

AJR Information

Volume XLVI No. 5
May 1991

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

**Giving hypocrisy
a bad name p3**

**Heirlooms of
stone p5**

**Annual report
p8/9**

The Annual Report

The AJR's manifold activities in 1990 are summarised on the centre pages of this issue. Their perusal will show that it had been a year of much-needed and expanding work. Reading the report will give you a clearer grasp of what we are about—and having done so, please come along to the AGM to acquaint the executive with your opinions and feelings. Like any other association of individuals AJR can only be as effective as its individual members make it.

The spectre haunting Eastern Europe

Democracy in their gunsights

A hundred years ago August Bebel called antisemitism 'the socialism of fools'. What he meant was that many proletarians blamed their economic misery on the Jews instead of attributing it to the social transformation wrought by the advent of capitalism.

A century later, the proletariat having meanwhile disappeared, a new formulation for Jew-hatred appears called for. Today, with the poisonous Protocols of the Elders of Zion enjoying a vogue in two large areas hitherto cut off from democracy—the Islamic world and Eastern Europe—antisemitism could be redefined as the authoritarianism of knaves.

Islamic Jew-hatred as a by-product of the Arab-Israeli conflict lost its life-threatening virulence with Saddam's defeat, but the situation in Eastern Europe, and especially the Soviet Union, causes deep anxiety. In the state born to the strains of the Internationale plans are afoot to publish *The*

Protocols in the Red Army's Journal of Military History. The journal's editor, Major-General Filatov is a spokesman for the military lobby grimly flexing its muscles to reverse the entire post-Brezhnev trend of Soviet history. Filatov was in Baghdad just prior to the 100 Hours' War predicting Iraqi successes; equally memorable Filatovisms are his depictions of Edvard Shevardnaze as 'speaking broken Russian', and of Boris Yeltsin as 'half-peasant'.

These denigrations combine Russian xenophobia against a Georgian with Stalinist venom against liberal reformers. Antisemitism, Slavophilia, Stalinism—the entire mindset needed to lead Russia back into the Dark Ages is displayed in the outlook of this representative Red Army brasshat. Filatov-type blimps, Party aparachiks, KGB men and Pamyat activists are all working for the advent of the latterday Ivan the Terrible required to reimpose order on a country they see dissolving in a deluge of reform.

In their scenario the Jew is a germ carrier of everything that is un-Russian, from cosmopolitanism through private enterprise to parliamentary democracy. The onslaught against the Jews may, or may not, culminate in pogroms; if it does the even greater casualty than Jewish lives will be Russian democracy.

In the states bordering the Soviet Union, too, antisemitism is the cudgel authoritarians use, not so much to kill the few remaining Jews as to stifle democracy. In Warsaw Lech Walesa and Cardinal Glemp have conjured up the image of the Jew as, respectively, alien to the Nation and the Catholic Faith—the one to disenfranchise liberal Solidarity, the other to put the skids under the secularists. In Bratislava Slovak separatists, nostalgic for their Axis-sponsored 'independent' state of fifty years ago, recently greeted Vaclav Havel—Eastern Europe's greatest democrat since Andre Sakharov—with cries of 'Jew, go back to Prague'.

Meanwhile, Russia's moment of truth approaches. As President Gorbachev finally psyches himself up for the irreversible choice between rule through the ballot box or the Black Berets, the fact that he has never seen fit to speak out against antisemitism augurs badly for the future of democracy.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on

THURSDAY 6 JUNE 1991, 7.30 p.m.

at

15 CLEVE ROAD, LONDON NW6

AGENDA

Annual Report 1990
Hon. Treasurer's Report
Discussion
Election of Executive Committee
Amendment to AJR rules
Followed by a talk by **Rabbi Hugo Gryn** entitled
'Revisiting the past'
Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

Continuing scandal

Mattersburg, once the largest of the seven 'holy kehillot' of the Burgenland, has a municipal museum that features portraits of past mayors. One of the worthies thus commemorated is the Nazi burgomaster Franz Giefing, who helped make the town *judenrein*. This scandal continues despite protests by the Association of ex-Mattersburger in Israel, and the Speaker of the Austrian Parliament. □

The Hidden Child

The first international gathering of children hidden during World War II will take place May 26-27, 1991 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel, New York City.

If you were such a child, or know someone who was, please contact Nicole David, 4 Oakfields Road, London NW11 0HY 081 455 4834 □

Bad news from Slovakia

In Bratislava nearly ten thousand extreme nationalists celebrated the fifty-second anniversary of the proclamation of 'independent' Fascist Slovakia by Monsignor Josef Tiso; the latter was hanged as a war criminal in 1947. □

Getting a rocket

The German Greens were thrown into disarray by the 'wartime' statement of their executive member Hans-Christian Ströbele that Scud attacks on Tel Aviv were a natural consequence of Israeli policy. The furore caused by Herr Ströbele's assertion led to his demotion from the post of Party spokesman. □

Profile

A book-filled life



Ilse Wolff.

Asitting room in St John's Wood. Paintings on the walls, books on shelves, tasteful furniture. My hostess bustles about – with an energy that totally belies her 83 years – feeding my appetite for copy with newspaper clippings (while not, happily, ignoring my thirst). At the start of the interview she says something which sounds like a quotation: 'People who love literature but can't write become librarians, publishers or editors'.

It transpires that this is not an entry in the Dictionary of Quotations, but Ilse Wolff's key to her own life.

Born in Silesia she spent her childhood in late-Imperial Berlin. The father's death in the Great War wrote finis to hopes of university study. Instead Ilse attended evening courses while employed by firms, e.g. Electrola Grammophon Gesellschaft, whose business had an art 'component'. After 1933 she worked in the Emigration Department of the Reichsvertretung deutscher Juden. Marriage to Ernst Löwenthal was followed, in 1939, by emigration to England. Soon after arriving she joined the nascent Wiener Library, to the evolution of which she made a major contribution, first as Dr Wiener's secretary, and then as bibliographer. As Chief Librarian for close on two decades she initiated and edited its Catalogue Series. Library users deeply indebted to her range from historians like John Wheeler-Bennett and Alan Bullock, to popular novelists like John le Carré.

Her second husband, Oswald Wolff, had meanwhile set up as a publisher producing books on German themes for the English market. After his death Ilse, having herself just battled a serious illness, carried on the imprint. Foolhardy courage paid off. Her first book, on Willy Brandt, appeared just when his appointment as Federal Chancellor stimulated widespread interest. Another notable 'first' was Ilse's commissioning of a biography of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau which subsequently achieved, in coals-to-Newcastle fashion, translation into German.

Turned 80, she finally embarked on her third career – as editor of *Doch die Sprache bleibt*, a prose anthology of the PEN Centre of German-speaking authors abroad.

Retirement has brought scant diminution of activity. Ilse is a board member of the PEN Centre, a card-carrying Liberal Democrat and a participant in the work of the Council for Christians and Jews, as well as of the Anglo-German Association. All in all hers was, and is, a life that invests the *soubriquet* of the Jews as the People of the Book with a new connotation. □ R.G.

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BRIDGE CLUB

All bridge players are welcome to join the Bridge Club which meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 1.30pm.

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Giving hypocrisy a bad name

The Puritans, Macaulay informed us, banned bear-baiting, not because of the pain it inflicted on the bears but because of the pleasure it gave the spectators. People who do – or say – the right thing for the wrong reason have figured in British history for centuries. Of late, however, this particular sub-species of the genus hypocrite has really come into its own.

It all started with CND, who wanted the West to disarm unilaterally in order to 'shame' Khrushchev and Brezhnev into giving up their nuclear weapons. 'Useful idiots' (i.e. useful to the Kremlin) was how the Gulag veteran Vladimir Bukovsky described CND. His scorn did little to inhibit unilateralist rhetoric. 'This is a nuclear election' Hugh Jenkins trumpeted in 1984, implying that unless Michael Foot went to Downing Street, and stymied President Reagan, the world faced nuclear war.

Warlike peaceniks

One of the glaring eccentricities of the peace campaigners is their partiality for Third World militarists given to specious rodomontade. Cuba, whose leader nearly triggered the Third World War during the 1961 Missile Crisis, and has not taken off his battle fatigues since, is hailed as a force for peace on the Security Council. The permanently battle-dressed Sandinistas were similarly perceived. Colonel Gaddafi, too, has his devotees, as evidenced by the outrage that greeted the U.S. raid on Tripoli prompted by Libyan state terrorism.

With the last-mentioned we broach the Arab issue, which has long been of overriding concern to the peace camp.

It needs to be appreciated that the – not unjustifiably – disgruntled Palestinians have not only been pawns in the multiple adversarial power play of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. They have also been unknowingly cast as footsoldiers of the

revolution-to-come by the ultra-Left, who constitute a key element of the peace camp. Having had to abandon the Marxian notion that the proletariat of the industrialised West will make the revolution, Trotskyites like Vanessa Redgrave have assigned that role to the dispossessed of the Third World – and who is more dispossessed than second-generation Palestinian refugees?

Spurious heirs

The Gulf War has been a windfall for Leftie Arabists, providing them with undreamt-of opportunities for occupying the moral high ground. Tony Benn has protested the slaughter perpetrated by a U.S. bent on boosting oil company profits and keeping the Third World in thrall to Washington. A latter-day Cassandra, Claire Short, warned, the moment hostilities commenced, that Iraqi civilians would be casualties glossed over by HM Government. And then, when Saddam capitulated, she warned the West against imposing a 'tyrannous' regime on Iraq. Would that it had done so – many, Kurds and others, would be alive today!

Spurious heirs to the dissenting tradition in British public life, the Redgraves, Benns and Shorts are accomplishing the seemingly impossible; they give hypocrisy a bad name.

□ R.G.

Critic criticised

Marcel Reich-Ranicki, the Grand Panjandrum of German literary criticism, has been taken to task for asserting that Hebrew literature existed only since 1948 and describing its current state as 'very weak'. An open letter in the *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* draws the critic's attention to such pre-1948 Hebrew-writing luminaries as Bialik and the Nobel laureate Agnon, as well as to the currently internationally renowned authors Amos Oz, David Grossmann and A. B. Yehoshua. □

Yiddish – chattering class-speak

The chattering classes is the fashionable term for politicians, academics, media types and the like, previously known as opinion moulders. Such folk who 'live by the word, and perish by the word' seem to find Yiddish an indispensable tool of their trade. Take the wonderfully evocative word *schlock* (derived from *schloch*, scruff). Film critics would be virtually tongue-tied unless they could deploy terms like *schlock horror* or *schlockbuster*. Political journalists would feel similarly bereft without nuggets of *mameloshen*. During the Gulf War for example, *The Times*, in a memorable phrase, described the United States as 'schmoozing with Syria'.

Two nights earlier BBC TV's *Newsnight* had arranged a three-way hookup, in which a US Senator, a Soviet spokeswoman and a Jordanian academic were meant to bounce ideas about the postwar settlement off each other. When the Russian and the Jordanian, prompted by *Newsnight* presenter Jeremy Paxman, waxed critical of Operation Desert Storm, the US Senator accused them of *kibitzing*. This term stumped Paxman, and even his editor could only tell him (via the earpiece) that it was a Yiddishism, without, however, vouchsafing a translation. This deplorable double lapse indicates the need for a shake-up in the BBC, unless, of course, Auntie wants to be known as the Little England Broadcasting Corporation in future. □

Soviet Jews in Germany

Speaking in mid-February, Heinz Galinski, Chairman of the Community, estimated the number of Russian-Jewish emigrants granted asylum in Berlin at four thousand, while an additional fifteen hundred were being accommodated on the territory of the former DDR. □

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Letters to the Editor

SEPARATED BY A GULF

Sir – You are ascribing the tension in the Middle East to Arab destabilisation, and at the same time insult them by pointing to their not keeping pace with modernisation. I submit that it was the creation of the State of Israel and concomitant injustices meted out to their Arabs which destabilised that area. Do you expect the Palestinians to thank Israel for their expulsion (yes – they were expelled), and those who were left there for not being treated evenhandedly? The Gulf War proved that Arabs can be quite at home with modern science and high-technology, and that Islam is no obstacle.

I fervently believe that the war was inane and quite unnecessary. Sanctions were already biting deeply into Iraq, but were not given a chance to work . . . Selfish oil considerations caused all the slaughter.

Sundale Drive
Crewe

O. Bleier, A.C.M.A.

SUPERFLUOUS ARTICLE

Sir – I challenge J. Rotter when he quotes Peter Schidlof (March issue) saying *Ich spiel auch die Geige*. This sentence is an Anglicism. In 1940 the refugee German or Austrian did not speak Anglicised German. (Admitted, most of us do now.) What he would have said is *Ich spiele auch Geige*.

Byron Court
Harrow

Rudolf Jaray

SALOMON SULZER

Sir – In his Schubert biography Alfred Einstein mentions Sulzer, for whom the composer set to music the Hebrew text of the 92nd psalm. (This composition is dated July 1828, two months before Schubert's death.) Einstein further records Franz Liszt's interest in Sulzer's exceptional voice and in his efforts to reform Jewish religious singing.

Holland Park Avenue
London W11

J. Rotter

MEDICAL MAN

Sir – Re the Tribute to Dr. Peter Meyer in your columns recently, may I add for the sake of interest that Dr. Peter Meyer's father, Professor Dr. Ludwig F. Meyer, was one of the two most famous of Berlin Paediatricians (the other being Professor Dr. Arnold Orgler, brother of the late Mrs.

Jacoby-Orgler). – This Dr. Ludwig F. Meyer then emigrated to Israel, becoming as famous there in the same field. My late mother and I knew Dr. 'L. F.' well, for I was his patient until he left (and then Professor Orgler's). Both of them were Professors for Paediatrics in the University of Berlin, until Hitler changed all that for so many. This would exemplify that Dr. Peter came from very special medical background.

Belsize Park Gardens
London NW3

C. H. Guttman

WHO GUARDS THE GUARDIANS?

Sir – It is a pity that the author of the March 91 leading article splashed it with a big blot of offensive intellectual snobbery when referring to the Conservatives conferring 'leadership first on a woman, and then on a quasi-prole.'

I, for one, found this phraseology extremely objectionable and unworthy of an AJR publication for reasons which are so obvious that they need no statement in detail.

Alexandra Park
London N22

M. Maynard

Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder. The same, alas, holds good of irony. Ed

DOUBLE STANDARD

Sir – Your March editorial *Who guards the Guardians?* will come as no surprise to those people who constantly remark on the relegation of Israel and its democracy to a place in the league table of human infamy well below that accorded to despots.

There can surely be no further question that, where the State of Israel is concerned, a definite double standard applies. There is another word for that double standard: anti-Semitism.

California Lane
Bushey, Herts.

M. H. Marx

I CAME ALONE

Sir – In the above book I came across the story of Liesl Roberts (nee Jura), who now lives in Los Angeles.

Suddenly it struck me: I knew a Liesl Jura in Vienna who went to the same High School as I.

Her story was even more shameful than mine. She *never* returned to High School, but was a domestic servant, dressmaker,

milliner and shorthand typist before winning a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music.

Think of the years when she had no music tuition whatsoever! What a waste of talent!

I wrote to her and she turned out to be the girl I knew, how wonderful! She asked me to keep in touch with her.

Brookdale Road
London SE6

A. Saville, A.R.C.M.

NATIONAL CHARACTER

Sir – You write 'It has taken the Germans 50 years to swing from unthinking bellicosity to thoughtless pacifism.'

This, I think, is a particularly base accusation against the Federal Republic.

Imagine the self-righteous chorus of the former Allies if Germany were anything but pacific. After their war experiences – *pace* Hamburg and Dresden – their pacifism is deeply felt and honest. There were anti-war demonstrations in all big towns, and vigils in many churches both East and West. They asked for more time to be given to diplomacy to work. Is that thoughtless pacifism?

Avenue Road

Eva R. Eisenschitz

London N6

BOUQUET-CUM-BRICKBAT

I enjoy *AJR Information*, but, having arrived here as a child without chance of an education, find it a bit highbrow.

Barkingside, Essex

Henry Weston

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Heirlooms of stone

My forefathers came from a little Franconian village called Ickelheim. When I started researching their history I discovered that many villages in Bavaria had relatively large Jewish communities. Ickelheim Jews owned at least 15 houses out of 97 dwellings in the village and had a synagogue, a school and a mikva. I recently discovered that there was also a private mikva in my great-great-great grandfather's house!

The Ickelheim Jewish community ceased to exist during the 1920's, when the last remaining Jews moved to the towns and cities. Elsewhere the communities remained active until they were destroyed. In Middle Franconia alone these numbered 99, many dating from the late Middle Ages.

In Oberzenn near Ickelheim we discovered the old cemetery that was the last resting place for the Jews of the surrounding villages. It lies on a hilltop in open countryside overlooking a lake and is surrounded by an old stone wall. The grass is cut regularly and the cemetery is, on the whole, in good condition.

Through my researches, I met Mario Jacoby, a Jewish photographer living in Oettingen, a Swabian village with a similar history to that of Ickelheim. Mario was born in South America of refugee parents and spent time in Israel, before settling in Germany.

Until recently, one of Mario's assignments has been the preparation of a photographic record of the Jewish cemeteries for the Franconian Office for the Care of Historical Objects. The Jewish Research section intended to prepare a ground plan of all the cemeteries and eventually to make a translation of the Hebrew inscriptions on the gravestones.

In Bavaria the Jewish cemeteries are the responsibility of the *Landesverband der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinden*. Since 1953, the Bavarian administration has allocated funds for the care and upkeep of



Work in progress at Treuchtlingen.

Jewish cemeteries, increasing the budget annually to DM1,300,000 in 1990. In 1987/88 part of this money was used for a photographic inventory of some of the cemeteries in Middle Franconia. Twenty-nine cemeteries had been documented, and an inventory made of 13, when disagreement between the Jewish community and the Bavarian authorities stopped further work.

Even if the annual funds were multiplied twentyfold, it would not be possible to restore all the stones. The old gravestones are mainly hewn from sandstone. Acid rain is causing rapid deterioration, adding to the damage wrought during the Nazi regime and more modern vandalism. Preservation would require individual removal and lengthy immersion in a silicone bath after restoration work had been carried out. The costs would be prohibitive; also the Jewish orthodox authorities are against the scientific restoration of the graves, and would

prefer them to be left to the elements.

Mario Jacoby believes that the best solution would be to make a stone by stone inventory of the cemeteries that still remain – and a surprising number do remain! They would need to be measured to scale and each grave marked on the plan. When the individual stones have been cleared of moss and other accumulated dirt, the inscriptions could be highlighted with chalk to make them clear enough for a photographic record. With Hebrew translations added, a record would be produced for posterity and for future genealogists. It would also mean that if, at a later date, the Bavarian authorities should decide to restore the cemeteries, the task would be very much easier.

If readers feel they could help, or would like restoration work carried out on the graves of ancestors, they should write to Mario Jacoby at Muhlstrasse 44, D8867 Oettingen, Germany.

□ Franceska Rapkin

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Reviews

Israeli Bond – without drive

Amos Oz, *TO KNOW A WOMAN*, Chatto & Windus, translated by Nicholas D. Lange, 1991, £13.99



Amos Oz. Photo courtesy: Chatto & Windus.

This book has two chief characters, a philosopher and a spy, who are, in fact, one and the same person. Yoel Ravid is a man in his early forties whom events have cast utterly adrift – a man with five passports and as many differing names and other papers. Even his family do not know his real job as he travels on his missions abroad; they believe him to be a salesman and buyer for the Israeli government.

One day a coded message recalls him to base from Helsinki. He leaves precipitately and neglects to take certain precautions. These mistakes link up with earlier ones committed in Bangkok. All this is, however, wiped from his consciousness when he gets home where his wife has been electrocuted, seemingly accidentally. In his mind there is a barely admitted suspicion that she has been murdered by the Secret Service.

From that juncture the novel moves backwards and forwards in Yoel's personal life. No James Bond, he is and remains a Jewish paterfamilias, now saddled with an awkward, teenaged, mildly epileptic daughter, a mother and a mother-in-law, both fiercely independent and clinging at the same time. Disillusioned, mourning and alienated, he takes early retirement. His superior, the 'Patron', is sympathetic, but lets him know that he has reneged on his duty. The Patron wants him to return abroad and put matters right. Yoel refuses.

A colleague goes instead and is killed, which leaves yet another scar on Joel's psyche.

He transplants his family to a Tel Aviv suburb and, jobless at too young an age, fills his days with obsessive work around the house and the garden. He uses his excellent brain to philosophise but curiously does so in a most trite manner without himself realising this. Depression and mild persecution mania make triteness appear as revelation.

He makes one effort to redeem himself with the Service by offering to avenge the murdered colleague, but is turned down. His dilemma is resolved – in a manner reminiscent of the Russian novel – through the performance of menial chores as a hospital help. And this is Yoel's atonement for his failings which have cost lives: among the sick he discovers that he has healing powers which help poor bodies who have passed beyond the art of the doctors. Although the novel is often puzzling, it is so in a challenging manner and the reader's interest never flags.

Despite the absence of derring-do, the world of espionage throws its frightening shadow, and is skilfully counterpointed by intimations of Israel suburban existence.

□ John Rossall

Secondary Primo

Primo Levi *OTHER PEOPLE'S TRADES* Michael Joseph, 1989. *THE MIRROR MAKER* Methuen, 1990. *THE SIXTH DAY* Michael Joseph, 1990. (All translated by Raymond Roenthal)

Many of us are familiar with Primo Levi's brilliant books about his experience at Auschwitz and the consequences of that experience. These are compelling reading matter, the uncompromising text comes straight from the heart. His book *The Periodic Table* is based mainly on his working life as an industrial chemist and this, too, appeals because it comes so totally from the author's hardwon experience.

The three books under review, in contrast, are collections of newspaper articles and short stories, exercises in science fiction and general commentary. I found them interesting, certainly 'a good read', but they are not in the same class as *If This Is A Man* and its companions. Levi's imagination was

not as fertile a source of material as his memory.

The collection entitled *The Sixth Day* (when Man was created), is, in the main, entertaining science fiction. Among the recurring themes is the fascination with machines of all sorts, for duplicating everything (text, objects, even people), for assessing personality and for experiencing our desires. The best three in this collection are the title story, giving the committee discussion for the design of Man, the lunar report describing Earth as seen through instruments available on the Moon, and the rather worrying essay on the consequences of an increase in the viscosity of water. I think these three stories are so much better than the others precisely because they rely on Levi's scientific experience, as worker, administrator and observer.

The other two collections are short articles published mostly in *La Stampa* in the 1980s, up to Levi's death. They cover a wide range of topics but few of them are totally satisfactory or memorable. Many of them are explanations of how scientists approach their work, good popular journalism in fact. Some of the stories have similar themes to *The Sixth Day*, for instance the title story of *The Mirror Maker* concerns the invention and unsuccessful exploitation of the 'personality mirror', where we see what others think of us.

All in all, easy reading that does not demand great concentration. However, you will get no clue to the real Primo Levi, as revealed by his other books.

□ Paul Samet

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Half-hearted sceptic

WHEN I GO TO HEAVEN, Broadcast
4 March 1991, BBC1

'Christian Bishop meets Jewish atheist' was how the event was billed. A little disappointingly it turned out to be a civilised discussion between Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburgh, and the Booker Prize-winning Jewish novelist Bernice Rubens.

Literature was discussed, but only peripherally. Bernice reminisced about her Jewish family – the father, an immigrant cheated out of a passage to New York and her British born mother. The parental home, she said, had been afire with music and Zionism. When God entered the discussion it was via Bernice's education at a Gentile school. She answered the Bishop's inquiry whether that had been all right for her, disconcertingly, with 'I learned that I had killed Christ'. The Bishop was actually upset. She added 'If it had not been that there would have been something else'.

They agreed that all human societies seem to need scapegoats, but the Bishop insisted on the uniqueness of antisemitic 'scapegoating'. She was more inclined to see it as a part of general xenophobia. He, quoting George Steiner, thought that the poison of antisemitism arose from a hatred of God and His strict commands for which non-Jews blamed His people. It was then that Bernice Rubens said she did not believe in God because of His absence during the Holocaust, and all the other disasters which have befallen mankind.

A little later she revealed that she is no militant atheist, scarcely a very firm agnostic. She admitted to moments of longing for God, for instance, in Jerusalem. The Bishop mentioned the after-life. Whom would she hope to meet in heaven? Her answer was Mozart, Schubert and Primo Levi.

In the 'finale' she insisted on burial; on no account did she want to be 'burned', i.e. cremated. Praising the beauty of the Jewish burial service, the lady billed as an atheist showed strong leanings towards the concept of the resurrection of the body.

□ John Rossall

Poetess among pioneers

BERLIN JERUSALEM, Film 1990, Amos
Gitai, Director

After the severe press criticism of Amos Gitai's *Berlin Jerusalem*, I was prepared for a deeply flawed piece of work. *Au contraire*, I found the film fascinating from beginning to end, deeply felt and artistically presented.

Faults were, of course, noticeable, with some dubious analogies creeping in. But then this is a very ambitious effort, articulating the Jewish tragedy of the latter-day Diaspora through the story of two women. They were the renowned German Expressionist poet Else Lasker-Schüler, and Russian revolutionary Tania. Tania goes to

Palestine when the Nazis are only a cloud on the horizon; Else clings to her beloved Germany until the burning of the books presages a more gruesome conflagration. Tania immerses herself in the physical struggle to redeem the Land, while Else perceives everything around her through the, sometimes distorting, mirror of poetry.

The poetry is, in effect, quite pervasive, which struck some critics as obtrusive. I found the elegiac tone of the verse perfectly befitting the tragic events of the poetess's life, particularly when she sorrowed at the graveside of her son Paul, whose sickly presence had set the tone for some of the earlier scenes. Others had been made uncomfortable by her 'Prince Yussuf' poses, the 'Berlin decadence' cabaret scenes and the occasional hint at Lesbianism. But for me this did not destroy the coherence of the whole.

Photographically the film obtains its effects by quite startling contrasts between the glaring brightness and stark colours of the Holy Land and the subdued shades of Berlin. An exception to this was the poetess's bewildered night-time arrival in Jaffa.

Gitai has been charged with drawing parallels between the displacement of Arabs from the land and the Nazi persecution of the Jews. It seems to me that he points up some dangers in a balanced way, as when he shows an oath-taking scene by young Jews which has hints of jingoistic bombast about it.

I must endorse one criticism: the English sub-titles are simply awful. *Berlin Jerusalem* can only be fully appreciated if one has some Hebrew and quite a bit of German. □

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Annual Report 1990

Social Services

1990 saw a further increase in the number of those seeking our help, both financial and social. Our team of social workers, led by Mr Samuel Wolf, dealt with many complex and serious problems and on many occasions responded to calls from members who had reached 'crisis point' and needed immediate help.

There was a marked increase in the number of clients at the Day Centre seeking assistance. As a result of their advancing years many find difficulty in dealing with ordinary domestic administration problems, such as settling bills, filling in simple forms or writing replies to officials.

Many more sought help with general debt counselling; our social workers have also attended small claims courts and DSS hearings in which members were involved.

The Advice Centre, started a year ago under the direction of Mrs Agnes Alexander, dealt with many problems emanating from East German property claims. Austrian pensions became available to people too young to have worked in Austria before emigration and, following close co-operation with the Austrian Embassy, Mrs Alexander was able to obtain pensions, back-dated to January 1990.

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

The success of the Day Centre continues unabated. Visitors enjoy companionship, make new friends, are stimulated by the varied programme of activities and entertainment and are refreshed with the excellent food provided.

The substantial financial contribution made to its cost by the AJR Charitable Trust and other sources ensures that our services are available to all, irrespective of individual financial limitations.

The care and dedication of our Day Centre staff led by Mrs Sylvia Matus, supported by numerous volunteers, continues to be much appreciated by all those who enjoy the Centre's facilities. We are greatly indebted to Mrs Hannah Goldsmith for the efficient planning, many months in advance, of the entertainment offered daily at the Centre.

Residential Care

Under the guidance of Mrs Ruth Finestone, our Homes Department continues to be responsible for the selection, and eventual admission, of applicants to Leo Baeck House, Osmond House, Heinrich Stahl

House, Clara Nehab House and the newly built Balint House. The recently renamed Otto Schiff Housing Association continues to be responsible for the day to day management of the homes. Our Homes Department and the various House Committees work very closely with their staff to ensure that residents are cared for with dignity in suitably pleasant surroundings. However, financial deficits arising from the operation of the homes are affecting future plans for their modernisation. To raise money for their support we have launched the AJR Residential Care Appeal during the year under review to which further reference will be made below.

Sheltered Accommodation

Applications continue to be received for accommodation in the sheltered flatlets in Eleanor Rathbone House, at 15 Cleve Road and in Otto Schiff House. There is a waiting list for the second re-building stage of Otto Schiff House and it is hoped that the flats will be ready for occupation during 1992.

AJR Club

The AJR Club still meets regularly at Cleve Road, where its members enjoy a wide variety of entertainment and lectures. During the year Mrs Lotte Saenger, its dedicated Vice-Chairman, passed away and is sadly missed by us all. Mrs Hilde Baban and Mrs Suzie Horwell continue to organise the club with enthusiasm and flair.

AJR Information

Under the editorship of Mr Richard Grunberger our monthly journal continues to provide its readers with informative articles on current affairs and a wide range of cultural subjects. The lively debate AJR Information generates among members is evidenced by the strongly held views in the many letters published in its columns. A complete change of layout and typestyle effected during the year updated its appearance and has found ready acceptance with the readers.

Mr Maurice Newman joined the Editorial Department as Publications and Publicity Manager with special responsibility for seeing the journal through the press and covering AJR events.

Self Aid

Administered as part of the AJR, Self Aid of Refugees provides much-needed financial

support to those in our community who cannot make ends meet. There has been a marked increase in the number of applications for individual grants required to relieve needs. The AJR Charitable Trust and other sources provided urgently needed funds to meet all these demands. Our Annual Charity Concert was held on 14 October 1990. The audience enjoyed a wonderful musical afternoon provided by Raphael and Peter Wallfisch. The 1991 concert will be held on 10 November at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and we look forward to seeing our regular supporters together with many new friends.

AJR Residential Care Appeal

Early in 1990 we launched the AJR Residential Care Appeal with the object of funding the refurbishment and extension of the homes offering residential care and sheltered accommodation to elderly Jewish refugees. Support of these homes, operated by the Otto Schiff Housing Association, is at the very centre of AJR activities through our responsibility for the admission procedures for new residents, general welfare work among residents and the work of the House Committees at each home.

The establishment of the first of the homes now lies back more than 30 years and new funds are needed to satisfy today's standards and expectations. The transfer in January 1991 of all full-care residents from Otto Schiff House to the new Balint House, in the Bishops Avenue, represents the first stage of the development programme. Apart from other new features all rooms in the new home have their own toilet facilities. It is with much gratitude that we record that this project was made possible by a most generous donation to the appeal by the Paul Balint and Andrew Balint Charitable Trusts.

The need for the provision of residential care will remain for many years to come and much remains to be done to achieve the objects of the appeal. Accordingly, we implore all our members to contribute generously to the appeal. There is no better means of expressing our generosity than by supporting the elderly in our community.

Membership

The success of our activities continues to attract new members to replace those we inevitably lose every year. The call to help recruit new members and thus ensure the

continuation of the AJR and its services for many years to come is as urgent as ever. Such opportunities exist among the relatives and friends of each and every one of our members and should be vigorously pursued.

Staff and Volunteers

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the professional ability and care our staff, under the direction of the Administrator, Mrs Lydia Lassman, bring to their work. We thank them for their devotion to our members' interests. Thanks are likewise due to our many volunteers, who share in this important endeavour and bring relief and comfort to so many. Members of the Association of Children of Jewish Refugees also pay frequent visits to the homes and play an active part in the community.

More volunteers are needed in all areas of our work. Members are asked to contact our volunteers co-ordinator, Mrs Laura Howe, even if they can spare but a few hours a week.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is actively involved in all aspects of the work of the association. At last year's Annual General Meeting Mr H. E. Levy was elected to membership of the committee. (For nominations please see page 10 column 3)

C. T. Marx
Chairman

Treasurer's Report

- The Activities of the AJR have increased in all areas.
- Homes – 60 new admissions.
- Day Centre cared for 250 visitors per week.
- Self Aid gave financial support to 211 needy people.

The AJR Charitable Trust, a registered charity, provides the money for all our welfare activities. The needs increase so fast that the Trust's expenditure again exceeds its income by a substantial margin.

We present the summarised income and expenditure accounts of the AJR, Self Aid of Refugees, and the AJR Charitable Trust, which give you a picture of the whole organisation and its manifold tasks.

M. M. Kochmann
Hon. Treasurer

AJR

Membership income and donations have shown a welcome increase. In view of the considerable services the AJR now makes available we rely on our members to give us a minimum subscription of £25 p.a. We have contained our administration cost and the increased grant of the AJR Charitable Trust reflects the greater workload of our social service department.

Summary of Balance Sheet as at 31 December 1990

FIXED ASSETS			
	1990	1989	
	£	£	
Less depreciation	15,309	16,399	
CURRENT ASSETS			
	43,068	61,208	
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
	17,010	26,058	42,801
Reserve for Staff	41,367	34,806	
Retirement Fund	25,000	26,670	
	16,367	8,136	
REPRESENTED BY GENERAL FUND			
Balance 1/1/90	8,136	6,813	
Net income for the year	8,231	1,323	
	16,367	8,136	

Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31 December 1990

INCOME		
	1990	1989
	£	£
Membership Fees, Donations	94,124	69,860
Grant from AJR Charitable Trust for Welfare Services	175,000	167,500
	269,124	237,360
EXPENDITURE		
Rent, Rates, Postage, Telephone etc	33,639	33,144
Salaries	177,268	149,916
Pension Contributions/Retirement Fund Administration Expenses	13,105	20,211
AJR Information	9,456	7,225
	27,425	25,541
	260,893	236,037
Net Income	8,231	1,323

AJR Charitable Trust

Our accounts show that expenditure rose to a new record and whilst income also increased substantially we still had to withdraw £225,348 from our reserves. Receipts from legacies brought £279,059 which prevented our reserves being run down.

In line with our undertaking we gave grants for refurbishing the homes to the Otto Schiff Housing Association which enabled them to complete the new Balint House. We also increased our grants

towards the running costs of the homes to reduce their substantial deficit.

The homes of the Otto Schiff Housing Association are now our largest commitment. We expect to give an equal sum this year for refurbishing and improving facilities and contribute to major repairs such as the lifts in Eleanor Rathbone House. We shall also double our contribution towards the deficit of running the homes. Our Residential Care Appeal has made an encouraging start by raising £516,830 in the first year towards our target of £4 million. This report demonstrates only too clearly the urgency of our task. Please continue to give us your support.

Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31 December 1990

INCOME		
	1990	1989
	£	£
Covenants, Donations	20,709	46,815
Investment income	303,718	211,848
	324,427	258,663
EXPENDITURE		
Grants:		
Paul Balint AJR Day Centre	102,227	82,753
AJR for Social Services	175,000	167,500
Self Aid	18,000	17,500
CBF Residential Care & Housing Assn.	202,688	179,830
Other Organisations Administration (including property repairs £22,889)	6,842	5,531
	44,727	21,691
	549,484	474,805
Taken from Reserve Fund	(225,057)	(216,142)

Self Aid of Refugees

The annual charity concert provides most of the income. This year a legacy substantially added to our receipts but it was still necessary for the AJR Charitable Trust to give a larger grant to meet the fast rising needs of the poorest members of our community. We thank the B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck (London) Lodge Trust Fund for helping us again by giving additional financial help.

Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31 December 1990

INCOME		
	1990	1989
	£	£
Concert Receipts	10,333	10,328
Donations, covenants, Legacies	17,549	3,375
Grant AJR Charitable Trust	18,000	17,500
	45,882	31,203
EXPENDITURE		
Aid Grants Administration Charges	27,630	23,774
	5,477	8,403
	33,107	32,177
Net Income	12,775	(974)

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

15 Cleve Road, London NW6 3RL
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Morning Activities – Bridge, kalookie, scrabble, chess, etc., keep fit, discussion group, choir (*Mondays*), art class (*Tuesdays and Thursdays*).

Afternoon entertainment –

MAY

- Wednesday 1* Music in Spring – Marianne Vidal (Soprano) accompanied by Joseph Phibbs (Piano)
- Thursday 2* The Beaufort Ensemble
- Monday 6* CLOSED
- Tuesday 7* Light Musical Entertainment – Shirley Gurevitz (Soprano) accompanied by Sylvia Cohen (Piano)
- Wednesday 8* The Channing Flutes entertain with Ruth Newman
- Thursday 9* Music from Spring into Summer – Anna Lishman (Soprano) accompanied by Piers Ricketts (Piano)
- Monday 13* Tessa Newman entertains at the Piano
- Tuesday 14* Hans Freund: Our Kind of Music
- Wednesday 15* Mainly Mozart – Fred Rosner (Base) and Alicia Spivack (Soprano) accompanied by Rosa Butwick (Piano)
- Thursday 16* A Musical Afternoon with Jane Rosenberg (Mezzo) accompanied by Sheila Baillieu (Piano)
- Monday 20* CLOSED
- Tuesday 21* Talk on Back Problems and Associated Complaints – Dr Sandra Richer
- Wednesday 22* Harry Rose and Friends Entertain
- Thursday 23* Ornati Ensemble – Flute & Strings playing mainly Mozart – Presented by Ruth Newman
- Monday 27* CLOSED
- Tuesday 28* One-Man Music Hall Show – Mickie Driver
- Wednesday 29* A Music Hath Charms – Angela Pressman and Friends
B Outing to Luton Hoo
- Thursday 30* A Life of Music with Doris Samuels (London Ladies' Choir)

The AJR at Work

Grant-aided

How the AJR helped found a career



Ariel Bruce.

In February this year the Channel 4 series *Cutting edge* screened a very moving documentary entitled *Relative strangers*. It centred on the work of a 'genealogical detective' named Ariel Bruce, a graduate of the Kingston Polytechnic Social Work Department, who has set up a unique business. The company, Ariel Bruce Associates, is the country's only private family tracing service. Its work is bringing together relatives separated by adoption, and it has a remarkably high success rate.

Ms Bruce's first 'client' approached her while she was still a student. Handicapped

by illiteracy he asked for her help in tracing his natural mother. This first step led on – via employment by a local authority – to the formation of the company, which offers counselling and advice as well as a simple search process; clients are charged on a sliding scale according to ability to pay.

In the five years of its existence the company has reunited hundreds of families – parents with children, and siblings separated whilst very young. Ariel's work has attracted a great deal of media attention. She is often asked to appear on TV programmes and receives requests to give interviews to newspapers. However, she rations interviews to two a year as she maintains she has no wish to become a 'media person'.

So where does the AJR fit into this? When Ariel was offered a place as a mature student at Kingston Polytechnic she approached Surrey Council for a grant, but was refused. After exploring many other avenues to try and raise the necessary money, she, the daughter of a refugee, approached the AJR Charitable Trust. The Trustees, impressed by her determination to succeed, decided to make an award in the form of a loan. Her gratitude for this lifeline is still apparent after eight years. 'I was so happy at the news', she remembers. That decision changed Ariel Bruce's life. She, in her turn, has changed the lives of others. For its timely help on this occasion the AJR can safely award itself a pat on the back.

□ M.N.

CONGRATULATIONS

to AJR Administrator Lydia Lassman and family on the Barmitzvah of her son Oliver on 4 May 1991.

From the AJR staff and volunteers.

JUNE

- Monday 3* Crime Prevention – Be safe, be secure – Talk and Video presented by West Hampstead Police Station Crime Prevention Officer
- Tuesday 4* Making the best of Old Age – A Chat with Irene White
- Wednesday 5* Hans Freund: That Reminds Me

Election of Executive Committee

(Continued from p. 9 col. 1)

The following members have served on the Executive since the 1990 Annual General Meeting and will be proposed for re-election at the AGM on Thursday 6 June 1991.

- Mr C. T. Marx Chairman
Mr M. M. Kochmann Vice-Chairman & Honorary Treasurer
Mrs K. Gould Honorary Secretary
Mrs E. S. Angel
Mrs M. Brooks
Mr J. Dunston
Mr A. C. Kaufman
Mr H. E. Levy
Mr W. D. Rothenberg

Happy occasion



Sheila Miller-Bryan, Head of Home at Heinrich Stahl House, joins in the birthday celebrations. Photo: Newman.

On the first Monday of every month there is a birthday party at Heinrich Stahl House. At these get-togethers, organised by the House Committee, all residents who have celebrated a birthday in the preceding thirty days are congratulated and receive gifts, birthday cake and a spirited rendition of *Happy Birthday To You*. The April gathering toasted seven birthday children with more than seventy celebrants in attendance. The entertainment was provided by the irrepressible Hans Freund and his friend Marian Lewis.

The most astounding aspect, for the

uninformed observer, of this party was the amazing richness and depth of knowledge and culture of the participants. Since the 'singalong' included songs in German, Hebrew, Yiddish and Italian as well as the usual complement of English language tunes one sensed that all of the residents must have led lives rich in colour and experience. The staff's understanding of this fact and their uncondescending attitude towards their charges attests to their own sensitivity and expertise.

This month's party was a great success. This, I am reliably informed, is not unusual.

□ M.N.

BIRTHDAY GREETING

Warmest birthday wishes to our Vice-Chairman and Hon. Treasurer, Max Kochmann, on his 70th birthday. From the AJR Executive, staff and volunteers.

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FOUNDER MEMBERS

Did you join the AJR in 1941?

We wish to pay tribute to our founding members during this, our 50th anniversary year.

If you have been a member since 1941 please contact **Lydia Lassman** at:

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SUNDAY 26th MAY at 3 p.m.

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FAMILY EVENTS

Golden Wedding

Davies Gerda and Felix Davies are happy to announce their Golden Wedding anniversary on 1st May, 1991.

Deaths

Francken Lisl Francken (nee Heim) died on 7 April 1991 after a long illness bravely borne. Beloved wife of Hans, loving mother of Barbara, John and Dee, devoted grandmother to James and Julia.

Jordan On 23 March 1991 peacefully, Leslie James (Leo Jossek) aged 84. A deeply loved husband and father. Time will not erase our love for him.

May Erna May, widow of Moritz May ex-Frankfurt-am-Main, died 13/2/91 aged 98 at a Manchester nursing home. Sadly missed by all her remaining family. Son's address: H. May, 12 Apex Close, Weybridge, Surrey.

Wiener Edgar Hans Wiener died 29 March 1991. Much missed by wife Gerda, children Marion and

Stephen, daughter-in-law Melanie, grandchildren Philip, Caroline and David, relatives and friends.

Wolf Erich Wolf passed away peacefully on 3 March 1991, aged 81. Greatly missed and much loved by his daughter Helen, son-in-law and grandchildren.

Tombstone Consecration

Tischler The consecration of the memorial stone in loving memory of Ilse Tischler, beloved wife of Salomon, will take place at Bushey Cemetery on Tuesday 11 June at 3 p.m.

CLASSIFIED

Miscellaneous

Collector of old Jewish and Palestine picture postcards. Single cards purchased. David Pearlman, 36 Asmuns Hill, London NW11. 081-455 2149.

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Widow, 70, Continental Jewish background plans 2 weeks holiday in Abano Spa, Italy, late June/early July. Anyone of similar background interested? Tel: 081-205 7690.

The AJR Club gratefully acknowledges a donation of £3000 from the estate of the late Bertha Cohn who had been a member of the AJR Club for many years.

Mrs Glesinger, who recently arrived from Israel, please contact cousin Erna Gal.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

The *Discernible Times* exhibition linked to the Jewish Students Art Festival, was recently held at the Ben Uri Gallery. For all that Jewish concepts and scenes were represented in many of the works, no underlying unifying factor could be discerned. Nevertheless, this was a most interesting show – although R. B. Kitaj said of the opening, ‘God help you, if you intend to make a career of art’.

The *Cato Gallery*, 100 Heath Street, NW3, will be showing *Pauline Bewick and Daughter* (8–19 May), and *David Backhouse (new sculpture) and John Bratby (fascinating pastels)* (5–16 June).

During May John Denham will be showing a selection of works by several of his gallery artists, including Walter Nessler, Puck Dachinger, Pamina Mahrenholz, Erich Kahn and Else Meidner.

Our old friend Lily Freeman is exhibiting her *Happy Paintings, New Work from Home and Abroad* at Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 (10–23 May). An innovative exhibition *Honeymoon Project: Miralda* is at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (18 May–22 June). This is a fanciful exploration of matrimonial ritual and, at the same time, celebrates Columbus’ discovery of America. Miralda is ‘creating’ the marriage of Barcelona’s Columbus monument to the Statue of Liberty and has produced an eternity ring for ‘Miss’ Liberty out of thousands of rings donated by people from all over the country. The marriage will be celebrated with all due pomp and ceremony in New York in 1992.

Marketa Luskacova, born in Prague in 1944, settled in London in 1975. She is an important photographer and her *Photographs of Spitalfields* are being shown at the Whitechapel Art Gallery (5 April–26 May).

Among National Portrait Gallery exhibitions during 1991, one of the best will undoubtedly be the *BP Portrait Award*.

The prestigious Summer Exhibition at

the Royal Academy is almost upon us (8 June–18 August) – just a note for your diary! And there is still time (until 19 May) to see *The Twilight of the Tsars* exhibition at the South Bank Centre.

The *Serpentine Gallery* is showing selected works by Victor Pasmore (16 April–27 May). An illustrated catalogue including an essay by Norbert Lynton is available at the exhibition (price £8.95).

Elizabeth Harvey-Lee is holding an interesting exhibition *Friends and Relations: Prints by and of related Artists* at 8 Ryder Street, St James’s, SW1 (7–11 May). A fully illustrated catalogue will be available (price £5).

The *Tate Gallery* has acquired *Vesuvius in Eruption*, by Joseph Wright of Derby. This picture was purchased with financial assistance from, among others, John Ritblat.

The exhibition of specifically Jewish work by Abram Games is on show at the Ben Uri (until 12 May) and well worth visiting. This will be followed by an exhibition of new acquisitions, including a magnificent *Ketuba* by Yaakov Boussidan.

SB's Column

A Memorial in Spain. A memorial for Walter Benjamin, German-Jewish philosopher is to be erected at Port Bou where he died 50 years ago, committing suicide on his flight from the Nazis. The original suggestion for this memorial came from German Federal Chancellor Richard von Weizsaecker.

40 years ago – an end and a beginning. ‘Light Music’ underwent a drastic change in 1951. With the deaths of Ivor Novello (whose musicals never achieved popularity on the European continent) and Sigmund Romberg – *Desert Song* and *Student Prince* are unforgotten here – the way was clear for musical productions of a different kind, mainly from the United States; Lowe’s *Paint Your Wagon* and, in particular, Hammerstein-Rogers’ *King and I* became the hit shows of the year.

Another Opera House. Because of Iron Curtain restrictions the opera in Brno, Czechoslovakia, is little known in the West, though well attended by visitors from neighbouring Germany and Austria. Within its rich repertoire it specialises in performing works by Czech composers, notably Dvořák and Janáček.

A James Saunders play for Vienna. A comedy by James Saunders, much-

performed playwright in English, is planned for Vienna’s ‘Josefstadt’ for next season; the translation into German was made by Hilde Spiel, and completed just before her death last year.

Birthdays. Bass baritone Benno Kusche, internationally known stalwart of the Bavarian State Opera, celebrated his 75th birthday. Born in Freiburg, but always loyal to Bavaria, he has been with the Munich opera ensemble for over 40 years. His best-known rôle was Beckmesser in Wagner’s *Meistersinger*, a part he sang first under Thomas Beecham at Covent Garden in 1951. Recently he appeared in Munich as a much-acclaimed ‘Frosch’ in a performance of *Die Fledermaus*. – Also 75 is Martha Eggerth, Hungarian-born singer-actress who, after a career in German films, emigrated to America together with her husband, Polish tenor Jan Kiepura.

Obituary An appreciation appeared in this column in October 1990, when Hans Thimig, last male member of the famous theatrical family, had his 90th birthday. He died at the end of February, mourned by friends who admired his qualities as producer, actor and as a man; although working on the German stage during World War II, he resisted political pressures and remained faithful to his principles. His first wife was the actress Christel Mardayn. □

40 Years Ago this Month

Jewish Ethical Standards

Jewish Law does not recognise any distinction between civil and religious laws. Western minds, trained in the conception of a strict separation between religion and State, are apt to regard this as a certain backwardness. They forget the specific reasons which have led to the emancipation of the State from the supervision of the Church and also that Jewish culture is essentially the culture of the Jewish religion and that Judaism, as a religion, is different in its structure from the religions which have sprung from it. From the viewpoint of the development of mankind, the Jewish conception is at least equal to any modern idea of the purpose of man. It is indeed, so the religious Jew assumes, of superior value on account of its higher conceptions of human rights and duties, mutual responsibility and social inter-relation. The intrusion into the private sphere, in consequence of the religious law, is not the result of a lower conception of human dignity, but of the higher value, which is placed upon man as human being and bearer of religious truths. A legal system must be judged by the purity of its inherent aims and tendencies and the generality of its ideas; also, of course, by the absence of bias and prejudice in favour or against certain classes.

AJR Information May 1951.

Quotes of the month

As long as the Vatican denies Israel diplomatic recognition the Pope has no right to talk about peace in the Middle East.

Furio Colombo, Italian Author

The Arab policy of General de Gaulle was a succession of illusions.

Roland Dumas, French Foreign Minister

In the post-Gulf War period antisemitism is, naturally, an idea whose hour has come. Although European Jewry is no more, European Jew-hatred still exists.

Jan Ross, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

Babylon overrun, anti-Saddam forces say.
Headline in *The Times*

Ratschlag an Gorbachev

Lass die Balten sich verwalten
Und ihre Eigenart entfalten,
Lass die Krim-Tartaren fahren;
Kehr den Turkoman-Kalmücken
Deinen slawisch breiten Rücken,
Gib den streitbaren Azeris
Die Nutzniessung ihres Meeres,
Und befrei Uzbekistan
Von dem Baumwollanbauwahn,
Mit dem Halbmond meid Verdruss;
Neu erbau' das Haus von Rus!

□ R.G.

Pensionierte Folterknechte

Die Folterknechte
sind Pensionisten geworden
und füttern die Spatzen
Ihre einstigen Vorgesetzten
bekleiden Ehrenämter
Die Herren Schriftleiter
empören sich über Israel
ehe sie zum Wochenende
auf ihre Landsitze fahren
und die Söhne und Enkel
wollen nicht verstehen
warum man über die alten Geschichten
noch immer reden muß.

□ Harry Brainin

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Prelude and aftermath

The two main films shown at this year's Berlin Film Festival focus, respectively, on the run-up to the Third Reich, and the immediate aftermath of its collapse. 1920s Germany is evoked in *Erfolg*, a film starring Bruno Ganz based on Leon Feuchtwanger's novel about interwar Bavaria. (The Munich-born author had been so alarmed by developments in the province that he moved to Berlin in 1930.)

The film about the aftermath of Nazi rule, *Uranus*, is set in France, stars Gerard Depardieu and derives from a novel by Marcel Aymé.

Despite their literary provenance and star cast neither film found much favour with the critics. □

Diminished aliyah predicted

Alexander Shmukler, an executive member of *Va'ad*, the umbrella organisation of Jewish cultural groups in the Soviet Union, thinks Soviet-Jewish emigration peaked last year, and estimates that this year's figure will be around 60,000. This contrasts sharply with the forecast of a quarter of a million Soviet *olim* in 1991 made by Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Dinitz. □

VERSE AND WORSE

ANDREW DAVIS

(TV adaptor of *Pride and Prejudice*)
Bath, after all, was Jane's home ground -
So let's the audience astound
With Darcy starkers in a tub
And all that sort of rub-a-dub;
Skip Bloomsbury, and Jamesian Boston,
We stimulate *Drang nach der Austen!*

CHE GUEVARA

A theme that runs through time's potpourri
Is Che Guevara's great *gevureh*,
But what his heirs from Spree to Isis
Forget is: In the Cuban Crisis,
To set the toiling masses free,
He nearly triggered World War Three

SCHWARZENEGGER

The dad, a cop in Graz, he
Was - and *who* wasn't? - Nazi;
The son, flesh turned to iron,
Is, contrariwise, pro-Zion,
Gave Waldheimville the push,
Now yodels '*servus*, Bush!'

LECH WALESA

Both electrician and live wire
He lit the Kremlin's funeral pyre,
But having driven out Big Brother
He could - just - turn into another.

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ALL LEGAL WORK UNDERTAKEN

Obituaries

Abraham Epstein

Abe Epstein has died at Osmond House, aged 79, having borne the disability of Parkinson's disease, with dignity, for over four years.

Abe's odyssey from his native Warsaw to post-war London encapsulates much of our war-time history. In 1939 he – then 28 and a graduate chemist – escaped the Germans only to be deported to Russia. Imprisoned for two years in various labour camps, with insufficient food or shelter, he suffered frostbite and the amputation, without anaesthetic, of a toe. After Hitler's attack, Poles in the camps were enrolled in General Anders' Army. An agonising march (his foot still unhealed) to an army depot started a long roundabout journey to the battlefields of North Africa and Italy. Demobilised in London, Abe was joyfully reunited with his sister who had survived in Warsaw with false documents. (Cruelly she was killed by a runaway car in 1969.)

Abe resumed his profession as a chemist, at the laboratories of J Lyons and Company, where he remained for the rest of his career. On retirement he became a volunteer at University College Hospital, counselling Polish, Russian and German patients. After his illness was diagnosed, he joined the Parkinson's Disease Society and worked for it, helping with administration and visiting fellow sufferers.

Music was Abe's chief joy; at his funeral one of his great delights – a Brandenburg Concerto – was played in joyful commemoration.

Evelyn Cibula

George Rosney

George Rosney has died, aged 70. Born in Karlsruhe, he arrived in Britain in 1939, where, after internment, he volunteered for the Pioneer Corps. Transferred to the REME he took part in the invasion of Normandy.

On demobilisation he got a factory job and studied at night school for an engineering qualification. After obtaining this he worked as a design engineer.

In middle life he was tragically struck by Parkinson's Disease. He suffered for 13 years, for seven of which he was cared for at Osmond House, where he died in February. □

Cross and crooked cross

The past months were dotted with black anniversaries: 30 January Machtergreifung, 11 March Anschluss, 15 March Occupation of Prague, 10 April Proclamation of Independent Croatia. The last mentioned tragedy occurred precisely 50 years ago. It was brought about by the confluence of two powerful currents: Nazism and militant Catholicism. For all that Hitler despised the Slavs, he used their frustrated separatist aspirations with Machiavellian skill – first to break up Czechoslovakia, and then to dismember Yugoslavia. In both instances Catholicism served his purposes only too well. The head of Fascist Slovakia was Monsignor Tiso, while the Croat Fuehrer, Ante Pavelic, pledged to turn his Quisling state into a 'bridgehead of the Vatican in the Balkans'.

On his accession Pavelic sent the Pope a message stressing – in Latin – his determination 'that our fatherland, suffused by the spirit of the Gospels, becomes a kingdom of Christ'. In this crusading endeavour Pavelic and his Ustashe thugs targeted Orthodox Serbs, Gypsies and Jews as their chief victims, and set about massacring them with a blood lust that at times even shocked the Germans.

Members of Catholic orders took a prominent part in the Ustashe's extermination programme. The worst atrocities took place in Jasenovac, a camp commanded by the Franciscan monk Miroslav Filipovic. 'The first Franciscans from Assisi' wrote the Italian journalist Conrado

Sili in *Il Resto de Carlino* on 18 September 1941 'looked on birds and fishes as their brothers and sisters, but their successors in Independent Croatia are, driven by hate, slaughtering innocent human beings'.

Jasenovac Camp, dubbed the 'Catholic Auschwitz', became a killing ground for 200,000, the majority of them Serbs, but including 40,000 Gypsies and 29,000 Jews.

In 1945 Monsignor Dragonovic, the erstwhile Croat Commissioner for the Resettlement of Serbs and Jews, master-minded, from a safe haven in the Vatican, the escape of the Ustashe leaders. Ante Pavelic donned a priest's disguise and went, via South America, to Franco Spain, dying there in 1959. Interior Minister Andrija Artukovic fetched up in the U.S.A., whence he was extradited in 1986 to stand trial in Yugoslavia. By this date the country that Tito had reunited after the war was already showing the strains that are currently threatening to tear it asunder. It is a sobering thought that Franjo Tujman, the present head of the semi-autonomous Croat government, draws inspiration from his 'predecessor' Ante Pavelic. Equally sobering is the thought that John Paul II, an inveterate globetrotter, has not seen fit, so far, to pay a penitential visit to Jasenovac.

□ R.G.

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Leaves from a diary

Mevasseret Zion, Thursday
31 January

Tonight we've had enormous luck. But there's no sense of relief: tomorrow night this darkness will again enfold us. My five-and-a-half-year-old son already knows how to ask after each attack whether it was a 'conventional or a chemical' one. Perhaps we should put an age limit on the use of such words . . . after all, far less rude and ugly words are forbidden in polite company. With great caution I take the mask off his face, untangling the blond strands from the hideous rubber straps, trying to offer him some trace of intimacy in this violent chaos. He already knows all about chemical and biological weapons. About the body's reaction to gas. About carpet bombing and dead cormorants. Once I hesitated to tell my children about the acts of the Nazis. I feared that a child who heard what men could do to their brothers would no longer be the same child. Something within him would be tainted and damaged forever. Now he watches television, and I must tell him about warheads carrying bacteria of plague and cholera. In Europe and America parents cringe when they have to tell their children about the facts of life. In the land of the Jews, long before they learn the facts of life we must tell them the facts of death.

Monday 25 February

For the hundredth time I check the windows and doors in the sealed room. I decide to

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tape long strips of masking tape in squares across the window-pane, to prevent the glass from shattering in the event of an explosion. After all, Saddam has promised not to leave even a 'withered leaf' in Israel. Something in my movements, in my paced and skilful confidence, startles me – an old memory, a memory twenty-four years old, shakes me – it was just like this, with these movements, at this pace, that my father stretched strips of tape across the window-panes when I was a boy, before the Six-Day War. He didn't notice that I'd entered the room and sat behind him, to watch . . .

Back then it had been Nasser, the President of Egypt, who had promised to throw all the Jews into the sea within weeks – and I was sure I wouldn't live to see Rosh Hashanah. That was the year I began to learn to swim in earnest.

Now with a lurch of apprehension I turn my head, knowing I'll see, for an instant, the child that I'd been, praying no child will be there: but a child is there. My eldest son had entered the room and settled himself on the floor, to watch. □

David Grossman, author of, among others, *The Smile of the Lamb*, and *See under: Love*

URGENT – PEOPLE ALONE

'Loneliness is still the biggest problem amongst our ageing refugee community and the maintenance of regular contact is essential' – the Chairman, Association of Jewish Refugees.

We have members who have no family or whose family live abroad and whose contemporaries have died. They would appreciate visits, help with shopping or short outings. These things help to transform the quality of their lives. Assistance is always appreciated too in the Residential Homes of the Otto Schiff Housing Association where many of the residents are AJR members. Visits to individual residents, escorting people to hospital or shopping are always welcomed. And drivers to take members to and from our Day Centre in West Hampstead are desperately needed.

These survivors of the Holocaust need **YOUR** help! If you can spare a few hours a week please ring **LAURA HOWE, AJR Volunteers' Co-ordinator on 483 2536 between 9.30-5 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 9.30-1.30 p.m. Friday.**

Out of the ashes

Hofgeismar, North Hesse, may be a comparatively small town near Kassel, West Germany, but it shares with Frankfurt/Main the distinction of being the only other place in Hesse with a Judaica museum. In an area where today's youth grows up without Jewish neighbours, where school children regularly express the desire to learn something about Jews and Judaism, the Hofgeismar museum provides a facility to help to close this gap. In conjunction with the *Jahrbuch Kassel*, a local history magazine, a number of important Jewish contributions relevant to the district have been published which in 1985 were re-issued in a special edition *Fremde im eigenen Land* (Strangers in their own Country). A sequel is planned for the not too distant future.

In order to further historical research a regional Jewish bibliography was published in December 1989 comprising no less than 971 titles; some of the listed authors such as Franz Rosenzweig and Rudolf Hallo are of general importance considerably beyond merely local interest. The growing library of the Hofgeismar museum can provide most of the books in question. In their totality they are indeed a record of *Verbrannte Geschichte*, incinerated history, the title of this well produced booklet of 83 pages. It is obtainable from the publishers:

Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde e.V., Zweigverein Hofgeismar near Kassel, West Germany. Cost DM 9. □

From Generation to Generation

The Raphael Counselling Service and Belsize Square Synagogue have initiated a series of meetings bringing Holocaust survivors and refugees together with members of the next generation. They did this because an atmosphere of silence, an implicit taboo on Holocaust experiences, has often impeded communication between the generations. The encounters have in several cases helped to break down the wall of silence between parents and children, enabling them to talk about the painful past for the first time.

Anyone interested should contact Mrs Henny Lehmann at the Belsize Square Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX, tel: 071 794 3949. □