

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Harking back to ancient stereotypes

The antisemitic stereotype of 'the Jew' - more deeply ingrained on the Continent than here - is a composite of six traits, five of which, by strange coincidence, start with the letter c: cupidity, cowardice, conspiracy, cosmopolitanism and concupiscence (i.e. inordinate sexual appetite).

The sixth is vengefulness as conveyed by the un-Christian concept of 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'. English literature features two classic examples of the vengeful Jew in Shakespeare's Shylock demanding his 'pound of flesh' and Marlowe's Jew of Malta poisoning an entire nunnery in retribution for his daughter's apostasy.

Both these evocations of the Jewish spirit of unforgiving vendetta date back 400 years, and more 'recent' literary constructs like Dickens's Fagin and Trollope's Melmont have focused on other undesirable characteristics. I was therefore touched to the raw to hear the 'telly-don' Dr Starkie (on Radio 4's *Question Time*) trace the Iraq war back to Old Testament-inspired vengeful feelings for 9/11 among Christian fundamentalist Americans. Dr Starkie was not content to leave it at that. Feeling he had to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's, he performed a labour of supererogation by describing the Old Testament as Jewish.

In fact, the whole history of the permeation of Western thought by Jewish influences points in the opposite direction. The most striking example of this occurred in Britain in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. At a time when, in reaction to revelations about Belsen and Auschwitz, anti-German feeling in this country was running high, two prominent Jews - the publisher Victor Gollancz and the musician Yehudi Menuhin - took a stance against Germanophobia and advocated reconciliation. (This somehow chimes in



Victor Gollancz

with the bizarre fact that although Wagner wrote the poisonous antisemitic tract *Das Judentum in der Musik*, individual Jews - from Hermann Levi via Bernard Levin to Daniel Barenboim - have been among the most impassioned Wagnerites.)

In the sphere of specific German-Jewish history one can list two further instances of influential Jews promoting a spirit of forgiveness. After the assassination in 1922 of Walter Rathenau, the foreign minister of the Weimar Republic, his mother appealed to the court trying his murderers not to invoke the full severity of the law. A little earlier, during the Bavarian Civil War between White and Red Guards, Ernst Toller, the Jewish commander of the latter, had won a minor victory which yielded many prisoners. He immediately ordered the release of all captives below the rank of officer on the grounds that they had been duped by their superiors. Alas, the freed prisoners immediately rejoined the White Army, which ultimately won the Civil War.

In the sphere of jurisprudence too, Jewish influence has overwhelmingly been exerted towards ameliorating the rigours of the law. In pre-Nazi Germany, Magnus Hirschfeld and Friedrich Wolf campaigned for the repeal of punitive

legislation against homosexuality and abortion. In France, Justice Minister Adolphe Crémieux liberalised the law and, in the USA, Supreme Court judge Felix Frankfurter played a similar role. Last but not least, the current British Chief Justice, the arch-liberal Lord Woolf, is living refutation of Dr Starkie's ill-considered assertion.

But the clincher in any contemporary discussion on Jewish vindictiveness is surely the attitude to the Likud brand of Zionism. One can confidently assert that at no time since the creation of the Jewish state has an absolute majority, either in Israel or the Diaspora, favoured an intransigent hardline solution to the Arab-Israeli problem. The fact that the Likud has been in the ascendant for the last 25 years has more to do with the weakness of the Labour Party and the splintering of Israel's political spectrum, than with overwhelming support among the electorate.

In the Diaspora, lack of support for an 'eye-for-an-eye' policy is even more pronounced. A recent *Jewish Chronicle* headline, 'Two out of three US Jews oppose Bush over Iraq', is indicative. After all, the toppling of Saddam had removed a lavish financier of suicide bombing, and dispatcher of Scud missiles, against Israel. For Britain, no poll results exist, but it is a fact that two leading advocates of a boycott of Israel are Jews, the senior MP Gerald Kaufman and the Open University's Professor Steven Rose. Similarly, two out of the three creators of *Guantanamo* - a play demanding justice for militant Islamist (and militantly anti-Israel) detainees held at the US facility - are Jews: the writer Gillian Slovo and the director Nicolas Kent (see Profile). And, surely, not even Dr Starkie would be able to detect a spirit of vindictiveness in the editorials of the *Jewish Chronicle*.

Gott moves in mysterious ways

Richard Grunberger

Recently the *New Statesman's* critic Richard Gott lauded Professor Overton's *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia*, while objecting to a number of other books comparing the two tyrants. He wrote: 'Somewhere, in the ever-popular "parallel lives" genre, a study of Franklin D Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler surely must exist. One put the Japanese in concentration camps, the other locked up the Jews. One took control over America's traditional sphere in Latin America, while the other moved decisively into Germany's obvious heartland in eastern Europe. So how come these startling parallels have been largely ignored by historians and publishers?'

I assume that Gott penned these lines with satiric intent, but a scintilla of nagging doubt remains. Some iconoclasts have a passion for tearing down hero figures from their pedestals. The vandalising three years ago of the Churchill statue in Parliament Square proved that to some on the anarchist left the greatest Briton ever was simply an imperialist. Never mind that he helped rid the world of Hitler, 'they say', he opposed Indian independence and ordered soldiers to fire on striking miners.

If Churchill presents a target for character assassination, his co-architect of victory over Nazism, the abovementioned Roosevelt, positively invites attack. Do I hear you ask why this should be so? The answer is simple: it's the nationality, stupid! FDR was American. It is a handicap not even a President Kerry - who incidentally, in classic immigration fashion, had a grandfather named Kohn - would have been able to escape for long. In the eyes of the *bien-pensant* left, America's place is in the wrong.

France's exposed antisemitism

Ronald Channing

Racism and antisemitism in France are on the increase and could pose a threat to the country's democratic values, says a government-commissioned report. France is host to Europe's largest Jewish community, numbering some 600,000, and President Chirac only recently made a strong appeal for racial and religious tolerance. Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin commented that the report's revelations were 'utterly unacceptable in a country like ours'.

In the first nine months of 2004 the number of racist and antisemitic attacks and threats was higher than that recorded for the whole of last year - including 166 attacks and 584 threats against Jews. These included desecration of cemeteries, swastika graffiti on Jewish-owned property, fire-bombings of synagogues and verbal abuse in schools.

Contrary to general belief, however, the results of the report's interviews and analysis of police statistics by the report's author, Jean-Christophe Rufin, show that

the majority of antisemitic acts in France were carried out neither by supporters of the far right nor by disaffected youth of North African origin. 'Antisemitic acts are the work of a far more diverse group of French people, who use Jews as their scapegoats', he concluded

Mr Rufin went on to deduce that pronounced anti-Zionism amounted to a form of antisemitism worthy of equal reprimand: 'Anti-Zionism legitimises the Palestinian armed struggle, even when it targets innocent civilians. Thus it could also legitimise violent acts committed in France', he said. 'By the same token, accusations of racism, apartheid and Nazism against Israel ...could, by extension, put France's own Jewish population in danger.'

Mr Rufin proposed legislation combating antisemitism and racist acts and specifically targeted regulations in schools: 'The very foundations of the French republican model forbid its citizens to be differentiated according to ethnic or religious criteria,' he said.

Life certificates: a new development

Michael Newman

From January 2005 onwards, Austrian members of AJR will be able to have their *Lebensbescheinigungen* (life certificates) notarised either at the AJR offices in Stanmore or at the AJR Day Centre in West Hampstead. Those unable to come to either of these locations can have their certificates signed at an AJR regional group meeting or during a home visit by an AJR social worker. It will still be possible to go to the Austrian embassy to have certificates signed.

This development is in light of concerns the AJR has raised regarding the difficult journey to the Austrian

embassy as well as the cost of having certificates authorised by doctors or notary publics.

Life certificates will be issued in January and pensioners have six weeks to have them signed. As this service is being offered for the first time, forms completed by the AJR must be returned to the Austrian embassy in London and not to the pension authority (*Pensionsversicherungsanstalt, PVA*) in Vienna.

Members who are having their forms notarised must also bring with them for identification an official document such as a passport or driving licence.

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A change from *The Sound of Music*

Richard Grunberger

Countries, especially when they have expanded empires, are in the habit of inventing a mission for themselves. France boasted of its *mission civilisatrice*, while Germany claimed *Es wird am deutschen Wesen einst die Welt genesen* (The German essence will heal the world). Imperial Britain saw itself as a reincarnation of Rome - cf Palmerston's *Civis Romanus sum* speech - and Dostoevsky apostrophised Tsarist Russia as the 'Third Jerusalem'.

What of Austria? Once it was celebrated in the phrase *Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima*, as the empire that would outlast all others in the world. In the seventeenth century it actually stopped the Turks, and thereby Islam, from advancing into Western Europe. Thereafter it declined and, after 1918, all that remained was a rump state. With the empire and vital economic assets gone, it had to rebrand itself, as it were. The answer was - symbolically, at least - the Salzburg Festival. In other words, the country re-emerged as a magnet for music lovers and tourists.

This artistic aspect of Austria's modern *raison d'être* is important. For decades after 1945 the country was in denial about its involvement with Nazi barbarism, and the undiminished worldwide reputation of the Vienna Opera and Philharmonic helped to spread this unfortunate amnesia. The fact that a Karajan had advanced rapidly, thanks to the purge of Jewish conductors, and that Karl Boehm had acquired an expropriated Jewish apartment was conveniently glossed over.

Other cultural instances of Austria's refusal to face its past were the resurrection of the career of Werner Kraus (of *Jud Süß* notoriety), and the rehabilitation of Paula Wessely, who on Nazi orders had cravenly denounced her benefactor Max Reinhardt and starred in the bloodthirsty propaganda movie *Heimat*.

With beneficiaries of Nazi patronage like Karajan, Wessely and Elizabeth

Schwarzkopf high in the cultural firmament, postwar Austria had returned to the *status quo ante* in one important sphere. A corresponding development took place in the political arena when (a) Chancellor Kreisky took the ex-SS officer Karl Peters into his cabinet; (b) Waldheim was - twice - elected president; and (c) Haider joined the government coalition.

However, even in Austria the devil, and his toadies, did not have all the best tunes. The country's past literary celebrities included humanitarians like Grillparzer, Nestroy and Wildgans - as distinct from reactionaries like Heimito von Doderer - and the former have had some notable contemporary successors. One was Thomas Bernhard, who hated Catholic, superficially denazified Austria to the core of his being. He went so far in his revulsion towards his compatriots that he forbade posthumous performances of his plays in the country.

Several years ago a similar ban on the staging of her own works was decreed by the 2004 Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek in protest against Haider's inclusion in the government. Jelinek's work has likewise targeted the Nazi collaborator Paula Wessely, while her play *Totenauberg* dealt with the relationship between the world-famous philosopher Martin Heidegger and his PhD student Hannah Arendt. Heidegger joined the Nazi Party in the year of Hitler's takeover, whereas Arendt was Jewish. Jelinek's own pedigree bears a strictly limited resemblance to this. Her Viennese mother stayed loyally married to her Czech Jewish father, who escaped the Holocaust as a chemist employed in the German war effort. However, postwar his dreadful experiences caught up with him, and he suffered a terminal nervous collapse.

The writer's view of the world as a place full of violence and (male) oppression was clearly shaped by this - which makes her an uncomfortable denizen of the country of *The Sound of Music*.

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Recital by Cracow-born refugee well received

Anthony Grenville

Natalia Karp, the distinguished pianist and a former refugee from Poland, gave a well-attended lunchtime recital at St James's, Piccadilly, playing with Hisayo Shimuzu. The piano duo played an attractive programme, beginning with a piece by Schubert, then Chopin - always a favourite of Natalia Karp - an engaging suite by Debussy, and pieces from Bizet's *Jeux d'Enfants*, before concluding with a Mazurka and a rousing Krakowiak by Moszkowski. The audience, which had a distinctly Central European admixture, gave the performance an enthusiastic reception.

Natalia Karp was born in Cracow and studied in pre-Hitler Berlin under the legendary Arthur Schnabel. During the war she survived a number of ghettos

and camps, including Plaszow, of *Schindler's List* fame, where she saved her life and that of her sister by playing the piano for the commandant, Amon Goeth. After the war she came to London, where she enjoyed a long and illustrious career, in particular with her Alpha Trio. To mark the centenary of Chopin's last concert in London, Natalia Karp was invited to play, using the very same piano on which the composer (another political refugee) had played, a signal honour.

Age seems not to have diminished Natalia Karp's love of the piano, to judge by the success of this most recent recital. The AJR offers her its congratulations and extends its best wishes for her future performances.

Inside information

AJR's Wessex group chairman Mark Goldfinger spoke to a gathering in Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight. Among his audience were 30 inmates plus prison officers and Home Office officials.

Mark recalled the years he had spent in concentration camps in the war. He had survived, he said, only through a mixture of luck, boldness, ingenuity and, above all, his own strength of character.

The one hour scheduled for his talk, in which he replied to many questions, was extended to well over two hours.

George Ettinger

Jewish English (American style)

'Hebonics': an interrogative language

Jewish English - now dubbed Hebonics - has officially been declared a second language by the New York City Board of Education. The city's schools are the first to recognise Hebonics as a valid language and significant attribute of American culture.

According to Howard Schollman, Linguistics Professor at Brooklyn College, the sentence structure of Hebonics derives from Middle and Eastern European language patterns, as well as Yiddish. Professor Schollman explains: 'In Hebonics, the response to any question is usually another question - plus a complaint that is implied or stated. Thus "How are you?" may be answered: "How should I be, with my feet?"' Schollman says that Hebonics is a superb linguistic vehicle for expressing sarcasm or scepticism. An example is the repetition of a word with 'sh' or 'shm' at the beginning: 'Mountains, shmountains. Stay away. You want a nosebleed?'

Another Hebonics pattern is moving the subject of a sentence to the end, with its pronoun at the beginning: 'It's

beautiful, that dress.' Schollman says one also sees the Hebonics verb moved to the end of the sentence. Thus, the response to a remark such as 'He's slow as a turtle' could be 'Turtle, shmurtle! Like a fly in Vaseline he walks.'

The following examples are taken from his bestselling textbook Switched-On Hebonics:

Question: 'What time is it?'

English answer: 'Sorry, I don't know.'

Hebonics answer: 'What am I, a clock?'

Remark: 'I hope things turn out okay.'

English response: 'Thanks.'

Hebonics response: 'I should be so lucky!'

Remark: 'Hurry up. Dinner's ready.'

English response: 'Be right there.'

Hebonics response: 'Alright already, I'm coming. What's with the hurry business? Is there a fire?'

Remark: 'I like the tie you gave me - I wear it all the time.'

English response: 'Glad you like it.'

Hebonics response: 'So what's the matter - you don't like the other ties I gave you?'

Remark: 'Sarah and I are engaged.'

English response: 'Congratulations!'

Hebonics response: 'She could stand to gain a few pounds.'

Question: 'Would you like to go riding with us?'

English answer: 'Just say when.'

Hebonics answer: 'Riding, shmiding! Do I look like a cowboy?'

To guest of honour at a birthday party:

English remark: 'Happy birthday.'

Hebonics remark: 'A year smarter you should become.'

Remark: 'A beautiful day.'

English response: 'Sure is.'

Hebonics response: 'So the sun is out - what else is new?'

Answering a phone call from son:

English remark: 'It's been a while since you called.'

Hebonics remark: 'You didn't wonder if I'm dead yet?'

Dutch girl's concentration camp love letters 'Freedom from behind barbed wire'

Ronald Channing

Love letters written in a Dutch concentration camp by an 18-year-old Jewish girl and smuggled to her boyfriend outside have been rediscovered. They describe Helga Deen's last month of imprisonment in the Vught camp in July 1943 during the German occupation of the Netherlands. Their significance has been compared to that of Anne Frank's diary.

Helga was in her final year at school in Tilburg before she was imprisoned in April in Vught, where more than 31,000 people were held between January 1943 and September 1944. She described life inside the camp and her despair, and wrote about the 'prisoners' delousing and children being transported to Auschwitz'.

The 'diary' was brought to the Tilburg archive by the son of her wartime boyfriend, who revealed that his late father treasured her letters, kept for 60

years in a purse with a lock of hair, which no one else was allowed to touch. The Dutch Institute for War Documentation said that it was an exceptional discovery: 'Very few diaries were written in the camps ... they were rarely recovered because people's luggage was taken away when they were deported.' The letters had been concealed in a green school notebook marked 'physics'.

Following the deportation of 1,300 children to Auschwitz and Sobibor, on 6 June 1943 Helga wrote: 'Transport. It is too much. I am broken and tomorrow it will happen again ... If my happiness and willpower die, I too will die.' It was to be her last entry. Helga and her father, mother and brother were transported to Sobibor, where they were murdered immediately on arrival.

Queen to lead nation's Holocaust Memorial Day

Ronald Channing

The Queen and Prince Phillip are to attend the central event of next year's Holocaust Memorial Day, in London's Westminster Hall, on 27 January, the date of the liberation of Auschwitz. Similar commemorative events are planned in all parts of the country.

The year 2005 also marks the 60th anniversary of the entry of British troops into the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Consequently, the focus of attention for 2005 will be predominantly on survivors and liberators, as reflected in this year's chosen theme, 'Survivors, Liberation and Rebuilding Lives'. It is anticipated that camp survivors resident in Britain and British troops who were present at the liberation of Bergen-Belsen will be well represented.

Home Secretary David Blunkett, who played a leading role in the unveiling of the Kindertransport statue at Liverpool Street Station last year, expressed the hope that as many people as possible would pay their respects to the survivors and learn from their testimony. 'Holocaust Memorial Day remains a day of huge

importance to our nation', he said, 'not only because it allows us to remember those who fell victim to the Nazis, but also because it inspires and encourages us to act on the lessons of the Holocaust, to challenge intolerance and racism wherever we find them today.'

These events are to be the last organised directly by the Home Office. Responsibility is to be placed in the hands of a new independent charity. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is to oversee the annual national event, advise and guide local authorities, produce and publish education materials for schools and maintain a website, as well as generate publicity and awareness. Of the maximum 15 trustees to be appointed, the Board of Deputies of British Jews is being granted three reserved places and the Holocaust Educational Trust a further two places. This is intended to ensure that the Jewish experience remains central to the commemoration of the Holocaust.

Disraeli - his life and times

New exhibition at the
Jewish Museum

Ronald Channing



A new exhibition celebrating the life of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli - marking the 200th anniversary of his birth - has opened at the Jewish Museum, Camden. Disraeli was regarded as one of the most fascinating and elusive figures in Victorian England. The exhibition, entitled *Disraeli - A Man of Many Parts*, explores his critical role in shaping Victorian England, his politics and literary aspirations, and his intriguing relationship with Queen Victoria, with whom he formed a close friendship.

Disraeli's complex relationship with his Jewish origins is also examined. He was born into a Sephardi Jewish family of Italian origin, but his father had him baptised into the Anglican Church at the age of 13, thereby opening up the possibility of a political career. Practising Jews were prevented from serving in Parliament until 1858, yet for many of his contemporaries Disraeli remained 'the Jew' and was widely portrayed as such in the popular press.

During both his tenures of office as prime minister, Disraeli instituted a series of important social reforms and laid the foundations for the modern Conservative Party. He also managed to maintain a parallel career as a prolific novelist. This wide range of interests is illustrated by letters, books, cartoons, documents and objects specially collected for this exhibition. These include loans from his home, Hughenden Manor, and from other private collections.

Disraeli - A Man of Many Parts can be seen at the Jewish Museum, Albert Street, Camden Town until the end of January 2005. Telephone 0207 284 1997 for details.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

THE LESSON OF HISTORY

Sir - I grew up in Mannheim and, having some spare time after retirement, I decided to read about the history of the Mannheim Jewish community. To my surprise, I discovered that its origin owed much to the peculiar character of King James I of England (and VI of Scotland). James's daughter Elizabeth was married to Frederick, the Elector of the Palatinate, which had its capital in Heidelberg.

In 1617 Frederick, a good Protestant, was invited to become king of Bohemia as the people there did not wish to be ruled by a rabid Catholic Hapsburg prince. Frederick accepted the offer and asked for help from his father-in-law in case there was trouble with Hapsburg Austria. But James hated war - he is the only king of England and Scotland never to have gone to war. His aversion to war, and his pathological fear of knives, are supposed to be due to the fact that his mother's musician/lover Rizzio was murdered in front of her eyes while she was pregnant with James.

In any event, James refused to help Frederick. The other Protestant princes followed suit, and Frederick was driven out of Prague after a very brief reign and had to take refuge with his relatives in Holland. There he and Elizabeth brought up their family.

The eldest son, Karl Ludwig, used the time there intelligently. He saw the importance of trade in creating wealth and the disproportionate importance of Jews in the trade of The Netherlands. He also realised that they were able to benefit the country because of the lack of restrictions which were applied to Jews elsewhere in Europe. When after the Thirty Years' War he himself became ruler of the Palatinate, he decided that Mannheim was to be an important

commercial centre. He therefore invited Jews to come and settle there, granting the same liberal terms he had seen in Amsterdam - no ghetto, no special taxes, and freedom to trade in all types of goods.

Susan Foot
Exeter

BARBED-WIRE ENTANGLEMENT

Sir - The main point of Richard Grunberger's review seemed to be not to review *The Secret Purposes* but to demonstrate how much the reviewer knows about Jewish refugee history. Sadly, what Mr Grunberger doesn't seem to know about is the concept of the novel. To say, for example, that 'an ex-Communist militant would never drift around England without any contact with exiled comrades' is nonsense, firstly because my protagonist, Isaac Fabian, does not drift around England - he lives in Cambridge and then is interned on the Isle of Man - and secondly, and much more importantly, because he is not Klaus Fuchs, or Oskar Kokoschka, but a character, and his initial uncertainty about such contact on arriving in England is entirely in character. Similarly, to say that 'it strains credulity that a Prussian registrar would marry a Jew and an Aryan a full year after the Nazi takeover' is peculiar, firstly because such marriages were not actually illegal until after the Nuremberg Laws were passed in 1935, and secondly, once again showing Mr. Grunberger's blindness to the idea of individual character, it ignores the fact that Isaac's wife comes from a rich family whose connections would have been able to override such misgivings.

But most specious, and this is really why I'm writing, he ends by saying that 'my gravest charge against him is that he makes Isaak (sic), who left Germany

before the outbreak of war, describe a massacre that could have occurred only in Nazi-occupied Poland'. Now, it is made entirely clear in the last pages that the massacre described by Isaac is not exactly what it appears to be. So either Mr Grunberger is being deliberately mendacious or he never finished the book before writing the review, so keen was he on showing off his own erudition.

David Baddiel
London

FORGOTTEN VETERANS

Sir - I still have my Berlin grandfather's memoirs, in which he writes how proud he was that his name had been changed from Itzig to Irting just in time (1915) so that his son could serve his Kaiser and Fatherland under his new name.

Rita Kahn
London N4

Sir - Preventing these veterans from being forgotten also depends in part on what we do about it. This year, on my overnight annual pilgrimage to my city of birth, Wesel-on-the-Rhine, on the anniversary of Crystal Night, I will be asked to approve the design of a memorial plaque to six German Jewish soldiers killed in action in 1914-18.

Ernest G Kolman
Greenford, Middx

Sir - Mr Sulzbacher (November issue) tells us that Jews could not become officers in the German army before the war but did so after 1914. The ban on Jews being commissioned applied in the Prussian army, but certainly not in Bavaria. Hitler's company commander, who nominated him for the Iron Cross and who eventually pinned it on his tunic, was the Jewish captain Guttman. But I do not believe that the Prussian army changed its spots even after the outbreak of war. That President von Hindenburg supplied the foreword to the *Gedenkbuch* is not surprising: he was very conscious of the patriotism of German Jews, particularly that of army veterans.

Francis Steiner
Deddington, Oxfordshire

AUSTRIAN COMPENSATION

Sir - Following my letters in previous issues of *AJR Journal* regarding the delays in distributing payments from the General Settlement Fund, I have now received about 40 letters, emails and telephone calls. I am most grateful for these, and heartened by them. I now wish to send the letter below to people of consequence in the Austrian government, and to those in the Jewish organisations who believe they have acted on our behalf. If you agree with this letter, please send me your approval in words similar (or identical) to those I have written below.

Peter Phillips

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Herts, WD3 4HL*

*Email: peterphillips@supanet.com
Telephone and fax: 01923 778431*

Dear Sir,

We are writing to express our dismay at the continued delay in distribution of payments from the General Settlement Fund (GSF). At the outset, we would like to say that we are all applicants to the GSF and are not participants in any class action litigation.

Accepting that the Claims Conference was party to the Washington Agreement that provides for the GSF, we would like to point out that we ourselves are not members of that organisation and that they in no way speak for us.

We are aware that the Washington Agreement is based on the principle of legal peace but, with no end in sight to the current litigation, it is we, the survivors, who are being denied justice. Whether or not the principle of legal peace applies, Austria has not yet settled its Holocaust-era debts and continues to hold on to the properties and other assets appropriated from our families.

In our opinion, the progression of any lawsuit should be totally separate to the process of disbursing payments from the GSF so that we survivors can enjoy some modicum of justice in our latter years.

Moshe Jahoda, with whom you are no doubt familiar, has gone on record to refer to the alarming mortality rate among Austrian Holocaust victims - as many as two survivors per day are dying. They have been denied the opportunity to benefit from their rightful inheritance.

Time is now against us and we are looking to you to take the necessary steps

to bring a swift and satisfactory end to this long overdue matter. We look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely

Signed on behalf of the Austrian Holocaust Claimants Compensation Group

THANKS TO THE DAY CENTRE

Sir - That I was accepted as a member of AJR has certainly changed my life. I have something to look forward to and enjoy every moment I am there. From the bottom of my heart I want to thank Sylvia and the volunteers.

*Rosa Fuhrman
Edgware, Middx*

SELECTIVE MEMORY

Sir - I lived in France during the German occupation and saw how easily the French collaborated with the Nazi authorities. When I worked in Montmartre with false papers as a 'guide' taking German soldiers to night clubs, cabarets and brothels, I encountered many Frenchmen bragging about their connection with the German authorities and showing off the black-market supplies given to them by the Nazis for services rendered.

As mentioned in my biography *Desperate Journey - Vienna, Paris, Auschwitz*, I had my own experience with the French gendarmes who arrested and tortured me to find out the names of my Resistance group. To stop the terrible torture, I had to admit that I was a Jew hiding from the Germans up in the hills of Figeac, but that I had nothing to do with the resistance. It was my French girlfriend, Jacqueline, who denounced me to the Vichy police because I broke off my relationship with her. After the war I wanted to find her, but discovered that she had left France with a German lover when he returned to his homeland after the occupation. It makes me laugh that France is now trying to tell the world how Charles de Gaulle won the war single-handed and neither Churchill nor Dunkirk is ever mentioned.

*Freddie Knoller
London N20*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Gwen John *Self-Portrait* 1902
© Estate of Gwen John 2004.
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As Augustus John became increasingly flamboyant, his sister, Gwen, grew more introverted. Now, until 9 January, **Tate Britain** is celebrating their differences in a first major exhibition there. Gwen John and Augustus John both studied at the Slade School in the 1890s but then their paths diverged. Augustus won plaudits for his post-Impressionist style and was feted by the London cognoscenti, who compared him with Gauguin and Matisse. Playing tortoise to his hare, the slower-working Gwen initially fell under her brother's shadow, but now her subtle and introspective art is being re-evaluated and is said to share the intimate and intensely personal perspective of artists like Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard.

Both Augustus and Gwen became infatuated with the same muse - Dorelia McNeill - an alluring woman who lived with John and his wife, Ida. He had children by both women, maintaining a nomadic and bohemian existence in Provence, which reflected his obsession with Romany culture. In Augustus John's vision Dorelia is imbued with every feminine quality - from the purity of the Madonna to the sensuality of the femme

fatale. His full-length painting of the pregnant Ida in earthy, ochre tones is ironic and flaunting at a time when the depiction of pregnancy was unorthodox. But when Ida died shortly after childbirth he was devastated, and his family paintings evoke a mystical dream of his unchanging paradise - with Ida and Dorelia and all their children eternally around them. Certainly, Augustus John's portraits became incandescent. His matadorial painting of Wyndham Lewis and his broody depiction of Yeats - who thought the work made him look drunk and disreputable - capture a moment, or a mood, in contrast to the prevailing elegant, frozen attitudes of traditional portraiture.

Gwen, described as a modern Vermeer, was less keen on exhibitions, and her work shows a retiring, fragile disposition. After the death of her lover, the sculptor Auguste Rodin, the spiritual absorption of her work increased and, for her brother's vigour, she offers gestures of surrender or sadness. While some of her work is almost too chalky, too pallid, her portraits of old ladies peering out into a world gone cold on them are searing comments on the changing perceptions of age.

At the **National Portrait Gallery** it is a very different story. **G. F. Watts Portraits** celebrates the work of this high-society painter, whose gallery of simpering beauties, including his wife, the actress Ellen Terry, calls to mind a nineteenth-century *Hello* magazine. Though short-lived - Ellen was 17 and he 47 - their marriage revealed a more poetic aspect of Watts, whose work can be opulent and Grand Masterly in style. But Watts stands on the cusp of the pre-Raphaelites, whose bohemian society he enjoyed and whose solemn portrait of Tennyson offers a glimpse into the artist's darker side. The poet's wife, Emily, complimented Watts on his ethereal - almost more mood than flesh - depiction of her. 'You are a subtle alchemist', she said.

Interestingly, Watts's portrait of Blanche, Countess of Airlie, though depicting her bejewelled and gorgeous in her red dress, bears a striking facial similarity to Gwen John's self-portrait, also in red.

RG's INTERFACE

'Culture heroes' make waves

The US author and film director Paul Oster (*New York Trilogy*, *Smoke*) said in an interview with the *Jüdische Allgemeine Wochenzeitung* that he profoundly disagreed not only with Zionism, but also Judaism. He considers the latter - alongside Christianity and Islam - responsible for an increase in lethal fanaticism.

The TV comedian Ali G, alias Sacha Baron Cohen, has been touring the United States, allegedly probing for the roots of prejudice. In the process he has been encouraging redneck audiences to join him in the song *Throw the Jew into the Well*. The video of this performance has meanwhile appeared on several Islamist websites.

The 2004 Frankfurt Book Fair

commenced with a symposium on *Orient and Occident*, at which the star speaker was the leading Muslim academic Tariq Ramadan of the University of Freiburg. Ramadan recently accused some of France's most influential intellectuals - Bernard-Henri Lévy, Alain Finkielkraut and Bernard Kouchner (of *Médécins sans Frontières* fame) - of supporting Israel and the Iraq war because they were Jews.

Austria honours outstanding

Jews The Austrian Post Office is mounting an exhibition of stamps commemorating 40 celebrities, including Sigmund Freud, Karl Kraus, Lise Meitner, Arnold Schönberg and Billy Wilder. (The stamp commemorating Theodor Herzl was referred to in our November issue.)

Righteous Gentiles honoured

A memorial plaque has been affixed to a house in Berlin's Knesebeckstrasse where Emma and Franz Gumz hid several Jews during the war. Among the lives they saved was that of the writer Inge Deutschkron (*Ich trug den gelben Stern*) and her mother.

The hinge generation

AFTER SUCH KNOWLEDGE: WHERE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST ENDS AND HISTORY BEGINS

Eva Hoffman

Secker and Warburg 2004, £16.99, 280 pp.

Whereas Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* recounted her own struggle with her Holocaust inheritance, *After Such Knowledge* embraces the collective narrative. Hoffman uses her wide reading and experience, including her own narrative and those of others, to construct a narrative of the Holocaust in the collective consciousness.

Her thesis is encapsulated in the chapter headings that indicate the collective post-Holocaust progression from Event to Fable, to Psyche, to Narrative, to Morality, to Memory, to separating from the Past and finally to assessing the Present.

History is lived contemporarily; historiography, or the 'history' that is passed on to future generations, can be constructed only after the event. Cynically, we can define 'recorded history' as an account of something that didn't happen by someone who wasn't there. The aptness of this definition is apparent if we think of its extremes - accounts written by Holocaust deniers, Armenian Genocide deniers and others of their ilk. Hoffman notes that the era of living memory of the Holocaust is ending and the Holocaust is passing into virtual memory. The documents 'speak for themselves' but they cannot enter into a discourse with historiographers of the future who may interpret them with an erroneous mindset.

Hoffman describes eloquently the experiences that children of the 'second generation' know so well. She points out that they are the 'hinge generation', meaning that through them either 'the meanings of awful events can remain arrested and fixed at the point of trauma' or they can be processed to a new understanding. Many of the first-generation survivors were too traumatised to work through to resolution or, in some cases, even to begin the work of mourning. The second generation has a second chance

REVIEWS

to do this processing. An essential part of this work for both the offspring of survivors and perpetrators is coming to terms with Germanness and with each other. The *Shoah* seems to demand something of the second generation as if a 'trusteeship' has been thrust upon them.

Hoffman provides fascinating descriptions of inappropriate responses to the Holocaust at both personal and collective levels: pseudo-identification, contortions and distortions to dis-burden the self, self-indulgence, indulging for 'thrills' and recruiting the Holocaust for political purposes or personal gain. She explores the spectrum from disavowal (denial and forgetfulness) to avowal (making it a sacred obsession and voyeurism) and from trivialisation to 'expanding the Holocaust into emptiness'.

The demise of the Soviet bloc opened up the possibility for many more survivors and their progeny to visit the 'Old Country', which, for the second generation, had been a powerful but virtual image. The importance, even in our globalised modern world, of 'roots' breaks through all barriers of resistance. The reality often proved surprisingly different to the fantasised image. The section Hoffman devotes to exploring the commemoration of the massacre at Jedwabne, in a part of Poland that had been under Soviet control, is unbearably moving. It is crucial to her later theme of the 'return of the repressed', with increased urgency the longer it is suppressed and denied. As she says, only public recognition before the world can bring relief to the survivors and their children. Due to the time-lag in facing Holocaust knowledge, this usually has to be done on behalf of the perpetrators by the government that has inherited the terrible history and in the presence of mostly second and third generations of the survivors.

Hoffman points out how 'the balm of recognition' has been possible to some

extent through 'symbolic justice' created out of dialogue between first-generation perpetrators and survivors in the aftermath of some post-Holocaust atrocities and genocide, for example in South Africa, Bosnia and Rwanda. Such dialogue is vitally important to short-circuit new cycles of vengeful violence. What Hoffman does not mention is that we carry in our collective psyche the unhealed wounds of countless pre-Holocaust atrocities that have not been fully acknowledged in the public arena. For example, the Armenian Genocide is still denied by Turkish representatives and historians through wilful misinterpretations. As long as there is no acknowledgement by the inheritors of the perpetrators, mourning cannot proceed to resolution. The final stage of genocide is the wiping out of all memory of those murdered in the genocide. For the generations of the survivors this means their ancestors are wiped out as if they had never existed and the possibility of reclaiming roots, with all that implies, is lost.

This final stage of public acknowledgement has probably been achieved as fully as possible with regard to the Holocaust. Personally, I feel that Jews are in the best position to claim this on behalf of the progeny of the survivors of not-yet-acknowledged genocides. If we have learned nothing else about the Holocaust, Hoffman makes very clear the importance of bearing to know the truth of what actually happened and acknowledging it publicly. We need to apply this 'lesson' retrospectively as well as currently if we are to be able to contain the causal elements that Hoffman delineates so masterfully in relation to the Holocaust.

Ruth Barnett

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THEATRE

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PRIMO

Adapted by Anthony Sher
Cottesloe Theatre, London

Primo Levi's *If This is a Man* recounted what it was like to be trapped inside a monstrous mechanism geared to mass extermination. The work has earned its place as a record of man's inhumanity to man alongside *Goodbye to All That* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* - whose horrors it magnified exponentially.

Whereas military means had been employed in mass exterminations throughout history, the Nazis pioneered the use of industrial techniques. They simultaneously coined the most sadistic slogan ever to mock slave labourers, with *Arbeit macht frei* inscribed on the gates of Auschwitz.

When a new transport passed through those portals of hell most went straight 'into the gas', while the able-bodied few were made to perform back-breaking labour. Levi survived the latter ordeal thanks to food smuggled in by Lorenzo, an Italian bricklayer. He was vouchsafed another chance of survival when the Germans needed skilled chemists for their Monowitz plant producing artificial rubber.

I still recall 40 years after reading the book what a transfixing impression Levi's encounter with Lorenzo and his 'job interview' at the Monowitz lab made on me. The encounter with Lorenzo occurred just as Levi, at the end of his tether, contemplated running into the electrified fence to end his unbearable existence. What decided him not to give up was the blinding revelation that somewhere out in the world beyond the barbed wire goodness still existed. The encounter with the lab chief pitted the stinking, half-starved, zebra-striped Levi against a spruce well-fed technocrat who puzzled that

the interviewee was not *au fait* with the latest research findings announced in academic publications.

In adapting the work for the stage, Anthony Sher plumped for a one-man narrative delivered by the middle-weight, sober-suited Levi subsequent to his liberation. He thereby forewent the opportunity of setting certain scenes in the dramatic present. In consequence, the audience could not vicariously join Levi in the switchback ride from suicidal depression to the renewed will to live triggered by Lorenzo's humane gesture.

Nor could we explode with outrage while watching the scene between the well-laundered, pink-fleshed lab chief and the malodorous skeletal Levi. Anthony Sher is on record as saying that he deliberately eschewed any attempts at verisimilitude on stage. There is, of course, something to be said for an approach that avoids melodrama - although the National Theatre staged Joshua Sobol's *Ghetto* in a much more cathartic manner over 20 years ago.

I confess I feel more deeply moved towards both terror and pity by what I read on the printed page four decades ago than what I saw on stage last month. Nonetheless, I take my hat off to Anthony Sher as actor, if not adapter.

Richard Grunberger

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Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Ilona first entered my world some ten years ago, when she was about 14 years old. She had immigrated to Israel from Russia with her mother and grandmother not long before, and was attending the prestigious Jerusalem Music Academy High School. For lack of means, however, she had been unable to buy the required textbooks and had been told not to return until she had obtained them.

Somehow this information came to the ears of Bnai Brith's English-speaking Albert Einstein Lodge in Jerusalem, of which both my late parents were members. The Lodge committee saw fit to extend some financial aid to the young girl, who quickly won the hearts of its members. The financial assistance continued for several years and without a doubt contributed to Ilona's success.

Ilona combines immense musical talent with great personal charm. After finishing high school she went on to complete graduate studies at the Rubin Academy of Music, also in Jerusalem. She undertook the onerous task of a double degree, in both piano and voice, studying with some of Israel's leading teachers. In addition to the assistance from Bnai Brith, Ilona won scholarships from the America-Israel Fund.

From time to time, with the assistance of the Lodge, Ilona gave concerts, displaying her talents and achievements. It was always extremely gratifying for the members to see the progress of their young protégée, and over the years her audiences grew ever larger.

After completing her studies in Jerusalem Ilona moved to London, where she was awarded a place at the Royal Academy of Music to undertake further voice studies. Having successfully completed her MA, she is currently working in London and building her operatic career.

It is gratifying to know that Ilona's talent has been enabled to blossom through the foresight and kindness of patrons in Israel and England.

The Tricycle Theatre has two entrances - a somewhat antiquated one in the Kilburn High Road, and a gleaming new one in a side street round the corner. The theatre also has, according to director Nicolas Kent, a dual function - one as a venue for drama, and the other as an educational agency serving the local community.

The latter task fills Kent with particular satisfaction because he feels that by running workshops for 'socially excluded' local children he is repaying Britain for accepting his German-Jewish refugee father almost 70 years ago.

His father, born in Offenbach near Frankfurt, arrived here at the age of 28, worked in women's fashion/buttons and married an Englishwoman. She was from Shepton Mallet in Somerset and was an art buyer for Selfridges before moving to the haberdashery section where she met his father. She was married, but left her husband and the couple moved in together a few days after war was declared in 1939. 'It was obviously a very unusual thing for people to do in those days', says Kent. Kent's father changed his name from Kahn to Kent during the war - 'something he later regretted'. Nicolas was born in 1945, and was brought up in Hampstead Garden Suburb. He describes himself as 'a spoilt only child and quite lonely. And I didn't know whether I was English or continental.' At 12 he went to board at Stowe School, where he encountered antisemitic prejudice based on snobbery (Michael Grade, another 'outsider', left after one term). Kent showed greater staying power and went on to Cambridge, where he read English.

Cambridge, almost as famous for the 'Footlights' as for its bevy of Nobel Prize winners, has long been a breeding ground of theatrical talent. Kent's contemporaries included the playwrights David Hare and Howard Brenton, as well as the BBC's John Simpson.

Having graduated, he received a year's grant from ABC Television to train as assistant director at the

PROFILE

Richard Grunberger

Tricycle chief



Nicolas Kent

Liverpool Playhouse. Next, he managed a touring company headed by Maria Aitken and Anthony Andrews. Other way stations in his directorial career were the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, the Watermill Theatre at Newbury, and the Traverse at Edinburgh.

He also toured Africa under British Council auspices and - most appropriately - directed *Macbeth* in Baathist Baghdad shortly after the Yom Kippur War. The Iraqi authorities demanded that the entire cast submit certificates of religion in addition to their passports - a request with which the Foreign Office concurred. Kent, who does not profess the Jewish faith, refused to comply with the request, and his obstinacy eventually paid off.

As director of the Tricycle Theatre he has been particularly associated with meticulously researched plays based on documentary evidence, starting with *Half the Picture*, his reconstruction of the Scott inquiry into the arms to Iraq affair in 1993. Kent has gone on to stage verbatim extracts from the Stephen

Lawrence inquiry in *The Colour of Justice* (1999), the Hutton inquiry into the death of David Kelly, *Justifying War* (2003), as well as extracts from the Nuremberg war crime trials (1998).

In the same year he attended the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. Kent was there to research his play of the same year, *Srebrenica*, in which he edited for the stage transcripts of the hearings investigating the massacre in that town during the Bosnian war.

He has been in his present position for about 20 years and can claim, without exaggeration, to have turned round the theatre, which had previously been in dire straits. This achievement has been, in equal parts, artistic and financial - and Kent gives credit for the latter to his DNA. (His father had branched out, in middle age, from button merchant to the production of car sunroofs and even golf balls.)

Today, the theatre is securely in the black. It receives financial support from the Arts Council and the Association of London Boroughs, but generates nearly half its income from ticket sales.

Not only was the recent production, Sean O'Casey's *Shadow of a Gunman*, playing to full houses, but the Tricycle building echoes all day with purposeful activity - from rehearsals to acting classes for pupils from local schools.

Theatre-goers attending performances of *Shadow of a Gunman* come across a programme note drawing parallels between the Black and Tans in 1920s Ireland and British soldiers in present-day Iraq.

This sort of political engagement has characterised much of Kent's work - not least in the docu-drama *Guantanamo*, for the compilation of which he interviewed relatives of prisoners held in the US detention camp.

He is clearly a man of the theatre, for whom the term 'acting' carries a double meaning. One is what thespians do professionally - and the other is to use the stage in the 'battle for hearts and minds' currently agitating much of the world.

INSIDE the AJR

Building on the talents of AJR Glasgow

Professor Issy Metztein, one of our members, gave us insight into the personalities and works of important architects who left Nazi Europe for freedom in the West, including the German Expressionist Erich Mendelsohn, designer of the Einstein Tower in Potsdam. As always, the meeting was followed by a delicious tea and a chance to socialise. Indeed, one of the highlights of this part of the afternoon was the reunion of two former students of the same university. *Claire Singerman*

North London: what makes the AJR tick

Head of AJR Finance Gordon Greenfield talked to us about what makes the AJR tick, and gave details of how the organisation's manifold activities are funded and managed. We all had some idea of the social and welfare work provided, although it must be doubted whether any of us had knowledge of the full range of the organisation's work.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 16 December, 10.30 am. Late Chanukah Party

Children of Israel meet in Norfolk

And it came to pass that several of the Children of Israel sojourned to the City of Norwich and each carried off the fruits of the earth so that they should have a communal feast. And they spoke about who had and who had not returned to the land of their fathers and if not why not. And, as is common among the Jews, they did not speak with one tongue and in the opinion of some the Danube was blue, the mountains of Austria a wonder to behold, and the Rhine a pleasant river, but the inhabitants thereof were of no account.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: Tuesday 15 February 2005. Same place, same time

Guten Appetit in Surrey

The late Tony Freud was responsible for what is now a tradition with the Surrey group: an annual Summer Lunch get-together, which this year was hosted by Edmée and Tom Barta, ably assisted by Edith Vanstone. Many members brought their own specialities, with an overriding southern European flavour. We were happy to welcome new members and all enjoyed the good food and each other's company - over 30 of us on this occasion.

Vernon Saunders

Diaries discussed in Sheffield

We had a most enjoyable meeting at the home of Steve and Hilary Mendelsohn, with the good attendance reflecting the interest shown in the topic of diaries. Inga Joseph spoke about various diarists before readings from her published book *My Darling Diary*. The ensuing discussion led to many insights into her and other members' experiences of coming to this country. Susanne Green provided us with AJR updates as well as lovely refreshments and it was interesting to meet Barbara Dorrity, the Northern social worker.

Otto Fleming

Next meeting: Sunday 3 April 2005, 2.00 pm: 'Food - Memories, Recipes and Tastings'

Weald of Kent entertained by radio broadcaster

Meeting in Maidstone, we thoroughly enjoyed a talk by Stewart Macintosh, who related his early ambition to be a radio broadcaster, from which he never deviated. With amusing anecdotes from Brighton, Northern Ireland and elsewhere, it made for an informative and entertaining afternoon.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: date to be announced

Ilford: AJR facts and figures

The AJR's Gordon Greenfield gave us an oversight into the new offices in Stanmore together with a brief resume on key personnel. He also produced facts and figures on expenditure, which was followed by questions from the floor. We all felt we had learned a lot more about the AJR's multifaceted work.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wednesday 1 December, 10.30 am. Pre-Chanukah Party with Quiz

Essex and the missing musical

We much enjoyed records of the musical *Rothschild* presented by Walter Woyda. *Rothschild*, written by the same artists who wrote *Fiddler on the Roof*, had the same amazing success on Broadway. However, for reasons of 'political correctness', this beautiful musical never appeared on the London stage.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 14 December, 1.45 for 2.15 pm. Community Chanukah Party

Pinner jazz gems

Our own member Alf Keiles entertained us with selections from his collection on the theme 'Jewish Influence on Jazz and Dance Bands'. Among other gems we had the first recording in 1927 by Bing Crosby, as a member of the Rhythm Boys, in 'Side by Side', with Paul Whiteman, then Al Jolson, Perry Como with 'Zena, Zena', Geraldo, Josef Schmidt, Diane Schuur, Joe Loss and many others. Lots of nostalgic foot-tapping.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 9 December, 2.00 pm. Chanukah Party

Cambridge contribution to community

Ruth Clapham gave a fascinating account of her many contributions to the community, ranging from involvement with the Red Cross, charity shops and political and council activities in the Huntingdonshire area, culminating in the award of the MBE. Ruth had also produced a cookery book and operated as a liaison officer, helping to trace missing persons in Germany. Once again Mr and Mrs Binks had arranged a delicious supply of refreshments, to which many members had contributed. It was provisionally agreed that after December meetings would take place on 17 February, 14 April and 16 June 2005.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: Thursday 16 December. Susannah Alexander (Education Officer, Jewish Museum), 'The History of the Jews in England - An Overview'

Looking on the bright side in Wessex

Following our garden party and an excellent lunch at the Normandie Hotel in Bournemouth, Bettine Le Beau delivered an unforgettable talk on her principles:

Enjoy what you have. Appreciate what good fortune you might experience. Always look on the positive side. Always keep your self-esteem. Altogether, a talk by a real survivor. *George Ettinger*

Next meeting: Tuesday 7 December. Chanukah Party

Liverpool: 'Aunt Adele's Diary'

Speaking on his 90th birthday, Dr Erich Strach told us how after the war he had found a diary written by his aunt Adele in Theresienstadt. In the diary she writes vividly of the suffering to which she and other inmates were subjected: fear of extermination, gnawing hunger, bed bugs and typhus. *Gerald Jayson*

Memories exchanged at Bradford Continental Friends meeting

At our fourth meeting - we now meet regularly in the Bradford Synagogue Hall - we enjoyed exchanging memories in an atmosphere of friendship and understanding. Indeed, these meetings have proved so successful that we have arranged a joint event, a pre-Chanukah Party, to be held on Wednesday 1 December at the Mornington Hall in Bradford Synagogue for the Leeds, Harrogate and Bradford Continental Friends groups. *Albert Waxman*

Brighton and Hove Sarid: Giving without receiving

Rabbi P. Efun of the West Hove Hebrew Congregation stressed that charity and good deeds form the basis of Jewish ethics. There are many ways of giving, of which charity is just one - but the highest form of giving is the one that expects nothing in return. *Rudi Simmonds*

Next meeting: Monday 13 December, 10.45 am. Chanukah Party - Food - Readings. Bring a friend!

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100th birthday celebration



Back: Sigi (son), Nicky (granddaughter)
Front: Irma Faith and Terry (Sigi's wife)

Irma Faith, who was born in Hamburg in 1904, celebrated her 100th birthday in fine style at Balint House in Hampstead, where she is a resident, with her son Sigi Faith, a former member of the AJR Management Committee and supporter of AJR's Kindertransport special interest group. The immaculately dressed lady proudly showed her card from the Queen to special guests Rudi Vis MP and the Mayor of Barnet.

In December 1938 Irma and her late husband sent their only child, then 10 years old, to safety in England on the Kindertransport. Irma managed to free her husband from Sachsenhausen concentration camp and to leave Germany; they reached Shanghai as penniless refugees. 'The Japanese came and it turned into a nightmare', she remembers. It was ten years before Irma and her husband were reunited with their son, at Southampton docks.

'I have a wonderful family - two grandchildren and six great-grandchildren', said Irma, adding 'and I read a lot.' She will always be grateful for being allowed to make a new life in England.

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Thur 2	Ann Kenton Barker
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Mon 6	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 7	Angela Jenshil
Wed 8	Rita & Jack Davis
Thur 9	Margaret Opdahl
Sun 12	CLOSED
Mon 13	KT Chanukah Party - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 14	Nicola Smedley
Wed 15	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 16	Madeleine Whiteson
Sun 19	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 20	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 21	Sheila Games
Wed 22	Katinka Seiner
Thur 23	Freddy Hill
Sun 26	CLOSED
Mon 27	CLOSED
Tue 28	CLOSED
Wed 29	CLOSED
Thur 30	CLOSED

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If you are able to take one of our members shopping on a fortnightly basis with all expenses paid please contact:

Carol Hart, Volunteers Co-ordinator
Tel 020 8385 3070

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Kerzner. Isidor Richard Kerzner, aged 77 years, after a long battle with cancer, passed away 11 August 2004. He was on the Kindertransport with 300 children from Austria. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. His wife Astrid Kerzner and only child, Madeleine Kerzner.

Rayner. Heini Rayner, born Vienna 1922, died 28 September after a long illness. He will be sadly missed by his wife of 54 years, Mitzi, daughters Madeleine and Susan, grandchildren Craig, Laura, Nicky and Hayley, and sons-in-law Gary and Alan.

Reiner. Hans Reiner passed away suddenly and is deeply mourned by his wife Hedy, daughter Susan and son-in-law Alan, and grandchildren Robert and Corine.

Wyatt. Fred Wyatt, born Germany 1914, died September 2004, was a member of the AJR for many years. In spite of his disability, Parkinson's disease, he joined in all the activities at the Day Centre, especially chess and Scrabble. He will be sadly missed.

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Obituary

Adolf Prag

Adolf Prag, who has died at the age of 97, was born in Baden-Oos near the Black Forest. Educated at the Goethe-Gymnasium in Frankfurt-am-Main, he studied mathematics at the local university supported by a grant from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, although he had been expected to study classical languages. His linguistic aptitude proved valuable when he participated in a *Lesekränzchen* led by Max Dehn. Classical mathematical texts were studied in their original languages and Prag proved to be a great asset in translating Latin and Greek texts into German.

At Dehn's suggestion, Prag chose the seventeenth-century Oxford mathematician John Wallis for his thesis for the teacher's *Staatsexamen*, and it was of such quality that it was included in a historical book published by Otto Neugebauer.

There was little prospect of Prag's obtaining a post in a state school under the Nazis, and he chose to become an *Assessor* in Anna Essinger's mainly Jewish co-educational boarding school in Herrlingen, near Ulm. He was able to emigrate to England when in 1933 she decided to move the school to Bunce Court in Kent. There he became a much esteemed maths teacher and deputy head.

In 1937 he met Frede Warburg, daughter of the historian Aby, in Bunce Court School. They married a year later. Both were involved in finding homes for Kindertransport children but were interned on the Isle of Man in June 1940. On his release he taught at St Edward's School, Oxford and later at Westminster School, where he eventually became head of the maths department and school librarian. As the library held a number of valuable historical texts, his interest in history was rekindled, and he pursued this interest passionately long after his retirement. He published several texts and assisted with the publication of the eight volumes of *The Mathematical Papers of Isaac Newton* (1967-81). Adolf and Frede died at the same age within a few weeks of each other.

I am indebted for much of this information to Christoph J. Sciba's In Memoriam (June 2004) (LBB).

Leslie Baruch Brent

Arts Diary December

To 30 January 2005 'Pioniere in Celluloid: Juden in der frühen Filmwelt'. An exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Frankfurt am Main. Tel 0049 (0)69 212 350 00

Mon 29 November Michael Faulkner MA, "Die Rote Kapelle" (The Red Orchestra). The Soviet Spy Ring in Nazi-Occupied Europe'. Club 43

Mon 6 December Dr E. M. Batley, 'The Political Problem of Goethe's Freemasonry'. Club 43

Mon 6 Moris Farhi, 'Turkey and the Holocaust'. Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL, Gustave Tuck Theatre, Gower Street, London WC1. 6.30 pm. Tel 020 7679 3520

Tues 7 Gerhart Riegner memorial lecture. Professor Carlo Ginzburg (University of California, Los Angeles), 'Sacred Sociology: A French Approach to the Religious Dimension of Fascism'. Wiener Library/Centre for German Jewish Studies, University of Sussex/Leo Baeck Institute

Thur 9 *From Swastika to Jim Crow*. Premiere film screening: the story of German refugee scholars in the segregated South. 7.30 pm. LJCC

Mon 13 Hans Seelig MA, 'A Last-Minute Look at Some Musical Anniversaries of 2004 That We Have Missed'. Club 43

Tues 14 'The Glory of Gershwin'. Lecture by Rodney Greenberg. London Jewish Cultural Centre, 7.30 pm

Mon 20 An informal 'Chanumas' evening with refreshments. Club 43

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

London Jewish Cultural Centre King's College, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 tel 020 7431 0345

Wiener Library 4 Devonshire Street London W1 tel 020 7636 7247

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Additional Swiss bank accounts

The court administering the Holocaust Victims Asset Litigation (Swiss Banks Settlement) has announced that an additional list of 4,000 names of owners of Swiss bank accounts will be published. The updated list will be accessible only on the internet at www.crt-ii.org or www.swissbankclaims.com.

To date, 1,379 awards have been made and more than \$167m (approximately £95m) has been disbursed to 2,407 claimants. These figures include 145 awards made to UK claimants at an average of \$60,000 (£35,000). A total of \$800m (£450m) has been set aside from the Settlement to pay claims for dormant Swiss accounts.

Austrian General Settlement Fund

Although payments from the General Settlement Fund (GSF) cannot be disbursed until the conclusion or dismissal of lawsuits in the United States against Austria and Austrian companies, the deadline for claims under the *in rem* restitution heading has been extended until **31 December 2004**.

According to the National Fund, 'These claims pertain to properties formerly belonging to Jewish Nazi victims that were owned by the Austrian government or any legal person under public or private law wholly owned, directly or indirectly, by Austria as of 17 January 2001'. Application forms are available from this office and should be submitted to the National Fund, Parliament A-1017, Vienna, Austria.

The imminent distribution of €1,000 (approx. £650) awards in respect of lost personal possessions - as mentioned in last month's *AJR Journal* - is entirely unrelated to the processing of applications to the GSF.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to michael@ajr.org.uk. Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.

Newsround



Song and laughter

Ronald Channing

Members and their guests greeted one another at AJR's annual tea with light opera, held once again at the London Marriott Hotel. In his welcome, Chairman Andrew Kaufman reiterated his pride in the AJR as the leading European

organisation caring for refugees and survivors from persecution. This year, singers from the Carl Rosa Opera Company presented excerpts from Franz Lehár's delightful *The Merry Widow* as well as other Lehár favourites.



Andrew Kaufman



Myrna Glass, Walter Woyda and guest



Carl Rosa Singers



Seated: Ruth and Norman Jacobs
Standing: Harry and Marion Heber



Peter and Marion Dannenberg



Steffi Steiner

PHOTOS:
RONALD CHANNING



Henry Brooke and guests

Queen's visit to Germany

At a banquet given in Berlin by President Horst Köhler, the Queen spoke of the need for reconciliation between the two countries. 'In remembering the appalling suffering of war on both sides, we recognise how precious is the peace we have built in Europe since 1945', she said. The Queen laid a wreath at Germany's central memorial for the victims of war and tyranny, and visited a war cemetery in nearby Potsdam.

Romania admits Holocaust role

On Romania's first Holocaust remembrance day, President Ion Iliescu admitted his country's complicity in the Holocaust. His statement ended decades of official denial that hundreds of thousands of Jews were murdered at the hands of his countrymen when Romania was allied to Germany in World War II.

Family reclaim former Karlsruhe home

Seventy-six-year-old Edith Rosenfelder is suing for compensation, or the return of the home in which she spent her childhood, in the German city of Karlsruhe. In 1937 her father Fritz was forced to sell the house to a Nazi official for 12 per cent of its value - which he never received. The house is owned by the French cosmetics company L'Oréal, which says it bought it in good faith in 1961.

Sir Sigmund's second Hungarian honour

President of the Three Faiths Forum, Hungarian-born Sir Sigmund Sternberg was invested with a second honour by President Ferenc Mádli at a ceremony held at the Hungarian embassy in London. 'I am glad that I have been able to make some contribution to strengthening Hungary's links with a world from which she was cut off for far too long', he said.

Posthumous recognition

Irène Némirovsky's novel *Suite française*, regarded as a French equivalent of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, has been awarded one of France's top literary prizes, the Prix Renaudot. Its Jewish author died in Auschwitz in August 1942.