

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The widening Atlantic

In the 1820s Foreign Secretary Canning looked to the New World - America - to counterbalance the Old. From the 1840s on, the United States absorbed Europe's huddled masses yearning to be free, most famously the Irish fleeing the potato famine, and Jews fleeing Russian pogroms. In 1917/18, America became a global player and helped determine the outcome of the Great War. In the interwar years her retreat into isolationism crippled the League of Nations and triggered the Slump. Pearl Harbour brought a vacillating country into the Second World War and, ever since, Washington has played a preponderant - and largely beneficent - role in world affairs. The (flawed) elections of last November brought George Bush to the White House with an agenda that carried troubling echoes of 1930s isolationism. This agenda has since been modified by the pressure of events, for instance in the Middle East, where the new President felt obliged to dispatch the Director of the CIA. In other areas though - most notably the Kyoto Accord and arms control - President Bush has stubbornly ignored the views of his European allies.

If America and Europe are currently drifting apart, the fault is not all on one side, however. Some of the founder members of the EU, most notoriously France, have often subordinated the common Western interest to selfish financial advantage in their dealings with Iran and other oil-rich countries.



The European Union is, overall, a most positive development - *pace* the current Franco-German 'alliance' after three hundred years of blood-bespattered enmity, and the sanctions on Austria in response to the Freedom Party's inclusion in the government - but it does have its flaws. Most notably, Europe takes what it pleases to call a more 'even handed' approach to the Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio than does the US. This is undoubtedly motivated by the above-mentioned financial considerations, as well as the presence of millions of Moslems in countries like France, Belgium and Spain. Then again, though Europe was the actual arena - as well as the seedbed - of the Final Solution, the Washington Holocaust Museum plays a more central role in the national psyche than do corresponding institutions in France or even Germany.

This is not to downplay the progress Europe, especially its formerly Jewish-populated East, has been making in facing the past. In Poland the publication of Jan Gross' book on the

horrific Jedwabne massacre of July 1941 has ignited a countrywide debate about Polish-Jewish relations under the German Occupation; in consequence the myth that Jews earned their neighbours' hatred by collaborating with the Soviets is wearing increasingly thin. In Russia itself the self-appointed 'conscience of the nation', Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who in the past has depicted Jews both as promoters and beneficiaries of the Bolshevik terror, has signalled a significant new departure. He is currently engaged on a historical *magnum opus* which, he says, will when completed, absolve him of the taint of antisemitism.

Thus Europe is shining a fitful light into its gradually receding dark past. Where this dark past is still alive - at least in mens' minds - is the Arab and Muslim world. Syrian, Iraqi and Libyan presidents, Iranian and Saudi clerics, Egyptian journalists, and others, use invective against the Jews for which they ought to pay split royalties to medieval popes and to Julius Streicher. By significant coincidence some of the countries from which this lethal propaganda emanates are the very 'rogue states' against whom President Bush wants to employ his missile shield. It would be a pity - not to say an unintentional crime - if America's go-it-alone policy were to prompt Europe into taking unilateral counter-actions. That would shatter the Western unity that has provided large parts of the world with prosperity for the past half century.

Oldham and Burnley currently attract the media spotlight for two closely related reasons: simmering racial tension which occasionally flares into serious violence, and double-digit voting percentages achieved by the British National Party. The two Lancashire towns are in the general area where Engels collected material for the Marxist classic *The Condition of the English Working Class (1844)* and where, some decades earlier, William Blake had conjured up a nightmare vision of 'dark satanic mills'.

The textile mills of the Pennines, whose postwar demand for labour sucked in immigrants from the Indian sub-continent, are now largely closed, leaving unemployment black spots in their wake. In consequence, places like Burnley and Oldham now accommodate a disgruntled majority of whites alongside sizable minorities of insecure Asians.

The whites readily believe myths that the authorities favour the immigrants over themselves in matters of social provision. This paranoia has reached a point where some are even convinced that the town council allocates more money to rubbish collection and traffic-calming measures in 'black' than in white areas. Such myths are assiduously spread by the professional racist hatemongers the BNP has sent into the area.

To bring this inflamed situation under control, the laws on affray and racial incitement will have to be strictly invoked - and new jobs, especially for the young, created. In addition, immigrant leaders themselves need to be more focused on facilitating integration. Why, for instance, does Burnley have to maintain a costly 'translation unit' almost half a century after the mass influx of Asians? *AJR Information* appeared - in English(!) - within seven years of the mass influx of German-Jewish refugees into the UK. It would contribute to inter-racial harmony if Asian communal leaders applied themselves more purposefully to turning their constituents into English speakers. When in Rome...!

RG

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'From Kind to the House of Lords'

Guest speaker Lord Dubs recalled his experiences as a Kind arriving in England in 1939 from his native Prague. Despite an underprivileged childhood, Alf Dubs regarded himself as being among the more fortunate.

Entering public life, he served as Labour MP for Battersea from 1979 to 1987 with responsibility for Government immigration policy. As Director of the Refugee Council from 1988 to 1995, he was able to help asylum seekers and refugees. Granted a peerage in 1994, he subsequently served as Minister in Northern Ireland for three years, helping to further the peace process, and earlier this year he was appointed Chairman of the Broadcasting Standards Commission.

Honorary Officers' Reports

AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman, reported that 550 new members had joined the AJR, many from KT (Kindertransport). At the Day Centre everyone was known and treated individually; food, entertainment and atmosphere were second to none and there was a special monthly Kinder lunch. A twice-weekly frozen meals-on-wheels service maintained a close relationship with the recipients.

To ensure that members could remain in their own homes as long as possible AJR's Social Services department offered support, and an expanding 'Homecare Service' organised and paid for cleaning, caring or gardening. 185 members finding it hard to make ends meet were granted a total of £229,000 from the Self-Aid fund. AJR spent over a million pounds a year on members' services, leaving a shortfall of £400,000 which could be bridged only with donations and legacies.

AJR was establishing new groups throughout the UK and kept in touch with members through the restyled *AJR Journal*, which maintained its high standard. AJR's new website was accessible on: www.ajr.org.uk

Project unviable

A new site to rehouse the Day Centre, together with sheltered accommodation, had been sought by AJR. Regretfully, it had

been decided that the project was not viable in the face of competition from commercial property developers and the search had been abandoned. The Chairman stressed that AJR had not abandoned responsibility for members living at Eleanor Rathbone House and discussions with OSHA, Jewish Care and JBG would ensure residents' well-being. The home's management was to be sub-contracted to B'nai Brith JBG Housing Association. The Chairman expressed his appreciation to Jewish Care, OSHA and JBG for their co-operation.

Working with five other charities involved in Jewish refugee welfare, a new claims and restitution advisory service now operating out of AJR's offices, had experienced exceptional demand.

Hon Treasurer W David Rothenberg, detailed financial aspects of the main items and revealed the intention to combine the AJR's present separate entities into one, which was more efficient and cost-saving.

Anniversary celebrations

The celebration of AJR's 60th anniversary year was to include an anniversary tea and cabaret at London's Grosvenor House Hotel on Sunday 9 September and an exhibition chronicling AJR's history. The Chairman thanked AJR's many volunteers, members of staff and the Management Committee for their support.

Mr Ludwig Spiro referred to the excellence of the recent symposium on *AJR Information*, held in co-operation with the Universities of Sussex and London, to which Lord Moser and Dr Anthony Grenville had made outstanding contributions and where appreciation was expressed to Richard Grunberger for his 13 years' editorship. Mr Herman Hirschberger asked for confirmation of the taking of minutes. Mrs Anne Marx invited members to participate in the monthly Luncheon Club

Nominees for the Management Committee were re-elected and Sigi Faith and Eric Reich, both Kinder, were elected for the first time. Andrew Kaufman, W David Rothenberg and Eleanor Angel were re-elected as Honorary Officers.

RDC

'Sorry' is the hardest word

Richard Grunberger

We live in an age of celebrity endorsement. Lady Thatcher was endorsed by the Spice Girls and Tony Blair by Sir John Mills. One doesn't want to sound snobbishly superior about showbiz personalities, but half a century ago 'big names' involved in political razzamataz were people of greater gravitas: none other than JB Priestley 'facilitated' Labour's first landslide victory in 1945.

1945, of course, also ended the vogue for celebrity involvement with the defunct 'great' dictators. Suspecting that few readers know the extent of this collaboration, I will just quote the names of three collaborationist Nobel Prize winners for Literature: Knut Hamsun, Gerhart Hauptmann and Luigi Pirandello. The last named died in the mid-thirties, but Hauptmann survived the war by one year, and Hamsun by seven. Neither even tried to justify their earlier conduct. Given their great age - both were over eighty - this was perhaps understandable.

Less understandable - and forgivable - was the failure of the equally famous, and rather younger, philosopher Martin Heidegger to publish an *apologia pro vita sua*. The Nazi-appointed Rector of Freiburg University went to his grave apparently untroubled by such weasel acts as banning his own Jewish teacher, Edmund Husserl, from the university campus.

By contrast, several celebrities who had given their influential imprimatur to the Stalin regime suffered subsequent pangs of conscience. Probably the most outstanding example of post-Stalinist contrition was Paul Robeson. The peerless Black singer and actor spent his declining years in a state of paranoid depression conceivably brought on by gnawing remorse over his role as self-deluded accessory to a KGB-engineered deception. In 1952 at the height of Stalin's antisemitic campaign Robeson was officially invited to Moscow. At a restaurant the KGB produced one of the victimised Yiddish writers - briefly released from the Lubjanka, 'force-fed'

and given sunlamp treatment - for Robeson to interview. At the meal the writer was distant and silent, whereas his voluble 'translator' gave Robeson all sorts of assurances. The singer believed the lie because he wanted to believe it. On his return to the US he maintained that the allegedly jailed Yiddish writers in the USSR were at liberty, and condemned the American papers' biased reporting.

Another pro-Communist celebrity with reason to regret things he had said earlier was Jean-Paul Sartre. Asked after 1956 (i.e. Khrushchev's exposure of Stalin) why he had previously denied the existence of the Gulag, Sartre argued that such an admission would have confused the 'men of Billancourt' - site of the Renault car plant - and would have strengthened the forces of the Right. The British Communist Party, unable to enlist intellectual 'superstars' like Sartre, made do with the eminent scientists Bernal and Haldane. The geneticist JBS Haldane subsequently had ample reason to regret his involvement. When, flying in the face of all scientific evidence, Stalin placed the charlatan Lysenko in charge of Soviet genetics, the conflict between political loyalty and scientific integrity tore Haldane apart.

Bertolt Brecht, the chief parade horse for the East German Communists, experienced no such dark nights of the soul. After the construction workers struck in East Berlin in June 1953, Brecht allegedly wrote: "If the government disapprove of the people, why don't they dissolve the people and elect a new one?"

With Brecht, we return to the widespread tendency of celebrity endorsement by theatre folk. In one famous instance, this predisposition infected an entire thespian clan. In 1940 - with Stalin neutral - Michael Redgrave actually went to the lengths of advocating British-German peace negotiations. A generation later Vanessa and Corin Redgrave exhibited a similar crazed devotion to Trotsky; or at least his ghost.

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Remembering Frydek-Mistek

Katia Gould

The small town of Frydek-Mistek, which lies across the River Ostravica in north-eastern Moravia (now the Czech Republic), once had its own synagogue and a thriving Jewish community. The temple, built in 1865, was burnt down by the Nazis in June 1939. Today the town has not a single Jewish inhabitant, but its Jewish past was commemorated in a moving Holocaust remembrance service at the Beth Israel Temple in the city of Charlottesville, Virginia, USA.

Last year, the Charlottesville Jewish community, through the Czech Torah Network, acquired a Torah scroll from the destroyed Frydek-Mistek Temple. The scroll is now exhibited in a handsome glass cabinet in Charlottesville's Beth Israel Temple, surrounded by three specially designed stained glass windows.

I spent a week as guest of the Charlottesville congregation to take part in the commemoration, in the company of my sister Magda, one of only four concentration camp survivors from the Czech town. I was asked by the Rabbi to give a short talk at the Friday night service on the Jewish history of my home town and my family, whose paternal forebears had lived in the area since at least 1680. On the same day, the Mayor of Charlottesville issued a proclamation naming the day as a day of Holocaust remembrance and urging all citizens "to remember the lost Jewish community of Frydek-Mistek." The local paper printed a front page article and there was an interview on local television.

A few days later we met the children of the Hebrew School, aged 6-12, and answered their lively questions on our childhood and youth in a Jewish community that is no more. This was a uniquely emotional experience as was the whole unforgettable visit.

Pankow revisited Ernest Lowenberg

Arriving from all parts of the globe, some twenty former *Zöglinge* (residents) of the Jüdische Waisenhaus descended on Berlin Pankow for the inauguration of the newly restored building, now owned by the Cajewitz Foundation. Founded in the late 1880s to house orphan refugee boys from the Russian pogroms, the Waisenhaus has a long and chequered history. Built in 1912, the present handsome edifice could house up to a hundred boys who were brought up by a band of dedicated teachers under a somewhat harsh regime. In the late 1930s, a few boys managed to emigrate; the remainder, with their teachers, were transferred to a neighbouring home to prepare for *Abwanderung* (Nazi jargon for deportation). None, except my favourite teacher, Siegfried Baruch, survived Auschwitz.

During the war, the requisitioned building was used by Himmler's SS. After the war, the GDR Government handed the building to the Cubans as their embassy during which time it fell into total disrepair. After reunification it was purchased by the Cajewitz Foundation which, with the help of the

Förderverein ehemaliges jüdisches Waisenhaus under Dr Inge Lammell (herself a former refugee), restored it to its former glory. It now houses the local library, a training centre for Caritas nurses and a community centre appropriately based in the former ornate *Betsaal*, and will become a permanent memorial to Jewish life in Pankow.

The inauguration celebrations (we '*Ehemaligen*' were treated like royals) extended over several days culminating in the unveiling of a plaque in memory of the Jewish Pankower who perished in the Holocaust. Addresses were given by local and national dignitaries including Dr Andreas Nachama, Chairman of the Berlin Jewish Community, W Thierse, German Bundestag President, and the Cajewitz Foundation's Prof PA Albrecht. The following hectic days included a sightseeing tour of Berlin, the Jewish Museum and a walk through former Jewish Pankow.

The return to the place of our childhood was a moving experience and we bade goodbye to our hosts in the knowledge that the issues of the past had been addressed.

St Louis survivors in Canada Gisela Feldman

After considerable heart-searching, my sister and I decided to make the journey to Ottawa for a meeting of survivors of the *St Louis* organised by a Christian group which funded our costs. What persuaded us to go was the prospect of seeing again some of those who had taken part - as we had - in the documentary *Voyage of the St Louis*.

In speeches at a ceremonial dinner, we were reminded of the Canadian Government's attitude in 1939, as enunciated by the then Director of Canada's Immigration Branch F C Blair who, when asked how many Jews he could allow in, replied: "One is too many." Canada's reluctance to take us in was mirrored by that of most other countries and enabled Goebbels to write: "You see, nobody else wants them either - at least

we are building camps for them."

The theme of shame, repentance and the wish for forgiveness was expressed by various religious figures, including Canada's best-known Christian broadcaster Rev David Mainse and Ottawa's (Catholic) Archbishop Marcel Gervais. I had difficulty with the wish for forgiveness as I could not forget those who had perished. But the meeting ended with a resolution that those present had done nothing which required forgiveness and we did not wish them to carry the burden of their forefathers. What was important was to learn from the past.

We were treated with overwhelming kindness. My hope is that the little acorns of tolerance will grow into healthy oaks.

Anglo-Jewry and the Refugees from the Continent

Part 2

Dr Anthony Grenville

Among the Jewish refugees from Hitler who came into contact with British Jews very early were those young women who had come to Britain as domestic servants - one of the categories of refugee to whom entry visas were most readily granted - and found themselves working in Anglo-Jewish homes. Astonishingly enough, this area has been almost completely ignored by the scholars who have worked on the Jewish refugees from Hitler in Britain. For example, Professor Tony Kushner's powerful account of the plight of those who came to Britain on domestic permits, *An Alien Occupation*, contains one solitary sentence on the treatment endured by refugee domestics in Jewish households. To read Kushner, one would think that the ladies who mistreated their refugee servants were all gentile British and that none was Anglo-Jewish. This is plainly far from the case. On the contrary, it is obvious that many young refugee women would have been domestics in Anglo-Jewish households. Firstly, because such households would have been more likely than their gentile counterparts to take on Jewish refugee maidservants, out of a sense of duty and being better informed about the plight of the Jews under Nazi rule; and secondly because the refugee women, or their families who made arrangements for them, naturally often aimed for positions in Jewish homes.

Taboo subject

But for academics like Kushner, who are primarily concerned to highlight the poor treatment of the refugees by the British, any evidence of hostility between the refugees and Anglo-Jewry is an unwelcome diversion, since it threatens to obscure the supposedly clear division between the refugee Jewish ethnic minority and an intolerant, xenophobic and latently antisemitic British majority. The subject of conflict between the Jewish refugees from Central Europe and British Jews is virtually taboo for such scholars.

I have gathered material about refugee domestics in Anglo-Jewish households, and by and large it tells a sorry tale of exploitation, insensitivity and a lack of compassion often verging on callousness. Of course, many refugees had positive experiences of Anglo-Jewry and many developed close ties with that community. But it did not take many cases of bad treatment in the early days to embitter relations between the two groups permanently. The experiences of two former domestics with whom I conducted interviews are cases in point. Both came to London from Vienna as very young women not long before the war and both endured a succession of truly dreadful jobs in Anglo-Jewish homes. What struck me was not so much the humiliating drudgery, poor wages, demeaning treatment and squalid conditions: these would have been the lot of servants everywhere, in Vienna or Berlin as well as in England.

Lack of compassion

Far worse was the lack of basic human compassion shown by fellow Jews to persecuted co-religionists, helpless young women desperately concerned about their families trapped in Nazi Austria. One was offered a job by a wealthy Jewish lady, but on condition that she never spoke about Hitler or her family in Vienna; when she asked another employer to act as guarantor for her mother and brother, he shouted at her and told her that she was asking him to sign his own death warrant. When her brother did get to England, he was forbidden to enter the house. Her mother never got out.

The other young woman was the victim of a cruel deception. To stop her handing in her notice, her employers promised to bring over her sister and mother. When her sister arrived and refused to work for the family because of the appalling conditions, it emerged that the employers had not made an application for her mother, and now had

no intention of doing anything. Given the shortage of time before the war, this sealed her mother's fate. That a Jewish family should sabotage the last chance of a young Jewish refugee's mother to escape from the Nazis, pocketing her wages into the bargain, is shocking. Clearer evidence of the lack of natural bonding between the two groups of Jews would be hard to find.

Cultural divide

Part of the problem lay in the fact that the Anglo-Jewish hosts, though reasonably affluent, were still only on a relatively lowly rung of the British social ladder, and that the level of sophistication in such lower middle-class households compared unfavourably with the emphasis on culture and education in Continental Jewish homes. My interviewees encountered levels of ignorance and even illiteracy that astounded them, not to speak of habits of personal hygiene that led one former refugee domestic to remark that whenever she began to like her employers, she only had to walk up the stairs close behind them for liking and respect to evaporate. Another interviewee, who after the war worked with a Jewish fund-raising organisation, commented that the local committees were composed of volunteers who included magnates from the financial and property worlds, but who had little interest in the musical and artistic high culture in which the refugees were steeped. Wealthy British Jews might be seen at the socially prestigious opera, but not at the theatre or at concerts, whereas for the refugees the Wigmore Hall became something of a cultural Mecca. This difference in interests proved a real barrier to closer social interaction. The ascent of British Jews up the social scale took place under a system of values quite different from that of the Continental Jews, accentuating the divide between the two groups.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

A DIFFERENT GERMANY?

Sir - Driven not by generosity of spirit or remorse but by the knowledge that German business will not now be sued, the German Parliament approved the compensation for slave labourers not less than 56 years after they were freed. At the same time a Munich court will sentence Anthon Malloth (89) - it took 30 years to bring him to justice for more than 100 murders and many witnesses have since died.

So when the reviewer of Haffner's book (*June 2001*) claims that those who fail to acknowledge the emergence of a different Germany must be blind, I just wonder who is.

Frank Bright
Ipswich, Suffolk

CONFLICT COMPARISONS

Sir - For Frank Bright to compare the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the 1920-22 Turko-Greek situation (*Letters May 2001*) is neither helpful nor logical. If the Israelis want to live in peace with their Palestinian neighbours, they should cease to build provocative settlements in conquered Palestinian land.

Inge Trott
Cheam, Surrey

PROPHETS WITHOUT HONOUR

Sir - Readers interested in Vienna's early 20th century cultural contribution will find a thorough and interesting study of the period in Schorske's *Fin de Siècle Vienna*, (Vintage books) published in 1981, which caused quite a stir at the time.

Dr K Schiller
Knutsford, Cheshire

ROLE MODEL?

Sir - Martha Goebbels' (*May 2001*) brother, Dr Quandt, principal of the

Goethe Schule in Berlin-Wilmersdorf in the mid 1930s, did his best to be a role model too. First, he tried unsuccessfully to kick me out for insolence to my maths teacher. Then he summoned the whole student body to the *Aula*, called me to the front and gave me an official warning not to incur one more *Tadel* before the following Easter. In the event, I left without collecting another *Tadel*.

Bern Brent
Farrer, Australia

RETURN TO VIENNA

Sir - My wife and I, along with 80 former Viennese Jews, recently visited Vienna as guests of the Jewish Welcome Service. Among the highlights was the reception in the Hofburg (televised) by President Klestil who made a moving speech declaring that antisemitism would not be tolerated in Austria, and underlining Austria's debt to its Jewish citizens in the worlds of science, medicine, literature, music etc. A few days before the re-election of the Mayor of Vienna, we enjoyed a *Jause* in the Rathaus where we met the Mayor. There was also a memorable Friday evening service in the beautifully restored City Synagogue with an address by Chief Rabbi Dr Eisenberg. The work of the Jewish Welcome Service's Dr Leon Zelman, who is also active in the field of Austro-Jewish education, is much appreciated.

Albert Dutch
London NW2

AUSTRIAN ARCHIVE

Sir - AJR members may be interested to know that the Austrian Resistance movement archive has a list of 61,000 Austrian-Jewish victims of the Shoah. The list includes full names,

date of birth, concentration camp and - where known - date of death. Some entries include short biographies and photos. The information can be obtained by post from DÖW, Altes Rathaus, Wipplingerstrasse 8, 1010 Vienna, or from the website (www.doew.at). A form is available to register information about victims, as well as those Jews who were living in Austria in 1938 but who managed to escape. I hope this project, which will help to refute revisionism, will be supported by survivors here.

George Vulkan
Harrow, Mddx

RIGA GHETTO MONUMENT

Sir - The preparations for the memorial service at the cemetery in the forest outside Riga are complete (see *Riga ghetto monument, October 2000*). The memorial service, to be conducted by Vienna's senior Rabbi Dr Chaim Eisenberg, will take place on 30 November this year. Leading personalities from various countries will also attend. The names of all those who perished in the Riga ghetto will be immured in the cemetery in everlasting memory of the dead. All those German cities from which there were transports to Riga have co-operated in the *Initiave Riga* project and work is in hand to construct a list of all those murdered in Riga. The Vienna list is complete. Anyone - survivor or friend - who wishes to attend the ceremony is very welcome.

Erich Herzl
Initiave Riga, Wollzeile 9, 1010 Vienna

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Central Office For Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Details of the Holocaust era agreement involving two major international banks have been announced.

Barclays and JP Morgan are to pay compensation for their role in operating with the Vichy and occupational authorities to plunder systematically the bank accounts, safe deposit boxes and other valuables of their Jewish clients both before, and in accordance with, antisemitic laws passed in France during WWII.

The banks have created Settlement Funds totalling US\$ 6,362,500, with more than half contributed by Barclays. Separate funds will be established to pay administrative and legal costs.

Claims are also admissible in respect of assets held with the predecessors of Barclays and JP Morgan, including Rothschild Frères, Morgan et Cie and some branches of Lloyds Bank.

Submission of claims is not dependent on documentary proof. Claims will be valued by converting to US\$ the balance as at 1940 and then calculating its equivalent as at 1999 - for Barclays claimants - and as at 2000 for JP Morgan claimants.

Following a fairness hearing to be held later this year, potential claimants will have until 30 September 2002 to submit applications. Then, and not earlier, claims will be assessed and awards made. For an application form or further information, telephone 0800 169 8318 (free) or access the Internet at www.barclaysfrenchclaims.org or www.jpmorganfrenchclaims.org

Swiss banks

To ensure their application will be assessed, applicants who have had no confirmation of receipt of claims submitted in respect of Swiss bank accounts should send a registered letter to the Claims Resolution Tribunal, P.O. Box 2666, JAF Station, New York NY 10116-2666, USA. The deadline for filing claims is 5 August 2001.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Froggnal, London NW3 6AL. For assistance with the completion of application forms please telephone 020 7431 6161 for an appointment.

Tax exemption on Holocaust bank accounts

Compensation paid by banks on unclaimed accounts, opened by Holocaust victims and frozen during World War II, will be tax free, the Government has confirmed.

Under an initiative called "Restore UK", announced on 8 May 2000 by the British Bankers' Association, compensation is being paid by banks on unclaimed accounts opened by Holocaust victims and frozen during World War II under the Trading with the Enemy Act 1939. Where the investor of the monies in the unclaimed account was a Holocaust victim, the banks have said they will make an exceptional up-rating payment.

No tax will be payable on any monies paid out by banks or building societies under the "Restore UK" initiative to Holocaust victims or their beneficiaries. This exemption will cover income tax liabilities on any compensation payments made on or after 8 May 2000 under the scheme, as well as death duties in respect of the capital held in the accounts.

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Arts and Events Diary August

Until 27 Aug Legacies of Silence: The Visual Arts & the Holocaust.

The contribution of artist-witnesses and survivors to post-war culture and the arts. Imperial War Museum.

Until 23 Sep Judaica exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Dorotheergasse 11, Vienna.

Until 14 October Leo Baeck: Aus dem Stamme von Rabbinern. Frankfurt Jewish Museum. 0049 69 21230705.

Until 28 October Remembering Luboml: Images of a Jewish Community. Jewish Museum, Camden Town.

Until 4 Nov Kladovo successful & unsuccessful escapes to Palestine. Photographic exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Vienna.

Until December Exhibition of Jewish cartoonists. Jewish Museum, Finchley.

Organisation Contacts

Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Rd., London SE1 6HZ. 020 7416 5320

The Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 129-131 Albert Street, NW1 7BN. Tel: 020 7284 1997

Sternberg Centre for Judaism/Jewish Museum, Finchley. 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY. Tel: 020 8346 2288/ 8349 1143.



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ARTS & REVIEWS

Art Notes

Gloria Tessler

You always sense a kind of awed silence in the presence of genius. It was true of the Renoir Exhibition, and it is true of the National Gallery's Vermeer and the Delft School, which continues until 16 September. Although genius is difficult to define, it is instantly recognisable. There are no histrionics with Vermeer. He works subtly and without egotism. The Delft School of the Dutch 17th Century celebrated the material lifestyle of the landowner class. By the time Vermeer came along in the mid 1660's, this preoccupation with solid matter softened into a more subtle examination of light and the way it filters and suffuses its subjects. Thirteen of Vermeer's works are presented here and there are references to worldliness in the background maps, perhaps a nod to Dutch imperialism, heavy tapestry curtains, voluptuous folds of cloth -- and yet what he conveys is people at work.

In *The Milkmaid*, with its wonderful curves and attention to detail, it is the solidity of her face which reflects the physical roughness of the pitcher and bowl. *The Art of Painting* shows how the soft yet brilliant light from the left lifts the satin of the artist's clothes while retaining the focus of the composition on the model. The artist is seen only from the back dressed in the velvets and satins of a wealthy gentleman. So brilliant is Vermeer's composition that even the background of the painting will allude to the texture or shapes shown in the main subject matter. Other paintings, like *Woman with a Lute*, convey the idea of incompleteness - the subject waits by a window as though for a partner in a duet. Similarly, the appeal of *Girl with a Red Hat* is the look of surprise on her face. Often Vermeer will



The Milkmaid - Johannes Vermeer
©Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

contrast the heavy splendour of dress or drapery with a face so subtle it is almost etiolated.

By contrast, **Pieter de Hooch's** rigid family scenes contain a geometric sense of space where children themselves appear less as children than mini adults. While his linear perspective and geometric clarity became a feature of Delft painting, he lacks Vermeer's grace.

My overwhelming impression of **The Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition** is of being overwhelmed. But the Academy's 233rd Summer Exhibition does have some saving graces, and among them is its sheer vitality and modernity. **Kitaj's** delightful charcoal, *Braiding Hair*, and **Peter Blake's** *Madonna of Venice Beach*, showing a girl in a non-matching bikini roller-skating, admirably catches the light and the busy scene just behind her. The bed, *de rigueur* with the modern art world, has had its day or, should we say, its night. **Tate Modern** had its latrine and the Summer Exhibition has its bath, complete with feet and etchings in enamel and terracotta by **Antoni Tapies**. A huge painting resembling a cross between a tube map and a lecturer's blackboard notes attracted much speculation at the opening. There are some exciting abstracts by **George Rowlett**, **Arthur Francis Stockham**, **Kenneth Draper**, **Maurice Cockrill**, - and **Ian Stephenson**. For figurative examples, **David Remfry's** *Party* has intrigue and movement

RG's INTERFACE

Opera uproar. Opera houses in different countries are much in the headlines - but, unfortunately, largely for non-musical reasons. La Fenice in Venice burnt down, the Bolshoi face financial ruin, Bayreuth is riven by feuds among the Wagner clan and the cash-strapped Berlin municipality needs to shed an entire opera house. The municipal authorities, who in Cold War days subsidised the arts to the hilt for propagandist reasons, are currently embroiled in a painful cost-cutting exercise - while captains of industry seem to lack the Maecenas instinct. (One wonders if German musicians sometimes regret the emigration of the likes of Paul Hamlyn.)

Broadway Praterstrasse. In June Vienna's Jewish Museum staged the three-week *Mazeltov 2001* festival of exhibitions, music and dance. A unique feature of the event were guided tours of sites in the Second District, where Yiddish theatre and cabaret had once been performed.

Playwright 'outed'. Some years ago Patrick Marber burst on the London theatrical scene like a two-stage rocket. Soon after the poker-based *Dealers' Choice*, came the cutting-edge play *Closer* featuring the Internet (alongside sexual explicitness). With *Howard Katz* - currently at the Cottesloe - Marber has revealed himself as a sentimental Jew. The revelation (of Marber's state of mind, not his ethnic origin) has discombobulated the critics.

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Reviews

Portrait of a trial

THE HOLOCAUST ON TRIAL,

D D Guttenplan,

Granta, 2001.

The controversial title of this recent book is certainly justified. Many who followed last year's libel trial may remember feeling gripped by an underlying anxiety: had David Irving prevailed in his suit against Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin books, the historical legacy of the Holocaust would be under threat. A prediction Naomi Gryn and I shared after the trial's final session was that Irving would be awarded the proverbial halfpenny. Such a pyrrhic victory would have proved disastrous for the defence.

It is greatly to Guttenplan's credit that he has succeeded in providing a blow by blow account of the trial whilst preserving a sense of suspense, even though the outcome is known. His book benefits, too, from being extremely readable thanks to his

seamless interweaving of a variety of elements into the body of the narrative. Aspects of Holocaust history, statistics, seemingly hair-splitting arguments, anecdotes - all manner of information is purveyed, leaving the reader eager to continue, not knowing what surprise might be coming next.

A striking feature of the trial was the defence's use of a team of experts on the Holocaust and historiography, rather than survivors. Guttenplan regrets this absence of "human voices to put flesh on the facts", even though he understands why such a choice was made. His assessment of the court performance of the experts adds a touch of liveliness and humanity to the account, as do his fair and illuminating pen portraits of the protagonists, Irving and Lipstadt, and members of the defence's legal team.

What makes the book of particular interest to readers familiar with the subject is Guttenplan's challenge to various Jewish responses to the legacy of the Holocaust. He is not convinced by Lipstadt's argument, in her *Denying the Holocaust*, that denial is a

phenomenon deriving from postmodernism rather than an "assault on the history of one particular group." He takes issue, too, with the hostility directed at prominent refugees from Nazi Europe like Raul Hilberg, Hannah Arendt and Arno Mayer, whose observations and testimonies might not fit the standard blueprint. In contrast, he regards the extreme oversimplification of the contemporary historian, Daniel Goldhagen, who censures the entire German people as murderous antisemites, as particularly dangerous. No less so are universally accepted half-truths that turn out to be myths, including the belief that people were gassed to death in Belsen and Dachau, that the King of Denmark wore a yellow star and that Pastor Niemöller opened his memorable testimony to the indifference of bystanders with "First they came for the Jews ..." rather than "First they came for the Communists ..." All this provides ample fodder for the Holocaust - denier's cannon.

Emma Klein

Crossed Lines?

THE BATTLE FOR AUSCHWITZ,

Emma Klein,

Vallentine Mitchell, 2001.

Once every two years, thousands of young Jews demonstrate their concern for due remembrance of the Holocaust by joining the 'March of the Living' which retraces, in silence, the footsteps of the Jewish martyrs from the huts of Auschwitz to the gas chambers of Birkenau. It is a poignant gesture. But its symbolic significance gains even greater weight when it is considered in the context of the events described by Emma Klein in her new book.

This slim volume is the result of painstaking (and no doubt, at times, painful) research into the increasing 'Christianisation' of death camp remembrance. She records the circumstances leading to the Catholic-Jewish conflict, which began in August 1984 when fifteen Carmelite nuns established a convent in a building close to the former Auschwitz camp.

Since the premises had once been used to store Zyklon B gas, the objection by several Jewish organisations to the convent's siting was not unpredictable. All the same, their response came as a surprise to Polish Christians, who did not see why their own suffering under the Nazis should not also be symbolised by Auschwitz. But the erection in 1989 of a large wooden cross on the convent lawn was bound to give even more serious offence to Jews and the 'slide towards confrontation' was under way. By the end of that year, battle was joined in earnest and years of verbal exchanges, diplomatic interventions, religious disputations, and heartache where comfort should have prevailed, ensued. Before long, the conflict assumed world-wide dimensions involving rabbis, priests, bishops, cardinals, politicians, journalists and broadcasters.

Among those who have, over the years, sought to repair the damage to Jewish-Christian relations has been Sir Sigmund Sternberg. Unfortunately, his efforts to restore the situation

peaceably to a position less demanding on Jewish susceptibilities were all too frequently hampered by scepticism on the one hand and undisguised antisemitism on the other. The struggle continued until, at last, in May 1993, the nuns were to be rehoused in a more appropriate location, still near the camp but less hurtful to Jewish feelings. They refused to move and left Oswiecim altogether. But the large wooden cross has remained - and so has the problem. In her concluding chapter, the author surmises that the resolution of this embarrassing impasse might be found in an eventual - albeit reluctant - acceptance by Jews of the Christian cross as a suitable memorial for Jewish as well as Christian martyrdom. But she also acknowledges that the end of the battle for Auschwitz is not yet in sight. She is to be congratulated on her careful and commendably objective formulation of, as Jonathan Webber puts it in his Introduction, "at least some of the main questions."

David Maier

Economical with the Truth

THE YEARBOOK OF THE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN EXILE STUDIES, (ed) Anthony Grenville, Editions Rodopi, 2000.

The German-speaking Exiles in Great Britain series presents subject matter of absorbing interest. Arguably the most important topic touched on here is encapsulated in the title of the book *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis* by William Rubinstein (1997). Frank Baron takes issue with Rubinstein's thesis in a contribution focusing on two eye-witness accounts of the Nazis' ongoing extermination programme: Jan Karski's about Warsaw and Belzec in 1942, and Rudolph Vrba's about Auschwitz in 1944. When these reached Western leaders they prompted some - but lamentably insufficient - action. In 1944 both Washington and the Vatican interceded with the Hungarian Regent Admiral Horthy who, however, was speedily deposed in a Nazi putsch. The blame for too little being done to save Hungary's Jews is, according to Frank Baron, shared by US Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy, Cardinal Seredi (who justified his silence by citing the example of his superior, Pope Pius XII) and Budapest community leader Rudolf Kastner; the latter suppressed Vrba's Auschwitz report because he was pursuing illusory negotiations with Eichmann. The most revealing fact in Baron's piece, however, relates to the hysterically - if understandably - hostile reactions to the Auschwitz report among ordinary Hungarian Jews:

"When Dr A Nathan tried to read from it to a Jewish labour service unit the reaction was awful. They called him a defeatist, a traitor. If it had not been for a few Zionist friends they would have beaten him to death."

It is with relief that the reader turns from this hugely upsetting topic to

others in the volume which provide bitter-sweet 'light' relief. One article deals with the role of the *Remigrant* Peter de Mendelssohn in re-creating a democratic press in Allied-occupied Germany. Resentful Berliners accused de Mendelssohn, who had lived through the London Blitz, of having observed their ordeal - air raids, street battles, etc - from a "safe distance". He was also admonished by his wife Hilde Spiel, who had stayed behind in London, not to show undue readiness to fraternise with artists tainted by their Nazi past. Yet within weeks of her own arrival in Berlin, Spiel accepted an invitation to take tea with the wife of Veit Harlan, director of the 'genocide promotion movie' *Jud Süß*. Later, back in her native Vienna, Spiel also socialised with the top-ranking Austrian novelist Heimito von Doderer, whose *oeuvre* would have earned him a jail sentence - or worse - in liberated France (pace the fate meted out to Drieu le Rochelle, Celine and others).

But, of course, anybody who resettled in a previously infected environment, perforce had to come into contact with virus carriers. This is something the directors of the Austrian exile theatre must have known intuitively, because in wartime London the *Laterndl* performed the rustic playwright Karl Schönherr, who had hailed the Anschluss. However, it appears that not all intending remigrants had that 'sixth sense.' Eva Kolmer, the indefatigable organiser of the Free Austrian Movement, had spent her entire seven-year exile disseminating the myth of widespread Austrian resistance to German occupation. She was to experience a profound shock when, en route to recently liberated Vienna in 1946, she witnessed hundreds of Tyrolean women bidding tearful farewells to their departing German Wehrmacht boyfriends. This sad anecdote is related by Charmian Brinson, who notes with regret that Kolmer's name means little to posterity.

Richard Grunberger



Record Review

Erik Levi

The American conductor and academic Leon Botstein has built up a considerable reputation for espousing unusual and neglected repertory on disc. Initially a specialist in romantic music, he has set down admirable recordings of works by Brahms' friend Joseph Joachim (IMP Classics 3036 702092), the oratorios *Paulus* by Mendelssohn (Arabesque Z67053) and the intriguing *Odysseus* by Max Bruch (Koch 365572). More recently he has turned his attention to the 20th century, providing a highly persuasive account of the somewhat Brahmsian *First Symphony of Dohnányi* supported by solid playing from the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Telarc CD80511).

Perhaps his most interesting discoveries concern 20th-century German music. A release containing the *First and Sixth Symphonies* and the *Symphonic Poem Miserere* by Karl Amadeus Hartmann (1905-1963) offers eloquent testimony to one of the few German musicians who openly defied the Nazi regime while remaining in his native country. This is powerful and uncompromising music of suffering and protest, drawing upon a diverse range of musical influences including Mahler, Bartók and Schoenberg. With the London Philharmonic Botstein delivers committed performances of works that should be far better known (Telarc CD80528).

A more controversial recording is that of Richard Strauss' final opera *Die Liebe der Danae* (Telarc CD80570 3CDs). Composed during the Second World War, but performed only once before Goebbels' declaration of total war in 1944, this is the most overtly Wagnerian of Strauss' stage works. Occasionally the musical invention outstays its welcome, though there are passages where the composer recaptures the inspiration of his youth. This first modern recording of the work made at a concert in New York has plenty of adrenalin, and although the quality of the soloists is decidedly mixed, Botstein ensures that the opera moves with pace and a sure sense of direction.

"I can't remember a time in my life when I wasn't convinced I would do something with science, technology or engineering." Even without seeing the playful bow-tie and absent-minded professor coiffure, few would mistake the voice of Professor Heinz Wolff, familiar to many from television series such as the Great Egg Race and Great Experiments Which Changed the World.

Heinz Wolff arrived with his family in Britain aged 10 on the day the Second World War broke out. Born in Berlin, the only child of a "typical middleclass and highly assimilated family", he led a comfortable life in the family home on the Kurfürstendamm, attending a private Jewish school in Berlin's Grunewald. Between 1933 and 1939, despite his tender age, Heinz would accompany his father - who had become an expert in *Gleichschaltung* (aryanisation) when he could no longer make a living from the family textile business - to business meetings. From the age of four, he 'did' chemistry with his father on Sunday afternoons, thanks to a schoolboy laboratory built up by his father who had once yearned to be a chemist.

Had it not been for the mother's illness and death in October 1938, the family - including Heinz's aunt, uncle and cousin - would have emigrated earlier. As it was, Wolff senior facilitated business deals which allowed would-be emigrants to build up credit balances in countries (including the UK) which would not admit them unless they could demonstrate that they could be self-supporting. Helped by the Gestapo contacts of his devoted 'Aryan' secretary, he also became active in interfering in the operations of the Gestapo thus assisting a number of people to leave Germany. On 27 August 1939 the Wolff family crossed the German-Dutch border, intending to remain in Holland until all five visa numbers for entry to the USA were called. However the Dutch threat to return them to Germany saw the family embarking on a boat to Gravesend, arriving just as the first air raid sirens were sounding.

PROFILE

Marion Koebner

Professor Heinz Wolff



After registering as aliens, the family settled in northwest London and Heinz and his cousin attended school near Golders Green, his aunt helping to bring him up until he was 15. His father avoided internment by presenting himself to the tribunal leaning heavily on his son's shoulder wearing dark glasses and using a walking stick. He was adjudged not to be a danger to the state! When a land mine blew in the front door and windows of their Hampstead Garden Suburb home, the family evacuated to Oxford. Even after the family returned to London, Heinz stayed on in Oxford to complete his schooling. Having offered him a place to read chemistry, St Catherine's College, Oxford, invited him to postpone his studies by one year in view of his young age and the many ex-servicemen returning home who would want places. Heinz acceded and got a job at the Radcliffe Infirmary where he invented a principle which made possible the construction of a machine to count blood cells - and then the machine itself. He continued working for three years at the Radcliffe "absorbing electronics and engineering osmotically" and never took up the university place.

Prof Wolff's career with the Medical Research Council (MRC) began when he responded to an advertisement for a physicist to design equipment to measure dust concentrations in coal mines. Being "one of the few people who knew how to count little things" and with a good word from his old boss and a few influential friends, he got the job despite lacking formal qualifications and moved to Penarth, near Cardiff, where he met his future wife, Joan. When the MRC suggested it was time he got a degree or other higher qualification, he read physiology and physics at University College, London, working for the MRC during the long vacations. In 1954 he graduated with a First. Interested in working in the human physiology field, it became clear to Prof Wolff that biological establishments, including medical ones, were unable to make use of technological advances since the war because they knew insufficient about them. He saw a niche for people straddling the biological sciences and engineering sciences and coined a new description for himself as a 'bio-engineer'.

In 1983, he left the MRC and founded the Brunel Institute for Bioengineering at Brunel University. He is now Emeritus Professor of Bioengineering. One of his current projects involves a kit working on the principle of detecting hazards, which can be installed in the home of any elderly person wishing to continue living at home. Prof Wolff's conviction is that, in the 21st century, the community will have to take a larger share of the responsibility of looking after its elderly. Differing from the mainstream, his view is that innovation in the 21st Century will not be primarily in science and technology, but will focus on the way in which society organises itself.

Looking back, the man who describes working and dignified practical joking as his hobbies, doubts he would have had the varied life and career he has had in Britain had events not forced him out of the "more stratified and less humorous" German society.

INSIDE the AJR



South London AJR visiting Brighton

Brighton/South London

The South London group's visit to spend the day with Brighton members was the first time such an event had been organised since the formation of AJR groups. The welcome by Myrna Glass was responded to by Herbert Wolff, who explained that SLAJR had been formed when some anthropologists discovered that there was Jewish life beyond northwest London! After everyone had introduced themselves with a brief autobiography, a sumptuous buffet lunch followed, prepared by Fausta Shelton and Myrna Glass. The visitors spent an enjoyable couple of hours discovering Brighton before returning to London.

Frank Goldberg and Herbert Wolff

Next meeting - 20 August, Susannah Alexander: History of Anglo-Jewry

West Midlands

Hosted by Leon Jessell MBE JP, the group's third annual garden party and luncheon was held in his beautifully maintained garden in glorious weather. The food and drink, some new ideas on plant maintenance, a good turn-out and Mr Jessell's hospitality made it a perfect afternoon. As a token of gratitude to the host, £100 was collected for the AJR Charitable Trust.

E Glaser

Glasgow

Over fifty members of AJR and SAROK (Scottish Association of the Reunion of

Kinder) from all parts of Scotland attended a lunch hosted by Jewish Care Scotland at Glasgow's Walton Centre. SAROK, an independent group initiated 11 years ago by Dorit Sim, has been managed for the last six years by Rosa Sacharin.

Introducing the newly appointed Northern Co-ordinator, Susanne Green, Head of AJR Social Services Marcia Goodman told the meeting of the support the AJR could offer both AJR and SAROK members. Marcia explained that by working together, AJR and SAROK members could benefit from additional support from the AJR in the form of expertise in Claims applications and personal and financial support when appropriate. Further, it is hoped that by advertising in the wider Scottish community, potential members who might otherwise be isolated and alone will be able to join in activities and avail themselves of the other benefits.

SG

Pinner

Michael Heppner's intriguing account of finding the original home of a Czech Torah scroll was beautifully illustrated with slides. His 'mission' began in 1978 with his rabbi's call from the *bimah* to find the community from which the scroll came. Michael made risky forays behind the Iron Curtain to contact remnants of once thriving communities. Helped by Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, his efforts brought aid to individuals, restored their synagogue and cemetery and 'liberated' many artefacts of historical value. Michael's painstaking researches are galvanising congregations with a Czech scroll to take an active interest in the communities which once read from them and to honour the memory of individual Jews who met their tragic fate under the Nazis.

Walter Weg

Next meetings - 2 August, Garden party. 6 September, Howard Midgen: Towns, mountains and tribes of Morocco with Jewish interest.

Surrey

Next meeting - 14 August, garden party at the home of Tony Freund

KINDERTRANSPORT NEWS

David Jedwab

The Acculturation of Kindertransport Children was the esoteric title of a discussion forum organised by the University of Sussex Centre for German Jewish Studies last month at the Imperial War Museum. The main speakers were Prof Edward Timms, Director of the Sussex Centre, Prof Wolfgang Benz, Director Technical University, Berlin, and James Taylor of the Imperial War Museum. The speakers, who mainly discussed Holocaust research, undertook to concentrate on the history of the Kindertransport post 1938-39. Five Kinder, including Bertha Leverton and David Jedwab, participated in the ensuing discussion.

Sue Read, director of the film *The Children Who Cheated the Nazis*, showed previously unpublished material of the film's interviewees who described how, as children, they coped with their arrival in the UK and struggled to master English. She announced that a further 30 unpublished film interviews would be recorded on video for the benefit of universities and research institutes. The Kinder recommended that extra funds be raised to provide explanatory captioning or a sound commentary and that the University of Sussex be invited to oversee the project.

Michael Newman of the Central Office for Holocaust Claims spoke to a well-attended Kinderlunch at the AJR Day Centre. He drew on his wide knowledge to detail the various claims and organisations involved, and provided helpful and informed answers to the audience's questions.

60th Anniversary Tea, 9th September. The Kinder are giving this celebration our fullest support; 400 letters have already been sent to Kinder in Greater London inviting them to join a Kindertransport table (please indicate when booking) and to support the brochure.

Next Kinderlunches: Monday 6th August and Monday 3rd September speakers to be announced.

Six decades of 'AJR Information'

Ronald Channing

In the first event marking AJR's 60th Anniversary year, a unique gathering of scholars and senior members of the refugee generation met at London University's Institute of Germanic Studies (IGS) to hear distinguished German-Jewish refugee academic Lord Moser reveal that his recent peerage was granted 65 years to the day after his arrival in Britain. "To have published *AJR Information* continuously for the best part of six decades is a remarkable achievement," said Lord Moser, recalling the 1940s when his parents derived information, confidence and support from its pages.

Organised by Prof Edward Timms, director of Sussex University's Centre for German-Jewish Studies, the symposium investigated AJR's highly regarded monthly magazine as a source of valuable historical information. Prof Rüdiger Görner, director of the IGS, welcomed his fellow academics and the former refugees from Germany and Austria to a "spiritual home."

Dr Anthony Grenville presented a paper drawing on his own experiences researching *AJR Information* for his social and cultural history of the refugee community to be published next year. Dr Jon Hughes (University of Sussex) placed *AJR Information* in the context of a number of other exile publications in Paris, Prague, Moscow, Amsterdam, New York and London of which only New York's *Aufbau* and AJR's magazine survive.

Prof John Grenville (University of Birmingham) discussed the potential for making *AJR Information* available on CD-Rom, based on his successful transfer of the Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook. The symposium ended with a panel discussion chaired by Prof Timms in which members of the current editorial team, Richard Grunberger, Katia Gould and Ronald Channing, discussed the future potential of the magazine.

Lord Moser presented Richard Grunberger with a bound presentation volume of the last two years of *AJR Information* in appreciation of 13 years of outstanding editorship.



AJR Members, family and friends are invited to join in

AJR's 60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION TEA AND CABARET

*at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London W1
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Tue	7	David Lawrence, piano
Wed	8	Helen Blake & her daughter Siobhan
Thur	9	Elaine Gee, guitar
Sun	12	Day Centre open - no entertainment
Mon	13	Kard & Games Klub
Tue	14	Amanda Palmer entertains
Wed	15	Sylvia Eaves - Act I - Scene II
Thur	16	Tricia Dibb & Michael Heaton
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Mon	27	Day Centre closed - Bank Holiday
Tue	28	Guyathérie Peires, mezzo soprano & Bill Patrick, piano
Wed	29	Roy Lennard, keyboard
Thur	30	Amanda Palmer entertains

Announcements

Deaths

Bing, Gabrielle (Gabi), née Landau, was born in Berlin in 1918 and died shortly before her 83rd birthday on 9 May 2001 after a short illness. She was much loved and will be greatly missed by her daughters, Vivien, Marion and Susan, her five grandchildren, relations and many friends.

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Telephone 020 7794 3949

Minister: Rabbi Rodney J Mariner
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Regular Services:

Friday evenings at 6.45pm
Saturday mornings at 10am
Religion School: Sundays at 10am to 1pm
Nursery School: 9.15am to 12.15pm
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BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE
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The AJR does not accept
responsibility for the standard of
services offered by advertisers

Certificates of Life

The Metropolitan Police have confirmed that the issuing of Certificates of Life is still part of a police officer's standing instructions and that no instructions have been issued to the contrary. The authority for this is found in paragraphs 3.11 and 3.12 of the Instruction Manual S1 Station Officers' Duties (reproduced below) which should be produced if you encounter difficulties.

3.11 A Certificate of Life is a document required by a European Pension Authority to confirm that an ex-citizen of that country, now resident in the UK, is still alive and therefore entitled to draw a pension from that country.

3.12 If such a pensioner attends a police station and asks the police officer on duty to sign such a certificate, the officer should:

- Make sure the certificate includes an English translation or if not, that an official translation on the issuing authority's headed notepaper is produced;
- Examine suitable identification (which must include a photograph, such as a passport) and make sure this identification relates to the applicant and that this person is the person named in the Certificate of Life;
- Determine, as far as possible, that other facts included on the certificate (such as marital status and home address) are correct, by questioning the applicant.

The officer should then sign the certificate, adding the date and station stamp.

Congratulations to Ernst Fraenkel, Wiener Library chairman, on his appointment as an OBE and to Suzanne Bardgett, Director of the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust exhibition on being granted an MBE.

Also to Walter Laqueur, awarded the Aufbau Prize 2001 for Distinguished Contribution to German-Jewish culture.

An untypical resting place

John Chillag

What happens when an SS officer is prevented from obeying his instructions? And whoever heard of individual 'war graves' for Jewish concentration camp victims in the heart of Nazi Germany in 1944?

With 30 members of my family I was deported in 1944 from Győr in Hungary to Auschwitz. Having survived the initial selection, my father and I were picked, together with 270 other Hungarian Jews, to become slave labourers of the *Bochumer Verein*, one of the largest steel and armament complexes in the Ruhr. Working at the large presses operated at 1000°C, without protective clothing and with the added brutality meant death for most of us; my father died there in December 1944.

Through the Red Cross, I found out in the 1950s that my father had been buried in a cemetery in Bochum. But why and how was only resolved in the last couple of years through the research efforts of Dr Hubert Schneider of Ruhruniversität Bochum, and the Bochum city archives. The usual disposal method for dead *Häftlinge* was cremation. But a few days before my father's death, Allied bombing demolished the local crematorium 'authorised for use by the SS'. The SS camp officer sent a telegram to his superiors in Buchenwald: "What am I to do with these Jewish corpses?" The first name on that list of 52 victims was that of my father! The brief answer came: "Bury them". Thus, the corpses were dumped at the cemetery, where the decent superintendent and his wife arranged their burial in individual graves. In 1965 the municipality erected uniform gravestones over the 52 graves, with individual names, dates of birth and death on the stones. The site, unique in the annals of the Nazi era, is now a 'listed monument'.

Search Notices

Dr Samuel Mandelbaum, born 31/03/1876 in Platz/Brückenau, physician in Spitalgasse, Schweinfurt, Germany. Moved to Berlin (or possibly left Germany) in 1938 with his wife Betty née Buxbaum born 12/07/1882 in Eubigheim/Tauberbischofsheim. Dr Mandelbaum may have died in New York in 1968. Their son **Kurt Mandelbaum**, born 13/11/1904 in Schweinfurt, later changed his name to Kurt Martin, professor in Manchester, UK, has worked for UNESCO, lately lived in London, and their daughter **Ilse Mandelbaum**, (later Ilse Laredo) born 31/10/1906 in Schweinfurt, lived in London. Descendants sought by Gabriele Fleckenstein, Kempener Strasse 48, D-50733 Köln, Tel: 0049 221 9723189; Fax: 0049 221 9723891; Email: gabriele.fleckenstein@t-online.de.

Toni (Antonia) Benario née Vogelsdorf, born 17/2/1886, died 1/5/1962 in Maida Vale Hospital, St. Marylebone. Last known residence 12 Strathray Gdns, London NW3. Seeking her nephew V E Hilton, her executor, last known addresses 17 Mulberry Close, Beaufort St., London NW3 and Flat J, 21 Cadogan Gdns., London SW3. Any information please call 020 8908 0582.

Else Nelson née Maass, lived at 1 Brampton Court, Brampton Grove, London NW4 in 1966. Sister of Ernst Maass, Rechtsanwalt und Notar born 13/01/1887, died 10/11/1963 in Berlin. Any information please call 020 8908 0582.

Schwerzl family, formerly of Czechoslovakia, Usti Na Orlici and Germany. Any information please contact pmpvincent@hotmail.com.

JEWISH REFUGEES COMMITTEE

A message to all those still wanting to trace relatives or to apply for their Documents of Identity and/or their records.

Please send all your requests to:
Jewish Refugees Committee
World Jewish Relief,
74/80 Camden Street,
London NW1 0EG
Tel: 020 76911782

A fully qualified team is ready and eager to deal with your enquiries.

Tante Laura and the piglet

Polly Zimran

My favourite (Czech-born) aunt survived the *Götterdämmerung* in Vienna. Though her husband, a Catholic Rhinelander, was repeatedly taken to Gestapo headquarters and beaten, he refused to divorce her. Tante Laura had to do slave labour in company with other Jewish wives of Aryans. This meant she had to get up before four o'clock in the mornings, walk right across Vienna, and work some 14 hours without food or water. Unlike most Viennese, Tante Laura's friends stood by her and never wavered. She and my uncle lived outside Vienna where country folk knew how to augment their rations.

Heirlooms for eggs

As in the First World War, people began bartering family heirlooms for a few eggs. The war dragged on and the papers wrote about strategic retreats, rather than great victories. Austrians, realising that the war was lost, now talked of having been occupied and forced to fight. Laura now did not go to work any more, removed the yellow star and used trams at will. Word reached her that a peasant had a sow in litter and was more than eager to exchange the piglets for the most he could get. But silence and speed were vitally important since withholding livestock from the army was a capital offence.

Tante Laura sadly packed the last of what could possibly be exchanged, rose before daylight and dressed as for a mountaineering expedition. Uncle, who quietly watched her, was asked for a rope. What do you want a rope for, he asked and his wife said: wait and see. She got on an overcrowded train. After many hold-ups,

she reached her destination, trudged down muddy lanes and crawled under hedges to the peasant's house. Handing over her last possession, she got the man to help her tie the piglet round her waist. She had been a comfortable lady in pre-Anschluss days. Now her clothes hung on her, and could easily accommodate a piglet. The front trotters were tied round her neck, the hind legs round her waist, the little head found plenty of room in her loose and empty bra.

Overcoming the Russians

Somehow she survived the nightmarish homeward journey. This, though, was the day the Russians entered Vienna and by the time the train drew into the station, it was swarming with soldiers. When Laura saw the Red Army uniforms she screamed with joy, she wanted to kiss and hug the Russians. But two pairs of very strong arms grabbed her on alighting from the train and Laura realised with horror what that meant. She had hoped and prayed that the coming of the Russians would put an end to terror, but the reality was quite different. Their minds were set on rape. Bitterly disappointed, my aunt flew into the rage of a person who had exchanged one evil for another. Tumbling out of her memories came a stream of taboo swear words in Czech. The two Russians said tearfully that they had not heard such dulcet tones since their childhood. It reminded them of their mothers and grandmothers. Laura collected her wits, made the would-be rapists help her up and then, pointing to her piglet-rounded waistline, demanded safe conduct to her house. Firmly linking her arms in those of her two cavaliers, she willy-nilly got it.

60th Anniversary Tea and Cabaret

The response has been excellent for the AJR's 60th Anniversary Tea and Cabaret on 9 September.

The Grosvenor House Hotel is the venue for this special event which we will celebrate with a full sit-down tea and cabaret entertainment. There will be ample opportunity to see, and chat with, friends old and new.

The highlight of the afternoon will be the leading cabaret duo, 'Kit and the

Widow' who have appeared in the West End, on television, as well as on national and world tours.

Booking is still open. Tickets at £18 each - which includes a full tea and cabaret entertainment - may be reserved with the AJR's Head Office. Booking forms are available from Head Office, or telephone the Secretary, AJR 60th Anniversary Celebration Tea, 020 7431 6161 to reserve a place.

Newsround

Unwanted charity

A London charity has declined to be further involved in distributing royalties received from *Mein Kampf*. Sales receipts are said to be about £50,000 a year and have been applied, until now, to helping victims of Nazism.

French railways sued

About 100 Holocaust survivors and their heirs are suing SNCF in a New York court alleging that the company profited from transporting tens of thousands of Jews and others to concentration camps. SNCF argues that the New York court does not have jurisdiction.

Pope's visit

The Pope visited Babi Yar during his Ukrainian visit and laid flowers at a monument. It is estimated that the Nazis massacred between 100,000 and 200,000 Jews there.

Monet proceeds shared

The proceeds of sale by auction of a Monet painting, stolen by the Nazis from its Jewish owners, will be shared by the heirs of the family and the immediate past owners.

Hitler's bunker

The Jewish Claims Conference will assume ownership of Hitler's Berlin bunker and will sell the site to distribute the proceeds, mainly to the heirs of the Wertheim family which was forced to sell the land to the Nazis.

Papon appeal dismissed

The European Court of Human Rights has dismissed the appeal of Maurice Papon against a 10 year sentence for his involvement in the deportation of Jews from France. His plea on grounds of health and age was rejected.

Demjanjuk on trial again

The US Government has applied to an Ohio court to deprive John Demjanjuk of US citizenship. It alleges that documents have come to light which prove he assisted the Nazis in the persecution of European Jews during WWII.

Germany's First Holocaust Chair

Frankfurt's JW Goethe University has created Germany's first Chair in Holocaust Studies with the appointment of a Swiss historian, Phillipe Burrin.