

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Two admirable blue stockings



Emma Lazarus

Exactly 100 years ago a plaque was affixed to the plinth of the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island. The inscription read:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

The promise contained in these stirring lines by Emma Lazarus was, alas, only temporary. In 1924 the US Congress ended unrestricted immigration, abruptly terminating the greatest Jewish population movement in history. It had started in 1881 when the Tsarist regime responded to the assassination of Alexander with a series of pogroms.

Within a year boatloads of fugitive Russian Jews arrived in the USA. Her encounter with them inspired the Sephardic Emma Lazarus, who had personally experienced neither poverty nor persecution, to write *Songs of a Semite*. In the composition of those poems she endeavoured to live up to her teacher Ralph Waldo Emerson's precept 'to show the celestial element in the despised present' (i.e. in humdrum daily life). On completing the cycle Lazarus dedicated it to a fellow woman writer, who, she wrote, 'did most among the artists of our day towards elevating and ennobling the spirit of Jewish nationality.' This dedicatee was George Eliot.

Eliot seems unique among her literary contemporaries - both Continental European and English - in espousing the cause of the Jews. Dostoevsky showed antisemitic tendencies, as did Gustav Freytag, and, to a lesser extent, Balzac. Among English novelists the best-selling Charles Dickens had created the stereotypical Fagin figure (although he subsequently tried to make amends with his sympathetic portrayal of Riah, a minor character in *Our Mutual Friend*). The similarly prolific Anthony Trollope made the foreign financier Melmotte a monomaniac - though not unique - villain in *The Way We Live Now*.

Eliot had not always been a philosemite. Criticising Disraeli's novels *Coningsby* and *Tancred* at the start of her literary career, she had written: 'The fellowship of race to which Disraeli exultantly refers is an inferior impulse ... Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade.' During the subsequent decades, when she immersed herself in philosophy and theology, travelled on the continent, fell under the spell of Heine, and suffered ostracism because of her unconventional lifestyle, her estimate of the Jews underwent a radical transformation.

And not only that. She hoped that *Daniel Deronda* (published in 1874) would 'widen the English vision'. For her, the Jews' preservation of their faith through centuries of dispersal and persecution was a model for the way the English might reaffirm their national consciousness.

But above all, of course, *Daniel Deronda* was a Zionist novel, and Eliot deserves to be called the greatest, if not the first, gentile Zionist. And, like most visionaries, she was - often wilfully - misunderstood. To Leslie Stephen (Virginia Woolf's father) Zionism was a



George Eliot

scheme only one degree less chimerical than a plan for a gipsy nationality in Africa.

When Henry James was asked to review the novel, he found the task so onerous that he wrote his critique in the form of a debate between three readers. One of his *alter egos* said she was wearied by the Jewish burden of the story and felt tempted to skip chunks. Another dubbed *Daniel Deronda* 'a dreadful prig' and subjected him to primitive antisemitic jibes: 'I am sure he had a nose and I hold that the author has shown great pusillanimity in her treatment of it. She has quite shirked it.'

The fact that Henry James felt impelled to inject this crude example of gutter antisemitism into his review shows the forces George Eliot was battling. She was fully aware of this, as shown by the title of one of the last essays she wrote: 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' (the acronym for *Hierusalem est perdita*: Jerusalem is lost - the cry uttered during the Crusader pogroms).

Two centuries ago Wordsworth wrote: 'Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour/England has need of thee.' Today, when the air is filled with the din of new 'Hep! Hep!' cries from Peshawar to Finsbury Park, one would like to rewrite Wordsworth's lines, substituting George Eliot for Milton, and Zion for England.

Virtual reality

Richard Grunberger

Though *der Heim* - the Yiddish-speaking heartland of Eastern Europe - vanished over half a century ago, it spawned a rich folklore, some of which fed into world culture. Prime examples are the legend of the *Golem* - the precursor of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* - and the notion of demonic possession exemplified in Anski's *Dybbuk*.

At a less elevated level, stories abounded about archetypal fools, braggarts, drunks, beggars (*shnorrers*) and gossips (*yentes*). The fools all inhabited the real, existing Polish town of Chelm (Chelmno). German simpletons, in contrast, lived in the fictitious Schilda - hence the term *Schildbürger*. The English equivalent, Gotham - as in 'Three wise men of Gotham went to sea in a sieve' - was an obscure village in Northants.

Braggarts are personified in the European imagination by somewhat flaky aristocratic figures like Baron von Münchhausen and Sir John Falstaff. The Yiddish counterpart as teller of tall tales is the plebeian Hershele Ostropoler. The last named was ordinary, but not average. In the Yiddish communal subconscious, Mr Average - the Victorians' 'man on the Clapham omnibus', alias Joe Bloggs - is Chaim Yankel.

After faces lost in the crowd, places lost in the distance. When the English want to evoke the back of beyond they say Timbuktu, and the Americans Hicksville. The Yiddish counterpart to those places is Yehupets (the Austrian equivalent is *Kigrizpotschen* - possibly a strange compound of Kirghiz and slippers).

Mention of Austria brings to mind their national stereotype of cretinous aristocrats: Graf (Count) Bobby. His nearest English equivalent, other than the generic term 'chinless wonder', is Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster. Yiddish folklore has produced nothing remotely similar; lacking a land of their own, the Jews also lacked a landed aristocracy. The closest Jewry got to having a hierarchy was the priesthood - and no one would poke fun at that living repository of traditional wisdom.

'Britain's Schindler' knighted



Nicholas Winton, pictured here with Esther Rantzen (left) and Vera Gissing, was guest of honour at a gathering of 200 Kindertransport members held at the Imperial War Museum last August. The meeting, organised by the AJR, was part of the Continental Britons Exhibition programme of events

The 93-year-old man known as 'Britain's Schindler' has been awarded a knighthood. For nearly 50 years he concealed his humanitarian mission: his late wife, Greta, discovered that he had organised the evacuation of 669 youngsters out of Czechoslovakia only when she found lists of the children in an old leather briefcase in their attic.

In 1938 Nicholas Winton, who was working for the London Stock Exchange, was invited to Prague by a friend at the British embassy. On arrival, he was asked to assist in the refugee camps. Noticing that nobody seemed to be helping the children, he set up an office at a dining room table in a city hotel. Soon, parents were rushing to

'the Englishman in Wenceslas Square', trying to persuade him to include their children on his lists to get them out of the country. Eventually he put 669 children on eight trains for London. But on the outbreak of war, on 3 September 1939, the ninth train, the one carrying the most children, never left the station.

One of 'Winton's children', Vera Gissing, said he 'rescued the greater part of the Jewish children of my generation in Czechoslovakia. Very few of us met our parents again - they perished in concentration camps. Had we not been spirited away, we would have been murdered alongside them.'

HS

Thea's Diary

On 27 January, marking this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, Radio 4's Women's Hour is broadcasting the first of ten episodes of *Thea's Diary* (originally *Das Tagebuch der Thea Gersten*). Thea Hurst (née Gersten) was born in Leipzig in 1925 and now lives in Yorkshire. She wrote her diary between 1939 and 1947. It begins shortly after Kristallnacht in Leipzig and chronicles loss, exile and coming to terms with a new culture in England. The programme can be heard at 10.45 am with daily repeats at 7.45 pm.

BD



AJR Journal

Richard Grunberger Editor-in-Chief
 Ronald Channing Executive Editor
 Howard Spier Editorial and Production
 AJR Journal, 1 Hampstead Gate,
 1a Frogna, London NW3 6AL
 Tel: 020 7431 6161 Fax: 020 7431 8454
 e-mail: editorial@ajr.org.uk
 www.ajr.org.uk

JACKMAN
SILVERMAN

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

26 Conduit Street, London W1R 9TA
 Telephone: 020 7409 0771 Fax: 020 7493 8017

Lost in transit

Richard Grunberger

At a recent '43 Club evening a member criticised the choice of Continental Britons as the title of last year's exhibition at the Jewish Museum. His point was that we should define ourselves by the language and culture in which we had our roots, rather than by that into which we got pitch-forked. Warming to his theme, the speaker even found fault with his contemporaries for having omitted to pass on the German linguistic and cultural heritage to their children. Refugees who had totally anglicised themselves, he concluded, provided a vindication of the Nazi *canard* that Jews were not part of Germany.

I felt sufficiently provoked by this bizarre take on the process of adaptation to a new environment which we all underwent willy-nilly on arrival, that I drew up a mental profit-and-loss account of my own transformation from Jewish Austrian into Continental Briton. The account had gone into the red, I recalled, almost from the start. It took next to no time to establish that continentals knew more about Britain than Brits did about the continent. For instance, while Shakespeare, Wilde and Shaw had been names to conjure with on the other side of the Channel, Goethe, Schiller and Hauptmann were virtually unknown in Dover and points north.

Over time I realised that England was not the *Land ohne Musik* of German myth, but I could still not comprehend why choral works such as *The Messiah* drew larger audiences than operas over here. Opera seemed to be a real touchstone. How often, while recounting the well-worn anecdote about Slezak-Lohengrin asking 'When is the next swan due?' did I discover that my listeners didn't know the plot of the opera. More fundamentally, while in the old country the text of operatic arias had entered public consciousness and spawned parodies, over here the lyrics hadn't even been translated into English. Viennese sang *Auf in den Kampf die Schwiegermutter naht* and

Berliners crooned *Reich' mir die Hand mein Leben Komm' auf mein Schloss mit mich/Ich will dir Kuchen geben Denn Semmeln frisst de nich*. The UK called one the *Toreador's Song*, and the other *Là ci darem la mano* - and how many Brits were Italian speakers?

As against this, I concluded, Germany had produced nothing to equal Elizabethan poetry, Jacobean drama or Restoration comedy. Likewise, the architecture of (and art displayed within) Blenheim, Burleigh House and Castle Howard could more than hold their own against Hohenzollern, Wittelsbach and Habsburg palaces. And who among nineteenth-century German novelists could enter the lists against Jane Austen, the Brontës, Mrs Gaskell, George Eliot, Thackeray, Trollope and Dickens? Certainly not Gustav Freytag - though Theodor Storm and Fontane might be lone contenders.

Conclusive proof of the appallingly low level of contemporary German literary taste was proved by Richard Wagner's prose-poem *Das Rheingold*, which he published before setting it to music. It was riddled with alliterations - e.g. the Firegod Loge's *zur lockenden Lohe mich wieder zu wandeln spür ich lockende Lust* - interspersed with mock-poetic effusions à la *Des Gatten Treu' ertrotzte die Frau/trüge sie hold den hellen Schmuck/den schimmernd Zwerge schmieden/rührig im Zwange des Reifs*. In the same year, 1852, as this stilted high-faluting mock-medieval confection rolled off the printing presses - and was snapped up by the German *Bildungsbürgertum* (bourgeoisie of education) - Charles Dickens published *Bleak House!* I rest my case.

(None of the above should, however, be construed as suggesting that we ought to be grateful to those who forced us to flee for our lives to a country where, happily, Wagner was better known for composing *Here comes the bride/ All dressed in white* than for writing *Das Judentum in der Musik*.)

NEWTONS

Leading Hampstead Solicitors
advise on
Property, Wills, Family Trusts
and Charitable Trusts

French and German spoken
Home visits arranged

22 Fitzjohn's Avenue,
London NW3 5NB

Tel: 020 7435 5351
Fax: 020 7435 8881

CONSULTANT

to long established English
Solicitors (bi-lingual German)
would be happy to assist clients
with English, German and
Austrian problems.

Contact Henry Ebner

Myers Ebner & Deane
103 Shepherds Bush Road
London W6 7LP
Telephone 020 7602 4631

ALL LEGAL WORK
UNDERTAKEN

AUSTRIAN and GERMAN PENSIONS

PROPERTY
RESTITUTION CLAIMS
EAST GERMANY - BERLIN

On instructions our office will
assist to deal with your
applications and pursue the matter
with the authorities.

For further information
and appointment
please contact:

ICS CLAIMS
146-154 Kilburn High Road
London NW6 4JD

Tel: 020 7328 7251 (Ext. 107)
Fax: 020 7624 5002

Furs and Swells

Martha Blend

One way or another, animal fur has played a small but not insignificant part in my life. It's practically a banned substance in this country now, though one still sees it on the backs of women abroad. They probably haven't been subjected to the poster campaign that shows how many dumb wild animals have to die to clothe a dumb human. When I tried to give away even a favourite suede jacket which no longer did up on me to my niece's daughter, I was told the family had no use for animal skins. Do they wear clogs then, I wondered. Swears and Wells, Harrods and other stores which used to display in their windows models elegantly attired in mink and musquash have long since closed their doors or their fur departments and a transparent top rather than a white fur is now the badge of celebrity at a film premiere.

My earliest memories are of my mother - normally wrapped in a shabby old coat - transformed by the addition of a fox fur when going out visiting. I can still see in my mind's eye its gingery pelt slung obliquely over her shoulder with the triangle of the fox's face on her hip. Two beady eyes gleamed near the tip of the triangle and a clip behind it slotted into a loop at the other end to anchor the creature to its wearer. A bushy tail completed the picture.

After the Nazis entered Austria my mother tried desperately to find a safe haven for me with foster parents in England. We received photographs from a couple who were prepared to take me on. He was dressed in winter coat and trilby hat, she resplendent in a fur coat which gave an exaggerated image, as I was to discover, of their worldly wealth. 'You see, you're going

to rich people,' my mother commented, in her attempt to sweeten the pill of my departure.

When I arrived I found out that the said garment was a grey squirrel fur. My foster mother - I called her 'auntie' - had had it remodelled to what was then a more fashionable shorter length. What with its disproportionately large collar and my aunt's diminutive size and plump figure, she looked in it for all the world like a large bumble bee. The coat did yeoman service in keeping her warm during the war and was finally demobbed with the soldiery when the war ended.

Now followed a period of making-do. Lino, which had seen service in many places during our evacuation, was cut up again to fit our London flat and no one gave a second thought to a luxury like fur. However, it was to come into its own again following the period of austerity. Then I began to notice a phalanx of black-clad ladies creeping towards our local synagogue. It was the middle-aged women of the Jewish community decked in what had become the uniform of the well-to-do, a black Persian lamb coat. Its tightly-curved surface did not lend itself to a caressing touch, but the prestige it conferred on its wearer was considerable. In fact, to be seen without one on the High Holy days was a sign of social failure.

When I married I found that my father-in-law was a furrier by trade. He had worked for Harrods at one point and then gone on to start his own business in the City. When he was bombed out of there he transferred his workshop to the top of his house in Stoke Newington.



Trude Grenville and Klary Friedl walking on Regent Street, c. 1950
(courtesy of Anthony Grenville)

My mother-in-law was forever complaining about the dust this brought to their living quarters. I was fascinated by the paraphernalia of his trade - the trestle tables, model stands and bundles of skins and lengths of lining materials. My father-in-law used to amuse us by making wicked jokes about the sack-like figures of his clients. 'Make it long,' they instructed. The length was a matter of status. He also told us about his experiences of service in the First World War when the authorities mistook his trade for that of a farrier. Hardly knowing one end of a horse from another, he was nonplussed when expected to shoe it.

Near the end of her life my aunt also acquired one of the desirable Persian lamb coats. When she died, I found she had left me a small amount of money, her silver candlesticks and the coat. The last found a home with her niece, but with the money I bought a desk for my children from Heal's and a luxurious sheepskin coat for myself. When I told the story to a neighbour she commented rather cruelly: 'You've converted the aunt to the coat.'

Denizens of shadowland

On general release, Stephen Frears's *Dirty Pretty Things* has been - favourably - described as a film about London, not a single shot of which will boost tourism. A lot of the action unfolds inside a cavernous luxury hotel whose sinister, brooding ambience puts one in mind of Kafka's *Castle*.

Most of the scenes are shot at night, partly because the hero is a night porter but also on the symbolic grounds that the entire cast of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants lead shadowy lives. They exist in a twilight zone where some fall victim to exploitation - including sexual abuse - by their own kith and kin, while others are the hunted quarry of sadistic immigration officers.

But *Dirty Pretty Things* is also a thriller whose main plot line is the step-by-step uncovering of a hugely lucrative, and sometimes lethal, trade in human body parts.

Even so, I, boasting first-hand, if semi-historical, acquaintance with refugee problems, found aspects of the film hard to credit. At the start of the Third Millennium, when the Council for the Welfare of Immigrants is a well-established UK institution, are asylum seekers really as clueless and friendless as here depicted? And can one believe the overnight conversion of the Nigerian from melancholy drifter into resourceful action man who hoists the promoter of the lethal body parts trade with his own petard?

All that takes a lot of swallowing, but what I found most dubious about the film was its underlying premiss. It is this: London enjoys its profitable and prestigious First World status partly because the dirty work needed to keep a metropolis ticking over is performed by menials from the Third World, to whose very existence Londoners are blithely impervious. *Dirty Pretty Things* wants to have it both ways by sending out a politically correct message gorily packaged in thriller form. It, moreover, forces one into a Tebbitt-like posture and to ask: if the UK is so inhospitable to asylum seekers, why do so many make it their favoured destination?

RG

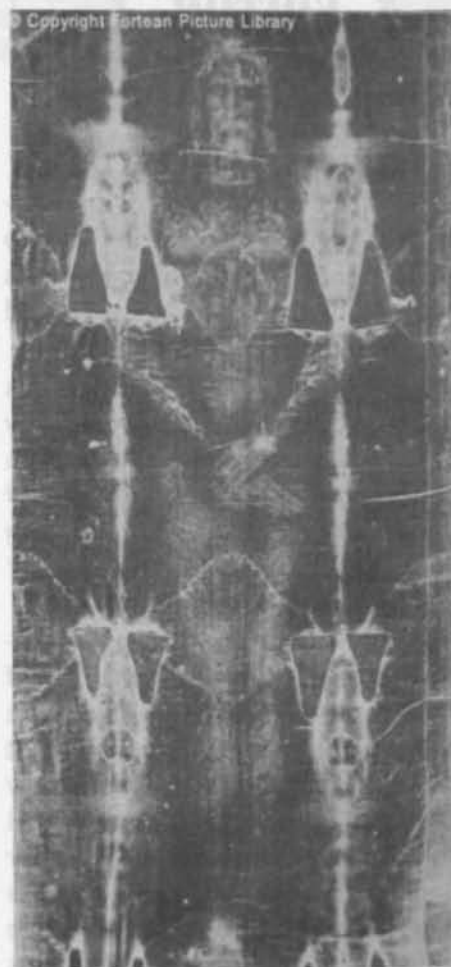
SCIENCE NOTEBOOK

The role of carbon dating Prof Michael Spiro

The advent of a new year always brings thoughts of age. Not just our own, but of life, the universe and everything, to quote Douglas Adams. Science programmes on TV often tell us the ages of objects found in archaeological digs and even the age of the Earth, but how do they know?

Many archaeological finds involve the remains of previous forms of life, like bones and clothes and wood which contain proteins and cellulose and other compounds of carbon. Now carbon, and certain other elements, can exist in several forms called isotopes (their nuclei contain different numbers of neutrons).

Almost all carbon atoms exist as carbon-12, where the number refers to the relative weight of the nucleus. However, one carbon atom in 830 billion exists as the isotope carbon-14. Its nucleus is radioactive and slowly decays. Tiny amounts of C-14 are continually formed when cosmic rays from outer space bombard nitrogen atoms in the upper atmosphere. The C-14 then combines with oxygen to form 'heavy' carbon dioxide, which mixes rapidly with the normal form of CO₂. Through photosynthesis this heavy form is taken up by plants, which in turn are eaten by animals. But once the plant or animal dies no more C-14 is taken up, and these atoms slowly decay within the dead organism. The ratio of carbon-14 to carbon-12 inside objects such as wood or bones then halves every 5,730 years (the so-called half-life of C-14 atoms), becoming a quarter after 11,460 years, and so on. The carbon ratio can be measured very accurately, so allowing us to determine the age of the specimen. Carbon dating works well for studying objects up to 20,000 years old, and even up to 50,000 years with suitable corrections.



A famous example is the Turin shroud, a cloth believed by many Christians to have been wrapped around the body of Jesus Christ. However, carbon dating of its linen threads by three independent laboratories in 1989 showed that the material was only 700 years old.

Extremely long half-lives of several hundred million years are possessed by two isotopic forms of the heavy metal uranium. Eventually these decay into two different isotopic forms of lead. Measurements of the amounts of the various parent uranium atoms and of the various daughter lead atoms occluded in different rocks has enabled scientists to determine their ages. As a result, we now know that the Earth's crust was formed some 4,300 million years ago. Perhaps that thought will calm us down as we wait impatiently for the next bus.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

GAULEITER GRUNBERGER

Sir - Your attitude towards present-day Germany is often so slanted as to border on the objectionable and is quite unworthy of a so-called responsible and erudite magazine.

So the fact that Schröder has refused to commit the German army to an attack on Iraq means that he is endorsing Haider, who is a friend of Saddam Hussein, as well as siding with the Palestinians against Israel? You can't be serious, Mr Grunberger!

As for Möllemann, his alleged Jew-baiting antics consist mainly of breaching the Eleventh Commandment 'Thou shalt not criticise Israel', and are undoubtedly no worse than the criticisms of Israel spouted every day by the 'Member for Baghdad East', George Galloway. It is true that Möllemann made some rather uncomplimentary comments about the deputy chief of the Judenrat, Friedmann, who is brilliant, but also rather arrogant. If, as you constantly imply, all Germans are inherently antisemitic, Möllemann's statements should have had the result of more votes for the FDP and not less! In fact, the FDP immediately distanced itself from him and forced his resignation from the national party.

Several friends and myself have taken to calling the Journal *Der Stürmer* and the editor a Gauleiter. Under the circumstances, I feel I have no alternative but to discontinue my membership.

As I am convinced that you will not publish this letter in whole or in part, I am sending copies to like-minded friends and acquaintances.

F Goldberg
Arundel

Regarding Schröder and Möllemann,
Mr Goldberg is referred to page 3 of

our January issue. His description of me, a fellow-Jewish refugee, as a Gauleiter is in execrable taste. Readers Ambrose, Bild, Brent, Foot, Hasseck, Houlton, Lustig, Manson, Prager, Rumney, Schatzberger, Suschitzky, Trott, Vajifdar and Walker have all had letters critical of me published in recent issues of the *Journal-Ed*.

Sir - During trips to the UK I am frequently asked, by both Jews and, particularly, non-Jews, to explain Israel's policies and actions. I don't always find it easy to reply, especially when I am asked to explain positions with which I disagree but feel the need to defend. Your lucid and eloquent articles are often a great help to me in this, with January's editorial being a prime example.

Shmuel Herold
Raana, Israel

Sir - Recently there have been attacks on RG in *AJR Journal* for two reasons: (a) that his contributions are too many; and (b) that readers disagree with some of his well-expressed views. I partially concur but find his English style admirable and I feel that without him as Editor and frequent writer there would be no *AJR Journal*.

Herbert Anderson
Norwich

Sir - I strongly underwrite every word our Editor has written about Israel and disagree with Liesel Houlton (Letters, January). Let her resign: that will be her loss.

Anne Pisker
London SW15

Sir - I am now 83 years old and living on a pension which was once quite comfortable but is now getting less

and less. At the same time, I would like to say how much I enjoy your journal, for which I wait anxiously each month. Not only is it full of interest but it also takes me back many years to when I was a young emigrant in England. Thank you very much.

Susanna Ascione
Rome

ANNUS MISERABILIS

Sir - Richard Grunberger writes (January issue) of his *annus miserabilis* and the opprobrium to which he was subjected during 2002. I am largely in agreement with him on most of the political issues facing us. However, I confess the subtlety in the fourth paragraph of his letter, concerning the fundamentalists, defeats me. I am not sure if he means that Jewish fundamentalism, although for the most part stopping short of terrorist killing, is to be deplored as much as the Muslim version. If that is indeed what he meant, I wholeheartedly (again) agree with him.

Dr Emil Landes
Highgate, London

Sir - Richard Grunberger has 'numbered both individual Iraqis and Egyptians among my friends' (January issue). Wow! You could have fooled me!

Martin Hasseck

CONTRADICTION

Sir - I feel I must take issue with Mr Rosner's description of Dr Sacks as our chief rabbi. He is the chief rabbi only to the orthodox community and, indeed, would strongly object to being the chief rabbi to the independent, reform or liberal congregations - seeing that he does not even recognise us as Jews!

Mrs M Smith
London NW9

FURTWÄNGLER SMEAR

Sir - Your December editorial implies that Wilhelm Furtwängler was a Nazi supporter. However, Furtwängler had a Jewish secretary, and he did what he could to help Jewish refugees. The

story goes that the BBC would not consider any recommendation from Furtwängler of a refugee because it was invariably favourable whatever the merits of the person concerned. He was entirely apolitical, yet, to my knowledge, never conducted in the German-occupied countries. It is true that on occasion he conducted concerts for which Toscanini had been scheduled. Toscanini was neither a Jew nor a refugee but just happened to be an opponent of the Italian regime. I can see nothing wrong in Furtwängler taking his place. I feel he has been unjustifiably maligned by being tarred with the Nazi brush and this should be put right.

CF Flesch
London NW6

The fact that Toscanini was not a pre-ordained victim of fascism makes his anti-fascist stance all the more admirable! Thomas Mann's patriotic 'Reflections of an Unpolitical Man' (1918) was a source of bitter regret to him subsequently and, as a committed champion of democracy, he refused to shake the hand of the apolitical Furtwängler in 1949 - Ed.

CRITIQUE

Sir - Your skit on British monarchs (October issue): please do not print such unmitigated rubbish again.

G Rosenthal
London N2

FATEFUL FRIDAY

Sir - Your item about the rebuilding of the Moria Primary School in Cologne (September issue) kindled my memory of the events of 64 years ago. On that fateful Friday morning in October 1938, my teacher, Mr Simons, told our class that all pupils whose parents were Polish must return home at once. I was then ten years old. I took my eight-year-old brother home, and we found our mother packing a few belongings as we were being expelled to Poland. My mother and brother perished

there during World War Two.

Mordechai Vered
Holon, Israel

PERSPECTIVE, PLEASE

Sir - I can appreciate Laura Selo's feelings regarding her exploitation (November issue), but it was surely better to be exploited than to have been held in a concentration camp. I write as someone who knows of suffering through the hardships of her parents and grandparents.

Felicity McCarthy
Sutton

ANTI-ISLAMIC PREJUDICE

Sir - I find Andrew Herskovits's letter (December issue) offensive. It seems to be based on a naïve assumption that all Muslims hold the same Islamic beliefs. Has Mr Herskovits studied the Koran as well as the Christian Testaments and the Torah and, if he has, how can he come up with such a simplistic difference? Mainstream Muslims have been at great pains to point out that the fundamentalist belief in martyrdom through suicide bombing is not based on the Koran. Does Mr Herskovits believe that both Christianity and Judaism are free of fundamentalist groups that put power and death before life and justice?

Ruth Barnett
London NW6

RED J IN PASSPORTS

Sir - My understanding of the red J in passports (editorial, December issue) is that the Swiss asked the Germans to do this so that the border guards could readily identify potential refugees as Jewish and turn them away if appropriate.

Rudi Leavor
Bradford

NEW GERMAN SYNAGOGUE

Sir - I have had a telephone call from a teacher in Solingen, my home town, to tell me that a synagogue is to be opened in neighbouring Wuppertal.

Ilse Shindel
Wembley, Middx

ARE YOU ON A LOW INCOME AND IN NEED OF HOMECARE HELP?

AJR might be able to offer financial assistance.

Members who might not otherwise be able to afford homecare please contact:

Estelle Brookner, Secretary
AJR Social Services Dept
Tel: 020 7431 6161

Companions of London

Incorporating
Hampstead Home Care

A long established company providing care in your home

Assistance with personal care
General household duties
Respite care
Medical appointment service

'OUR CARE IS YOUR CARE'
020 7483 0212/0213



SPRING GROVE

214 Finchley Road
London NW3

London's Most Luxurious
RETIREMENT HOME

- Entertainment-Activities
- Stress Free Living
- 24 Hour Staffing • Excellent Cuisine
- Full En-Suite Facilities

Call for more information
or a personal tour

020 8446 2117
or 020 7794 4455

enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk

Simon R Rhodes M.Ch.S.
STATE REGISTERED CHIROPODIST

Surgeries at:

67 Kilburn High Road, NW6 (opp M&S)
Telephone 020 7624 1576

3 Queens Close (off Green Lane)
Edgware, Middx HA87PU
Telephone 020 8905 3264

Visiting chiropody service available

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Kenwood House has a redoubtable collection of Rembrandts, Vermeers, Turners, Reynolds, Gainsboroughs, Van Dycks and Frans Hals with which the Iveagh Bequest has enriched the nation. They can be viewed daily inside this elegant eighteenth-century neo-classical house. But now they have a new neighbour.

Today's fashion artists may be interested in the Suffolk Collection of Jacobean and seventeenth-century royal portraiture, which has relocated to Kenwood from Greenwich Park. Many portraits of Jacobean family life were painted by the noted English artist William Larkin, 1585-1619. The Collection includes portraits of the Stuarts by Van Dyck and Lely, many commissioned by the Earls of Suffolk and Berkshire. In fact, there is a direct link to Charles I, who created the Earldom of Berkshire in 1626 for Thomas, second son of the Earl of Suffolk.

What is probably most exciting about the paintings is their air of mystery. Who are these people and when were they painted? And by whom? Few



Diana Cecil, Countess of Oxford by William Larkin (died 1619)

seventeenth-century artists signed their works and were rarely mentioned in existing bills and inventories. The first painting to greet you is possibly Catherine Knevet, Countess of Suffolk, possibly painted by William Larkin. Catherine was the second wife of Lord Thomas Howard, 1st Earl of Suffolk, whom she married in 1583. There is evidence that the Countess was a spy. She is believed to have received £1000 a year from the Spanish government in return for 'information'.

The Suffolk Collection includes family portraits, royal portraits and works by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch masters. Upstairs, Larkin's full-length portraits of the twins, Anne Cecil, Countess of Stamford, and Diana provide outstanding examples of the fashions of the day. Larkin is noted for his distinctive paintings of drapery, which seem weighted in metal. The sisters, wearing their slightly disdainful Jacobean look, are in full regalia of slashed silk dresses, fashionable around 1615. Here is all the cloak-and-dagger mystery of the period: draped sleeves, silk hankies, caperie and draperie. The girls' mother, Elizabeth Countess of Exeter, wears a black dress, so velvety it is almost tangible. Other features in this room are blond, crimped hair and pointed slippers with silver baubles. And that's just the women!

The popular Edward Sackville, 4th Earl of Dorset 1590-1652, wears strands of black silk ribbon in his left ear. A supporter of Charles I, Edward killed Lord Bruce of Kinloss, father of the 1st Earl of Elgin, in a duel in 1613. Around his neck is a ruff like a starched tablecloth. Trendy men of his day were so bejewelled and beribboned, you wonder how they could dine, never mind duel! His wilder, darker brother, Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset, is richly adorned for the wedding of King James I's daughter in 1613.

Yet the portraiture anticipates the progression from extravaganza to Puritan austerity that Cromwell and the Civil War of 1542 were to impose. A portrait of King Charles I is a copy of an original by Anthony van Dyck, principal painter to the Court of Charles I. That of his son, Charles II, painted in the studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, may have been added to this collection by James Grahme, a supporter of Charles's brother, James II.

RG's INTERFACE

Israel (a) David Merron's *Collectively Yours* (Bakewell Country Books, 1999) is a study of the kibbutz movement with a bleak prognosis for its future. Even so, kibbutzim account for 40 per cent of the country's agricultural - and 10 per cent of its industrial - production. (b) *Divine Intervention*, a Palestinian-made French-speaking film about love across the Arab-Israeli divide, has won the international critics' prize at Cannes. Its prospects for an Oscar nomination are slim because Palestine is not recognised as a sovereign state.

Shanghai. (a) Bernard Wasserstein's *Secret War in Shanghai* (Boston/ New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999) deals with the activities of competing intelligence services in China's greatest port during World War Two. The most problematic character in the book is the editor of the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*, Ossi Lewin, whose pro-Japanese stance caused him to be denied entry into the USA and Israel after the war. (b) The *Gelbe Post*, a fortnightly catering for German-speaking Jewish refugees resident in wartime Shanghai, is now available as a reprint.

Berlin. Alice and Gerhard Zadek, *Ihr seid wohl meschugge* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1999) is the joint autobiography of a married couple who, imbued with youthful idealism, returned to East Berlin from their wartime refuge in Manchester. Though both laboured diligently for the reconstruction of the DDR, they became objects of suspicion in their new-old *Heimat*. For one, they were returnees from the West; for another, they worked for official acknowledgement of the specifically Jewish contribution made by the likes of Herbert Baum and his associates to the anti-Nazi resistance.

London. Nicholas Maw's Holocaust opera *Sophie's Choice* (based on William Styron's novel), performed at Covent Garden under Sir Simon Rattle's baton, has proved a resounding success.

Bonn. The controversial Leni Riefenstahl exhibition is currently on display at the House of History of the Bundesrepublik.

Chink of light

THE RIGHTEOUS: THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST

Martin Gilbert

Doubleday £25.00

There is a Jewish saying: 'He who saves one person saves the world.' In this book Martin Gilbert focuses our attention on one aspect of the Holocaust that has not received much publicity: the people of all nationalities and persuasions who saved Jewish lives. He mentions the better-known rescuers such as Frank Foley, the British diplomat in Berlin who issued visas for desperate refugees, and Raoul Wallenberg, who gave protective passes to Jews in Budapest. However, the book is mainly concerned with the 'unsung heroes' who sheltered Jews at great risk to their own lives.

Gilbert gives details of rescue work in all the countries of Nazi-occupied Europe. In a few - notably Denmark, Finland and Bulgaria - there was strong resistance to the deportations. Apparently Belgium concealed the greatest number of Jews. In France, despite the disgraceful behaviour of its leaders and policemen, many were taken in by families. In Italy the monasteries provided hiding places for many Jews. Even in Berlin 4,700 Jews who had been held in the Rosenstrasse detention centre were released due to the sustained protest of their Aryan wives. There are examples of kindness even in concentration camps.

For the most part, it was ordinary people, as well as clergy, who opened their doors to the persecuted. Some helped because of a bond of friendship dating from before the German occupation; others did so out of religious conviction or simple humanity.

Yet in paying tribute to the extraordinary bravery of these men and women we cannot lose sight of the fact that they were a minority and, although thousands of Jews were hidden in cellars, barns and lofts or were provided with false papers, millions were allowed to go to their deaths without protest from their neighbours, whether through fear, indifference or opportunism. Nor was it at the behest

REVIEWS

of the Catholic hierarchy that individual priests followed their consciences and saved the lives of Jews.

As a reader, one would have liked a more selective approach to the material. Gilbert tends simply to pile on examples when a more subtle analysis of the circumstances would shed more light on these. Nevertheless, this book serves as a caveat against stereotyping - the Germans, the Poles, the church - and the deeds of the rescuers, some of whom are honoured at the Yad Vashem memorial institute, are a chink of light in the darkness of the Holocaust.

Martha Blend

A tale of three countries

WHENCE WE CAME, WHERE WE WENT: A FAMILY HISTORY

Walter Albert Eberstadt

W.A.E. Books, New York 2002

Last September I organised a conference on the part played by the refugees from Hitler in the German-language broadcasting of the wartime BBC and in the radio stations run by the British occupation forces in post-war Germany. There was frequent mention of a Major Walter Everitt's role in the setting up of Radio Hamburg, the future Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk.

I was consequently delighted to discover from the autobiography of Walter Eberstadt that he had been that Walter Everitt, in his previous incarnation as a British officer, and that he had exercised a vital influence on Radio Hamburg at the ripe age of 24, launching the careers of such golden figures as Axel Eggebrecht and Peter von Zahn.

Born in 1921 and raised in a respected Hamburg Jewish banking family, Eberstadt has a string of achievements to his credit. The family escaped to England in 1936, and in 1939 Walter gained a place at Christ Church, Oxford - my own college some 25 years later. There, however, the

parallels end, for Eberstadt's studies were painfully interrupted by internment on the Isle of Man, then by service in the British army in Normandy.

His outstanding abilities were evident in the responsibilities he shouldered as an officer in Hamburg, in his first civilian job for the *Economist's* Intelligence Unit, and above all in the spectacular success he enjoyed when he left Britain for New York in 1951. Driven partly by the impulse to make the career that the Depression and Hitler had denied his father, Eberstadt rose very high in the elite banking house Lazard Frères.

Everywhere Eberstadt seems automatically to have gravitated to the top. This applies most obviously to his career as a banker, but also to his charitable commitments to a row of deserving institutions, from the Martha's Vineyard Preservation Trust, of which he became chairman after building a summer home in the area, to New York's New School University, an institution with strong refugee connections of which he became a senior trustee.

Eberstadt was equipped by temperament and inclination to make the acquaintance of highly placed people. His memoirs are studded with vignettes of members of the British upper classes, City grandees, influential figures from New York financial and intellectual circles, and a slew of bankers, from Herman Abs of the Deutsche Bank to Arthur Burns and Alan Greenspan of the US Federal Reserve Bank.

A British reader will regret that a man of such ability should have chosen America as the country where he could best deploy his talents. Eberstadt justifiably resented the callous way in which his adopted country had interned him in 1940 and had refused him British nationality until after the end of the war.

Given that he spent 11 years in Britain after the trauma of his internment, in the British army, at Oxford and in the City, it also appears likely that a deciding factor in his choice was the unlimited prospect offered to a dynamic young man by Wall Street in 1951, compared to the restrictions that hamstrung the City under Attlee and Cripps.

Yet Britain was also kinder to the young Eberstadt than America would have been. Emigration to Britain was easier for his family than it would have been to America, where immigration quotas were rigorously maintained. Nor did Eberstadt at his British public school undergo the antisemitic backlash experienced by his Jewish fellow students in America every time the Jew-hating Father Coughlin made a radio broadcast.

Furthermore, Eberstadt's easy entry to Oxford would not have been matched at the American Ivy League colleges, which kept Jewish students to a small quota intake until after 1945. This remarkable refugee success story owes something to all three of the countries in which he lived.

Anthony Grenville

Eager for Armageddon part II

THE WAR THAT MADE THE NAZIS
BBC2

This programme had a very simple thesis: in 1919 most Germans refused to accept that they had been militarily defeated and considered the Treaty of Versailles an unendurable affront to national self-esteem. Within a decade millions were turning to Hitler, who pledged himself to tear up the treaty and punish the 'traitors' who had signed it. What he also promised - unmistakably if only subliminally - was to stage a second round of the war in order to reverse the outcome of the first.

The project of preparing for a 'second round' started within weeks of the Armistice. General Ludendorff kickstarted the process by fabricating the notorious Stab-in-the-Back myth according to which the army had not been beaten in the field, but betrayed by politicians and pacifists. While Versailles only allowed Germany a humiliatingly small army, military honour was 'satisfied' by *Freikorps* desperados battling Poles beyond the borders and Communists within. Nostalgia for war suffused the writings of Ernst Jünger and Ernst von Salomon. Astonishingly, many Germans even

professed to read a similar message in the pages of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* - a work the rest of the world saw as a pacifist disavowal of war.

Shortly after the publication of this book, the country was engulfed in economic crisis, which saw unemployment treble and the Nazi vote increase tenfold (!) between 1928 and 1932.

It was at this point in the documentary's otherwise excellent narrative that I spotted an omission. There was simply insufficient emphasis on the 'youth vote'. The Nazis were a party of the young, as exemplified by the fact that Hitler was only 44 when he became Chancellor. I am convinced that the majority of the 2 to 3 million youngsters who reached voting age between 1928 and 1932 felt they had missed out on the glorious experience of war, and voted Nazi in order to repair that omission.

The commentary might also have pointed out that whereas in 1930 65 million Germans felt claustrophobically constricted within their post-Versailles borders, nowadays 83 million exist quite contentedly in the smaller space assigned to them at Yalta.

Richard Grunberger

Afterglow

GRACE NOTES

Karen Gershon

The Happy Dragons' Press: New Garland Poetry Series, 2001, £5.00

Back in the 1960s, the late Karen Gershon published her *Selected Poems*, a volume mostly dedicated to her Poems on Jewish Themes. These were piercingly honest poems, whose plain, almost humdrum, manner had cumulatively a most powerful effect. She was acclaimed at the time by many of England's leading poets.

Now, 22 of her last poems have appeared posthumously in a beautiful 18-page, hand-set, hand-printed, limited edition. No longer about the Holocaust, these poems are philosophical, dwelling on old age

and mortality in a gentle and contemplative manner:

Old women ought to feel
compassion for

the old men whom they married
long ago,

who are the landlords of the boys
they loved ...

Elsewhere she writes:

We are the grace notes of the dead,
their echo and their afterglow;
as dead stars still exist as light ...

The poems are attractively accompanied by abstract drawings by Stella Tripp. The finely printed booklet is the work of Julius Stafford-Baker who, half a century ago, began by publishing the poetry of Bernard Kops. The editor of the New Garland Poetry Series is the poet Shirley Toulson. A collector's item.

Gerda Mayer

Annely Juda Fine Art

23 Dering Street
(off New Bond Street)
Tel: 020 7629 7578
Fax: 020 7491 2139

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

GERMAN and ENGLISH BOOKS BOUGHT

Antiquarian, secondhand and
modern books of quality
always wanted.

We're long-standing advertisers
here and leading buyers of
books from AJR members.

We pay good prices and
come to collect.

For an immediate response,
please contact:

Robert Hornung MA(Oxon)
2 Mount View, Ealing,
London W5 IPR

Email: hornungbooks@aol.com

Tel: 020 8998 0546 (5pm to 9pm is best)



PROFILE

Richard Grunberger

Engraver with gravitas



Käthe Strenitz

Everybody familiar with the story of 'refugees from Nazi oppression' has heard of the so-called Winton children, 669 Czech youngsters who arrived in the UK shortly before the war. The epithet 'Winton's children' applies to them twice over, a) because Nicholas (now Sir Nicholas) Winton worked tirelessly for their rescue, and b) because he stood in *loco parentis* to all those orphans-to-be.

Käthe Strenitz belonged to their number. She was born in 1923 in the glass-making town of Gablonz in the Sudeten part of Czechoslovakia. Her father, a tobacco importer, sat on committees that served both the Jewish and general community. The mother was something of a blue stocking who took advice on childrearing from a close friend, the famous Vienna-based psychologist Alfred Adler. Though Käthe encountered little antisemitism at her German *gymnasium*, she, like many of her generation, embraced Zionism and joined the continental counterpart to Habonim.

The other great enthusiasm of her early teenage years was art. Paradoxically her artistic education received a great fillip in the crisis year 1938 when the family moved to Prague. In the beleaguered capital she attended the *Officina Pragensis*, an art college offering courses on engraving, lithography, poster design, etc. Here she imbibed *avant garde* ideas and came under the influence of a distantly related older student, the poet Peter Kien (subsequent librettist of the Terezin opera *The Emperor of Atlantis*).

In March 1939 the Germans occupied Prague. Within a matter of weeks Käthe found herself on a Quaker-sponsored children's transport to England. She remembers no detail of the journey other than being put in charge of a compartment occupied by bawling, traumatised toddlers. Initially she had a soft landing in the UK, spending her first fortnight comfortably ensconced with two well-connected sisters en route to New York. What followed was a switch-back ride of contrasting

experiences. The nadir occurred on a farm at Fordingbridge, where she was given insufficient to eat and had to sleep on the landing. When she picked up some windfall fruit she was made to confess to stealing in front of the farmer's children. Next she caught impetigo off seasonal fruit-pickers from the East End of London. At that point she packed her bags and took the train to London - a display of initiative she still marvels at 60-odd years later.

Happier days followed at the David Eder Farm in Kent, set up to train future *kibbutzniks*. Here she picked frozen brussel sprouts and worked in the stone-floor kitchen, but enjoyed the high-spirited company of, among others, the future wife of Ernst Gombrich.

When Kent was declared a Protected Area Käthe was sent to a girls' hostel in North Hackney whose gloomy ambience put her in mind of Edgar Allen Poe. Her next stop was a farm owned by a cousin of the poet Walter de la Mare where she learnt to milk and to plough with horses.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to her, Mrs Winton had sent some of Käthe's drawings to Oskar Kokoschka, on whose recommendation she was awarded a British Council scholarship that took her to Regent Street Polytechnic. This sudden change in her fortune was not, however, as auspicious as it appeared. For one, because of the wartime call-up, elderly instructors recalled from retirement were staffing the faculty at Regent Street. These men purveyed an aesthetic which struck Käthe as hopelessly antiquated when compared to what she had recently imbibed at the *Officina Pragensis*. For another, the scholarship only paid her school fees, and she still had to do chilblain-inducing menial jobs - such as washing bottles for Express Dairy - to earn her keep.

She left the Polytechnic, did full-time war work and moved into Canterbury Hall, a hostel maintained by the Czech Trust Fund. Here she encountered the refugee poet Erich Fried and met her future husband, a Czech-Jewish journalist-turned-entrepreneur. They married during the war, and had a daughter in 1950, after which Käthe returned to the Regent Street Polytechnic to complete her art education. By that time her husband owned a plastics factory north of Kings Cross whose interior - as well as the surrounding industrial landscape - Käthe made the subject of many engravings. In subsequent years she received the Lord Mayor's Award for woodcuts, exhibited regularly at the Bankside gallery, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers, and in 1989 the Greater London Record office acquired her industrial drawings for their permanent collection.

Today Käthe feels fulfilled in both her work and family relationships - but the Holocaust has left deep scars. Apart from mourning her next-of-kin and persistent worry about Israel's future, she is particularly concerned that no archive anywhere caters for Peter Kien's literary estate.

INSIDE the AJR

Edinburgh supper meeting

Northern Region Group Co-ordinator Susanne Green made a special visit to update members on recent events. We met at the home of one of our members for supper (contributed by all present) and a chat. The interesting forthcoming programme begins with a talk and demonstration by Heather Valencia on Yiddish music. Vicky Gruneberg, who initiated the topics, kindly offered her home for the events. We were informed about an invitation to pay another visit to the marvellous Beth Shalom centre. Several people said they were agreeable to taking part in the AJR's newly launched oral history project.

Judy Gilbert

Brighton & Hove Sarid's belated Chanukah

We celebrated a belated Chanukah, with members enjoying the doughnuts, latkes, cakes and grapes provided by Myrna Glass and Fausta Shelton. The quiz that followed was enjoyed by all. The meeting was concluded by various members telling jokes fit for well-brought up people.

F Goldberg

Next meeting: Monday 17 February, 10.45 am. BBC broadcaster Stewart McIntosh will speak about his work

Manchester talk by Home trustee

We had a most successful meeting at the Morris Feinmann Home. In a talk laced with humour, Dr Peter Kurer enchanted his audience of some 40 people by relating the extraordinary coincidences in his busy life. He also spoke about his own background, which had created in him such interest in the care of the elderly. Dr Kurer had been chairman of the Morris Feinmann Home for 'more years than I can remember' (his words) and is still a trustee of the Home.

Werner Lachs

Happy family Chanukah party in Essex

Our Chanukah party was just like a large, happy family meeting. Two nice ladies were feeding us doughnuts and tiny potato latkes - lots of them. Things soon livened



Hermann Hirschberger welcoming guests at the Kindertransport Chanukah Party in the AJR Day Centre. Guests Irena and Peter Langford wrote to Sylvia Matus, the Manager of the Day Centre, to express their thanks: 'To all the hard-worked organisers and staff of the Chanukah Party. Thank you for a delightful afternoon and the marvellous feast provided for us. Every minute and mouthful was much appreciated'

up with a quiz and some joke-telling. A special treat was the distribution of Israeli 'Chanukah Gelt' made of chocolate, which Myrna Glass had thoughtfully brought back for us from her visit to Israel.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 11 February, 10.30 am. 1st Birthday - party with music

Liverpool group member speaks on European WIZO

Twenty people enjoyed a meeting at Harold House. The speaker was group member Sonia Strong on 'European WIZO - Then and Now'. Sonia (born Sonia Biener) spoke on the basis of her family's involvement in WIZO in Magdeburg before the war and her WIZO experiences in Palestine/Israel during and after the war, when WIZO gave support to survivors from Europe. Ten years ago WIZO re-established its European Council, which offers welfare support to survivors of smaller Jewish communities behind the Iron Curtain and lobbies the European Parliament on issues of antisemitism and human rights.

Next meeting: February (details to be announced)

'Sing-along' in Pinner

Jenny Kossow played her piano accordion to the 40 members present and led us in a Chanukah 'sing-along'. There was also some dancing, including Hava Nagilah with audience participation. This was followed by lighting the candles and a feast of traditional delicacies. It was also our group's fifth birthday. We now have a good

attendance of regulars, many of whom have become good friends. Our thanks also go to Vera and Irene, who arrange the monthly programme and have done so for as long as the group has existed.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 6 February, 2 pm: Dr David Wolgroch will speak about Shalvata, the counselling service within the Centre for Holocaust Survivors in Hendon

North London talk on the Spanish Inquisition

Despite being held up in traffic, Andrew Herskovits gave a fascinating, albeit abbreviated talk on 'The Fate of Spanish Jewry in the Wake of the Spanish Inquisition', stressing the sufferings of those who had converted at the hands of the Inquisition. He also spoke about those who in later years became part of the Spanish aristocracy. While waiting for Andrew's arrival, members took the opportunity to talk about their lives before and after their arrival in the UK, which made very interesting listening.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 27 February, 10.30 am. AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro, 'Making the Best of It - the Internment of Refugees, 1940-1941'

Surrey next meeting: Wednesday 5 February, 10.30 am. Contact Edmée Barta (01372 727 412) for details

Wessex next meeting: Wednesday, 19 February, 2.30 pm. Contact Mark Goldfinger (01202 552 434) after 6 pm for details

Voice of an angel



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Joy Puritz, granddaughter of legendary German soprano Elisabeth Schumann, telling the story of her grandmother's long and glittering career

The voice of the great turn-of-the-century operatic soprano Elisabeth Schumann rang out once again, loud and clear, through the AJR Day Centre to an appreciative audience of KT-AJR members. Her granddaughter, Joy Puritz, related Elisabeth's very special story - from her birth in 1888, listening to her mother's singing from under the grand piano being played by her father, making her first performance at the age of four, and being recognised as possessing a very fine voice and exceptional musicality.

While not missing out on a number of amours and husbands, Elisabeth Schumann spent ten highly successful years at the Hamburg Opera House before being persuaded to take up residence at the Vienna Opera, being followed there by her (Jewish) number two husband. As the singer retained her instantly recognisable singing voice with its astounding range and pitch well into the recording era, Joy Puritz was able to play a selection of her recordings dating mostly from the late 1920s well into the 1940s. The remastered discs available today capture much of her pure musical magic: only a magician could evoke such enthusiastic applause from the audience at the Day Centre at the end of each melody.

RDC

Northern Region Social Worker appointed

Barbara Dorrity has been appointed AJR's first Northern Region Social Worker. Based in Manchester, she will be working three days a week and can be contacted on tel/fax 0161 446 9926.

AJR HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sunday 18 May 2003 -
Friday 23 May 2003

THE FERNLEA HOTEL
11/17 SOUTH PROMENADE
ST ANNES-ON-SEA, LANCS F18 1 LU

£250 per person £13 supplement for sea view or deluxe room to include dinner, bed, breakfast, outing and entertainment

Call Ruth Finestone on
020 7431 6161 as soon as possible as numbers are limited

THE LUNCHEON CLUB

Rhoda Goodman
Shaare Zadek Medical Centre
will speak on
'The Impact of Urban Terror on
an Israeli Hospital'

Wednesday 19 February 2003
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
15 Cleve Road NW6 3RL

Early reservations please!
Lunch now only £5

Please telephone Sylvia or Susie

KT-AJR

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT
CLEVE ROAD

Monday 3 February 2003
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Andrea Lyttleton
will speak on 'Graphology'

Lunch £5

Reservations required
Please telephone
020 7328 0208

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE NEW ARRANGEMENTS

Members requiring
benefit advice
please telephone
Linda Kasmir on
020 7431 6161
to make an appointment at
AJR, 1 Hampstead Gate,
1a Frognal, NW3 6AL

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre 15 Cleve Road, West Hampstead, NW6
Tel: 020 7328 0208

Monday - Thursday 9.30 am - 3.30 pm

FEBRUARY	Afternoon Entertainment:
Mon 3	KT Lunch - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 4	Yokov Paul
Wed 5	Nicola Smedley
Thur 6	Katinka Seiner
Sun 9	DAY CENTRE CLOSED
Mon 10	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 11	Opdahl Trio
Wed 12	Amanda Palmer
Thur 13	Ronnie Goldberg
Sun 16	DAY CENTRE OPEN -AJR/FJR Paul Coleman -Musical Entertainer
Mon 17	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 18	Joe Kay
Wed 19	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 20	Jenny Kossew - Accordionist
Sun 23	DAY CENTRE CLOSED
Mon 24	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 25	Valerie Hewitt - Piano and Voice
Wed 26	Mike Marandi
Thur 27	Amanda Palmer

PLEASE NOTE: FROM JANUARY ONWARDS, THE DAY CENTRE WILL ONLY BE OPEN ONE SUNDAY IN EVERY MONTH - PLEASE SEE PROGRAMME ABOVE.

Stone Setting

The Stone Setting for the late Kurt Steiner will take place on Sunday 16 February 2003, 2 pm at the Liberal Cemetery, Pound Lane, Willesden, NW10.

Classified

Would anybody have any knowledge of a Will made by Mr Herbert Baer of 17 Daleham Gardens, London NW3, who died on 29 May 2002? Please contact Box No. 1264.

Miscellaneous Services

Manicure & Pedicure in the comfort of your own home. Telephone 020 8343 0976.

FJR CLUB

**THE PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE
15 CLEVE ROAD
LONDON NW6 3RL**

**Sunday 16 February 2003, 2 pm
Paul Coleman - Musical Entertainer**

**Open to all AJR members
Meetings: Once a month on Sundays**

ADVERTISEMENT RATES

FAMILY EVENTS

First 15 words free of charge,
£2.00 per 5 words thereafter.

CLASSIFIED, SEARCH NOTICES

£2.00 per 5 words.

BOX NUMBERS - £3.00 extra

DISPLAY ADVERTS

per single column inch 65mm £12.00

COPY DATE - 5 weeks prior to publication

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

North London

Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

South London

Ken Ambrose 020 8852 0262

Pinner (HA Postal District)

Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Surrey

Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)

Fausta Shelton 01273 734 648

Wessex (Bournemouth)

Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

East Midlands (Nottingham)

Bob Norton 01159 212 494

West Midlands (Birmingham)

Henny Rednall 0121 373 5603

North (Manchester)

Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Leeds HSFA

Trude Silman 0113 225 1628

Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool

Newcastle

Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Essex (Westcliff)

Larry Lisner 01702 300812

**VERY RELIABLE MATURE LADY
EX-NURSE**

WITH 1st CLASS REFERENCES

Seeks post as companion/assistant with a lady.

1-5 days per week; 3-5 hours per day.

Assistance with bathing/personal requirements and dressing.

Exercise/Light body-massage/Walking. Shopping.

Preparation of Meals.

Excellent Cook.

Own Car.

TEL: 020 8346 2777

ACACIA LODGE

Mrs Pringsheim, S.R.N. MATRON
For Elderly, Retired and Convalescent
(Licensed by Borough of Barnet)

- Single and Double Rooms.
- Ensuite facilities, CH in all rooms.
- Gardens, TV and reading rooms.
- Nurse on duty 24 hours.
- Long and short term and respite, including trial period if required.

From £350 per week
020 8445 1244/020 8446 2820 office hours
020 8455 1335 other times
37-39 Torrington Park, North Finchley,
London N12 9TB

**Leo Baeck Housing Association Ltd
Clara Nehab House
Residential Care Home**

All single rooms with en suite bath/shower
Short stays/Respite and 24 hour Permanent Care
Large attractive gardens
Ground Floor Lounge and Dining rooms
Lift access to all floors
Easy access to local shops and public transport

Enquiries and further information
please contact: The Manager
Clara Nehab House
13-19 Leaside Crescent
London NW11 0DA
Phone: 020 8455 2286

SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household electrical work

PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518

ALTERATIONS

OF ANY KIND TO LADIES' FASHIONS
I also design and make children's clothes
West Hampstead area
020 7328 6571

BELSIZE SQUARE APARTMENTS

24 BELSIZE SQUARE, NW3

Tel: 020 7794 4307 or 020 7435 2557

Modern Self-catering Holiday Rooms,
Resident Housekeeper, Moderate Terms
Near Swiss Cottage Station

AJR Seder Night

Second Night Seder Service
to be conducted by Rev. Fine
Thursday 17 April 2003

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
15 Cleve Road,
London NW6

Please telephone
020 7328 0208 for reservations
£23 per person
Limited space available for
wheelchairs
6 pm for 6.30 pm prompt start

Caring Carers

The experts in live-in Home Care.
We can provide long or short term assignments from our professional and reliable care team.

Please call our Care Manager
for a no obligation chat on:

020 7372 9041

Fax: 020 7372 9038

**BELSIZE SQUARE
SYNAGOGUE**

51 Belsize Square, NW3 4HX

We offer a traditional style of religious service with Cantor Choir and organ

Further details can be obtained from the synagogue secretary
Telephone 020 7794 3949

Minister: Rabbi Rodney J Mariner
Cantor: Rev Lawrence H Fine

Regular Services

Friday evenings at 6.45 pm

Saturday mornings at 10 am

Religion School: Sundays at 10 am to 1 pm

Nursery School: 9.15 am to 12.15 pm

Belsize under 3's: 9.30 am to 11.30 am

Space donated by Pafra Limited

BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

51 Belsize Square, London NW3

Our communal hall is available for cultural and social functions

Tel: 020 7794 3949

The AJR does not accept responsibility for the standard of services offered by advertisers

Obituary - Abba Eban

The Israeli politician and diplomat Abba Eban has died at the age of 87. Abba Eban dominated the first decade of Israeli diplomacy following the state's establishment in 1948, serving as its representative to the United Nations and as ambassador to Washington. He went on to become one of the Jewish state's most respected foreign ministers, serving for eight of the most turbulent years of its history, between 1966 and 1974.

Born Aubrey Solomon Meir in Cape Town, Eban was brought up in England, studying oriental languages and Classics at Cambridge. During the Second World War he served on the staff of the British Minister of State in Cairo. Later, as an intelligence officer in Jerusalem, he trained Jewish volunteers in methods of resistance in the event of a German invasion.

In 1946 Eban moved to British-ruled Palestine. A year later he spearheaded the embryonic Israeli state's successful campaign for recognition in the United Nations and, following independence, steered its often

stormy relations with the international body. In 1959 he left the diplomatic service and was elected a Labour member of the Knesset, quickly becoming a minister, before rising to deputy prime minister and foreign minister under Golda Meir.

His very British appearance, Oxbridge accent and instinctive elitism set him apart from the great majority of Israeli citizens. He remained something of an outsider in a society dominated by East European and oriental Jews.

Eban was fluent in many languages and endowed with a famous dry wit - one of his best-known sayings is that the Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat 'never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity.'

He was optimistic that peace would eventually come to the region, observing that 'history teaches us that men and nations only behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives.'

HS

Arts and Events Diary - February

Until 6 April 2003 'By the Rivers of Babylon: The Story of the Jews of Iraq'. Major new exhibition following the successful Continental Britons exhibition. Jewish Museum, Camden Town

To Yom Hashoah 'Am I My Brother's Keeper? Rescue in the Holocaust?' Jewish Museum, Sternberg Centre

To Sun 2 February Anne Frank: A History for Today Exhibition. Wood Green Central Library, High Road, London N22. Tel 020 8808 8772

Mon 3 February The Rev. Uta Blohm (German Lutheran Church, London), 'Religious Traditions and Personal Stories: Women Working as Priests, Ministers and Rabbis'. Club 43

Mon 10 Michael Faulkner MA, 'The Strange Story of Rudolf Rocker and the Jewish East End, 1895-1914'. Club 43

Mon 17 Dr Christine Pullen, 'Eleanor

Marx and the Men and Women of the British Museum in the 1880s'. Club 43

Wed 19 Radoslav Kvapil, piano: Beethoven, Viktor Ullmann, Pavel Haas. Beethoven and Oppressed Composers of our Times series. St James Piccadilly. Lunchtime concert, 1.05 pm, entry free

Mon 24 Professor Michael Alpert, 'A Snapshot of Mid-Nineteenth Century London'. Club 43

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club 43 Belsize Square Synagogue. Meetings 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig tel 01442 254360

Jewish Museum, 129-131 Albert Street, Camden Town, London NW1 tel 020 7284 1997

Jewish Museum, Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, London N3 tel 020 8349 1143

Central Office For Holocaust Claims Michael Newman

Compensation to French orphans

The French government now pays compensation to orphans whose parents were deported from France and died at the hands of the Nazis during the Second World War.

Applications are restricted to people who were under 21 at the time and who had one or both parents murdered as a consequence of deportation by the collaborationist Vichy regime. Excluded from an application are those victims who are already receiving a reparation pension from either the German or Austrian government.

Those eligible will receive either a one-time payment of 180,000 FF (approximately €27,000/£18,000) or a monthly pension for life of 3,000 FF (approximately €450/£300).

Applications should be addressed to the Ministère de la Défense, Direction des Statuts des Pensions et de la Réinsertion Sociale, Quartier Lorge, Rue Neuve de Bourg L'Abbey, BP 6140, 14037 Caen Cedex, France. The telephone number is 0033 231 384 506.

East Germany property restitution

Owners of properties in the former East Germany, including East Berlin, which were lost, stolen or confiscated as part of the Nazi aryanisation programme, can now apply for compensation.

Under the terms of a law passed by the reunified Germany, the Jewish Claims Conference has been appointed as the legal successor to properties that were not claimed within the December 1992 deadline imposed by the German government.

Today, through the Goodwill Fund, the Claims Conference has already paid out more than DM 200 million.

For further information and to file a claim, contact The Successor Organisation, Sophienstrasse 26, 60487 Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The telephone number is 0049 69 97 07 08 0 and the fax number is 0049 69 97 07 08 11.

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.

Sophie's Choice: a major artistic achievement

Malcolm Miller

Sophie's Choice, an opera by Nicholas Maw based on the William Styron novel, received a warm reception at its premiere at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Among the singers was Angelika Kirschlager as Sophie, part of a superb cast, conducted with fervent intensity by Sir Simon Rattle in an imaginative and well-acted staging by Trevor Nunn.

Sophie's Choice filters its response to history through literature. Styron's novel, popularised in the famous film, highlights the universal moral that the Nazi regime was not solely antisemitic, but, above all, anti-life. The story centres on a Polish Catholic woman who lives with her Jewish lover Nathan, stained with an intolerable memory: at Auschwitz she was forced to choose which of her two children would be taken to the gas chambers. Sophie's tale is told to a young American writer, Stingo, tellingly portrayed by Gordon Gietz, who shares their Brooklyn boarding house yet whose older self - Dale Duesing - appears between each scene to narrate the story in a type of recitative. Indeed, the opera is as much about Stingo's choice to become a writer, as about Sophie's choices, the last of which is to stay with the jealous Nathan, richly sung by Rodney Gilfry, eventually entering into a suicide pact with him. The lyrical music of the final scene is one of the many beautiful moments, its poetry and symbolism linking it with Wagner's *Liebestod*, Maw's musical evocation of Sophie's redemption of her past.

Nicholas Maw's musical style is original, neo-modernist rather than avant-garde, influenced by mainstream twentieth-century music, Berg's *Wozzeck* and Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Mahler and Schoenberg. And always responsive to the moods of the action, even though some key moments require more time and space for the necessary impact. Overall the music works as music, but whether it is entirely successful as opera is an open question.

But the four hours move briskly, with luscious slow tableaux and genuine fast music. Among the memorable highlights is the big-band 'radio' music when Nathan and Sophie invite Stingo to visit Coney Island. A tango for Stingo and the wonderfully Brooklyn Yetta Zimmerman (Frances McCafferty) gradually merges with the 'radio' band music. Especially moving was the requiem-like chorus which accompanies the Auschwitz train scene. The searing orchestral music after Sophie's argument with her father over his racism is another musical highpoint, as are several orchestral interludes.

Even so, there is a sense in which Maw's music never quite reaches the angst-ridden level necessary for the story, though it comes close to expressing the madness of the Nazis and Nathan, who turns out to be a paranoid schizophrenic. The Auschwitz commandant Rudolph Hoss is surely portrayed in too sympathetic a light, within a largely lyrical part, albeit finely projected by Jorma Silvasti. Later it is the camp doctor, a convincing Alan Opie, who 'allows' Sophie the choice of saving one child. When her daughter is taken away, the silence seems to be broken too soon, and the musical flow restarts before the horror is fully assimilated. Underlying this scene and the Auschwitz scenes is a memorable orchestral chord, elusive and dissonant, a type of leitmotif evoking the pain of the Holocaust, yet also transformed, remarkably, into the love music for Sophie and Stingo. At the end of the opera the original chord returns, leaving the audience with what Rattle described as the 'unbearable tension' of its lingering dissonance.

With some revision, Maw's opera could become what Rattle has described as one of the major operas since Britten. The test will be whether it is taken by any of the major companies in the coming year. It seems particularly apt for the American public, and, one hopes, also for the rest of the world.

Newsround

Wuppertal synagogue consecrated

While on a recent visit to Germany, Israeli President Moshe Katsav took part in the consecration ceremony for a new synagogue in Wuppertal, along with Germany's President Johannes Rau. The occasion for Katsav's visit to Germany was the 25th anniversary of a partnership between Wuppertal and its Israeli sister city Beer Sheva, as well as the consecration of the city's new synagogue.

Ambassador seeks more balanced approach to teaching of German history

Thomas Matussek, the German ambassador to the UK, has called for a more balanced approach to the teaching of German history. He told *The Guardian* that while he acknowledged that students should learn about the Holocaust, the success of postwar German democracy was equally important.

Painting to be returned after 54-year campaign

The British heirs to a masterpiece seized by the Nazis in 1938 have been told by the Austrian authorities that it will be returned to them shortly. *Little Town on the River* or *View of Krumau*, painted by the Austrian Expressionist artist Egon Schiele in 1916, is valued at about £7 million. The decision to return the painting brings to an end a 54-year-long struggle by Daisy Hellmann, a Viennese Jew, and her heirs to win back the painting.

Baden synagogue to be restored

Austrian Jewish leader Dr Ariel Muzicant has welcomed a decision to restore the synagogue in Baden, Austria's most famous spa. The project is an initiative by the Province of Lower Austria, the Baden municipality and the Jewish community.

German Jewish leaders re-elected

Paul Spiegel has been re-elected as president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. He was unanimously elected for a three-year term along with his deputies, Michel Friedman and Charlotte Knobloch.

Swiss overturn wartime convictions

The Swiss government has backed a proposal to overturn the wartime convictions of people who broke laws then in effect when they sheltered Jews and others fleeing Nazi Germany.