

AJR Information

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December 1991

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Don't miss . . .

No monument stands at Babi Yar p3

Seventh annual Jewish Film Festival p4

The AJR Charity Concert p9

Kindling Chanukah lights

Madrid could either prove the light at the end of the tunnel or the headlight of a Syrian juggernaut. Like Antiochus in Maccabean times Assad of Syria is Israel's inveterate foe. We can but pray that he be worsted by the weapons of diplomacy – a novel form of combat essayed by the Shamir government when, uncharacteristically, it stayed out of the Gulf War – so that the flickering peace process may ignite a true Festival of Lights. The House of Israel needs, and deserves, the blessings of peace. □

Immigrants, nationalists and neo-Nazis

The curate's egg year

Looked at globally the year now drawing to a close resembled the curate's egg in the *Punch* cartoon: it has been good in parts. Surprisingly, one of the better parts has been the Middle East, where positive developments have ranged from the defeat of Saddam via the hostage releases to the opening of the Madrid peace conference.

Beyond the Middle East, in Asia and in Africa, the situation continues to be problematical – with endemic, if localised, civil wars, and the problems engendered by population growth outstripping food supplies. This, in turn, has increased the pressure of political and economic refugees on the countries of the EC. In Europe overall the year brought an irreversible shift towards democracy in Moscow, but this gratifying development has been partly offset by a worrying, almost continent-wide rise in nationalism.

In Britain rising nationalism has taken the relatively innocuous forms of continued government resistance to closer European integration, and tighter scrutiny of asylum seekers. Across the Channel politicians of the centre right are playing the anti-immigrant card,

cynically hoping to benefit from the xenophobia stirred up by Le Pen's National Front. Italy, too, has evinced racist tendencies – both in the official treatment of Albanian refugees and in physical attacks on North African pedlars.

But it is Italy's neighbour Yugoslavia that exemplifies the horrors to which heedless nationalism can lead. Some observers of the current carnage incline to the view that the ferocity – and apparent insolubility – of the Serb-Croat conflict provide retrospective justification for the Tito dictatorship.

Similar arguments are advanced, and not only by nostalgic Communists, on behalf of the now defunct DDR. Seeing instances of neo-Nazi thuggery spread rapidly from East to West Germany in the aftermath of unification, one is tempted to sympathise with this view – but it is profoundly shortsighted.

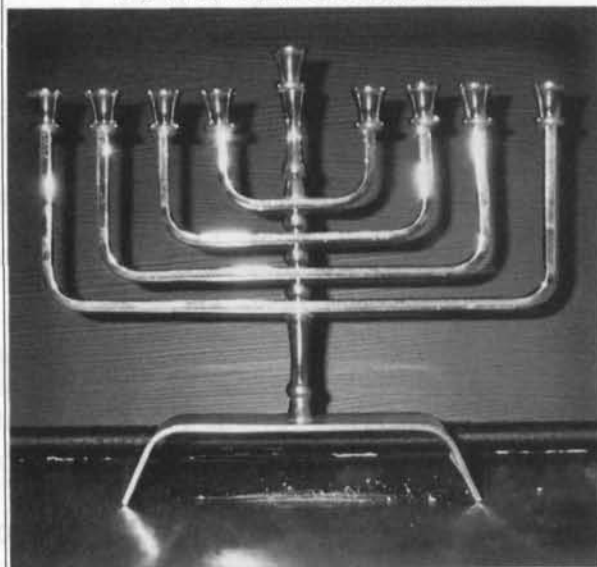
The Ulbricht-Honecker recipe of burying the country's Nazi past in a conspiracy of silence, and dealing with its surviving manifestations among the young by police methods, did not solve the problem; it merely drove it underground where it continued to fester under the surface.

If racism, xenophobia and a belief in Elders of Zion-style conspiracies are today more widespread in Eastern than Western Europe the reason lies in the greater impoverishment of the East. Indigence, of course, breeds envy – but it is not a matter of material poverty alone. For over forty years there has been no real debate about the roots of Nazism in East Germany (or, for that matter, about the roots of antisemitism in Poland).

Look at the contrast in the West: for nearly 400 years, from the Thirty Years War to World War II, France and Germany have hated and fought each other – yet today, in an atmosphere of open debate, they have drawn so close together that they are on the verge of setting up joint armed forces.

Threatening though the German situation appears one short year after the Fall of the Wall, there is reasonable hope that the Bonn government's Europeanism, and economic assistance to *Ossies*, will ultimately make rampaging neo-Nazis appear of no greater political consequence than our own home-grown lager louts.

WE WISH ALL OUR READERS



A HAPPY CHANUKAH

Havel warns Slovaks

President Havel of Czechoslovakia has called for the prosecution of political extremists. He also criticised, in a radio address, nationalist leaders in Slovakia for tolerating fascism and antisemitism. He added that the Slovak political establishment had remained silent on the issue and should now make its position clear. Among examples used by Mr Havel were Slovak nationalists who have threatened to prosecute federalists for 'treason' after they win independence, and those who have desecrated Jewish graves. □

Wiener Library Symposium

The cultural, artistic and economic legacy of the 60,000 plus refugees who came to Britain from Nazi Europe is being forgotten. This is the subject of a symposium to be held at the Wiener Library on Sunday 9 February from 2.00 pm to 6.30 pm. It is feared that a whole area of Jewish history may disappear without trace if no action is taken. If anyone would like to attend please phone the Wiener Library (071-636 7247). Enrolment fee £5. □

Burgheim medal

A non-Jewish German historian and librarian, Mrs Monica Richarz, has received a medal for her outstanding efforts in the field of understanding and cooperation between Jews and non-Jews. The Hedwig Burgheim medal was named after the Jewish headmaster of a school in Giesen who was murdered by the Nazis in 1943. □

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Profile

Un(re)tiring Teacher



Ralph Blumenau.

What could be more quintessentially English than to go on from St Paul's School to Oxford and, after coming down, to teach public school boys in a place suffused by the spectral proximity of Sir Edward Elgar? However, at sixty – when teachers at public schools are put out to grass – Ralph Blumenau did something rather un-English: he retired from the rural charm of the Malvern Hills to a flat in Notting Hill.

On closer acquaintance such wayward conduct becomes explicable. Ralph came to England aged 13 from Cologne, where his father had owned a corsetry factory. After emigration his father re-established the enterprise, first in London and then in Shrewsbury. When Ralph obtained a History degree at Oxford, teaching was not then his first choice of career. A quondam Vice-President of the National Union of Students responsible for liaising with student organisations in recently liberated Europe, he had a yen for work with an international flavour. But despite a stint with UNESCO, such work did not materialise and he thus settled for his other love, that of teaching. After four years at the King's School, Canterbury, he stayed at Malvern for over a quarter of a century, rising to be Head of History and of General Studies.

Expertise in General Studies has stood him in particularly good stead since retirement and the return to London. The youthful sexagenarian became involved in the work of the University of the Third Age. Gradually his work load increased, and during the current session he teaches three disparate courses: History of Art, History of Philosophy, and History of the Jews. The last-mentioned is hugely popular, with weekly attendances of up to 130. (One ought to add that the London U3A, more so than U3A in the provinces, has a very large Jewish membership.) Last year Ralph also taught, under Spiro Institute auspices, a course of Jewish History at Harrow School.

Such voluntary work for the benefit of the wider community – U3A students pay only £22 per year, and all the teaching and administration is unpaid – is part of the Blumenau family tradition. Ralph's father chaired the Otto Schiff House Committee in the early days; his wife, a university-trained ex-social worker, is involved in the work of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

□ R.G.

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No monument stands at Babi Yar

Thus runs the opening line of the poem Yevtushenko wrote in 1961, on the 20th anniversary of the mass killing. He intended a twofold indictment – both of the Nazi perpetrators of the massacre, and the Soviet manipulation of truth about it.

Kremlin policy on Babi Yar had actually been inconsistent. In 1942 Foreign Minister Molotov had reported details of the slaughter of 'mainly Jewish victims' to the Western allies; Ilya Ehrenburg likewise recounted it in his post-war novel *Burja*. All this changed after 1948 when Stalin, reacting to the creation of Israel, launched the 'anti-cosmopolitan' campaign and eliminated the Yiddish intelligentsia. At the same time Babi Yar became, on Kremlin orders, a black hole in the collective Soviet memory.

This conspiracy of silence long outlasted Stalin's death. The limited thaw under Khrushchev enabled the author Victor Nekrasov in 1959 to protest against the authorities' plan to turn the massacre site into a sports ground, and to demand that a monument be erected. There followed Yevtushenko's poem, which gained in impact from the fact that Shostakovich incorporated it into his 13th Symphony.

Undifferentiated victims

Khrushchev hit back by condemning the notion of specific Jewish martyrdom; the party line declared all Soviet dead of World War II undifferentiated victims of German Fascism. The conspiracy of silence was again breached in the mid-sixties. Firstly the writer Anatoli Kusnezov – a child eyewitness of the massacre – published an account of it in the magazine *Junost*, and then Yevtushenko penned another indictment of Soviet antisemitism in the poem *Bratskaja Ges*.

In 1975 the authorities at last erected a memorial to the 33,000 dead of Babi Yar – some distance away from the actual killing ground, and without any mention of the

victims' Jewish identity. The following years saw a resurgence of Ukrainian nationalism, and, mindful of its blood-stained record, local Jews grew apprehensive. However, the leaders of *Rukh*, the newly formed separatist movement, disavowed antisemitism, and even placed some Jews on their list of election candidates.

Commemoration

On 30 September 1991, the 50th anniversary of the massacre, the independent Ukrainian government organised a commemoration at which President Leonid Kravchuk spoke of his countrymen's partial guilt for what happened at Babi Yar. A message from President Gorbachev admitted to 'seeds of antisemitism growing on our Soviet land', and noted that Jews had been the primary victims of Fascism.

The commemoration – apart from being very moving – thus represented a notable 'first'. Even so its importance was undercut by Gorbachev's absence. (Other notable absentees were members of the German and U.S. governments – the former was represented by Bundestag Speaker Rita Süsmuth, the latter by President Bush's brother Jonathan).

How did the commemoration affect Ukrainian Jewry? Half of the estimated 60,000 Jews of Kiev have filed applications to emigrate – the majority of them to Germany. □

Historical record

The *Freie Universität Berlin* is in the process of making a documentary about the fate of Jewish Berliners who were deported to camps.

If you can supply evidence about the fate of relatives, friends or acquaintances who were deported and would be willing to pass this information on in order to aid in the construction of this historical record please contact: Dr Klaus Sühl, Freie Universität Berlin, Zentralinstitut 6, Babelsberger Str. 14-16, 1000 Berlin 31. □

Acting up

As the daughter of Sir Michael, Vanessa Redgrave is a queen of the British stage by right of inheritance. Six feet tall, she could also say, with Goethe, *Vom Vater hab' ich die Statur*. What she could not claim to have inherited is *des Lebens ernstes Führen* (the serious conduct of life) – not least because Sir Michael was hardly in a position to bequeath such a legacy. He had, after all, lent his considerable prestige to the CP-inspired People's Convention of 1940 advocating a negotiated peace with Hitler Germany.

Heir to her father's Thespian gifts, Vanessa has likewise inherited his political blindness. Instances of the latter abound – from her Kalashnikov-hugging war dance in a PLO guerrilla camp to her assertion that the Egyptians lost the Yom Kippur War because of Brezhnev's 'betrayal'.

Vanessa's support for the armed enemies of Israel has given rise to the notion that she is an antisemite. This is only correct in as far as Americophobia subsumes antisemitism – because in ultra-Left demonology Israel is both the tail that wags the U.S. dog (via the Jewish lobby) and the chief running dog of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

In the conventional meaning of the term she can be no antisemite since Marx, and especially Trotsky, are her political deities. She has also supported the revival of Soviet Jewish theatre by arranging the appearance of the Moscow-based *Shalom* troupe at the Lyric, Hammersmith, several years ago. What disappointed theatregoers about the *Shalom* actors, however, was that they spoke far more Russian than Yiddish, and focused entirely on the horrors of Tsarist antisemitism.

There was nothing in the *Shalom* troupe's script about the Doctors' Plot or the persecution of Ida Nudel and Nathan Scharansky. The last-mentioned were, of course, Zionists – so that making them non-persons corresponded perfectly to Vanessa Redgrave's tunnel vision of the world.

□ R.G.

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Reviews

Seventh annual Jewish Film Festival

This year saw the seventh annual Jewish Film Festival at the National Film Theatre. This regular event contains movies from across the widest spectrum of subject matter from Hollywood murder mystery to the Holocaust via graduation projects from film students and documentaries about Jewish life.

Some of the offerings have been rather controversial, whilst others have been downright boring. Each however, has provided a basis for discussion, even argument, and, above all, this festival has provided thousands of film lovers with a great deal of cinematic pleasure.

AJR Information is pleased to offer a selection of reviews from this year's festival:

VOLVO CITY. Britain 1991.

Dir: Roy Ackerman

This 50 minute documentary presents an intimate portrait of the Hassidim of Stamford Hill. The title refers to the large number of Volvo estate motor cars driven by members of the community.

One of the films most striking features is the endemic humour of the Hassidic approach to life. 'Jewish humour' is much vaunted. There are bookshelves full of it. In Stamford Hill the humour is on the streets and in the shops, the schools and the homes of the people. For those outside the community it is an eye-opener to see these mournfully clad orthodox Jews as real people and not merely as stereotypes. This film was subsequently shown on Channel 4 in November.

□ M.N.

THE BURIAL OF THE POTATOES.

Poland 1991. Dir: Jan Jacob Kolsky

The *Burial of the Potatoes*, is alas, an object lesson of how, in a work of the imagination, form and content, instead of cohering, can diverge and fatally undermine the creator's intention. The content of the film deserves the highest praise. It is an essay in Polish *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* which nothing in the postwar German (or French, or any other) cinema can match in its unvarnished truth-telling. Polish peasants are shown, overwhelmingly, as monsters of rapacious land hunger with the libido, and personal hygiene, of barnyard animals; their moral code a vacuum inside a carapace of Catholic piety.

As regards form *The Burial of the Potatoes* exhibits a traditional Polish penchant for rib-nudging symbolism with cooing doves, dewdrops on leaves and tremulous violin strings on the sound track. At the same time, having been made in 1991, the film runs riot with post-Communist permissiveness in scenes of inebriation, madness, defecation and sex, including rape.

All in all a praiseworthy, but self-defeating, enterprise which, to mix metaphors, goes dizzily over the top in its attempt to drill down to the bedrock of evil in the Polish peasant mentality.

□ R.G.

THE GOLEM OF PRINCELET STREET.

Britain 1991. Dir: Brett Turnbull.

The story of this film (previewed in *AJR Information* April 1991) is quite simple. In a modern treatment of the old Yiddish folktale two unlikely friends, an elderly Jewish recluse and a Bangladeshi boy, build a Golem.

The story looks very good on paper and, indeed, had a great deal of potential. However, it is unfortunate that, possibly in an attempt to be regarded as a 'serious' film maker, the director has managed to make a 40 minute film seem hours long by the device of using the absolute minimum of dialogue. The long silences which occur frequently as the action unfolds pictorially, have the distracting effect of giving one plenty of opportunity to wonder what the time is and when the film is finally going to come to a conclusion. When, thankfully, it does the outcome is of little interest. It is difficult to engage with characters who are not allowed to develop.

This is Mr Turnbull's first feature. The

initial idea and storyline suggest that there may be great things in store. Given 20 minutes longer to build and a less 'arty' approach this film could well have been a minor classic.

□ M.N.

THE LAST MARRANOS, **France 1990. Dir: Stan Neumann**

In the small town of Belmonte, north of Lisbon, men, women and children fast on Yom Kippur and bake unleavened bread for Pessach. On Friday nights they light candles. They even joke about the Friday chicken which is presented as converted fish to an inspecting priest. Nevertheless, they also go to Mass, and their dead lie in the churchyard under the Cross.

An Israeli visitor interviewed the inhabitants. Yes, said the *Marranos*, they went to church but prayed to Adonai. And then they imparted to him a fantastic mixture of heresy and folk memory as to what had taken place in Jewish history. Moses and Jesus played a part in this, sometimes as antagonists. It is the women who keep the faith, or rather the customs and garbled memories, alive. There is no rabbi, nor any other Jewish authority.

The film showed the starkness of the landscape which makes for a hard living. The 'Jews' are market traders as well as farmers. The gentiles appeared to be rather puzzled by them, as if they were wayward children. 'They fast a lot', they said. A fat priest was a great deal nastier. He said you could recognise the *Marranos* by their noses, like the distorted paintings of Judas Iscariot in the church. The Jews, for their part, were not exactly afraid, but had the unease *vis-à-vis* 'the others' which we all share.

□ J.R.

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An unduly varied life

Alfred Joachim Fischer: *IN DER NAEHE DER EREIGNISSE*. Transit Berlin. DM 38.-.

The reminiscences of journalist A. J. Fischer extend from the years of the Weimar Republic up to the present day, during which time he visited no less than 55 countries.

Born in Posen Province, the author saw his childhood marred by the hostility of Germans – for whom he was a Jew – and of Poles – for whom he was a German. When, after the First World War, Posen became Polish the family, like most German-Jewish inhabitants, left and settled in Berlin.

At an early age, the author entered journalism as a contributor to papers with the liberal Mosse and Ullstein imprint as well as of the right-wing Scherl company.

In 1933 he left Germany, his first place of refuge being Prague. Among the Czech Jews who helped the new arrivals was Max Brod, of whom Fischer gives a vivid description, and Marie Schmolka.

During his stay in Prague Fischer built up connections with a wide range of newspapers all over Europe which became his regular 'customers', and some of which also helped him in emergencies. This gave him some financial security, though there were periods during which he had a desperate struggle to pay for food and accommodation. He often highlighted the plight of Nazi victims, and never tired of appealing for political and material rescue measures.

His visits to foreign countries began comparatively early, the first destination being Scandinavia. There followed a stay in the Balkans. In Rumania, he interviewed the Queen Mother whose son, King Carol, had a Jewish mistress, Madame Lupescu.

There followed his first visit to Palestine. Every Jew, he writes, whether religious or secular, is bound to be awed when facing the Wailing Wall. His most prominent Jewish interviewee was Arnold Zweig. The *Stavanger Aftenblad* wanted information about Carl von Ossietzky, who, awarded the Nobel Prize, had been forbidden by the Nazis to travel to Oslo for the ceremony. Zweig was able to draw on personal reminiscences of the courageous publicist, formerly a close friend of his. (After the war, Zweig settled in the GDR, where though President of the Academy of Arts, he always refused to sign anti-Israel declarations.) Another *Jecke* who left Palestine was Leopold Jessner. Guest producer of several plays, mainly Shakespeare, he found the language difficulties unsurmountable and died in the United States.

Fischer next went to Turkey which Atatürk had westernised, moving the capital to Ankara. Here, a new university proved a blessing for many scholars who had lost their positions in Germany. The *Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland*, headed by Dr F. Demuth, procured no less than 150 appointments for academics in Turkey in 1933 alone (among them Carl Ebert and Hindemith).

Returning to Prague, Fischer found the outbreak of war imminent. After an adventurous and dangerous flight, he reached London. Here, he had to share the fate of most 'ememy aliens', being first interned in various English makeshift camps, and then shipped to Australia.

In the last chapters Fischer describes his postwar experiences as a knowledgeable interviewer of leading German and Israeli personalities, among them President Heuss, Chancellor Adenauer, Schumacher and Erhard, as well as Ben Gurion and Golda Meir. He pays special tribute to F. G. Duckwitz, wartime German Ambassador to Denmark, who saved Danish Jews from deportation by initiating their clandestine flight to Sweden. His first Austrian interviewee was Kaethe Dorsch, whose intercession with Goering, and even Goebbels, had saved endangered artists and their families.

This book is truly a *document humain*. A 'Child of our Time', Alfred Joachim Fischer has kept alive the upheavals our generation had to witness.

□ Werner Rosenstock

Gender agenda

Richard Grunberger: *OLD ADAM, NEW EVES* (Vision Press 1991 £8.95).

Richard Grunberger's catchy title suggests a linking theme, but it is more an excuse for a collection of lively essays about 25 different women. Some, like Golda Meir, Isadora Duncan, Annie Besant, and Dorothy Parker were famous in their own right. Others like Allelujova Stalin, Jenny Marx and Sonia Tolstoy were merely linked to famous men, but the 25 have nothing in common other than the fact that they were all women and were for one reason or another well-known. Forget about the theme, therefore, and enjoy the writing.

The most formidable figure in the collection is perhaps Golda Meir. She succeeded in a man's world of politics, and in particular the very masculine world of Jewish

politics. Jewish tradition insists that women should be seen and not heard, and preferably not seen either; before the Jewish state emerged there were long arguments among the religious parties whether women could vote, let alone run for office. As Grunberger says 'probably no other woman had to overcome comparable drawbacks of gender, class, culture and, not least, race', but he seems convinced that she was a great Prime Minister. She was not, and Teddy Kollek was right when he described her as a 'dogmatic adherent to obsolete slogans' who 'saw everything in black and white'.

Most of the women in these pages are tragic figures for most were married to artists, and artists make awkward and sometimes impossible husbands. Charlotte and Stefan Zweig died in a suicide pact and so did Cynthia and Arthur Koestler.

Jenny Marx died a natural death, but lived an unnatural life, hounded by the police in Germany and then sharing an attic in Soho with her irascible husband, his mistress, and innumerable sickly children.

Grunberger offers a certain amount of light relief when he turns to Dorothy Parker and he quotes her *bon mots* to good effect. He even comes up with some of his own. The nearest thing Mrs Parker had to a stable relationship was with her second husband Alan Campbell, who was 11 years her junior, and it wasn't all that stable. They eventually divorced and then remarried 'thereby proving' – writes Grunberger – 'that their inability to live apart equalled their incapacity for living together'.

He dwells at length on her Jewishness, but she was only Jewish enough to be paranoid and, for all her wit, she was in fact a rather silly and pathetic little woman. Her life was as unhappy as her prose delightful. But at least she lived to be 74 and died in bed. Which is a happy ending of sorts.

□ Chaim Bermant

Sad screenplay

Bertold Brecht wrote a poem *On The Suicide Of The Refugee WB*, about the last days of Walter Benjamin and his tragic attempt to escape across the mountains to Spain in 1940. The party was arrested by border guards and Benjamin, unable to face capture, killed himself. The shocked guards subsequently released the other members of the party. It was the 50th anniversary of this event last year. The interest generated by this incident has prompted the Spanish to make a movie about Benjamin's last days. □



Letters to the Editor

TREASON OF THE CLERKS

Sir – Not many editors have the integrity to publish criticism of their stance. You seem to be one of these rare birds. But there remains the need to maintain the paper's standards and to ensure that correspondence does not fall too far below the intellectual level of editorial matter.

In the case of the attacks over 'Treason of the Clerks' you seem to have fallen over backwards too readily. The article was intelligently reasoned and deserved better criticism and reasoned dispute than infantile name-calling and sloganising! As small children we had a silly saying 'Your left hand is the one with the thumb on the right'. Why does Maire Sackin feel called upon to defend the Jewish concepts of compassion and justice, and the late NHS, against you? Did I miss something, or is it your guilt by association with the 'right' of her imagination?

Kenton
Harrow

R. J. Braude

Sir – As regards what Maire Sackin terms your vilification of the historian A. J. P. Taylor there are things to be said on both sides.

Some 25 years ago, approximately, he stated in a magazine article that the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in the concentration camps was not deliberate, but the result of sheer ineptness on the part of the Germans running the camps; they simply did not know how to provide sufficient food, medical supplies, and so on. A truly astounding statement subsequently quoted by 'revisionist' historians. I must add that when pressed about these opinions later he did recant, at least partially.

However, balancing this, he wrote in his *English History 1914–1945*: 'Englishmen of all classes and of all parties were offended by the Nazi treatment of the Jews. Jews were treated as badly in other countries, and often worse – in Poland, for example, with whom, nevertheless, Great Britain remained on friendly terms. For that matter, there was a good deal of quiet antisemitism in England.'

A. J. P. Taylor was not in any way anti-semitic: indeed he abhorred all kinds of prejudice. The statements made in the magazine article quoted above arose, in my opinion, from a deeply-rooted tendency to

utter from time to time, sweeping rejections of firmly established opinions – and the more incontrovertible such opinions were, the more he loved to attack them. He was, nonetheless a good historian and, much more important, a decent man.

P.S. The quotation from Emma Lazarus on the front page should read 'yearning to breathe free'.

Sutton
Surrey

Philip C. Moss

BESOTTED?

Sir – A number of readers have accused the Editor of being right-wing, preferring the Sandinistas to the Contras, and have implied both that the Gulf War was unjustified aggression against poor, suffering Iraq, and that the West's nuclear strategy was an act of unmitigated evil.

Firstly, every editor has a right to express opinions irrespective of his readers'. Secondly, the elimination of the Sandinistas from power gave Nicaragua a democratic government. Thirdly, if America and its Allies had not intervened in Kuwait it, and probably other Gulf states, would be occupied by Iraq and bombs would have rained down on Israel. Lastly, it was the West's nuclear policy which prevented World War III by acting as a deterrent, and was ultimately responsible for the collapse of communism, whilst CND was blind to all that.

Come on you merry gentlemen, are you so besotted with Marxism – which at any rate, is now a dead duck?

Wembley
Middlesex

A. Goldsmith

HANS ALBERS

Sir – I always enjoy reading SB's Column.

In this particular instance (to quote the late Dr Joad) it all depends what you mean by 'hard time' and 'protecting his wife'. Far from being 'barred from stage and screen', the blond Hans consistently topped the Nazi Film League Table with the highest salary ahead of stars like Heinrich George and Hans Moser.

It must, however, be stated in fairness that Hans Albers, who with Teutonic subtlety liked to refer to himself as *der liebe Gott*, never genuflected to the Nazi hierarchy and was indeed known to have given Goebbels & Co. 'a hard time'.

As for 'protecting his wife', Hansi Burg, the 'love of his life', spent the Nazi years in England, and rejoined Albers immediately after the war.

Chigwell
Essex

Fred Rosner

THE KREMLIN CHIMES TOLL MIDNIGHT?

Sir – They do indeed. RG's comment is most perceptive. Two minor points: All discriminatory legislation against Jews was abolished shortly after the abdication of the Czar in February 1917, and thus before Lenin's October putsch. Jews were indeed 'disproportionately' represented among the Bolshevik revolutionaries; however, 90 per cent of the population were peasants, and took no part in politics. The revolutionaries were all intellectuals, and the proportion of Jews among the Russian intelligentsia was roughly the same – 20–25 per cent – as among the revolutionaries. The participation of Jews in the Russian revolution therefore offers no cause either for pride or shame. Incidentally, Vera Kaplan, who tried to shoot Lenin, was Jewish, as was Leonid Kannegiesser, who succeeded in killing



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 G. Schmerling

SELLING HITLER

Sir – Your leading article in the August issue, brought A. J. P. Taylor's writings to the attention of those of your readers who may not have read his works. To those who are familiar with Taylor's work, linking him with David Irving and Ernst Nolte, is astonishing, and gives a quite misleading impression of his attitude to Jews.

Taylor deplored the Shoah in moving terms on several occasions, e.g. *From Sarajevo to Potsdam*, page 169, to mention but one.

It is a pity that you mention David Cecil and Alan Bullock in this context, as you appear to be confusing History with Historiography. Anyway, *De mortuis nihil...*! Is it fair, therefore, to 'sell' A. J. P. Taylor short?

Mangotsfield
 Bristol

John Stanleigh

TAKING THE STORY OUT OF HISTORY

Sir – There is no doubt that 20th century Europe has reason to be grateful for the existence of the U.S.A. It is pointless to speculate on the 'ifs' of history, but it could be argued that European history would have been very different but for the discoveries of the New World, and the expansion of the English, French, Dutch and Iberian colonial empires. Overseas possessions caused endless European wars; and Anglo-French rivalry in North America in particular, and its effects on the Seven Years War, may have been responsible for the rise of Prussia – and indirectly that of Hitler.

Deddington
 Oxfordshire

Francis Steiner

LANGUAGE, PLEASE!

Sir – It seems to be that you forget the fact that your readers are all foreign-born, whose mother tongue has not been English.

Being anxious to display your extensive vocabulary, you are in the habit of using words which the majority cannot clearly understand. They, I am sure, would prefer easily comprehensible expressions, though at the same time they are fully aware of your admirable knowledge of the English language.

'El Rosario'
 Marbella, Spain

Walter H. Simpson

SILVER SPOON GIRL

Sir – I think that Thomas Mann got the 1929 Nobel Prize for the novel *The Buddenbrooks*, and not for the *Magic Mountain*.
Colliers Wood
 London SW19
 Antonia Kann

I stand corrected. Although *The Buddenbrooks* had been published twenty-eight – and *The Magic Mountain* only four – years before the award, the Nobel Prize citation referred to the former Ed.

OLD COMRADES

Sir – I am very surprised that the September profile made no mention of Dr Falk's chairmanship of the ex-service (1943) Association where he is of great help to the refugees who served in the British Forces during the 1939–1945 war.

Ilford
 Essex

L. Rayant

Sir – Having just read the October profile, I must add my tribute to Arnold Horwell.

He was Quarter Master Sergeant of 93 Coy Pioneer Corps, when I joined the unit as an 18-year old. Arnold Horwell was always most helpful in every way, and I am sure that all surviving members of 93 Coy remember him with great respect and affection.

Linden Lea
 London N2

F. H. Edwards
 (formerly F. L. Meyer)

COUNTERVAILING FORCE

Sir – When Israeli forces kidnapped Sheikh Obeid, Archbishop Runcie condemned that act, probably seeing in it dangers for the release of Terry Waite. Is it not ironic, that today the fate of Sheikh Obeid and Terry Waite is linked and that it is unlikely that one will be released without the other? Does this not prove that men of violence only understand force?

Somali Road
 London NW2

Ernest Gruenwald

Shadows on the silver screen

Echoes of the last war continue to reverberate through the French cinema. *Uranus*, a major film featuring the mega-star Gerard Depardieu, focuses on still-contentious issues of collaboration and resistance under Nazi occupation. It conveys the message that wartime collaborators and *resistants* were, alike, small minorities; the great majority of the French simply tried to survive as best they could. The bulk of the population, exemplified in the film by Depardieu, may have supported the corrupt Petain regime, but were not themselves corrupted in so doing. The original author of *Uranus*, Marcel Aymé, incurred a charge of collaborationism for having published nonpolitical articles in Nazi-licensed newspapers; more surprisingly, its director is the Jew Claude Berri – of *Jean le Florette* fame – who was himself hidden from the age of ten by an antisemitic farmer in the Vichy-controlled part of France.

Femme fatale

The arrival of *Uranus* in British cinemas coincided with news of the death of Viviane Romance. The near-forgotten name of the *femme fatale* of prewar French movies brings to mind the ignominious role played by many screen idols under the Occupation. Arletty fraternised with Wehrmacht top brass, while Viviane Romance and Danielle Darrieux were much-publicised guests of Goebbels in Berlin; they subsequently gushed over his 'politeness' in speaking French to them.

Such actions could literally be described as gilding a corpse. Romance and Darrieux enacted their sickening charade at the same time as the Nazi genocide machinery swallowed up the incomparable Harry Baur, arguably the greatest character actor of the interwar French cinema.

After the war Viviane Romance escaped the obloquy that befell other real, or alleged, collaborators such as Maurice Chevalier, Sacha Guitry and the ballet dancer Sergei Lifar. In a bizarre reversal of her wartime stance she starred in *Panique*, the film version of a George Simenon story whose hero, an eccentric outsider, falls victim to the aggressive herd instinct of his neighbours. Later she retreated into Catholic piety until dying, half a century after the martyred Harry Baur, in the odour of sanctity.

□ R.G.

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DECEMBER

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- Tuesday 3* Music For You At Chanukah – Lucy White (Violin) and Juliet Davey (Piano)
- Wednesday 4* Connaught Opera – Music For You – Maria Arakie (Soprano) and Glenn Wilson (Baritone) accompanied by Carol Wells (Piano)
- Thursday 5* Susi and Arnold Horwell: 'Richard Tauber – A 100th Birthday Concert' – Preceded by lighting of the Chanukah Candles
- Monday 9* Solo Piano Recital – Debbie O'Brien
- Tuesday 10* Lunch-Time Piano Recital – Steven Neugarten
- Wednesday 11* (a) Theatre Outing
(b) Operetta and musicals – Nina Fogelberg (Soprano) with own piano accompaniment
- Thursday 12* Melody Hour – David Jedwab (Tenor) and Avril Kay (Soprano) accompanied by Rosa Butwick (Piano)
- Monday 16* The Dulcet Tones
- Tuesday 17* Cabaret Francais – Barry Dawson appearing as Henri Duval
- Wednesday 18* The Music of George Gershwin followed by a light classical programme – Paul Audwin-Naser (Piano)
- Thursday 19* An Hour in Winter with Sally Popperwell (Piano) and Joanne Davies (Violin)
- Monday 23* An Afternoon of Music with Doris Samuels and Judith Norman
- Tuesday 24* CLOSED AFTER LUNCH
- Wednesday 25* CLOSED
- Thursday 26* CLOSED

The AJR at Work

Afternoon baton charge



The Metropolitan Police Band at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre.

Photo: Newman.

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre continues to provide a varied menu of daytime entertainment for its members. The wide range of artists and acts was highlighted on Tuesday October 15, when the Metropolitan Police Band made a return visit.

The band, conducted, appropriately, by Mr Duncan Beat, played a rich selection of tunes, from marches to a medley from Rogers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* via golden oldies like Katescher's *Wunderbar*.

The music was complemented by the conductor's affable chat between tunes. It was a very enjoyable afternoon altogether. We all hope that Mr Beat and the Metropolitan Police Band will be able to return again some day. □

BOUQUETS

Sir – As an avid reader of *AJR Information* I send your publication and all AJR members my best wishes for the 50th Anniversary.
Dorchester Court Eva Scott (née Löwenthal) London SE24

Sir – Thank you very much for the Golden Anniversary membership certificate. My husband and I joined the AJR in 1941. It seems like yesterday.

I was most pleased to hear that there is a younger generation joining the AJR so that your good work will continue for many years to come.

Hendon Irene White London NW4

Sir – On behalf of our entire family I should like to thank you for the excellent work you are doing at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. I have watched the Centre go from strength to strength thanks to the help of a really wonderful team.

Going to the Centre has meant so very much to my mother-in-law, she calls it 'my day out'. She hopes she will be able to attend regularly. On the occasion of her 95th birthday I enclose two appreciations, one from her nephew and one from us.

Charlotte Weinberg

DECEMBER

- Monday 30* Me – My Music and You – Linda Roth (Mezzo) accompanied by Norman Sydee (Piano)
- Tuesday 31* CLOSED AFTER LUNCH

JANUARY

- Wednesday 1* CLOSED
- Thursday 2* Youth Takes a Bow – Miriam Arton (Violin) accompanied by Sheila Games (Piano)

Regular voluntary visitors required for two elderly, frail AJR members; one living near Maida Vale W9 and one near Golders Green. Further details from Laura Howe AJR Volunteers' Co-ordinator, 071 483 2536.

The 44th annual charity concert

Once again this year our Association pulled off the remarkable feat – remarkable in view of its half century of existence – of filling the Queen Elizabeth Hall to near-capacity. This was due to some, if still insufficient, extent to the presence of younger people – and some very young (see photograph) – among the concert goers. The Queen Elizabeth Hall's design and somewhat sombre decor do not readily lend themselves to engendering an atmosphere but by the interval inspired performances had interacted with the discerning receptiveness of the audience to produce a positively charged mood – a mood further enhanced by the captivating Smetana piece in the second half. At the end the audience's thunderous applause was rewarded with the playing of an all-too-short encore. The sensation of spiritual uplift among those leaving the hall was palpable; even the most veteran concert goers went out with a lighter step than they had come in. □

Talich Quartet: A musical treat

The concert featured a programme uniquely appropriate to the nature of the audience. The tentative uncertainty with which Mozart's quartet K465 in C opens suggests the nervous unease with which the great composer pays homage to his illustrious mentor Hayden. Did we not all feel something like it as we faced the stern necessity of a new beginning? After the first trepidations Mozart treats us to a purposeful interplay of the outer parts in the second movement, masterly balance of the ensemble in the third, and, in the finale, a superb work-out, first in the minor and then the major key, before the triumphant conclusion. That the work requires delicacy and a studied avoidance of pyrotechnics was superbly well understood by the performers.

Brahms' quartet opus 51 is probably one of the most difficult to interpret convincingly. Crisp, but unobtrusive, pizzicatos on the cello accompany passages in which the upper strings sing their hearts out. Touches of melancholy, irrepressible pessimism and occasionally surging emotions are sternly contained by self-deprecating discipline. The second movement can easily degenerate into shapelessness unless the cello dominates unobtrusively with a broad sweep of noble Brahmsian phrases. In the third movement the Talich Quartet demonstrated that they can be exciting as well as studiously relaxed.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot? Not at the AJR Charity Concert.



Photos: Newman & Angel.



Smetana's quartet No. 1 allowed the performers to really enjoy themselves. The cello has an especially rewarding part, at times simulating a chortling bassoon only to revert to fastidious austerity as it props up the unashamed jollity of the upper strings.

The interpretation of the three works requires a deep insight into the psyche of the period – an insight with which, on this showing, the members of the Talich Quartet are richly endowed. □ *Rudi Lenk*
Members should note that next year's concert will be held on 8 November.

Volunteers' meetings



An AJR volunteer brings a client on a family outing.

On September 5 and October 3 a two-part meeting of voluntary helpers, under the guidance of Laura Howe, took place at Hannah Karminski House. The atmosphere was, as usual, warm and relaxed.

Two notable conclusions were reached through these meetings. The first was that even those amongst us with 50 years of welfare service experience still had something to learn from every new client. The second came as an answer to the question 'What is a carer?'. The simple reply: Someone who cares, who can offer a listening ear, a friendly touch and a willingness to help others.

The advantages of doing this kind of work through an organisation like the AJR are manifold. For the clients, of course, there is always someone on hand, even if their regular visitor falls ill. For the volunteers there is the sense of belonging and a camaraderie which grows from the knowledge that we are all working together.

□ *Irene White*

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FAMILY EVENTS

Golden Wedding

Busse Micky and Gunter Busse are celebrating their Golden Wedding on 5 December, and send warmest greetings to their many friends.

Ruby Wedding

Lawrence On 25 November 1991, Martin and Trudy Lawrence of 2 Marlborough Avenue, Edgware, Middx, HA8 8UH, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

Deaths

Carmichael Gerda Carmichael (nee Lebach) of Sherriff Road, West Hampstead, died 21 October after a long spell of ill health. Her many friends and her two cousins, Ilse Dessau and Ursula Feingold were greatly relieved when, finally, her suffering came to an end.

Bloch-Scherbak Anne Bloch-Scherbak died on 2 November 1991, at Leo Baeck House peacefully after a long illness.

Breuer Eva Breuer passed away at Heinrich Stahl House on 21 October 1991. Sadly mourned by her nieces, nephews, relatives and friends. May she rest in peace. Shalom.

Liebeck Lisa Liebeck died suddenly on 29 October 1991. Sadly mourned and missed by all her family and many friends.

Norman Betty Norman (Nee Avram), of 32 Barnard Hill, Muswell Hill, London N10, passed away on 30 October 1991, after a

long illness bravely borne. Her fighting spirit for her beliefs inspired respect throughout the community. She was a loving mother to her sons Harold, David and Alan and a tireless carer for many less fortunate, but deserving people. She was always generous to others, even if she went without herself. Her wise counsel and good humour will be missed by all who knew her. May her dear soul rest in peace now she is reunited with George Nathan. Shalom.

Pick Alice (Lisl) Pick died, aged 83, on 6 October 1991. Sadly missed and warmly remembered by her many friends.

Tombstone Consecration

Valfer The memorial stone for Jacques Valfer, who died on 30 November 1990, was consecrated on 3 November 1991 at Western cemetery, Cheshunt. Shalom.

Personal

Middle-aged lady, healthy and cheerful, seeks similar companion to share holidays. Each to pay own expenses: Box No. 1210.

In London, 45 years ago, I married a Viennese Waltz - her name is Kitty. We have been dancing happily together ever since. Greetings to all our good friends, from Toronto, Canada. The Schafers.

Continental lady young early 80's, living in Chelsea, would like to meet female friend in neighbourhood for an occasional chat and coffee. Please reply, including telephone number, to Box No. 1211.

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Leo Baeck (London) Lodges Open Meeting in December, visitors welcome. Wednesday 18 December, at 11 Fitzjohn's Avenue, NW3, Mrs Evelyn Freedländer speaks on 'Remnants of Jewish Village Life in Germany' with slides.

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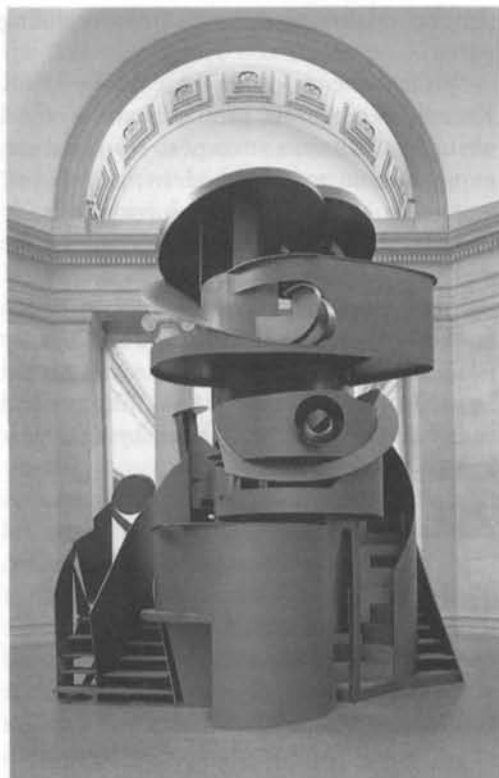
Sir Anthony Caro's major exhibition *Sculpture towards Architecture* at the Tate Gallery (until 26 January 1992), must not be missed, especially the colossal steel tower with its many entrances, stairs and sequences of spaces. After her own Caro exhibition Annelly Juda will be showing works by Nathan Cohen and Christine Hatt. Cohen, born in London in 1962, has already exhibited widely, including an exhibition at Annelly Juda in 1988.

Fornasetti: Designer of Dreams is at the Victoria and Albert Museum (until 19 January 1992). Piero Fornasetti was a prolific draughtsman and designer, heavily influenced by the Surrealist movement. The exhibition includes both drawings and a vast range of objects, including umbrella stands, lamps, chairs, cabinets, screens, trays and plates. Libertys of Regent Street are showing a range of merchandise embellished with Fornasetti's well-known images: furniture, fabrics, silks, shirts, scarves, ceramics and even a bicycle.

The Kalman Kemeny exhibition at the Ben Uri was a rare treat, including the presence of the 95-year old artist at the opening. The exhibition not only included his portraits in oil, and views of Hampstead Heath, but also a wide range of flower paintings. It is being followed by *Scenes from the Holy Land* (until 22 December) which include works from the Society's own collection by David Bomberg, Mane Katz, Amy Drukker and Maurice Sochachewsky, as well as recent works by Judith Yellin-Gillat and Nata Kaplan. Three contemporary artists, Hava Intrato-Barak, Judy Bermant and Helen Keats, will also be represented.

The Collecting the 20th Century exhibition at the British Museum (until 16 February 1992) is well worth a visit because of the wide variety and excellence of the objects exhibited. I was particularly thrilled to see the silverware made by Bruckmann in my home town of Heilbronn. A fascinating catalogue, edited by Frances Carey is available (price £4.95). Also at the British Museum is *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture from Augustine to Alfred 600-900*. (until 8 March 1992).

Of high topicality is Jock McFadyen's *Fragments from Berlin* at the Imperial War Museum (until 12 January 1992). McFadyen was commissioned by the Artistic Records Committee of the Imperial War Museum in 1990 to produce work in Berlin



Anthony Caro: *Octagon Tower/Tower of Discovery*, 1991. (Picture courtesy of Annelly Juda Fine Art, London).

since the dismantling of the Wall. He spent most of his time exploring the newly opened eastern sector of the city and the large swathe of wasteland once occupied by the Wall. The exhibition consists of oils, gouaches and two processional sculptures. Also at the Imperial War Museum is

Anne Frank at Belsize Square

Adignified and moving ceremony at Belsize Square Synagogue early in November inaugurated the month-long *Anne Frank in the world* exhibition. There was standing room only in the spacious synagogue hall when Cornelius Suijk, International Director of the Anne Frank Foundation, Amsterdam, rose to speak. He recalled his youth in the interwar Netherlands, a society untainted by anti-semitism, in which, however, Catholics and divergent Protestant sects practised intra-Christian apartheid.

Speaking of war and occupation Mr Suijk made a special point of emphasising that Dutch volunteers assisted the Gestapo round-up of Jews; by the same token some Austrians (whose compatriots staffed the Nazi genocide machinery in the Netherlands) behaved decently. To back up his appeal for rigorous avoidance of national stereotyping he quoted Otto Frank; Anne's father had personally confessed to him that

Richard Eurich: *From Dunkirk to D-Day* (until 12 January 1992). Eurich, now aged 88, is a senior Academician and the exhibition shows how well he rose to the occasion in depicting this traumatic period. His largest Dunkirk picture is in the grand manner – a highpoint panoramic view spreading out over the port, the beaches with their little boats, and the great plume of smoke overall.

Richard Ziegler: Pastels and Drawings 1922-35 are at Runkel-Hue Williams (until 11 January). The October Gallery is showing Susanne Kessler's *The Carousel of Forms: Constructions and Drawings* (until 14 December). With the support of the Goethe Institute, London. Susanne Kessler was born in Wuppertal in 1955, and now works there and in Rome. Her first construction *Karussell* was built in 1987, investing her painting with volume and movement. The observer is in the middle of the shapes as soon as he or she enters the room. The Camden Arts Centre is showing sculpture installations by Kathy Prendergast (until 22 December).

Leonora Carrington, a Surrealist painter, was born in Lancashire in 1917 and met Max Ernst in 1937. She lived with him in the south of France until the outbreak of war, and in 1941 she settled in Mexico. The first major retrospective exhibition of her work is at the Serpentine Gallery (until 26 January 1992). □

he altered one of the Diary entries so that it read 'these' Germans instead of 'the' Germans *tout court*.

The other main speaker, Miep Gies, had known Otto Frank even better. His secretary in happier times she had throughout the occupation acted as one of the lifelines to the family holed up in the attic of 263 Prinsengracht. After their deportation she had hidden Anne's diary until she could return it to Otto. Now in her mid-eighties she related poignant personal reminiscences of little Anne's reactions to life in the attic. The applause that greeted Miep Gies showed the audience's awareness of being in the presence of a veritable saint.

Belsize Square Synagogue – whose 'founder' Rabbi Dr Georg Salzberger had earlier numbered Otto Frank among his Frankfurt congregants – are to be congratulated on staging the exhibition and arranging a series of related events throughout November. □

SB's Column

SB is on holiday; his column will appear again in the January 1992 issue. □

Idol words

There are public events which are tragedies pure and simple – and others which, though equally tragic, have overtones of macabre verbal farce. Thus the Tienanmen Square massacre occurred in the City of Heavenly Peace, and some of the bloodiest fighting between Serbs and Croats took place on a stretch of motorway called the Highway of Brotherhood. The body count on both occasions was – by the standards of our century – actually quite low; what was huge was the mismatch of language and reality.

The world should, however, have become accustomed to this sort of thing in the decades since 1917. The very name of the state Lenin created – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – was a fourfold lie. Union is a *voluntary* association, Soviet means an *elected* council, Socialist signifies concern with people's *welfare* and Republic

denotes absence of a traditional ruling *caste*.

Within twenty years of coining USSR Kremlin double-talk proliferated into total absurdity. Britain's attempt to stop German expansionism was dubbed an 'imperialist' war – but when Hitler, having already swallowed half Europe, attacked Russia the war became 'just' overnight.

Victory did not narrow the gap between Soviet language and reality. The country possessing the largest army in the world headed the self-styled Peace Camp, and called client states held down by that very army 'People's Democracies'.

While Russia boasted a Party *nomenklatura* enjoying unrivalled privileges and spent a huge proportion of its GNP on arms, it portrayed the West as saddled with a ruling class serving the interests of the 'military-industrial complex'.

Not since the religious wars had the world been treated to such verbal displays of hypocrisy. And yet hypocrisy has some-

thing positive about it, since it is, in the words of the proverb, the tribute vice pays to virtue. Hitler, Stalin's unidentical twin, did not even pay a lying tribute to virtue. To show that he meant to turn the clock back he substituted archaic terms like *Sippe* and *Gau* for family and province; training academies became *Ordensburgen*. As an earnest of his detestation of democracy he abolished the terms *Republik* and *Präsident*. He never softpedalled his Judeophobia.

Almost as crucially, he did not rein in his hatred of Slav 'subhumans' when to do so would have gained him Russian allies during the war.

Whether this was an expression of consistency or of purblind hubris is a moot point.

Another question that will probably never be resolved is which of the true monstrous twins – the dissembling Stalin or the blunt Hitler – was the greater villain.

□ R.G.

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Garbo's Galician 'partner'

Probably every reader of *AJR Information* remembers *Ninotschka*. And besides the unforgettable Garbo our reader is bound to remember the three incompetent commissars played by wonderful Central European actors Sig Ruman, Felix Bressart and Alexander Granach.

The last mentioned was born Yeshaya Gronach in Werbowitz, Galicia, one of the eight children of a baker who went bankrupt. As a child of ten he carried huge sacks of flour on his shoulders resulting in bent legs – which years later, in Berlin, he had broken and re-set so that he might play Hamlet. The operation, paid for by a German admirer, was not entirely successful. Nor am I sure that he ever played Hamlet since it is never mentioned in the lists of his many great roles.

But in 1933 he took over Mephisto from Gründgens at the Deutsche Theater – not bad for an ex-baker's apprentice, porter, brothel bouncer, coffin polisher from the depths of the Pale, whose mother tongue was Yiddish and who had no more than elementary education in one of Baron Hirsch's schools and in the *Heder*. When he was fired that same year from the Prussian State Theatres he won an action against the state for illegal dismissal – as a Jew! – and received his wages for the duration of the existing contract. This was typical of Granach, a man totally without fear.

He never looked much like an actor – he was rather squat and very powerfully built. But he had a wonderful voice, capable of great variety, and a face variously described as 'manly', 'wild', 'expressive', 'a boxer's'. Women adored him, but men also admired him. Only antisemites feared him.

At the age of 16, speaking Yiddish, Polish, and some Ukrainian he got himself to Berlin, determined to become an actor. He was an anarchist and had already led a bakers' strike in Lemberg. He read voraciously and worshipped Gorki, who had also once been a baker. He succeeded in becoming the only scholarship student of his year at Reinhardt's school. Director of the school was Berthold Held, an 'anti-semitic Jew' whom he despised. At nights he worked, first as a baker and later as a coffin polisher. He ate at the cookery school of the Jewish Community, where one got two meals a day for 10 Marks a month. He had no great opinion of many of the actors at the Royal Theatres who 'talked and walked artificially, like no-one ever does'.

When war broke out he volunteered for the Austrian army, was taken prisoner by the Italians and escaped. Returning to Galicia after the war, he joined one of the Jewish self-defence units against the pogroms of Petljura. Later he went to Vienna, playing a season with Moissi. Here he first met Elizabeth Bergner, whose career he advanced greatly. Next he spent two years in Munich with Hermine Körner, where he played his first Shylock. He was still only 29.

From 1921–33 he was in Berlin, one of the outstanding actors of the expressionist theatre, creating roles for Brecht, Toller, Kaiser and Sternheim. In 1931 he took a tour of Kaiser's *Von Morgen bis Mitternacht*, in Yiddish(!) to the U.S. Sadly, I cannot discover any reactions of the Jewish-American theatregoers to whom this must have been a bit of a shock after their usual *Yiddl with a fiddle* fare. He also appeared in various films, including Pabst's *Kameradschaft*.

Forced to leave Germany in 1933 he went to Poland and gave the first performance of *Professor Mamlock* (in Yiddish), which he toured with his own troupe. 1935 found him in the U.S.S.R. as Director of the Jewish National Theatre in Kiev. He also gave recitals, in German, with Carola Neher, one of Brecht's best-known actresses. In November 1937 both of them were arrested. Neher was never heard of again. What seems to have saved Granach was the KGB's discovery of a letter from Lion Feuchtwanger – who stood high in Stalin's favour at the time – in the actor's possession.

Next – again with Feuchtwanger's help – he was in Zürich, playing his last German language roles which included Shylock and Macbeth.

From there he went to New York, first playing Yiddish theatre – and finally to Hollywood where he appeared in supporting parts in quite a number of films. Apart from *Ninotschka* he had important roles in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Hangmen also Die* and *The Seventh Cross*. In 1945 he underwent an operation for appendicitis in New York from which he died, still only 55.

□ Heinz Bernard

The Brown Danube

The Penguin Dictionary of Literature lists 14 Jews out of a total of 32 Austrian entries, and the proportion among Nobel Prize winners is probably similar. Hermann Wittgenstein founded the Austrian metallurgical industry. Jews figured prominently in the 'Viennese Schools' – whether of 19th Century Economics, *Fin de Siecle* Music, or 20th Century Philosophy. Psychoanalysis, Austrian Social Democracy and the Salzburg Festival were, largely, of Jewish provenance.

On the other hand (*pace* The Independent, 25 October), 50 per cent of today's Austrians think the Jews wholly or partly to blame for their persecution throughout history, 19 per cent want Austria to be *judenrein*, and 31 per cent prefer not to have Jews as neighbours.

One could, I suppose, take comfort from the fact that the proportion of Austrians averse to having East European or Turkish neighbours even exceeds that percentage!

By coincidence this X-ray picture of Austrian xenophobia appeared just after the announcement of the 1991 Booker Prize award. The winner, a Nigerian, had shared the shortlist with two Irishmen, one Hong Kong Chinese, one Indian and one Englishman (Martin Amis). We are, of course, all creatures of history. Just as Victorian Britain had colonised Ireland, Nigeria, Hong Kong and India, so Maria Theresa's Austria had occupied the East European countries – Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland – from which most contemporary immigrants into Austria originate.

Not only do the Austrians of today refuse to honour the bill history presents them with; true to the self-mystification of the Anschluss years they deny their own part-East European roots. After all, the most bloodstained Austrian SS murderer was one Odilo Globocnik, while Mirko Jelusich headed the *gleichgeschaltete* Burgtheater.

But there is worse – or better – to come. Josef Haydn was of Croat, Franz Lehár of Hungarian, and the playwright Nestroy of Polish ancestry. As for Mozart, he was so lacking in 'national consciousness' that he collaborated with the (baptised) Jew Da Ponte, featured Albanians in *Così fan Tutte* and composed a Turkish March.

All this, however, pales into virtual insignificance besides one key fact: Mr Austria himself, the 'waltz king' Johann Strauss, was – according to Nazi-decreed assiduous *Ahnenschnüffelei* in the parish records of St Stephen's, Vienna – neither Austrian or Aryan, but a Hungarian Jew. □ R.G.

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VERSE AND WORSE

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In nightmare caverns of her mind

GERMAINE GREER

Amazon queen of academe
Whom hormones so preoccupied
That they usurped her erstwhile theme
Of rights to womankind denied

The black box

For half a century it rested, sealed
at the bottom of my Viennese trunk.
I lift the small casket onto my desk,
afraid to open the lid, to disturb my sleepers
with the yellow rustle of paper sheets.

I pick up one of father's letters
his strong German cursive
reflects his blue commanding eye:
Remember your Jewish upbringing and
keep the Laws.

Mother's soft rounded hand
strokes her daughter's cheek.
Her dark eyes plead
Let not our fate darken your young life.

The cycle of letters tracks their flight.

I shuffle dead sheaves
my eyes blur the last, the Red Cross notice:
Shot by the German Occupying Forces
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Day and Hour not recorded.

□ F. Stang

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Fraenkel Prize

The Wiener Library in London is pleased to
announce that the Fraenkel Prize in Con-
temporary History for 1991 has been
awarded as follows:

Mark Levene, Great Britain, was
awarded the prize open to all entrants for
his work 'War, Jews and the New Europe: A
Study of the Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf,
1914–1919' and Angela Schwarz, Ger-
many, was awarded the prize for entrants
under 30 for *Die Reise ins Dritte Reich.
Britische Augenzeugen im national-
sozialistischen Deutschland (1933–1939)*.

In 1992 there will again be two distinct
Fraenkel Prize awards, both for unpub-
lished works in the field of contemporary
European history, one of \$5,000, open to all
entrants and one of \$3,000, open only to
those under 30. Candidates should specify
for which of the two prizes they are
competing. For more details, please write
to the Administrative Secretary, Wiener
Library, 4 Devonshire Street, London
W1N 2BH. □

Outback Nazis

Two men living in Adelaide, Australia, have
been charged with the murder of 226 people
in the Ukraine in 1942. Both are Australian
citizens, believed to have emigrated after the
war. Three people have been charged since
the War Crimes Act was passed two years
ago, permitting retrospective prosecution
for war crimes committed in Europe.

The authorities have been investigating
more than 600 cases brought against Aus-
tralian citizens. They say at least 12 are
likely to lead to prosecutions. □

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The onward march of mameloschen

The media-assisted diffusion of Yiddish
through the Anglo-Saxon consciousness
continues unabated, with three instances
recorded in the space of a few September
days. A 'commentary' piece in The Guard-
ian bore the heading *Chutzpah restrained*,
while The Independent's drama critic, in a
review, wrote about 'a group of spiritless
nebbishes with banal fears and frustra-
tions'. Interestingly enough, though the
review started with a quote from Leo
Rosten's *Joys of Yiddish*, no dictionary
definition of *nebbish* was given.

The pitfalls faced by non-native users of
Yiddish surfaced in another Guardian item
that described a *thudnik* (*sic*) as a *nudnik* –
fool – with a PhD. Not only had the writer
got the exact connotation of the term wrong
– in Yiddish *nudnik* means bore, or nuis-
ance, and *nar* means fool – but *phudnik* had
become *thudnik* by an error in trans-
mission. (That error conforms to a vener-
able cockney tradition exemplified by the
alliterative phrase 'firty-fousand fevers on
a frush's froat'.) □



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Mozart's maverick wordsmith

Emanuele Conegliano was born in 1749 in the ghetto of the provincial Venetian township of Ceneda, the son of the Jewish leather merchant Geremia Conegliano and his wife Rahel Pincherle. When Geremia was widowed he converted, together with his three sons, to pave the way for a second marriage outside the Jewish faith. Fourteen-year old Emanuele was not only baptized, but earmarked for Catholic priesthood. He was given the opportunity of an extensive classical education by the generous local bishop, Lorenzo Da Ponte, who had recognized his new godson's exceptional talents and had, as was customary, conferred his own name on him.

Soon the gifted young trainee *abbate* was blossoming out in a variety of directions which were to prove significant for the rest of his long and turbulent life. He acquired a profound knowledge of Italian and antique literature, and became a highly respected teacher of classics while still in his teens. However, even this early, the satirical thrust of his writing became apparent, and not even his episcopal protector could prevent Da Ponte's eventual expulsion from the Venetian republic for undermining State authority (as well as for adultery). We next find him in Prague, and then Vienna.

Here it was the 'flop' of his libretto *Il ricco d'un giorno* for court composer Salieri that paved the way for his collaboration with the 'second choice' Mozart. Had it not been for Da Ponte's persuasive skills vis-à-vis Emperor Joseph II Mozart may never have achieved his decisive break-through with *Figaro*. After Emanuel Schikaneder's attempt to stage Beaumarchais' play in Vienna had received the Imperial veto, Da Ponte succeeded in convincing Joseph II that he had watered down its revolutionary undertones. For example, Figaro's lengthy monologue in the play, berating the nobility in general, and the Count with his claim to *jus primae noctis* in particular, is cut down in the opera to the brief and highly effective, but hardly rebel-rousing, cavatine *Se vuol ballare, signor contino*.

Such a modified version must have surely suited an emperor who aimed to curtail aristocratic privilege. Be that as it may, in the last analysis it was Mozart's music which carried the day and overcame any remaining Imperial misgivings.

Later Da Ponte informed Joseph II that he was working on three opera librettos simultaneously: *Don Giovanni* for Mozart, *Diana's Tree* for Martin y Solar, and *Tarar*

Obituaries

Professor Georg Schwarzenberger

Georg Schwarzenberger, formerly Professor of International Law at London University, has died, aged 83.

He was born in Germany on 20 May 1908, and educated at Tübingen University; he took a doctorate at London University in 1936. He had left Germany two years earlier; his fears of a resurgence of Nazism informed his approach to international relations for the rest of his life.

In 1938, when Schwarzenberger was appointed a lecturer at University College, London, international law was neglected. He revolutionised the teaching of the subject and helped create one of the best law departments in the world.

Best known for his book *Power Politics* (1941), he showed unflinching realism and contempt for empty moral gestures. At a conference during the Vietnam war, on seeing some American delegates burning their country's flag, he remarked: 'OK, you're burning the flag, but would you be willing to tear up your passports and the benefits they confer?' The protestors desisted.

Professor Schwarzenberger was called to the bar at Gray's Inn in 1955, but never practised. He held many appointments, culminating in the Deanship of the Faculty of Laws between 1965 and 1967 and the Chair of International Law from 1962 to 1975. □

for Salieri. He explained that, to avoid confusion, he worked on *Don Giovanni* at night, with Dante's *Inferno* in mind, on Solar's opera during the morning, with Petrarch at his elbow, and found inspiration for Salieri's work through Tarquato Tasso in the evening; *se no vero, ben trovato*.

Later still, after running bookshops and theatrical canteens in London and New York, teaching Italian at an American college, devoting some effort to distilling *Schnaps* and, last but not least, helping to launch the first New York Opera House, the nonagenarian Da Ponte recorded what he considered the more memorable episodes of his long and varied career in an autobiography. Throughout one detects a strong element of self-glorifying embroidery but the author of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte* may be forgiven if he did not confine his own life story to merely factual events.

However, when Da Ponte devotes far

Harry Petzal

Harry Petzal left Germany with absolutely nothing in the 1930s and carved out a successful career in the metal stockholding industry in his adopted country, at one time giving employment to some 80 people.

His liberal, compassionate and optimistic philosophy of life was largely formed by his education in the Odenwaldschule in Germany. Later he studied metallurgy. He escaped from Germany in 1939.

As soon as he reached England he joined the Pioneer Corps. Because of his specialised metallurgical knowledge he was later allocated to run a heat treatment factory under the Direction of Labour regulations.

After the war Harry joined an existing metal trader, starting his own company, The Atlantic Metal Co Ltd. in 1952. He and his company built a reputation for high standards combined with entrepreneurial flair. He was still enjoying his work at the age of 82 years, and had become a legend in his lifetime in the aluminium industry, where he was regarded with great respect and affection. Although his health had been impaired for some years he made little of the constraints it placed upon him, and always gave an impression of fitness and irrepressible cheerfulness. He died suddenly on 14 September 1991 in San Diego, California. He was much loved by his family and world-wide circle of friends, all of whom miss him deeply. □

more space in his autobiography to his notorious friend Giacomo Casanova than to his collaboration with Mozart, one does receive an eloquent indication of the intellectual level of its author.

□ Frederick W. Rosner

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Autumn leaves from a Berlin diary

Thursday third October. A year ago to the day the two halves of Germany became one again.

For us it is the start of the Jewish component of our stay. We visit the Weisensee cemetery, reputedly the largest of its kind in Europe. It is my first visit in 56 years and a moving experience. Apparently the cemetery was not desecrated during Kristallnacht, but wartime bombs and the ravages of time have taken their toll. The authorities are now, thanks to the effort of Rudi Leavor and others, beginning to restore it. It must be herculean task. At the moment most of the cemetery still looks like jungle, taken back by nature; a forest of tall trees, some of which have shot up from the burial mounds, with thick undergrowth everywhere. Some of the family mausoleums of the pre-Nazi upper bourgeoisie are still recognisable, even in their tumble-down state. With considerable difficulty we find our mother's grave (she died in 1935), and in quite a different part of the forest from that of my paternal grandparents. We

meet quite a few visitors, but nobody else looks ancient or patently Jewish. The cemetery obviously has an attraction for young Germans. The street leading up to the main gate is now called Herbert Baumstrasse, commemorating the leader of a small Jewish resistance group all of whom were caught and killed. We are told that the Gestapo 'tactfully' never arrested Jews near the cemetery, but lay in wait for them at the far end of the street for subsequent deportation.

In the evening we visit the famous cabaret *Die Distel*. In one sketch a woman judge has to decide to whom a house really belongs. The first claimant actually lives there; the second was turned out some time ago because her husband fell foul of the regime; the third one lived there until the communist take-over. Finally an old man appears wearing a *yarmulka*. The curtain falls and we are not told the outcome of the solomonic judgment.

A motley crowd

Friday. We assemble early at the Information Centre for a three hour guided minibus ride with the emphasis on places of specific Jewish interest. We are a motley crowd of elderly ex-Berliners from Australia, Israel, the U.S.A. and South America. Our guide is a young German with an astonishingly detailed knowledge of German-Jewish history and religious lore. We stop at the Great Synagogue in The Oranienburger Strasse, now in the process of being splendidly restored, but not yet open for worship. Our next stop is in the Grosse Hamburger Strasse to look at a gaunt building which used to be one of Berlin's main Jewish schools. Across the road was Berlin's oldest Jewish cemetery, turned by the Nazis into a football pitch. All that now remains are a few fragments of headstones scattered about and a memorial plaque to Moses Mendelsohn. But what moves us more than anything else seen on our tour, is a haunting sculpture consisting of a number

Upward revision

The number of Jews in Hungary has long been estimated at around 80,000. According to Gustav Zoltai, President of the community, it is about twice as large. His calculation is based on the example of Szeged, which had been assumed to have 400 Jews; when, after the democratic revolution, the authorities distributed application forms for restitution a thousand applicants came forward. □

of small Lowry-like figures, grouped apprehensively together. This was one of the assembly points during the war where Jews, selected by the Jewish authority, reported for deportation. The sight rekindles the whole controversy about this tragic issue, and the bitter arguments raised by Hannah Arendt and others.

In the evening a young lady comes to interview me. She is researching the history of Jews who lived in the East Berlin suburb of Treptow, preparatory to an exhibition to be staged next year at the local town hall. At my time few Jews were living in this unfashionable petit bourgeois suburb: The girl is Jewish herself, daughter of a communist couple who fled to the Soviet Union in '33, and whose father subsequently disappeared in some Gulag. She and her mother had returned to Berlin after the war. I was the first Treptower she had ever met. All I could really promise her was a picture postcard of Hindenburg and myself, he in the full hardware of an imperial Field Marshal, and I dressed in the heavy ceremonial garb of a fraternity student. The occasion was a grand *Staatsakt* in March 1933 at the Opera House, with Hitler and his whole cabinet in attendance. All the student fraternities of the University had been requested to send representatives including, by some administrative bungle, our German-Jewish duelling fraternity (K.C.). At the conclusion we students formed a double line of honour across the Unter Den Linden, through which the whole gang slowly passed. My interviewer was suitably impressed when I told her that I was less than 2 ft. away from the *Fuehrer*. A Mills bomb in my hand, I said, would have saved the world no end of trouble.

□ Ronald Stent

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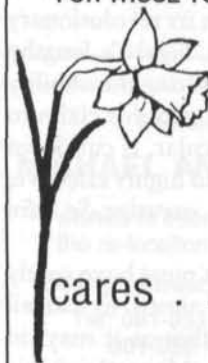
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