

Don't miss . . .

Pinochet's return
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More Shoah business
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Vatican in Kremlin mode

In his famous 1956 speech Khrushchev denounced Stalin – but in strict secrecy. His penchant for truth-telling was qualified by the fear that too much truth would destabilise the Soviet system. The Pope's Lenten declaration of remorse resembled Khrushchev's speech. It was a welcome first step – but longer on pious sentiment than on actual substance. What is required in place of generalised references to past crimes and misdemeanours is the readiness to name the names of their Catholic perpetrators, however highly placed in the hierarchy □

The promise of youth

'Bliss was it on that day to be alive, and to be young was very heaven!' exulted Wordsworth, recapturing his mood on the day news of the Fall of the Bastille reached him. Ever since the French Revolution it has been taken as read that the cause of youth is synonymous with aspiration for radical change.

Change can, however, just as easily lead to genuine innovation as to a cunningly disguised rehash of the past. Mussolini, whose anthem proclaimed dynamic youth – *Giovinetza* – saw himself as the reincarnation of the Caesars of old, re-introduced antique symbols like the *fasces* (hence 'Fascist') and sought to re-establish the Roman Empire. Hitler, at forty-four the Reich's youngest ever Chancellor, reversed history and dragged Germany – and with it Europe – backwards past the Hohenzollern and Hohenstaufen eras into the Dark Ages.

What is the Youth v Age situation in the world's troublespots today?

Austria provides a prime example of the past camouflaged as the future in the person of Jörg Haider. This heir to the political legacy of nineteenth century Teutomaniac von Schönerer stakes his claim to modernity by performing exploits on ski slopes and bungee jumps and recently even turned his party from a vehicle for Pan-Germanism into one for purely Austrocentric xenophobia.

Russia has for ten years now been the world's major battleground in the contest between the Old and the New. Here millions of pensioners and the marginalized yearn back to the days of Khrushchev's goulash-cum-Gulag communism and will vote for Zyuganov. However, the Communist candidate is likely to be outgunned by Putin at the elections because the latter's victory in Chechnya appeals to the even more backward looking patriotic impulse.

A place where the relatively young have triumphed over the

old is post-Tudjman Croatia. Here President Stipe Mesic has offered to resettle the violently expelled Serbs of the Krajina. This could be a crucial first break in the vicious circle of Yugoslav fratricide, because it might alleviate Serb persecution mania – a syndrome dating back to the Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389 – and thereby lessen Milosevic's grip over his subjects.

The contrast between Youth and Age is also a key factor in the ongoing gradual transformation of Iran. In this austere stronghold of Islam over half the population are below twenty-one, and this youthful preponderance has lately impacted on public awareness twice over: first in the Teheran student riots and then in the Majlis election results. It is no exaggeration to say that young peoples' demands for expanded horizons and greater social latitude are prizing the country loose from the straitjacket in which the Ayatollahs had confined it.

Islamic fundamentalism may be only one strand in Arabic intransigence towards the Jewish State. For all that the youthful challenge to the theocratic control of Shiite Iran could conceivably spill over into its Sunni neighbours and have a subtly ameliorating effect on the inflamed situation in the Middle East □



Left to right: Rachel Whiteread, designer of Vienna's Holocaust Memorial, Daniel Libeskind, architect of Berlin's Jewish Museum and Prof James Young, authority on memorialisation, panellists in Jewish Book Week. (Report page16)

Profile

Irene Lawford

Irene Lawford Hinrichsen is descended from seventeenth-century Sephardi immigrants into north Germany who became Court Jews. Over the next 200 years the Hinrichsens developed several regional branches. The main one resided at Leipzig, a centre of music-making (*pace* the Gewandhaus orchestra) and of the German publishing industry. Both activities came together in the music publishing house CF Peters, which had had links with Beethoven and came into the possession of the Hinrichsen family in the era of Brahms.

When Irene was born in 1935 the firm was jointly run by her grandfather Henri and father Max. Times were hard. A year earlier, when Max had taken a wife from among the impoverished Catholic nobility, her brother, a Reichswehr general, had broken off all contact. Concurrently the Nazi authorities threatened the firm with Aryanisation. In 1937 her parents took Irene to England where they settled in London and sent Irene to school at Letchworth. (Grandfather Henri was to



Irene Lawford

perish at Auschwitz).

Over here her father worked hard to re-establish himself in the music publishing business. This brought him into conflict with the old established firm of Novello & Co., acting as British agents for the Nazi aryanisers. He nonetheless managed to set up Hinrichsen Edition Ltd (which focused on Early English Music) as well as Peters Edition.

When Irene left school she followed her father – whose postwar hopes of having the Leipzig firm restored to him had been dashed by East German nationalisation – into the business. After

some time he sent her to the continent where she acquired valuable experience working behind the scenes at such festival venues as Salzburg and Bayreuth, and with music publishers. Back in London she eventually became the long-serving editor of the musical journal *The Baton* and founder of the Philatelic Music Circle. She also married and had two children. Another notable family event was her cousinly encounter with the daughters of the (meanwhile deceased) Wehrmacht general who had shunned his Jewish-miscegenated sister.

Widowed in the late 1980s, Irene found a new outlet for her energies when the Fall of the Wall enabled her to revisit Leipzig, the ancestral Hinrichsen home. Educated Leipzigers are keenly aware of their city's impoverishment by the Nazis. Apart from being much in demand as a lecturer, Irene is also esteemed as a bearer of the Hinrichsen name – a name redolent of bygone culture and civic consciousness.

Awareness of that illustrious heritage has recently inspired Irene to produce a book entitled *Music Publishing and Patronage* that will be reviewed in our next issue

□ RG

Blumenthal at the Lords

Raising the profile of Berlin's new Jewish Museum – and funds for the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at Sussex University – was the occasion for a reception at the House of Lords attended by the museum's director, Michael Blumenthal. Having served as an economist, teacher and high-ranking US Government official, he was now devoting himself to a project closely connected to his roots, namely German-Jewish history.

Introduced by Lord (Richard) Attenborough, Chancellor of Sussex University, Blumenthal attributed the growth of interest in German-Jewish history in part to "generational change" on both the German and the Jewish sides. The current budget of the Museum – which is to be the largest Jewish museum in Europe – was met equally by the German Federal Government (the *Bund*) and the *Land* of Berlin. There was, however, an initiative for the Bund to take over the entire responsibility and grant it national museum status.

The present empty structure, built to a

strikingly original design by architect Daniel Libeskind (see *AJR Information* for March 1999), had attracted 250,000 visitors in its first year. When the completed museum opens next year, Blumenthal anticipated that some 600,000 people would pass through its doors annually. The museum would illustrate the 2,000-year history of the Jews on German soil which was of particular importance for the many Germans who had little if any opportunity to meet Jews and for whom the concept of German-Jewish history equated with Auschwitz.

Michael Blumenthal said that the museum had three objectives: to demonstrate that German history could not be understood without a comprehension of German-Jewish history; through this history, to teach the lessons of tolerance; and to demonstrate the terrible cost to minorities of intolerance. The museum's displays were to be complemented with a major outreach programme for schools and colleges which would have a significant impact on all academic research into German-Jewish history. He was confident that the Centre for German-Jewish Studies would prove an important link in

the network of academic institutions throughout Europe, the USA and Israel devoted to study and research in this field.

□ MK

*The AJR wishes all
its members
a Happy Pesach*

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Reflections on Pinochet's return

No country that has had a civil war can afford to remain frozen in a fratricidal posture; a house divided against itself cannot stand. Franco, Pinochet's forerunner in Spain, kept state and society in a deep freeze for the rest of his long life, but with his death in 1975 everything changed dramatically.

Surprisingly, left-leaning post Franco Spain did not put those guilty of atrocities during the Civil War on trial. The new democratic leaders considered amnesia-assisted social peace preferable to picking at old scars.

In Chile an amnesiac peace seems impossible of attainment. The wounds inflicted in the course of the 1973 coup and the subsequent repression are too deep and too recent. Besides Chileans have seen the mothers of the 'disappeared' demonstrate effectively against the bloodstained Junta in neighbouring Argentina.

Reconciliation without recrimination, though, seems to have worked in South Africa – possibly because both sides have peered into the depths of the racial abyss that would open up unless all communities forgot about the past and kept their gaze fixed resolutely in the future.

Russia resembles South Africa in that the victims of the previous government's terror machine were completely powerless. And if the apartheid regime was a byword for cruelty and exploitation, the Soviet penal system put it totally in the

shade. The horrors of the Gulag were such that the absence of trials of KGB operatives tempts one to say that post-Communist Russia has not been 'denazified'.

A case in point is the Siberian nickel-smelting town of Novrils which thousands of camp inmates dug out of the tundra, often with their bare hands. Recently the ex-KGB commandant in charge of the 'project' was feted on his 90th birthday by his erstwhile underlings as 'founder of Novrils'. In his reply he said that he took modest pride in having equipped Russia with a modern nickel industry.

He could easily have gone on to praise Stalin's 'orderly employment policy' – to quote Haider only slightly out of context. With Austria we return to a Catholic country which, like Spain and Chile, has long been split down the middle. In the interwar years Right and Left clashed bloodily twice over – in 1927 and 1934 – till the Nazi tide swept both away. After the deluge the Catholic Blacks and Socialist Reds pledged themselves to overcome past animosities and work together. But neither side kept faithfully to the bargain. Red Chancellor Kreisky took ex-SS men into his cabinet to dish the Blacks. The latter, in turn, demonstrated bad faith firstly in backing President Waldheim, and secondly by hoisting Haider into a pivotal position in Austrian politics.

One thing can be confidently asserted: neither Pinochet's return nor Schüssel's machinations have contributed to the democratic health of their respective countries.

□ Richard Grunberger

Reporting the Irving/Lipstadt case

Court 73 of the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand has, since the beginning of this year, been the venue of a libel action brought by the controversial right-wing British historian David Irving against the American academic Professor Deborah Lipstadt. Irving alleges that in her book *Denying The Holocaust: the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, published in 1993, Professor Lipstadt libelled him in referring to him as a Holocaust denier, a description that, he maintains, threatens his reputation as a historian. The proceedings have been held in open court

with the public gallery always full to bursting. The press has regularly reported excerpts from the proceedings, both of the evidence and of judicial interventions □

The editor has decided not to comment on this long-running case until its conclusion, when the proceedings and their outcome can be assessed in their totality.

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Reviews

More Shoah business

Peter Novick, *THE HOLOCAUST AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London, 2000, £18.99.

First published in the USA last year, this is a very personal view of the changing perceptions of the role of the Holocaust in American public awareness across a half century.

Peter Novick charts the rise in prominence of the *Shoah* in the changing political climate of the USA from the late 1940s to the present, when Holocaust commemoration has become 'institutionalised' and, in principle, uncontroversial. Throughout his analysis, Novick sets the prominence (or otherwise) of the Holocaust in American public discourse in the context of other events and preoccupations of the day.

For Novick, the postwar years were characterised by a silence about the Holocaust bred first, by the Cold War in which West Germany was viewed as a bulwark against Communism and second, the need for Jewish immigrants to assimilate into American society. The Eichmann trial broke the taboo and provoked public debate throughout the decade which succeeded in shifting the focus from German perpetrators to Jewish victims. Support for Israel was at its height during the Six Day War when the Holocaust was frequently invoked. Jewish leaders traced the subsequent decline of US support for Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War back to a fading of Holocaust awareness.

The projection of the Holocaust into public awareness, Novick suggests, was a device used by American-Jewish organisations to counteract the tendencies towards intermarriage and assimilation from the late 1960s. A burgeoning increase in academic courses and Holocaust 'events' evidenced the demand of Jews seeking an identity. At the same time, with the outcome of the Vietnam War, victimhood became more fashionable at a time when American Jewry was united neither by Israel nor by religious observance. Thus, the Holocaust became the binding element. By the 1990s, the Holocaust had become a bandwagon attractive to politicians and is now "part of the US cultural mainstream".

One justification often argued for the prominence of the Holocaust is the lessons humankind should learn from it. For

Novick, the only lesson of the Holocaust is that humans are capable of the most awful atrocities. Further, he maintains that far from sensitising us to other atrocities and encouraging intervention to halt them, the Holocaust has the contrary effect; he points to the failure of the US to intervene in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Rwanda and Bosnia.

Can the Holocaust remain central in the future now that the purposes for which Novick says it was brought to attention have been achieved? It is not an American collective memory because of its remoteness from Americans' experience. The role of the Holocaust as a central reference point, he says, is in the hands of American Jews and will depend on the way in which American society changes over time. However controversial Novick is in assessing the role of the Holocaust in American society to date, he admits to having no answers.

This is a timely, albeit controversial, contribution to the debate about the ways in which, and the reasons why, the Holocaust has come so to preoccupy the West nearly sixty years on. Although it is an analysis of the situation in the USA, it provides pointers and ideas which illustrate how an event in recent history can be used for differing social and political agendas. In a media-dominated age, the lessons should be heeded.

□ Marion Koebner

One who was there

Hugo Gryn with Naomi Gryn *CHASING SHADOWS, Memories of a Vanished World*, Viking, £16.99.

The late Rabbi Hugo Gryn has been referred to as 'an icon' among Holocaust survivors. Whether he would have welcomed such an epithet is questionable. Nevertheless he remained dedicated to finding a meaning for his survival and grappling with a post-Holocaust theology. The last chapter of *Chasing Shadows* – 20:20 Hindsight – includes an answer to the question: 'Where was God at Auschwitz?' for which he will always be remembered: 'I believe God was there Himself – violated and blasphemed. The real question is "Where was man in Auschwitz?"'

What is remarkable about Gryn's

memories of the Holocaust and the vanished world of his childhood, apart from the stature of the author/protagonist himself, is the dual or even triple perspective that is to be found in the narrative, skilfully compiled into a coherent whole by Gryn's film-maker daughter, Naomi.

Thus it is the mature Gryn, reflective and nostalgic, who recreates his home town of Berehovo after a return visit in 1989 while it is as a young rabbinical student in 1951 that he wrote an account of his experiences during the Holocaust, recapturing the rawness and urgency of the thirteen-year-old whose life has been shattered. When the material overlaps – both accounts, for example, refer to Hugo's years at the Jewish *gymnasium* in Debrecen after Berehovo and the surrounding region were absorbed into greater Hungary in 1938 – the picture conveyed is very different.

Gryn was born in 1930, during the all too brief period between the world wars when Berehovo was part of the independent state of Czechoslovakia. Jewish life flourished with Jewish observance and secular culture enjoying a comfortable co-existence. It was a rare balance, exemplified by the fact that Czech and modern Hebrew were the languages of instruction in the Jewish elementary school, 'with each class sporting pictures of Tomas Masaryk, the founding president of the Republic and of Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement'. Thus Gryn's background was as different from the insular devotion of the *shtetl* as it was from the assimilation prevalent among 'Germans of the Mosaic persuasion' and others.

Gryn survived the 'selection' at Auschwitz by claiming to be a nineteen-year-old carpenter. Nevertheless it was his curiosity as a thirteen-year-old that led him to investigate a windowless tower building and barely escape being gassed with streams of unknowing smaller children. While the chapters detailing his ordeals in the cattle train, at Auschwitz, at Lieberose and on the 'death marches' make compelling reading, this episode is particularly spine-chilling.

Chasing Shadows is a fitting memorial to a great and well-loved figure for which Naomi Gryn deserves our thanks and congratulations.

□ Emma Klein

Cont.

Lost childhood

Clare Parker, *KLARA'S STORY*, self-published, 1999, £4.

In a remarkably simple testimony of terror and survival, Clare Parker recalls the destruction of her life as a Jewish child in Budapest and the traumatic events she was called upon to survive.

In 1942 Klara, an only child not yet eleven years old, went to a strict Catholic school in a Budapest suburb, the only Jew in the class and subject to antisemitic taunts and teacher's discrimination. Father, who had a metalworking business, and mother, who was a typical *balabusta*, kept news of the war away from Klara, though by 1943 they listened to the BBC despite its being strictly forbidden.

Father was sent to a forced labour camp, Jews' movements were restricted and a yellow star had to be worn. By 1944 they knew that the Russians and the Allies were winning the war, but Regent Horthy and Cardinal Mindszenty welcomed the Nazis into Hungary. Atrocities against Jews proliferated and eventually Klara, her mother and grandmother were moved into a ghetto, then transported in the dire conditions of cattle wagons to an unknown destination which turned out to be Auschwitz. After dozens of selections, Klara was one of the few women who survived.

Transferred to Mauthausen in Austria for slave labour and, after losing her mother, she was eventually among the few survivors liberated by American soldiers. Recovering from her ordeal in a Budapest hospital, she learned that her father had also survived. During the Hungarian uprising in 1956 father and daughter escaped into Austria before emigrating to England. Klara/Clare's account is well illustrated, short and easily readable, being intended first and foremost for children. □ RDC

To order copies at £5 including postage please telephone Claire Parker on 020 7431 6001.

The novelist as historian

Günter Grass, *MY CENTURY*, Faber, 1999, £16.99. translated by Michael Henry Heim.

Günter Grass shares with Heinrich Böll the distinction of being Germany's best known postwar author. He famously put his head above

the parapet, when at considerable social risk he campaigned for Willy Brandt in the 1965 General Election. A few years earlier he had erected a most moving memorial to a victim of *Kristallnacht* in the character of Sigismund Markus in *The Tin Drum*.

In the work under review the century of the title provides scope for a race through that simultaneously awful and awesome period of time. The book is obviously a work of historical fiction, but so fact-based that real characters appear in it. These include the greatest corporal of all time (Grass's epithet for Hitler) and Max Liebermann, the finest Jewish painter of our time.

How has Grass managed to sail through virtually a hundred years and not seem out of balance? He has written chapters, each headed by a year, i.e. starting with 1900 and ending with 1999, each year being pinned down in 600 to 1000 words symptomatic of it. Not always terribly significant, but symptomatic.

A fine example is chapter 1938, the *Kristallnacht*. At first reading I thought it was too naïve, underestimating the horror of it. He allows it to be seen in an unidentified place by a non-Jewish girl-child. On reflection I have decided it was not a bad way of putting it before the non-Jewish public. The child's bewilderment and anxiety should have taught them a lesson.

By contrast he has Liebermann watching the triumph of Hitler and his hordes in 1933. The painter watches from a roof: a numinous person by his side (a surrogate Günter Grass?) is sickened by the spectacle of the torchlight march – and then suddenly he confesses to himself that he is also attracted, but only for seconds.

It is not possible to quote all the grim, joyful, bizarre and even indifferent examples, but it is a good mix some of which each of you, who can still call her-or-himself refugee, must have experienced or heard of.

There is the Zürich debate between enthusiastic nationalist ex-soldier Ernst Jünger and world-famous pacifist writer Erich Maria Remarque; the Eichmann trial seen from the point of view of the Jewish glazier who made the booth in which the shabby criminal faced his judges; Chancellor Brandt on his knees in postwar Auschwitz; the unhappiness of those other refugees, those from the East to the West.

The book may shake readers and at times amuse them, but it won't leave them bored. □ John Rossall

SEARCH NOTICES

Paula Fürst headmistress of the Theodor Herzl Schule in Berlin until its closure in 1938, subsequently worked for the 'Reichsvertretung'. Before deportation in 1942, she accompanied a Kindertransport to England on 3 August 1939. Information about her, the Transport, or concerning regulations governing those accompanying such Transports sought for a biography. Please contact M.+ H. Ehlert, Karlsbader Str. 2., 14193 Berlin. Tel: 0049 30 825 8708

Livia Laurent, pen name of Mrs Eva Meyerhof, née Oppenheim, born c.1915, arrived in Britain from Frankfurt in 1933, actress and writer ("A Tale of Internment" and a volume of poems). Known to have been living in Netherhall Gardens in 1948. Researcher into German-speaking women in internment would be grateful for any information. Contact Dr Charmian Brinson, Humanities Programme, Imperial College, London SW7 2BX. Tel: 020 7954 8754. Email: c.Brinson@ic.ac.uk

Historian wishes to hear from any of the 1,725 Jews able to leave Nazi Vienna in 1938 having been baptised into the Anglican Church by Embassy chaplains Revs. C.H.D. Grimes and Frederick Collard. Contact Giles McDonogh, 102 Highgate Road, London NW5. Tel. 020 7267 5385; Fax 020 7267 6995.

Eleanor Rathbone PhD researcher seeks firsthand information, recollections etc. Contact Susan Cohen Tel. 020 8441 9711.

Kurt Erich Glauber Served in the Pioneer Corps until 1943, then transferred to another part of the British Army. Killed on 1 April 1942, aged 42. Information sought about his post-Pioneer service, including place and circumstances of his death, by Ludwig Berlin, 39 Greenhill, Hampstead High Street, London NW3 5UA. Tel. 020 7794 7281.

Zerlina Engel resident in the Belsize Park area in 1939, last known address "Eastmoor", 24 Milton Rd., Bournemouth (1948). Information sought by her close relative in Israel, Mr Freddy Kahane, whose admission to England in 1939 she was instrumental in securing. Please contact Mr. M. Goldenberg, 4/48 Wood Lane, London N6 5UB.

PhD student wishes to speak with immigrants to Britain in 1930s/1940s who served in the **Pioneer Corps** or other **British Army** units or who were interned. Also to those who were members of the Czech or Polish Free Armies. Please contact Steven Kern, Longnor House, Derby Hall, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2QT. Tel. 0115 951 4350.



Letters to the Editor

BOMBING AUSCHWITZ

Sir – JC Lee of London in his letter of February 2000 explains at some length – “because of the logistics involved” etc. – why the railway lines to Auschwitz were not bombed in the summer of 1944 when 400,000 Hungarian Jews might have been saved.

I find such opinions difficult to understand when there is now literature available on this subject.

I quote from Heiner Lichtenstein *Why Auschwitz was (not) bombed* Bund-Verlag, Cologne 1980: “Since the allies held supremacy in the airspace over Europe from 1 April 1944 at the latest, the objects which had been attacked were regularly photographed from the air, either on the same day or a few days later. This is true also of Auschwitz. I have access to copies of such photographs”. Some are actually reproduced in this book. He goes on: “We are dealing with official documents”...

The first air attack took place on the 7 July 1944, further attacks followed on 21 August “beneath a carpet of 350 heavy US bombers”... “The IG Farben refineries near Auschwitz were bombed on 13 September... A factory building, which had previously been destroyed, was attacked again...”

To summarise: Auschwitz was bombed – but not the railway lines, nor the gas chambers, but “armaments factories near Auschwitz” – “oil and rubber works” (the latter were bombed 13 September 1944) etc.

I believe that many secret documents are now available, so I stop here.

Cheshire

Mrs Marianne Walter

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Gerda Mayer has requested that we reprint two sentences from her letter in the March issue which we toned down so as not to offend some readers. The sentences read:

Sir – Is it not unreasonable to expect the world to genuflect every time the word ‘Jew’ is mentioned? Is it not undignified to keep digging around for yet more culprits from whom to extract apologies (and compensation!?).

London E4

Gerda Mayer

Sir – To those of us who cry that “enough is enough” and that the so-called “Holocaust Industry” be laid to rest, Karl Jaspers, no less and NOT a Jew, warned: “That which has happened is a warning. To forget it is guilt. It must be continually remembered. It was possible for this to happen, and it remains possible for it to happen again at any moment. Only in knowledge can it be prevented”.

Surrey

Robert Miller

SWITZERLAND COMES TO TERMS

Sir – Late in 1942 I crossed the mountainous border between France and Switzerland with great difficulty. My mother had preceded me and was found on a mountain with third degree frostbite after seven days. I was interned in Geneva and after four days sent back to France, having asked at least not to be sent back into Germany. I again had to start to live in hiding, was caught and taken to prison etc. It is high time the Swiss came to terms with their past and paid compensation to survivors.

Kenley, Surrey

I Nowakowska

QUERY

Sir – As recipient of a small Austrian pension I have for years tried to find the most cost effective way to make use of this money. A transfer in schillings or in sterling being too costly on a month-by-month basis, I rather accumulated the proceeds in my Austrian bank and either used the money when in Austria, or arranged for a transfer once or twice each year.

Now with Austria off my travelling itinerary I thought it best to open a Euro account with my bank here and use Euro travellers cheques when visiting other countries. It emerges that apart from the commission levied for the travellers cheques, my bank charges £30 each half year for this account and others apparently make similar charges.

Can any of your readers, many of them recipients of Austrian or German pensions suggest the most cost effective way of dealing with this problem?

2 Elsworth Court

Thomas Edmund Konrad

Elsworth Road, London NW3 3DU

VALUE OF THE EURO

Sir – When the European currencies strengthen, we will get more money again. When that will be is anyone’s guess. Germany took on the rebuilding of East Germany which has cost them a huge amount. Of course, not least is the effect, however small, of our demands for restitution and the threatened blocking of imports from companies which used slave labour. For every plus there is always a negative! So, until these matters are largely settled, Germany will have the financial problems that devalue a currency.

Of course, it would have been nice now, with the benefit of hindsight, to have the pension fixed in pounds. But at the time of the agreement, I suppose we thought marks were a better currency which generally has got stronger against the pound for many years, and resulted, overall, in higher pensions than would have been the case if paid in pounds.

Hope this makes sense.

Hayling Island
Hampshire

Steven Schreier

Sir – Responsibility for this situation (January letters) rests with the British government, which artificially increases the value of Pound Sterling. Their negative European policy created an unfortunate situation for recipients of pensions from Germany, which has established a fixed Euro Exchange Rate whereas Britain has not! Therefore the exchange rates to the pound vary from day to day!

Wembley Park
Middx

Rolf Weinberg

GLIMPSES OF AUSTRIA

Sir – We do not share Jussy Brainin’s impression of Vienna. When my wife and I travelled there we received a lot of help while using public transport (sometimes even unsolicited).

In all metropolitan cities the ever increasing population of pensioners spend a lot of time attending to their health needs.

The return of stolen paintings is a bitter subject. We note that the Louvre has just returned six paintings after 50 years to their rightful owners. Austria, too, has acted positively with the Mauerbach auction after a long delay.

Perhaps we should look at facts as they are!

London NW2

A Dutch

ENDLESS DELAY

Sir - I want to draw attention to the seemingly endless process of restitution and subsequent sale of a property in what was East Berlin. My case has now lasted more than three and a half years. For every step forward there seem to be at least one, and occasionally two steps back!

It is being handled by a German law firm with offices in Leipzig. It occurs to me that there may be other AJR members with seemingly endless cases and we could perhaps compare notes. It could even be that the same lawyers are involved! If nothing else we could cry on one another's shoulders.

Esher, Surrey Mrs Bronia Snow

BLACK HOLE IN EUROPE'S HEART

Sir - I have yet to find any issue of *AJR Information* that had anything positive to say about Austria, and was therefore not surprised to read your March editorial.

The arrogant and hypocritical attitude of the 14 EU Member States can only help Haider's Freedom Party.

To compare the current situation to the events of 11 March 1938, which I witnessed, is simply absurd!

Stanmore, Middx FW Gillard

(IM)PROPER NOUNS

Sir - allow me to add two more examples of pejorative adjectives to your piece:

Both "*Kauderwelsch*" and "Double Dutch" refer to a language which is unintelligible and impossible to understand.

Sutton Inge Trott

NEWTWIST

Sir - When I read my husband the letter about *Oliver Twist's* Fagin being an anagram of Ganif (January issue), he was very taken with the idea. Straight away he asked me: "Then what would Shylock be?" "Shlocky, of course," was my equally instant reply.

London SW15 Ann Antrich

THE ART OR THE LIFE

Sir - I must defend Virginia Woolf against the charge of being boring. *Mrs Dalloway* which I have read repeatedly is anything but boring. In fact it is a perfect masterpiece, bringing together within the compass of a single day post-WWI

life in London with all its variety of class, circumstances, nationalities, and the devastating after effects of the war.

Northwood M Herz

HOLOCAUST ART?

Sir - The front page of the February issue had this so called 'work of art' but there was a need for explanation, how does it represent the Holocaust?

It makes me uncomfortable, when so-called artists make some objects that any schoolchildren under ten could do better?

London NW3 Clare Parker

MINI-CRITICISM

Sir - I greatly enjoy reading *AJR Information*, but found two flaws in the February issue. (a) The prognosis for Croatia expressed in the editorial has been contradicted by the recent elections. (b) Your item New Jewish Museum (p4) states 'there is ample Jewish memorabilia' - which surely ought to read *are*.

Bristol Dr F Morgan

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?

Sir - When Fahrenheit calibrated his thermometer, he meant to have 100° to read the human blood temperature.

Unfortunately, he could not exactly ascertain the human blood temperature. He constructed his thermometer scale and ended up with it to read 96° only.

Harrow Rudolf Jaray

HAKOAH REUNION

Sir - Late in 1999 I went to Vienna (at the invitation of the Jewish Welcome Committee and the Austrian government) to celebrate the 90th birthday of Hakoah Sports Club. Other participants came from Israel and USA, but I was only one of two UK representatives.

I had been a Hakoah swimmer in 1930s Vienna, when we won every championship going. Most participants at last year's reunion had attended the 1935 Maccabiah in Tel Aviv and we seemed to pick up where we had left off. The friendship and warmth were unbelievable.

Putney Anne Pisker

BOUQUET

Sir - I have just received my first copies of *AJR Information*. To my delight I found them both very interesting. There

are some wonderful snippets such as the Jewish traders around the Vatican as well as more serious topics.

Maidstone Inge Hack (ex ROK)

THANKS

Sir - I would like to express my thanks particularly to Andrea Goodmaker and Norah Gittins for the assistance given to me in trying to trace my Czech grandfather who lived in Prague at the beginning of the war. What I found out did not make pleasant reading, but at least I know now for certain what happened to him, which gives me satisfaction of mind.

Cheltenham, Glos Mrs Susanne I Bollen

Sir - Thank you very much for the help your readers gave in contacting me with information about Margot Pottlitzer.

London NW3 Pamela Barwood



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AJR Reports

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Leeds

At the AGM of the Leeds Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association Trude Silman was elected Chair, Rudi Leavor Vice-chair, Heinz Skyte Treasurer and John Chillag Secretary. It was agreed to investigate the feasibility of a project to gather and publish members' testimonies. Later, Max Kinsley told the story of his leaving Berlin in 1939 and coming to Britain.

Trude thanked outgoing Chair Heinz Skyte for his dedication and hard work in the association's first five years. Heinz was the founder-chairman of HSFA, having retired as Secretary of the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board for whom he worked for 34 years. Although he will now have more time for playing bridge and listening to music, Heinz is remaining on the committee to which he will continue to lend his experience and knowledge.

□ Trude Silman

The next meeting of Leeds HSFA will be on Sunday 7 May when Rabbi Ian Morris will speak on 'The Wisdom of War Crimes Trials'.

Pinner

In his talk entitled 'Art through the Ages', Gerald Hellman said that to appreciate great paintings, we had to look, study and observe. Through his long association with fine art printing he had developed a sensitive analytical eye. Passing round the audience carefully annotated prints of masterpieces, he picked out exciting details easily missed by the casual visitor to museums and galleries. In a historical overview from the fifteenth to the twentieth century, Mr Hellman showed how styles and subjects had changed as religious and wealthy patronage gave way to greater freedom of expression. His talk was illustrated with the work of Michelangelo, Titian, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Renoir, Picasso and Dali.

□ Walter Weg

The next meeting of Pinner AJR is on Thursday 6 April at 2 p.m. at Pinner Synagogue: 'Desert Island Discs' hosted by Harry Hurst. On Thursday 4 May, Ann Ebner will talk on 'Historical Jewish London'.

Brighton and Hove

Aubrey Millstein, Chairman of the representative Council of Christians and Jews in Brighton and Hove and Chairman of the Three-Faiths-Forum (shortly to take place at Rally Hall), gave a highly individual interpretation of the story of Western religions during the last 5000 years. He explained how the subject had led him to the search for inter-faith contacts. He made reference to the way in which the new Race Relations Act has put a new emphasis on dialogue between the various religions. □ Rudi Simmonds

The next meeting of Sarid will be on Monday 17 April: Michael Robinson, Food writer, will speak on Ashkenazi and Sephardi cooking.

South London

Alively and informative discussion followed Rabbi Neil Kraft's talk on Jewish mythology. Members were able to share memories and tales of superstitious customs in their own families which proved to be a fund of entertainment as well as learning. Members were greatly relieved to know that, as the Golem had no soul, it could not be snatched by the devil when he sneezed, hence there was no need to say 'bless you' to him! □ KA

Surrey

The last meeting was a social occasion at which members were able to catch up with each others' news. Ernest Simon reminded members that he would be stepping down as chairman, having filled the post for two years. The suggestion by Vernon Saunders, that the meeting's host could act as chairman was agreed.

Since many members are keen gardeners, it was suggested that an excursion to the Royal Horticultural Society gardens at Wisley be organised. □ Ernest Simon

The next meeting of AJR's Surrey Group will take place on Tuesday 6 June at the home of Ernest and Louise Simon.

Manchester

A visit to Beth Shalom, organised by Harry Blake, will take place on Sunday 16 April. Enquiries to Werner Lachs (Tel. 0161 773 4091) □

Antiques expert for Luncheon Club

Laszlo Ekstein-Easton grew up in a family immersed in the business of antiques in Hamburg where his father owned an auction house and antiques shop. The family left for London in 1937 and after the war opened an antiques shop in London's Jermyn Street which Laszlo joined as co-director, continuing in the business after the death of his parents until 1995. He now acts as a consultant and buyer for a distinguished clientele both in the UK and abroad.

On Wednesday 17th May, as the welcome guest speaker of the AJR Luncheon Club, he will illustrate a selection of the articles he has collected and dealt in over the years with slides, and is happy to give an opinion on individual pieces. When anyone sets about collecting antiques his advice is to concentrate on items that reflect a hobby. His, for example, is music so that he has collected miniatures of composers and at one time owned a Stradivarius violin on which he learned to play! □

For Luncheon Club reservations please call Sylvia, Renée or Susie on 0207 328 0208.

Always a pleasure

Dear Sylvia,

For quite some time, my husband and I have been going to the AJR Day Centre, mainly to play bridge, and we have really enjoyed the pleasant atmosphere and facilities at the Kard & Games Club on Mondays. On arrival in the morning we are greeted with coffee, tea and biscuits, and at lunchtime there is a delicious three-course kosher meal at a very reasonable charge.

In addition to bridge, you can play chess and kalooki for beginners. There is an instructress who will teach you bridge or help to improve your game. The rooms are peaceful and everyone is treated with great courtesy and friendliness.

As Mondays have proved so enjoyable for us both, we now attend the Centre twice a week. It is an excellent way of spending a day in congenial company and we can highly recommend it.

London

□ Hetty Jacobi

ANNUAL AJR VISIT TO
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Sunday 18 June 2000

£18 per person including coach fare & vegetarian buffet lunch (£8 for those using own transport)
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Thursday 30 March
Tuesday 4 April
Wednesday 12 April
Thursday 4 May

and every Thursday from
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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.

... **Viewpoint** ...

Unsafe at any speed

As the pace of modern life continually quickens, despite the invasion of electronic communications into our workplaces and living spaces, increasing demand for intra and inter city travel continues unabated. The traditional people carriers, the railways, are seeing a surprising return of passengers who still regard rail travel as reliable and safe, while low-price airlines are generating more short-haul traffic. Yet the already pressurised road system has imposed onto it a burgeoning number of motorcars and commercial vehicles to ply on congested city streets and highways and a motorway network which dates back to the 1960s.

While giving due recognition to the many freedoms possession of a car bestows, would we continue to contemplate with equanimity the death of more than 300 people each month of the year were they to be the victims of an aeroplane or a train crash? Must we accept the slaughter on Britain's roads and do nothing radical to reduce it?

In 1950s America, faced with motor manufacturers' reassurances and blandishments, Ralph Nader identified the

sheer raw danger to which every car-traveller was exposed. Arguing that cars were inherently life-threatening, his revolutionary book *Unsafe at Any Speed* changed public perceptions and forced safety considerations into the design and construction of cars worldwide. His message is still being learned and applied.

What we have to accept, no matter how reluctantly, is that the human frame was designed to perambulate at around two to three miles per hour, not to control complex manoeuvres from an unstable vehicle travelling at anything up to 80 or 100mph! If we are serious about wishing to reduce the mayhem, as well as continuing to improve the passive safety devices built into our cars, the speeds at which vehicles travel have to be reduced – preferably by foolproof electronic devices – and these limits rigorously enforced.

To alleviate the loss of life and human anguish caused by road crashes is to demand recognition for basic civilised values and concern for fellow human-kind.

□ **Ronald Channing**

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APRIL/MAY 2000

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Wed 5 Paul & Sinikka Coleman
Thurs 6 MEMORIES LANE SINGING GROUP
Sun 9 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 10 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 11 THE GEOFFREY WHITWORTH DUO
Wed 12 THE VALERIE HEWITT SHOW
Thurs 13 THE JULIAN BARBER DUO
Sun 16 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 17 KARD & GAMES KLUB

Tue 18 PESACH WITH EDDY SIMMONS
Wed 19 CLOSED – PESACH
Thurs 20 CLOSED – PESACH
Sun 23 CLOSED – EASTER SUNDAY
Mon 24 CLOSED – EASTER MONDAY
Tue 25 Bridgette Hurst – Myrtle Bruce-Mitford & Timothy Barratt, piano
Wed 26 CLOSED – PESACH
Thurs 27 CLOSED – PESACH
Sun 30 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 1 CLOSED – BANK HOLIDAY
Tue 2 Susan Travers & June Lewis accompanied by Michael Heaton, piano
Wed 3 Nicola Smedley accompanied by Jan Cunningham, piano
Thurs 4 Jack & Rita Davis

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Births

Treitel/Robinson. Kurt and Renate Treitel welcome the birth of their beautiful granddaughter, Olivia Leah, on 29 January – a daughter for Caroline and Jonathan.

Deaths

Freud. Annette Freud. *AJR Information* expresses condolences to Walter Freud on his bereavement.

Katzenstein. Erika Katzenstein died peacefully on 1 February, aged 91. Much loved and mourned by Catherine, Bryan, David, Debbie and Anthony Reuben. *Mit ihr konnte man Pferde stehlen!*

Masserick. Therese Marie (Resi) Masserick, née Freund, born 18 March 1921 in Vienna, arrived in England in 1939, died in Liverpool 7 February 2000.

Meier. Arnold Meier passed away peacefully on 19 February, aged 95. A very special person who was an inspiration to us all. His warmth and vitality will be remembered with love and affection by his loving wife Trude, sons David and Jonathan, sister Miriam and their families.

CLASSIFIED

For Sale: Signed lithograph of dancer (framed) by Jehuda Bacon, Gobelin tablecloth edged with hand crocheted lace. Price to be agreed on viewing.

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Day Centre

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Societies

Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners and Ex-Breslauers. Please contact Peter Sinclair 020 8882 1638 for information.

Lily Freeman invites all her friends to the opening of her exhibition **'HAPPY PAINTINGS'** at Hampstead Museum Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 on **Thursday 4 May 6.30-8.30pm** Exhibition continuing **5-21 May Wed-Sun inclusive 12-5pm**

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AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Leeds HSEA:	Trude Silman 0113 225 1628
West Midlands: (Birmingham)	Edgar Glaser 0121 777 6537
North: (Manchester)	Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091
East Midlands (Nottingham)	Bob Norton 01159 212 494
Pinner: (HA Postal District)	Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833
S. London:	Ken Ambrose 020 8852 0262
Surrey:	Ernest Simon 01737 643 900
Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)	Fausta Shelton 01273 688 226
Wessex: (Bournemouth)	Ralph Dale 01202 762 270

FORTHCOMING EVENTS APRIL 2000

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon 3 | Erwin von Bendemann , journalist. 'Der Umzug von Bonn nach Berlin' (in German). Club 43, 8pm |
| Sat 8 | Theresa: Julia Pascal's play about the secret history of Viennese Jew Theresa Steiner betrayed by the Guernsey authorities to the Nazis. Embassy Theatre CSSD, Eton Avenue, Swiss Cottage London NW3, 8pm. Bookings only from 020 7383 0920. Tickets £12. (Also at the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre, Sinclair House, Woodford Bridge Road, Ilford, Tel 020 8551 0017, on Wednesday 5th at 7.45pm & The Bull Theatre, 68 High Street, Barnet, Tel 020 8449 0048, on Thursday 6th at 8pm) |
| Mon 10 | Effects of Ageing on Holocaust Survivors: Irene Bloomfield, psychotherapist. Club 43, 8pm |
| Thur 13 | Debate surrounding the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin: Prof Curt Germundson, Wiener Library, 6.30pm, £2 |
| Mon 17 | Stefan Zweig: Dr Richard Dove, University of Greenwich. Club 43, 8pm |
| May: | |
| Tue 2 | Yom Hashoah Commemoration, Manchester: New Century Hall, Corporation Street, Manchester 2. 8 – 9.15pm. Further information from the Jewish Cultural Centre, Bury Old Road, Manchester M8 6FY. Tel/Fax 0161 720 8721 |
| Sun 7 | Yom Hashoah Commemoration, London: Logan Hall, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, WC1H 0AL. 10.30am. Tickets (unreserved seats) available from 15 April from National Yad Vashem Committee, Commonwealth House, 1-19 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1NF. Tel 020 7543 5400 |

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club '43, Belsize Square Synagogue. Hans Seelig. Tel: 01442 254360
Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street. London W1. Tel. 020 7636 7247
The Jewish Museum, 80 East End Road, Finchley N3 2SY. Tel: 020 8349 1143

Art Notes

"Tell me, Rabbi, would you ever eat pork?" "Yes, I would, at the Pope's wedding."

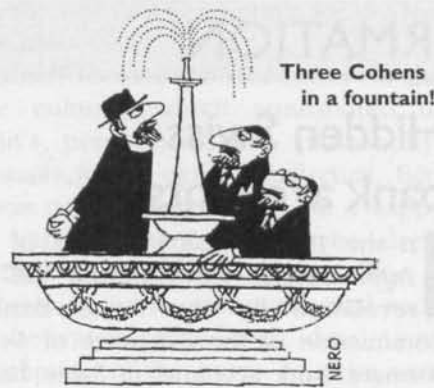
Harry Blacker's pseudonym, **Nero**, derives not just from his name but from the dark, self-mockery of his caricatures. Cartoonists hold up a mirror to society, often at some personal risk. The cutting edge of his humour, the whimsy of **Mel Calman**, the draughtsmanship of **Ralph Sallon** and the bleak brilliance of **Vicky** are all featured in a **Ben Uri** retrospective exhibition, **Jewish Cartoonists and Political Caricaturists**, opened by the ex-politician most likely to have egg on her face, **Edwina Currie**. The former Minister and MP for Derbyshire South, whose revelations about salmonella in eggs once shattered her party and the nation, told guests at a private view where she launched her latest novel, that cartooning and novel-writing were the only ways to tell the truth in politics and get away with it.

Not every cartoonist *does* get away with it. Britain may be a safe place, but the other day in Iran a newspaper cartoonist was imprisoned for subversive activities. There are still many countries where the price of a cartoon is personal freedom. During World War II, Sallon's powerful draughtsmanship earned him a place on Hitler's hit list. His caricatures graphically describe a history of the first part of the 20th century, spanning politicians on both sides of both wars. Both Sallon and Vicky appeared in the *Daily Mirror* in its embattled, socialist days, Calman's bewildered sausage people illuminated the front page of *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* until his death in 1994.

Peanuts cartoonist, **Charles Schultz**, once described his whole life as being "one of rejection. Women. Dogs. Comic strips." Perhaps in this note of self-depreciation, we can read much of the comic artist's *raison d'être*.

The job of the cartoonist, Roger Low said at the opening of the **British Cartoon Trust's 100 Best Cartoons Exhibition**, is to be subversive, or even to act as the court jester in conflict with the newspaper proprietor.

Cartoons, in fact, should be taken seriously. Sallon's were virtual portrait studies. Phineas May's were an overview



of synagogue history – he was curator of the Jewish Museum and well placed to know. Blacker's characters are static; nothing moves in his vision except verbal interchange. And his caricatures are literally our Jewish selves *in extremis* – perceived at a time when Jews were less integrated into society. And yet, in another sense, they are all timeless, irreverent, celebrating the fact that to be Jewish is to be this very specific, mannered, neurotic, hilarious person.

Vicky, on the other hand, was the Job of his day, who would not let politicians' misdemeanours or bad judgement escape his retributory pencil. There was Douglas-Home, too gentle an aristo for high office, Marples and his railways, Khrushchev and his bad temper. Vicky's lampoonery savaged them and he pointed the way forward as few columnists could have done.

Which is the point of the cartoonist's craft, after all. All the words of the day fall away in the face of the eternal validity of these sketches, drawn swiftly in the small hours as deadlines dawned. Didn't someone once say a picture is worth a thousand words?

From the victorious Peruvian Christ of the Conquistadores to **Stanley Spencer's Resurrection**, in Cookham, the **National Gallery's** celebration of 2000 years of Christianity, **Seeing Salvation**, runs with a BBC2 four-part series, beginning Sunday, 2 April. The exhibition and programmes convey the various aspects in which the Christian saviour has been perceived. But how did Jesus' Jewish roots influence the image handed down to his followers? To find out, see next month's **Art Notes**. □ *Gloria Tessler*

SB's Column

Conductors. The three top conductors on the international postwar scene were Leonard Bernstein, Sir Georg Solti and Herbert von Karajan. Their present day successors are Daniel

Barenboim, Ricardo Muti and Zubin Mehta. This list is complemented by Claudio Abbado and Pierre Boulez (75) who is about to undertake a world tour with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Gelebte Musik is a book of musical memories by nonagenarian Hans Mayer (Suhrkamp Verlag). Mayer who as a young man heard Kleiber, Klemperer and violinist Bronislaw Hubermann, emigrated to Paris in 1934 and attended *Tristan* and *Meistersinger* performances with a cast of 'Non Aryan' singers conducted by Furtwängler.

Tit-Bits. An evening of readings from Austrian exile authors at Vienna's Akademietheater was devoted to works by Polgar, Molnar, Torberg and Hans Weigel. Owing to the impact of financial considerations on artistic standards at Berlin's Komische Oper, Generalmusikdirektor Yakov Kreizberg has handed in his resignation. Peter Turrini, the Austrian author who was to receive the Carinthian County Award for his dramatic output declined to accept it from the provincial governor, Jörg Haider.

Obituaries. Cabaretist Martin Flossman, a well known Austrian TV personality, has died at sixty-two. Flossman was successor to the legendary Karl Farkas at the 'Simpl' in Vienna, where he acted and directed for 20 years. The Austrian pianist Friedrich Gulda, equally accomplished in classical and jazz music, has died, aged 69 □

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CLAIMS INFORMATION

Compensation for Czech soldiers

The Czech Parliament has approved a law which entitles every Czech national who served abroad in the Czechoslovak Forces during the Second World War to monetary compensation. Surviving spouses also qualify.

Soldiers who served for not less than one year are entitled to a payment of Kč 120,000 each (approx. £2,000 at current exchange rates). Those who served for between three months and one year are entitled to a payment of Kč 60,000. A soldier's widow or widower will receive one half of these sums, but in the case of someone killed in action, the surviving spouse will receive Kč 120,000.

Please note that an essential condition for initiating a claim is the possession of Czech nationality. Claims, accompanied by the necessary proof, have to be submitted no later than 30 June 2001, to the competent social security office, namely: Úřad sociálního zabezpečení, Křižová 25, 52808 Praha, Czech Republic □

Holocaust insurance claims

If you are a Holocaust survivor, or the heir of a Holocaust victim, you may have a legitimate, unpaid Holocaust-era life, education or dowry insurance claim and the opportunity exists for you to receive payment. You can now file claims through a new claims resolution process set up by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims.

The Commission consists of representatives of United States insurance regulators, five European insurance companies and their subsidiaries, the State of Israel, worldwide Jewish and Holocaust survivor organisations and European regulators as observers.

The claims resolution process provides individuals with a central source for information on, investigation into and payment of those outstanding policies, without any charge to claimants.

For more information telephone free-phone number: 0800 169 8318 or write to: International Commission, PO Box 1163, Wall Street Station, New York, NY 10268, USA □

Hidden Swiss bank accounts

In the January 2000 edition of *AJR Information*, we reported on the revelation by the Swiss Banking Commission of the existence of 54,000 dormant bank accounts in Swiss banks. At the time of writing, it was understood that the names of 25,000 account holders were to be published on the Internet to enable holders and their heirs to make claims.

Enquiries of the Swiss Embassy have elicited that such a list will not be published until the Independent Committee of Eminent Persons authorises such publication. Progress can be followed by referring to two web sites: www.icep.iaep.org and www.swissbank-claims.com □

Austrian pensions – new payment options

Pensioners living outside Austria who receive a pension from the *Pensionsversicherungsanstalt der Arbeiter* can now have this pension transferred directly to their local bank account. Previously, social security payments could only be made to a current account with an Austrian bank.

To qualify for payment outside Austria: (a) The pensioner's bank account must be in the pensioner's country of residence; (b) the pensioner's bank must be a correspondent bank of BAWAG Bank (check whether your own bank qualifies); (c) the pensioner must be the sole account holder; (d) the pension must be transferred in local currency.

(The above changes do not yet apply to pensions received from the *Pensionsversicherungsanstalt der Angestellten*, although the direct transfer scheme has been announced for April 2000. At present, only transfer to accounts in Israel has been confirmed under this scheme).

To receive payment outside Austria, applications forms can be obtained from: Pensionsversicherungsanstalt der Arbeiter, Rossauer Lände 3, 1092 Vienna. tel.: 0043 1 313 20-0 □

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Isaiah Berlin: three-culture polymath

Dr Michael Ignatieff, biographer of the Oxford academic and philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin, delivered a lecture on his late mentor before a most distinguished audience, which included Lady Berlin and many of Berlin's confidants and contemporaries. Lord Rothschild, President of the Institute of Jewish Policy Research, and Prof Avishay Braverman, President of Ben Gurion University, represented the two organisations which arranged the lecture. Hosted by Prof Aaron Klug, President of the Royal Society, in the Society's majestic premises, the chair was taken by fellow Nobel Prizewinner, Dr Max Perutz.

Berlin's family came to this country from Riga, in Latvia, the western extremity of the Russian Empire. His father was a timber merchant whose trade with the Baltic Exchange in London made the family's migration to England less economically hazardous. As a 'Baltic Jew' Riga's German-speaking culture placed Sir Isaiah somewhere between Eastern Europe and Germany. In England, at the age of 29 he was made a Fellow of All Souls and rapidly rose to prominence in Oxford, happy to remain within its envi-

rons, the war years excepting, for the rest of his life.

Ignatieff focused his discussion on the three cultures which contributed to Berlin's perspective and philosophy. Unusually for an exiled intellectual, Berlin was not a tortured soul, but a happy and happily married man who drew together his cultural origins into a synthesis. In the Russian intellectual tradition, he was fascinated with ideas. As an Englishman (of the home counties variety) he imbibed the values of respect for others and toleration of dissent. He also gained what Ignatieff termed "a sense of reality", recognising that which was possible and practicable.

His Jewishness represented the "heart and soul of the man," said Ignatieff. Berlin understood the Jewish people's deep attachment to a national homeland and was a convinced Zionist. When visiting Palestine in 1934 Berlin felt himself to be at home in a milieu of shared Jewish cultural traditions and values.

These three cultural identities were blended together to make the whole; since nothing in his persona was repressed, "all the parts of him spoke". Nevertheless, Berlin saw himself primarily as a Russian Jew, not an English Jew, which was reflected in a degree of ambivalence in his relationship with

Anglo-Jewry. Above all, he did not deny his Jewishness. It was not easy to be a Jew in 1947 and 1948, when Jews in Palestine were struggling to secure statehood in the face of mandate policies formulated by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. Berlin quite happily chose not to settle in Israel, despite his friendships with Chaim Weizmann and other founding fathers of the Jewish State, preferring to remain a Russo-Englishman.

Challenged at question time on Berlin's likely knowledge of the Holocaust while serving at the British Embassy in Washington from 1941 to 1946, a confidant of Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Goldmann, and with probable access to military intelligence, Ignatieff quoted Berlin as remarking that he was "not fully aware of the Holocaust until January 1945." Though his judgement may have been tempered by the dangers faced by his own family in Riga, all of whom perished, and by his closeness to Weizmann, who saw persecution of the Jews as a (large-scale) pogrom, Ignatieff conceded that this was probably "not the whole truth." However, his view of Berlin as a passionate believer in the State of Israel who had a poor regard for the Foreign Office, brought partial redemption.

□ Ronald Channing

New Management Committee members

David Jedwab, 74, and Anthony Spiro, 52, have been co-opted onto the Management Committee of the AJR and are to stand for election at the Annual General Meeting.

David Jedwab

Berlin-born, David came to London on the Kindertransport aged 13 and began agricultural training with a view to settling in Palestine, but served in the mines as a Bevin boy. After helping the rehabilitation of Holocaust survivors, he later ran his own export company prior to retirement. Last year he organised the concert at the reunion of Kindertransport in London and has led former members of RoK into membership of the AJR.

Anthony Spiro

A 52-year-old chartered engineer, most of whose career has been in finance and communications, Anthony is the Director

of Corporate Affairs for Tomkins Plc. From 1992 to 1997 he was Hon Treasurer of the Management Committee and Council of the Otto Schiff Housing Association working to maintain OSHA's refugee priorities. As a member of the AJR he is looking forward to ensuring that it continues to offer members the high standards of care, support and guidance they deserve.

Dr Elisabeth Maxwell guest speaker at Annual General Meeting

Dr Elisabeth Maxwell, organiser of the 'Remembering For the Future Conference' at the Imperial War Museum and in Oxford in July has accepted an invitation to speak at the AJR's Annual General Meeting taking place on 25 June. For many years Dr Maxwell has been engaged in Holocaust teaching and has extensive contacts with Holocaust scholars.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the
**ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH
REFUGEES**

will be held on

SUNDAY 25 June 2000

3 pm at 15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Agenda:-

Annual Report 1999

Hon. Treasurer's Report

Discussion

Election of Committee of Management*

Guest speaker:

Dr Elisabeth Maxwell

* No person other than a committee member retiring by rotation shall be elected or re-elected a committee member at any general meeting unless:-

- he or she is recommended by the Committee of Management, or
- not less than twenty one clear days before the date appointed for the meeting, notice executed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting has been given to the Association of the intention to propose that person for election or re-election together with notice executed by that person of his or her willingness to be elected or re-elected.

AJR Information research project

Since 1997, I have been working one day a week at the editorial office of the *AJR Information*, carrying out research on the early issues of the journal. I believe that I am the first scholar to have worked systematically on the journal, and am still the only one to be doing so. I see my research as the essential pioneering work that will eventually make the journal the object of proper academic study, thus deepening our understanding of the journal, of the Association of Jewish Refugees, and of the community of exiles from Hitler that it represents, and at the same time heightening their respective profiles in the public eye. As the journal has never been indexed, I am first drawing up a comprehensive list of its contents, issue by issue.

My aim is to write a book on the *AJR Information* 1941-1970, covering the war-time years and the first quarter century of the settlement of the refugees from Central Europe in this country. Proceeding chronologically, the book will trace the development of the refugee community,

as reflected in the pages of its own journal, surely one of the best sources for a social history of a remarkably interesting group of people. The main themes are those that dominate the articles in the journal and that were of central concern to the readership. Thus, in the years immediately after 1945 the key issues include naturalisation and the acquisition of British citizenship, attitudes to Germany and Austria in the wake of the Nazi regime, the issue of Palestine/Israel, Jewish concerns and relations with Anglo-Jewry. In the early 1950s, the question of restitution comes to the fore.

Throughout, I am concerned to analyse the sense of communal identity of the former refugees, their self-image, their understanding of their position in British society and their relationship with those around them in their adopted homeland. Perennial issues like the debate about language, German versus English, or the repeated discussions about changing the name of the journal (and the Association) contribute greatly to our understanding of how the refugees saw themselves in relation to their new surroundings. Particularly valuable as a source of information about the economic situation of the community are the many advertise-

ments in the journal, while the personal advertisements – births, deaths, lonely hearts ads etc – are a mine of information about the social history of the community over the years.

From the initial decision to settle in Britain after 1945, the themes of assimilation and integration are at the heart of my analysis, as is the exceptional contribution that the refugees made to Britain in many areas of culture, society and the economy. Also of great importance is the distinctive high culture which the refugees brought with them from Central Europe and which is so evident in the pages of the *AJR Information*. It is probably this that is the key constituent of the identity common to the first generation of the German-speaking refugees from Hitler who made their home in Britain after 1945.

□ Dr Anthony Grenville

An article by Dr Grenville, entitled 'German-speaking Exiles in Great Britain', analysing the first five postwar years of the *AJR Information* (1946-1950), appeared in *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Vol. 1* (1999). Shorter articles appeared in *AJR Information* during 1999.

KINDERTRANSPORT NEWS

Following the despatch of our new KT Newsletter, we are planning our future activities.

We hope to use the AJR Day Centre in Cleve Road, West Hampstead for our meetings. This will enable us to organise regular events, the first of which, likely to be after Pesach, will be an inaugural lunch to be followed by a talk given by a popular speaker. Details will be announced in *AJR Information*.

There were some voices – albeit not many – who thought we should have retained our independence. Independence from what? We are now part of an established infrastructure with substantial resources and with people dedicated to assisting us with the preservation of our history and tradition. There must be hundreds of stories out there waiting to be told and hundreds of bewildered Kinder who still do not know the story of their parents' odyssey and who consequently simply do not know their own origins.

We urge all Kinder and their children and grandchildren to purchase a copy of our RoK99 Reunion Book and RoK99 Video commemorating the June 1999 Reunion which will move you to the core. We have received nothing but praise and appreciation.

May we encourage any reluctant ex-RoK members to join us and send your subscriptions to the AJR so that we can stay in touch and provide continuity in the long history of the Kindertransport. □ David Jedwab

Two years of progress

The retiring President of B'nai B'rith's Leo Baeck (London) Lodge, Stuart Willner, reports two years of solid achievement in providing assistance and support to fellow Jews in the Ukraine and Israel, as well as to the old and needy in the United Kingdom. Two mobile vehicles have been provided which operate out of Lvov and Cherkassy, support has been given to a mother and baby clinic in Kiev, and plans are advanced to build a community centre in SW Ukraine later this year.

The potential for B'nai B'rith to exercise greater influence in European affairs has been enhanced by the merger of the governing body in the UK with that representing continental Europe, signed last year at an international convention in the Hague attended by representatives from 56 member countries.

As AJR members often share common origins and interests, Stuart Willner believes that many more would find B'nai B'rith membership particularly rewarding. The Leo Baeck Lodge meets weekly at its own premises in Swiss Cottage, presenting a social and cultural programme with guest speakers. Incoming President, Sidney Shipton, invites readers of *AJR Information* to attend open meetings of the Lodge by contacting membership secretary Norbert Cohn on 0208 346 7068. □ RDC

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AJR
will be held on
SUNDAY 25 JUNE 2000 – 3.00pm at 15 Cleve Road, NW6

Haider's timebomb keeps ticking

Herr Schimanek of the Lower Austrian FPÖ is no stylist. When he gushes 'Haider is 50% of the Freedom Party' he means Haider constitutes half its strength – the other half being its one million plus voters. How reminiscent such sentiments are of Goebbels' wartime slogan 'Hitler ist Deutschland!'

Opponents of the EU's boycott of Austria query the rightness of penalising the seventy-three per cent of the electorate who didn't vote for Haider. This is a fallacious argument.

The 'blameless' seventy-three contain a further twenty-seven per cent who, by voting for Schüssel's right-leaning People's Party, failed to keep the FPÖ out of power.

Schüssel's acolytes belong to the same grouping in the European Parliament as the British Conservatives. It is eerie to hear Tory spokesmen sing almost from the same hymn sheet not merely as the People's Party, but as Haider's acolytes. One of the latter, interviewed on TV, brushed aside Haider's Nazi apologetics by charging that the Socialist governments persecuting the FPÖ through the European Union accepted Communist coalition partners. (His special *clou* was branding the current German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, a veteran of the sixties student movement, as a 'street-fighter'). Similarly, Tory spokesmen from Lord Tebbit to Nicholas Winteron have argued that since Socialist governments in Italy and France with Communist participants had escaped EU boycotts, Brussels lacked the mandate for action against Vienna. Lord Tebbit went one further and insinuated that Left extremists were in fact worse than Right ones be-

cause Stalin had killed more people than Hitler.

This is not only crude, but totally beside the point. For one, Soviet Communism never fomented racism – mankind's greatest scourge – and for another, every country has its own individual historical context. The device of using the sins of French or Italian Communists to exculpate an Austrian SS apologist is deeply flawed.

What, after all, is the *epuration* of 1944/5 (the purge of French collaborators undertaken by kangaroo courts) or the execution of Mussolini without due process of law, compared to Lidice and Oradour – not to mention Mauthausen?

And, since the aforementioned commentators see the Far Right and Left as mirror images of each other they ought not to object to a depiction of recent Austrian coalition building as 'Schüssel playing Kerenski to Haider's Lenin'.

□ RG

Tracing looted art

Although the debate about looted art in Britain has been simmering for some time, only recently has it become headline news. Continental Europe had been the focus for owners – or more usually their heirs – seeking to recover valuable works of art looted by the Nazis and often innocently acquired by art galleries.

The Government has set up a panel, – reporting to the Culture Secretary Chris Smith and chaired by a retired senior judge – to deal with claims on works of art in British museums and galleries, though the concern that its terms of reference appear to preclude full restitution has still to be met. The panel can recommend only financial compensation (which will not reflect the actual value of the work), an *ex gratia* payment, or the display next to the work of an acknowledgement of its provenance during and since the Nazi era. Ann Webber, co-chairperson of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe, believes that this would contradict the principles of international justice which provide that the remedy for theft is restitution.

In response to further criticism relating to the alleged lack of consultation with interested parties, the Department of Culture has indicated that concerns voiced by interested organisations will be "taken

on board" during a consultation process.

Two years' research in national collections has disclosed 350 paintings in ten British galleries that may have been looted during the Nazi era and a list has been published on the Internet. Well-known national institutions such as the Tate Gallery and the British Museum rub shoulders with Liverpool's Walker Gallery and collections in Scotland and Wales. Inclusion in the list, however, does not indicate that the item concerned is a certain target for claims; simply that there is a question mark over its provenance. Ann Webber says that "millions of works of art went missing in the Nazi period" and that "there could be eight thousand works (of uncertain provenance) in Britain."

Due to a lack of documentation the galleries concerned may be unable to prove that the works were not looted. Even if it can be established that a painting is in the looted category, English law requires state museums and galleries to keep their collections intact and the law would have to be changed if the works were to be returned. There is also the question of definition of 'rightful ownership' which, in some countries, is conferred by *bona fide* purchase at auction.

One less publicised aspect is the financial position of individual owners (as opposed to institutions) who may be re-

quired to return valuable paintings purchased in all innocence. Could they be compensated, if at all? They may well find themselves in possession of works of art with no resale value as a result of their dubious provenance.

Potential claimants and others can turn to the Internet as a valuable source of information. A good starting point is the website of the World Jewish Congress' Commission for Art Recovery: www.wjc-artrecovery.org

□ Marion Koebner

50 YEARS AGO

DEATH OF HEINRICH MANN

With the death in Hollywood of Heinrich Mann, in his 78th year, one of the last great literary figures of pre-Hitler Germany has gone. Heinrich Mann was not only a prolific novelist who has 18 novels to his credit, but was in contrast to his brother, Thomas Mann, a socialist and a political activist, a factor which, for many years, was responsible for the strained relations between the two brothers.

Heinrich Mann started in the romantic vein with "Drei Göttinnen", but already in his "Untertan", he struck a critical social note. German writers acknowledged his leadership by electing him as the first President of the "Akademie Deutscher Dichtkunst" in the Weimar Republic, a post which he was about to resume now under the auspices of the East German Government.

□ AJR Information, April 1950

NEWSROUND

Recovered Art

A triptych by Count Leopold von Kalckreuth, on loan to the Royal Academy from the Munich Neue Pinakothek, is the first looted painting in Britain to be returned to its rightful owners, the surviving children of its pre-war Austrian owner. Traced to Munich in the early 1970s, the authorities refused to return it. Within ten weeks of the intervention of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe in December 1999, the painting was acknowledged to belong to the Glanville family.

Vocal rightwing in Germany

The Brandenburg Gate was the venue for rightwing demonstrators marking the anniversary of the Anschluss with nationalist slogans in solidarity with Jörg Haider.

In North Rhine – Westphalia, the CDU leader coined anti-immigration slogans against bringing in computer specialists from India to combat the shortage at home: *Kinder statt Inder*.

Haider's tainted estate

Jörg Haider is being pressed to return his Carinthian country estate to the Israeli heirs of the original owner. Haider inherited the property in 1986 from his great-uncle who in turn acquired it in 1941 at a time when Nazi laws prohibited Jewish ownership of property.

War crimes

Britain's first convicted war criminal, Anthony Sawoniuk, failed in his appeal against conviction.

Following a visit to Latvia by senior officers from Scotland Yard's War Crimes to investigate possible proceedings against Konrad Kalejs, Latvia has indicated that it is unable to mount a case against him. Kalejs, meanwhile, has returned to Australia to avoid deportation from the UK.

French lesson

Sixty years after the event, from this autumn the Holocaust is to be included in the national curriculum of French secondary schools.

Papal persistence

A Vatican official has said that Pope Pius XII was right not to condemn the Holocaust publicly as it would have increased persecution of the Jews. He added that neither was it incumbent on his successor, Pope John Paul II, to make an apology. □ MK

JEWISH BOOK WEEK**Christian views of the Holocaust**

The opening session of Jewish Book Week launched a collection of 50 essays on *The Holocaust and the Christian World*, a joint publication of Yad Vashem in Israel and Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre in England, edited by Prof Carol Rittner and Irena Steinfeldt of Yad Vashem, and Stephen Smith Director of Beth Shalom. Stephen and Irena were joined on a discussion panel by Sister Margaret Shepherd, Director of the Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ), and the chair was taken by Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander.

Irena Steinfeldt reported that Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, received two million visitors last year, the majority non-Jews, many of whom came from young generations seeking answers to their questions about the Holocaust. Teaching them was forming an increasing part of Yad Vashem's work, as well as opening up a dialogue on the subject between Christians and Jews.

Sister Margaret Shepherd recalled that though the CCJ was established in 1942, study of the Holocaust remained a main focus of attention. Participating as a member of a CCJ group of Jews and Christians visiting Holocaust sites in Poland, the issues and concerns expressed then were still being discussed. She took pride in the Roman Catholic Church having led the way to a Christian-Jewish dialogue and from the present Pope having moved the dialogue forward "more than any other Pope in history."

Stephen Smith thought it inescapable that the murder of Jews "simply because they were Jews" took place in Christendom, and that the Christian world "was a part of the mechanism which led to the destruction of European Jewry." "If you question your faith," said Stephen, "you question yourself." Paradoxically, the Christian world had been happier to leave the difficult questions to the Jews, but over the last two generations Christians had begun to admit that something was wrong. The book "presented a new challenge to the Christian world," said Stephen, which was having to struggle with these issues. "We will never plumb the depths of the tragedy, but we need to try." □ Ronald Channing

Memorials to the inexplicable

Launching his latest book, *At Memory's Edge*, Professor James Young, an authority on memorialisation, chairman of the Berlin Holocaust memorial commission, emphasised that there was an "anti-redemptive" quality to the work of the artists he had studied in his book: a feeling that no memorial could make sense of events which themselves made no sense. He touched on the counter-memorial work of artists, mentioning in particular Horst Hoheisel's proposal that the Brandenburg Gate be destroyed and its pulverised remains distributed in the surrounding area. The debate in itself was more important than any resulting memorial, he said.

Rachel Whiteread, winner of the Turner prize and other prestige awards, spoke about the process which led to the completion of her Holocaust memorial in Vienna. Constructed in concrete to represent the interior of a library – where all the books have their spines to the wall – the memorial has been five years in the building and, although completed, is encased in a wooden crate with no fixed date for its unveiling. The project has been beset with difficulties, not least the discovery that there had once been a synagogue on the area allocated to the memorial, excavation of which had taken priority. She was resigned to the possibility that antisemitic graffiti were likely to appear on the memorial although she also believed that Austria was trying to heal wounds.

Daniel Libeskind, well known as the architect of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, cited Faulkner's words: "History is not over – we are part of it" in describing his approach to the design of the Museum. Taking the six points of the Star of David as his starting point, he designed the Museum to reach out to the various parts of the city inhabited by individual Jews and Jewish communities over the centuries. "It is a building not only pointing to the destruction, but also to the good times for the German Jews." His concept reflected the "tension between the deserted vacancy of history and the idea that humanity must become more tolerant".

In closing the discussion, Professor Young expressed the view that most Holocaust memorials "do not heal, but provoke, memory." □ Marion Koebner