The Emperor of Atlantis* an opera which, in conjunction with other ghetto-created works, made Theresienstadt one of wartime Europe's centres of artistic excellence.

But Theresienstadt not only generated high art. It also hummed with the music and laughter of cabaret provided by some of the brightest stars of the Weimar firmament. The bestknown of them was Kurt Gerron, a man of vast bulk and arresting ugliness, whom filmgoers will remember as the proprietor of the *Blue Angel* establishment in the film of the same name. Gerron also premièred the

POETS' CORNER

ABSCHIED VON DER MUSE

Einst stand die Muse mir zu Seiten
Und fordert' dass ich mich verschriebe
Und opfert' meine Mussezeiten,
Mein klein Talent fuer ihre Liebe.

Sie war mir manchmal wirklich hold
Und wenn ich meine Perlen streute
Auf dass mein Wortschwall sie erfreute
Wie auch der Klang von meinem Liede
So ernt' ich leider kargen Sold
Denn ihre Gunst war Narrengold.

Daher ein letztes Angebot
Zur Werbung um des Leser's Gnade:
Ein letzter Strahl von Charon's Boot
Von England's gastlichem Gestade.

□ RS Lenk

role of Tiger Brown in the *Dreigroschenoper* and wrote the cabaret poem *Ich bin das grosse Nachtgespenst*.

He became a refugee in Holland, was never out of work, but was finally overtaken by the Nazi nemesis and sent to Westerbork transit camp. Here, as well as subsequently in Theresienstadt, he put all his skill and inventiveness into entertaining his fellow inmates and became a household name among thousands en route to the gas chambers.

The Nazis had the macabre notion of making a propaganda film about Theresienstadt with the stomach-churning title *Der Fuehrer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt*. The Fuehrer makes a gift of a town to the Jews and put Gerron in charge of the filming. On the understanding that he could thereby earn his release Gerron went to work with his customary energy, but on completing the film was shattered to find his name on the list for the next transport 'East'.

The film *Kurt Gerrons Karnsell* – made with the participation of surviving Theresienstadt cabaret performers and contemporary German stars like Ute Lemper and Ben Becker – is a fitting tribute to an outsize artistic personality in

'While you are in England'...

Helpful Information for every Jewish refugee

A pocket-sized blue book bound in linen. Son of Nürnberg, did you need telling 'Speak English in the streets. Never German'?

With eyes like holes your mother packed your things

and sent you on the river road to freedom,
a pleasure boat to Holland up the Rhine. Although your passport could have barred the kingdom
the big red 'J' seemed harmless in the sunshine

and coloured stars were sewn into your clothes,
brown stars for gypsies, red 'politicals'. Only the gays unlaced pink triangles and you've unpicked the lethal Jewish star

from clothes I never touched and never knew
though it will light the stone that honours you.

(In memory of Rudi)

□ Jill Bamber

every sense of the word. (Alas, it was only shown to a sparse afternoon audience during the Jewish Film Festival at Hampstead's Screen on the Hill.)

□ RG

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Letters to the Editor

CHAMBERLAIN'S CLONES

Sir – The critics who opposed NATO's adventure in the Balkans have been proved right. The intervention in Kosovo has not created peace and stability among the warring factions; on the contrary, it has inflamed mutual hatred which will not be assuaged in our generation.

The bombing campaign left the Serbian army virtually unscathed, but destroyed the infrastructure of Serbia and her neighbours.

I am at a loss to understand the purpose of the campaign considering that NATO tolerated the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs from Krajina. Furthermore, already in November 1998 SAS units were placed in Kosovo; only 2500 international observers instead of the promised 8000 were deployed there and were withdrawn at the same time as Milosevic faced unacceptable demands in Rambouillet.

Had only a fraction of the billions of dollars expended on the war been used to defuse the tensions in the Balkans by promoting this region's economic development, the case for democracy would have been better served.

I fail to see how any parallel can be drawn between Chamberlain's appeasers and those who criticised this war.

Sheffield

Otto Fleming

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Sir – The terrible fate of H Fisher's parents had blinded him to all but 86 months of Austrian history, i.e. the period from March 1938 to May 1945. This is very understandable but not particularly helpful if one wants to appreciate the course of Austro-Jewish relations.

In the 19th century, Austria was what Britain is now, a haven for immigrants, particularly Jewish immigrants fleeing from the pogroms of the Ukraine. It would not surprise me if Mr H Fisher's ancestors had fled from just such districts to welcoming and safe Vienna. The most important benefit the Jews derived from Austria was a modern education. Without such an education many would have remained junk dealers like their uneducated parents and like my great-grandfather. In 1846 there were 3,739 Jews living in Vienna, in 1923 they had increased to 201,513.

Austria suffered terribly after WWI. The country was in constant political uproar. I do not think it surprising that these calamities had become too much for her people to bear and as a result they had become unhinged and believed in a false prophet.

But even in the euphoria of the Anschluss, not all Austrians forgot their humanity. Our Fräulein Amalie Schoner, adorned with a large Swastika, helped to remove incriminating documents, an action which in all probability saved our lives. Had she been a "good" German, she would have taken the papers not to safety but to Gestapo HQ for a handsome reward.

Although my grandmother perished in Auschwitz, not all Austrians were Jew-eating devils.

Oxted, Surrey

AW Freud

CLAIMS AGAINST POLAND

Sir – I want to inform any interested readers that I am one of the plaintiffs in the "Class Action" brought in the United States District Court in New York against the Republic of Poland, Ministry of the Treasury, for the return of buildings and land situated in present day Poland and formerly German.

I am claiming for the return of the office building situated in the centre of Breslau, 7 Rynek (formerly 7 Ring) and other buildings owned by my grandfather Myer Koppenheim.

I shall be pleased to furnish any readers with full details of the case, including the name of the lawyers involved with this case, who have extensive experience in Holocaust claims, including the Swiss Bank Settlement and the German Slave Labour Cases.

Salford

P Koppenheim

IRRESISTIBLE SLOGAN

Sir – I often asked myself where the slogan "Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer" came from. Hitler certainly had not an original mind. He was much better at copying, adapting and bending to his purposes the inventions of others.

When King Albrecht I was murdered by his nephew Johann Parricida in 1308 for

denying him a share in managing the Hapsburgian possessions, he left behind him three sons: Friedrich der Schöne, Albrecht der Lahme and Otto der Fröhliche.

In one of the documents exchanged between the brothers occurred the Latin expression: *unus populus, una gens, unum dominium*.

It seems quite certain that Hitler, who had enough spare time during his years as a vagrant in Vienna and used it to read up on misunderstood German history, came across a translation of this expression somewhere and decided to adapt and use it.

Kiriat-Shmonah, Israel

Fedor Schön

THANK YOU BRITAIN FUND

Sir – It seems so ungrateful and mean to still carry a grudge about our internment when considered against the dark days of 1940.

A militarily unprepared Britain had been forced to take up arms against a Germany armed to the teeth. The British nation stood "with their backs to the wall".

So, they did give us the inappropriate classification of Enemy Aliens and interned us as an emergency measure! Sure, internment was not a pleasant experience, but we should never forget that in the summer of 1940, with "Hannibal ante portas", the House of Commons found the time to question the government in an open debate on refugee policy. This was *democracy in action*!!

Glasgow

Martin Anson

Sir – Whilst I fully agree with Gerda Mayer's letter (July issue), may I rectify her last paragraph. Many refugees, myself included, volunteered for service in the British Forces from internment on the Isle of Man. 246 Co. Pioneer Corps and 257 Co. Pioneer Corps were formed almost exclusively from interned volunteers.

London NW4

E E Blum

Sir – I would like to tell Gerda Mayer (July issue), that my father who was on the L.O.M., did volunteer for the Pioneer Corps but was not taken, on account of his age. It was quite wrong which was acknowledged after the war that Jews fleeing Nazi oppression were interned together with Nazis.

London SW15

Anne Pisker

SECOND GENERATION

Sir - I believe that in order to understand the aims of the "second generation" we need to know the meaning of the term. Does it mean the "second generation of Holocaust survivors", or the "second generation of refugees", or the "second generation of the AJR"?

Oakhill Park, London NW3

Herta Reik

BELITTLING THE KINDER

Sir - We are writing in response to Ruth Barnett's letter (August issue). We trust that it was merely an oversight or printing error which led to the omission of the Second Generation Network from her list of "Kinder's Kinder" who she hoped would organise future events involving survivors and their descendants.

It is distressing to find that so many in the community are still unaware of our work, as we represent a large number of the second generation in the UK for whom we organise outings and events. In fact several of our members helped at the recent RoK Conference to which Ruth Barnett referred and we fully intend to be involved in any future events especially as one of our aims is to promote dialogue between the generations.

Second Generation Network

Caroline Blank

JAMES PARKES

Sir - Readers may be interested to learn that the Rev. James Parkes, featured in your July issue as "a tireless worker for Jewish refugees", was himself a refugee from the Nazis.

In 1935, when he was living in Geneva, he was marked down by the Swiss Eiserne Front, a Fascist organisation. Their attempt on his life failed, but crippled his manservant and the police informed him that they were unable to guarantee his safety. He left the country within three weeks.

"I loved my Geneva flat", he later wrote. Apart from its charm it had one special association for me: I found that I was living in a bridge house between the [medieval] Jewish ghetto and the Christian city.

Poole, Dorset

Sidney Sugarman

AJR WITHOUT R

Sir - With the new century round the corner may I make one final plea to drop the R for Refugee.

Of all who agitated for that in these

columns over the years, Harry Blake said it best: 'Eighty years ago they called me a baby. When I no longer needed nappies, they stopped.'

Isn't it high time we threw our dirty linen into the rubbish bin of history? But if we can't tear ourselves away from those three letters, let's at least follow the example of the new forward-looking Israel government who have caught the mood of the next century and call ourselves Arab Jewish Reconciliation.

Harrogate, Yorks

Günter Guttman

KNIGHT OF THE ROAD

Sir - I had a very pleasant experience while on holiday in Tel-Aviv recently.

I can walk without a stick but I cannot go fast. So I take a stick which makes me feel safer. So when I was trying to cross a very busy road, without success, to my amazement a taxi stopped suddenly near me. The driver got out of his cab, walked up to me and took my arm. 'There now, *geveret*, I will help you across the road' and he did. Behind the taxi other traffic had to wait.

London NW2

Lilly Levi

TWO BRESLAUERS

Sir - It is well known that a Jewish doctor from Breslau, Ludwig Guttman, was knighted for starting a new branch of medicine, Paraplegia. Less known is that another Jewish doctor, also from Breslau, (of course!) likewise started a branch of medicine connected with sport and became adviser to the US President on planning the sports programme for the American armed services. His name was Ernst Jockl and our philosemitic headmaster, Dr Gabriel, would have been very happy to know about it.

London NW3

Ernst Mitchell

LISTENER'S COMMENT

Sir - Congratulations on a wonderful tape (taped version of *AJR Information*). Interesting and intelligently read. Thank you!

Echuca, Australia

Vic Hannah Rachkind

TEREZIN SEARCHES

Sir - I recently visited the archives section of the Terezin (Theresienstadt) ghetto in an attempt to trace the fate of some members of my family.

Having no idea how long this would take I went there and back from Prague

by public transport, which worked well.

If any readers are contemplating to do the same I would be pleased to share my experiences with them; they are welcome to contact me at the address and telephone number given below.

14 Clive Road

Peter Meyer

Esher, Surrey KT10 8PS

Tel: 01372-464478/469309

BON MOT

Sir - Very many years ago, as a young child in Palestine, I saw a competition to find the best answer to "How odd of God to choose the Jews". the winner was "Why odd of God? His son was one!"

London NW11

Hannah Toeg

Sir - "It's not so odd, the Jews chose God."

London NW11

Lionel Simmonds

UTOPIAN ENTROPY

Sir - Your June editorial expressed the hope that one day racial xenophobia will be a phenomenon of the past.

Not every reader will be familiar with entropy and the second law of thermodynamics and this is my excuse to quote an example. Imagine that you have two containers, one filled with oxygen and the other with nitrogen. When these are connected by an open pipe the two gasses will mix and sooner or later both containers will be filled with a gas of average composition. One could wait literally for ever for the two gases to separate again, with all the oxygen molecules going into one container and all the nitrogen molecules into the other.

Entropy also applies to human races. They lived apart for thousands of years and nature endowed them with different characteristics. Travel was difficult and dangerous and for all intents and purposes each race was kept in a separate compartment. The inventions of the last 150 years changed the position and particularly in the last 50 years, travel has become a flood.

Intermingling will result in more and more mixed marriages and, as we have learned from the concept of entropy, unmixing is statistically impossible. We can look forward with certainty that in future all mankind will be uniform, probably looking like the north-Africans of to-day and the distinguishing racial marking and with it the xenophobia will have disappeared.

Oxted

AW Freud

AJR Reports



Members enjoying an afternoon chat at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Midlands

When Midlands AJR members met for their annual garden party at the Walsall home of fellow member, Leon Jessel MBE JP, it must have been the hottest Sunday in July. Everyone admired his beautifully groomed garden and some even took a handy tip or two from the gardener!

In a departure from the usual DIY tea, Leon provided a delicious salad lunch for the party of 30. It all made a very enjoyable occasion and thanks go to the host for his kind hospitality.

□ Sonja Shindler

South London

Pam Schweitzer, founder of the Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre in Blackheath, South London, related how since starting the organisation in 1983, it had developed into a continent-wide movement benefiting people across Europe, including sufferers from Alzheimer's disease. Reminiscence's main aim is to bring both old and young together in an 'age exchange' which gives the old a renewed interest in life and the young an opportunity to learn about times gone by.

The centre performs plays based on accounts of real-life situations which are both entertaining and instructive. Their themes have included *Can we afford the doctor?*, *All our Christmases*, *Through the Blitz* and a specifically Jewish topic, *From Stepney Green to Golders Green*, each subject being accompanied by its own explanatory booklet.

In addition to presenting performances at their Centre (opposite Blackheath Station), where a 1920s-style shop and complementary attractions help people to recollect their youth, the group also performs in hospitals, clubs and schools. The Centre always extends a warm welcome; please phone 0181 318 9105.

□ Ken Ambrose

SLAJR's next meeting will be on Thursday 23rd September.

Brighton & Hove

Roslyn Ings spoke to members of 'Sarid' about her regular visits to Israel and illustrated her talk with photographs and video recordings. Quoting the apocalyptic prophecy, in which the world's armies would fight a final battle on the plains of Judaea and herald Armageddon, provoked a spirited and good-natured discussion.

AJR's Outreach Worker, Myrna Glass, presented the speaker with a token of the group's appreciation. Mrs Fausta Shelton, who hosted the meeting, held at the Ralli Hall in Hove, kindly provided the refreshments.

□ Frank Goldberg

Leeds HSFA

Lawyer Charles Sinclair-Morris recalled his childhood and arrival in England on the Kindertransport in an address to the Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association. Though he read law in the north of England, he recounted life in Lincoln's Inn in London and an encounter with the late Lord Denning. His experiences on the immigration tribunal brought the story full circle □

It's good to volunteer

Before taking up the post of Volunteer Services Co-ordinator for the AJR earlier this year, I was manager of a residential home in north-west London which specialised in caring for adults with learning difficulties. Much of the staff's and my time was spent trying to bolster their confidence and self-esteem, to convey that we cared about them as individuals and that although we were professional workers, we valued their company.

When I left to join the AJR, it made sense to me that I should keep in contact and continue to befriend those with whom I had a particular relationship. On my regular visits we often go out for lunch, see a film and have a good chat – all of which I enjoy immensely.

When meeting possible volunteers for the AJR for the first time I always ask: "Why do you want to do this?" The answers are often inspiring. "I lost my grandparents a few years ago and I missed the wisdom of an older generation." "My grandparents live so far away that I rarely see them, so I wanted to fill a gap in someone else's grandparents' lives." "I am of German origin, not Jewish and I wanted very much to give something back to the people who were persecuted, to know that we are not all bad."

If any of these heart-warming reasons motivate you and you have some time to spare, please call me, Amanda Clark, on 0171 431 6161 and volunteer to spend some time with a member of the AJR living on their own □

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The demand for places at the Luncheon Club meetings continues to be high. As last year, members are invited to book well in advance to make certain of enjoying their preferred guest speakers without being placed on a waiting list.

If a cancellation has to be made, the Luncheon fee of £7.50 can be returned only if a full 24 hours notice is given.

| | | |
|-----------|----|--|
| September | 22 | John Marshall: Looking back at Westminster |
| October | 20 | Sir Sidney Samuelson: My first 60 years in the film business |
| November | 17 | Alex Faiman: History of the Russian Jews in Manchuria |
| December | 15 | Maurice Soffer: Six profiles of a retiree |
| January | 19 | Jeffrey Segal: What sort of a job is that? |
| February | 16 | Ann Kirk: I found a family |

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following dates:

| | | |
|-----------|----|-----------|
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| Thursday | 9 | September |
| Tuesday | 14 | September |
| Thursday | 23 | September |
| Wednesday | 29 | September |
| Tuesday | 5 | October |

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10am to 12 noon at:

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London NW3 6AL

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

Gold conference follow-up

Britain has hosted the first annual meeting of the International Fund for Needy Victims of Nazi Persecution, a follow-up to the Nazi-looted gold conference which was held in London in 1997.

Up to 220,000 elderly Nazi victims, especially those in Eastern Europe, have received help from a £30 million fund □

... Viewpoint ...

Holding office

The rise of the office as the preferred workplace in western society rests on a misleading premise, namely, that within it are carried on productive activities dignified by the term 'work'.

Offices originated as adjuncts to the factories of the industrial revolution. Typically, orders were received and scheduled for production in the owner's own house, situated at a discreet distance away from the dust, dirt, grime and rigours of the workplace. The massive water and steam powered mills stood proud as giant copies of the owners' own Georgian mansions.

The advent of factories, set along the great arterial roads feeding conurbations with the consumer goods of the age of mass-production, prompted concealment of the dull processes of manufacture and assembly behind office blocks masquerading as the Egyptian tombs and classical palaces of a new industrial aristocracy.

Impenetrable borders separated the white- from the blue-collar world and communication was minimal; only sen-

ior foremen, suitably downgraded in brown overalls, were permitted to tread the carpet pile. Ironically, row upon row of desks mimicked the factory in requiring repetitive clerical tasks from its salaried functionaries.

In America the great corporations' desire to display their might and power at the centre of the country's major commercial capitals brought the vast edifice of the skyscraper, erected far from its industrial manufacturing base and filled with office 'workers' who uncannily managed to obtain ever-increasing rewards though their tangible output remained zero!

Just how these giant edifices continue to proliferate well into the computer age must be predicated on the human need for community and small social groups in which each member relates to all others, yet which is sufficiently hierarchical to ensure that each knows his or her place. The age-old social order of the countryside and its stereotypical characters – the squire, the parson, the doctor, the labourer – are still extant in today's offices.

□ Ronald Channing

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Afternoon entertainment programme – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1999

| | | |
|------|----|--|
| Wed | 1 | THE GEOFFREY WHITWORTH DUO |
| Thur | 2 | Tricia Dibb, soprano & Wayland Holford, baritone, accompanied by Michael Heaton, piano |
| Sun | 5 | Francoise Geller, Bernard Wilcox & Peter Irvine accompanied by Gloria Moss |
| Mon | 6 | KARD & GAMES KLUB |
| Tue | 7 | Deborah Fink with piano accompaniment |
| Wed | 8 | Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton, violin, accompanied by Peter Gellhorn, piano |
| Thur | 9 | Geoffrey Strum & Helen Blake |
| Sun | 12 | CLOSED – ROSH HASHANAH |
| Mon | 13 | KARD & GAMES KLUB |
| Tue | 14 | Abigail Gorton, soprano, accompanied by Angus Cunningham, piano |
| Wed | 15 | Rita & Jack Davis |
| Thur | 16 | Francoise Geller, Diana Jackson |

| | | |
|------|----|---|
| | | & Gordon Griffin, accompanied by Margaret Eaves, piano |
| Sun | 19 | CLOSED – KOL NIDRE |
| Mon | 20 | CLOSED – YOM KIPPUR |
| Tue | 21 | Sheila Games & Daphne Lewis |
| Wed | 22 | LUNCHEON CLUB |
| Thur | 23 | Suzanne & Sergei Bezkorvany, cello & violin, accompanied by Hermione Goldsmith, piano |
| Sun | 26 | CLOSED – SUCCOT |
| Mon | 27 | KARD & GAMES KLUB |
| Tue | 28 | Jenny Kossew entertains |
| Wed | 29 | Leslie Townsend, violin, accompanied by Bridget Cunningham, piano |
| Thur | 30 | Katja Hipp, soprano, accompanied by Eldad Neumark, piano |

October

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| Sun | 3 | CLOSED – SIMCHAT TORAH |
| Mon | 4 | KARD & GAMES KLUB |
| Tue | 5 | Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton, accompanied by Peter Gellhorn, piano |

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Baer. Edith Baer passed away on 2 July 1999, aged 90 years. Deeply mourned by husband Heinz, daughter Eveline and sister Margot.

Bunzel. Herbert Bunzel died peacefully in his sleep on 20 July, aged 87, after a short illness. He will be deeply missed by his wife Nina and is mourned by his family and friends.

Engelhard. Lilli Engelhard, née Gold. Born Leipzig 1920. Stephen and Michael Engelhard are sad to announce the death of our mother peacefully in her sleep on 23 June. She will be missed by us and six grandchildren.

Fraenkel. Margot Fraenkel, née Goldschmidt, born Ostrowo (then Provinz Posen) 21 August 1904, died 24 June 1999 in London. Stronger than life is death but stronger than death is love.

Knopf. Ilse Knopf passed away but not forgotten by her friend Maurice Newman, who appreciated her decidedly cheeky sense of humour; his wife Anne and their children David and Johnny, towards all of whom she showed the greatest kindness.

Ryz. Ilse Ryz, of Oadby, Leicestershire passed peacefully away on 18 July at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, sadly missed by her family and many friends to whom she was devoted as she was to music and life itself.

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| S. London: | Ken Ambrose 0181 852 0262 |
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Art Notes

An enormous media fuss has been made of **Mark Wallinger's Ecce Homo**, his life cast which now lords it over Trafalgar Square standing south of the National Gallery and gazing – though his eyes are closed – at a point midway between Whitehall and the Mall. Lording it is wrong because this life-sized Christ, engulfed by tourists and pigeons, has a plangent, alabaster purity and you have to seek him out among the top brass of the military statuary around him.

One of the thornier issues surrounding this miniscule, thorn-crowned Christ, is the question of whether a life-cast is art. As one artist lamented, artists have lost the skill and patience to create the laboriously accurate works of sculpture that used to define high art. In these days of installations and conceptual art, we are asked to reflect on the subtleties – or crudities – of the artist's mind rather than evaluate the creative skills that embody their work. This was the case with the Royal Academy's "Sensations" exhibition featuring, among the rest, Damian Hirst's disembowelled cattle, some complete with trapped flies and maggots.

But if the artist's role is to comment on society, then Wallinger's Christ has a point to make about Christianity's shrinking role in multi-ethnic, near-secular Britain. In the absence of clear, ethical voices forging a path through the moral maze, Wallinger's diminutive Jesus high on its plinth, makes a perverse and disturbing comment. Now you see him, now you don't. So subtle, so relaxed that you have to walk around it to see that the hands are actually bound, this Christ brought before Pilate to stand guard over Trafalgar Square is, in the words of *The Guardian's* Adrian Searle – "a putative Christ for our times; uncertain, vulnerable, introspective". And hardly noticed by the tourists feeding the pigeons and their children between Trafalgar's giant lions of Judah.

From life-size to super-life, the National Gallery launches an exhibition later this month of the work of their first appointed Associate Artist. Brazilian born **Ana Maria Pacheco's** main wooden sculptural installation, **Dark Night of the Soul**, features the martyred San Sebastian, who survived his fate as a human pincushion by the arrows of the Emperor



Zebra and foal, Pissaro 1938, etching

Diocletian. Like Wallinger, Pacheco prefers a broader, more contemporary reference to her work and avoids the mention of the martyr's name. The exhibition continues until January 2000.

There's a chance to buy a Pissaro this autumn. The great impressionist's granddaughter, **Orovida Pissaro** will exhibit her wild and non-sentimental animal woodcuts at Browse & Darby of Cork Street until October 22. Prices range from £200 to £500. Camille Pissaro's *Boulevard Montmartre, Spring, 1987*, estimated at over £5m, was plundered by the Nazis from a Breslau Jewish Holocaust victim and has just turned up in the Israel Museum.

Following the trend for celebrities to become artists, polymath **David Hemmings** will show his 40 vignettes of the English Season, "**Pimms and Picnics**" at the Osborne Studio Gallery, SW1 until October 2.

After Rembrandt, **Van Dyck's 400th birthday** is celebrated by the Royal Academy until 16 December in tandem with the City of Antwerp. It is described as the largest ever retrospective of the artist's work.

□ Gloria Tessler

SB's Column

The Torch. The Vienna Jewish Museum is staging a Karl Kraus exhibition (till November) which focuses on his satirical journal *Die Fackel*. This made its first appearance 100 years ago and was a controversial, widely read, but largely scurrilous, publication. The exhibition features a vast range of letters,

caricatures, theatre programmes, posters and articles by Fackel-Kraus. The latter had many enemies, but also masses of devotees. He died in 1936; his fiery periodical is a vivid reminder of splendidly provocative journalism.

Changes at the Vienna 'Burg'. The Vienna Burgtheater, traditional home of the classics, has just had a change of direction. Claus Peymann left after 12 years of hotly-debated 'modern' management when plays by Brecht, Turrini, Tabori, Handke and Elfriede Jelinek replaced the classics. The new director Klaus Bachler intends to do away with automatically retaining actors of long standing and to rely on short contracts. To-day, only a few veterans like Susi Nicoletti (since 1940) and Gusti Wolf (1946) remain in the ensemble.

Glyndebourne opera is 65 years old. It opened in 1934 with a *Figaro* performance under the aegis of Fritz Busch (who had just left Germany) and created a special festival atmosphere in glorious countryside. With tickets priced at three and four guineas it did not exactly provide cheap entertainment.

Birthday. Bass baritone Ian Wallace, an immensely popular singer and entertainer, had his 80th birthday. Radio Four listeners, in particular, will happily remember his numerous appearances in the quiz programme *My Music* □

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REGULAR VISITS TO LONDON

The untranslatable inscription

Soon the Bundestag will convene in the redesigned Reichstag building. Sir Norman Foster has suffused that edifice with daylight, perhaps in an attempt to sanitize the past. However, Paul Wallot's 1884 classic portico remains unchanged. As before, it bears the dedication – fashioned from captured French cannons – “*Dem deutschen Volke*”.

Why am I ruffled by this remnant of the Reich? Rendered into English as “*To the German People*” it sounds innocuous enough. But no translation is ever exact and in this instance the unbridged semantic gap is revealing.

In English, *people* is construed as a plural, as a body of persons belonging to a country, place, class or suchlike; but with the overtone that the persons retain their individual responsibilities and rights. Indeed, *people* is sometimes used emphatically in place of *human beings*.

By contrast, *das Volk* is invariably construed as a singular, as a collective of unity, as a part of mankind *en masse*. Tracing the *Bedeutungsgeschichte* (historical meaning) of the word, Grimm's *Wörterbuch* notes that it entered the German language as the Slavonic “pulk”, which in the dark ages denoted a warring horde (*Kriegsschar*). Those of us whose ears still ring with the echo of the Nazi chant “*Ein Land, ein Volk, ein Führer*” witnessed the dark ages extending into this century.

In the Hebrew Bible the word AM (*Volk/people*) is construed variously as singular or plural, according to the setting. When Israel thirsted in the desert and harried Moses we read: “*Va'yarev* (singular) *ba'am*” (Numbers 20.3). When

the Children of Israel prepared to accept the Ten Commandments – clearly directed at each individual – we read: “*Va'yanu* (plural) *ba'am*” (Exodus 19.8).

In the German translation we find the singular *Volk* in each case, namely “*das Volk baderte*” and “*das Volk antwortete*”. Just as inevitably, in the English translation *people* is employed on each occasion, that is “the people strove” and “the people answered.” Thus in both translations the implicit distinction in the source-text between an unruly crowd, driven by mass-instinct and an orderly assembly of responsible individuals is lost; and with it the implied lesson and warning. Thus are the consequences of Babel!

Among my possessions, I have the 1937 edition of ‘*Der Grosse Duden*’, then as now the standard German lexicon. In keeping with the times, the entry for *Volk* is furnished, side by side with references to Goethe and Schiller, with two quotations of A Hitler. They exemplify the Nazi ideology that the individual is dispensable to the *Volk* and must adhere to the *Volk* under all circumstances.

Yet in an earlier, more enlightened age the great Gotthold Ephraim Lessing already sensed this potential for evil when his *Nathan* protested:

“Sind wir unser Volk? Was heisst denn Volk? Sind Christ und Jude eher Christ und Jude als Mensch? Ah! Wenn ich einen mehr in Euch gefunden hätte den es g'nügt ein Mensch zu heissen!” (*Nathan der Weise* 2,5).

Is it too much to hope that one day the Bundestag will be dedicated “*Den Deutschen Menschen*”?

□ Otto Hutter

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Mon 13 Dr F Rosner: *Der Dirigent Hermann Levi und seine Zeit.* (IN GERMAN). Club 43, 8pm

Wed 22 *To the Bitter End: Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1942-45.* Martin Chalmers, editor & translator, reads extracts at 7.30pm, the Goethe Institut, 50 Princes Gate, Exhibition Road, London SW7. Admission £2

Mon 27 Pastor Dr Uwe Vetter (German

Protestant Church, Knightsbridge). *Forgiveness: A personal account of a third generation view of the Shoah*

October

Mon 4 Robin McEwan: *The Illuminations of the Ethiopian Miracles of Mary in 17th & 18th centuries (with slides).* Club 43, 8pm

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club 43, at Belsize Square Synagogue.
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The high cost of giving

According to the 12th century Jewish philosopher Maimonides, there are eight degrees of charity. The noblest is the offer of an opportunity to make the recipient self-supporting. The second is the anonymous gift, a romantic and truly spiritual concept, I always believed. But what would that Jewish sage have made of the dozens of charity requests that come pouring through our letter boxes every day? Even if you were to support them all, you could never set up one person for life and as for anonymous donations, the chequebook or the credit card immediately exposes the giver's identity.

Outside your home, you are immediately assailed by the *nouveaux pauvres* who harass you at tube stations, on street corners with babies, headscarves, bits of paper misspelling Cosova. "Spare any change?" mumbles the chirpy lad in the shop corner with his empty coke or beer can and his blankets ready for the night. But the coin you toss him is not enough, according to Maimonides' fourth degree. It must be given with a smile. In fact, the lowest rating, the eighth – the surly look and the grudging fumble for change – is unfortunately the way most of us give most of the time. In Maimonides' day the sages would artfully tie money in sheets which they threw behind their backs, sparing the poor any embarrassment.

But it is one thing to live in a small community and try and help those close to you, quite another to face the emotional onslaught of the world's starving, all of whom come knocking on your door, like ghosts from the pen of Shalom Aleichem or IB Singer. And what would Maimonides make of those who think the Jewish community should support religious establishments, because the pious mustn't sully their hands with the mundane work that is the lot of us lesser mortals? Not a lot, it seems.

The great philosopher had sharp words for those who persuade individuals and communities, that it is their duty to finance sages and scholars studying Torah. "Not a single word", he asserts, "either in the Torah or the sayings of the sages, lends credence to it". Clearly the new Israel government has taken this on board as it contemplates measures to prevent draft-dodging in Orthodox communities on account of Torah study.

In Maimonides' day, one assumes that the well-off knew the poor man at the

gate and were moved to help set him on his feet and for those whose charitable impulses were mitigated by the need for an ego-boost, the gift served to enhance their position in society.

Yet could even Maimonides anticipate the all-powerful charity industry which followed eight centuries later? It is not just a question of compassion fatigue. Your compassion may not dry up but your cheque book certainly will and you may feel that giving charity to a few and having to turn away so many others, is almost as though you have never given at all.

Then there is the question of the genuineness of the cause. Was it simpler in Maimonides' day? To us, a woman huddled within the cavernous belly of Old Street Station with a babe at her breast, is a shocking sight, something profoundly offensive to Western sensibilities. It seems to shatter all our media-fed awareness of who we are and where we have arrived in the dynamic, technocratic dog-days of the 20th century. You open your purse, once, twice, several times. Then you remember that you pay taxes for this sort of thing, that this is not Burundi or the Balkans, but the City of London. It is then that you notice that your fellow travellers on the Northern or Central line are peering into their *Guardian* newspapers and ignoring the headscarved one with the open hand and the muttered plea. Before long, you do the same. Twin emotions draw at the rawness of your soul. One, that you are being taken, literally, for a ride. Two, that the rest of the carriage will consider you a weak-minded nerd if you part with your cash. Oh yes, the issue of tube-cool is not to be sniffed at.

And so, what Maimonides did not have is exactly what we are presented with today in our tidy, well-run, computerised little lives. Mixed messages. One: the insatiable need for more; more entertainment, more money, more commercial and personal satisfaction, better food, a better body, a healthier life-style and a lust for the high life. Two: the genuine impoverishment of that other society, that sub-culture that lurks beneath the gloss of London's so-called sophistication. The Balkan tragedy, the precarious peacetalks in Northern Ireland. The tinder-box of Israeli-Arab relations. The battered wives. The abused and murdered children. Those who crawl in terror or lie in street corners eking out, not a living, but a genuine dying.

And the third message is the most cynical of all. Yes, people are malnourished, tortured, war-victims, refugees, poor beyond hope of redemption, living in a poverty trap – *but they aren't really*. Their demands on us are *unreasonable*. The money goes elsewhere. There is a Welfare State, give or take a bit of New Labour hysteria. Therefore they have no right to expect. Not from me. Not from you, for heaven's sake.

As I complete this article, the doorbell rings. You've guessed it. Another moon-eyed young girl clutching a baby in her arms. "Kosova, Serbia," she mutters. Behind her I can just make out the figure of a man in a black hat, hand raised to kiss the *mezuzah*. He clutches a piece of paper with Hebrew characters. He, too, speaks no English. I see the phrase lurking on his tongue: "Baruch Hashem", he is about to murmur. Maimonides – where are you? Anglo-Jewry has need of you.

□ Gloria Tessler

THE WIENER LIBRARY Memorial Plaques

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Wiener Library in London. As part of our commemoration it has been decided to issue a limited number of 50 memorial plaques for mounting in the Reading Room and Memorial Hall. Users of the Library have often remarked that the existing plaques are among the most moving features of the Wiener Library.

We hope that you will wish to join us in commemorating those who perished in the Holocaust as well as those members of the refugee community who have given so much to Britain. Each plaque will be accompanied by a certificate, one copy of which will be preserved permanently at the Library.

The Library offers two plaques to bear your personalised inscription:

- a rectangular brass plaque (125mm x 95mm) mounted on one of our bookcases at £250,
- a circular plaque (130mm diameter) mounted in a more prominent position at £1,000.

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The development of community identity

Anthony Grenville

(Part III)

A front page article in July 1947 has the title 'Trustees of an Heritage', quoting a phrase from Leo Baeck's speech opening the first plenary session of the 'Council for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany', the international organisation representing the dispersed remnants of German Jewry. Fittingly, this body was based in London, then the key bridgehead between the continent of Europe and the Jews overseas and, again fittingly, its president was Rabbi Dr Baeck, the spiritual leader of the German Jews in Britain. In a sombre address, he declared the history of the Jews in Germany to be at an end, but went on to proclaim the London-based Council 'the trustee of [their] spiritual heritage; the refugees in Britain would play a leading part in ensuring that their creative legacy passed on into the future.

That legacy, emancipated and secular in its subordination of traditional religious practices and beliefs to the goal of assimilation into the educated German-speaking middle class, set its refugee heirs in Britain apart from many other Jewries, including Anglo-Jewry. This emerges clearly in the *AJR Information's* attitude to Palestine/Israel, which though overwhelmingly positive and supportive, was plainly neither Zionist, in that it notably refrained from encouraging its readers to emigrate there, nor informed by a deep sense of kinship. Time permits only an analysis of the *AJR Information's* coverage of the immediate impact of the creation of Israel on the refugees in Britain. Before 1948 the journal had not endorsed the principle of the establishment of a Jewish state, stopping short at the humanitarian demand that homeless Jews be admitted to Palestine, in the framework of a peaceful compromise accord. Clearly, the establishment of a Jewish state claiming to represent all Jews would pose a serious problem for those Jews whose loyalties lay elsewhere and who had opted to settle in host countries like Britain and to integrate into British society.

The editorial front-page column of the journal's January 1947 issue contains two contrasting items. The first, resoundingly entitled 'Testimony of Faith', quotes from Chaim Weizmann's proud account to the

Zionist Congress in Basle of the progress made towards the establishment of a free Jewish state; the second records that the Pioneer Corps had been granted the privilege of the title 'Royal' in recognition of its war service, a distinction that would gratify the many refugees who had served in its 'Alien Companies'. Together, these items neatly encapsulate what Herbert Freedman termed 'the intricate problem of "double loyalty"' (July 1947), the divide between pride in the nascent Jewish state on the one hand and the refugees' pleasure in official recognition and acceptance by Britain on the other. Loyalty to Britain proved the stronger, at least for the majority whose natural enthusiasm for Israel did not extend to resettling there.

As an editorial article in October 1948 makes clear, the impact of the foundation of Israel on the refugees from Hitler in Britain was twofold and potentially divisive. On the one hand, some welcomed the establishment of Israel unreservedly as 'the fulfilment of dreams they have cherished throughout their lives'. But for others, who 'react to the new situation with qualified rejoicing', Israel also represented a threat to the security of their identity as Jews settled in the Diaspora, since it called into question the claim to full Jewishness of those communities that remained outside the Jewish state; they must 'hope that the conception of a Jewish State may not impair the position of the majority of Jews outside Israel, who feel themselves politically integrated into their countries of residence'. These included the heirs to the German-Jewish tradition, who arguably had by now too little in common with the core values of the Jewish state to be easily transplanted there from Britain, though they supported it warmly.

To judge by the journal's reports, the Jews from Central Europe were both less emotionally committed to Israel and less rooted in their identity as a traditionally Jewish community than was established Anglo-Jewry. It is, for example, hard to imagine a leading figure among the refugees declaring his belief, as did Professor Selig Brodetsky, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, that 'Jewish education in this country should be associated with Jewish life in Palestine and

that the Jewish child should be made to feel that he is a part of the unity of the Jewish people' (April 1948). It is also unlikely that the Board of the Association of Jewish Refugees would, as the Board of Deputies did, have burst into a spontaneous rendition of the Hatikvah to welcome the proclamation of the Jewish state. The development of the collective identity of the refugees from Hitler kept them somewhat at arm's length from Israel and the relative weakness of their allegiance to traditional Jewish religious and social practices was also to distance them from Anglo-Jewry.

Initially, expectations of close and friendly relations between Anglo-Jewry and the refugees were high, as is shown by the welcome extended in 1946 to the *AJR Information* by such organs of Anglo-Jewry as the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Zionist Review*. Front-page articles in November 1949 and September 1950 recalling the generous financial support extended by British Jews to the often destitute new arrivals are evidence of the latter's gratitude, though already in these articles the heavy emphasis on charitable support in material terms points up the relative failure of human and organisational contacts to develop on a wide scale.

This is not to deny that many refugees from Central Europe did become involved with Anglo-Jewry, through synagogues and other institutions, in their careers, their pastimes, their friendships and social relations and not least by marrying Anglo-Jewish partners. But the majority remained separate from British Jewry, retaining a distinct Continental identity that pervades the *AJR Information*, with its highly cultured and largely secularized brand of journalism, designed to appeal to an intellectually sophisticated and assimilated readership. The refugees did not on the whole build their communal organisations around religious institutions, as Anglo-Jewry had done around the synagogue, nor was their social and cultural life determined to the same extent by customs and values deriving from Jewish religious practice.

Attitudes towards the absorption of the more recent refugees into Anglo-Jewry were divided. On the one hand, leading figures in Anglo-Jewry, like Selig Brodetsky, warmly welcomed AJR members into the common fold in articles published in January and June 1947. On the other hand, others close to the refugee commu-

continued opposite

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nity, like Otto Schiff, Chairman of the Jewish Refugees Community that had brought many Jews out of Nazi Germany and EN Cooper, Chairman of the London Regional Refugee Council, saw the future of the refugees in very different terms: 'Now that the refugees are being rapidly absorbed into our British national life, I find myself asking what contribution they can make in the years to come to the life and work of the country of their adoption. It is my great hope that they may become a living link between this country and the best of the culture that derives from Germany and Austria.' (January 1947) Significantly, a series of articles designed to acquaint the readership with the institutions of Anglo-Jewry, still evidently deemed necessary nearly a decade after their arrival, quickly fizzled out.

Relations between the refugees, who came from the westernized cities of the German-speaking world and the British Jews, who were largely descended from the earlier wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe, were affected by the historical hostility between the assimilated, secularized, middle-class Jewish

communities in Germany and Austria and the Eastern Jews, mostly poor, orthodox in their religion and traditional in their practices. There is clear evidence in the *AJR Information* of the disapproval felt by the Eastern Jews for the German Jews who had, in their view, abandoned their ancestral religion and assumed instead a sense of patronising cultural superiority towards their allegedly more backward cousins. Perhaps discreetly, some of the journal's most overt explorations of this sensitive area come in its reports from distant Israel, where some Eastern Jews viewed the 'Prussian Jekkes' (August 1950) with ill-concealed disfavour.

In July 1948 the editors of the journal address the central question of the route to integration chosen by the Westernized refugees from Central Europe, contrasting it with the historical experience of Anglo-Jewry:

'In Germany, the Jew was assimilated and belonged to the middle class; even when losing his fortune, he did not become a proletarian but a petty bourgeois. In the London East End... he belonged to a Yiddish speaking proletarian stratum, though at a later stage either he or his children managed to improve their posi-

tion. Many misunderstandings between the refugees from Germany ... and other sections of the Anglo-Jewish community may be explained by this different background. The dispossessed refugee did not start at the lowest rung of the ladder in Whitechapel, but, penniless as he was, took his furnished room in Hampstead or other North-Western parts of the town.'

Even allowing for an element of generalization, this analysis does point to a key feature in the development of the self-image and identity of the refugee community; continuing the tradition of upward social mobility and assimilation in the countries of origin, the majority of the central European Jews aimed almost instinctively to integrate into the equivalent strata of British society, the prosperous, professional middle classes and this socio-cultural orientation proved stronger than any religiously based allegiance that might instead have bound them into Anglo-Jewry.

The early postwar years saw the community of German-speaking Jewish refugees in Britain struggling to define its own identity. This paper has examined some of the preconditions for the development of that identity □

Obituaries

Fritz Hellendall

Fritz Hellendall was born in Düsseldorf in 1912. Although without religious beliefs, he was always very much aware of his Jewishness. From an early age, he developed an interest in Heinrich Heine, with whom he felt a certain affinity as a Jew with a humanist outlook. In a school essay, the sixteen year old Fritz criticised his headmaster for the latter's opposition to the erection of a memorial to Heine in the city of Düsseldorf.

He recognised the evil of the Nazi regime early on and came to England in 1934, where he took a law degree at King's College, London. In response to the threat of internment in 1940, Fritz joined the Pioneer Corps, serving all over the country, from Alnwick to Ilfracombe.

After the war, Fritz interviewed many victims of Nazi persecution in the run-up to the Nuremberg Trials. For years after that, he put a lot of energy into helping fellow refugees with their restitution

claims from the German Federal Government, as well as pursuing his profession as a solicitor.

During a visit to Düsseldorf in 1968, Fritz discovered that the issue of recognition of Heinrich Heine had been revived. He took part in successive *Bürgerinitiativen*, in the face of reactionary and anti-semitic opposition and his efforts were rewarded in 1988 when the University of Düsseldorf was named after Heinrich Heine, whose statue was erected on the university campus.

Fritz will be very sadly missed by his family, as well as many friends and acquaintances □

Eric Walters-Kohn

Austrian-born Eric Walters, who has died, aged 92, had a family background in Moravia to which he was extraordinarily attached. After matriculation he worked in his father's Vienna factory, which produced ribbons and cord. Following the Anschluss he endured incarceration in Nazi concentration camps for nearly a year. After his

release he came to Britain. Here he initially worked as a baker and then went on to a firm making cord for parachutes. In 1940 he joined the Pioneer Corps, was promoted to the rank of sergeant and in 1944 took part in the Battle of Caen.

After the war he briefly returned to Vienna to reclaim his murdered parents' factory and house.

Back in Britain he set up a manufacture of blouses and skirts. The firm expanded and at its peak acted as supplier to both British Airways and the Girl Guides' Association. Eric Walters was a staunch member of B'nai Brith and the AJR and in his leisure time indulged a love of drawing. □ RG

Manchester anniversary

The Morris Feinmann residential home for the elderly in Manchester, has celebrated its 40th anniversary. It was established with the help of reparation funding in order to secure suitable accommodation for Jewish WWII refugees □

NEWSROUND

Settling accounts

Funds stolen from Jewish holders of Barclays Bank accounts in France during the Nazi occupation are to be repaid. The bank has agreed to a \$3.6 million compensation fund for survivors or their heirs.

'Lost' painting found

Art auctioneers Sothebys have identified a painting in the Tate Gallery by Jan Griffier, depicting Hampton Court in 1710, as belonging to the heirs of a Jewish art collector from Düsseldorf who was murdered by the Nazis in 1937. His starving wife was forced to exchange artworks for food while hiding in Belgium. Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate and chairman of the museum directors' working party on looted Nazi art, is hoping to reach a satisfactory and speedy settlement with the victim's family.

'No rescue' policy

Recently released British Government archives indicate that Britain's Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, scotched an American 1944 plan to exchange Jews from concentration camps who held South American passports, for expatriate Germans. He feared that some would end up in Palestine.

UK asset compensation commenced

The first compensation payments have been approved for people whose assets were confiscated by the authorities under wartime legislation. The Department of Trade and Industry reports that over 200 applications have been made by survivors and their families. The fund resulted from an enquiry led by Lord Archer of Sandwell.

Asylum legislation

In her new appointment, Home Office Minister Barbara Roche, former JFS head girl, has taken over responsibility for the Government's Immigration and Asylum Bill. The restrictive legislation proposed has already suffered criticism from immigrant welfare organisations and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Czech transfer

The Czech Government is preparing to transfer Nazi-looted artworks to Prague's Jewish Museum if no legal heir can be identified. It was estimated that some 70 paintings would be received.

□ RDC

OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL SOLOIST
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Internationally acclaimed cellist, Raphael Wallfisch, is to play Haydn's melodious cello concerto in C with the highly rated musicians of the newly-formed London Concertino at the AJR Concert at Imperial College, in October.

Raphael Wallfisch was born in London in 1953 into a professional musical family with both a distinguished cellist mother, Anita and pianist father, Peter. After studying in Rome and at the Royal Academy in London, he advanced his interpretations of the repertoire under Gregor Piatigorsky in California, at which time he was honoured to play chamber music with the great Jascha Heifetz. In 1977 he won the international cello competition in Florence and he performed and recorded with his late father.

Even in a generation which has produced many fine cellists, Raphael Wallfisch stands out. Having recorded many neglected works, he has also earned a reputation as a leading explorer of the cello repertoire. He plays regularly with major British orchestras – most recently at this year's Proms – and fulfils engagements in many parts of the world, including the USA, Canada Australia and Europe. Professor at the Winterthur Konservatorium in Switzerland and teacher at the Guildhall School of Music in London, he is continually in demand for taking masterclasses in all parts of the world.

Raphael Wallfisch will be guest soloist at the Annual AJR Concert on Sunday 10th October 1999, at 3pm, in the Great Hall of Imperial College, South Kensington, London SW7. The London Concertino's programme, under its conductor Richard



Raphael Wallfisch, soloist at the AJR Concert

Dickins, will include works by Mozart, Vivaldi, Haydn and Holst. To complement the afternoon's entertainment, each ticket includes within the price a cream tea served during an extended interval. Seats are available in the auditorium at £10, £15 and £20 and a concert coach service, leaving from and returning to Finchley Road Underground Station, is available at £3 per place if booked in advance. As this year's concert venue has fewer seats than has the Queen Elizabeth Hall, early booking is recommended to avoid disappointment.

□ Ronald Channing

BOX OFFICE: Please send your cheque for the full amount to: **The Concert Secretary, AJR Charitable Trust, 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Frognal, London NW3 6AL. Enquiries: 0171 431 6161.**

Interfaith dialogue

Bendorf in Germany hosted an interfaith conference attended by nineteen delegates – British Jews, Northern Ireland Catholics, Protestant and Catholic Germans, Egyptian Copts and Israeli Jews and Arabs. Each national group presented a general description of their country's culture and history, complemented by a personal family history, in which I recounted my grandmother's survival from Auschwitz.

Knowledge of the Holocaust varied widely between the delegates; to some of

the Egyptians it was totally unknown! Gaby Glassman guided the group in its approaches to the Holocaust in preparation for a visit to Buchenwald. The emotional response came not only from Jews, but also from young Germans who voiced their concern at evidence of a growing xenophobia in today's Germany.

It became clear from a talk given by a Palestinian, whose family were dispossessed in the 1948 war, that arguments about the past achieved little or nothing. Only by working together can peace and reconciliation be advanced.

□ David Byers