

AJR Information

Volume XLVII No. 4
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Don't miss . . .

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Passover thoughts

Judaism is a history-conscious faith. Tisha b'Av, Chanukah, Purim, above all Pesach, commemorate landmarks of our past.

At Passover we also seek past echoes in the present.

Remarkably the Jews' 40 wilderness years between escaping Pharaoh and entering Israel have an exact parallel in Eastern Europe's Communist interim between Hitler's defeat and the coming of democracy. One can also liken the current Russian aliyah to the Exodus. For all its vicissitudes it has contributed to Israel's six-fold population growth since 1948. Such an increase in four decades is a near-miracle almost comparable to crossing the Red Sea. □

Who stands in the dock?

The war crimes debate continues

On the surface the Demjanjuk trial in Israel and the Vilnius hearings of the Gecas case seem to vindicate the opponents of the War Crimes Bill of 1991. The majority of the House of Lords, it will be remembered, argued that the fallibility of human memory rules out a fair trial close on half a century after the commission of a crime.

It now appears that Demjanjuk was wrongly identified as 'Ivan the Terrible', while Gecas faced some charges emanating from the KGB.

This does not, however, mean that the legal purists in the House of Lords have been proved right. If accepted, their counsel of perfection would only have resulted in yet further inaction in the face of crimes that beggar the imagination. Erich Mielke, the former East German police chief awaiting trial in Berlin,

ordered fewer killings in 40 years than Ukrainian or Lithuanian SS auxiliaries perpetrated in 40 days. There can be no reasonable doubt that Demjanjuk or Gecas – for all that the accusations levelled against them lacked total accuracy – participated in genocide in other ways. Furthermore, the Vilnius hearings in the libel action Gecas brought against Scottish TV showed that witnesses, too, were deeply implicated in the horrors of 50 years ago. The half-a-century time span, incidentally, is still ten years less than that covered by the prosecution's case against Mielke. (The first charge against him dates back to 1931.)

The Berlin court trying the ex-Stasi chief does not scruple to use relevant documents that originated in the Nazi era; *pari passu* prosecutors bringing charges against Balts or Ukrainians need not consider all evidence compiled by the KGB so compromised as to be inadmissible.

In the last analysis it matters less that the charge should encompass every detail of the alleged crime than that it is brought at all. For 40-odd years murderous Nazi accomplices have been allowed to lead a tranquil existence; elementary justice demands that after all-too-long a delay lives unhaunted by guilt be at last shadowed by the fear of prosecution.

Justice likewise demands that those involved in making postwar Britain and the U.S.A. a safe haven for SS auxiliaries be arraigned – if only posthumously – before the bar of public opinion. Never in the history of civilisation has W. S. Gilbert's 'My object all sublime . . . to make the punishment fit the crime' prompted more hollow laughter than after the Second World War. If East Germans shot at the Berlin Wall weigh heavier in the scale of justice than our dead the Nuremberg Laws are perpetuated.

There are some perverse logicians who say that if the first links of a chain were weak it is wrong to strengthen subsequent ones. Opponents of the Gulf War argued that the West, having previously built up Saddam Hussein against Iran, was wrong to make war on him. Critics of War Crimes legislation argued similarly that the negligent postwar pursuit of justice makes it wrong to repair omissions now. Both lines of reasoning are flawed and would, if accepted, have fatal consequences.



An illustration from a Frankfurt Hagada, 1921.

Judgement on Salomon

The Ancient Romans had a saying to the effect that books have their 'fates'. The modern counterpart to this is that every film has two stories. One is the plot – and the other the plotting that goes on before, during and after the filming.

In the case of *Europa, Europa* (producer Artur Brauner, director Agnieszka Holland) the promotion has generated complications whose strangeness echoes that of the story it depicts. This is the near-incredible saga of Salomon Perel who, as an adolescent, survived the Nazis by disguising himself as a Hitler Youth, and now lives in Israel.

Now to the plot that unfolded *behind* the camera: *Europa, Europa* made with German finance in a German studio, though by a Polish-Jewish director, was a largely German effort. It therefore needed a German nomination to be entered for the Oscar contest. The *Auswahlkommission*, however, refused to nominate it on artistic grounds – whereupon the (Jewish) producer accused that body of withholding a native product for political reasons, i.e. avoidance of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. In this he received support from the elite of German film makers – Volker Schlöndorff, Werner Herzog, Michael Verhoeven, Margarethe von Trotta. The commission, for its part, insisted that it had faulted the film on grounds of bad taste and prurience. The result was a total impasse. However, the deadlock has now been broken: the American Motion Picture Academy has itself nominated the movie for an Oscar in the 'best script' category. We await the Oscar jury's judgement on Salomon. □

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Profile

A role in ROK



Bertha Leverton.

Photo: Newman.

The tiny Regent Street office of the Reunion of Kindertransports (ROK) in many ways reflects the character of its occupant, founder Bertha Leverton. Mrs Leverton is as busy as the room looks and sounds, with cardboard index files covering every available surface, constantly ringing telephone and clicking computer keyboard.

Bertha Engelhard grew up in Munich, an extrovert girl whose sporting prowess earned her acclaim usually reserved for boys alone. When not helping her parents in the laundry they opened after the Nazi takeover, she took part in bicycle races and swimming galas.

In 1939 15-year old Bertha and her younger brother and sister came to Britain on kindertransports, and were taken in by a couple from Coventry. This was not a happy time for Bertha. Her 'foster parents' were non-Jews and the children had no access to any Jewish religious activities. They, moreover, spent a large part of the Blitz in the centre of Coventry (a prime target for bombers). When the family was eventually evacuated to North Yorkshire Bertha found employment in a cotton mill. The fostering couple relieved her of her unopened pay packet at the end of every week. Worse still the surrogate father pressed his attentions on her; the situation was becoming intolerable.

However, 1943 brought wonderful news. The Engelhards were alive and well. They had escaped Germany in 1940, across the Alps, and had found refuge in Portugal. It was to be another year before new legislation made parents resident in neutral coun-

tries who had children under 15 years living in Britain eligible for entry visas. The Engelhards arrived in 1944, on Bertha's 21st birthday. Perhaps it is the deep pleasure with which Mrs Leverton remembers this occasion, still evident as she recounts the tale, that unconsciously inspired her later efforts in organising the ROK?

The moment they saw the thin and ragged state of their children the Engelhards took them away from their foster parents and went to Birmingham, where they moved into a one bedroomed flat. The next year, aged 22, Bertha married.

She and her husband built up a business and raised three children, two girls and a boy. Tragically, the boy died of leukemia when he was only 21. The shock tore the fabric of the marriage. Bertha moved to London, to run the jewellery wholesaling business her late son had established.

Twelve years ago, Bertha remarried, and as Mrs Leverton stopped work for the first time in her life.

The realisation, in 1988, that she had been in Britain for 49 years made her conceive the idea of a 50th anniversary reunion. The rest, as they say, is history.

With the help of her husband, Sidney, Bertha approached the media around the world in order to contact all *Kinder*.

The success of the first, 1,000-strong, reunion is well documented. ROK now has active branches in the U.K., the U.S.A. and Israel. From the first ROK offices, donated by the AJR, the book '*I Came Alone...*' was collated (reviewed in *AJR Information*, October 1990). The present office, donated by Erich Reich, keeps, with the invaluable assistance of Rita Rosenbaum, records of the *Kinder* worldwide and produces the monthly ROK Newsletter.

Bertha Leverton is a plain speaker. She makes no bones about the fact that she has never received a full education, and her honesty is disarming. But, whatever Bertha lacks in expertise she doubly makes up for in enthusiasm and energy.

□ M.N.

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Fate lends a hand



Ruth and Morris Golden.

One needs a large scale map of Florida to locate Port St Lucie, a thriving town, with a growing Jewish community, 40 miles north of West Palm Beach on the Atlantic.

For the last seven years Renee Lee (Day Centre assistant organiser) and her husband David have spent their winter holidays there, making quite a few friends at the Port St Lucie Temple Beth-Israel.

Last January, they were invited to the home of congregants Abe and Senta Koren.

Over coffee conversation touched on many topics, eventually settling on the subject of their roots. Senta, née Ebersohn, had gone to school in Berlin, where she had

a particularly close friend called Ruth Rosendorf.

The girls were together until excluded by the Nazis. Senta Ebersohn went to Poland with her family, and Ruth Rosendorf, who married in 1937, lost all contact with her.

Senta, however, survived Poland and lived in Israel for many years. She married Abe Koren, had two children, and eventually moved to the U.S.A., where they settled.

Over the second cup of coffee Senta mentioned she had found out some years back that her friend Ruth had married a British national named Golden.

There was a pause as Renee said in a very quiet voice 'I know a Ruth Golden'.

The impact of this statement cannot be described!

Everyone went totally silent for what seemed an eternity.

It seemed that after over 50 years without contact here was a chance that Senta's friend Ruth might be found.

She had to wait a few more days until Renee returned to England and could establish if Ruth Golden was indeed the long lost Ruth Rosendorf.

She was! (Moreover, Ruth had been certain that Senta had perished in Poland with her family.)

One can only imagine the shrieks of joy, mingled with sobs, as extended telephone calls re-united them.

As an added bonus, Ruth Golden found another school friend who lives close to the Korens in America – Senta Weissmann now Senta Potter.

This was one invitation to coffee that will remain unforgettable!

□ D.L.

READERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

AJR Information has thousands of readers. For all that the majority of them share broadly similar origins, their interests and preferences do not necessarily tally in every respect. In fact, the section of the community the journal seeks to serve is quite widely diversified in taste and outlook – in addition to which, a steadily growing section of our readership belong to the second generation.

It is in order to gauge the extent of this diversification that the enclosed questionnaire has been devised. We need to understand our readership better in order to provide a service which reflects their wishes and needs.

The questionnaire is constructed in such a way that, given a sufficient response, we will be able to judge which elements constitute strengths, to be built upon, and to identify weaknesses. *AJR Information* belongs to AJR members and it is up to you to tell us what you require from your journal.

In order to facilitate your replies a pre-paid envelope has been enclosed with the questionnaire. No postage stamp is required.

This poll is being conducted purely to ascertain the effectiveness of *AJR Information* as the organ of the AJR.

What we are trying to do to narrow the gap between those who write and those who read the journal is part of a series of innovations designed to extend AJR services, the first of which is the extension of Day Centre hours (see page 8).

It is important that as many members as possible respond to our request for their ideas in order for us to gain a balanced view.

Prize Draw

All replies with the relevant section completed will be entered in a Prize Draw, the winner of which will be announced in a future edition.

We look forward to hearing from all our members in the very near future. □

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Reviews

Pursuit of the unspeakable

Peter Z. Malkin, *ICH JAGTE EICHMANN*, trls Dietlind Kaiser, Piper, 1990, DM 39.80



Eichmann on trial.

Piper Verlag.

This is the German version of a book originally published in the United States. For all that it is a sombre subject, *Hunting Eichmann*, curiously, has passages which rival the events in Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana*, or some James Bond stories. The reader should not expect accounts of legendary flawless operations by the Israeli Secret Service; rather he encounters some very hard-trying Jewish young men and a woman in an all but impossible situation.

Eichmann is first spotted by an Israeli agent in Argentina. Though the man is an excellent interrogator of Nazis, his other actions are so inept that he nearly aborts the operation at the outset.

It takes the joint Mossad-Beth Shin team some time before they make up their minds that the suspect is, in effect, their target. Ricardo Klement lives with his family in a shabby house in a run-down Buenos Aires suburb. They watch him get off the bus night after night, an ordinary middle-aged drudge coming home from work.

During the preparatory moves the team rent eight 'safe' houses, each one of which proves unsuitable for different reasons. The one they finally decide to use is like an ice box, without any heating; the strategic planners had forgotten that in those lati-

tudes it is going on for winter. By the same token they are far too lightly clad, without raincoats in incessant downpours.

The actual 'snatch' is breathtakingly described. The back-up pretends to be repairing his broken-down Mercedes opposite the target's house. Malkin, an unarmed combat champion, grabs 'Klement' by the throat as he walks from the bus stop. He could easily have killed him, but the aim is to get him into the Mercedes. The back-up lifts the limp victim by the legs and they are off to the villa hidden in rain-sodden isolation.

Baffled

Eichmann betrays his identity when the captors call him by his SS number. They keep him in a little room chained by an ankle. They never mistreat him but cannot but rejoice in the fear of the creature who once lorded it over doomed Jews. Malkin, a bit of a loner, breaks the non-talking rule and his conversations with the Nazi monster are among the best parts of his book. Eichmann, though, remains an enigma. He had a Jewish boyhood friend; he despised Streicher's pornographic anti-semitism; he had studied Jewish affairs, including some Hebrew and Yiddish. In captivity he was obedient and co-operative, but stubbornly adhered to his belief in Hitler, whose will he had carried out to the last. The author is still baffled, as well he might be.

□ John Rossall

Refutation

Arnold Paucker, *JEWISH RESISTANCE IN GERMANY*

Dr Paucker refutes the widely held belief that the German Jews went like lambs to their slaughter. As the professional historian he is, he allows no exaggerated claims and never resorts to purple passages. Everything is painstakingly documented in five-and-a-half pages of footnotes. What emerges is that most of the resistance came from the Left and the young; but the Jewish 'authorities' and the Jewish Press often acted bravely, even courageously. (The pamphlet, in English, is an extended version of a lecture given in November 1988 at the German Resistance Memorial Centre in Berlin. Copies can be obtained, free of charge, from the Leo Baeck Institute, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1N 2BH.)

□ J.R.

JFK – hit and myth

For all that Hollywood is the ultimate dream factory, it occasionally registers the malaise of its own society like no other film industry in the world. In the 1930s, when U.S. big business was in the habit of riding roughshod over the little man, Hollywood made films like Frank Capra's *Mr Smith goes to Washington*, where James Stewart took on the Establishment on behalf of the powerless.

If poverty amidst plenty preoccupied interwar America, the focus subsequently shifted to race relations and Vietnam. The race issue propelled the black film director Spike Lee to fame, and the war in S.E. Asia provided Vietnam veteran Oliver Stone with his launching pad in the film *Platoon*. Since then Stone has become one of the most talked-about movie makers in the world.

Talked-about in the context of Oliver Stone means controversial. *JFK*, his three-hour epic about the Kennedy assassination, is a 'message picture', a sombre version of Frank Capra with Kevin Costner's District Attorney as the James Stewart of the 1990s.

Costner is the ideal partner for Stone. His own Oscar-festooned *Dances with Wolves* conveyed the message that the West was won by rapacious White men from morally superior Red Indians. The film carried conviction as regards White villainy, but mythologised the fierce Sioux into paragons of self-restraint and tolerance living in tune with nature.

JFK, though shot in technicolour, adheres to the same black-and-white scheme. District Attorney Jim Garrison discovers that the official version of Kennedy's murder, as authenticated by the Warren Commission, is a high level cover-up. Worse, it is a tissue of lies – right from its starting premise that in Dallas on that fateful November day only three shots were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald, the lone assassin.

Plaster saints

Just as in *Dances with Wolves* the scenes of white villainy carry absolute conviction, so in *JFK* CIA dirty tricks, suborning of witnesses and media manipulation are entirely credible. By the same token, just as Costner's Sioux were plaster saints, so Stone's President Kennedy is a knight in shining armour. The director seems to be the only surviving believer in the myth of 'Camelot'. Leaving aside all the President's glaring character defects, Stone also

presents him as a dove over Vietnam and an advocate of equal rights for Blacks. There is no documented evidence for these assertions. On the other hand Lyndon Johnson who, in Stone's book, led the *coup d'état* against Kennedy at the behest of the military-industrial complex, introduced more equal rights legislation than any U.S. president.

As a piece of film-making *JFK* is impressive. The trouble with it is Oliver Stone's adherence to the old journalistic adage 'Don't print the truth, print the legend!'. Why, amid all the references to the Mob, doesn't he once allude to the Kennedys' own Mafia connections?

More importantly, the film has come out several years too late. At a time when the U.S. and the former U.S.S.R. were locked into a spiralling arms race the picture of Washington being manipulated by arms manufacturers and their henchmen in the Pentagon, the CIA, the judiciary and the media might have looked plausible – certainly more plausible than now that Yeltsin rules Russia. On the other hand, the fact that Yeltsin named his headquarters the White House could suggest that he, too, is a CIA operative. A possible *sujet* for another Oliver Stone picture, perhaps?

□ R.G.

Persecuted prosecutor

Ivan Klima, *JUDGE ON TRIAL*, trls. A. G. Brain, Chatto and Windus, 1991, £14.99

This is not so much a novel as a life story, a journey through the deep night of Central Europe; but it is also a work of fiction of the first order, worthy of comparison with Kafka and Dostoyevsky.

It cannot be read without close attention, for two themes are interwoven with great skill. One is the story of Judge Adam Kindl in Communist Czechoslovakia, told in the third person singular; the other is narrated by Adam the child and youth, in the first person singular, until the characters 'meet' at the end. (All the chapters of Adam's personal Odyssey carry references to the *Waters of Lethe* – the river of forgetfulness in Greek myth.)

At the start Judge Kindl who opposes capital punishment is assigned to a murder trial to ensnare him in State intrigues. His masters want the accused executed, to compromise the judge in the eyes of quasi-refuseniks who consider him a sympathizer; if he thwarts his superiors he will be 'hanging' himself professionally.

Preparations for the trial run right through the plot. The accused is a small-time crook charged with killing his landlady, but Kindl has doubts on that score.

The main thread of the plot interlinks with others. Both the judge and his wife are drawn into emotional entanglements with other people – which in one case almost results in a suicide.

The Fortress Town

The *Lethe*, or memory section of the book, is strongly autobiographical. Adam is whisked away with his mother and young brother to the 'Fortress Town' (Theresienstadt) as a boy. He grows up preserved from the full impact of horror by his youth. In the 'fortress' conditions, though awful, are bearable; the dangers are the incessant transports to the unknown. He plays at being a prisoner, or a food thief, or a helper with the sick. But one day his best friend, an orthodox young Jew, disappears and that brings reality home to him.

The Russians liberate him and his family. Then, after a brief period of euphoria, begins the awful story of a people cheated of liberation. His father, an inventor and convinced Communist, is arrested and imprisoned on a trumped-up charge. Dubcek's Prague Spring deceives them all until the Russians come again, this time as the foe.

Throughout it all Adam studies and practises law. This confronts him with one of the key dilemmas of the human race: how to reconcile justice with the exigencies of real life. But the philosophical, even metaphysical themes are not obtrusive – the human story takes precedence over all others.

□ John Rossall

Music to our ears

Rilke *NEUE GEDICHTE* (New Poems) trls. by Stephen Cohn, Carcanet Press, 1992

Under the heading 'Rainer Maria Rilke über die Judenfrage' the *Jüdische Rundschau* of May 1935 excerpted letters the poet had written a decade earlier to a Jewish acquaintance of his. The item was no doubt prompted by the editor's wish to demonstrate to readers coming under growing anti-Semitic pressure that at least one highly regarded representative of 'Aryan' culture had not so long ago declared himself a friend.

Indeed the poet had in these three letters spoken of the Jewish faith as one to which it was not possible to be converted at any given point in time: a Jew, he said, was born with, and into, a unique spiritual allegiance in which he remained forever rooted. He considered it a privilege to be a Jew and thus to belong to a people whose members (not unlike Arabs, and perhaps also Russian Orthodox believers) are from birth at once part of a nation and of a religion. He spoke of the special contribution the Jewish people had made throughout history towards the wellbeing of mankind. And he declared himself in favour of the Zionist ideal.

Rilke in English

It is interesting to ponder these thoughts in the context of the collection of Rilke's poems of 1907–8, beautifully translated by Stephen Cohn (whose earlier translation of the *Elegies* we reviewed in December 1989). As before, the poems are set out in both languages, thus affording special enjoyment to the bilingual reader. But, as Stephen Spender points out in a *Sunday Telegraph* review, the present translation is poetry in its own right. Cohn is clearly an accomplished poet who has achieved the virtually impossible: an English version of German poetry which does not sacrifice any part of the original meaning upon the altar of precise translation. Quite simply this book is, in the words of its Introduction, 'Rilke-in-English'.

And 'Rilke-on-Judaism' is reflected in some of the most striking poems in the collection. They are based on familiar Old Testament stories. There are, for example, the movingly haunting lines of *Abishag* and *David Sings Before Saul* which display an amazing insight into the hearts and minds of the Shunammite virgin, the aged king and, by contrast, the young David. *Josuah's Ordinance* is a powerful account of the battle of Gideon the day the sun stood still.

Painting in words

Other poems have a New Testament connection, or are inspired by classical mythology. Elsewhere we see nature: landscapes, creatures, flowers and trees – painting in words, a transformation into language of the visual arts. Perhaps that is the secret of Cohn's success, since his own background is that of a distinguished sculptor and painter.

If there was any doubt about Rilke's place in the ranks of outstanding neo-Classical writers, this book dispels it. Rilke is a great German poet. Through Stephen Cohn he has become an English one as well.

□ David Maier



Letters to the Editor

STREET THEATRE REPRISED

Sir – While appreciating your erudition and humour I must take issue with your comments on the protest against the imprisonment of Mordechai Vanunu.

Israel's arms policy is totally immoral. In return for billions of dollars of U.S. arms aid annually it has supported various corrupt South American regimes Washington dare not back openly. Israel has also given military help to South Africa and helped the regime to break sanctions.

As to nuclear weapons, fall-out from an explosion can be carried all over the world contaminating both bombers and bombed; this would be particularly true of Israel since her enemies are adjacent. It is the principle of their use Vanunu was protesting against; if Israel wanted to bring charges against him it should have done so, and not have kidnapped him.

Teignmouth Road
London NW2

(Dr) T. L. Lukes

Sir – Having read this article more than once, I still don't know anything concrete about the 'minor production' which presumably is the main subject of the piece. What is its storyline? When and where was it performed, and by whom? Harold Pinter? Alexei Sayle? Bruce Kent?

I have, however, learnt more about the Editor's by now well-known prejudice against CND, and his views on Harold Pinter and Alexei Sayle's wife.

Prior Park
London SE3

Kenneth Ambrose

BOUQUET

Sir – I admire your wide knowledge of so many subjects, as well as your wonderfully easy style. When I finish reading – or devouring – one issue of AJR Information I can hardly await the next one!

Grove Hall Court

Hall Road, London, NW8

Mrs A. Kaufmann

THE EMPEROR'S SHILLING

Sir – Martin Goldenberg's tribute to his father's career in the old Austrian army reminds one of the relatively close ties between it and the Empire's Jewish population; close at least in comparison with other countries.

In a climate of rising anti-semitism about the turn of the century, the Imperial Army

was among the institutions least affected. And compared with, say, Prussia, where a Jew could not even get a reserve commission, it may surprise some people that in Franz Joseph's army five unbaptised Jews reached the rank of general. No wonder Jews were among his most loyal subjects.

Chapmans Lane
Deddington, Oxon

Francis Steiner

TROUBLE WITH SURNAMES

Sir – The only survivor of his family, my late husband was persuaded, to his perpetual subsequent mortification, to change his surname; he thought the natives might find Wolowicz offensive to their possibly lethal prejudices. Had he checked he would have found that Walton means foreigner, from an association of walnuts, as foreign nuts, with fringe settlements of immigrants. I wonder how many others fell into a similar trap?

St Swithun Street
Winchester

Gertrud Walton

FOR THE RECORD

Sir – I recently advertised in *AJR Information* for music suitable for an entertainment programme for our older members.

I am now writing to place on record my deepest gratitude for all the responses I have received. I am quite overwhelmed – both by people's interest and generosity, and by the quantity of material available.

People have been willing to lend – and even donate – music which has been part of their lives since early childhood, carrying happy memories of a bygone era, and the theatres, concerts, cinemas and dance halls of their youth.

So many members have had their own stories to tell about how they came by the music, and how it was transmitted safely to Great Britain – in one case, via New York, following a last-minute change of plan on the part of its owner.

Thank you, everyone, for giving me such an enjoyable and fascinating project for 1992.

Chiswick
London

Angela Arratoon

QUOTE MISQUOTE

Sir – In your February profile of Rabbi Felix Carlebach one of the last sentences does not make sense.

'Do you think of yourself as lucky when you look back at your life?' the Rabbi answered: 'No, I was never lucky, just humble and grateful'.

Now I ask you: what has the one got to do with the other? I'd like to think that the good rabbi was misquoted.

College Crescent
London NW3

Mrs M. Stern

I assure you he was not. Ed.

A LESS THAN SPLENDID RECORD

Sir – I do not agree that hostels were best for us. Unable to get privacy I could not even find a place to cry without being noticed. At Tunbridge Wells we did not even have privacy in the bathroom (until I complained).

All Lady Reading was prepared to do for me was employ me as a kitchen maid. She was also a snob: offered clothing coupons for us she said 'Hand-me-downs are good enough for my refugees'.

Brookdale Road, SE6 Mrs A. Saville, ARCM

CONDUCTOR'S CONDUCT

Sir – I read Carl Flesch's tribute to Furtwängler and your own highly critical comments with interest.

After the death of Arthur Nikisch, my aunt, Louise Wolff, engaged Furtwängler as his successor at the Berlin Philharmonic Concerts, and he was a frequent visitor to my aunt's house.

There can be no doubt that he interceded on behalf of Klemperer, Bruno Walter and Max Reinhardt, genuinely believing that he could resist Nazi interference in musical life. He continued to conduct works by Paul Hindemith, which brought him into direct conflict with Goebbels. But he always maintained that he did not want to become an emigrant. Perhaps the best way to sum up his character is to quote Der Freischütz: *Schwach war er, doch kein Bösewicht.*

Ladbroke Grove
London W11

Lilli Wolff

It may interest you to hear that, according to a diary entry in September 1939, Furtwängler expected Nazi victory in the war because 'men cannot cope with too much freedom'. Ed.

TAKE A STAND

Sir – M. and E. Goldenberg demand that the AJR take a stand in public against the proposed asylum restrictions. AJR members have been very generously admitted to this country at the time of the Hitler persecution. It ill behoves *them* to demand of

Britain to admit yet more refugees. What would the Goldenbergs say if, having offered a room to a homeless refugee, they found that, instead of gratitude, he was now demanding space for another half dozen?

Bishops Close

G. Schmerling

Old Coulsdon, Surrey

BRICKBAT

Sir – You obviously haven't read your Le Carré too well, or you couldn't write that 'Karla' appears in *The Spy who came in from the Cold*; therefore one wonders what reason you have to suggest the author had Markus Wolf, or any other living person, in mind when he created his 'Karla'.

Bath Road

William W. Brown

Reading

LORD WHITE

Hanson Trust co-director Lord White

Has at last seen the light,

Had a bout of bravado

In the State of Colorado

And declared that Herr Hitler was right

Holland Park Ave

J. Rotter

London W11

AJR BOUQUET

Sir – Just a year ago I started to visit the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre at Cleve Road and my husband, who couldn't walk very well, joined me on a few occasions. We were both very impressed by the efficiency with which it was run. My husband, who was a professional violinist, was most impressed by the high standard of the entertainment.

I started attending the painting classes and have received great encouragement as a beginner.

The AJR is a great organisation for helping all those elderly and lonely people. May you, with the help of your wonderful staff and volunteers, continue to do so.

Wembley
Middx

Mrs R.N.

Last year in Karlsbad



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The Willner family's hotel, circa 1936.

After 52 years, I let myself be persuaded to return to my place of birth. Pre-war Karlsbad was, of course, one of the leading spas in Europe, drawing many visitors (*Kurgäste*) from all parts of the world. The 12 or so springs, the best known being the famous 'Sprudel',

were renowned as a cure for liver, gall, kidney and stomach complaints.

On arrival, it took me half a day to reorientate myself and then my first task was to locate our old house. As I stood in front of it memories of childhood, happy days spent with my parents and numerous relatives flashed across my mind. I did not ring the door bell. A few metres from my home stood our beautiful synagogue – now only a brown plaque inscribed in Czech and fixed to a white marble wall of the Hotel Bristol remains.

At the Grand Hotel Pupp, known in better days to most of the European aristocracy, the old splendour was still visible, but only just. Forty years of Communist rule had left their mark. In the huge ballroom, with its impressive columns and ornate ceiling, once graced by Polish counts, Hungarian barons, German professionals and business tycoons with their resplendent ladies, a four-piece rock band now played the latest hits; bottles of Coca-Cola adorned many tables as a reminder that this was Karlsbad 1991.

My last port of call was my old *Gymnasium* on the banks of the river Tepla. I stood on the same stairs leading to the front entrance which featured in an essay I wrote in the first form entitled 'My way to school'. It concluded with the phrase 'and as I climb the stairs, I think to myself, I wish I was on the way down again'. My German master just put a red line through it with the remark 'frech' (insolent).

□ Stuart Willner

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain advises Members and Friends that the Annual General Meeting will be held on

Thursday 11 June 1992, 7.30 p.m.

at

15 CLEVE ROAD, LONDON NW6

A talk will be given by

Richard Grunberger
(Editor AJR Information)

Full details and Annual Report will appear in the May issue.

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

15 Cleve Road, London NW6 3RL
Tel. 071 328 0208

Morning Activities – Bridge, kalookie, scrabble, chess, etc., keep fit, discussion group, choir (*Mondays*), art class (*Tuesdays and Thursdays*).

Afternoon entertainment –

APRIL

- Wednesday 1* April Fool's Day – Geoffrey Strum (Tenor) accompanied by Johnny Walton (Piano)
- Thursday 2* The Pleasures of Music – Lynn Hendry (Piano) & David Bartov (Violin)
- Monday 6* A. Singing for Fun – The Longford Singers with Margaret Eaves at the Piano
B. Outing to Althorpe House
- Tuesday 7* Musical Gems from the Past – Bernard Wilcox (Tenor) & Valerie Monese (Soprano) accompanied by Leslie Barnes (Piano)
- Wednesday 8* Ann Warnes & Geoffrey Whitworth Entertain on Horn & Piano
- Thursday 9* Israeli & Other Folk Songs – Max Witriol (Guitar)
- Monday 13* The Richmond String Quartet
- Tuesday 14* Melody Hour – Carole Staff (Soprano) & Jaque Canderrowlem (Tenor) accompanied by Rosa Butwick (Piano)
- Wednesday 15* Jack Davidoff & Friends Entertain
- Thursday 16* Hans Freund: PESACH is Coming
- Monday 20* CLOSED
- Tuesday 21* A PESACH Musical Entertainment by Rev. Stephen Robins – Cantor of Edware Synagogue
- Wednesday 22* Jack & Rita Davis Entertain with a Musical Programme at PESACH
- Thursday 23* Two In Harmony At PESACH – Natalie Sinclair (Soprano) accompanied by Jules Rubin (Piano)
- Monday 27* Solo Piano Recital – Debbie O'Brien
- Tuesday 28* The Beaufort Ensemble
- Wednesday 29* Demonstration by Members of Irma Mayer's Keep-Fit Class from Sobel House

The AJR at Work

DAY CENTRE HOURS EXTENDED

The run-away success and popularity of the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre has persuaded us (as foreshadowed in our March issue) to extend its weekday opening hours into the late afternoon and to offer regular Sunday afternoon sessions.

Commencing from 10 May, opening hours and costs will be as follows:

Monday to Thursday	9.30 a.m.–3.30 p.m.	£3.00
	3.30 p.m.–7 p.m.	£2.00
	All day	£5.00
Sunday (except Open Day, Sunday 17 May)	2.00 p.m.–7 p.m.	£2.50
FIRST SUNDAY and FIRST WEEK of EXTENDED HOURS (3.30 p.m.–7 p.m. only) will be FREE OF CHARGE		

Volunteer drivers urgently required

from early May for extended Day Centre hours.

We need help with a variety of tasks including driving members to and from the centre, serving refreshments, helping on reception etc.

Please ring Laura Howe on 071-483 2536 between 9.30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Thursday or between 9.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. on Friday.

- Thursday 30* Connaught Opera – Music For You – Maria Arakie (Soprano) – Glenn Wilson (Baritone) – accompanied by Carol Wells (Piano)

- MAY
- Monday 4* CLOSED
- Tuesday 5* Fun with Music – Sue Parker (Piano)
- Wednesday 6* London Ladies Choir
- Thursday 7* The Story & Music of Lerner & Loewe – Presented by Audrey Samson

You may choose, according to your inclination and stamina, to attend either all day or an early or late session only (but please give prior notice to facilitate catering and transport, if required).

The weekday programme to 3.30 p.m. will remain as listed in the Diary. Late afternoon and Sunday sessions will offer refreshments including a light supper. Members may play cards or chess, watch an occasional video show, buy goods at the Day Centre shop, sit out in the garden on warm evenings or just chat with friends.

We shall be happy to welcome new members who, in addition to the regular activities, may also take part in our popular outings and away weekends.

A special welcome is extended to all members of the AJR Club to participate fully in all the Day Centre has to offer.

Inquiries to Sylvia Matus or Renee Lee at the Day Centre (071-328 0208). □

AJR BOUQUET

Sirs – To begin with allow me to say that you are wonderful!

Having become used to the levels of efficiency in this country (Zimbabwe) I was surprised at your immediate reaction to my request on behalf of my sister. Your findings are such that I can put my mind at rest.

Believe me, it is nice to know that there is help when it is needed.

St Luke's Ave.,
Bulawayo

Mrs G. Hope

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Monday 11 May–Thursday 14 May:
ISRAELI WEEK**

In keeping with our Israeli theme staff and members are invited to attend in traditional Sabra costume. The menus for the week's meals will also have an Eastern Mediterranean flavour.

**Sunday 17 May at 2.30 p.m.:
OPEN DAY**

Entrance £2 to include refreshments

New interests – New friends

As you get older and less active your social life tends to shrink – and loneliness looms large. If you have come to this country as a refugee, perhaps losing part of your family in the Holocaust, such problems may magnify. What you need are new interests, new friends, or perhaps an opportunity of meeting old friends long neglected.

The AJR Day Centre is offering many of our members a new outlook on life. Here mental and physical stimulation are part of the daily bill of fare. Mixed group activities to choose from range from keep-fit classes through art lessons, choral singing to lectures, talks and discussions. If your preference is for more individualistic pastimes, such as a quiet game of scrabble or cards – from kalooki to bridge – or if you are a chess player, amateur or master, you will find willing partners.

But problems of loneliness and lack of stimulation are not the only ones that assail the elderly. Bread-and-butter concerns can be just as pressing. That is why the Day Centre runs weekly drop-in advice sessions – on Tuesday 10 a.m.–12 p.m. – at which Agi Alexander, AJR Welfare Rights Adviser, aided by Norah Gittins, counsels members on pensions, housing benefits and general financial questions.

Sometimes it is enough just to be able to pour out your troubles to a willing listener. Our in-house social workers, Susie Kaufman and Eleanor Angel, are available to lend an ear, to sort out problems, or just to offer a sympathetic shoulder.

For many members, the highlight of the Day Centre visit is the afternoon entertainment. The nature of the programme can vary widely – from Flamenco dancers to string quartets – but the standards remain consistently high.

In May – from Monday 11 to Thursday 14 – the Centre will be celebrating the anniversary of Israel's Independence with a special 'Israeli Week' gala. If you, or your friends, wish to attend please contact Sylvia Matus or Renee Lee on: 071-328 0208.

□ K.G.



The daily keep-fit class at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre in full swing.

Photos: Newman.



Some visitors enjoy more sedate pastimes.

Cleve Road Gala

'It's better than the Ritz', a visitor to the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre during the recent Gala Week was heard to exclaim after sampling the generous three-course lunch. A slight exaggeration, perhaps, yet a genuine expression of the ambience of physical and mental well-being engendered by the centre.

Specially mailed invitations to all members asking them to bring along guests – free of charge – for this special week produced a far higher than usual number of visitors.

Staff and volunteers alike coped admirably with the extra influx, visibly enjoying the added bustle and excitement. It seems that they will have to accept this as the norm in future, since many of the guests are planning to become regulars. They very much enjoyed the entertainment and facilities on offer.

The centre's in-house shop is also doing a roaring trade. Members, especially those

who experience difficulties in getting out and about, can avail themselves of this valuable service without, thanks to our volunteer drivers, having to worry how to transport their goods home.

Popular event

A free Prize Draw, for a gift voucher from a well known high-street store, was featured as part of the Gala Week special events. This proved so popular that it is now going to become a regular part of the daily entertainment. Entry in the draw will, of course, continue to be free.

As I shared a lunch table with three members I was fascinated by the way the conversation moved from the finer points of chess, via the latest current jokes, to theology during the consumption of the three-course meal. The after-dinner conversation revolved around the upcoming day-trips announced that morning, especially the planned coach outing to see *Don Giovanni* the following week.

□ M.N.

AJR SOCIAL SERVICE DIARY

Attendance Allowance

In April 1992 a new benefit will come into being which will replace the Attendance Allowance, this will be called the Disability Living Allowance or DLA for short.

This will not affect those aged over 65 who are already in receipt of Attendance Allowance as their payments will continue unchanged. However, everyone, no matter what age, will be receiving a letter in due course from the Attendance Allowance Unit of the DSS explaining the changes. If any of our members who receive this letter require clarification in the matter please do not hesitate to contact us.

Bogus Callers

A sad sign of the times is the number of bogus callers now circulating in many areas. A recent case reported to us was that of two men calling at the door of one of our members saying they had been sent by the local council to value the premises in connection with the forthcoming Council Tax. We would like our members to be aware that this internal valuation is totally unnecessary as it can be carried out from the outside of the premises without any tenants being disturbed. Please be careful of any callers and do not be embarrassed to check their credentials before allowing entry. □

Agi Alexander, Head of Social Services

FAMILY EVENTS

Birth

Dunston John and Susie Dunston (nee Shiffman) are delighted to announce the arrival, on 19 February, of Naomi Elisabeth. A sister for Mathew, first granddaughter for Fred and the late Liesl Dunston, seventh grandchild for Ken and Ellen Shiffman, and seventh great-grandchild for Sadie Shiffman.

Deaths

Nelki Wolf Nelki, of 43 Nightingale Lane, London SW12, died 10 January 1992. Sadly mourned and missed by all his family and many friends.

Pastor Hynek Pastor passed away on 1 March 1992, aged 88 years after a long illness, bravely borne. We mourn for our dear Hynek, now at peace. He will be sadly missed by his wife, son, family and friends.
Striem Gerda Jeanette Striem (nee Luster), widow of the late Hermann Striem. Born in Zehlendorf, Berlin. So deeply mourned by daughter

Jennifer, and Stanley, Timothy and Jeremy.

Summerfield Margot Summerfield of 81 Holmefield Court, Belsize Grove, London NW3 passed away on 27 February 1992 aged 85. Deeply mourned by her twin sons George and Peter, daughter-in-law Marianne, grandchildren, family and friends.

In memoriam

Weiss Karl Weiss who left me heartbroken March 1982, also Tommy who died suddenly March 1956 not quite eleven years old. 'To the world they were only grains of sand, to me they were the whole world.'

Miscellaneous

Exchange a 5 bed semi in Vernon Drive, Stanmore, Middx for a three bed house or flat in any part of NW London. Phone evenings only: 081-202 7117.

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empathetic counselling. Home visits available. Tel: 0923-820306.

Fully qualified violinist, young and enthusiastic, seeks pupils and concerts through the community. Phone Emmanuel Emerich: 081-208 2475.

Ladies alteration work collected and delivered if required. For quick service phone: 081-455 0168.

TV researcher is looking for children hidden from the Nazis during the Holocaust. Phone Sue Cohen: 0702 333050.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes



Oskar Kokoschka's portrait of Karl Kraus.
(Leicestershire Museums and Art Galleries.)

Rembrandt van Rijn ranks among the all-time greats. Much of his work can now be seen in London. *Rembrandt: the Master and His Workshop* which concentrates on his paintings is at the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery (until 24 May). His etchings are simul-

A picturesque tale

Christie's auction of Hans Holbein's *Lady with a Squirrel and Starling*, scheduled for this month, has already set off shock waves because the picture will probably go abroad and thereby deplete Britain's treasury of art. On the one hand, thanks to a wealthy and discriminating aristocracy this country had a disproportionately larger share of the world's great art than of her great painters; on the other it has long suffered the drain of art treasures to owners and museums abroad.

In the 17th century Cromwell sold off most of the collection amassed by his artloving predecessor Charles I. (Fortunately, perhaps because he saw himself as incarnating Roman *virtu*, Cromwell kept Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* at Hampton Court.) A hundred years later the dissolute grandson of Sir Robert Walpole, the first ever Prime Minister, flogged off all the paintings the latter had installed at Houghton Hall, his Palladian mansion in

taneously on display in the Gallery's Sunley Room, and *Drawings by Rembrandt and His Circle* can be seen at the British Museum (until 4 August).

Otto Dix (1891-1961) was the foremost German realist artist of the 20th century. The first major representation of his work in Britain takes place at the Tate Gallery (until 17 May). It marks the centenary of Dix's birth.

While at the Tate do see *Brice Marden: Prints* (until 21 June). Marden is a leading contemporary painter-engraver. Also at the Tate until 26 July is a display of David Hockney's paintings.

There is still time to see the Mantegna exhibition at the Royal Academy (until 5 April). Andrea Mantegna (c. 1431-1506) was one of the greatest artists of the Italian Renaissance, contemporary with da Vinci and Bellini. The exhibition brings together more than 150 paintings, drawings and prints from all over the world.

An important exhibition '*The Expressionist Face: Graphic Art in Germany 1905-1925*', sponsored by Lufthansa, is being held at the Manchester City Art Gallery (until 4 May). It contains over 80 prints by such outstanding artists as Schmidt-Rottluff, Munch, Dix, Kollwitz, Kokoschka, Pechstein, Beckmann and Barlach.

Zeit-Mauer is the title of an exhibition at the Goethe Institut (until 25 April) which attempts to explore the effect of German reunification on artists' work and ideas. □

Norfolk. Sold to Catherine the Great to pay for the grandson's huge gambling debts, the Walpole pictures formed the nucleus of the Hermitage collection at St Petersburg.

In the early 19th century Houghton was inherited by the 1st Marquess of Cholmondeley, whose family seat was in Cheshire. Reluctant to move, he shut up Houghton Hall, which was only reopened around 1920 by the 5th Marquess and his wife. The Marchioness, being a Sassoon heiress, was Jewish. (Her two best known male relatives were, respectively, Siegfried of *Memoirs of a Foxhunting Man* fame, and the notorious social climber Philip, recipient of a telegram one Easter that read 'Christ is risen, why not invite him for lunch?')

Of course, anyone keen to undertake serious social climbing in this country needs to read *Debretts*, and acquaint himself with the pronunciation of all names listed therein. On a famous occasion the confidence trickster Horatio Bottomley phoned the Marquess of Cholmondeley, pronouncing the name as it is spelt. 'Lord Chumly is out' said the butler frostily, 'who shall I say

SB's Column

60 Years ago. 1932 contained many magical musical moments. Fritz Kreisler enchanted audiences with the long-running operetta *Sissy*. Fritz Massary scored an immense success in Berlin and Vienna in Oscar Straus' *Eine Frau, die weiss, was sie will*. Robert Stolz composed *Venus in Seide*, and Paul Abraham followed his *Blume von Hawaii* with *Ball im Savoy*, a resounding success.

Moser videos. Many of the best-loved Hans Moser sketches are now obtainable as videos in Austrian book and record shops, ranging from *Es schlägt 13* and *Hofrat Geiger* to *Ober, zahlen* and *Hallo, Dienstmann*.

Birthdays. Käthe Gold, just turned 85, has had one of the longest careers on the German-speaking stage. A child actress during the first world war, she impressed later on in the classical repertoire; engaged by the Vienna 'Burg' in 1947, she stayed there for over 40 years until her recent retirement. Her reputation in Shakespeare, Ibsen, Shaw and Strindberg roles became legendary. Eric Leinsdorf, the Vienna-born conductor, is 80 years old. Assistant to Toscanini in Salzburg in the Thirties, he emigrated to the United States and worked for many years at the San Francisco opera house as well the New York 'Met' where he became musical consultant to Rudolf Bing. The bass Otto Edelmann, celebrated his 75th birthday. His Hans Sachs was enthusiastically received at Bayreuth, and his Baron Ochs (reputedly the best since Richard Mayr) earned critical acclaim when the new Salzburg Festspielhaus opened in 1960.

Obituary. Martin Held, who died at 83, a heavyweight in the Jannings tradition, was a member of the Berlin Schollertheater for many decades. He also appeared in many films, most notably in *Rosen für den Staatsanwalt* (seen in London in 1959). □

called?' 'Mister Horatio Bumly' was the conman's deft reply.

But to return to the Sassoon- (and Rothschild-) descended 5th Marchioness of Cholmondeley. It was thanks to her wealth and shared interest in the arts that Houghton Hall was restored and improved after a century's closure and dereliction. It was also she who found Holbein's *Lady with a Squirrel and Starling* hanging neglected on a back stairs at Cholmondeley, Cheshire, and had it authenticated before restoring it to its rightful place. This happens to be the painting now expected to fetch around £20 million at Christie's. □ R.G.

Premier from Pinsk (Part 2)

In the second extract from his book
OLD ADAM NEW EVES (Vision Press, £8.95)
Richard Grunberger continues the life story of
Golda Meir.

His [Myerson's] objections were overcome, however, and three years after their marriage, in 1918, they found themselves in the Holy Land. Life was incredibly hard at Golda's chosen destination — a kibbutz where Myerson dug stones, she picked olives, and quinine tablets were handed out at every meal. Here he found the lack of privacy as little to his taste as the backbreaking work and the danger of malaria. 'I do not want to start a family', he told Golda, 'that will be brought up in a Childrens' House'. This time she relented. They went to Jerusalem and lived in a small flat lit by oil lamps, with a tin shack serving as kitchen, where their two children Menachem and Sarah were born. Soon after the move Golda became a full-time Zionist functionary, whose work increasingly took her abroad (mainly to the U.S.A.). This spelt the end of the marriage; thereafter Myerson lived in Haifa, and Golda — unless abroad — with the children in Tel Aviv.

Meanwhile her political career flourished. Elected to the *Histadrut* (Trade Union) executive she took charge of its Health Service. In 1938 she was Jewish representative at the Evian Conference on Refugees which President Roosevelt convened after Hitler's annexation of Austria. A year later, on the eve of hostilities, a British White Paper revoked the Balfour Declaration and shut the gates of Palestine on the Jews in their moment of greatest need. During the war, when the Royal Navy turned back refugee-laden coffin ships, like the *Struma*, which thereupon sank, Golda composed the text for English language leaflets and posters aimed at British personnel who, by denying the refugees entry, condemned them to certain death.

After the war, with the Palestine Question moving to the forefront of the world's political agenda, Golda's importance increased. She addressed the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry and soon after, when the British interned the male members of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, she became its acting head. Just before the Israeli War of Independence, disguised in Arab robes, she visited King Abdullah of Transjordan in a forlorn attempt at solicit-

ing his neutrality. On 14 May 1948 as the guns started firing, hers was one of the 38 signatures on Israel's Declaration of Independence read out at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

In June, with the war, in which Israel received Soviet arms, still raging, she was appointed Ambassador to Russia — the country she had left 42 years earlier. Phlebitis delayed her departure and, before she left, she attended her daughter Sarah's wedding, as did Myerson. He told reporters: 'I came to Palestine for one reason only: to be with Golda. But she was never there!'

Golda arrived in the Soviet capital in September. On the first Saturday after presenting her credentials she and an Embassy party attended service at Moscow Synagogue. There the rabbi, the only person apprised of the visit in advance, followed a prayer for Stalin with one for Golda Myerson, Ambassador of Israel. At this a wave of emotion rippled through the congregation of old men, who turned to stare up at her in the Womens' Gallery. When some weeks later, on the Jewish New Year, the Israelis attended divine service again, the streets around the synagogue were thronged with a crowd that brought the traffic to a halt. On the way back to the Embassy Golda had to ride in a taxi that inched its way through the heaving mass of humanity. She lowered the window and called out (in Yiddish), 'I thank you for having remained Jews!'

Doctors' Plot

Soviet officialdom quickly learnt the lesson. At Golda's next visit, on the Day of Atonement, policemen were posted all round the synagogue to press the crowd back. Soon after, Stalin's wrath descended: Jewish theatres and newspapers were closed down, Yiddish writers liquidated and the 'Doctors' Plot' — to poison Soviet leaders — discovered. However, by the time the so-called murderers in white coats stood in the dock, Stalin's death supervened and the trial was adjourned *sine die*. In the interim, Golda had long been recalled to Israel and joined the cabinet as Minister of Labour and Development. Her seven years' tenure of that office coincided with a period of mass immigration — mainly of Jews from Arab countries — which more than doubled the country's population. By the time she changed portfolios, thanks to a vast house-building programme, which was underpinned by the creation of the necessary infrastructure of roads, water works, sewage plant, etc. none of the immigrants lived in tents any more. During this period of change for the country in which she took a

leading part, Golda's personal circumstances also changed. Myerson died, she became a grandmother and acquired a daughter-in-law. She, also, in line with other pioneers of the new state, hebraized her surname to Meir.

Appointed Foreign Minister in mid-1956 she was at first crucially involved in the preparation for the Suez Campaign. Then, after Israel's military achievements in the Sinai were set at nought by the super-powers, she master-minded a diplomatic 'charm offensive' in the Third World, especially Africa.

Eventually she retired from ministerial office in 1965. The Six Days' War two years later saw her address huge fund-raising rallies in the U.S.A. Back in Israel she re-emerged as a key player in the political game by launching a reunified Labour Party, and in 1969, aged 71 she was back in government — at its head!

Hardline stance

As prime minister she guided Israel through the Suez Canal bombardments which were initiated by Colonel Nasser in retaliation for the Egyptian debacle in the Six Day War. At the same time she scotched attempts undertaken by World Jewish Congress president Nahum Goldmann to mediate between Nasser and herself. She likewise adopted a hardline stance on the increasingly contentious Palestinian issue. 'There was', she told *The Times* in 1969, 'no such thing as Palestinians when the Jews came. It was not as though there was a Palestinian people and we threw them out; they did not exist'. In a literal sense she was right. The inhabitants encountered by the Zionist pioneers had little perception of themselves as Palestinians; their sense of identity derived either from membership of their clan or of the ill-defined Arab nation. On the other hand, there could be no gainsaying the fact that in the interim their sense of being Palestinians had intensified in response to the Jewish influx.

If her attitude towards the Palestinians was rigidly unimaginative, she showed herself flexible on another issue that deeply divided the Israeli public: Germany. Having earlier disagreed with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's policy of German-Jewish *rapprochement*, she warmly welcomed Chancellor Brandt to Jerusalem in 1973. That visit occurred during the penultimate year of her premiership, a year crowded with drama. Despite shock defeats in the opening rounds of the Yom Kippur War, Golda managed to get her party re-elected to power in 1974; shortly afterwards she retired, aged 74. Six years later she died.

At the funeral, Labour Party leader Shimon Peres eulogized her as a 'stalwart lioness'. The Labour Mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek, by contrast, has described her as a 'dogmatic adherent of obsolete slogans' who 'saw everything in black and white'. Others have charged that as a self-declared secularist she showed unprincipled readiness to accommodate the rabbinical lobby over the 'who is a Jew' controversy. But such criticism notwithstanding, Golda Meir was a most remarkable woman. Probably no other woman had to overcome comparable drawbacks of gender, class, culture and, not least, race – and risen to such heights. The girl who built castles of mud at Pinsk had gone on to help build a nation out of pioneers, refugees and camp survivors on the history- and blood-encrusted strip of land between the desert and the sea. □

The shape of Knessets to come

On 21 January the ultra-nationalist parties *Tehiya* and *Moledet* bolted from Israel's most Right-wing government, thereby depriving the Likud dominated coalition of an overall majority of mandates in the Knesset.

Their decision to defect reflected a growing impatience in extreme Right-wing circles with the drift of Likud's foreign policy – particularly its embrace of the U.S.-sponsored peace talks. Self-government for the Palestinians, irrespective of what form it takes, is seen by the hard-liners as the first step on the road towards a Palestinian State and as a consequence running directly against their cherished vision of extending Jewish hegemony throughout all of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Unable to cobble together a Knesset majority (the proposal of resurrecting a National Unity government with Labour was dismissed by both camps), Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had no choice but to go to the country several months before he was obliged to do under Israel's electoral Laws. Instead of a November General Election Israelis will now go to the polls on 23 June.

There is no doubt in many Israelis' minds that the election campaign will be a bitter and bruising affair and that the country now faces four months of political internecine warfare where the dividing line between national interest and narrow political interests becomes blurred.

Indeed the first shots in the campaign have already been fired. The political decision to assassinate Hezbollah leader Sheik Abbas Al-Musawi, owed more to Likud's immediate political considerations than to national security concerns.

Drawing the Hezbollah and PLO into combat on Israel's Northern border was a master political stroke, having the effect of dampening Right-wing sniping at the precise moment when the Likud's leadership primary was being held. Yitzhak Shamir's subsequent victory (46 per cent of the vote), was never in doubt, what was in question was how Ariel Sharon would perform; his poor showing (trailing in third and last place) illustrated how Shamir had been successful in stealing this would-be Emperor's clothes.

Yet such diversionary tactics can only temporarily deflect the political agenda away from the pressing domestic and international problems dogging Israel. Three months ago the opinion polls gave Likud a seven point lead over Labour, today the two parties are running neck and neck.

True to the old adage that it is governments that lose elections rather than oppositions that win them, Labour's improved ratings owe more to public dissatisfaction with Likud than to any new found belief in the policies of Labour.

The forthcoming election will be fought over the future of the peace process and the grave economic crisis facing Israel. On the peace process Likud faces criticism from all sides and is in a no-win situation – for the Right it has already conceded too much, for the Left the Government has not even begun to confront the substantive issues.

Obstacle to peace

Whilst there is some disagreement in Left-wing/liberal circles on where the autonomy proposals should lead, all agree that the government's policy of continued settlement on the West Bank is an obstacle to peace and, more significantly, to securing the American Loans Guarantees – the issue that straddles the foreign and economic questions and which is uppermost in the Israeli public's mind.

Secretary of State James Baker's announcement that the U.S. will only endorse such loans on condition that Israel halts all settlement activity in the Territories has had the effect of keeping the peace talks in Washington on track and shunting Likud policy into a siding.

Likud faces the perplexing dilemma of alienating the Right yet further by acceding to the American demand or alienating an unquantifiable percentage of potential

voters by placating the Right and sending the economy into an even deeper nosedive.

Faced with spiralling unemployment levels, with over half a million people living below the poverty line, with a fall of 1 per cent per capita national income in 1991, with a burgeoning trade deficit, with an annual budget that, on the admission of the Finance Minister, is \$2,000 million overspent, and with the near Herculean task of successfully absorbing Soviet immigrants, Likud seems to have little alternative but to comply with the American directive.

The Russian 'Yes'

Yet rationality has never been a strong point in the Middle East, a fact that has not escaped the Russian immigrants, who in an attempt to secure a larger slice of the national cake have announced the establishment of their own political *Da*, the Russian word for 'yes'.

What exactly they are saying yes to is not clear as yet.

A January poll found that 32 per cent of the 200,000 recent Soviet immigrants registered to vote (8 per cent of the national electorate), would support a Russian party.

Likud and Labour are banking on the fact that ethnic parties have never fared well in Israel.

All realise that the Soviet vote is up for grabs. In the coming months new immigrants can expect to be fêted in a way unknown to them since the first heady days of Russian influx. Likud are already laying on coach tours for the *olim* to show what life is really like beyond the green line and Shimon Peres has been assiduously learning Russian.

Peres may have miscalculated in view of Rabin's election to the Party leadership. Yet rumours abound that because of the close manner in which Rabin scraped home, winning only 0.59 per cent more than the 40 per cent legal minimum, Peres may launch a rearguard action. Such a manoeuvre would undoubtedly harm Labour's fortunes, since most pundits are agreed that Rabin as leader could boost Labour votes by as much as five mandates.

Irrespective of how well the two major parties fare, it is extremely unlikely that either party will garner enough votes to break the vice-like grip that the small religious parties have historically exerted on government. With the question of electoral reform way down the political agenda, only further fragmentation, by way of an ethnic Russian or Arab vote (7 per cent of the national electorate), could break the political status quo.

□ Peter Grunberger

VERSE AND WORSE

PAT BUCHANAN

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Led the U.S. to Prohibition
Could his appeal *America First*
Consign our planet to perdition

PADDY ASHDOWN

His ratings in the polls were poor
Until he told of his *amour*,
Now floating voters are his pals –
Such is the fate of Liberals

SHEIK MOUSSAWI

While Valentino in *The Sheik*
Was a lover, though a rake,
This blackrobed, turbanned potentate
Conveyed just one emotion: hate

Eingelebt

Ich lebe seit yonks in diesem Land
Ich hab' mich ergeben mit Herz und Hand
Ich liebe Old England und seine Sitten
Ich habe den Rueckweg abgeschnitten –
Ich ess meinen Yorkshire Pudding zum
Braten

Ich esse selbst sandwiches mit Tomaten
Ich cut meine hedges und roll meinen Rasen
Ich spreche vom Wetter in all seinen Phasen
Und stecke dabei meine Hand in die Hose
Dem Kellner zulieb nehm ich
Pfefferminzsauce

Ich schwing meinen club auf dem putting
green

Ich singe begeistert: God save our Queen!
Und trotzdem fragt mich fast jeder Mensch:
Are you French?!

□ Wilhelm Jondorf

Cookery Corner

In this new addition to the pages of *AJR Information* readers are invited to send in their favourite recipes and share them with our members. This month's recipe is for that 'special occasion'.

No. 1 FILET DE SOLE A L'ECOSSAISE

Poached Sole fillets with smoked salmon sauce

100 g (4 oz) smoked salmon
4 large fillets of sole or 8 small ones, plus
100 g (4 oz) extra (about 600 g/1½ lb total weight)

1 egg white

240 ml (8 fl oz) single cream

10 g (½ oz) chopped chives

10 g (½ oz) butter for greasing

3 15 ml spoon (3 tablespoons) dry white wine

5 ml spoon (1 teaspoon) chopped dill weed

5 ml spoon (1 teaspoon) tomato puree

salt and freshly ground pepper

OVEN TEMPERATURE Gasmark
6/400°F/200°C

Preheat the oven. Cut half of the smoked salmon into fine strips.

Cut the remaining smoked salmon, and the extra 100 g (4 oz) sole, into small pieces. Liquidise in a liquidiser or food processor with the egg white, 2 tablespoons of cream and the chives.

Season the sole fillets on one side with a little salt and pepper. Divide the salmon and cream mixture between them and roll up the fillets. Grease an ovenproof dish with the butter and place the rolled fillets in it.

Pour over the white wine and add the dill, cover with aluminium foil and cook in the oven for 20–25 minutes.

Carefully remove the fish rolls and keep warm. Pour the cooking juices into a saucepan and boil rapidly to reduce to half the original volume. Add the remaining cream and the tomato puree, mix well, boil up again and season carefully. Serve sauce separately.

Fillets can be cut in half for serving and arranged on plates. Pour over sauce and decorate with strips of salmon. □ A.M.M.

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A life without tomorrows



Mary Copsey with some of her young patients in Bucharest.

The name Mary Copsey is well known to clients of the AJR and the Otto Schiff Housing Association (OSHA). As the Head of Care at OSHA, her daily work involves her deeply in caring for the aged. Recently, however, Mary went to Romania to do voluntary work for those at the opposite end of the age spectrum – youngsters unlikely ever to grow old. She spent four weeks, under the supervision of the Health Aid U.K. organisation (HAUK), tending children on an AIDS ward in a Bucharest hospital.

Like most of us, Ms Copsey first became

aware of the plight of Romania's children through television reports about two years ago. She was, naturally, touched and wanted very much to help – but did not know how. This is not uncommon. Many people feel affected by exposure to the troubles of others, but the pressures of daily life rarely give them time or the means for doing more than donate a little to charity. This was, initially, the case with Mary.

Late reply

However, a year later an advert appeared in the *Nursing Times* asking for skilled volunteers to do short-term work with sick children in Romania. Mary Copsey replied.

Last November, after a two day training seminar in Rochdale, she left, as part of a group of nurses, for Bucharest. Their arrival was depressing with dimly lit Otopeni Airport still bearing evidence, in the shape of unrepaired bullet holes, of the country's recent upheavals. They journeyed through the shattered, grey streets to the Lubyanka-like general hospital in the city's northern suburbs.

The hospital did not merely look like a punishment block – many of the doctors had been assigned to it because of their ideological crimes. Mary speaks with admiration of these people, who had risked their careers by 'rocking the boat'.

Lack of facilities

For those used to Western standards the lack of facilities and funding for the unit was shocking. Mary cites one instance where a child died because the ambulance which was to take him to another hospital for surgery had no petrol.

The children themselves need, and thrive on, attention. Mary found them cheerful, approachable and very affectionate. This is a miraculous development. Until 18 months ago, when HAUk first came to Romania, they had been tied to the beds and swaddled, cut off from human contact by staff who had themselves become brutalised. Hopefully there will be no return to this squalid system for the children, but the sadness still lurks beneath the surface. Ms Copsey was disturbed by the ease with which the children 'latched on' to new volunteers. Accustomed to the coming and going of care staff, they seem unable to form proper relationships. Perhaps this is for the best. It avoids a monthly heartbreak.

Guilt and gratitude

Mary's return to London occasioned a form of reverse culture-shock. As, emerging from the poverty and squalor of Romania, she entered an affluent Western city gearing up for Christmas with overflowing shops and glittering lights, her feelings alternated between guilt and gratitude.

Mary Copsey believes there is hope for Romania. It is a fertile country whose present problems stem mainly from mismanagement and a lack of infra-structure; however, it will not enter the 'First World' overnight.

Mary will be returning to Romania in September.

□ M.N.

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ANGLO-JEWISH ASSOCIATION PROGRAMME 1992

LECTURES:

'PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY'
Dr MAYER HILLMAN,
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW,
POLICY STUDIES INSTITUTE

WEDNESDAY 20th MAY, 6.45 p.m.*
ATHENAEUM CLUB, 107 PALL MALL, LONDON SW1
* To be preceded by an AJA Council Meeting at 5.30 p.m.

'THE MARGINS OF BELONGING – WHAT IS LEFT OF JUDAISM?'
RABBI SIDNEY BRICHTO

WEDNESDAY 11th NOVEMBER, 6.30 p.m.
ATHENAEUM CLUB, 107 PALL MALL, LONDON SW1

SOCIAL EVENTS

SUNDAY 5th APRIL – A.M.; ANTIQUE EXHIBITION,
HOLLAND PARK

SUNDAY 5th JULY – P.M.; GARDEN PARTY
Details to follow

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1992 –
WEDNESDAY 16th SEPTEMBER

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TELEPHONE: 071 387 5937

Ludwig Spiro, Octogenarian



Ludwig Spiro.

Photo: Newman.

The long term survival of any organisation – as recent examples running the gamut from SDP to CPSU demonstrate – represents a triumph of hope over adversity. How appropriate, therefore, that the birthday 'child's' surname brings to mind *Dum spiro spero*, which (roughly) translated means as long as there is life, there is hope!

It had been a feature of Jewish organisations in Germany that they were headed by men with doctorates – almost invariably in law – with an additional sprinkling of businessmen and bankers. Ludwig Spiro diverges from that tradition. The son of a railway official, he had a thorough training in engineering; in the course of a lifetime's work in this country he achieved non-pareil expertise in the design and manufacture of industrial pumps.

He has always been a rigorously practical

man – from 1940, when he established an efficient postal service in Internment Camp, to the time around 1980 when he reorganised the AJR office, changed staff, modernised equipment and updated methods. He did all this while serving as Hon. Treasurer of the AJR as well as chairman of the management committee for the Old Age Homes (subsequently reconstituted as the Otto Schiff Housing Association).

In the intervening years the retirement-at-75 rule has meant that Ludwig Spiro had to exchange the Treasurership for the more honorific life presidency of our Association. But to be retiring is just not his style, as demonstrated by his vigour in exercising the chairmanship of the Heinrich Stahl House Committee.

Happy 80th birthday Ludwig! May you be granted many more years of purposeful activity! □

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Mrs Resi Buch born 3 March 1923 in Kassel, Germany. Last known address: Belsize Square, London NW3. Please contact Max Kahn, Chimborazo 510-402, Mexico City, Mexico 11010.

Information is sought about the life and work of Bertha Sander born Cologne, 1901, whose work is stored in the archives of art & design of the Victoria & Albert Museum. Information to Ms Ulla Rogalski, Jahnstrasse 1, 6900 Heidelberg 1, Germany.

A TV researcher is looking for children hidden from the Nazis during the Holocaust. Please phone Sue Cohen: 0702-333050.