

# AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

## Exodus and retro-exodus

In this month of commemorating the Exodus from Pharaonic Egypt it may not be inappropriate to reflect on exodus as a recurring theme in our historical experience.

The great caesura in Jewish history is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. This cataclysmic event left us burdened with the unique fate of being a people without firm ground under our feet throughout the ensuing 20 centuries.

In the welter of migrations which swept across Europe during the first millennium one wave carried Jews towards Spain (Sepharad) and another towards Germany (Ashekenaz). In both countries they took root and flourished - temporarily. The Crusades devastated the Rhineland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, causing a massive exodus to Poland. Two centuries later Spain and Portugal underwent 'ethnic cleansing' - a process that forced thousands of Sephardim to seek asylum in Holland, Italy and Turkey.

Hereafter only relatively minor Jewish population movement occurred until the age of steamships and pogroms. (The pogroms had been anticipated around 1650 by the horrendous Khmel'nitsky massacres in Ukraine which decimated once flourishing Jewish communities.)

From 1880 until the outbreak of the Great War, some 2 million poverty-stricken and persecuted Jews left the Russian Pale of Settlement - *der heim* - for the USA, Britain, South Africa and South America.

The Great War brought about a small population shift within Austria-Hungary when thousands of Galician Jews fled from the advancing Russians to Vienna, Budapest and Prague. The postwar decade perpetuated this westward drift as France and Belgium encouraged East European immigration to offset wartime population losses.

The year 1933 sounded the death knell for continued Jewish existence, first in Germany and then in mainland Europe. During the last peace-time years, half of Germany's (and two-thirds of Austria's) Jews



Immigrants from Morocco en route to Israel, 1949

made their escape. Polish Jewry, the largest community on the Continent, was caught in a trap, although about one in ten escaped to Russia (where about half survived).

The post-1945 period saw a smaller, though highly publicised exodus as several thousand *Shoah* survivors tried to reach British-administered Palestine. (One of the boats involved was appropriately named *Exodus*.)

Israeli independence transformed the situation. The promulgation of the Law of Return emptied the Displaced Persons' (DP) camps in Germany and Austria within a short time. Simultaneously a huge exodus of Jews from Arab countries - from Morocco to Iraq - overwhelmed the fledgling Jewish state. In addition, the bulk of the Bulgarian and (the far more numerous) Romanian communities made their way to Israel.

Back in Germany, the Jewish situation underwent several changes in the next half-century. Moribund communities of handfuls of survivors - self-styled *Liquidations-gemeinden* - took on a new lease of life as DPs from Eastern Europe decided to rebuild their lives in the country which, however burdened by its past, offered better economic prospects than their homelands.

Meanwhile, the DP founders of the 'reborn' German communities have spawned a small new generation of German speakers. However, they would have been

numerically too weak to ensure a vibrant communal renaissance if it had not been for what might be termed a retro-exodus - the influx of Russian Jews which in the last quarter-century has raised the size of the German Jewish community from around 40,000 to 100,000.

A body of that size is clearly viable. Demographically the future of the (inherently problematical) German-domiciled community therefore seems assured. But there are, of course, huge hurdles to be overcome. On the host society's part, there is the long echo of the epithet 'Hitler's willing executioners' coined by Professor Goldhagen. As for the Jewish community, it faces the daunting challenge of melding together two disparate entities: a German-speaking minority and a majority of Russophone newcomers.

The gulf between the two extends beyond language to lifestyle and even conduct during synagogue services (echoes of the pre-1933 animosity between *yekkes* and *Ostjuden*). Whether the evolution of a united community will ever lead to a genuine German-Jewish symbiosis is another matter. Every so often a German public figure with a Judeophobic agenda - a Walser, or Möllemann, or Hohmann - pops up and casts a long shadow and then disappears from view. In other words, the jury on the future of German Jewry is still out.

## Disparate Caribbean neighbours

Richard Grunberger

Haiti, which has recently moved briefly into the headlines, holds a few sad records. It is one of the world's poorest countries with probably the highest illiteracy rate. But it was also the first country in which a slave population rose against the colonial plantation owners and achieved short-lived independence under Toussaint L'Overture two centuries ago.

Like other Caribbean islands, Haiti attracted a number of Jewish immigrants, mainly of Sephardi - as well as Marrano - origin. In the years before the last war Haiti also granted visas - for a price - to Jews in transit from Europe. By contrast, its near neighbour, San Domingo, boasted a sizeable Ashkenazi population in the late 1930s when the Dominican dictator Trujillo encouraged German and Austrian Jewish refugees to come to his country. His motives were partly economic and partly eugenic: he looked to the Jewish newcomers to inject a European strain into his nation's African gene pool.

If Trujillo failed with the latter objective, he succeeded with the former. The 3,000 German Jews who found refuge in the Dominican Republic helped establish a number of new industries and, although many of them did not put down roots, they left their mark on the economy.

Today, Dominica is one of the success stories of the Caribbean, while Haiti offers a vista of hopelessness. The reasons are partly political, partly cultural. For decades the country was under the sway of the corrupt Duvalier dynasty and their secret police, the dreaded Tonton Macoute. Haiti is also the only state in the world where the Voodoo cult is accorded the semi-official status of a recognised religion.

## Simon Wiesenthal - 'A lifetime of service'

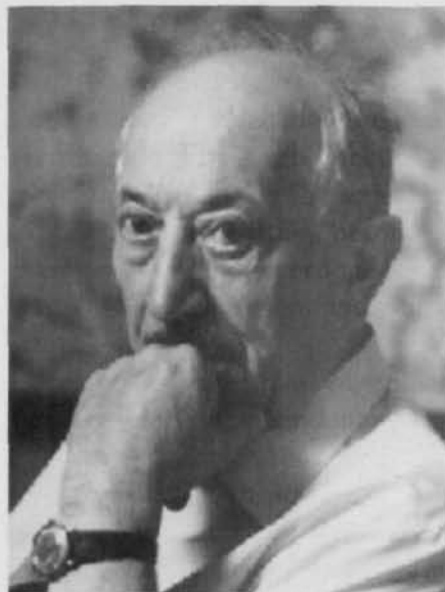
Ronald Channing

Simon Wiesenthal, a survivor of Mauthausen concentration camp who has devoted his life to the tracking down and prosecution of Nazi war criminals, the perpetrators of the Holocaust, still works at the age of 95 from his cramped, sparsely-furnished office in Vienna, known throughout the world as the 'Jewish Documentation Centre'.

The rare privilege of an honorary knighthood, bestowed by HM the Queen, has been awarded in recognition of his 'lifetime of service to humanity'. Among his many other awards are the US Congressional Gold Medal and the Légion d'Honneur.

Born in Ukraine in 1908, Wiesenthal qualified as an architect in Prague and lived in Lvov with his wife Cyla. The Red Army's occupation of 1939 gave way to that of the advancing Nazis in 1941. His family were sent to a concentration camp and for slave labour; 89 members of the couple's families were murdered. When American forces liberated Mauthausen in May 1945 Wiesenthal was barely alive.

At the earliest opportunity Wiesenthal began to collect evidence of Nazi atrocities, in support of the US Army's war crimes investigations. He doggedly followed up leads which led to



the capture in Argentina of Adolf Eichmann, who masterminded the destruction of European Jewry, and to his trial and execution in Israel. Wiesenthal also tracked down in Austria Karl Silberbauer, who arrested Anne Frank, and Franz Strangl, commandant of Treblinka who had decamped to Brazil.

The honorary KBE recognises the value of Simon Wiesenthal's work for the Jewish communities from Austria, Germany and Central Europe who subsequently made their homes in Britain.



Kindertransport's *grande dame*, Bertha Leverton, who delivered a lecture on her arrival as a child refugee and her life in Britain to an enthralled audience at the Museum of London, pictured in front of the Lord Mayor's golden coach

PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

### AJR Journal

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## Where is the great refugee novel?

Richard Grunberger

One of the outstanding features of the publishing scene in recent years has been the success of immigrant novels. Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* - the one about Pakistanis and West Indians, the other about Bangladeshis - are obvious cases in point. Their subject matter - the culture clash of newcomers from the Third World with the host society - is found to interest a wide readership.

The much-commented-on migration of 'children of the Raj' to the mother-country began in the aftermath of the Second World War. That conflict had likewise been preceded by an influx of around 70,000 refugees from Nazi oppression into the UK - yet our arrival in this country did not inspire a single novel that achieved bestseller status. Of course, the contrast between Berlin or Vienna and London was nowhere near as great as that between an Indian village and Bradford or Burnley. However, despite hailing from First World countries, we lacked other advantages of our postwar successors. We weren't English speakers, had not attended missionary (or other English-type) schools, and knew nothing of cricket or rugby.

Early on our acclimatisation in this country was complicated by the outbreak of war. Officialdom initially lumped us together with 'real' Germans - hence internment - and sections of the public followed suit. Nor was antisemitism a totally negligible force during the war and the birth-pangs of the State of Israel. And the insistent counterpoint to all this was growing awareness of the Pandora's box of horrors subsumed in the term Holocaust.

Despite the obvious plethora of subject matter the author of a German-Jewish refugee saga could get his or her teeth into, no such piece of writing has yet appeared and achieved bestseller status.

How to explain this dearth? My own pet theory is that social class, both of the authors of, and characters in, refugee novels has a lot to do with it. Newcomers to an established society tend to find themselves at the bottom of the heap - from which position the next generation may (or may not) emancipate themselves.

We 'continental Britons', however, tended to project a rather more middle-than working-class image (I have a hunch that this *bourgeois* label applied more to German than Austrian Jews). Accordingly, such novels as were written about the refugee experience came from the impeccably middle-class pens of Anita Brookner and Eva Figs.

Their style is too well-mannered, not to say anodyne, to give readers the gutsy experience they expect from an immigrant novel. (I also exclude from consideration W. G. Sebald's epic *Austerlitz*, which focuses on the trauma of a virtual toddler transplanted from Prague to Wales.)

Are we therefore doomed to pass from the scene without leaving a noticeable imprint on English literature? Can we not do for Belsize Park what Israel Zangwill did for Bethnal Green and Louis Golding for Magnolia Street? Is there no Bloomsbury House novel in gestation worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as the literary effusions of the Bloomsbury Group?

The answer to all these questions is almost certainly 'No!' Almost - but not totally. I have heard of a writer whose ambition it is to write the defining refugee novel. He knows his way around Bethnal Green as well as around Belsize Square - Bloomsbury House as well as the Bloomsberries. What's more, he has impeccable working-class credentials - having been a domestic servant, a garment worker and a centre-lathe turner. Do I hear you ask 'what's holding him back?' The answer is simple: no publisher is interested!

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# 'Sebastian Flyte, Meet Albert Einstein ...' Part 2

Anthony Grenville

When Einstein decided against taking up the position offered to him at Christ Church, he expressed the wish that his stipend be used to fund posts for Jewish academics dismissed from German universities by the Nazis. That wish played its part in creating a continuing connection between the Jewish refugees and Oxford's grandest college.

Already in May 1934, Dean Williams wrote to Einstein to inform him that Christ Church proposed to give a sorely needed £200 to the distinguished classical philologist Eduard Fraenkel, who had been dismissed from his chair at Freiburg University for racial reasons and was now 'giving valuable lectures' in Oxford. Einstein was delighted that good was coming from the money intended for his post; in the last letter in his file at Christ Church, he wrote that he often thought gratefully of the generosity with which British academic institutions were contributing in this way to the preservation of intellectual values.

Two distinguished German-Jewish professors found refuge at Christ Church. Felix Jacoby, an outstanding specialist in Greek historiography and poetry, had been Professor of Classical Philology at Kiel University from 1907 until his dismissal in 1935. In 1939 he emigrated to Britain, where he continued to work on his magnum opus, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, publishing 15 volumes of texts and commentary over the 35 years during which he pursued this project.

One can imagine what it meant to Jacoby, stripped of his position and at the mercy of the Nazis, to receive a letter from Dean Williams in December 1938 inviting him in the warmest terms 'to continue your important work on the fragments of the Greek historians as soon as possible here at Oxford'. As well as arranging funding for Jacoby, the college was reaching out in solidarity to a colleague in distress: 'A considerable body of scholars and historians here are prepared to give you their strongest support.'



Tom Tower, Christ Church, Oxford

Many years later, in 1954, Dean Lowe wrote to Jacoby, acknowledging the return he had made for the college's generosity: 'In conditions of great difficulty and strain, with every temptation to "fold up" and on a modest allowance hardly commensurate with the deserts of a great scholar of your reputation and seniority, you have gone on indefatigably and kept pouring out contributions of the highest value to scholarship. That is something which we are glad, and indeed proud, to support.'

Another German-Jewish refugee academic who brought huge benefits to his adopted college was Paul Jacobsthal, who had been Professor of Archeology at Marburg University from 1912 until his dismissal in 1935. An expert on Greek vase painting, Jacobsthal was appointed to a post at Christ Church in 1937. His studies on the influence of Mediterranean civilisations on early North Alpine cultures led to his also becoming University Reader in Celtic Archeology. Dean Williams had enlisted the support of Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden (himself a former student at Christ Church) to obtain permission from the German authorities for Jacobsthal to leave Germany.

However, Jacobsthal's file at Christ Church also shows the dark side of the

refugee experience in Britain. In early September 1940 Dean Lowe received a letter from Jacobsthal, who had been interned as an 'enemy alien' in Hutchinson Camp on the Isle of Man. Characteristically, the letter expressed Jacobsthal's anger and frustration at having lost two months' work. Jacoby was also interned, as were two Christ Church undergraduates, Walter Eberstadt and Matthias Paneth. Jacobsthal wrote one of the most vivid and moving of internment memoirs, with the striking opening: 'On Friday July 5th 1940 in the morning when I was peacefully writing on Celtic Geometric Ornament a knock came at my door in Christ Church and a plain clothes Police Officer entered producing a warrant of arrest.'

On his release, Walter Eberstadt joined the Pioneer Corps. From Ilfracombe he wrote to Dean Lowe: 'May I take this early opportunity to express to you my most sincere thanks to you for all you did for me during my internment ... I find it hard to express on paper what this assistance, and the spirit in which it was done, meant to me during my internment ... you cannot imagine what it meant for an internee when he realized the outside world did not believe in his alleged guilt, and had not forgotten him'. He subsequently distinguished himself as a British officer, and later on Wall Street.

Other German-Jewish refugees who studied at Christ Church include the poet and translator Michael Hamburger and the publisher John Calmann. The eminent historian Peter Pulzer, a child refugee from Vienna, is gratefully remembered by generations of students of politics and modern history at Christ Church, where he taught for many years before his appointment to a chair at All Souls College. Last but by no means least, the distinguished economist Professor Peter Oppenheimer, the British-born son of refugees from Nuremberg, has taught at Christ Church since 1967.

*This is the second and concluding part of this article.*

# Yom Hashoah: An Evening of Remembrance

Gaby Glassman

Pinner Synagogue's annual commemoration of the Holocaust has become one of the largest of its kind in the UK. As this year marks the 60th anniversary of the deportations from Hungary, we remember that event and pay tribute to the heroic deeds of people like Raoul Wallenberg. Two eminent guest speakers, Dr Trude Levi and Professor Ladislaus Löb, will share their experiences with us.

Trude Levi has published two books: her autobiography, *A Cat Called Adolf*, and *Did You Ever Meet Hitler, Miss?* - comments on her presentations in British and German schools. She was deported to Auschwitz from her home town, 80 miles from Budapest, and has worked at the Wiener Library and Mocatta Library at University College London.

Professor Löb's review of *Nine*

*Suitcases* by Béla Zsolt recently appeared in *The Times*. He translated the book, which he described as 'one of the most important Holocaust memoirs ever written'. He was born in Transylvania, lived in Switzerland until 1963, and then came to the University of Sussex, where he is Emeritus Professor of German.

The fate of Hungary's Jews during the Second World War is unique because:

- Hungary was the last country to be occupied (as late as March 1944);
- As the Nazis knew they had little time to annihilate the country's Jewish population, the anti-Jewish measures were implemented much faster; and
- The rescue machinery was already in operation when the deportations began.

Eichmann himself travelled to Budapest to supervise the deportation of the Jews. Of the 825,000 people classified

as Jewish under Hungary's racist laws, an estimated 565,000 were murdered. At least 100,000 Hungarian Jews survived as a result of the intervention of several foreign diplomats in the city, including Raoul Wallenberg.

In the spring of 1944 Eichmann negotiated with Jewish leaders over an exchange of 'goods for blood'. He demanded 10,000 trucks in exchange for 1 million Jews. Although the deal failed, 1,686 men, women and children were saved and eventually reached Switzerland, Béla Zsolt and Professor Löb travelling on the same train.

*Gaby Glassman is Chair of the Yom Hashoah Committee. 'Yom HaShoah: An Evening of Remembrance' will take place at Pinner Synagogue on Sunday 18 April, 8-10 pm.*

## Gleiwitz remembered

A commemoration ceremony was held on the site of the synagogue in Gleiwitz, 65 years after the synagogue was destroyed on Kristallnacht. Now part of Poland, prior to World War II the town had a large Jewish population.

In the presence of the Israel Ambassador to Poland, the Mayor of Gleiwitz and other notables, Mrs Hilde Kochmann, representing the pre-war Jewish community of which she was part, unveiled a commemorative plaque and sculpture. In turn, she was honoured for her support, and that of her late husband Max, for the project recalling the lost community.

Sadly, Hilde Kochmann died at the end of last year. Born in 1918, Hilde spent a happy childhood in the town before she and her two sisters were sent to England by their parents in the summer of 1939. A devoted wife and mother, her activities included nursing and bookkeeping in her husband's expanding business and she was involved with the Leo Baeck Lodge, Belsize Square Synagogue and the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex.

## English declining as world language

Howard Spier

'Optimists learn Russian, pessimists learn Chinese' - this was the popular wisdom when I was a university languages student. Now - many (full) moons later and following the collapse of the Soviet/Russian empire - this wisdom clearly needs updating: 'Optimists learn Chinese, pessimists learn ...' - complete as you wish.

According to a recently published report, English is likely to lose its second place in the league table of world languages by the middle of the century. While Mandarin Chinese is expected to maintain its lead in terms of the number of native speakers, English is likely to be overtaken by Arabic and the related languages of Urdu and Hindi. German and French are among languages expected to decline along with English.

This is the conclusion of an analysis published in the journal *Nature* by David Graddol of the Milton Keynes-based language consultancy the English Company. According to Mr Graddol, the positions of the four languages behind Chinese - English, Urdu-Hindi, Arabic and Spanish - are swiftly converging, with English declining and Arabic in steep ascent.

In 1995 there were 1.1 billion Chinese speakers, with English next in the league table at 372 million, Urdu-Hindi with 316 million speakers, Spanish with 304 million, and Arabic with 201 million.

The popular notion that English is destined to become a world language is 'past its sell-by date', Mr Graddol says, though he predicts that more people will speak a number of languages, including English.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### LIVERPOOL STREET MEMORIAL

Sir - In 1939 my parents took in a young German Jewish girl aged six who, I seem to remember, arrived on the last transport from Germany. Not one of us could speak any German at all and the poor girl must have been terrified. I was some four years older and naturally had no understanding of the misery she must have been suffering at the time.

After reaching adulthood, over the years we have kept in touch and, last autumn, she invited us to meet her at Liverpool Street Station and 'share' with her the exhibition that has been placed there. We were so pleased that she asked us as both my wife and I found it most moving. The statue of the little girl was inspirational and, even as a septuagenarian, I must confess, I was moved to tears. The expression of desolation and bewilderment is so vividly expressed in this statue - I would ask you to pass this on to the sculptress who made it. I would like to pay tribute to those whose idea it was to place the plaque and exhibition there, and to those who brought it into being and financed it.

*David Doherty  
London*

### FRAUGHT ENCOUNTER

Sir - Recently, while visiting my husband's relation in Germany, I happened to get into a discussion during which she declared that she was a racist and had no regard for Easterners. I was astonished and asked what I was doing there standing in front of her since I am Jewish (as, of course, she knew). Her rather aggressive reply was: 'No,

you're not, you're a human being [ein Mensch]'. When I insisted, and added that I was proud of being Jewish and that to deny it would be to betray my parents, she became more and more excited and eventually exclaimed that she didn't want to hear the word 'Jew' again. For the last 40 years she had heard it too often and now she had had enough of it.

In a later phone call her husband took the same line, stressing that he too could no longer bear to hear about the 'good Jews' and the 'bad Germans' and went on to speak about the policy of Israel. He tried to explain his wife's angry reaction by claiming that I had provoked her by insisting that I was Jewish and felt proud of it. Both appear to want to accept me but not my Jewishness, which to me is an integral part of myself. Is to be a Jew and to say so a provocation?

*Ruth Schwiening, née Auerbach  
Market Bosworth*

### 'PALESTINE' A BOGUS CONCEPT

Sir - It is evident that hostility to Israel often owes more to ignorance than to malice. All the more reason, therefore, to make it clear that 'Palestine' never really existed for the Arabs and that they have subverted history in lately appropriating the 'Palestinian' title, so gaining acceptance for the bogus claim that, as such, they had been in 'Palestine' from 'time immemorial'. The historical profile of Eretz Israel shows that its non-Jewish inhabitants were never a separate nation, never governed the land, never created the polity or institutions of a state, and never fought against foreign rule. Only the Jews possess genuine

historical/cultural roots and legal rights unique to this land.

*S Goodman  
Kingswinford, West Midlands*

Sir - Francis Deutsch's statement (January issue) that 'the Occupied Territories ... are an occupied sovereign state' begs a series of questions. When did they become a sovereign state? Who recognised it? What was its government and where was it based?

Attempts to set up a Palestinian Arab state since the abandonment of the British Mandate in 1947 have been rejected (usually with violence) by the Palestinian leadership. In 1948 the West Bank was annexed by Jordan and the Gaza Strip was occupied by Egypt. The annexation was recognised only by Britain and Saudi Arabia, and the Jordanian claim was subsequently abandoned. Thus the land has no legal owner but is occupied by Israel. It is terra incognita.

*Bryan Reuben  
London N3*

### LITERARY HUMOUR

Sir - It is rare indeed that I laugh out loud when reading, but Richard Grunberger's commentary on Howard Jacobson's *The Mighty Walzer* caused me to do just that. A masterly example of literary humour. It illustrates the almost unlimited potential of Yiddish as the source of a unique sense of comedy, virtually untranslatable into anything remotely as funny in any other language.

*Emil Landes  
Highgate, London*

### LIBERATION OF BELSEN

Since next year will see the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Belsen, I wondered whether any organisations are planning to visit the camp at that time. I would like to go myself but would prefer to travel as part of an organised group rather than alone.

*Andy Wheeler  
London*

**YAD VASHEM**

Sir - Your reviewer of the recent Yad Vashem conference states (January 2004) that Yad Vashem translates literally as the 'hand of God'. It does no such thing. It translates literally as 'hand and name', and hence as Deeds and Reputation, or as the things one is remembered by. Hence, a memorial.

*WE Goddard  
London NW3*

**BATMITZVAH**

Sir - Re Liesl Silverstone's letter (January issue) regarding the forthcoming barmitzvah ceremony for Kinder who missed out. Ms Silverstone asked what about the girls, and alleges prejudice and self-imposed sexism. In Judaism men and women are equal but have different roles to play. There are physical differences and boys require circumcision. For boys a barmitzvah is obligatory, but a batmitzvah is a newish custom observed by only a few, and even among the strictly Orthodox most girls do not have a batmitzvah ceremony.

*Henry Schragenheim  
London N15*

**BRICKBAT**

Sir - Richard Grunberger, despite his learned authority, talks through his hat (February issue). On 16 May 1940 thousands of German Jewish men and boys were arrested and interned. I was among them, having just turned 16. At Ealing police station I began three months of arrest and internment via Chelsea Guards' Barracks, Kempton Park, Wharf Mills and Onchan camp, Isle of Man.

After the night at Chelsea Barracks we were detained at Kempton Park. From train to camp we had to run a gauntlet of Grenadier Guards each side of the path, armed with fixed bayonets and commanded by a sergeant major with a cocked pistol in each hand. Throughout my brief internment we inmates were in no doubt we risked being shot should we try to escape. Suicides of usually

middle-aged men were not unknown. The Editor is obviously ignorant of these matters.

*KG Speyer  
New Barnet*

**A CRITIQUE OF CRITICS**

Sir - Your 'Letters' feature contains a rather sad item: 'Brickbat' - a prime example of irrationality and non-sequitur. Why should the writer of this piece feel constrained to cancel his AJR membership just because the journal features the occasional article by Mr Grunberger?

This 'always the same because it's by the same person' argument, like the proverbial sieve, just doesn't hold water. A little mental experiment even if a bit fanciful will explain why. Let us assume that, one fine day, I discover an amazing fact: H.G. Wells's time machine was more than mere fiction. And it turns out that the Mona Lisa, Faust and Fidelio were actually created by the same person!

*CP Carter  
Richmond, Surrey*

**BOUQUET**

Sir - Renewal of my AJR membership is now due. Very many thanks to all the staff for producing this great journal.

*Ilse Seelig  
Ashford, Kent*

**NEW ACRONYM**

Sir - How sad it is that we still call ourselves refugees. We ceased to be refugees many years ago, and have long since adopted the English language and the English way of life. Many of us can hardly remember the cruel places where we were born and from which we escaped to this country and to freedom. Positive thinking should help us to choose a better name in the future. Why not call us by the name which was so cleverly suggested in last year's spirited correspondence: the Jewish Association of Continental Britons or JACOBS for short?

*Julie Franks  
Westcliff-on-Sea*

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# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Cardinal Don Fernando Niño de Guevara, Inquisitor General of the Spanish Inquisition The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. H.O. Havemeyer

He was born Domenikos Theotokopoulos in 1541, but the Cretan artist, better known as **El Greco** - the Greek - who fell under the spell of Titian and Tintoretto in Venice in 1568, and Michelangelo in Rome two years later, had an independence of vision which put him into a class of his own. For nearly 300 years after his death he was consigned to obscurity, but his artistic individuality came to life again in the late nineteenth century. The painter is celebrated in a new exhibition until 23 May at the **National Gallery**, where his incandescent and fearless use of colour, light and form not only prefigured Impressionists like Picasso and Cézanne, but inspired later modernists, such as Jackson Pollock. And we're talking about a true sixteenth-seventeenth-century Renaissance man.

You might say that El Greco was the first conceptualist, because he believed that images are conceived in the mind rather than as part of a process of mere

observation. Perhaps it was his training as a painter of icons that lent him a spiritual insight into the Byzantine world. El Greco gave the world of religious experience a more subjective dimension, and his experiments with perspective and more naturalistic use of light and colour grew from his contact with the great masters in Venice.

The antiquities of Rome and the voluminous talent of Michelangelo were next to engage him, but his praise of the great Italian painter was not without critical comment, especially for his use of colour, although he learned much from Michelangelo's understanding of anatomy. What makes El Greco so eternally vivid, so utterly contemporary, is his deliberate flouting of artistic convention: his work is characterised by elongated or distorted forms, sharp noses and swirling brilliance of colour - reds, blues, yellows - to express his inherent ideas, which might have been lost in a too literal translation.

El Greco settled in Toledo, then the ecclesiastical capital of Spain, in 1577, during the Counter-Reformation and his powerful portrait of a cardinal, believed to be the Inquisitor General Cardinal Niño de Guevara, evokes a sinister intelligence. It was painted, it is understood, when the Cardinal was en route to an *auto da fé*. He also painted a *converso* as a beggar on the road, perhaps a nod to Toledo's Jewish history.

El Greco's religious ideas were undoubtedly informed by his Greek Orthodox background. He depicted the holy alliance of politics and clergy, and the turbulence of his time could be seen in the way he often painted the sky in turmoil, the clouds ominous. In this he betrayed something of Breughel. In one painting the Christ-child is depicted almost as a light bulb, etiolating the features of his parents. Two paintings of Christ driving the traders from the Temple, completed between 1570 and the mid-1570s, show an interesting development. In the first, Christ is enraged by the merchants but, in the later painting, his actions seem more in sorrow than in anger, his face detached with purity.

## RG's INTERFACE

### Three exhibitions

Nine years ago the *Crimes of the German Wehrmacht: Dimensions of a War of Annihilation, 1941-1944 Exhibition* started touring Germany. In the interim it has attracted in excess of a million visitors and (despite a hiccup, when some exhibits were identified as Soviet-sourced) can be credited with a change in German self-perception.

Berlin's Centrum Judaicum is currently hosting the exhibition *Pioneers in Celluloid - Jews in Early Films*. The plethora of talent on display ranges from Carl Mayer (of *Cabinet of Dr Caligari* fame) to Erich Pommer and Ernst Lubitsch. Interestingly enough, the Weimar cinema also dealt with topical Jewish themes. A Russian pogrom was the subject of Carl Dreyer's 1921 film *Die Gezeichneten* (Marked Men).

The Stockholm Museum of History-based exhibition *Making a Difference* became the backdrop to a diplomatic *éclat* when the Israeli ambassador, Zvi Mazel, literally pulled the plug on an installation. The exhibit featured the photo of a female Palestinian suicide bomber afloat in a pool of red dye symbolising blood.

### Three Jewish history films

*The Secret* (Ronit Kertsner) focuses on four Polish men who discovered only in adulthood that their biological parents had been Jewish.

*Atlantic Drift* (Michel Daeron) deals with the several thousand German, Austrian and Czech Jews who embarked on barely seaworthy tramp steamers in Bratislava in 1940 hoping to reach Palestine, but were interned by the British at Mauritius.

*L'Chaim, Comrade Stalin* (Yale Strom) is about the failed, Soviet-sponsored project of turning Birobidzhan into a counter-attraction to Palestine.

## Jews and football in Central Europe

### DAVIDSTERN UND LEDERBALL

Göttingen: Die Werkschaft, 2003,  
508 pp.

At the beginning of German football - how could it have been otherwise? - stood a Jew. Walter Bensemann, scion of a prosperous Berlin Jewish family, picked up association football from English boys at a Swiss school and, on his return in 1889, began to propagate the game in Germany, beginning with the importation of a leather football. He became co-founder of Bayern Munich, Eintracht Frankfurt and Karlsruhe FV and pioneered international matches not only between clubs but also between representative teams.

All this information, and much more, can be found in this fascinating, scrupulously research-based book. The book consists of the contributions of a dozen authors, mostly journalists but also historians, psychologists and sociologists, all of whom were born well after the Second World War. The well-illustrated book was edited by Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling, who lives near Münster.

Particularly poignant is the story of Julius Hirsch of the Karlsruhe FGV, German champions in 1910. Hirsch represented Germany many times in the position of inside forward. He met his death in Auschwitz. His Jewish colleague with Karlsruhe and in the German national team was Gottfried Fuchs, who scored ten goals in a match against Russia, a world record which stood for many years.

These are just two examples of the many Jews who as players, coaches, administrators and supporters, contributed so much to German, Austrian and Hungarian football. They are, of course, not the whole story: the Hungarian-Jewish goal-getter Jenő Konrad of MTK Budapest had, in 1930, become trainer of the German champion club Nuremberg. Repeated insults in Streicher's *Der Stürmer*, published in Nuremberg, prompted Konrad to leave club and town within two years.

This book is a marvellous read. It

# REVIEWS

should be of interest not only to followers of football but also to anyone who wants to expand his knowledge of the political and social scene in Central Europe in the first half of the twentieth century.

Ludwig Berlin

## Finding meaning in extremis

### THE WINDMILL: THE STORY OF PETER KIEN

Written by Gloria Tessler  
Directed by Ben de Wynter  
*Union Theatre, Southwark*

There are many who take the view that those who did not themselves spend time in a Nazi concentration camp should refrain from 'describing the indescribable'. No doubt there is much to be said for this point of view. Nonetheless, Gloria Tessler, a writer, journalist and the *AJR Journal's* arts correspondent, seeks to penetrate this tragic veil with a view to exploring how intimate relationships function at such critical moments. The action of the play moves around her mother's cousin Peter Kiel, a gifted artist in the Terezin camp, prior to his deportation to Auschwitz.

Artistically, the dedicated (played here as somewhat self-indulgent) artist Kien is working with the Germans by day in an attempt to save himself and his family, and working with the composer Viktor Ullmann by night on *The Emperor of Atlantis*, an anti-authoritarian opera. Emotionally, Peter is torn between his conventional, rather dull wife, Ilse, who cannot come to terms with the pervasive fear and uncertainty of their existence, and his lover, Helga, who accepts life - and death - as it is. As relationships between the various families disintegrate under the unprecedented pressure, we appreciate what gives meaning above all else: love, art, memories. The Peter we see at the age of 25 remains forever at that age both to us and to Helga, who, now married

and living in the USA, remembers him as the love of her life.

This powerful play moves inexorably to its poignant conclusion. The excellent cast and director are ably assisted by musicians, whose tone adds immeasurably to the sombre mood.

Howard Spier

## From fascist to anti-fascist

### SIGNS OF HATE

Matthew Collins

*Searchlight*, 2004, £12.00, 60pp.

In this publication Matthew Collins, formerly a member of the National Front, tells how he decided to blow the whistle on that party. He was brought up on a tough, working-class council estate in South London and his father ran off with the family's baby-sitter when the boy was five years old. But he blames neither his father's desertion nor his family's circumstances for how he turned out.

Rather, he believes that the political climate of the 1970-80s played a major part in shaping him. The most dangerous element he could think of, when growing up, was NF, the initials of hatred, which gave him 'a huge sense of belonging'. He was unconcerned with education: 'I genuinely believed that there was going to be a revolution and a fascist government would come to power, and I'd be Minister for Transport'. Having left school at the age of 15, he was employed by the National Front as their press spokesman and he 'travelled up and down the country, spreading the message we had of hate'. By the age of 18, he had worked his way up through the organisation and was based at its office in east London.

At a rally in 1989 Collins had a change of heart when fellow protesters started attacking people nearby, mainly Asian women. His desire to 'right this wrong' led him to approach *Searchlight*, the anti-fascist group which, until then, had been a sworn enemy. He contacted the campaigner and journalist Gerry Gable 'and then, by the time I was in the NF office, I was passing information over on a daily basis'.

A television documentary was then made about the far right in Britain.

Collins co-operated with the production team, which filmed an actor reading his testimony. As the suspicions of his companions increased, he was advised by Special Branch to emigrate for his own safety. He went to Australia, with the intention of staying for a year. It would be ten years before he returned to Britain.

*Signs of Hate* is being used to train judges, police officers and parole officers to recognise members of extreme far-right groups by their badges, symbols and code words. It has been sent to officers working with community safety units who deal specifically with hate crimes. A top football club is using a copy to assist its stewards to pick out trouble-makers on the terraces. For many readers of this journal, the contents of *Signs of Hate* will, alas, be all too familiar.

Martin Hasseck

### Tripping the not-so-light fantastic

#### ANGELS IN AMERICA

Tony Kushner/Mike Nichols  
with Al Pacino, Meryl Streep  
Channel 4

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* - much lauded at the National Theatre in the Nineties - was adapted for TV under the direction of the Hollywood legend Mike Nichols. The work was conceived on a grand scale, and not only in terms of its truly Wagnerian length. It asked searching questions about sex, ethnicity, politics and, more unconventionally, about God's relationship with the human race. Though often depressing, not to say lachrymose, it ended on a note of qualified optimism.

Basically, the plot can be described as a quadrille 'danced' by four

homosexuals - one of them a historical figure. This is red-baiting Senator Joe McCarthy's legally trained henchman Roy Cohn, a foulmouthed, homophobic closet gay who contrived to put Ethel Rosenberg into the electric chair. The three main fictitious protagonists are a flamboyant Wasp, an uptight Mormon, and an over-articulate Jew. The Mormon is a married, unacknowledged homosexual (with a periodically insane wife) who gets headhunted by the Aids-infected, but still hyper-active, Cohn. Meanwhile, the Wasp develops the first symptoms of Aids and is left by his Jewish lover who, though conscience-stricken, takes up with the Mormon. The moribund Wasp is vouchsafed visions of his ancestors, and of a fiery angel who aids his ascent to heaven.

Reduced to this bold outline, the play may smack of soap opera. Nonetheless, it gripped me for the first four of its six hours' running time. This was due to Kushner's serious intent and undeniable verbal facility, as well as to Mike Nichols's skilfully directed fantasy sequences inspired by such diverse sources as Jean Cocteau and Busby Berkeley.

Ultimately, though, I found Aids an unsatisfactory metaphor for the threat facing mankind. I concede that it loomed very large in the Nineties - but only because nuclear Armageddon had been avoided, and Islamic terror not yet unleashed.

Richard Grunberger

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## Letter from Israel Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

You are driving along the highway. The car in front of you indicates it is about to turn right, but turns left. Without any warning, another car cuts across your bows and turns right. The driver of the truck you are overtaking puts his foot on the accelerator and speeds away from you and just then you are overtaken by a bus. Anyone looking for a quick route to a nervous breakdown need only drive on Israel's roads.

The rule that seems to govern driving behaviour in Israel is: give no quarter and expect none from others. The worst mistake you can make is to signal, as that shows you are far too law-abiding to be let loose on the roads. Indicating is definitely passé.

The problem is that the sense of urgency that governs daily life in Israel has spilled over into driving habits, despite the best efforts of police and educators. Behind the steering wheel people seem to undergo a personality change, and the mildest individual becomes a raging bull. Everyone is invariably pressed for time, so that cutting in, tail-gating, flashing headlights and tootling horns are all the order of the day.

Of course, there are occasional incidents of courtesy on the road, when you are able to merge with traffic without incurring the vocal wrath of the driver behind you, and the car behind maintains a safe distance. There is also the comradely convention whereby the headlights flashed by an oncoming driver inform you that there is a police speed-trap ahead.

In the final event, however, the steering wheel is the great leveller. The sturdiest of macho men and the feeblest little old lady are equals behind the steering-wheel. It is merely a question of whose nerves are the strongest in the battle for the road.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING  
AND SCULPTURE

Paul and Rose Gotley live in a charming, deceptively large cottage, with a swimming pool, in the heart of the Essex countryside. Both came to England with the Kindertransport and, with Rose's active involvement, Paul eventually established one of Britain's most highly specialised engineering companies.

Paul was born in Vienna in 1925. Though his father was a furrier, he always felt attracted to engineering. He and his sister enjoyed being part of a large, extended family and he won a scholarship to the local gymnasium. This lasted just three years as he had to leave the school with all the other Jewish children after the Anschluss. He had his barmitzvah in a low-key ceremony shortly before Kristallnacht. Later that year the family tried to leave Vienna by the 'back door' through Holland, but were turned back. In July 1939 his parents sent him on the Kindertransport to England, assuring him that they would soon follow, though in his heart of hearts he knew otherwise.

Rose's family, who lived in another district of the city, were patriotic Austrian Jews, three generations living together in her grandfather's house. An only child, she admits to being spoiled with 'lots of love'. Her childhood included a good education and she still keeps in touch with a girlfriend she met on her first day at primary school!

Rose's grandfather, though warned to leave, said Hitler would not last more than six months. His business was confiscated and he agreed to the escape of Rose's father to his sister in Yugoslavia just days before Kristallnacht.

Rose and her mother were reluctant to leave the grandparents. In 1938 Rose joined a Jewish club which met in a cellar once a week and sang Zionist songs. With chilling clarity she still relives her fear at the approach of Nazi thugs in their heavy boots. Although the children were defenceless, when one boy asked for the little girls to be freed, eleven-year-old Rose and her friend were

# PROFILE

Ronald Channing

## Paul and Rose Gotley Enjoying the fruits of success



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

allowed out of the cellar but forced to run the gauntlet of an 'evil crowd' pointing at them as 'dirty Jewish children'.

Distraught, Rose ran to her friend's home, from where her mother collected her. Immediately afterwards her mother received a permit for them both to go to England in March 1939, her mother as a domestic servant. They were separated, but her mother travelled from Beckenham to the hostel in Finchley once a week come hell or high water.

Paul found himself with other refugee boys in Barham House, an old workhouse in Suffolk, then, at 14, taking on the tough life of a farm worker in Derbyshire. Eventually he ran away to an aunt who had a flat in London, but was returned to Barham House where he stayed until it was taken over by the military. Relocated to a hostel in Oxford, he became a grocer's errand boy. But he began many years of study at night school, taking an engineering

course while working during the day in laboratories and engineering companies, which advanced his knowledge of physics, chemistry and engineering. On qualifying as an engineer, he took up a post in London.

In 1959 a colleague invited Paul to join him in a business venture - designing and manufacturing electro-mechanical control equipment. Paul became a director and learned a great deal about the running of a company. When in 1973 he started his own company, Neotronics, in Essex, Britain was converting to natural gas. This created a demand for his gas-detection equipment and he never looked back, developing Neotronics into one of the world's leading suppliers of safety and environmental instrumentation, with a factory employing 400 people in Essex and branches in the USA, France, Germany and Singapore. Rose had quit running her own nursery school and became Neotronics's buyer, retiring only at the age of 64.

It was Paul's special ability to marry the emerging digital electronics technology with existing physics technology which enabled him to establish Neotronics as one of the UK's most innovative companies, placing it among the country's top 200 research and development companies. Neotronics received two Queens Awards to Industry and in 1996 his services to manufacturing industry were recognised with the award of an OBE at Buckingham Palace. The couple have three girls and a boy, all of course now grown up, which leaves Rose time to be Welfare Co-ordinator for the Harlow Jewish Community and at a Friendship Club.

Paul and Rose have come a long way from struggling to make ends meet, and today they enjoy the fruits of the success of their company, which went public in 1987. Paul is still in business, producing and marketing gas sensors in partnership with their daughter Andrea, who is both technically and commercially well-qualified to carry on the family tradition.

# INSIDE the AJR

## Over afternoon tea in Hull

Over afternoon tea Susanne outlined AJR facilities regarding claims, holidays and recording of testimonies. With respect to Holocaust Memorial Day, Bob, a Kindertransportee, said that he had participated in an event at the Guildhall in Hull and that he gave talks at Beth Shalom.

*Bob Rosner*

Next meeting: Sunday 25 April

## South London: 'From broom cupboard to Bush House'

Stewart Macintosh told us that his interest in radio began when, as a child, he sat in the cupboard using the broom as an imaginary microphone, with his mother as the only audience. After a varied career he ended up on the BBC World Service, broadcasting to an audience of millions worldwide.

*Margaret Goldstein*

## Liverpool: from Danzig to Gdansk

Dr Oskar Dover spoke about the history of this Baltic port, intertwined with an account of his family's history since the First World War. His father had the foresight while on a holiday in England to prevent his family from returning to Danzig, thus avoiding the Holocaust. His family's recent visit to Gdansk had brought them closer together.

*G. G. Jayson*

## Birthdays celebrated in Essex

Celebrating both our second anniversary and *Tu Bishvat*, the birthday of trees, we drank wine and enjoyed a vast assortment of fresh fruits, the symbolism of which was explained by Myrna Glass. Later we watched a beautiful video about a young man's search in Israel for a tree his grandfather had planted years ago.

*Julie Franks*

Next meeting: Tuesday 20 April (not 13 April), 11.00 am. Otto Deutsch, 'The Vienna Coffee Houses'

## North London talk on post-war rescue

Our excellent speaker, Dr Amy Gottlieb, was one of the brave band of UK-born Jews who served in post-war Europe with the Jewish Relief Unit and the Joint Distribution Committee, helping to restructure the lives of camp survivors and assist in their movement to Palestine and other countries.

*Herbert Haberberg*

Next meeting: Thursday 29 April. Details to be announced

## Weald of Kent: never enough time

Among future activities we discussed was a visit to the KT statue at Liverpool Street Station. We plan to have future meetings in Maidstone to make it more convenient for those of us who live in the north of the county, though there never seems to be enough time to say all we want to say.

*Inge Ball*

Next meeting: Wednesday 21 April. Contact Max/Jane Dickson

## Agreeable morning in Surrey

We met in Weybridge, Jutta and Vernon Saunders having kindly offered their home again as the venue. The morning passed very agreeably with animated discussion, a lively mixture of old and new acquaintances, and with more than 20 members attending. We mourned the passing of our dear friend Tony Freud.

*Eva Gold Young*

## Harrogate Continental Friends

Due to coughs and sneezes, rain and wheezes our numbers were slightly depleted. We reviewed Holocaust Memorial Day and various opinions were expressed regarding the Testimony project. Susanne reminded us of the AJR holiday in St Annes in July and other forthcoming events.

*Inge Little (née Steinweg, formerly Dortmund)*

## Ilford: an example to us all

For sheer doggedness no one can beat Stewart Macintosh, who told us about his childhood ambition to be a radio announcer and how he persevered until he reached this goal. A very interesting talk and an example to us all - and a very good turnout. We decided that from July our group will meet on the first Wednesday of the month.

*Meta Roseneil*

Next meeting: Wednesday 21 April, 10.30 am. Otto Deutsch, 'The Vienna Coffee Houses'

## Birmingham (West Midlands) at new venue

Those attending our meeting, at our new venue in Rake Way, included one new member plus Ronald Channing from Head Office. I think everyone enjoyed the warm, very comfortable accommodation, which was more like one's lounge at home than a normal meeting room. We watched two films about Israel and had discussions about many topics.

*Henny Rednall*

Next meeting: Monday 26 April, same venue as above. For further information, call Henny Rednall on 0121 373 5603

## Dames and rabbis in Pinner

Some 40 of us were entertained and challenged by Walter Woyda's 'Music and Nostalgia' presentation. Nothing as simple as recognising a tune or giving its composer! There were cryptic clues: we had to link tunes to thoughts about particular countries, recognise people speaking about music and so on. As a sample: why should 'There is Nothing Like a Dame' make you think of a rabbi?

*Paul Samet*

Next meeting: Thursday 1 April, 2.00 pm. 'Talking about the Taste of our Past' - about food we remember from our childhood. Bring recipes if possible

## Convivial conversation in Bradford

Old and new attenders spoke about their experiences. Surprisingly, information on previously unknown historical events still surfaces. One such is that Greek Jewish girls were sent to German soldiers at the front and that when the girls became pregnant they were shot - until Hitler put a stop to the practice on the grounds that Germans should not associate with Jews in any way.

*Rudi Leavor*

Next meeting: Wednesday 5 May, 2 pm. Orthodox Synagogue, Springhurst Road, Shipley

## Glasgow: tradition of Vienna school maintained

Over 30 of us heard Professor Emeritus Otto Hutter talk lovingly about the Chajesrealgymnasium, a school in pre-war Vienna with a Zionist and universal outlook. Gratifyingly, the tradition is being maintained by its successor, Chajes Schule, which is now serving Vienna's new Jewish community. Our best meeting so far.

*Claire Singerman*

## Brighton & Hove Sarid: Jewish religious differences

Rabbi David Meyer spoke on 'Differences between Orthodox, Reform and Liberal Judaism'. The most intriguing part of his talk was with respect to the modern challenge: should we be more concerned with a few select, 'pure' Jews, who choose to live by the Book, or with the vast majority of the Jewish people, who adapt the Law to reflect the needs of the times they live in?

*Fausta Shelton*

Next meeting: Monday 19 April, 10.45 am. AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro, 'Making the Most of Internment on the Isle of Man'

Next meeting  
Cambridge Thursday 22 April



Above: Trude Silman chairing Leeds HSFA Planning Group committee meeting

Above right: Birmingham group members Lia and Philip Lesser celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
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**REFUGEES SUNDAY 6 JUNE 2004**  
at the  
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JFS, venue of AGM on 6th June

Guest speaker  
**Lady Jacobovits**

**Agenda**

Annual Report 2003  
Hon. Treasurer's Report  
Discussion  
Election of Committee of  
Management\*

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

(a) he or she is recommended by the Committee of Management, or

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

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**MONTHLY MEETINGS AT CLEVE ROAD**

**NEXT KT LUNCH 10 MAY 2004**

Otto Deutsch will speak on

'The Coffee Houses of Vienna'

**Monday - Thursday**  
**9.30 am - 3.30 pm,**  
**Sunday 2 pm - 5.30 pm**

**April Afternoon Entertainment:**

**Thur 1** Francoise Geller

**Sun 4** CLOSED

**Mon 5** CLOSED - PESACH

**Tue 6** CLOSED - PESACH

**Wed 7** CLOSED - PESACH

**Thur 8** CLOSED

**Sun 11** CLOSED

**Mon 12** CLOSED - PESACH

**Tue 13** CLOSED - PESACH

**Wed 14** Doreen Kaye

**Thur 15** Mark Rosen

**Sun 18** DAY CENTRE OPEN

**Mon 19** Kards & Games Klub

**Tue 20** Cantor Stephen Robins

**Wed 21** LUNCHEON CLUB

Speaker: Mrs Daphne Singer

"Reminiscences of an  
East End Headteacher"

**Thur 22** Jenny Kossev

**Sun 25** CLOSED

**Mon 26** Kards & Games Klub

**Tue 27** Paul Yakov

**Wed 28** Hounslow Community  
Opera

**Thur 29** Michael Heaton

Editorials and articles published, and opinions expressed, in *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Birthday**

Congratulations to Richard Grunberger, Editor-in-Chief of *AJR Journal*, on his 80th Birthday.

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**Day Centre**

**Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre.** Clothes sale, separates etc. **Thursday 1 April 9.30 - 11.45 am.**

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## Obituaries

### AW Freud

AW Freud, who has died at the age of 82, was born Anton Walter Freud. He was named, under pressure from his grandfather Sigmund, after Anton von Freud, a recently deceased generous Hungarian sponsor of psychoanalysis. He preferred to be known as AW, though to his wife and English friends he was to become Tony.

In 1938, following the Anschluss, a party comprising at least 20 people, including AW and his father, arrived in the UK from Vienna. AW later acknowledged that it was due to Sigmund Freud's fame that the family had such an easy escape.

In the summer of 1940, while a student at Loughborough College, AW was interned as an enemy alien. Soon after, he was deported to Australia on the *SS Dunera*, but less than a year later he was sent back to England, once again thanks to his illustrious name.

During the war AW served with the Special Operations Executive. In April 1945 he was parachuted into Austria and single-handedly took command of the German-held Zeltweg airfield, with

German officers informing him one after the other that they personally had never had anything against Jews. But, as a result of his failure to make radio contact with his superiors in London, he was unable to register his achievement. Though he left the army with the rank of major, nothing was ever said of his capture of Zeltweg, an omission he resented.

After the war he served with the War Crimes Investigation Unit in Germany, his main investigation covering the activities of Krupp during the Hitler period. At this time he met his future wife Annette Krarup, a member of a Danish aristocratic family. Having become a British citizen, he resumed his studies at Loughborough and embarked on a career as an industrial chemist.

In the 1980s AW publicly repudiated the implication, raised in a BBC drama, that his grandfather had had an affair with his sister-in-law Minna, who had lived as part of the household for 45 years.

AW cherished family life. His family home in Surrey was his abiding pleasure.

### Rolf Schild

Rolf Schild, who has died at the age of 78, was both a successful businessman and a distinguished public benefactor, his services recognised by the award of an OBE. He was born in Cologne and educated at the city's Jawne Gymnasium. Seeing the Nazi threat, the school's director, Dr Erich Klibansky, arranged for groups of Jewish pupils, of whom Rolf was one, to be transferred to UK schools. He himself was deported and shot by the Nazis.

Rolf arrived in Liverpool in 1939. Following a period spent in hostels and in internment, he trained as a lathe turner in Manchester. In London, he found a job in a film equipment manufacturing company. Simultaneously he studied physics and engineering at night school, qualifying shortly after the war in electronics.

In 1949 he took a job with New Electronic products, subsequently working on developing pressure transducers, a device which attracted the attention of Hawker Siddeley. He set up the company S E Laboratories with Peter Epstein. Work flowed in, in particular for

instrumentation for the government's Blue Streak ballistic missile.

By the early 1960s S E Laboratories was employing 300 people. In 1966 the company was bought by EMI, for which Rolf worked until 1973. He then became involved in a number of ventures which were to become Huntleigh Technology, the Luton-based firm producing sophisticated medical equipment.

Rolf Schild became a household name in 1979 when his family was held for ransom by bandits in Sardinia. The family was not released until a personal appeal by the Pope and the payment of a considerable ransom.

Rolf did not forget his debt to Cologne's Jewish community. He supported research by Dieter Corbach, the author of two substantial books which are now in the archive of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies: *Die Jawne zu Köln* and *6.00 Uhr ab Messe Köln-Deutz: Deportationen 1938-1945*. He also funded a four-year postgraduate project about the educational experiences of German-Jewish refugee children in Britain.

## Arts and Events Diary April

To 2 May 2004 'Continental Britons: Hans Gál and Egon Wellesz'. Jewish Museum of Vienna

To 20 June 'I Never Saw Another Butterfly ... Children's Art from Theresienstadt'. Jewish Museum Camden Town, in association with The Jewish Museum in Prague

To 28 October 'West End - East End: Jewish Life Across London'. Jewish Museum Finchley

Mon 5 No lecture (hall not available). Club 43

Mon 12 No lecture (Bank Holiday). Club 43

Mon 19 Dr Peter Ritzer, 'The Rhine-Main-Danube Canal: Tradition and Progress?'. Club 43

Mon 26 'Deutsche Lyrik in London (Lesung)' (in German). Club 43

Tues 27 Prof Alistair Davidson (Swinburne University, Melbourne), 'Human Rights, History and the "Sparrow's Eye" View: In Homage to Norberto Bobbio', Wiener Library. 7.00 pm

Mon 3 May No lecture (Bank Holiday). Club 43

### ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

Jewish Museum Finchley Sternberg Centre, London N3 tel 020 8439 1143

Wiener Library 4 Devonshire Street, London W1 telephone 020 7636 7247

## Into the Light

### Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

There's a famous Jewish joke which goes 'Why do Jews always answer one question with another?' 'I don't know, why do they?' Jews have always asked questions. Mark Twain spoke of the Jew's 'aggressive and inquisitive mind'. The basic linguistic structure of the Talmud is *shakla v'tarya*, the 'give and take' of question and answer. More than any other festival, Passover is a time of questions and answers. If there's one image that symbolises the Passover *Seder* meal, it must be the youngest child summoning up all of his or her courage and asking 'Ma Nishtana?' 'Why is this night different from all other nights?' - the Four Questions.

Asking and answering is the essence of the *Seder*. In fact, two Torah scholars making the *Seder* together are still obliged to ask each other these same questions. More. A lone Torah scholar would ask and answer those questions to himself. It must be then that the methodology of question and answer reveals something essential about the Passover experience.

'And there was evening, and there was morning, one day' (Genesis 1:5). The Torah teaches us that night precedes day. First came evening and only then morning. What is the message of this process? Why should night precede day?

This is a world which starts in deficiency, in night. In this world, perfection can only come after imperfection. Morning can only come after evening. Light can only come after dark. In the existence beyond this world, perfection can exist without a preceding imperfection. That is a world of truth. A world of light. A world of total revelation. But in this world we can only approach perfection by a

journey from the imperfect. Thus, in this world, our view of perfection is something which is always preceded by imperfection. Absence leads to presence. Emptiness becomes filled. Night becomes day ...

Three thousand years ago Egypt was the epitome of spiritual impurity. Egypt was the most spiritually poisonous place in the world. The mystics talk of 49 gates of spiritual corruption. The Jews in Egypt had reached that 49th gate, the spiritual nadir. The word for spiritual impurity - *tuma* - connotes constriction, being sealed off. The opposite of *tuma* is *tahara*. *Tahara* comes from the same root as the word for light and shining. When we talk of the Exodus as being a journey from darkness into light, this is not mere poetic sentiment. The Exodus was an escape from a literal darkness of the soul into the light.

The essence of the Passover story is a journey from slavery into freedom, from darkness into light. As the *Haggada* says: 'Originally our ancestors were idol worshippers, but now the Omnipresent has brought us near to Him.' The *Seder* is designed for us to experience the Exodus to the maximum degree. Our aim is to feel as though we ourselves were actually leaving Egypt. The great Sages who formulated the *Haggada* wanted us to experience that journey from darkness into light not just in the content of the words of the *Haggada*, but in its very form and style. They constructed the *Haggada* as a paradigm for the Exodus itself. Slavery to freedom. Darkness into light. Question into answer.

*This is an abridged form of an article which appears on the website of Ohr Somayach International.*

## Newsround

### Haider's comeback

The leader of Austria's far-right 'Freedom Party', Jörg Haider, is regaining the governorship of Carinthia following provincial elections. His participation in national government in 2000 brought EU sanctions against Austria, and his anti-immigration stance is certain to impact on neighbouring countries joining the EU this year.

### Priebke appeal

Former SS captain 90-year-old Erich Priebke, convicted for perpetrating the Ardeatine massacre of 335 Roman civilians, mainly Jews, in 1944, is the subject of an appeal to free him. Priebke escaped to Argentina, from where he was extradited in 1994. A spokesman for Rome's Jewish community said: 'Convicted assassins should end their days in detention.'

### Anti-antisemitism

At an EU conference in Brussels on anti-Jewish prejudice, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said: 'We must never have a situation where an antisemite can threaten Jews without the majority standing up and protesting.' European involvement in achieving peace in the Middle East would help the situation.

### Bournemouth member's honour

Walter Kammerling, a stalwart member of AJR's Bournemouth group, was awarded a medal of honour by Vienna, the city of his birth. He came to Britain with the Kindertransport in 1939 aged 15 and in 1943 served in the British army.

### Passionate opposition to *The Passion*

Though the Catholic Church of England and Wales gave its support to Mel Gibson's controversial film *The Passion of the Christ*, Jewish leaders in Britain were concerned with its potentially devastating effect on interfaith relations, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*. 'The reinforcement of medieval stereotyping of the Jewish people' was extremely dangerous, warned Board of Deputies Director-General Neville Nagler.