

## FORTY YEARS AFTER

### The Long Perspective of VE-Day

Time is notorious for the tricks it plays: with life and with memory. When we transport ourselves backwards to that eighth of May four decades ago, we cannot help recalling the sense of joy and relief that the monster and his regime had been overthrown, ground into dust, and that the future was full of hope and promise, whatever struggles still lay ahead. One thing that we knew before and better than most others was seeping into general knowledge: the vast scale of the tragedy, the millions who had perished. It took time to absorb the meaning of such a mad episode in human history. It undermined basic assumptions about the solidity and continuity of Jewish and general human life.

And yet, no sooner had the facts begun to be grasped than they started to be turfed under in the mind, stowed away in the unconscious: 'human kind cannot bear very much reality'. Survivors took up the threads of daily living, however deep the scars, and those who had been less directly affected carved out rewarding post-war lives in the countries of the new dispersion.

German-speaking Jewish (or Central European) life and culture were permanently uprooted from the lands where they had thrived for long centuries, their traditions carried to other countries. With remarkable adaptability, the refugees struck new roots in their host countries and have contributed their energies and talents, passing on the best of their tradition to their children.

Many thought and felt that after all that had happened antisemitism would not dare raise its head again. They did not realise how deeply rooted it is in the European tradition and the lands colonised by settlers from this continent. If one tries to find a turning point, one as likely as any other was that well known statement by de Gaulle at the end of the sixties, when he called the Jews 'a self-righteous and dominating race' (because the Israelis had not taken his advice). That lifted a stone and from under it crawled out all kinds of post-war nasties. If an Allied war hero could say that sort of thing, antisemitism acquired a certain

aura of respectability, and others could go further, as indeed they did.

It is sometimes forgotten how far back the roots of antisemitism reach, to the Gospels and the patristic literature, which means that each new generation absorbs certain notions and stereotypes as part of its basic education. This alone, with lingering folklore, explains the persistence and continuity of the phenomenon. It is not for us to edit the scriptures of others, nor would we presume to do so, for this is a matter for Christian concern. It is heartening that there is a growing awareness of the problem in sensitive quarters, and several Anglican bishops have recently spoken out unequivocally on this touchy subject. It will be a very long haul, however.

#### Strange statements

On the secular front, strange statements can now appear in very respectable places, made by unlikely persons. A. N. Wilson is a former Oxford don who now makes his living as a novelist, biographer and critic. In a recent *Sunday Telegraph*, reviewing a volume of Ezra Pound's correspondence with his wife, Wilson wrote that Pound's

'championship of Fascism was no more dangerous than [the minor Victorian writer] W. S. Blunt's championship of Irish nationalism and Islam. But modern Western democrats can be as intolerant of political dissidents as the Soviet Politburo, and mete out the same sort of treatment. Pound was sensible enough, after the Second World War, to ask to be locked up in a lunatic asylum rather than suffer the consequences of believing in 1945 what a good third of intelligent opinion in Europe had believed in 1939.'

What can one make of this? A third of intelligent European opinion was nazi-fascist? And that was perfectly all right, not a serious matter? And Pound's vitriolic broadcasts from Mussolini's

Italy were mere eccentric trifles?—the charge against Pound was treason. And Pound's vicious antisemitism is actually there in the verse, in his Cantos, not mere snide asides in private letters. Wilson's remarks reflect his donnish, superficial, frivolous side, an essential lack of moral seriousness. Such people are common in every society, but it is a sign of decadence when they purport to represent *intelligence*. How far we have drifted from the lesson of 1933-45.

This shows us, in fact, how quickly people forget—if, indeed, they ever wanted to know. It also reminds us how important are institutions like the Wiener Library, which document the truth of those years and make it available for all who need it.

In some quarters there is little interest in truth. In the last four decades we have witnessed the rise of Islamic antisemitism, which has grown out of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has battered on the vast financial resources accruing to the Arab world from its oil, and its message of hate has been spread by well-paid propagandists and an ever-growing Arab student population abroad.

There is also, in the background, the sinister hulk of Soviet antisemitism, which is manipulated by the state and initiates publications of a vicious and mendacious nature quite apart from the systematic persecution of individuals.

On the positive side, in this long perspective, Israel has provided a refuge and a home for the remnant of European Jewry and for most of the Jews from Arab lands. Diaspora Jewry thrives on its idealisation of Israel and its achievements, but

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#### AGM ON JUNE 6

The AJR give notice that the AGM will be held on Thursday, June 6, 1985 at the Hannah Karminski House, 9 Adamson Road, N.W.3 at 7.30 pm.

See details of speaker on page 5.

#### Don't miss:

Wiener Library Appeal page 3

AGM Speaker page 5

Letters: Hirsch, Mann page 5

Mendelssohniana page 6

## ALFRED WIENER'S CENTENARY

Shortly before his 78th birthday on 16 March 1963, Dr. Alfred Wiener wrote to a friend in Tel Aviv: "How I would have liked to send you an outline of my memoirs . . . I've been chipping away at them a bit, but it can't be long before they take shape . . ." A year later he was dead, leaving for posterity only his intention, or rather the germ of an idea, of writing what would undoubtedly have been the colourful and wide-ranging recollections of a full and a fulfilled life. In many fields—politics, the Jewish community, contemporary history—his memoirs would have held a rare significance and would have filled many gaps in our knowledge.

For Dr. Wiener was unusual among his contemporaries in character, education, interests, career and activity. Never tying himself to an office desk, as an actor on the political scene he gauged the situation and needs of the moment; then he endeavoured to make appropriate contacts and create friendly relationships which he would thereafter nurture. It is, therefore, a matter of particular regret that he had no opportunity to portray his own varied life or at least some of its important episodes.

Dr. Wiener emigrated to Amsterdam in the summer of 1934 and set up the Jewish Central Information Office in that city. At his insistence, the JCIO was most fortunately saved by a move from Amsterdam to London just before the outbreak of the Second World War. During the war, its name was changed to the Wiener Library; the British press was not uncommonly misled into connecting this with Vienna and even spoke of "the Viennese Library".

But far from it! It was Alfred Wiener who gave his name to this unique collection of the most

diverse printed matter, of historic antisemitic publications, of tiny anti-Nazi illegal booklets, documents and eyewitness reports, millions of press-cuttings and other invaluable material: it comprises information on Nazism, antisemitism and racism, every manifestation of fascism, not to mention recent Jewish history with special reference to the German-speaking world. But here we must concentrate on Alfred Wiener the man, rather than on his Library.

Alfred Wiener was born in Potsdam, grew up in Bentschen (then on the borders of Posen and Poland) and returned to Potsdam Gymnasium to take his Abitur. We know from his stories about his early life that the family lived in modest circumstances and that he really would or should have become a rabbi. Instead he developed into an orientalist and a Jewish politician, a writer and editor, an organiser brimful of ideas and a popular public speaker—with a delivery now enlivened by anecdote, now roughly jovial, now ringing out.



Dr. Alfred Wiener at work in the Library.

In the years 1905–1907, Alfred Wiener had begun his studies at Berlin University, his major subject being oriental languages and literature. At the same time he attended the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums. After visiting Egypt, Palestine and Syria between 1907 and 1909, he continued his studies at Heidelberg, where he submitted a thesis on Arab literature and achieved a Doctorate of Philosophy in 1913. Meanwhile, he had taken up the post in Berlin of private secretary to Dr. Paul Nathan (1857–1927). Dr. Nathan was a liberal German writer and the co-founder in 1901 of the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden. In this capacity he was chiefly concerned with Jewish social problems in Germany and beyond its borders.

The First World War meant for the young Wiener a second visit to the Near East, this time as a soldier in Palestine—then under Turkish rule. Later he was to become a board member of the Bund der Asienkämpfer. In 1919, at Dr. Nathan's recommendation, Dr. Wiener took a leading position in the C.V. (Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens), the foremost defence organisation, at that time under stress from the difficult task of combatting growing right-wing radicalism.

As Syndic or General Secretary of the C.V., Alfred Wiener worked closely with the Director,



Thomas Mann on a visit to the Wiener Library, with his daughter Erika.

Dr. Ludwig Holländer (1877–1936), who was also editor of the "C.-V. Zeitung/Blätter für Deutschland und Judentum". A courageous voice of warning, both through the written and the spoken word, Dr. Wiener year in, year out appeared before the Jewish and non-Jewish public; in the course of many efforts to preserve Jewish rights and Germany's domestic peace, he gained access to leading German politicians.

After a further short visit to Palestine—and, one night say, in between times—he published "Kritische Reise durch Palästina" in 1927 and in 1929 "Juden und Araber in Palästina", both books being issued by Philo Verlag, Berlin.

In 1934, seasoned by experience in the battle against antisemitism and at first supported almost entirely by a group of Dutch Jews, Dr. Wiener brought into existence the Jewish Central Information Office, mentioned above. At the heart of the project was a specialist library and archive, originally comprising his personally-owned books and other material. The JCIO expanded in Amsterdam and later in London until it developed into a regular institute of information, publication and research.

### Important task

In wartime and long afterwards it was quickly turned to and often used by international foundations, Jewish associations, politicians and scholars, to say nothing of its value for all types of media research. So through difficult years and decades for himself and his colleagues, Dr. Wiener—always supported by a staff of trusted and capable co-workers—accomplished his important tasks in the service of freedom, peace and friendship.

His particular talent for dealing with people and for "building bridges"—evidenced almost immediately after the cruel and inhuman Nazi period—again and again initiated the most fruitful friendships: this trait has had a lasting effect and left its mark even today.

ERNST G. LOWENTHAL

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### Forty Years After

is also made uncomfortable by the inevitable Realpolitik of a small country surrounded by hostile states. Much of the large emigration of Soviet Jews has been absorbed by Israel, but there is also a large Soviet Jewish diaspora in America. Only now, the Falashas have been airlifted from Ethiopia to Israel, presenting a further challenge to the country's capacity for absorption and integration.

Taking the broader view across those forty years, one is grateful that they have been years of peace, and for Jewish communities years of consolidation. Through the balance of power the Euro-American landmasses have been able to thrive and grow, and to gather strength to cope with the serious challenges of abrupt technological change and the social stress that comes in its wake.

Wars have been waged in the peripheral areas of the globe (Vietnam, Latin America, etc.), though the suffering and misery they entail for people who live there, at the periphery, is central to them.

For all its horror, the period 1933–45 has had the positive effect of a warning to mankind of what man is capable of, and of the need to cope rationally with inner and outer threats: to stand together, as interdependent free individuals and in our democratic political entities, against the destructive element in human society.

# THE WIENER LIBRARY'S FUTURE IS AT RISK

## An Appeal to You

Which Institute of learning, set in the heart of London, is most likely to have a record of your name, and almost certainly a piece of your family history in its archive?

\* \* \*

Which is the library most frequently consulted by newspaper and TV producers when they want to find the facts about the Holocaust?

\* \* \*

Where would you be able to see the original hit list compiled for the use of would-be Nazi Gauleiters of Britain, naming the people to be 'eliminated' on the first day of German occupation? Might your name have been among them?

\* \* \*

Where would a world-famous novelist like Leon Uris (remember 'Exodus'?) get his source material for a true story about a Nazi doctor gone into practice in placid Eastbourne?

The answer to every question is—The Wiener Library in Devonshire Street, London, W.1. Today, when this important institution is needed more than ever before, its future is at risk. It must be made financially secure this year.

This is the Library to which scholars and journalists turn when they want facts about our history, our lives and our deaths. It is the Library to which Military Intelligence turned during the war when there was a need to know the facts about Hitler and his hordes. It is the Library that gives the lie to doubters of the Holocaust, to politicians who think the time is ripe to dust off antisemitism and bring it back into polite society, to the neo-Nazis who poison the mind of English youth in the universities and polytechnics.

*"I feel it is essential that the Wiener Library survive."*

—the late Arthur Koestler

The Wiener Library, whether you like it or not, is your Library, even if you have never heard of it, even if you have no intention to visit it, (although you are warmly invited to do so). It is your Library because the chances are that your name, or that of someone dear to you, is recorded there; it is yours because it chronicles your past and helps to secure your future.



Above, from left to right: Sir Keith Joseph, Education Minister, Lord Elwyn-Jones, former Lord Chancellor, and Sir Claus Moser, Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, at Painters' Hall for the Wiener Library Endowment Appeal.

To carry out its vital function, the Wiener Library Endowment Appeal needs to find another £500,000 this year. It is of the utmost importance that the Jewish refugee community in this country is seen to have contributed substantially in amount and numbers.

*"Now it is surely our duty to preserve... the unique Wiener Library."*

—former Prime Minister James Callaghan

Two reasons for this are obvious and have already been mentioned: first, the continued existence of a reputable source of historical fact to tell the awful truth and to keep on telling it long after the last eye witness is dead.

Second, the need for an armoury with which to fight the resurgence of antisemitism. As the memory of the Holocaust recedes, so antisemitism crawls back from the gutter into the drawing room. Irrefutable fact, impeccable scholarship, unblinking vigilance, are the only shield.

Third, and perhaps most important, the Wiener Library can render you a service in return for your assistance. Like many members of our community

you must sometimes wonder whether you have done enough to pass on to the next generation your unique experience—the memory of looking down the abyss—so that they may guard against the fate of their elders... You may have wondered, as we have all done, whether you have said too little and taken the easy way out; or said too much, and loaded more burdens on to young shoulders than they should be asked to bear.

*"For action this day,"*

—the late Sir Winston Churchill

By supporting the Wiener Library, you can pass this onerous duty, this impossible balancing act, to an indefatigable guardian of your heritage. If errors of omission or commission have been yours, a contribution towards the Library's survival discharges your debt to history, and ensures that what must not be forgotten shall not be forgotten.

A form to make your intentions known to us is enclosed with this issue of AJR Information. In order to make it possible for everyone to contribute, we have agreed a range of options with the Wiener Library among which there is certain to be one to fit your sense of obligation. Please act today.

Below: Working in the Library.



PLEASE FILL IN AND POST THE APPEAL FORM INSERTED IN THIS ISSUE

# HOME NEWS

## AJR CLUB BRING-AND-BUY SALE

There was spring in the air and more than a hundred members and friends flocked to the stalls with their very attractive display of goods on 17 February. Wholehearted thanks to our marvellous organiser, Mrs. Maria Wilson, her children and grandchildren, and to her tireless assistants Mrs. Loli Walter and Miss Irma Woodman.

It was a great pleasure to watch everybody happy with their purchases, which included new dresses and shoes as special bargains. Upstairs our hostesses were busy serving tea and cakes, friends met and were happily chatting away, some of them getting together but once a year for this special occasion.

As there were some nice things left, a smaller sale was arranged at our Purim function. This too was a success. The total amount received was almost £1,400, an excellent result and certainly the best reward for our generous donors, organisers and devoted helpers.

MARGARET JACOBY

## TWO SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS

A double Royal Warrant has marked the business career of Mr. H. Russel of Hampstead, who came to this country from Germany as a boy of 15. After 1945, he took over a coathanger factory and was so successful that he obtained the Royal Warrant in 1974. Some years later he sold the business, which meant that the Royal Warrant lapsed. But Mr. Russel began again in the coathanger trade and has just recently received his second Royal Warrant.

Another former refugee who was recently honoured is Mr. Gunter Wittenberg who came here with a children's transport from Berlin. In 1953, he and his Austrian-born wife founded the engineering consultants Rhoden Partners. Now the Design Council has awarded Mr. Wittenberg their Production Engineer's Prize for Innovation in recognition of his work on a machine to replace complicated handsewing on small parachutes.

## SHEFFIELD BENEFACTOR FETED

Sheffield University recently held a reception to mark the opening of a new library section and to show its gratitude to Mr. Armin Krausz. Mr. Krausz has given much documentary material to the University Library, including a century-long run of the "Jewish Chronicle" on microfilm, books on the Holocaust and other interesting items.

## VE-DAY BROADCAST

The broadcasts of ITV on May 8, the 40th anniversary of VE-Day, will include a feature on the victims of Nazi persecution who found refuge in this country.

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## FROM OPERA CLUB TO NATIONAL ARCHIVE

As well as its world-famous libraries of books and newspapers, the British Library also includes the National Sound Archive. As its name suggests, the NSA houses sound recordings of all kinds in its premises in South Kensington. Its earliest incarnation was as an opera club, but with the passing of 78 recordings, it grew much larger with donations of out-dated 78s. Among the gifts were a number of songs in Yiddish and the NSA now includes a considerable Jewish Music Section. Songs, speech and music have come from all over the world, as well as from all the communities now living in Israel—the Tel Aviv Police Band rubs shoulders with a Bene Israel chang player from India.

The NSA is always on the lookout for further material and, of course, would include modern tapes of reminiscences—"oral history". Research officer Jeremy Silver is trying to collate all recorded material in Britain and would be glad to hear from organisations with such material. Recordings can also be heard by arrangement at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, London S.W.7.

## ANTIFASCISTS UNDERCOVER

An interesting footnote to the recent programme on surveillance shown on Channel 4—"20/20 vision"—is the fact that a researcher for this programme had himself been engaged in undercover surveillance. He is Gerry Gable, editor of the antifascist magazine "Searchlight", who in 1964 disguised himself as a GPO engineer in order to obtain access to David Irving's house. His intention was to obtain certain documents from the revisionist historian. Mr. Gable was subsequently fined a small sum.

Also in connection with the programme, a Jewish chemist from Leeds told how he had infiltrated the National Front in the hope of monitoring its activities.

## NOVEL CHARITY IDEA

After the charity dinner, the charity weekend: the New Ambassador Hotel in Bournemouth recently dedicated the entire proceeds of a special weekend to help "Operation Moses" and the Jews in Ethiopia.

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## MARGARET JACOBY 103

When I first came to the AJR Club, its Chairman, Mrs. Margaret Jacoby, was a mere 98. I marvelled at her regular weekly attendances and participation in all that went on. "Isn't she marvellous," everyone said. She was, and she still is five years later.

I feel quite sure we would still have the pleasure of seeing her at the Club most Tuesdays and Thursdays but for that unfortunate accident two years ago when she fractured her hip, which made her housebound. It is now only at some of our functions that we can welcome Mrs. Jacoby at Hannah Karminski House, but when she comes, she never fails to make a cheerful little impromptu speech to delight us all.

Her keen interest in Club affairs is undiminished. She is always eager to be kept informed at 141 Walm Lane of what is going on, and she frequently telephones to make sure all is well.

Her lively concern for her flock has been in evidence, too, when she has insisted each year on the holding of Birthday Bazaars to replenish the Club's funds. Her optimism has again been justified by its success last February. Not only she but also its organisers were delighted at the response to their efforts by members and friends.

Much has been written about our Chairman's exceptional personality, her warmth, her courage, and her wonderfully positive spirit. I cannot add to her praise. I can but try to illustrate her concern for others and her ability to cope and win. Another two typical instances come to mind: when the ambulance had been called after Mrs. Jacoby's nasty fall, she looked up the address of her friend whom she had been expecting that afternoon so that she should be prevented from coming in vain. And, most impressively: I asked her some time after her accident if she was satisfied with her progress. She replied yes, she was, for what use would it be to be disappointed!

Isn't she marvellous? She is indeed. She will be 103 on May 22nd. We wish for her and ourselves that she will remain well, alert, concerned and content for many years to come.

LOTTE SAENGER

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

Greeting to Margaret Jacoby

Time flies. Another year has passed, and on May 22, Mrs. Margaret Jacoby will have reached the venerable age of 103. Come to think of it, there is nothing "venerable" in her personality. She radiates joy, youthfulness and cordiality. With undiminished energy she continues her activities as Chairman of the AJR Club, a trusted guide to those who are in charge of the day-to-day work. Enthusiastically welcomed by the members she attends all important functions. She also keeps up the custom of sending her personal birthday greetings to her numerous friends inside and outside the Club. Above all, she enjoys life and, considering her age, is in miraculous good health. Our best wishes are with you, "Tante Gretchen". W. R.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Hirsch Interview

Sir,—I would like to correct some misapprehensions which crept into the interview about the Otto Hirsch Medallion award in Stuttgart (March issue of *AJR Information*), possibly because so much ground had to be covered in so little time during my stay in London.

My mother Martha Hirsch née Loeb never considered emigrating from Nazi Germany while 'reluctantly leaving my father behind', as reported. It was after the death of my father, Otto Hirsch, in the Mauthausen concentration camp in June 1941 had been reported to her that she received an immigration visa to the United States. She literally sat on baggage which had been approved and sealed for emigration by the Nazi authorities when Eichmann impounded her passport and stopped her emigration. Fifteen months later she was deported. After she had received her deportation order, Trude Wisten and her husband Fritz Wisten, the latter now deceased, offered to hide her in their house. She refused the offer, fearing to endanger the Wistens, who had been imprisoned (and then freed) just a few months earlier. The Wistens, however, succeeded in hiding and saving another Jewish person.

Also, an erroneous impression was created with respect to the Jewish community in Stuttgart. While the rabbi had absented himself, two past presidents and one member of the current 3-man presidium of the Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft Wuerttembergs attended the memorial session for Otto Hirsch in the Stuttgart City Hall on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

HANS GEORGE HIRSCH

6513 Kenhowe Drive,  
Bethesda, MD 20817, USA

## The Real Painter

Sir,—I have just received your January issue and wish to thank you for your warm write-up in honour of my 80th birthday. However, I wish to point out that the reference to a *good painter* does not apply to me but to my late husband, A. P. Michaelis, whose pictures became quite well known in Jerusalem through various exhibitions and his chairmanship of the Jerusalem Art Printing Centre of which he was the founder and chairman until his last days.

Rehov Shlomo Molcho 6, EVA MICHAELIS  
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## Katia Mann's Ancestry

Sir,—In his article on Klaus Mann, enhanced by his first-hand knowledge, Egon Larsen describes the Pringsheim family as "half-Jewish". In fact, not only Katia Mann's father, Professor Alfred Pringsheim, was Jewish; his mother came from an—albeit baptised—Jewish family. She was the daughter of the writer and co-founder of the "Kladderadatsch" journal, Ernst Dohm, and of the fighter for women's rights, Hedwig Dohm. The name Dohm was adopted by Ernst Dohm's grandfather, Levin Benjamin Schifrah, secretary of the Breslau Jewish community, in gratitude to the protagonist of Jewish emancipation, Christian Wilhelm Dohm. Hedwig Dohm was née Schleh, (originally Schlesinger, an old established Berlin family).

WERNER  
77d Compayne Gardens, ROSENSTOCK  
London N.W.6

## PAPER ENDS PUBLICATION

It is sad to learn that the German-language weekly "MB", put out by the Irgun Olej Merkas Europa, ceased publication at the end of March. This small newspaper published in Tel Aviv had for 53 years catered for German immigrants with news items and articles of particular interest to them. IOME decided, however, that with a dwindling readership and fewer correspondents it was not possible to continue publication of "MB" in its then form. In future an information sheet will be circulated for the benefit of IOME members.

## NEW REQUIEM RECORDING

The Australian Broadcasting Commission have lately produced a recording of Wilfred Josephs' Requiem, Opus 39, written in memory of the Jews who perished in Europe. The work was first performed in La Scala, Milan, in 1965 and won an international prize. The current recording is given by the Adelaide String Quintet and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra with chorus. The conductor is David Mensham.

AJR INFORMATION  
Request for old issues

The library of the Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem is short of the following issues of *AJR Information*: 1946: January, March, April, May, June; 1948: February, June; 1953: February, July, September, November, December.

It would be greatly appreciated if readers who have any of these copies in their possession and are prepared to dispose of them kindly sent them to the Editor of *AJR Information* (8 Fairfax Mansions, London NW3 6LA) who will forward them to Jerusalem.

## LUNCHEON CLUB

Please note that from 7 May, the Luncheon Club will meet on Tuesdays at Hannah Karminski House.

CELEBRITY SPEAKER  
AT AGM

The AJR Annual General Meeting, on 6 June, 7.30 p.m. at Hannah Karminski House, 9 Adamson Road, London, N.W.3, will have as guest speaker the distinguished Oxford don Peter Oppenheimer. He will be talking about a fascinating subject: 'Choosing the Future: A Look at Planning Techniques in a Large Corporation'. Mr. Oppenheimer, who is well known from his television and radio commentaries, is a Student (i.e. Fellow) of Christ Church, Oxford and is on secondment for two years as Chief Economist in Group Planning for the Shell Corporation, preparing long-term business planning scenarios.

His talk will follow the reports of the Chairman, Mr. Marx, and of the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Spiro.

Peter Oppenheimer was born in London of refugee parents from Nuernberg, his father having served in the Pioneer Corps before going on to Intelligence. From schooling at Haberdasher's and National Service in the Royal Navy, where he learned Russian, he went on to read PPE at The Queen's College, Oxford. He is married to a niece of the great Russian poet, Boris Pasternak (author of 'Dr. Zhivago'); she is a specialist in psycho-geriatrics. He spent three years in Bâle with the Bank for International Settlements, and has been Visiting Professor at the London Business School. He is a leading authority on international and monetary economics and his tour of duty with Shell runs through 1985-86. He will give us an insight into the mysterious workings of corporations at the highest level and we look forward to a big turnout.

## CLUB 1943

Meetings on Mondays at 8 p.m.  
Hannah Karminski House  
9, Adamson Road, NW3

1985

- 6 May. May Day Holiday: No Lecture.
- 13 May. Dr. Ruth von Schulze-Gävernitz: "Die Menschheitsidee bei den Griechen. Erkenntnis der Erdkugel. Die bewohnte Erde, die Oikuméné".
- 20 May. Gerald Guttman: "The Fascination of Alpine Excursions" (with slides).
- 27 May. Spring Holiday. No Lecture.
- 3 June. Sheila Levy: "A Survey of Jewish Art up to the 6th Cent., including some medieval manuscripts" (with slides).
- 10 June. Leon Yudkin M. A.: "What is Jewish Literature?"
- 17 June. George Jaeger, M.A.Th.L.: "Karl Marx. His Life and Work".
- 24 June. Dr. Angela Hobart: "Great Mogul Art. Miniatures and Architecture in the Great Mogul Period in India (13th to 15th Cent.)" (with slides).
- 1 July. Dr. Kurt Pflüger: "Die Einnahme von Konstantinopel durch die Türken."

## FELICITOUS FELIX

Speaking up for Felix Mendelssohn—this is the task which Wolfgang Stresemann—son of the famous German statesman, and himself a former Director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra—has set himself in a little volume which has just been published (*Eine Lanze für Felix Mendelssohn*, Stapp Verlag, Berlin, DM 29.80). One asks why the composer should need such a defence now, 40 years after the end of the Third Reich, which had banned his music.

The author's point is that Mendelssohn, highly rated in his lifetime, possibly even overrated, suffered a decline of his fame after his early death in 1847, not only because of Wagner's antisemitic attacks, but chiefly as a result of a fundamental change of taste which was reflected even in people as free from racial bias as G. B. Shaw.

It is this change of taste which explains why, even after 1945, a true Mendelssohn renaissance has not occurred in Central Europe. Matters are different in the Anglo-Saxon countries where the cultural climate has always favoured the specific genius of Mendelssohn, with his preference for well-ordered, non-chaotic musical structures, in short, for formal polish and perfection.

The family background and the Berlin cultural atmosphere are excellently portrayed. The biographical narrative, attractively presented, is based mainly on Eric Werner's standard book. The discussion of the music itself is interspersed in a manner which is hardly objectionable and facilitates reading. Unfortunately, the book lacks an index.

The author's judgements are generally well balanced. At times, he tends to raise questions without attempting an answer, e.g. about the impact, positive or otherwise, of the "father figures" in Felix's life, such as, besides his father Abraham Mendelssohn, Zelter, his music teacher, Goethe, a paternal friend of the young musician, and, among composers, chiefly J. S. Bach. This method of just raising a question for its thought-provoking potential undoubtedly has its merits.

### Wagner's attitude

The words with which the author (himself half-Jewish) opens the chapter on the relationship between Mendelssohn and Wagner, "Ein aergerliches Kapitel", reveal a certain inadequacy of approach in this ominous matter. The biographical facts are presented with dispassionate detachment.

Not everything was negative here during Mendelssohn's lifetime, and it was only after Felix's death that Wagner published his antisemitic attacks (under a pen-name, at first). They are justly condemned by Stresemann, but their general effect, extending far beyond the music of Mendelssohn, much of which Wagner had praised in earlier years, seems slightly underemphasised.

In his evaluation of the music itself, Stresemann, in accordance with the book's title, tends to act as counsel for the defence, where he considers it necessary. Here again, as in the biographical narrative, his views are well-balanced, avoiding monotonous eulogies as much as excessive criticism of others, e.g. in dealing with the once overrated *Songs without Words*. Quite sensibly,

the author warns performers against sentimental interpretations and recommends a preference for "understatement" (the English word is used!)

A good deal of space is devoted to the shorter sacred works, which appear to be unduly neglected, and, above all, to the chamber music which ranks very high among Mendelssohn's compositions and is treated with appropriate emphasis.



Felix Mendelssohn at 12

A good point is made in focusing on a fundamental change of style in the last Quartet in F minor, op. 80, written after Fanny's death and one of Felix's last works. "Dieses dunkelste, pessimistischste aller Werke Mendelssohn's" might have initiated a radical change of style, had he lived longer. This might confirm the current theory that, when fate ceased to favour him, he achieved "depth". A controversial thought!

It is gratifying to find the author placing "Elijah" among the composer's greatest works. Here, where even English writers, long overfed with performances of this oratorio, tend to be hypercritical, Stresemann sums up by calling the work "ein Stueck alttestamentarischer Religionsgeschichte."

In tracing Mendelssohn's influence on later composers, mention might have been made of Richard Strauss, notably his early Piano Sonata Op. 5 in B minor.

The epilogue aptly describes Mendelssohn as "diesen so eigenartigen, zwischen Klassik und Romantik stehenden, um die deutsche Musik von Bach bis Schumann hochverdienten Komponisten."

One serious misjudgement needs pointing out. In dealing with the "Festgesang", a cantata to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Gutenberg's invention of printing, Stresemann says: "Ein patriotisches Stueck das, wie meisten dieser Art, schon auf Grund der schwuelstigen Worte keine Vertonung von bleibenden Wert erlaube".

Not so. The tune in question, adapted to an English Christmas poem "Hark the herald angels sing", has become one of the most loved Christmas hymns in the English-speaking world, indispensable in any Carol Service. In short, this hymn tune rivals the composer's Wedding March in popularity among millions of people in the English-speaking world. H. W. FREYHAN

## GRANDFATHER MOSES

Although Moses Mendelssohn has often been criticised for his a-historical approach to Judaism, this volume (*Moses Mendelssohn—Gesammelte Schriften—Jubiläumsausgabe Band 8—Schriften zum Judentum II* Bearbeitet von Alexander Altmann—pp xci+375, Friedrich Frommann Verlag (Günther Holzboog) Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt) represents two independent historical processes which make it particularly fascinating and exciting. The first process concerns the content of this book, the second its form.

Over 300 years ago, in 1656, Menasseh ben Israel wrote his famous *Vindiciae Judaeorum* in support of the re-admission of Jews to England. In 1782, the English text was translated into German by Dr Marcus Herz at the request of Mendelssohn who added an Introduction and published both as Appendices to Christian Wilhelm Dohm's seminal essay "Über die Bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden" (1782).

As a result of this a Christian reader, now identified by Professor Jacob Katz as August Friedrich Cranz, published a pamphlet in which he took issue with some of Mendelssohn's arguments. This in turn led to the publication of Mendelssohn's most important contribution to the debate on the relationship between Church and State in general and Judaism in particular—*Jerusalem* (1783). These two books, the incidental publications related to them, a substantial Introduction by Professor Altmann and full notes (both Mendelssohn's and the Editor's) make this volume a scholar's delight and any general reader's pleasure.

### Background story

No less intriguing than the material contained in this book is the story of how it came to be published. The idea of issuing a definitive edition of the works of Moses Mendelssohn was first discussed in November 1925 when a number of interested organisations met to plan a Jubiläumsausgabe for the 200th anniversary of Mendelssohn's birth. The first two volumes were ready by the correct birth date in 1929. Between 1930 and 1932 a further four volumes were produced and, incredibly, a seventh volume in 1938. But this last volume was confiscated by the Nazis immediately and all but three copies were destroyed.

In 1961 the present publisher (Günther Holzboog) set out to revive the project and after a long struggle, complicated by legal difficulties, Professor Altmann agreed to act as chief editor and publication recommenced in 1972. The final product will consist of 20 volumes, divided into German, Jewish and Hebrew writings. There will also be four volumes of correspondence and a final register. When complete the whole edition will be a treasure for scholar and bibliophile alike. Happy are those who can possess it.

JULIUS CARLEBACH

### MANCHESTER MUSEUM GOING STRONG

The Jewish Museum in Manchester is now twelve months old and still growing. This year, the City of Manchester is providing a grant of £7,500 to be spent on a new exhibition area and sound commentaries.

## LOYALTY AND HELPFULNESS

### Farewell to Ernst Lomnitz

Dr. Ernst A. Lomnitz, whose death was announced in the April issue, has left his mark on the history of the AJR by his indefatigable services as Deputy General Secretary from 1963-1976. Born in Breslau 81 years ago, he chose the legal profession, and also established lifelong bonds with fellow students as a member of the FWV fraternity. When the Nazis came to power, he first went to France and later settled in India, where he held a responsible position with a leading international trade firm.

At the same time, he worked in an honorary capacity for the benefit of his fellow refugees as Committee member and later Chairman of the Jewish Relief Organisation. In those years he already took up contact with the AJR and visited our office whenever he came to London. His name also appears as the author of an article about the refugees in India which he contributed to the AJR anthology "Dispersion and Resettlement" (1955).

He left India first for Milan, where he worked for the same firm, and later went to England. At the time of his arrival, the AJR was in a stage of considerable expansion and in need of a further senior official. It was a stroke of luck for us that Ernst Lomnitz was available. He was no stranger to refugee work, for which he possessed both the compassion and the administrative capacity.

In his work for the Homes he immediately gained the personal sympathy of the members of the House Committees and of the individual residents who needed his help or advice. Yet he also had understanding and patience for other refugees who were in trouble in one way or another and who could rely on his practical help. At the same

time, he had a decisive part in the expansion of the AJR Charitable Trust. Many legacies and donations are due to the personal confidence he had established with those who got to know him.

When he retired at the age of 72, he had reason to look forward to an unperturbed time of well-deserved leisure. Yet it was not granted to him. He soon became ill and had to spend the last years of his life in a nursing home. Being housebound he was sustained in the first place by his wife, "Nushi", who sacrificed her whole private life to look after him in his many dreadful years of ill-health and distress. It may give her some comfort that her sense of loss is shared by his former fellow workers and his numerous friends. W. R.

### TIERGARTEN EXHIBITION

The Exhibition "Resistance and Persecution" of the Berlin Borough of Tiergarten, details of which were reported in our March issue, will be transferred to the Jewish Community Centre in the Fasanenstrasse. The opening ceremony will be held on May 2, the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Berlin. It is also learned that the Tiergarten Borough Council has decided to fix a commemorative plaque on the Putlizstrasse railway station, from which Jews were deported to the East. Furthermore, an application has been submitted to the Borough Council proposing to keep alive the memory of the outstanding teacher of law, Dr. Siegbert Springer, by putting a memorial plaque on the house in the Spenerstrasse where he lived. The application has been endorsed by more than 40 of his former students.

### PROFESSOR E.G.L.

The title of "Professor e.h." was bestowed on Dr. Ernst Gottfried Lowenthal by the Governing Mayor of Berlin as an extra-academic honour in recognition of his outstanding scholarly achievements in the field of Berlin history. As our readers know, Dr. Lowenthal has been closely associated with the AJR as a founder member since its inception and as first co-editor of *AJR Information*. He is also a member of the London and New York Boards of the Leo Baeck Institute. His numerous past and present offices, some of which were detailed in our December 1984 issue on the occasion of his 80th birthday, also include co-operation with several institutes in Germany concerned with research in the history of German Jewry in general or in special districts. As a member of the Association for the History of Berlin he has also contributed articles to its publications. In his laudatio Dr. Volker Hassemer, Berlin's Senator for Cultural Affairs, stated that as a research worker and publicist Dr. Lowenthal had contributed to a renewed proper assessment of the share of Jewish citizens in the cultural, economic and social development of Berlin and Germany during the past two centuries. We extend our sincerest congratulations to "EGL" on his well-deserved, rare distinction.

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## PICTURES AND TEXT

Some people like pictures, others like books, but illustrated books satisfy both tastes, and none more so than the superb examples in the "Manet to Hockney: Modern Artists' Illustrated Books" exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum (until 19 May).

More than 150 books are on display, each illustrated by a famous artist. The earliest is Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" illustrated by Manet, and the most recent, Wallace Stevens's classic poem "The Man with the Blue Guitar" illustrated by Hockney and published in 1977. All the illustrations are produced by an original graphic process, e.g. woodcut, lithography, etching, etc. and the books were published in very limited editions, sometimes as few as 25 copies.

### Top names

The list of artists includes Klinger, Degas, Pissarro, Klimt, Kandinsky, Nolde, Kokoshka, Wyndham Lewis, Marc, Pechstein, Beckmann, Feininger, Bomberg, Schmidt-Rottluff, Matisse, Miro, Moore and many others—all famous names. Because of the small editions, most of these works are very rare, and well beyond the reach of the average collector. However, there is some consolation to be found in the very moderately priced catalogue where all the books are described and mostly illustrated.

### Jewellery

Also at the Victoria and Albert Museum (until 9 May) is an exhibition of unique jewellery by Frances Bendixson made in her tiny studio in Fulham. She specializes in jewellery of twisted gold and silver wire set with semi-precious stones and antique beads.

There is more graphic art at the Redfern Gallery, 20 Cork Street, W1 in the exhibition of British Linocuts of the 1920s and 1930s. I personally was very taken by Powers's 4-colour linocut "Lifts" produced in 1929, but tastes vary and there is plenty to choose from. Prices from £60 to £2,250, unframed. ALICE SCHWAB

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### TILL NORLAND

One wonders whether Ernst Neuschul (1895–1968)—one of the founders of the Neue Sachlichkeit, member of the Novembergruppe, increasingly represented in museums round the world and currently the subject of dissertations on each side of the Berlin Wall—realised that he was founding an artists' dynasty.

His son, Till Norland (who signs himself Khalil on his paintings) has just had a show in the Willes Studios in Kentish Town. Hung on the three floors of the Studios, the exhibition provided a concept of his recent work and showed clearly that he has created a world uniquely his own and that he commands a total mastery of his medium. It is a world of fluid forms always metamorphosing and evoking natural shapes and textures of plant and landscape and sometimes the microscopic universe writ large. He uses colour brilliantly to startle and to soothe, to establish the subtle mood he has trapped on his canvas. His work defies labelling yet is all of a stylistic piece, while remaining infinitely varied. He is an important painter and will go far. People will one day count themselves lucky to have acquired pictures at his current modest prices. He lives in Oxford and will be showing again there soon.

His mother, Christine Norland, is a fine painter and recently exhibited her collages at the Camden Arts Centre.

Dynasty? Till's son Ben started this year at the Slade.

M.S.

### LUDWIG MEIDNER'S CENTENARY

The painter Ludwig Meidner was born in Bernstadt, Silesia. His artistic career began with a decision to train as an architect and he then attended the Royal School of Art in Breslau. In the usual academic training of that time, he painted pots, skulls and stuffed birds for a year or so, but later study at the Paris Academy was more attuned to his vivid imagination which would lead to his later apocalyptic paintings. He became a traditionally Bohemian figure, unkempt and grubby, but his wide range of friends and acquaintances included Modigliani, Else Lasker-Schüler and Walter Hasenclever. Chagall called him "Very talented, but mad".

With the coming of the Nazis, Meidner was stigmatised as one of the "degenerate artists". He taught drawing at a Jewish school in Cologne, but in 1938 fled to Britain, eventually living in the Finchley Road. However, he was never happy in Britain although his family were most unwilling to return to Germany. In his later years, Meidner was "re-discovered": his paintings were shown, a biography was written and the Mayor of Darmstadt personally interested himself in Ludwig Meidner and his wife Else, also a painter. In the years of the Third Reich, the artist had turned to his formerly rejected faith, painting Jews with Torah scrolls, and now his hallucinatory visions were converted into representations of the biblical prophets. Ludwig Meidner died in May 1966.



Norland: important artist.

### CARRY HAUSER AT 90

The honorary president of Action against Anti-Semitism in Austria, Professor Carry Hauser recently celebrated his 90th birthday. No less than three exhibitions in Vienna were showing some of his works on that day. Happily, he still continues to paint, as well as welcoming his friends.

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## FAMILY EVENTS

Entries in this column are free of charge, but voluntary donations would be appreciated. Texts should reach us by the 10th of the preceding month.

## Birthday

**Frank:**—Congratulations to Mr. Benno Frank, of West Wood Hall, 11 Surrey Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, who celebrated his 95th birthday in December 1984.

**Plaut:**—Mrs. Olga F. Plaut—congratulations on your 90th birthday. From your loving family and many friends.

## Deaths

**Barker:**—George H. Barker, of 71 Tarranbrae, Willesden Lane, London, NW6, passed away suddenly on 15 March. Dearly loved and sadly missed by all his friends and all who knew him.

**Elford:**—Suse (formerly Schwarz, née Bermann) passed away 25 February 1985, aged 80. Sadly mourned by her daughters Ursel (Wolfisz) and Vera (Price), sons-in-law Henry and Michael, grandsons Richard and Steven and families, grand-daughters Julia and Nicole, sister Alice (Jaschkowitz) and brother-in-law George. May she rest in peace.

**Frohlich:**—Ella Frohlich, née Sternfeld, died 23 February peacefully at home. She will be deeply mourned and missed by her family, her relations and her many friends all over the world.

**Hertz:**—Kurt Hertz (formerly Allenstein, East Prussia) passed away on 10 March. Greatly mourned and sadly missed by Sophie, Stephen, Nelly and John, family and friends.

**Wisdom:**—Dolly Wisdom, née Zuckerkandl, born in Berlin 26 September 1918, died in Slough 16 March 1985. Deeply mourned by her husband Sidney. May she have Peace.

## Erratum

**Schmidt:**—In our March issue, the birthdate of the late Irmgard Schmidt was stated as 31/12/1889. This should have read "1899".

## CLASSIFIED

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