

AJR INFORMATION

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TWO GERMANIES — OR ONE?

Reflections on the potential demise of the DDR

Last November, on the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, we — and some others — were concerned about the manner in which Germany looked back into its past. Exactly a year later many more people are concerned about how Germany views its future.

As long as the German Reich existed, its political class was notorious throughout Europe for dressing up current issues as 'questions'. In Bismarck's time there was a Social Question and a Polish Question. Soon there arose a Women's Question, and, dwarfing all others in significance, that textbook example of a bogus problem: the Jewish Question. By the time the Germans applied the Final Solution, the world realised that it was they who posed the real question. From this realisation stemmed the postwar settlement which, by creating two Germanies, has allowed both West and East Europeans to sleep more soundly in their beds ever since.

Francois Mauriac's *bon mot* 'I love Germany so much that one isn't enough for me' articulated the relief of a nation which had suffered German aggression three times in under seventy years. If a Frenchman expressed such sentiments how should we, who vicariously suffered German extermination, feel? We could do no other than welcome the reduction of the Reich into two separate — and rival — German states.

In the immediate postwar years quite a few Jews even 'rooted' for East Germany, which they perceived as more thoroughly cleansed of its Nazi past than the Bundesrepublik. It was to East Berlin, after all, that Arnold Zweig and Brecht returned (and Feuchtwanger thought of returning).

However, below the level of the *Prominente* whom the Ulbricht regime courted for prestige reasons the situation was discouragingly different. Cold War blasts caused the vestigial Jewish communities in East Germany to wither, while a small but growing number of DPs and Soviet Bloc escapees set up nuclei of protected (and problematic) Jewish life in the Federal Republic. The record of the DDR in matters Jewish has

remained overwhelmingly negative ever since. Internally the Ulbricht-Honecker clique disclaimed any liability for Jewish material losses in the territory under its control; externally it aided the enemies of Israel with propaganda, training and arms. The fact that Honecker has of late made certain conciliatory gestures is at best a cosmetic embellishment on a forty-year record of crass insensitivity to Jewish concerns.

However if this regime shows itself to be far more moribund than has hitherto been suspected one of the bedrock features of the entire postwar period — the existence of two separate German states — threatens to disappear into the black hole of history. In other words the German Question (aka Reunification) which the world had optimistically thought dead and buried shows signs of being revived. Should we be concerned about a development that is bound to be accompanied by a recrudescence of nationalism? Some might argue that since there are only few Jews in Germany — and those should not have settled there in the first place — the matter is only of peripheral concern to us. Such a view would be profoundly shortsighted. A groundswell of opinion in favour of reunification washing across both German states would also affect Austria, where Freedom Party leader Jörg Haider has been advocating another *Anschluss* for years. Haider's colleague in the Bundesrepublik, Franz Schönhuber, has recently dubbed the Jews 'the fifth occupying power'. German unification would cancel out the long-term results of the Allied postwar occupation of the country and could thus be seen as a triumph of xenophobic teutomania (and antisemitism).

On the other hand the Germans are entitled to an undivided nation state of their own. To deny them that would be an abnegation of the principle of the self-determination of nations — on which the modern world order is based — and of the democratic principle itself.

The Germans confront the Free World with a huge dilemma. The very fact that the German

Continued overleaf

SPREAD THE WORD

Hot off the press our new and updated AJR brochure is coming to you with this issue. We hope you will like this colourful presentation of our various activities. The photographs on every page show actual scenes in our Day Centre, in the Homes, and in our offices — undoubtedly some will recognise familiar faces. The text above the illustrations conveys a good impression of the wide range of AJR services, the extent of which is not always recognised outside our membership — and sometimes not even within.

But we have not gone to the expense of producing this brochure merely for you, our members, to look at. There is much more to it than that: one of its important aims is to assist in attracting new members. It is not just the additional subscriptions we look for, welcome though these are to help defray the growing cost of our operations continually extended to meet greater demands. We wish to spread a sense of communal solidarity. Too many refugees and members of their families still remain outside our Association and ought to be within. Often they stand aside until such time as a personal need arises, which our facilities are thought to be able to serve.

We invite each and every one of you, our readers, to act as a recruiting agent for us. Take pride in your membership of the AJR and let it motivate you to enrol new Members and Friends to our Association. And while you are about it, look out for non-members who regularly borrow *AJR Information* from members (we are reliably informed that such exist) and get them to join.

Our new brochure with the services it describes reflects credit on our activities and should make recruitment easy, if only you will 'have a go'. Our office has a good stock and additional brochures are yours for the asking. Each one includes a membership application form. Use them well!

C.T.M.

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Question is moving to the top of the political agenda after a forty years' freeze results from the recent stirrings of freedom in Eastern Europe. Just as the dawn of democracy there is accompanied by a nationalist upsurge with incalculable consequences for the survival of the USSR in its present form, so the emergence of a united Germany could upset the entire continental balance, as well as the structure of the EEC.

'From humanity via nationality to bestiality' Franz Grillparzer wrote presciently hundred and fifty years ago. The supra-national Habsburg Empire to which he owed allegiance could not withstand the force whose emergence he deplored. We must hope that the EEC — and the wider European community which seems to be emerging in the light of Hungarian and Polish developments — will be sufficiently adaptable and resilient to absorb the shocks of recrudescing German power at the heart of our continent.

INTERESTING LECTURE SERIES

During May and June of 1989 academics from Germany, Britain and the U.S.A. took part in a *Ringvorlesung*, a series of nine public lectures organised by the Centre for the Study of Antisemitism in the Faculty of Communication of the Technical University of Berlin.

The symposium had the general title *Verfolgung, Vertreibung, Aufbau: Wissenschaft in der Emigration nach 1933* ('Persecution, Expulsion, Reconstruction: Academics in Emigration after 1933'); and on successive Wednesday evenings, from 10 May to 5 July, the University's *Hörsaal H 1059* was the venue for the individual contributions. The introductory lecture, 'Emigration as a Subject for Research' was given by Professor H. A. Strauss, the head of the Centre. He was followed by Dr. A. Söllner, who spoke on 'Political Philosophy in Exile'. Dr. K. Fischer dealt with 'The Emigration of German-speaking Physicists' and Dr. P. Lasko, of the Courtauld Institute, examined 'The Influence of German History of Art in England'. A lecture on 'Emigré Economists at the New School for Social Research, New York' was given by Professor C.-D. Krohn, and Professor Edith Kurzweil compared French and American Psychoanalysis. Professor R. Lerner assessed Ernst Kantorowicz.

From the point of view of readers of AJR INFORMATION, the most interesting contributions were probably the lectures and discussions of the last two evenings: Dr. C. Hoffmann's 'The Leo Baeck Institute' and Walter Goldstern's assessment of the destiny and achievements of émigré engineers. As co-author of *Vertreibung und Emigration deutschsprachiger Ingenieure nach Palästina 1933-45** (see AJR INFORMATION July 1988), Mr. Goldstern was able to draw richly upon his great experience as a painstaking and committed researcher into the fate of members of his own profession who had found refuge, both in this country and in Mandatory Palestine.

D.L.M.

(* Now available at the special price of £8, inc. p. & p., from W. Goldstern, FIMEchE, FInstE, VDI, 12a Woodlands Court, Woodlands Park Way, Timperly, Ches WA15 7QQ.)

CONGENIAL GENEALOGY

What, you may ask, is the connection between the following: a cook at the court of a Bohemian countess, a sage from Bialystock, a well-known violin player and teacher, a medieval poet and author of *Klagesänge*, the head of the Jewish hospital in Hamburg before the war, a run of rabbis from Nikolsburg, and a *Schutzjude* (protected Jew), who in 1844 was appointed *Hof-Flaschner* by the Prince of Hechingen?

I am not in a position to know whether they were all, say, keen stamp-collectors, or had a craving for Viennese pastry. But they are all, nevertheless, brought together by appearing on our family tree.

Tracing one's roots is a pastime that goes back to the Bible in more senses than one (though the chances of getting back that far are pretty slim). It is also, of course, a project that never ends, since the present is only just that for the time being, and the past can always be traced, or at least imagined, one generation further back.

I began looking at my family's background about 23 years ago, secretly hoping to find 'somebody famous', as perhaps many schoolboys do. Although we have now traced a line going back 19 generations, to around the year 1450, the project must still be regarded as in its early stages, since the writing-up and collecting of documents and photographs, and the discovery of new material, is a never-ending task — which may, of course, be continued by future generations. And as for that elusive famous relative? Well, what has become clear to me, as the branches of the tree expanded ever further backwards, is that the fascination lies not in the search for fame (or even notoriety), as I once thought. No, on the contrary. It is much more the simple discovery of the lives and characters, hardships and modest achievements of so many ancestors, all in some way contributing to the world — and the family — as we know them today, which provides such an endless source of interest.

Once upon a time, there was a schoolteacher from Prague, a man called Jakob. His father, Akiba, must have been quite a respected figure, for he was known as the *Gaon Akiba*. He died around 1530, the very year in which Jakob moved to Frankfurt, where an established Jewish community was already living — in the 'Judengasse' just outside the city walls. So many families which later played a distinguished part in European and Jewish history were already resident in that particular ghetto at that particular time and afterwards, that to mention any of them would lay one open to charges of name-dropping. But be that as it may, it is at least of some interest that Jakob's house, appropriately opposite the 'Juden-schule', was also across the road from a house named *zum Rothen Schild*, the house where, of course, a particularly eminent family had its roots.

Life was certainly not easy for the Jews of Frankfurt. Although they had the security of living together as Jews, they were subject to no less than thirty-four separate taxes (*Steuern und Abgaben*), including payment for permission to leave the ghetto on Sundays, a special Jewish butchers' tax, payment for gentile soldiers to

'guard' the ghetto and lock it, and a tax with the daunting title of *Stättigkeitserneuerungsgebühr*. Quite apart from the financial burdens, there was always the fear of an unexpected pogrom. An unlimited supply of spurious reasons was always on hand to justify such brutality by the local populations, in Frankfurt and elsewhere: many are the families whose descendants are no longer here to look back in admiration on their ancestors' achievements.

From Flasche to Fleisch

Jews of the 16th century in central Europe were not permitted to have surnames of their own, but were known by their profession, town of origin, or by the house in which they lived; my ancestor of 17 generations ago, Jakob, the one from Prague, had a house built in the Judengasse which was called 'zur Flasche'. (Quite why is not known to me, unless, already then, the strains of an overworked teaching profession were beginning to tell. . . .) But what is certain, is that from the name of that house was derived the name of one of this century's greatest violin teachers and players — Carl Fleisch — who might, after all, be regarded as the 'somebody famous' on our family tree that I looked for as a young schoolboy.

This is hardly the place, however, for a personal foray into family history. On the other hand, most readers of AJR INFORMATION have lived through history to a degree fortunately denied to most other generations. It is certainly my hope that this fine journal is now also read by many members of the next generation, those who were born here of parents who came originally from Nazi-occupied Europe. The fact that I have gained years of absorbing satisfaction from the gradual discovery of one branch of my family's origins is a personal matter, though I hope it may act as a spur to others. But without doubt, we, of the first generation to be born in this country, can offer so much to the records of Jewish history by beginning the search into how exactly we came to be here, that I hope others may follow suit.

There was once a London Transport advertisement, seen on hundreds of red buses, which stated: 'Our routes pass your branches'. This was itself a clever adaptation of a slogan of one of the big banks: 'Our roots are not our branches'. The thing about Jewish history, all history, is that we cannot really tell exactly where we are on the historical tree — roots, trunk, branches, twigs, who knows? But we can at least dig a little to find out some of the recent and not-so-recent past of our families; and that itself gives us a clearer idea of where we have come from, why we are here, and what has made us as we are.

Gardening — even genealogical gardening — is a pastime that can be started at any age. So get digging! There are treasures to be found in every family plot.

JOHN DUNSTON

The author is a committee member of the Association of Children of Jewish Refugees. Anyone who is a child of refugees from Nazi Europe, and who would like to know more about the ACJR, should contact either Colin on 01-863 4947 or Anne on 01-579 9906.

A SHIP SAILS FROM SHANGHAI

In the years 1938-39, when Nazi persecution became ever more vicious, about 18,000 German and Austrian Jews fled to China's largest city, Shanghai, which at that time was partly international. In 1940, and early 1941, an additional 1,200 Polish Jews who had travelled via Russia and Japan arrived there.

Shanghai, which in the late thirties boasted a population of nearly five million, also had a large foreign community. This included about 5,000 Russian Jews who had fled after the revolution, and approximately 900 Sephardim from Iraq; many of the latter were very affluent and gave generous assistance to the arrivals from Central Europe.

As most of the refugees were practically penniless, they settled in Hongkew, a district of Shanghai, partly destroyed in the 1937 Sino-Japanese war, and under the control of the Japanese. There they mainly lived in hostels or *Heime* — consisting of large halls subdivided by blankets into units of about 2 x 2 metres for each family — which had been rented by the 'Joint'; some occupied cheap one-room flats.

The outbreak of the war in the Pacific made the plight of the Jewish refugees ever more serious; among other measures the Japanese authorities declared part of Hongkew a 'designated area' (or rather ghetto) from which Jews could only leave with a special pass. A month before the end of the war the ghetto was unfortunately bombed by American planes, whose real target was the Japanese naval headquarters, and 31 Jews lost their lives.

With the cessation of hostilities in August 1945, and the terrible tidings of the Holocaust becoming known, only a few were willing to return to Europe; even so, a transport of 700 Jews left for Austria in 1947. Almost all the others tried to obtain visas for the United States, Canada or Australia but, as entrance to these countries involved quota systems and other restrictive regulations, they had no choice but to wait. Notwithstanding all these difficulties, nearly 12,000 German, Austrian and Polish Jews had departed by September 1948. A sizeable remainder were still left, however, and this at a time when it became obvious, that sooner or later the troops of Mao Tse Tung and those of Chang Kai Shek would clash in Shanghai.

With the prospect of receiving a visa to the U.S., Canada or Australia in a short time seeming almost impossible, we faced the future with great concern.

Then one day a *Shaliah* who later became Israeli ambassador to Australia arrived in Shanghai, and immediately began registering the Jews of this city for *aliya* to Israel.

'Brothers and Sisters, the new State of Israel is awaiting you. We have housing, jobs, everything, just come', I recall him saying at one of the meetings with the Jews in Hongkew. And so, in December two ships, chartered by UNRRA, the 'Wooster Victory' and the 'Costelbianco' arrived to carry us from China's biggest city to the Holy Land.

The 'Wooster Victory' sailed on December 24, 1948 with over 900 passengers (mostly from the Russian Jewish Community) and a week later, on December 31, I, together with my family and another 950 Jews from Hongkew, boarded the 'Castelbianco'. At midnight (New Year), despite being very tired, we drank a 'Farewell to Shanghai' and a *Lehaim* to our new life in Israel.

On our ship, a converted troop transporter, sleeping quarters were rather cramped and the food of mediocre standard.

When we arrived in Capetown we really had a surprise in store for us. Thousands of this city's Jews came to the quayside to shower us with foodstuff and various items ranging from cosmetics to easy chairs. Hundreds of youngsters danced the *Hora*, waved blue and white flags and sang Hebrew songs alongside the ship.

After another three weeks the 'Shanghai-landers' were transferred to two smaller ships. Both these vessels, which had been built to hold 400 passengers at most, were already filled with over 800 refugees from the DP camps in Germany and thus the addition of another 400-500 passengers with wooden crates and other heavy luggage really made us wonder if we would reach Israel.

When we arrived in Haifa it was drizzling, but hopes were high. Then, at 10 o'clock cannon booms shattered the tranquility and we feared war had broken out again. It later turned out that the salvos were in honor of Dr. Haim Weitzman being elected President.

In the late afternoon we were divided into three groups for transfer to *Bate Olim*. One group went to Raanana, one to Neve Haim, and the third, among them our family, to Benjamina. After travelling on an old truck for nearly two hours we arrived in pitch darkness and pouring rain at a former British army camp, situated somewhere in the wilderness.

We were transferred in groups of fifty to *Quonset* huts, given an iron bed, straw mattress and two blankets and a 'meal', consisting of black

bread, tea, margarine and herring. Evidently, the last item had not been very fresh and all during the night people went out into the field to relieve themselves, with the howls of jackals nearby adding to the discomfort.

Next morning we went to look for our luggage. It turned out that many suitcases had been sent to Raana and Hadera, while those which should have been sent there went to Benjamina. That's when I learned what ballagan (foul-up), a Hebrew slang word I have often heard in my forty years in Israel, meant.

KURT MAIMANN

ABITURIENTENTREFFEN

Nahmen äusserlich Kenntnis,
waren alle so freundlich,
ich war ganz gerührt —
doch von Verständnis
habe ich nichts gespürt.

Wer war vom Mord
in den Lagern bewegt?
Wer stand vor der Asche
und hat mir die Hand
auf die Schulter gelegt?

Ihre Worte lockten,
schmeckten wie plastische Frucht.
Von der Jugendwelt
wer hat sich vor der Urne
still zu mir gestellt?

Wer von den Kameraden kam
überhaupt zum Bewusstsein
der Bestialität?
Wer senkte den Kopf
in Mitleid, in Scham?

Meine Schulkameraden hier
sie alle lächelten schön
wie künstliche Blumen.
Aber wer hat geweint?
Wer weinte mit mir?

GREGORY BLUNT

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Bertha Leverton who planned the Kindertransport Reunion (see September issue) from her Stanmore home has moved the office of the 'Reunion of Kindertransport' organisation into AJR premises at Hannah Karminiski House, 9 Adamson Road, London NW3 3HN (01-483 1125).

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A CITY WHERE THE YOUNG WANT TO KNOW

I had flown from Frankfurt Airport once before: to Heston, London, on 1 September 1939, 50 years ago. Then I had flown on my own, a 15-year old boy. I remember mounting the rickety steps of the aircraft with some difficulty, as the customs officers had virtually destroyed my shoes looking for hidden treasure.

There was quite a bit of searching this time round, too. Indeed, today's ubiquitous machine guns at the ready should have looked a lot more menacing than the holstered revolvers of long ago — yet it was all a bit of a lark, in the company of friends I had grown fond of. (We had been appearing in Alan Ayckbourn's *Bedroom Farce* at Frankfurt's English Theatre, generously maintained by the city and the Land Hesse.)

Though we lived in Nuremberg my mother came from Frankfurt, and a good bit of my childhood was spent there, or in nearby Bad Homburg, where then, as now, many of the prosperous Frankfurt families lived.

This connection was brought back to me forcibly on my first visit to the magnificent Jewish Museum in the former Rothschild *Palais* overlooking the Main. The last thing one passes, before leaving the building, is a long memorial tablet, apparently of stainless steel, on which are inscribed the names of all those who were deported from Frankfurt, and their eventual fate.

Although I knew, of course, that my mother and my sister had perished in the *Shoah*, I had not expected to find their names on this tablet. I did not know that it was from Frankfurt that they were deported to their terrible fate in the East.

I was glad that no-one saw me in that long, narrow corridor. Though it might have done no harm to one of the many parties of Frankfurt schoolchildren, who constantly troop through the Rothschilds' marble halls, to see that this bit of history is still very much alive.

I told my English colleagues about the Jewish Museum, and, prompted by them, about some of my memories. They didn't really know very much about Nazi Germany or the *Shoah*. But more interested still were the young Germans who worked in the theatre, or belonged to the 'camp followers' all theatre companies attract.

It was, in fact, the young Germans who again and again brought the talk in the bar or restaurants after the show round to the Nazi years and the fate of the Jews. When I feared that I was becoming a bore, obsessed as I am by the past, it

became clear to me that the ones who are truly obsessed by the past and its effect on the present are the young, intelligent, middle-class Germans. Where 20 years ago most Germans, young or old, only wanted to sweep the past under the carpet, the present generation of young, educated Germans, seemed to me to be permanently discussing it. It was often the smaller horrors that engaged them most. What they perhaps found most difficult to swallow, was that ordinary German people could take over a flat or a job that had belonged to a Jew, when they must have known why the Jew had left, and often, indeed, must have known the Jew. This kind of question I heard again and again. Perhaps the *Shoah* itself is too enormous, too incomprehensible. Perhaps also, one can always believe that one's own parents or grand-parents didn't know about Auschwitz or Belsen — but they certainly knew about the family Goldschmidt down the road.

As with my young friends — is it just my imagination, or are young educated Germans now among the most pleasant, most socially conscious youngsters in all Europe? — so with the radio, the press and the theatre. It was impossible to turn on the radio, read a quality paper, or a contemporary novel, without getting a reference to Germany's dreadful past. I saw a number of plays, none of which in any way related to recent history — Kleist, Hauptmann, Goethe — yet all of the productions were imbued with the consciousness of what German Kultur led to, or failed to prevent. This is clearly how all young directors view the classics. Not always to the plays' advantage, I must say.

The anniversary of the Burning of the Books was commemorated in two large bookshops with massive displays of new editions of the same books. Similar exhibitions were held in the two main libraries. Another library staged an exhibition round the *oeuvre* of Manes Sperber. The *Volkshochschule* advertised a course about the Frankfurt Jewish Community, to be given in the Jewish Museum.

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the birth of Anne Frank a ceremony was staged at the former *Philantropin*, once Frankfurt's most famous school, now an important auditorium. There were a series of performances based on the poems of Else Lasker-Schüler and Peter Sichrovsky's book *Born Guilty*.

How effective all this is, is, of course, another matter. A Neo-Nazi election meeting held on the Römer was certainly something of a joke. The meeting was held against the determined opposition of the Frankfurt Council, which had been taken to court over it. A vast force of police surrounded the place, which, for the first time during my stay, was almost empty. The audience consisted nearly exclusively of a troupe of kids with whistles, which they never stopped blowing, rendering the aristocratic-looking speaker quite inaudible. He made a good stab at rising above this, unlike an old lady who I assumed was his mother, who couldn't hide her fury. The two skinheads in Doc Martin boots who seemed to complete his entourage remained bored through-

out, even through the tinny rendering of 'Deutschland, Deutschland' which closed the proceedings.

Nevertheless, the Land of Hessen gave 14 per cent of the vote to extreme right wing parties — suggesting perhaps, that the parents of some of my young friends might be voting another way in the quiet of the election booth. Even if it is clearly no longer socially acceptable to attend their meetings — not in Frankfurt, anyway.

HEINZ BERNARD

THE SYNAGOGUE AT AFFALTRACH

Not many Jews lived in Affaltrach, a small Württemberg town near Heilbronn, although the community dated from the 17th century. In the mid-19th century when there were slightly fewer than 200 Jewish inhabitants it was decided to build a new synagogue to replace an older building that had become unsafe. The new synagogue served the dwindling community until November 1938, when it was attacked and ravaged by the ungodly mob. Fortunately the synagogue was not set alight and totally destroyed, as happened to so many other religious buildings. The ruined building stood unused for half a century, a stark reminder of the Nazi regime.

Now at least it has been restored and converted into a museum housing documents and objects relating to the Jews of Heilbronn and its environs. The festive opening ceremony took place on 9 November last (exactly fifty years after the ghastly events of Kristallnacht) attended by representatives of the municipality, the regional authority, the Catholic church and Rabbi Joel Berger of the Württemberg community.

The Museum catalogue is a well-produced work of 143 pages, profusely illustrated, and not only describes the objects displayed, but also contains data on the Affaltrach community and their synagogue, a history of the Jews in Baden-Württemberg, notes on personalities and much besides. Of particular interest are the maps showing intensive Jewish settlement in this area in the Middle Ages and thereafter (e.g. at Schwäbisch Hall, Wimpfen, Sondheim, Esslingen and Weinheim).

Some of the most poignant objects displayed, themselves of little intrinsic value, are the remains of prayer books discovered during the restoration of the synagogue, as well as a piece of a Torah binder still bearing the one word *Torah* in Hebrew characters. The new museum is a worthy memorial to a small community that existed among its neighbours for many centuries. At its opening Landrat Otto Widmaier said 'There is no longer a Jewish community that could make use of a restored synagogue in our district. That is an awesome truth we must neither suppress nor forget if we are to establish our democracy on a firm footing. In the words of the Bundespräsident the youth of today are not responsible for what happened then, but they are responsible for what history will make of it. We must learn from our history what man is capable of doing and, from that lesson, achieve the strength to overcome temptation, prejudice, and hatred in future.'

WALTER MANFRED

UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

Psychologist currently on a sabbatical in London, engaged in research on long-range implications of emigration of Jews from Germany, is interested in interviewing men immigrants who came to England from Germany between 1933 and 1939, aged 18-30.

Please contact Dr. Amos Handel 01-586 7975 (evenings).

MUSIC-MAKER EXTRAORDINARY

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER, *NOTEBOOKS 1924-1945*. Ed. Michael Tanner, transl. Shaun Whiteside (Quartet Books, 1989, £17.95)

Among this century's great German conductors, none has been more in the limelight than Wilhelm Furtwängler, alike as an artist and as a man. In both capacities he has been a controversial figure; his way of interpreting the classics was not easily accepted by some music critics, and his decision to remain in Germany throughout the Third Reich aroused more bitterness than the same conduct by many of his contemporaries. The very harshness of that hostility against him was the result of the original respect which he had enjoyed before 1933, and he was refused 'mitigating circumstances', in spite of the public stand he had twice taken against the regime's cultural policy, and in spite of his frequent intercessions on behalf of racially persecuted colleagues. The fact of the matter was that even *more* — nothing short of emigration — was expected of him who had been regarded as a representative of the 'other Germany'.

For many years, from 1924 until his death in 1954, he kept private notebooks not intended for publication, and these have now appeared in print.

In view of Furtwängler's ever-growing posthumous fame, nourished by the impact of his recordings, even on people who had never heard him in his lifetime, his views, laid down in this volume (which, regrettably, lacks an index) command widespread interest. Not surprisingly most comments on political matters appear mainly after 1945. On the whole, interest is focused on music, composers and interpreters. Furtwängler makes no secret of the fact that he regarded himself, in the first instance, as a composer, and many of his opinions may be taken as self-defence against criticism of his works as 'reactionary' and 'romantic', although he always emphasises the importance of musical form.

The style of the Notebooks is sketchy, often marred by incomplete sentences and a certain amount of repetitiveness. The overall impression that emerges is of Furtwängler's adherence to a kind of artistic Credo, which centres round the great German music from Bach via the Viennese classics — Beethoven above all — to Wagner, Brahms and Bruckner, extending to R. Strauss, Hindemith and Pfitzner (whose name appears very often, probably because Furtwängler felt a certain kinship with this anti-modernist romantic). Great non-Germans, like Verdi, Sibelius and Tchaikovsky, are by no means ignored. Stravinsky, whose aversion against Beethoven intensely irritated Furtwängler, is respected as a musical 'creator'. Many of the evaluations are provocatively disappointing. Speaking of contemporary composers, he says of R. Strauss 'He is, of all of them, the one who *can* do the most and who *is* the least'. And to think that to the man who wrote this fell the privilege of conducting the world premiere of Strauss' wonderful *Four Last Songs*!

Among his conductor colleagues, Furtwängler held Bruno Walter in high esteem. His dislike of Toscanini dates back to pre-Nazi times and had no political motivation. The *Notebooks* contain a

detailed critique of Toscanini's 1930 Berlin concerts revealing a fundamental antagonism, which is expressed in very uncharitable terms and mitigated by very little recognition. His profound disapproval of the Italian's interpretations is directed against 'literal renderings' whose rigidity of tempo leave no room for the kind of flexible tempi and subjective personal interpretation which Furtwängler himself considered indispensable. Even so, neither of them would have subscribed to present-day ideas of 'authenticity'.

The artistic conflict acquired a new virulence after 1933, when it conceivably strengthened Furtwängler's inclination to stay in Germany. The conflict may also have contributed to the vicious campaign which four years after 1945, prevented Furtwängler's engagement in Chicago, although, de-Nazified in 1946, he frequently conducted in Britain.

Those who criticise Furtwängler's decision to stay in Germany must bear in mind that, unlike Karajan, he never joined the Party and, early in 1933, refused to contribute to a volume of NS propaganda. His 1933 article against the ousting of Jewish artists (in an open letter to Goebbels) and a subsequent one defending Hindemith, attracted world-wide attention. Goebbels' reaction, deceptively courteous at first, later became openly hostile. Thereafter Furtwängler's inner resistance found its outlet in numerous clandestine attempts to intercede on behalf of Nazi victims. At no time did the conductor allow himself to be converted to Nazi ideas. Yet he seems to have been motivated by tremendous illusions about the good he could do with his music, presenting the 'other' Germany, his 'true Germany of Beethoven and Goethe' (Goethe is continually quoted).

'The message' he wrote 'which Beethoven directed at mankind in his works, particularly the Ninth Symphony, the message of goodness, of trust, of unity before God, seems to me never to have been more necessary than it is today.' The year was 1943, and the question arises whether the author of these lines had any inkling of the deeds some of his fellow-Germans carried out in the East at that very time.

Perhaps, Furtwängler, a man of undoubted noble intentions, but lacking in political insight, deserves to be pitied rather than condemned for his failure to recognise realities which caused him to throw in his lot with a regime of extreme evil. No wonder that many people who adore his artistic achievements find themselves sadly unable to absolve him of the consequences of a thoroughly misguided outlook.

H. W. FREYHAN

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FREE ASSOCIATION

Slovenia, says the newspaper headline, *votes for secession*. Slovenia suggests Slav, as well as slovenly. (Could slovenliness be connected with *schlamperei*?) Secession calls to mind the *Sezession* near the Ringstrasse, the building with the *art nouveau* cupola nicknamed the iron cauliflower.

The Slovenian capital is Ljubljana. It was once called Laibach, just as, in Habsburg days, Zagreb was Agram, Lvov Lemberg and Cracow Krakau.

From Laibach trains run to Villach. When both towns were in Austria-Hungary there was no passport control between them, and this shortened the journey. Even so not everybody wanted to undertake it. A treasured joke has a traveller say to the booking clerk 'Villach vill ach?' followed by 'In Laibach blaib ach'.

I turn the page. A cinema ad bespeaks the excellence of Ermanno Olmi's *Legend of the Holy Drunkard*. I think of poor Josef Roth who wrote the story, dying of drink in a cheap Parisian hotel. Given that his *Spinnennetz* (director Bernhard Wicki) is currently showing in German cinemas, Roth could be sitting pretty now. Of course, he would have had to live to a hundred — like Irving Berlin. Instead, cirrhosis of the liver and the spread of the swastika stain across Europe finished him off just 50 years ago. A Habsburg supporter, Roth had allegedly turned Catholic; to be on the safe side guests at his funeral recited the *Shema* and the Lord's Prayer in turn.

Scanning the book page I light on a critique of Max Perutz's *Stone Bridges of Prague*. The reviewer is impressed by Perutz's evocation of medieval shadow-shrouded Prague; he praises the tales of the occult Emperor Rudolph II, of general Wallenstein, the astronomer Kepler and of rabbis in the pocket of the court Jew Meisel.

A TV programme shows Haydn and Schubert spending time at Esterhaza. The Princes Esterhazy granted Jews the right to settle on their estates, and thus helped create the seven 'holy' *kehillot* of the Burgenland. Nearby a TV team films barbed wire being cut up for souvenirs: the Iron Curtain between Austria and Hungary is no more.

After 40 years the atrophy of Communist power shakes the kaleidoscope of Europe into a new pattern. The Balts talk of independence, and the Germans of re-unification. In Slovenia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and possibly in Trieste, Zagreb and Cracow as well, the talk — muted, but rising in volume — is of *Mittleuropa*.

What a vision: one state, based on the Habsburg patrimony, again embracing twelve nationalities! Mahler again on the podium of the Opera! Moritz Benedikt again editing the *Neue Freie Presse*. Theodor Kohn again elected Bishop of Olmütz, and the Prime Minister telling the cabinet 'I only hope he's already baptised!' The Emperor in white gala uniform again inspecting troops in Galicia, while onlookers exclaim 'Franz Josef mit papierene hoisen!' The vision fades: I have seen Mahler's death mask. There are no *shtetls* in Galicia. A Waldheim supporter edits *Die Presse*. Franz Josef-Land is an island on the edge of the Arctic. R.G.

FROM MATZOT ISLAND TO TINSELTOWN

The stranger-than-fiction life of the fiction writer Gina Kaus

Born in the 1890s, Gina was the daughter of a petty moneylender in Vienna's predominantly Jewish Second District (popularly known as *Mazzesinsel*). As a teenager she moved, with her family, to the Berggasse in the Ninth District, where Sigmund Freud had his surgery; Sophie, the less famous of the Freud daughters became her classmate at the *Lyzeum*.

At 18, the precocious Gina fell in love with and married Josef Zirner, a musician whose family owned a jeweller's shop in the exclusive First District. The Zirners strongly disapproved of their son's match with the young Jewess and severed all contacts with him. The advent of war, when Josef was called up, prompted a family reconciliation, however. During her husband's absence at the front, Gina had a brief affair, after which she felt a guilt-induced compulsion to see Josef again. She therefore took a train to where he was stationed along a relatively quiet sector of the Galician front. They met in breach of regulations, for which the army subsequently punished Zirner by transferring him to an exposed front-line position. He received wounds of which he died, aged twenty-three, in 1915.

Gina had meanwhile gone on to Berlin, where publication of some articles based on her Galician experiences put her in touch with writers and journalists like Carl Sternheim and Franz Blei. Back in Vienna, where she worked in the Zirners' jewellery store, news of her widowhood left Gina distraught; for a while she made herself hallucinate in an attempt to 'reach' her dead husband.

Then a new man — an even wealthier relative of the Zirners — entered her life. This was Josef Kranz, a middle-aged banker and distillery owner with artistic leanings, and a penchant for young soulful-looking women. Married, but living apart from his wife, Kranz invited Gina to live with him at his palatial residence. She accepted, but reluctant to figure as a mere mistress, she insisted on being adopted by Kranz, thirty years her senior.

The arrangement enabled Gina to live in luxury, settle her father's debts, and procure employment for her lover, Franz Blei, as Kranz's private secretary. Kranz also provided Gina with a studio where she had the requisite leisure for incubating her literary prentice pieces. In this studio, she also convened a salon of the Viennese postwar *avant-garde*: Franz Werfel, Robert Musil, Hermann Broch, Egon Erwin Kisch and Kafka's 'mistress' Milena Jesenska. (Another guest was the radical psychoanalyst Otto Gross who prefigured the Sixties' gurus Timothy Leary and R. D. Laing in his advocacy of drug-taking and subversion of family life.) Not content with

cultivating the company of literati, Gina endeavoured to turn herself into one of their number. She produced several novels featuring a villainous tycoon who bore a marked resemblance to her 'adoptive father'. Kranz, however, remained blithely indifferent to these defamations. What finally prompted their rupture was Gina's announcement that she was expecting a child by another man (the Communist writer Otto Kaus). Her enforced departure produced a moment of high drama when Kranz, who insisted on searching her luggage, discovered a golden trinket box. Accusing Gina of theft, he obtained a court order declaring her adoption null and void.

She thereupon married the impecunious Kaus and set about procuring money by the bizarre conjunction of playing the stock market and serialising novels in the socialist *Arbeiterzeitung*. In addition, expanding her journalistic range, she founded a journal for 'concerned parents' that ran articles by doctors, psychologists and teachers. After selling this publication, at a profit, she returned to fiction writing at a higher level: with Ullsteins as her publishers (and Vicky Baum as *lektor*) several of her novels achieved multiple translation, made the American bestseller list and were turned into Hollywood films.

By these means, Gina Kaus became a major dollar earner in the early 1930s — renting a luxury apartment near the *Staatsoper*, hiring top architect Josef Joffmann as interior designer, and taking yet another husband. She reached a twofold apogee; as a writer with a biography of Catherine the Great, and as a hostess by recruiting Karl Kraus into her salon. (Though grateful for Kraus's patronage, she quarrelled with him over politics, since he supported the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg regime as Austria's best defence against Nazi Germany.)

Following the Anschluss, Gina emigrated to America and became a wellpaid Hollywood scriptwriter. In 'tinseltown' she belonged to the coterie of emigrés that included the brothers Mann, Berthold and Salka Viertel, Franz and Alma Werfel, Friedrich Torberg and others. Some years after the war, her *Teufel in Seide* was filmed in Germany with Curd Jürgens and Lilly Palmer. In the benign Californian climate Gina Kaus — who wrote and 'lived' fiction with equal success — reached the ripe old age of ninety-two, dying in a Santa Monica nursing home as recently as 1985.

NIGHTMARE AND TRÄUMEREI

Dresden revisited

It was our *kleiderkammer* during the war. Jews did not get clothing coupons. We had to go to this place, Bautzener Strasse 20, to see what we could find there.

It now houses the offices of the Jewish Communities of the German Democratic Republic. I had called at short notice. Perhaps because of that, the secretary could not tell me anything. Not even when the first transport had left for Riga in 1942. In the office hung a charcoal

drawing by Bruno Gimpel, once an artist of note, and my teacher at the Jewish school. The school, set up hurriedly, after November 1938, in the modern outbuildings of the synagogue is all that was left of it. The synagogue itself, built by Gottfried Semper, was burnt down. An open space with some rubble remained. Now, on the site stands a concrete *menorah* to commemorate its destruction.

The present house of prayer is a building which was not destroyed. It stands near the entrance of the cemetery, some distance from the town centre. The cemetery and the building were spared by the Nazis and by bombs (except for one). The bomb damage has been repaired. Both the cemetery and the house are well kept. The latter has recently been restored; graves and tombstones are well looked after. When I called the curator was busy weeding among the graves. He had two ladies to help him. The prayer hall inside is stark, with white walls and wooden seats. Against one wall is the Ark. To either side of it the *Kaddish* is emblazoned on the wall, in Hebrew on one side, German on the other. Services are held only during Holy days now, when people come in from outside the town. On the roof of the house of prayer is a rather large Star of David. It was rescued from the old synagogue and hidden by a fireman.

The cemetery is not totally strange and unfamiliar; the site of the old synagogue, the memorial and the surroundings are. A modern concrete bridge spans the river. It is not the one I would sometimes cross on my way to school, hands cupped over my ears to shield them from the biting wind blowing up the river valley.

The town centre: modern high rise blocks, system-built of concrete slabs. Of the old *Präger Strasse* only the name remains. The *Hauptstrasse*, now *Strasse der Befreiung*, is a pleasant shopping precinct, with trees, green spaces and seats. The *Altmarkt* has been restored in a manner reminiscent of its former style.

The *Zwinger* is completely restored. The *Hofoper*, now *Semper Oper*, is rebuilt. Restoration work is in progress at the *Schloss*. The *Sistine Madonna* is as pretty as ever. The *Volkspoliceman* directs, courteously and in homely Saxon dialect. (At the border, coming in, passport control was very polite; going out, the official was the archetypal poker-faced trog.)

Dresden. At night darkness covers many scars which still remain. From the *Neustädter Ufer*, the bank across the river, a little way along on the old, rebuilt *Augustus Brücke*, now *Dimitrov Bridge*, the silhouette of Dresden seems almost its former, famous self. While the devastating mixture of ruins, rebuilt modernity and rococo still haunts the imagination, at night, the view of Dresden from the bridge is still — again — very beautiful.

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Recent news of Rudolf Bing's sad decline prompts this appreciation:

THE 'JEWISH ARCHDUKE'

Rudolf Bing, one of this century's most brilliant opera managers, helped launch the Edinburgh Festival, thereby saving the Glyndebourne Opera from an untimely demise — two achievements for which he received an, albeit belated, knighthood.

It was under his aegis that the Metropolitan Opera at New York reached an unprecedented ascendancy, with many of the world's great singers on its roster. Like Mahler and Toscanini before him, Sir Rudolf was a strict disciplinarian, but could also display patience and diplomacy.

A favourite in-house joke at the Met 'Under Sir Rudolf's tough exterior beats a heart of stone' exemplifies the sardonic humour which over the years had become an integral part of Bing himself. When somebody remarked that the proverbially unreliable George Szell, who for the umpteenth time had failed to honour a contractual conducting engagement, was his own worst enemy, Bing exclaimed spontaneously 'Not whilst I am alive'.

He recalls a typical chamber-music function at his patrician Jewish parental home in Vienna, with the Rothschild Quartet performing an ultra-modern work by Egon Wellesz. Since the chairs proved too low for the musicians, they had to sit on available volumes of Schubert chamber music. How much better would it have been, young Rudi thought at the time, if they had sat on Wellesz and played Schubert.

As a boy Bing showed little, if any, interest in school subjects, and at the age of 16 he appears to have contemplated a career as a painter or singer. However, he was sufficiently self-critical to realise his lack of talent for either of the two vocations. His lacklustre performance at a *Winterreise* recital convinced him that he had no future as a singer and prompted him to direct his ambition towards operatic management.

Thus, at a time when his former class-mates occupied themselves with football, young Bing would be attending *soirées* at his private tutor's, Dr. Eugenie Schwarzwald's, home. Here he would encounter members of the Viennese *avant-garde*, such as the architect Adolf Loos, the poet Peter Altenberg, Arthur Schnitzler, a certain part-time art teacher at the renowned Schwarzwald School by the name of Oskar Kokoschka, and — occasionally — Richard Strauss.

Like his eminent contemporary, Herbert von Karajan, with whom in later life he formed a mutual admiration society of Olympian exclusivity — a love-hate relationship aptly termed *Todfreundschaft* — young Bing well and truly went through the mill. Apprenticed to the unconventional Vienna bookseller Hugo Heller (who, after staging the Bratislava world premiere of Schnitzler's *Professor Bernhardi*, developed a thriving concert agency sideline) the precocious teenager became involved in preparing the engagement schedules of the likes of Bruno Walter, Adolf Busch, Lotte Lehmann, Elizabeth Schumann, Richard Mayr and the Rosé Quartet. In this capacity he accompanied Alfred Piccaver to London for two Albert Hall recitals. Fifty years later Bing affirms that throughout his varied

operatic experiences he had never again encountered voices comparable in beauty to those of Piccaver or Jeritza.

As Berlin-based concert agent, whose frustrating task it was to attend to the third-rate requirements of the German provincial opera houses, Bing gained useful experience, which would stand him in good stead for his future work. In Berlin Bing met Heinz Tietjen, Göring's future *eminence grise*, and General Manager of all Prussian theatres and opera houses. Bing's unqualified admiration for this past-master of intrigue is revealing. By praising Tietjen's capacity for combining charm, wit and non-committal diplomacy, Bing virtually draws a self-portrait.

Manipulator at the Met

When he expresses doubts as to whether he could ever hope to equal Tietjen's capacity for conspiring to achieve absolute supremacy — through the use of demoralising delaying tactics and pretended indecision, plus a dash of personal charm — Sir Rudolf reveals his own personal credo. It helps one appreciate his ruthless diplomacy, in consistently stalling the Met appearance of Maria Callas who had fallen foul of him.

(Eventually he offered the fading world star the non-singing, non-speaking pantomime role in Richard Strauss *Josephslegende* and, adding injury to insult, suggested Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* for the second half of the double bill.)

After much frustrating work at Berlin, Bing managed to be taken on by Carl Ebert, the newly appointed *Intendant* at Darmstadt. Here, he met conductors Karl Böhm and Max Rudolf, both of whom were to play an important role during his reign at the Metropolitan Opera.

When Fritz Busch and Carl Ebert launched Glyndebourne in 1934, they insisted that Bing be appointed as their administrative collaborator, responsible, among other functions, for the engagement of singers. Busch and Ebert who had dubbed the distinguished-looking youngster 'the Jewish archduke' — though for me he will always be the operatic reincarnation of Prince Metternich — knew how to value this workaholic.

Bing's creative imagination enabled him to sell the concept of the Edinburgh Festival to the mandarins of Edinburgh and to the world, timing its inception well ahead of the re-launching of Salzburg. Thus it was at Edinburgh that the

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra celebrated its post-war re-union with Bruno Walter, and Kathleen Ferrier made her international debut.

The allegations of certain gutter elements in the American press that Bing was knighted for his work as Ebert's glorified office boy can be dismissed.

During his 22 years at the Met the world's leading singers and conductors appeared there in the classical repertoire. Most of them admired and respected this autocratic enigma, whose old-world elegance belied his ruthlessly efficient managerial expertise.

There can be little doubt that Bing thoroughly savoured his power as general manager of the world's premier opera house. Thus he acted as his own ultimate one-man de-Nazification tribunal, applying frequently arbitrary criteria in tune with his own likes and dislikes.

Bing's quick repartee was renowned. When congratulating the Vienna Staatsoper Director Egon Hilbert on a magnificent *Tosca* performance with Leontyne Price, Corelli and Karajan, Hilbert replied, in a rather self-satisfied tone of voice: 'Yes, you see, that is the miracle of Vienna'. Whereupon Bing riposted 'O.K, but what about Gounod's *Faust* last night, which sounded straight from the sticks. Presumably that, too, is the miracle of Vienna?'

When the off-colour Roberta Peters was slated by the local press for her performance in Rossini's *Barbiere* during the Met's brief Paris visit, he announced: 'Miss Peters had a poor evening; the Paris Opera had a poor century'.

There were times, when the Met's Metternich 'went over the top'. On one hand Bing had always strongly condemned any type of claque system; on the other hand he deliberately organized a claque to cheer Callas, whom he had suspended for repeated breach of contract, and replaced at extremely short notice with the magnificent Leonie Rysanek at a crucial *Macbeth* premiere. This organised cheering of Callas was, of course, intended to provoke the audience into spontaneous support for the 'wronged' Rysanek.

When there was a real threat that the 1961/62 season would fail to get off the ground as a result of a musicians' strike, Sir Rudolf received a message from the White House that the President, who had been approached by the musicians behind Bing's back, had expressed confidence that the season would be a success. He replied that John Kennedy was welcome to take over the Met and let him handle Berlin. What splendid arrogance, but then this man had much to be arrogant about! F. W. ROSNER

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This article, the fourth in David Maier's series, includes contributions by others, notably Mrs. Jo McCarthy, head of Osmond House

4. HOMES AND HOUSING

The refugee community may take justified pride in the provision made since the 1950s for the care of its elderly. The story of the establishment of the residential homes in north west London with funds from property left heirless in Germany after the last war was fully described in a recent issue (*AJR Information*, February 1989).

Throughout this period of nearly forty years, AJR has been closely connected with the work of the homes, administered as previously stated, by CBF Residential Care and Housing Association. We are the first point of contact for intending residents, having from the start been involved with all aspects of selection and administration of the homes. Details of the formalities that this inevitably calls for are referred to below.

There are several homes offering residential care and sheltered accommodation for elderly refugees. Of the three residential care homes in The Bishops Avenue, Leo Baeck House is most suitable for those with few disabilities, Heinrich Stahl House for the physically less fit, and Osmond House is reserved for frail residents requiring a substantially greater degree of care. Otto Schiff House in Netherhall Gardens, off Finchley Road, at present combines facilities for both full care and sheltered accommodation. Eleanor Rathbone House in Highgate has 54 flats of sheltered accommodation.

To move or not to move

It is recognised that modern facilities permit elderly people to maintain themselves in their own home up to a much greater age than has been the case in the past. They greatly value and take pride in the preservation of their independence and are reluctant to envisage a time when its maintenance may become difficult and, eventually, unsustainable. The decline of their physical and mental powers cannot always be readily perceived — either by themselves or even by observers. Elderly persons' life-styles tend to reduce contact with friends and relations, leading to increasing loneliness and feelings of isolation from the outside world, which in turn undermine health and strength. Even if these factors are recognized there may be reluctance to consider the move to a residential home, because of concern about lack of privacy, fear of regimentation and a loss of identity. Not so.

Life in the Homes

Residents in the homes have their own room into which they may bring some of their cherished furniture and arrange to individual taste. They can come and go without having to shoulder the daily burdens of life: no worries about shopping, the preparation of food, cleaning, or any of the other 101 responsibilities of housekeeping. The three main meals are designed to suit continental tastes and are taken communally in the dining room. The rest of the day is spent at residents' volition, though, naturally, if they go out, the

staff of the home like to be informed and to know when to expect their return.

As in every organisation dedicated to the care of people good staff are the key to achieving high standards of service. Their commitment and ability determine the quality of the residential experience of those in their charge. The staff respond to residents and the residents in turn respond to staff. Unhurried personal contact is essential. The staff are supported by a multi-disciplinary team of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, chiropodists and visiting medical officers. Moreover, they have opportunities to extend their skills through the training facilities provided for them. The main objective at all times is to meet residents' needs for which purpose the professional tasks are designed to focus on the individual.

House Committees

Each Home has its own House Committee, a group of involved volunteers concerned with residents' comforts and amenities. They provide personal help and bring additional skills and activities for which staff cannot always be made available. Their participation in the work of the Homes outside the day to day management tasks

extends residents' range of opportunities, interests and relationships and also maintains regular contact with the matron or head of house. It has been said that they represent the 'soul' of the Homes: a splendid way of describing their role and underlining the valuable contribution made by voluntary helpers, both to the homes and many other facets of AJR activities.

Seeking admission

Seeking admission to a residential home is a matter which concerns not only the prospective resident, but also the family. Decisions of any kind may be difficult for an elderly person to take, the more so if it involves leaving one's home, the life-style one is used to, and entering a new environment, however warm the welcome that will be extended. Families should, therefore, feel free to discuss the subject of Old Age Homes with their parents or other elderly relative they feel responsible for, even if it may be some time yet before the step needs to be taken. They should also find out themselves, through visits or otherwise, the facilities offered in homes they may wish to consider for future admission. Such discussions which, if undertaken in good time, do not yet call for decisions, but help to familiarize potential residents with the need to consider their future without anxiety and enabling them eventually to make the transition well prepared and confident that it is the result of the right decision.

Postscript

Having described the residential facilities built up over many years and the part played by the AJR in caring for residents, let us not overlook the regrettably considerable number of elderly people of our community who live alone, and have no families or friends to turn to for advice or reassurance. Many such are known to our social workers, who maintain regular contact with them, and try, as far as possible, to stand in the place of the relatives and friends they lack and give them the feeling of being wanted. In addition there will be others of whom we do not know or who do not know of the AJR. They likewise may have no families or friends, live alone in unsatisfactory accommodation, perhaps unwell and feeling harassed by an uncaring world outside their four walls. At times such elderly refugees are referred to us by other agencies, such as the Jewish Welfare Board or Citizens Advice Bureau, and thus enable us to bring them within our care. Our members, our readers, should always be on the look-out for people in this unfortunate position and bring them to our notice. In this way every one of us can make a contribution to our welfare work, however small, yet great in terms of the happiness it may bring to a lonely individual.

HONOUR

In token of the esteem in which he is held professionally, Dr. A. R. Horwell was asked to open British Laboratory Week at Olympia in September.

Dr. Horwell has been an active member of the AJR almost since its inception and served on the executive committee for many years.

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VARIED FARE AT THE DAY CENTRE

The Austrian week, 18–22 September, focusing on Viennese cuisine — from *schnitzel* to *apfelstrudel* — attracted above-average attendances. Members happily joined in the spirit of the thing, with quite a few donning dirndls and lederhosen. (See photograph below.)

Future plans include the staging of Italian, French and Greek weeks at dates to be announced.

'Joys and Sorrows of an Editor'

That was the title of a talk Richard Grunberger, who has been editing *AJR Information* for the past 18 months, gave during the last afternoon session before the Jewish New Year. He claimed that the journal was unique in many ways. Though junior to *The Observer* (founded in 1791) by 150 years, we have the oldest readership in the country. We also have the largest number of foreign correspondents of any paper in Britain. We also bridge the gap between *The Times* and *The Sun* by having photographs on page three that feature not prominent young ladies, but —

pace the October issue — prominent musicians.

When Mr. Grunberger listed being misunderstood by readers among his editorial sorrows, one member of the audience remarked that she always opened the paper with a dictionary in her hand. Turning to the incidental joys of editorship, the speaker revealed that Helene Rischawy's poem *Sommer 1939* (September issue) had so impressed one reader that he produced an English version of it, while another identified the poetess as a long-lost relative!

Something else, Mr. Grunberger said, which brought him joy was the awareness of a readership which, though relatively small, extended almost worldwide; in the last few months he had received mail from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Chile and Australia.

After several questions and suggestions from the floor Richard Grunberger concluded with an appeal to his sizeable audience to send him personal reminiscences — or other, possibly humorous, contributions — with a view to their publication.



An Austrian scene at Cleve Road

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Take your choice — it's yours to make,
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Sylvia, Renée, Judy, Sue,
Helen's busy, lots of cooking,
Joseph doesn't stand just looking,
Lunching here is such a treat,
Lovely food and lots to eat.

Berni's bingo, Rhona's care,
Sadie's shop, with items rare;
Then the music or the talk
or the garden, sit or walk.

All my friends not here in name
Highly valued just the same!
Tea and cake to end the day
Smiles to send you on your way!

EDIE KLEMPNER

A habitué of the Day Centre

AJR CHARITY CONCERT

A review of the recital on Sunday, 5 November, will appear in the December issue.

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ICH BIN EIN PRO-BERLINER

GEORGE C. CLARE: *BERLIN DAYS, 1946-47*; London, Macmillan, 1989, £14.95

It is difficult to review *Berlin Days* in isolation; one cannot help comparing, at least subconsciously, a book which is worth reviewing for its own sake, with Mr. Clare's earlier work. Perhaps because of this comparison, it appeals less.

This is no doubt a case of tunnel vision in a Viennese who does not know Berlin and therefore cannot share the author's affection for the City; but it is also fair to say that a book dealing with one man's memories of a place, however important, for a span of less than two years does not have the sweep over time and space of his first book with its chronicle of generations from 1842 to 1942.

Which is not to deny the book's good points. It is, except for some howlers which may be due to sub-editing, well written and informative. Instructive in the sense that while the author's personal memories may not be of wider interest, his knowledge of Berlin at the time surely is; to anyone not conversant with the city and its history it is news that even after its occupation by the Soviets it was still for a while the real capital of Germany, and its artistic and cultural centre. For a hundred people who have heard of Berlin's 'golden years' sixty years ago, there is probably not one who is aware of the 'Golden Hunger Years' and this makes the book informative as well as a pleasure to read.

And these facts are not merely of historical interest. If the Berliners of 1945-47 still constituted an enormous reserve of ability and energy the Russians should in their own interest not have impelled them to leave for the West; what makes the book so topical is Mr. Clare's thesis that this Russian regime in Berlin, which drove so many of the élite into the Federal Republic, is largely

responsible for the success of the BRD over the last 40 years, by distributing a layer of talent over so many of its regions. The case is probably overstated, for the federal structure of Germany, compared with the centralisation of power and of most other worthwhile activities in, say, Paris or London, meant that Germany had always benefited from a wider spread of cultural and economic activity. But it is probably true that despite the economic competition of, say, Hamburg and Frankfurt, and the artistic competition of Munich and Dresden, Berlin had since 1870 acquired a potential which the Russians were unwise to redistribute all over the capitalist half of the country. What is also new to anyone not familiar with the workings of Allied Control in post-war Germany is the extent to which it employed ex-refugees. It was certainly news to me that these supplied so many commissioned officers and civilian employees that third parties had occasion to question their impartiality. (That there were many ex-Viennese among the American control commission personnel in Austria was known, and fits in with even contemporary American practice of appointing naturalised Americans as diplomats accredited in their own places of origin.) But the way in which one four-power committee in Vienna conducted its meetings in Viennese

German as a common mother tongue, still comes as a surprise.

If I find the chapter of the visit to Vienna particularly amusing, that too is tunnel vision, mitigated perhaps by my knowing at least some of the places and people that figure in the description. The different atmosphere of the four-power administrations in Berlin and Vienna respectively may well be due, as the author thinks, to the fact that Berlin was of overriding importance to all the Allies, while, in the last resort, Austria was not. After all, the Soviet forces did eventually agree to evacuate Austria, while the DDR continues to be their 'frontline'. George Clare has never made any secret of his admiration for Berlin, compared with Vienna, pre-war as well as post-war. That may be due to the merits of the large city, or to the 'negative local patriotism' which many of us share in respect of wherever we come from. It is here that our memories are most likely to throw up the images of 1938-39.

What makes Clare's approach attractive is not that he likes the town that has given him a wife, but his rejection of collective guilt; he refuses to condemn all Germans, irrespective of past conduct and age group, for the sins of the Nazis.

F.M.M.S.

CALLING EX-BERLINERS

An informal meeting of Jewish ex-Berliners took place in North London last month. 44 people attended and apologies were received from a further 30.

It was decided to establish a formal organisation. Invitations to a Sunday afternoon meeting in a central location to be held later in the year, will be issued shortly. Anyone who has not yet signified their interest and who would like to join should write to Harold Becker, 41 Meadowside, Cambridge Park, Twickenham TW1 2JQ.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**THANK YOU**

Sir — I want to express my gratitude to Self Aid and the AJR for finding my mother, Mrs. Markstein, a place in Heinrich Stahl House, where she received much kindness, efficiency and comfort — which she appreciated as much as she was able to appreciate anything at that stage of her life.

For myself I can only say that I would not have known what to do, or where to turn, without you. I shall never forget my last desperate phone call to you and your response when you asked us to come for an interview at Heinrich Stahl House.

Wishing you much success in your good work.
Red Road EDITH LOEWENSTEIN
Borehamwood, Herts.

ADVICE

The author D. L. M. of the leading article 'Behold The Day' in the September issue would have been better advised to leave the concluding paragraph unpublished. I must refer him, among other things, to Deuteronomy XIII, 7-17.

Harcourt Drive, ARNOLD A.
Reading ROSENSTRAUCH

(D. L. M. writes: *The Akida story amounts to a prohibition of human sacrifice as a religious ritual. Deut. xiii outlaws religious subversion and the pursuit of alien cults, including those which feed on such practices.*)

A MISCONCEIVED REPORT

Sir — Fred Barschak's report on the Kindertransporte Commemoration makes it hard to believe that he attended the event.

The 4 aims of the event were:

- (1) To commemorate the 50th anniversary of our arrival.
- (2) To remember our parents and relations who did not survive.
- (3) To express our gratitude to all people of every denomination who helped us to survive.
- (4) To establish a scholarship fund as a more permanent memorial to those who did not survive.

It is really hard to understand how Mr. F. Barschak got the impression that not 'at least a passing reference to those whose selfless devotion made . . . survival possible' was made. Is *all* not comprehensive enough? And could it be that he did not see the beautiful brochure with its outstanding cover designed by Mr. Abraham Games which contained personal messages conveying gratitude to Mrs. Lola Hahn-Warburg and Nicholas Winton?

When a member of the audience called Mrs. Gordon to the stage at the end of the commemoration she emphasized that this was not an occasion for awarding bouquets, movingly contributed to the profound atmosphere engendered by the concert, and reiterated the aims of the occasion: emphasizing remembrance of those who did not survive and gratitude to those who helped us to do so.

Hogarth Hill P. EISLER
London NW11

MISNOMER

Sir — I object to the term 'refugees' used for the East Germans now crossing into West Germany. The Oxford Dictionary defines the term as 'person escaped to a foreign country from religious or political persecution' — a condition which, surely, does not apply to the East Germans.

If they are classed as refugees, what were we in the Thirties?
The Ghyll, Richmond HENRY WOLFE
N. Yorks.

RIGHTWING BACKLASH

Sir — As your August article affirms, history never repeats itself exactly.

Germany today enjoys a dubious geographical position as a *Durchgangsbahnhof*; due to its economic circumstances it has become a magnet (similar to London) for the homeless, deviants and misfits; many urban districts and small towns resemble Bradford. Unemployment, inadequate housing, overcrowding and social tension bypass the rich progressives who preach sanctimonious tolerance to the benighted multitude.

The traumatic experience of Nazi guilt disables contemporary political thinkers and practitioners from dealing pragmatically with urgent questions of civil order. The popular shift to the right in Germany is a warning that the most serious challenges of our time are not being met; they will not go away by condemnation or vilification of the parties involved.

St. Swithun Street GERTRUD WALTON
Winchester

ADMONITION

Sir — Watching the BBC documentary *No time to say goodbye* I found it profoundly moving. A frame showed children being medically examined on arrival in Harwich, an event which seems to have preyed on Ms Hingston's mind for the past 50 years, and finally gave rise to her letter in your July issue.

Sadly one and a half million children failed to reach safety in time. That, rather than the temporary inconvenience of having to sleep on bare boards covered by brown packing paper, should have exercised her mind; but then some people are never satisfied.

Schiedamse Vest F. G. KATZ
Rotterdam

CATHARTIC ENCOUNTER

Sir — Having now read a number of articles and letters from former refugees — couched in delighted tones — about recent visits back to Austria and Germany, I felt it was time for someone to voice an opposing opinion.

I find it totally incomprehensible how any of my fellow-refugees could wish to accept a lavish gratis holiday from these countries, to be paraded at various functions, and questioned by young and old.

Of course the present generation want to 'clasp our hands and embrace' and to meet returnees to find out 'what really happened' — as Ruth Finch puts it in her September article. After all, their parents looked the other way 50 years ago and, if they were personally involved in the plundering

and beating, they are now ashamed to tell their children. However, please Ruth, don't try to tell me that the officials were embarrassed, the Bürgermeister of Hoeschst deserves credit for inviting you and your friends. Nor that he was fearful and hesitant, and concerned about your reaction. After all, you accepted their invitation readily, which surely meant that you wanted to go back.

Hartland Drive HANNA GOLDSMITH
Edgware

MAHLER'S CONVERSION

Sir — Your excellent article about Gustav Mahler's conversion to Christianity was marred by one piece of misinformation. Mahler never contemplated becoming a Protestant — it would have served no purpose when the sole object of his conversion was to qualify for high office at the Habsburg Court Opera. The story that he replied *Wenn schon, denn schon* when asked why he had not taken the lesser step is recounted by the reactionary New York critic Henry E. Krehbiel, whose obituary of Mahler is an object lesson in character assassination. The anecdote has, to my knowledge, no other contemporary source.

Far more telling is Mahler's remark to Ferdinand Pfohl in Hamburg, directly after his conversion. *Der Rock ist schon gewechselt*, he said, 'the outer garment has been changed' — meaning that the inner man remained the same. Alone among the prominent Viennese Jews who converted to Christianity, Mahler remained attached to his Jewish heritage. He never hid his origin but, wrote his wife, 'he emphasized it'.
Bolton Road, NORMAN LEBRECHT
London NW8

J. S. BACH AND THE JEWS

Sir — The interesting article in your August issue brought to mind a discussion I initiated some years ago on Handel's *Messiah*, which had been performed by a Mormon (missionary) choir in Jerusalem's biggest hall, the audience being invited to take part in the 'service' and to stand during the Hallelujah chorus *Glory to God and His Christ*. The point I then made was that, if Israelis wanted to hear music based on original Christian texts, however revoltingly anti-Jewish and unhistorical, they were welcome to do so, but to publicly perform, in Israel, a work containing falsified quotations and mistranslations from our prophets, designed to give a Christian slant to Jewish prophetic utterances, was totally unacceptable. As far as I know, this affront to Jews in their own country is now restricted to performances in Jerusalem's churches.

The pervasive influence of Renaissance music, painting and architecture has inspired masterpieces from which few people brought up in a Western European environment can altogether divorce themselves. I sympathise with J.D.'s feelings about singing or listening to glorious music with antisemitic texts. As I grew old, I have often told myself that there is enough music, especially instrumental music, to lift the spirit, without having to swallow poisonous barbs directed against the Jewish people which, in the last resort, have resulted in rivers of Jewish blood.

POB 16085 E. S. SCHWAB
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ART NOTES

Ottolie Tolansky (1912-77) was born in Vienna into a family of musicians. She originally studied at the Berlin Academy of Art and came to England in 1933 where she continued her studies in Manchester and Hammersmith. Her work has been shown in many municipal galleries and she has had six one-man exhibitions in London. Recently her son John Tolansky and Haim Lazarov have helped to mount a major retrospective exhibition of her work at the Hurlingham Gallery (until 23 September). The exhibition included nudes, flower paintings and still life. Examples of her work, as well as the work of other artists, can still be seen at that gallery's Christmas Exhibition (10-23 December).

Edith Birkin was born in Prague and at the age of ten was sent to the Lodz ghetto where both her parents died of starvation. Though subsequently imprisoned in Auschwitz and Belsen, she fortunately survived and came to England in 1945 to join her elder sister. Now she is happily married with three children. She trained as a school-teacher but eventually took up painting. Since then her work has been exhibited in Coventry Cathedral, North Staffordshire Polytechnic, Hereford and Manchester. A major exhibition of her work will be held at the Ben Uri Art Society (20 November-7 December). The exhibition consists of 27 oil paintings, expressionist interpretations in strong colours of her experiences in Lodz, Auschwitz, Belsen and her eventual release.

It is the Warhol season in London, with no less than five exhibitions devoted to his work. Andy Warhol (Andrew Warhola), born in 1928 as the son of an immigrant Czechoslovak construction worker, studied at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, worked part-time as a window-dresser and in 1949 moved to New York as a commercial artist and illustrator. The famous *Campbell Soup Cans* and *Marilyns* appeared in 1962 — the rest is history. Eventually he was shot and subsequently died. Warhol was and is a cult. Some describe him as a great man, the living embodiment of Pop Art and Society in the sixties; others have nothing but contempt for his work and describe it as a mere pretence and the exploitation of publicity. It is not even necessary to visit all the exhibitions; a most elaborate catalogue produced by New York's Museum of Modern Art for the Hayward Gallery (price £21.75) provides all the information needed.

A recent sale of wartime posters included a very rare ATS recruiting poster designed by Abram Games in 1941, which was withdrawn, after a considerable row, as being 'too glamorous'. Abram Games went on, nevertheless, to become the official War Office poster designer. Retrospective exhibitions of his work are planned for the coming months.

The *Camera Portraits* exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery (until 21 January 1990) draw on the gallery's unrivalled collection of photographs; it comprises portraits of Florence Nightingale, David Livingstone, Scott of the Antarctic, Charles Dickens, Lord Palmerston, Elgar, many actors and actresses and the Royal Family from Queen Victoria to the Princess of Wales. Fascinating viewing, even for people not deeply

concerned with the development of photographic techniques.

Those who like beautiful things should not miss paying a visit to Shirley Day Ltd, 91b Jermyn Street, where they will see a fine selection of Tibetan, Indian, Indonesian and South-east Asian metalwork, jewellery and textiles.

The Tate Gallery, Liverpool, is mounting a display from its own collection to mark the outbreak of war in 1939 (until 19 November). Works by Alder, Ardon, Eurich, Freedman, Kokoshka and Carel Visser are included among the seventy works depicting scenes from the Home Front, war on land, at sea and in the air, and other scenes of devastation.

The John Denham Gallery will be holding an exhibition of oils, pastels and drawings by Hugo (Puck) Dachinger (5-19 November). The exhibition will be opened by Dr. Ernst Peter Brezovsky, Cultural Attaché of the Austrian Embassy.

Finally, a reminder: the Gauguin exhibition at the Royal Academy (until 19 November) and the Hungarian exhibition at the Barbican Gallery (till 15 January 1990). Both are a 'must'.

ALICE SCHWAB

CALLING CZECH JEWS

Former Czechoslovak Jews from everywhere are invited to a World Rally in Israel from from 26 April to 5 May. During the gathering the Exhibition of the Heritage of Czechoslovak Jewry at the Tel-Aviv Diaspora Museum will be inaugurated. Registration forms can be obtained from Organising Committee of the World Rally, 15 Achad Haam Street, Tel Aviv 65142, Israel.



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JEWISH FATE ON FILM

Over recent years the Jewish Film Festival at the National Film Theatre on the South Bank has happily become an annual event. Given budgetary constraints the standard of work shown this September — both of fiction films and documentaries — was remarkably high. In any summary of the diverse offerings pride of place belongs to *Reunion*, a screen version of Fred Uhlman's novel about the friendship of a Jewish schoolboy for a young aristocrat in 1930s Germany. The latter, Konradin, is sufficiently influenced by family tradition to look up to the 'superpatriot' Hitler, and assures his assimilated friend that Nazi antisemitism is not aimed at Jews like him. The Jewish lad emigrates to America; as an old man (portrayed by Jason Robards in the film) he returns to Stuttgart to retrace his early steps and find out what happened to Konradin. This quest brings him up sharply against the stony silence and evasiveness that characterised much German postwar behaviour, and the film ends with a gripping *denouement* it would be churlish to give away.

Another immensely watchable fiction film for which the Festival served as a showcase was the French-language *Sandwich Years*. (Script: Jean-Claude Grumberg, whose play *The Workshop* ran at the Swiss Cottage Theatre some years ago.) Set in the immediate post-war years, the film tells the story of a Jewish adolescent who returns from hiding to Paris to find his parents gone, and tries to pick up the threads of his life. In this he is helped, as well as hindered, by a curmudgeonly elderly scrap merchant, a bereaved camp survivor whom the non-Jewish Polish actor Wojtek Pszoniak portrays with a degree of verisimilitude deserving of an Oscar nomination.

The documentaries screened at the Festival spanned a wide range. *Sol Zeyn* (Let It Be) dealt lovingly — and at wearying length — with the survival of Yiddish in Israel. Created by Zionists with a missionary zeal for Hebrew, the Jewish state provided a hostile environment for *mammoshoshen*. Today only two groups of Israeli residents — the Ultra-Orthodox and veterans of the Socialist *Bund* — still speak Yiddish on principle, but regrettably they don't speak to each other.

Righteous Enemy was that rarity among documentaries about Jews in the Second World War: a piece of research on film that cheered rather than depressed its audience. It described the efforts of a number of Mussolini's subordinates — both in the armed forces and the diplomatic service — to frustrate German attempts at bringing Jews in Italian-occupied areas within the ambit of the Final Solution. Thanks to their efforts about 15,000 Jews were granted a (frequently permanent) stay of execution in Dalmatia, Western Greece and South-Eastern France. However much overshadowed by the Six Million, that number deserves commemorating as a gleam of light in pitch-black darkness.

SB's Column

SB is on holiday; his column will appear again in the December issue.

LITTLE TALKING SHOP OF HORRORS

Last month at Yakar a hundred-strong Jewish audience heard a panel of academics and community workers debate the motion that Britain is an antisemitic society. At the conclusion of the debate the motion was defeated by the vote of just over half the audience. In other words, nearly every other person present felt that the non-Jews among whom they lived looked on them with hate-filled eyes.

I find this perception baffling, not to say illogical. Baffling because I consider antisemitism in present-day Britain to be markedly weaker than between the wars — and illogical because for the last forty years Diaspora Jews who felt an endangered minority had the option of going to the country where they automatically form the majority. (Besides Israel, the USA, Canada and Australia also accepted immigrants from Britain for most of the postwar period.)

At Yakar the main speaker for the motion was Professor Geoffrey Alderman of Royal Holloway College. This academic-cum-communal activist said, when his opponent cited the many Jews currently occupying high positions in Britain, that Austria showed a similar array of Jewish luminaries while being deeply antisemitic.

As I see it the occupant of a University chair in Politics who discerns parallels between British

and Austrian antisemitism is akin to a consultant in Dermatology lumping eczema together with skin cancer. Where, I ask, are the contemporary British counterparts to Austrian Judeophobes like Burgomaster Lueger (Ken Livingstone?), Prince Starhemberg (the Duke of Norfolk?), Bishop Hudal (Cardinal Hume?) or Professor Billroth (Norman Stone?). Where in this country do we hear street urchins chant *Jud', Jud, spuck' in Hut* (Jew, Jew, spit into your hat), a catch indicative of an unbroken tradition of antisemitism dating back to medieval times, when Jews were made to wear pointed yellow hats.

In Austria, as in Britain today, three parties competed for political power. Any British Jew can advance to positions of leadership in the Conservative, Liberal or Labour parties; Austrian Jews could not even vote for two of the three main parties — the Social Christians and the Pan-Germans — on account of their in-built antisemitic bias.

Skinheads or students

To sustain his case Prof. Alderman quotes the rising incidence of street attacks on Jews in places like Hackney. In Vienna, however, Jews were not beaten up in suburban backstreets but on the University campus! It surely makes a difference whether the perpetrators of antisemitic violence are skinheads (i.e. society's outcasts) or students (i.e. the future leaders of society).

As I write this I have before me an invitation from the Principal of Royal Holloway College to attend a lecture by Prof. Alderman on Anglo-Jewry, at which the whole panoply of academic pomp — from specially arranged transport to a reception at the College Picture Gallery — will be brought into play. If Prof. Alderman can see any resemblance between the action of his principal and the conduct of the quondam *Rektors* of Vienna University he would be well advised to switch from teaching politics to creative fiction.

R.G.

FRANKEL PRIZE IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

The Wiener Library has announced that the first award of this recently instituted prize was made to Professor Margaret F. Steig, University of Alabama, for her work on Public Libraries in Nazi Germany.

In making their award the members of the selection committee stressed that the many entries of very high quality submitted made their work rewarding, but their decision difficult.

Entries for the Frankel Prize for 1990, which carries an award of \$7,500, should be addressed to the Administrative Secretary, Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1N 2BH, so as to arrive not later than 1 May 1990. Further information about the prize may be obtained from the same address.

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Deaths

Gummers:—Dr. Julius Gummers (formerly dentist at Queen's Drive) has died aged 85, Beloved husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather, he will always be remembered and never forgotten by family, relatives and friends in this country and abroad. The funeral has taken place privately, according to his wish. Firwood Court, 10 Firwood Road, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 5PZ.

Hohenberg:—George Hohenberg died 18 September, aged 76. Sadly missed by his wife Marianne, son Tom and family, and all his friends.

Kutner:—Josef Kutner passed away suddenly on 20 September. Loving husband of Ruth for nearly 54 years. Devoted father of John and Evelyn

and father-in-law of Peter (Woolstone). Adored grandfather of Vikki, Zoe, Andrew, Tamara and Candice. He will always remain in our hearts and memories.

Matsdorf:—Wolf Simon Matsdorf passed away 13 September 1989 in Jerusalem. Mourned by his wife Hilde, son Peter, daughter-in-law Barbara, and grandchildren Michelle and Joshua.

Meyer:—Käthe Meyer, formerly of Lübbecke/Westf. and Düsseldorf, passed away peacefully at her home in her 93rd year. Deeply mourned by her son and friends.

Meyer:—Malli Meyer (née Löwenstein), born in Bocholt, Westphalia, died peacefully in Liverpool on 23 September in her 89th year. In loving memory John, Bronwen, Caroline, Jonathan and Robert.

Peres:—Dr. Alfred Paul Peres, beloved husband of Kate, died 11 October 1989, aged 90.

Schachter:—Josef Schachter died suddenly on 12 October. Loved and sadly missed by his wife and family, Trude, Peter, Lynda, Natalie, Gabrielle and Jonathan.

Thieberger:—Mrs. Stefa Thieberger passed away peacefully on 17 September in her 94th year. Deeply mourned by her relatives and friends.

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ODENBACH'S
FORMER SYNAGOGUE
RESTORED

Readers may remember an article in the January 1989 issue of *AJR Information* (with photograph) about the 18th century synagogue at Odenbach near Kaiserlautern, which was saved from destruction because of its proximity to other buildings, and whose particular artistic rarity is due to hidden Baroque murals, which were only discovered in 1985 by a local resident.

The small group of people who had formed a *Förderverein zur Erhaltung der Synagoge in*

Odenbach have now been able to purchase the building, and are making strenuous efforts to restore its fabric, and also to have the overpainted murals uncovered and restored. Another unusual feature is that the small Jewish community in nearby Landau has indicated its interest in holding services at Odenbach after the restoration of the synagogue. This would, of course, distinguish it from the many other rural synagogues with restored buildings, but no Jews to worship in them!

Considerable interest has been aroused among some descendants of former Odenbachers living in the Argentine, and since publication in *AJR*

Information (Jan. 89), Jews from England and America, too, have shown an interest.

The chairman of the *Förderverein*, Mrs. Hilde Dittrich, who belongs to the post-war generation, is a most dedicated champion of this work of restoration. She would give a very warm welcome to anyone able to visit the Synagogue by prior arrangement with her.

Readers interested in this project who want either to give or receive more information, or join the *Förderverein* (annual subscription DM12.00), should write to Mrs. Hilde Dittrich, Untere Glanstrasse 2, D-6759 Odenbach, West Germany (Tel. 01049 6753 2745). LORE STEIN

FOR YOUR DIARY

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

NOVEMBER

Monday 6	'The Blake Piano Trio'
Tuesday 7	'The James Chance Trio'
Wednesday 8	'The Wonderful Country Of Thailand' — Slide Show & Talk By Inge Munro
Thursday 9	'The Melody Makers' — Kathy McCormack and Ken Penney
Monday 13	'Serendipity Of Songs' — Maureen & Les Stevens
Tuesday 14	'Music For A While' — Wendy Duke & Kathryn
Wednesday 15	'A Smile & A Song' — Eddy Simmons
Thursday 16	'Popular Classics Sung By Doris Mainzer and Joe Vilensky accompanied by Rosa Butwick
Monday 20	'Kissin-Time' — Henry Kissin
Tuesday 21	'Cello & Piano Recital' — Sophie Harris and Mark Ray
Wednesday 22	'Unvergesslich — Musik & Poesie' — Fred Stern
Thursday 23	'Trinity College Of Music'
Monday 27	'Music To Delight You' — Lilian Green & Friends
Tuesday 28	'Pot-Pouri Of Music' — Valerie Hewitt
Wednesday 29	'Janice Armstrong Will Entertain With Les Brown At the Piano'
Thursday 30	'Opera You Love' — Sara Meadows & John Field

DECEMBER

Monday 4	'Ronnie Bell On Keyboard'
Tuesday 5	'Sharona Appelbaum (Vocalist) From Trinity College of Music Entertains'
Wednesday 6	'The Sunshine Singers'
Thursday 7	'A Culinary Taste Of Israel' — Germaine Hanstead
Monday 11	'Isabel Beyer & Harvey Dagul Entertain'
Tuesday 12	'Phyllis Boxer & Friends Entertain'
Wednesday 13	'CHANUKAH PREVIEW' — A Musical Entertainment With Susi & Arnold Horwell
Thursday 14	'The Sugarianos' — Jane Marciano & Roberta Sugarman accompanied by Daphne Lewis

Card tables are available all day Mondays to Thursdays

AJR CLUB

15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Sunday, 19th November, 3.30 pm

CONCERT BY THE HENDON STRING ORCHESTRA

Conductor Roy Budden
BACH, MOZART, TCHAIKOVSKY a.o.

Admission (incl. tea): Members 50p
Non-Members £1

The Club is open on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 6 pm for members to meet and talk to old and new friends or play games. Tea and, on weekdays, light suppers are served at nominal charges.

One Sunday a month, there is live entertainment followed by tea, on others video films can be watched in the Margaret Jacoby Room.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2 pm, members may attend the Day Centre entertainment.

Membership fee: £4 p.a.
Guests are welcome.

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INVITATION

TO ALL MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS

The Day Centre would like you to join us at
15 Cleve Road, NW6

FOR OUR FIRST OPEN DAY ON
SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 1989 2.30-5.00 pm

Day Centre Members will entertain you with: Music and Songs — a Keep Fit Display — an Exhibition of their Art Work and Handicrafts

Our Advice Centre Counsellor will be in attendance
Refreshments will be served

Come and get to know us and be our guest on this occasion!

For further information please contact Mrs. S. Matus 328 0208

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, VIENNA NINETEEN-THIRTYSEVEN

Saturday mornings I attended school, Saturday afternoons *shul* — actually youth service at the local *Tempel* — doing so even in midwinter. If I went to synagogue, though snow lay steeply banked along the kerbside and the wind sand-blasted my cheeks, it was less out of religiosity than fear of being found out by *Religionslehrer* Weisskopf; I could ill afford low grades in RI in addition to my other weak subjects.

Besides, returning from synagogue when flaring street lights lightened the crepuscular gloom was a pleasurable experience. Journey's end meant a swift cheering passage from cold to warmth.

Strangely patterned ice flowers grew like lichen on the outside windows; parallel panes separated by bolster-shaped draft extruders kept in the heat

lacked. She had the disdain of someone who knew 'what is what' for airy-fairy culture while he made up little rhymes about *The Elephant of Celebes* (Max Ernst's surrealist painting). She enjoyed fashion chit-chat and coffee house gossip, while he, a lifelong Social Democrat, still mourned the extinction of the Party in the sanguinary events of February 1934.

Today his conversation, as usual, took in art as well as politics. 'A man I know has just come back from a business trip to Bratislava. At a cinema there he saw Chaplin's *Modern Times*. It has a scene — which the censor cut out over here — where Charlie sees a red flag fall off an ice-cream van. He picks it up to run after the ice-cream seller and at that very moment nearby factory gates open and the workers stream out. Seeing



Round the table, with my mother pouring coffee for them, sat uncle Oskar, aunt Elsa and cousin Gerty.

which the slow burning stove suffused throughout our sitting room. Round the table, with my mother pouring coffee for them, sat uncle Oskar, aunt Elsa and cousin Gerty. Gerty had been passing through an 'awkward stage' for months, wallowing, I precociously suspected, in the slough of unrequited love. The conventional explanation for her moods was that she had been enrolled in a dressmaking academy — in Austria, typically even a trade school bore the designation *Akademie* — whereas she had set her heart on attending the Reinhardt Seminar. Oh those 'command performances' where I comprised the audience and Gerty emoted through her audition pieces: Gretchen's Prayer from Goethe's *Faust* and Queen Elizabeth's monologue from Schiller's *Maria Stuart!*

Gerty's parents were in every way each others' antithesis. Aunt Elsa showed a business acumen which uncle Oskar — a university-trained *Ingenieur* employed as a bank teller — singularly

Charlie carry the flag aloft they fall in line behind him and stage a demonstration.'

When coffee was over we gathered round the radio set, all shiny bakelite, which we had at last acquired in place of the old contraption with ear pieces. Each Saturday at half past five Radio Vienna transmitted *Wunschkonzert*, a request programme. Today it had a strong Wagner flavour. After Max Lorenz's Prize Song from *Meistersinger* Franz Völker sang (on record) *Dir Königin der Liebe*, the tenor aria from *Tannhäuser*. The spell of the music was broken when my mother, who was also knowledgeable in these matters, commented that *Staatsopernsänger* Franz Völker had forsaken Vienna for Berlin soon after Hitler's takeover there. As if on cue the announcer introduced the next item: *Selig sind die Verfolgung leiden* (Blessed are those who suffer persecution) from Kienzl's *Evangelimann*. Next came a recording of the Berlin Philharmonic under the baton of Wilhelm Furtwängler. This

prompted uncle Oskar to tell us a joke about the conductor. Wanting to shorten his name the Nazi collaborator Furtwängler offers his first 'r' to Schalom Asch, the Yiddish writer. Working out the ribtickingly rude effect of this 'consonant shift' on both names in my head I laughed like a drain — and felt even more cheered at my uncle's serious follow-up to the joke: Toscanini had slapped Furtwängler's face at Salzburg a few years earlier. All too soon the request programme was over. The visitors left and my mother began to prepare our supper. I meanwhile leafed through the pages of *Die Bühne*, an illustrated theatre weekly to which my uncle and aunt subscribed for Gerty's sake, and which was duly passed on to us. We in turn handed on the copy to Frau Brunner, a Jewish lady living round the corner from us on the council estate.

It used to be my job to take the journal round to Frau Brunner on Monday afternoons in exchange for that day's copy of *Der Morgen*. One Monday in my fourth school year — I had inexplicably escaped relegation at the end of the third — something bizarre happened at the hand-over. The political situation had become very tense and Chancellor Schuschnigg, beset by Nazi pressures from without as well as within, had called on Austrians to make *Österreich* their battle-cry and greeting. Accordingly, when Frau Brunner opened the door to me I shouted *Österreich!* At this she seemed struck dumb with terror. Eventually she recovered sufficiently to hiss, between clenched teeth 'Are you mad? Shouting that — when the neighbours might hear! Don't bother to come here again!'

Strange woman, I thought as I went down the stairs. What is she so scared of? That Saturday I did not go to youth service after school. Both were cancelled — as was the *Wunschkonzert*. Instead the radio broadcast Ward Price's interview with Hitler from Linz, the latter's home town.

R. G.

A LETTER FROM MY AUNT

Everything is much further away now than it used to be. It is twice as far to the corner, and they added a hill, I have noticed.

I have given up running for the bus, it leaves so much faster than it used to. It seems to me that they are making steps steeper than in the old days. Have you noticed how much smaller print they use in the newspapers now?

There is no use in asking anyone to read aloud to me as everyone speaks in such a low voice that I can hardly hear them. The material in clothes is getting so skimpy, especially around the waist and hips.

Even people are changing; they are so much younger than they used to be when I was their age. On the other hand people of my own age are so much older than I am. I ran into an old friend the other day and she had aged so much that she did not even recognise me.

I got to thinking about the poor thing while I was combing my hair this morning and in doing so I glanced at my reflection and — confound it — they do not even make good mirrors like they used to do!

HILDE BABAN