

AJR Information

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Don't miss . . .

**Yesterdays
Prague p2**

**East German
property claims
new deadline p2**

**Hungarian
compensation p9**

Hole in the heart

Germany, the long-divided 'heart' of Europe, was maladroitly put together again. The one-to-one exchange of currencies proved a huge vote-catching blunder, compounded by dilatoriness – and police lethargy – in confronting the problems of the East. Nor can it be said that the courts in the new Länder are handing down sentences commensurate with the gravity of Neonazi offences.

If, in addition, the Bundesbank now reprises *Deutschland über Alles*, we face the bleak prospect of Schiller's *Ode to Joy* never becoming the idealistically envisaged anthem of Europe. □

Inter-Slav conflicts and Germanisation

The Balkans quagmire

The murderous civil war in Yugoslavia once again challenges comfortable liberal assumptions about the innate goodness of man (and, some would add, about the religious concept of a beneficent deity). At a more pragmatic level it shows politicians' talk about a 'new world order' and a 'common European house' to have been little more than windy rhetoric.

If the Yugoslav mayhem serves any purpose at all it is to refocus minds on the events and aftermath of Hitler's war. Post-1945 a world sickened by the revelations about Belsen and Auschwitz was somehow incapable of incorporating Jasenovac into its vocabulary of horror, yet in the barbarity of the killing methods employed, this Croat Auschwitz had probably been even worse than Auschwitz itself.

By the same token that Jasenovac failed to enter the general consciousness, the punishment of its 'operatives' was given low priority and this was compounded by the Vatican which had bestowed legitimacy on the Croat Nazi state helping Ustashe killers to escape justice by means of the 'rat line'.

Of course, in the last analysis, the architects of Jasenovac are to be looked for in Germany, and especially Austria which has always had close links with the Balkans. War crimes charges against the Austrian Wehrmacht general Löhr included the bombing of Belgrade, the deportation of Salonika's Jews and the killing of 60,000 Serbs in the Kazara region. (Löhr's compatriot, Wehrmacht Intelligence officer Kurt Waldheim, received a Croat decoration after the Kazara campaign.)

But to unravel Balkan history one must go back beyond Hitler's war. Karl Kraus's Great War epic *The last days of mankind* has Viennese crowds braying 'Serbia must perish!', and a soldier's sweetheart telling a friend of a Serb prisoner's kidneys her fiancé had sent as a keepsake from the front.

It would be wrong, though, to ascribe the ferocity of conflicts in the Balkans simply to the example, or even the manipulation, of the surrounding Great Powers. The autobiography of the Montenegrin Milovan Djilas, Tito's comrade-turned-critic states that, going back over six generations, none of his forebears had died in bed. Djilas's account speaks volumes about the persistence of ancient hatreds among the Southern Slavs.

Actually in the matter of bloodletting the Slavs can, pace Chmelnitzki, compete with the best – or worst – of them. Linguists even conjecture that two of the most malign figures in German History, Nietzsche and the historian Treitschke, were of Germanised Polish stock. (The *tzsch* and *tschk* in their respective surnames are typically Slav sound clusters.)

The Germanisation of Slavs was particularly widespread in Austria (where Vaclavek mutated into Waldheim). Another deplorable example of ethnic upgrading was the writer Mirko Jelusich, Nazi-appointed head of the Burgtheater. The most notorious Germanised Slav though was the Austrian Croat Odilo Globocnik whose establishment of the death camps Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka and Majdanek earned him the soubriquet 'ruler of the Holocaust kingdom'.

And what, compared to that, is the present-day bloodletting in the Balkans?

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Yesterday's Prague



The Old Town Clock.

Photo: J. Sekal.

Golden Prague! Palace-thronged, cobblestoned, tram-clanging Prague. Escutcheons of Kinsky, Czernin, Lobkowitz, Colloredo-Mansfeld shadowless in the schoolday noon. Crocketed Gothic pinnacles, posturing baroque saints on the Charles Bridge, *Jugendstil* lamp-posts tarnished by time and dachshund piss. Revenant of 1930s Vienna – without the umbilical scar.

The Old Town. Labyrinthine passages. Iron-grey walls pockmarked with damp and decay. Metal-studded doors, massive gateways opening into secret courtyards. Houses resplendent with graffiti, their shutters carved and decorated. At the two golden bears a weathered Renaissance facade with a plaque denoting the birthplace of Egon Erwin Kisch: Kisch, the 'raving reporter', who blew the Austrian General Staff's cover in the Colonel Redl affair.

Kisch, who searched for the Golem under the eaves of the steeply pitched roof of the Altneuschul, second oldest synagogue in Europe. This is Jewish Prague, preserved by the Nazis as a museum for a defunct people. The Jewish Town Hall with its Hebrew anti-clockwise clock. The old Jewish cemetery, a drunken ziggurat of tombstones, at its centre the grave of Rabbi Loew, the Maharal. The Maiselova, named after the first court Jew in European history. The Pinkas Synagogue, its walls inscribed with

the names of 77,297 Holocaust victims in Bohemia and Moravia.

In the airier spaces round the Old Town Hall, famous for its carillon and astronomical clock, the buildings are newer, taller, more solid. On a house front beside a shuttered Baroque church another plaque: a portrait in metal bas-relief. Brow furrowed, eyes deepset, cheeks hollow – the face of one of life's shellshock victims. Gaunt angular letters form the name Franz Kafka.

St Vitus's Cathedral. Vast silver tomb of John Nepomuk. Vertiginous catwalks lead from one Oriel window to the next. The Wenceslas Chapel frescoed and inset with semi-precious stones. Crown jewels of Bohemia in the adjacent Treasury. Heydrich forced the seven dignitaries in charge to surrender the key and placed the crown on his own head. Hubris brought nemesis in the form of assassination.

Hradčany. The Castle and its environs, venue of all Czech history and culture. Here the Chancellery windows whose *Fenstersturz* triggered the Thirty Years War. (No guide mentions that other defenestration – of Jan Masaryk – that heightened the Cold War.) There the balcony from which, in Munich days, Beneš bade farewell to a weeping, resentful crowd. Atop a wooded defile the ruined dungeon tower where Dalibor, immortalised in Smetana's opera, plays ghostly violin music at night. Nearby the Vikarka tavern, setting of Janacek's *Excursions of Mr Brouček* whose drunken hero lands on the moon.

From moon to lunacy. The cobbled, pedestrianised Old Town Square. The Hus monument bearing the reformer's dictum *Truth shall prevail*. The Kinsky Palace alongside. From its balcony in cold February 1948 the Czech Stalin-clone Gottwald proclaimed the Communist takeover to the Party faithful massed in the square. Photographers recorded the historic scene – but under Communism what exactly is history? Historians never knew what was going to happen yesterday.

In 1952 Foreign Minister Clementis, the man standing beside Gottwald on the balcony, was executed for Titoism and had to be airbrushed out of the picture. The job was inexpertly done. The retoucher – a near relation to the good soldier Svejek – got rid of Clementis, but not of his hat. In consequence the official photograph of the foundation of the CSSR, displayed in town halls and schoolrooms throughout the country, showed a fur cap without face attached hovering spectrally to the left of Gottwald's head.

Letna Park. A heartstoppingly beautiful view over the Vltava, bridges foreshortened by a bend in the river. In the Fifties the park boasted a monument of Stalin at the head of a column of workers and soldiers – dubbed 'the bread queue'. In the Sixties Khrushchev ordered it to be blown up. All that's left now is an empty plinth, a concrete *tabula rasa*.

□ Richard Grunberger

New deadline for East German Property Claims

We understand from the German Embassy that all claims on *immovable* property situated in the former German Democratic Republic must be submitted by 31 December 1992, whereas the definite deadline for confiscated *movable* property, such as jewellery or works of art, will be the 30 June 1993. We regret that the AJR is unable to assist members with these claims. You may find it advisable to contact a solicitor. □

Search Notices

Lianka Stadler, one of two daughters of Zdenka Stadler (nee Guth), family originally from Rokysan but lived in Prague, please contact cousin Susan Gerstein: 329 Waban Avenue, Newton, MA 02168. U.S.A.

Descendants of William (Wolf)

Klingenstein, originally from Miltenberg am Main, who died in London 27.2.1916, please contact Herr Pfarrer Ullrich Debler of Miltenberg C/O Dr Arnold Meier, 11 Park Lane, Whitefield, Manchester M25 7FF.

Heine Ucko aus Gross Strehlitz

(Oberschlesien) oder Informationen über ihn gesucht! Horst Sassin, Wildbahn 18, D-5650 Solingen 1, Germany.

Information is sought about the German emigrant photographers Kurt Lubinski (born 19.10.1899 in Berlin), his wife Margot Lewin-Richter (born 17.03.1906 in Berlin) and their son Peter Thomas (born 22.11.1931 in Berlin). They lived in Berlin (Albrecht-Achillesstrasse 4, Halensee) and arrived in August 1933 in Holland (Heemstede, Clivialaan 14). In February 1937 they went to England (London, Chancery Lane 57–58) and worked for the British illustrated magazines. Probably they arrived in the early forties in America. Please contact Drs Louis Zweers, Photohistorian, Dr H. Colijnlaan 153, 2283 XE Rijswijk, Holland.

Sushila Bathirunathan is searching for mother Daisy Bathirunathan, formerly known as Daisy Schellenberg, from Switzerland. Last known address: 46 Glenloch Road, Hampstead, London NW3 around the 30.8.1956.

Nelly Bibring from Bad Oeynhausen, born 1928 approx. Former pupils of the school she attended in 1937 wish to invite her back to a fiftieth anniversary reunion. Please contact ZDF, Show 111, z. Hd. Herrn Günter Reininger, Postfach 40 40, D-6500 Mainz, Germany.

Profile

Ninety – not out



Ethel Mahler

Photo: Private.

What could be more typically Austrian than Slovak birth, a Hungarian forename, temporary residence in Moravia and marriage into a musical family. Etelka (Ethel) Mahler is a Viennese of an increasingly rare vintage. A schoolgirl at the time of Franz Josef's death she recalls the raucous bustle of the *mazze-sinsel* as clearly as wartime foraging trips into the countryside where innkeepers would automatically place a copy of the *Reichspost* (the Jewbaiting Catholic daily) alongside the pint of beer poured for her orthodox, but non-Jewish looking, father.

Ethel only became Mrs Mahler eleven years after meeting her husband. The reason: during the Depression marriage would have cost her her job as a secretary in the office of the Vienna Medical Association. When she did marry in mid-1939 her status as a U.K. resident – she had come over here as a domestic shortly after Crystal Night – enabled her stranded fiancé to leave Belgium.

Thereafter they were together for thirty-five years. The marriage remained childless because Ethel suspected a strain of abnormality in her husband's overly gifted family – Gustav Mahler was a second cousin – which she did not want to perpetuate.

After wartime internment Mr Mahler found permanent work in the catering trade. Ethel, by contrast, did a bewildering variety of jobs – charlady, stringer of pearls, knitter of hats, secretary of a Book

Club. In 1956, a turning point in her life, she joined the United Restitution Office as principal assistant to Dr Brassloff. After the latter's move to Geneva to head the Legal Office of the World Jewish Congress she, though lacking any legal qualifications, took charge of the Austrian Desk at URO.

In this capacity she dealt with literally thousands of applicants to the Austrian Assistance Fund for Emigrants and the Property Restitution Fund; in addition she proffered advice on questions concerning social security payments from Austria.

Her Sundays were devoted to visiting residents in the Old Age Homes (and in mental homes in London and the Home Counties) to gather particulars needed for their pensions applications. In recognition of this work the Austrian government awarded her the Silver Insignia of Merit.

In 1988 Mrs Mahler retired from URO at the goodly age of eighty-six. Four years later occasional phone callers to her flat in Golders Green are still making inquiries about Austrian pensions. She doesn't mind; on the contrary, having seen all her non-agenarian contemporaries except one – Dr Kapralik – depart this life, she feels such inquiries keep her in touch with the outside world.

□ Richard Grunberger

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OSHA appoints new Director



Marjorie Ann Power.

Photo: private

Otto Schiff Housing Association (OSHA), the organisation responsible for the administration of the homes for full care and of sheltered accommodation for refugees has just announced the appointment of Miss Marjorie Ann Power as its director as from 1 October 1992. She succeeds Mr Graham Philipps, who, having originally taken that position on a 'temporary' basis only, is now retiring after four years service.

Miss Power was born in London of refugee parents and educated at South Hampstead High School. A bilingual secretarial course at Ealing Technical College led to her qualifying as a Fellow of the Institute of Linguistics.

Varied career

Her varied career has included work as a technical translator, lecturing in English, business studies and bookkeeping at Willesden Technical College, running an employment agency and managing the UK subsidiary of an American marketing and trading company. Latterly she participated in setting up and then continuing the office service management of St James' House, a voluntary organization providing work, training and work experience for people with mental health problems. She is also a registered tourist guide.

Miss Power's interests extend to music and the theatre, and she has also taken an active part in Ladies' B'nai B'rith lodges. These achievements are an excellent background for the onerous task she is now undertaking. We wish her every success and look forward to co-operating with and supporting her in our common interest of service to refugees. □

Reviews

Folkloric tale of epic proportions

THE DYBBUK by Solomon Anski. RSC. The Barbican Centre



Joanne Pearce as Leye and John Shrapnel as Reb Azriel.

Photo: Ivan Kyncl, courtesy of RSC.

Anski's folkloric tale is essentially a love story coating a cautionary moral text of epic proportions. In turn-of-the-century Ukraine, a pious Orthodox community is challenged when a young woman on the verge of marriage is entered by a dybbuk, a groundless unsatisfied spirit.

The spirit is that of a poor Yeshiva student, Khonen, who unbeknown to anyone, has fallen desperately in love with Leye. He has been performing daily ablutions and switched his study from the Talmud to the Kabbalah in an effort to seek the purity he perceives as his entrance into her family. Khonen's dedication cannot but go unnoticed by Leye's father Sender who worships money while outwardly observing the religious laws. However, when Leye is possessed, Sender must call in Reb Azriel skilled in the ways of the dybbuk. In the course of the exorcism, Sender's unwitting duplicity is revealed and he must pay the highest price for his pride and greed.

Powerful performance

Joanne Pearce as the wretched and vulnerable Leye put in a powerful performance of physical theatre, both agonizing and compelling to watch. Spending the entire second act contorted while possessed by the dybbuk, she presented the double edge of a love that is resplendent in its honesty and perverted in its desire to own and control. John Shrapnel as the learned Rabbi, con-

veyed the dedication of a lifetime with the human fear of fallibility. Peter Needham as Sender, the father, brought low through short sighted stupidity and greed, lacked the right mixture of despair and cunning.

The RSC presented an austere naturalistic performance where a bare stage, large cast and authentic costuming made the broader theological and ideological problems that beset a small, poor religious community, visually manifest. In the programme notes an elderly Ukrainian Jew describes the Yeshiva students as 'thin, thin, thin... but they never starved of hunger... my mother, my brother and father all died of hunger.' The tangle of determined double standards, and an unbending faith that allows for both communication and isolation, remain contemporary dilemmas, and Anski's characters are as much modern as they are timeless.

□ Linda Gibson

Quirky but liberating

Irene Dische THE JEWESS Bloomsbury 1992 £14.99

A baseball loving Catholic Jew from Oregon who speaks suspiciously good German and a self-styled Jewess from the GDR who claims to have been to Auschwitz and says 'Oi weh!': this is the ill-assorted couple in the title story – by far the longest – of this motley collection, a volume as slim and potentially explosive as a letter bomb. He, Charles Allen alias Allerhand, has returned to the Fatherland to claim (or not to claim) his inheritance, a one-time antique shop destroyed in *Kristallnacht*, built up again after the war by his father, a specialist in Nazi loot and forged passports, and now, thanks to Esther, alias Margrete, off-spring of a Nazi, flourishing as an illicit business of *Threepenny Opera* proportions. The scene is West Berlin with its shifting populations and shifting values – a world that is immediately recognisable, whether we like it or not.

Blurred identities

Like the author herself, child of Austrian-German immigrants, brought up in Manhattan and now living in Germany, they are a thoroughly cosmopolitan lot, the types who people these quirky stories, condemned as they are by the vagaries of modern existence to a restless mobility: the Polish maid in Berlin, the Irish nanny in New York, the West German teenager in Tripoli, the East German defector born in Mongolia, bred in Shanghai and with mistresses and bank accounts in three countries. At home anywhere and nowhere, each carries with him or her the impedimenta of mixed-up parentage and confused memories, occasionally pausing to peer wistfully into a mirror to try and discern the real self. Individual identity has become blurred as moral, emotional and aesthetic adjustments and compromises have to be made. The professor pulled between his fastidious wife's Bunzlau china and his Bohemian mistress's Melitta coffee set, eventually settled resignedly for monogamy in a beautiful interior, with no room for sentiment save some remembered snatches of Eichendorff. And the best means of identification the Russian-Jewish emigré can produce is, of all things, a photo of himself and family beneath a Federal German Christmas tree.

GERMAN BOOKS BOUGHT

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Such are the ironies of life, which Irene Dische encapsulates in many a pithy aperçu: 'Being Jewish is not a nationality – it's an exit visa', 'Money is all I have these days', 'All he knows about his (*Lebensborn*) father are the head measurements'. Some stories read like idiosyncratic case histories: the Berlin concierge, erstwhile *Trümmerfrau* now wielding a snow shovel and a CDU shopping bag with undiminished energy, or the old scientist struggling dementedly against the disorientations of Alzheimer's. The foibles and frailties, excesses and eccentricities of people are recorded with keen, wholly unsentimental insight and enlivened by well observed documentary detail. And always just beneath the brittle surface lurk the cultural tensions between East and West, employer and employee, parent and child.

Stolen menorah

Survival is paramount, and the lengths to which some go in the interests of self-preservation are as funny as they are reprehensible. With an ironic detachment which only a Jew would dare to muster, Dische tells of a Russian Jew who, badly wounded by a German soldier at Stalingrad, now 'enjoys the fruits of his pension' too much to want to emigrate, of the Barmitzvah party with the 'expensive' rabbi and a hired band which strikes up the German national anthem, or, worse still, of the Berlin 'celebration' of the pogrom ('the most Christian of occasions'), when tons of cut-price Holy Land candles from Dresden are snapped up for the local Jewish community, with a stolen menorah thrown in.

True, one or two of these stories – the best! – are on the face of it not for the squeamish. Yet there is something oddly liberating in the author's healthy disdain of our taboos and prejudices, leaving the reader, as all true humour should, with at least one moist eye.

□ Brigitte E. Hay

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Transplanted Baum

GRAND HOTEL Musical, Dominion Theatre,
Tottenham Court Road, London W1

Vicky Baum's 1920s bestseller *Menschen im Hotel* was snapped up by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. With Greta Garbo in the lead, it became the first portmanteau film in which disparate lives unfold within the same setting. Hollywood liked the subject so much that it did a remake – *Weekend at the Waldorf* – in 1945. Now, sixty years after the Garbo movie, *Grand Hotel* has been transposed into a Broadway-premiered musical.

Highbrow critics might wrinkle their noses at Vicky Baum's stagey cast of embittered war veteran, fading ballerina, aristocratic conman, stage-struck typist, lecherous *Generaldirektor* and death-haunted 'little man'. However, stagey characters transfer easily to the stage, and musicals work best when designed in primary colours. Who would not warm to Flämmchen the typist, gamely struggling to escape from her slum background, or to 'little man' Kringelein with the diseased, but stout heart?

The ageing ballerina, who knows herself to be over the hill but cannot bear to acknowledge the fact, is more embarrassing to watch. The aristocrat conman who, after burgling her apartment, stays for a night of love, shows such charm-dripping *chutzpah* that one willingly suspends disbelief. Apropos of *chutzpah*, expressions like *meshuggah* and *mazeltov* litter the dialogue of Kringelein whom the adaptors have made Jewish – a detail I couldn't recall from my original reading of the book.

But, in a musical of the film of the book, this is a minor cavil; what matters is the music. Even though the score of *Grand Hotel* cannot compare with the creations of Frederic Lowe (Fritz Loewy) or Steven Sondheim, it serves as launchpad for pyrotechnic displays of dancing which had me, for one, cheering in the aisles. The Broadway graft on 1920s Berlin has taken!

□ R.G.

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PETER C. RICKENBACK

Shmoozer takes all

Clive Sinclair, AUGUSTUS REX, André Deutsch,
1992, £13.99

Don't, dear reader, be put off by the spoof Latinism of Sinclair's title, nor by the fact that the chief character of his short novel is August Strindberg, whom you may know as the gloomy Swede.

Whatever you do know is as nothing compared to the fare offered here. You may think that August (the Rex, or 'King', in question) lived from 1849 to 1912. Wrong! Clive Sinclair has brought him back to life in our era. He has done so with the aid of Beelzebub – Ba'al Zvuv, the Lord of the Flies – and, according to myth and theology, a subordinate of Satan.

Distorted hero

Using Beelzebub, a cynical but witty sort of demon, as story teller, enables the author to present the awful behaviour of his gifted but totally distorted 'hero' without prejudice. You may have learned that August S., a woman hater, had three wives. Beelzebub and Sinclair give him four. Perhaps you know that he was a paranoid antisemite. You have guessed it: wife No. 4 is Jewish, her identity albeit concealed behind a Swedish widowhood.

August soon finds out. Does he give her the boot? No, he is totally fatally fascinated by her. She loves him and serves him slavishly while he is so jealous of her that every shadow is a lover. That he never catches her out – because she is faithful – only demonstrates her Semitic cunning.

Mad genius

She, together with the rest of Sweden and the world, does not recognise that the writer who calls himself August Lagercrantz and who looks and writes like Strindberg, really is the mad genius. Only one professor does recognise him, but can hardly believe it, and just becomes his messenger boy in this life.

Now you may think that the revenant's Jew-hatred and misogyny, fuelled by spying and voyeurism, are detestable but harmless. Though even Beelzebub appears to let himself be fooled, such optimism is misplaced. The antisemitism leads to the well-known end result; Beelzebub's last move is so astoundingly, grimly and yet deservedly, awful that I have rarely encountered such an apt ending.

This is a fanciful but ultimately truthful and revealing book; in my view Sinclair's best, with much meat on the funny bone.

□ John Rossall

Letters to the Editor

APPORTIONING GUILT

Sir – I cannot concur with your statements. According to the *New York Review of Books*, 13 August 1992, two factors accounted for the failure of the Germans to produce the bomb. Foremost the mistakes made by Heisenberg in failing to construct a reactor. Secondly, Allied bombing which devastated German cities and with it most of the research facilities of the bomb makers.

Hirschenehagen was the second largest munitions factory in Germany, manned by slave labour from all over Europe (including my wife). No genius would have been able to hide the scene of that factory. What better target could have presented itself to an attack, to end the war or at least make it difficult to continue? Not so, due to bomber Harris whose declared aims were the cities and not the factories. Hirschenehagen was never touched by a single bomb.

Harris might inadvertently have contributed to averting the worst by preventing the German researchers from making 'progress' with the design of the bomb, but he neglected the real targets.

Oakhampton Road
London NW7

Franz Levi

Sir – In his book *Science: The Center of Culture*, published in 1970, Prof J. Rabi writes: 'A contributory cause of failure was the arrogance of German scientists. Heisenberg was the head of a small inner circle which was not receptive to ideas from lesser lights. Thus, when Fritz Houtermans came close to the idea of plutonium as early as 1941, no one took notice of his report because he was not in the favoured circle. The failure to recognize the possibilities of plutonium was one of Heisenberg's – and Germany's – biggest mistakes in the atom bomb race. They refrained from thinking critically about their work. The uranium problem, like many others, is too extensive to be grasped by one individual. A clash of ideas from many minds often is the key to success.'

This fully supports your views on German physicists.

The Avenue
London NW6

Walter Bloch

Sir – To assert that 'Heisenberg's team are polishing their haloes' is nonsense. Heisen-

berg and his colleagues knew that making an A-bomb might be feasible, but they also knew that they would never have the resources to get beyond the basic experiments. Heisenberg risked his life to contact Niels Bohr during a conference in Copenhagen in October 1941 to tell him just that. Unfortunately, Bohr misunderstood the message.

To conclude from the over 90 per cent 'Yes' votes after 1933, that all Germans were Nazis is naive. Do you really believe that Germany was a democracy after 1933, or that the votes were genuine? Do you really think that everybody in that Berlin air raid shelter, which Goering is said to have entered a week before the end, was a Nazi for not booing him? It would have taken a suicidal lunatic just to mutter.

You write 'The Germans in Dresden . . . were only (sic!) reaping the harvest sown earlier by the Nazis'. Is 'reaping' the right word for 130,000 civilians, men, women and children burned to death in one night?

You fancy it must have raised spirits amongst the doomed marchers from Auschwitz to see the smoke from that Dresden funeral pyre. If they had known what that pall of smoke meant, it would have confirmed their dread of the insanity of which this world is capable. Beware, Sir, that insanity is still catching.

Christchurch Hill
London NW3

R. Strauss

Sir – I cannot agree that most Germans and Austrians were Nazis and, by implication, antisemites. It simply does not follow; there is no evidence for it.

Have we forgotten what life under totalitarianism was like? Under such a regime most ordinary citizens live in fear of losing their jobs, their possessions, their freedom and even their lives. Not everybody is a hero like Pastor Niemöller who had the courage to become a martyr for his cause.

Hitler intervened in Austria before the referendum which he would probably have lost. And, supposing that Stauffenberg's plot had succeeded, is there any doubt that most Germans would have acclaimed him as a hero?

Alington Crescent
London NW9

Fred Dunston

It is a fallacy to assume that the obedience Hitler exacted from most Germans was

merely the result of terror. Himmler may have helped shape public attitudes – but he did so to a lesser degree than Goebbels. What enabled Hitler to win the allegiance of possibly as many as 90 per cent of his subjects was his blurring of the distinction between Nazis and Germans. Ed.

WISHFUL THINKING?

Sir – Apropos the last two lines on the last page of *AJR Information* August 1992: 'Malcolm Rifkind's promotion to the semi-redundant Ministry of Defence': *Ihr Wort in Gottes Gehör!*

Mercier Road
London SW15

Ed Rosenstiel

TAKE A STAND

Sir – Once again, this evening, we have seen on TV groups of terrified, desolate children, some with their mothers, being driven from their homeland into an, at best, uncertain future. Does Mr Schmerling still remember the Kindertransporte?

Wood Lane
London N6

M. Goldenberg

DISADVANTAGED GROUP

Sir – In June you published a letter from a Mrs G. Kaufman of Harrow. As I am constantly mistaken for her I want it known that I am (a) a different person and (b) that I disagree with her views.

I find it childish to complain of publicity given to one group of refugees as against another. Surely our overriding sentiment should be gratitude at having survived.

Wembley, Middx.

Mrs Gerda Kaufmann

BITTER-SWEET RETURN

Sir – Unfortunately some Jews have still not understood what happened in Nazi Germany. Mrs Treuherz writes of 'seeing our beloved Aachen literally risen from the ashes'. How can a Jew talk today of a beloved German city, when the blood of our dearest still cries out from the soil of the self-same city.

Woodstock Road
London NW11

Mr A Heckscher

Sir – I can well understand Jews looking back with love on memories of their former home towns in Germany.

I left Kassel in 1936, when I was 16. Despite suffering at school and at home from age 13 – my brother was arrested, we had SS searches in our home, I had to leave school prematurely and lost my father – I retain good, even sentimental, memories of Kassel going back to my earliest childhood.

I also had wonderful help and kindness from non-Jews during the Nazi years and think of the risks they took, and what some of them suffered during the bombing raids and at the hands of Nazis.

Northwood
Middlesex

Marianne Herz

POSTHUMOUS DISCRIMINATION

Sir – Last year I visited Auschwitz and Birkenau. The tour of the latter was conducted by an *Orbis* (Polish State Tourist Office) guide, who concentrated on the suffering of Polish soldiers – the first inmates of the camp – though she condescended to admit that some Jews were murdered there, too. When she said that the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz existed to pray for the many Polish victims, I interjected that the convent commemorated Sister Edith Stein, a martyred Jewish convert. At this she got most annoyed, but I am glad to say, most of the international non-Jewish group agreed with me.

Somali Road
London NW2

Ernest Gruenwald

RED WHITE AND RED

Sir – Having read your half-baked half-truths, I feel it is important that someone should react to this constant malicious agitation against Austria.

Far be it from me to be uncritical – but you might occasionally mention something positive – and a little more than the begrudging last two sentences of your editorial.

Haider's party has a small membership and it is wrong to frighten our own people living in England – so that when they come here they ask if we dare show our faces in the streets of Vienna for fear of being attacked as Jews! Haider's comment about the 'orderly employment policy of the Third Reich' cost him his job as provincial governor. The nasty remark about *Umwolkung* came from *one* man – and not Freedom Party *spokesmen* – and caused an enormous outcry. There are as many Viennese pro-Peymann as anti-Peymann, and the Burgtheater is usually sold out.

It might interest your readers that through private donations and the Catholic Caritas, a thousand lorries with food, baby requirements and medicines have reached Bosnian refugees. On 17 June, 60,000

NOTICE

Mr Ralph Blumenau feels he has been libelled in September's *Letters to the Editor*. We shall publish a full exchange of the relevant correspondence in November.

people demonstrated on the Heldenplatz and Eli Wiesel spoke, very movingly, from the balcony where Hitler made his notorious 'Anschluss' speech.

Rechte Wienzeile
Vienna

Gitta Deutsch

SCHLOCHAU

Sir – Apologies to many readers who wrote to us in response to my letter in February, regarding an intended sentimental journey to what is now Czuluchów. Many people, both here and in Germany, have advised against such a visit. Apparently all former German citizens of erstwhile 'Westpreussen' have left and the Poles are neither knowledgeable about, nor interested in, the fate of former Jewish residents. Should any readers however, be able to prove us wrong, please let them get in touch!

Four Oaks
Sutton Coldfield

Werner Abraham

ASSIMILATION

Sir – Simon Rocker's article begs the question as to what constitutes Jewish identity.

My only connection to the Jewish community is through my subscription to this journal, which I inherited from my mother. Her Jewish identity was ultimately defined by German racism... but denied by Jewish racism. As a result of this she owed her survival to Christian charity, as it was only the Quakers who aided her flight from Germany.

So what is the meaning of being a Jew? Perhaps it is always to be aware of mankind's capacity for good and for evil. Perhaps, above all else, it is to keep this very question alive.

Thornfield Grove
Middlesbrough

David Gordon

40 YEARS AGO

Sir – In your August issue you reported that a bequest by Mr Simon Rubenstein was to be used to help young people with special grants. It would be interesting to know what happened to the recipients of this help. Perhaps any of your readers who benefited would tell us what happened to them?

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Photo: Newman.

FASHION SHOW

What are they wearing in the Paris basin this year? Find out at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre on:

**Sunday 29 November –
3.30–4.30 p.m.**

**Tea – 2.45 p.m.
Supper 5.45 p.m.**

Entrance £2.50 (Ticket only)

STOP PRESS

Hungarian Compensation

Further to the notice in our September 1992 issue we now have the following information:

The deadline for mailing claims is 2 November 1992.

Compensation will be paid in 'compensation bonds' which are negotiable in Hungary and abroad. Persons eligible are present Hungarian citizens, persons unjustly deprived of their life or liberty for political or religious reasons whilst Hungarian citizens and foreign citizens permanently resident in Hungary in June 1992 or who deceased in Hungary prior to that date.

The position of Hungarian-born foreign citizens is uncertain. They may hold dual citizenship and thus qualify as Hungarian citizens.

For applications forms please contact the Hungarian Embassy, 35 Eton Place, London SW1. (A small fee may be charged for the application form.) □

ANYONE FOR SAMBA?

Learn Latin American and Ballroom dancing as part of the Tuesday afternoon activities at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre between 4.30 and 5.30 on 1 October and 15 October.

Ring Bobbi Spencer at the day centre on 071-328 0208 Thursday, Thursday and Sunday 2.00 p.m.-7.00 p.m. Monday and Wednesday 9.30 a.m.-2.00 p.m.

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Afternoon entertainment -

OCTOBER

Thursday 1	Metropolitan Police Band
Sunday 4	Debbie O'Brien Entertains At The Piano
Monday 5	Take a Quick-Step in Time with Geoffrey Strum & Johnny Walton (Piano)
Tuesday 6	CLOSED AFTER LUNCH
Wednesday 7	CLOSED

Important task

The AJR takeaway meals service, initiated in June, has proved to be a great success. Many people now regularly collect ready-cooked food from the Cleve Road kitchens. However, the enthusiastic response to the new service has highlighted the necessity of expanding it. Responding to the call to reach those people who are most in need, a meals-on-wheels delivery service has been initiated.

At present the new service is restricted to North-West London, limited by a shortage of volunteer drivers.

Although this is an important task it does not require any special skills to discharge it, the only qualifications required are: compassion, a little time to spare each week and a motor car. If you can find the time to deliver a few meals each week it could improve the quality of someone's life. For details on how to help contact Laura Howe, Volunteers Co-ordinator, at Hannah Karminski House on 071-482 1824 between 9.30 and 5.30 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday, 9.30-1.00 p.m. Friday. □

AJR INFORMATION is available on tape

Please contact Mrs Irene White 081-203 2733 before 9 a.m. or after 6 p.m.

MEALS ON WHEELS

WE ARE NOW ABLE TO OFFER A LIMITED DELIVERY OF MEALS ON MONDAY AND FRIDAY MORNINGS TO MEMBERS LIVING IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

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The cost for a kosher 3 course meal is £2.50. Payment for meals to be made to the Driver.

Meals can still be collected from 15 Cleve Road on weekdays (Mondays - Thursdays) for £2.00 per meal.

Members who feel they may qualify for delivery because of mobility problems, or other reasons, should contact Mrs Ruth Finestone for further details and an assessment interview on: 071 328 0208

Thursday 8

An Hour of Music between two Yom Tovim - Sandra Anders and Giles Turner (Piano)

Sunday 11

CLOSED

Monday 12

CLOSED

Tuesday 13

CLOSED

Wednesday 14

A Special Sukkoth Concert - The B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Songsters Love Duets from the Shows - Francoise Geller & Gordon Griffin accompanied by Irene Wallis (Piano)

Thursday 15

Sunday 18

CLOSED

Monday 19

CLOSED

Tuesday 20

CLOSED

Wednesday 21

Simchat Torah - Ronnie Goldberg Entertains with Songs & Guitar

Thursday 22

Trinity College of Music Entertains with Light Classical Music

Sunday 25

Alfred Gabriel presents: Magic Made to Measure Opera You Love - Sara Meadows and John Feild (Piano)

Monday 26

Tuesday 27

Is It Really Magic? - Presented by Joe Elman with Audience Participation

Wednesday 28

Singing For Fun - The Longford Singers with Margaret Eaves at the Piano

Thursday 29

Two In Harmony - Natalie Sinclair and Jules Ruben (Piano)

NOVEMBER

Sunday 1

Musical Quiz - Presented by Dennis Snowman Melody Hour - David Jedwab and Mabel Witzum (Piano)

Monday 2

Tuesday 3

Four Strings Each - Light Classical Music - Lucy White & Juliet Davey (Violin & Piano)

Wednesday 4

Light Classics - Trinity College of Music

Thursday 5

Sue Parker At The Piano

Sunday 8

CLOSED

FAMILY EVENTS

Births

Langnas Naomi Lea, daughter of Monica and Steven Langnas (7th grandchild of Marianne and Ludwig Fried, Basel).

Stein Lore Stein is delighted to announce the birth of another granddaughter, Sophie Isabelle, on 24 August, daughter of David and Sue Stein and sister of Jessica, Leah and Joseph.

Birthdays

Mayer Alice Mayer celebrates her 90th birthday on 6 October 1992, together with her family and friends.

Deaths

Arie Edward (Edi) Arie died suddenly on 26 August, aged 82, after an unexpected short illness. Deeply mourned and sadly missed by his wife Edith, his children, grandchildren, all the family and his many friends.

Cooper Edith Cooper, born Edith Hönigsberg, in Vienna, died, aged 84, on 18 August 1992. She will be remembered forever by husband Albert, daughter and son-in-law Jackie and Robert and sister Lizzi.

Philipp Walter Philipp, on 15 August in the comfort of his own home at Buckhurst Hill, at the age of 86 years. Missed by his brother Arthur.

Saenger Ilse Saenger, born September 1900 in Berlin, died 28 August 1992 after a short illness. Widow of Edward Saenger, poet and writer. Remembered with affection by her friends and the Widemann family in Germany.

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Sheldon Dr W F Sheldon died on 24 July, after a brief illness. Sadly missed by his wife Sandy, family and many friends.

Zorek Eric Zorek died on 29 July 1992, aged 86. Deeply mourned and sorely missed by his wife and family as well as his many friends.

In memoriam

Norton In memory of Karl Norton (Neubauer) born 27 October 1892 in Budapest, died in Leicester, 1982. He would have been 100 this year. Sadly missed by his son and daughter-in-law, Bob and Gerry and grandsons Paul and David. May his soul rest in peace.

Companion/Carers

Hove. Lady, 70s, offers temporary accommodation in her flat, reduced rent for some help/companionship. Box No. 1223.

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Can anyone help with the loan of a catwalk for a fashion show at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre? Please phone 081-958 5080.

Tarock. Two partners required. Contact Eric Walters, 61 Holders Hill Drive, Hendon NW4 1NN, Phone (Eves): 081-203 1510.

Anderman I have been very touched by all the good wishes on the occasion of my birthday. It is impossible to thank everyone personally, so please accept my thanks this way. Ruth Anderman.

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Only a few flats are still available. Details from: Mrs K Gould, AJR, on 071-483 2536 Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Viewing by appointment only.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

The John Heartfield (Helmut Herzfeld) exhibition at the Barbican, will move to Dublin, Edinburgh, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles on a tour beginning 1 October. A most illuminating and very informative catalogue edited by Peter Pachnik and Klaus Honnef has been published by Harry N. Abrams Inc, New York (price £19.95).

The Order of Merit was instituted by Edward VII in 1902 and limited to 24 persons. A series of portrait drawings of the original members was commissioned by Edward VII from the Scottish artist William Strang. The Queen has now decided to revive the idea, commissioning a number of British artists to execute portraits.

Manchester City Art Gallery is showing *Children of the North*, new work by Anthony Davies, the Belfast-based print-maker. In this exhibition (until 15 November) Davies has concentrated on the theme of children coping with the modern environment. From Manchester the exhibition moves to Leicester and then to Wolverhampton.

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of Anglia, Norwich is showing *Florentine Drawing in the age of Michelangelo*, a loan exhibition from the British Museum (until 12 October). This is a spectacular selection of over 50 works, representing such artists as Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Fra Bartolommeo.

The first major exhibition of the work of *Edvard Munch* will be at the National Gallery (12.11.92-7.2.1993). This is a very important exhibition, coinciding with the Festival of Scandinavian Arts to be held in London during the autumn. Admission charges and pre-booking will be necessary.

Each autumn a distinguished sculptor is invited to create an installation which will occupy the whole of the Tate's Duveen Sculpture Galleries. This year the choice has fallen on the American sculptor Richard Serra (until 17 January).

The Tate Gallery will be showing *The Swagger Portrait* until 10 January 1993. This is an exhibition of grand manner portraiture in Britain from Van Dyck to Augustus John and has been specially selected by Andrew Wilton, Keeper of the Tate's British Collection.

Juan Gris (1887-1927) is not yet fully appreciated in this country, but was at the



Heartfield and police president Zörgiebel, Use photography as a weapon 1929.

Photo: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin/VG Bildkunst 1992.

centre of the Cubist movement in France. The first major exhibition of his work, at the White-Chapel Art Gallery until 29 November, is presented in association with the European Arts Festival.

Finally, for those who appreciate Oriental art: there is an important exhibition of *Tibetan Art* at Spinks (until 30 October) and over 100 paintings and textiles in the Nehru Gallery of Indian Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum (from 7 October 1992). □

CLUB 1943

Anglo-German Cultural Forum
Meetings on Mondays at 8 p.m.

at the Communal Hall
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51 Belsize Square
London NW3

Oct. 5th. Dr Tom Lukes.
Siegfried Sassoon. The Anglo-German War Poet.

Oct. 12th. No Lecture.

Oct. 19th. No Lecture.

Oct. 26th. Dr Hugh Rank.
The Life and Work of Arthur Schnitzler.

Nov. 2nd. Alan Freeman.
German Reunification and its Consequences.

Nov. 9th. Dr Carol Diethe.
Thoughts on the Death of Wedekind's Lulu. This is what happens to bad girls.

SB's Column

Lower Austria (*Niederoesterreich*) is known for its cultural activities, among them summer festivals in Reichenau and Baden. St Pölten, the provincial capital, continues to provide young talent for better-known theatres, whilst Grein recently staged *Lord Saville's Crime*, the late Hans Jaray's adaptation of Oscar Wilde.

Personalities. Will Quadflieg, the German actor, a sometime visitor to Britain where he gave popular recitals of German classic poetry, later a much-praised 'Jedermann' in Salzburg, has been engaged by the Vienna Burgtheater to star in a new play by Peter Turrini. Georg Kreisler, the writer, composer and cabaretist whose very original numbers (viz. *Zwei alte Tanten tanzen Tango*) sold discs in record figures, was recently interviewed by the press on the occasion of his 70th birthday. A cousin of Walter Reisch of *Maskerade* fame, he talked of his years in Hollywood, of his New York period as entertainer in the Monkey Bar, of his cabaret collaboration with Topsy Küpers, and of his book *Ein Prophet ohne Zukunft*. Kreisler is still very popular and often compared with 'Schlager' composer Hermann Leopoldi.

Birthdays. Prague-born soprano Jarmila Novotna, who sang in Berlin and Vienna in the Thirties, created the name part in Lehar's *Giuditta* where she partnered Richard Tauber, emigrated to the States in 1939 and sang at the New York 'Met' until 1954, just celebrated her 85th birthday. Hungarian-born Sir Georg Solti whose postwar career took him to Munich, Frankfurt and Chicago, and who was musical director of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden from 1961 to 1971, is 80 and much in demand throughout the musical world.

Also 80 is soprano Christel Goltz, who shortly after the war excelled in dramatic rôles, especially as Salome, Elektra and Leonore in *Fidelio*, also as Marie in Berg's *Wozzeck*. A pillar of strength at Dresden for many years, she then moved to Vienna where she remained a member of the State Opera until 1970. She now lives in Baden near Vienna. Tenor Alfredo Kraus, who had his 65th birthday, is still extremely active; the remarkable strength of his voice was demonstrated at the memorable opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Barcelona in July. □

A history of the Jews in the German-speaking lands

Part 4: The Renaissance Period

Humanism

In some respects the Renaissance prefigured the Age of Enlightenment of the 18th century. The Humanists who were its inspiration viewed religious dogma with mocking scepticism, even if, unlike some of their 18th century successors, they stopped short of challenging the basic tenets of the Christian faith. But they detested fanaticism and intolerance and had no use for heresy hunts or for other aspects of the *odium theologicum*. This was true, not only of a body of scholars, but also of many princes and sections of the clergy. Even the throne of St Peter was occupied by a succession of humanistic Popes: Sixtus IV (1471 to 1484); Alexander VI (1492 to 1503); the patrons of Michelangelo and Rafael, Julius II (1503 to 1521) and Leo X (1513 to 1521; and Clement VII (1523 to 1534).

An important aspect of the Renaissance was the revival of interest in the Greek language, which had been all but forgotten in Catholic Europe during the Middle Ages. The Italians had been the first to revive its study in the 14th and 15th centuries, largely because they wanted to gain access to the original texts of the philosophers, dramatists and historians of Classical Antiquity. The humanists of Germany and the Low Countries also took it up, but their motive was different. They were more interested in religious than in pagan studies. They knew that many Christian dogmas were not biblical at all, but were the works of Church Fathers and of Church Councils from about the 4th century onwards. They wanted to purge Christianity of its post-biblical accretions; so they urged that closer attention be paid to what the Bible actually said. They wanted to be able to study the original text of the New Testament; and before long they wanted to study the Old Testament in the original; this led them to develop the study of Hebrew as well.

Johann von Reuchlin

The key figure in this study was Johann von Reuchlin (1455 to 1522). In his early days, he was still uttering the conventional sentiments that the Jews were a stubborn nation of blasphemers; and indeed many humanists – Erasmus for example – for all their enlightenment, never did rid themselves of contempt and hatred for the Jews. But Reuchlin, on a visit to Italy, visited the famous Renaissance scholar Pico della

Mirandola. Pico had studied the Kabbalah, and had seen in it mystical truths that impressed him greatly; he passed on this enthusiasm to Reuchlin who, on his return to Germany, published two books on the Kabbalah and effectively created an interest among German scholars like his nephew Philip Melanchthon (later a key figure in the Lutheran movement), in the Hebrew language and in Jewish theologians. For instance, Reuchlin considered that Rashi, Gershon and other commentators were essential interpreters of the Old Testament texts, not only for Jews, but for Christians also. In the course of time he also became an advocate of the Jews' right to be accorded proper treatment as 'members of the Empire and imperial burghers'.

Watchdogs of the Lord

Reuchlin was soon engaged in battle with the German Dominicans. The Dominican Order were punningly known as *Domini Canes* – the watchdogs of the Lord – ever on the lookout for dangers to the Christian faith. Since the 13th century they had campaigned for the burning of Jewish writings, especially the Talmud, which, they said, contained passages critical of Christian teachings. Now, at the beginning of the 15th century, they were particularly determined to ban Jewish writings since the Jews had quickly taken up the new art of printing. (Excluded from so many economic activities Jews have always gravitated to new industries in the early stages before these were organized to exclude them. The centre of the printing business at that time was Italy; several German Jews, who had fled there from persecution, were already prominent in the new industry.)

The German Dominicans were led by the Professor of Theology at Cologne University, Jakob Hoogstraten, and by a fiery agitator, Johann Pfefferkorn, who, like some of the most vitriolic preachers against the Jews during these centuries, was himself a convert from Judaism. Pfefferkorn wanted not only the Talmud but even the Hebrew text of the Old Testament destroyed since it differed from the Latin translation in some respects. Reuchlin countered that this kind of difference was exactly what he and the other humanists wanted to expose in the interests of recovering the purity of the original; the Hebrew text must be pre-

served. Regarding the Talmud, he admitted that neither he nor most Christians understood it; but there was no more reason for Christians to destroy the Talmud than there was for them to destroy books on mathematics which they could not understand. And he defended the Kabbalah because it contained religious insights of which Christians stood in need.

The struggle between Reuchlin and Pfefferkorn spread throughout Germany. The country at that time stood on the threshold of the Reformation, that movement which, among other things, resented the arrogance of clericalism; the supporters of Reuchlin soon included anti-clerical laymen like Ulrich von Hutten and Franz von Sickingen. The attack on the Dominicans widened into a general attack on the claims, obscurantism and intolerance of the Catholic Church in Germany.

Appeal to the Emperor

For his part, Pfefferkorn appealed to the Emperor Maximilian. At first Maximilian, influenced by his piously orthodox sister, inclined towards Pfefferkorn and ordered the confiscation of all Hebrew books (1509), but pressure from humanistic princes and perhaps the advocacy of his doctor Riccius, a convert from Judaism, but a noted Hebrew scholar and exponent of the Kabbalah, led the Emperor to reverse his edict in the following year. The Dominicans then summoned Reuchlin to appear before them for heresy (1511), but the Archbishop of Mainz put a stop to the proceedings; none of the German rulers – and the Archbishop was also a territorial prince – wanted the establishment of a Spanish-type Inquisition in Germany. The humanist supporters were also strong at the Papal Court and spoke up for Reuchlin with Leo X (as did the Pope's Jewish doctor): so the Pope also pronounced against the Dominicans (1516).

Books dealing with the Reuchlin controversy are silent about the Jewish reactions to this storm which, though urgently concerned with the fate of their holy writings, was raging above their heads. One must conjecture that, apart from the quiet word that may have been spoken to Pope or Emperor by their doctors, the Jews lay low, marvelling to find defenders among the Christians, but fearful that these defenders would lose and that the Jews would then have to pay the price to the Pfefferkorns and their rabid allies.

Then, to their amazement, they seemed to find another mighty defender – in Martin Luther!

To be continued.
□ Ralph Blumenau

1492 and all that

In the Middle Ages Western Europe was as fragmented as the Balkans are today. Then, gradually, more or less unified states – England, France, Spain – arose through conquest or dynastic marriage. One of the incidental long-term results was the countrywide expulsion of Jews (Germany as a whole saw no expulsion of the Jews because she was not unified until much later.)

The English expulsion occurred in 1290, and the French sixteen years later. The Spanish one, in 1492, was the worst, involving around a quarter of a million victims, and ending the most fruitful era in Diaspora history. This does not mean that the community, with its high profile financiers and royal advisers, had led a trouble-free existence before. There had been intermittent anti-Jewish outbursts; above all, in 1391 mobs incited by Dominican friars had ransacked *Juderias* throughout (Catholic) Spain. In the course of the subsequent, concluding, phase of the Christian-Moslem struggle the Church had also exerted enormous pressure on the Jews, enforcing conversions and setting up tribunals of the Inquisition. Under the circumstances many Jews had already undergone baptism, but *converso* families were often looked at askance. The Jesuits, for instance, made 'purity of blood', i.e. proof of non-Jewish ancestry stretching back three generations, a precondition for admission into the Order. (Even so the Jewish-descended Theresa of Avila became one of the most charismatic personalities of the Counter-Reformation.)

Jewish solidarity

In many instances new converts still felt solidarity with their former co-religionists. This was true of the two men chiefly involved in procuring royal patronage, as well as finances, for Columbus's journey: Count de Medinaceli, and Luis de Santangel, comptroller of the royal household of Aragon. Theirs were also the chief voices raised against the expulsion of the Jews demanded by the Inquisitor-General Torquemada.

The Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille, sided with the Inquisitor. On 31 March they gave Spain's Jews a three-months' ultimatum either to convert or leave the kingdom. On 3 August, shortly after its expiry, Columbus set sail – with a Hebrew-speaking interpreter, the *converso* Luis de Torres among

his crew, and the Jewish cartographer Abraham Zacuto's astronomical maps among his equipment. Adrift on an ocean as trackless as the wilderness, and confronted by a mutinous crew, he compared himself to Moses; later, in the Caribbean, he scanned the waters for growing things, especially birds, like Noah.

Putative Jewish descent

He is further known to have referred to the Second Temple by the Hebrew term Second House, and to have dated its destruction in the year 68 AD in accordance with Jewish tradition. Also, although everything aboard the *Santa Maria*, *Pinta* and *Nina* was ready on 2 August (which coincided with the Ninth of Av, commemorating the destruction of the Temple) he postponed the sailing by twenty-four hours.

The combination of the sources of Columbus's sponsorship, his choice of companions and helpmeets, his Old Testament references, the date of the sailing, etc, has led authors as diverse as the Spaniard Salvador de Madriaga and the Anglo-Jewish historian Cecil Roth to speculate that the explorer was of Jewish descent. Simon Wiesenthal even thinks that Columbus undertook his journeys to find a haven for Jews fleeing Spain after the Edict of Expulsion.

Most historians are sceptical. Simon Schama of Harvard, himself a Jew, dismisses the 'Jewish Columbus' suppositions as preposterous. He goes further, seeing Columbus's enterprise motivated not even by Renaissance curiosity, but by Christian millenarianism (i.e. to bring about the Second Coming). In Schama's view Columbus saw himself as a man of destiny called upon to complete a miraculous chain of events whose first link was the conquest of Granada from the Moors – significantly on New Year's Day 1492. The conquering Ferdinand of Aragon, as significantly bore (among others) the title King of Jerusalem. And wasn't it a near-miracle that the Catholic Majesties, having previously rejected their petitioner, then changed their minds?

Nomen est omen

As regards himself Columbus drew confirmation for his belief that he was preordained to accomplish great things from his very name. Christopher derives from *Christoferens* the Christ-carrier, bearer of the True Gospel to the whole world. Colon, the explorer's surname in Spanish, means populator (by inference populator of the world with Christians). In the original Italian

Columbus connotes dove – and the dove, in the Catholic perception, represents the Holy Ghost.

One could, of course, argue that the dove also possessed a Judaic significance as God's signal to Noah that the Flood had subsided. The search for a Land of Gold (Eldorado) could likewise be traced back to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus – known to Columbus – who had written of 'Ophir, the land of gold, which is in India, where precious stones and timber will be found to build the Temple' (and the explorer called the islands he discovered the Indies). Moreover the Second Coming is, in the final definition, a Judaic concept: Messianism runs like a red thread through Jewish history.

Half of world Jewry

Ultimately, though, the debate about Columbus's Jewishness and the 'Zionist' nature of his enterprise matters little compared to the fact that – indirectly – he enabled millions of our people to escape from poverty and danger in Europe. American Jewry, both North and South of the Rio Grande, today comprises half the world's Jewish population. Even so, Spanish-American Jews only number half a million at most. They, nonetheless, constitute a not insignificant corrective to the singly greatest defect their countries inherited from the motherland: lack of tolerance and democracy. Nobody (except possibly Mrs Thatcher) did more to undermine the Argentine *junta* than the human rights activist Jacobo Timmerman of *Prisoner without a name, Cell without a number* fame. By the same token the success of Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden* may well contribute to Chile's avoidance of another General Pinochet in future. Never mind about Montezuma's revenge – this is the revenge of the descendants of the 1492 exodus on the heirs of Torquemada!

□ Richard Grunberger

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Cookery Corner

No. 7 PINEAPPLE AND GINGER CAKE

A supremely easy and quick recipe for those
with a sweet tooth.

INGREDIENTS (Serves as many as you like):

1 packet ginger biscuits
1 large tin of pineapple chunks
8oz whipped cream
3oz melted butter
1 chocolate flake bar

METHOD

Crush biscuits to crumbs (use a blender if
available). When crushed add melted butter
and mix well. Pack mixture onto shallow
baking dish to a depth of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (approx).
Place dish in refrigerator for at least 1 hour,
or until set.

Drain juice from pineapple chunks. Pour
chunks onto biscuit base and level out with
dessert spoon.

Cover the whole to any depth you like
with whipped cream. Sprinkle flaked choco-
late on top. Return to refrigerator until
ready to serve.

ALTERNATIVE RECIPE

Substitute pineapple with any fruit, tinned
or otherwise, which you like. The same
applies to biscuits for base. Do not, under
any circumstances, skimp on the cream.

□ M.N. (Inspired by Deborah L)

40 Years Ago this Month

CHANGE OF LANGUAGE AND NAME?

Replies to our 'Gallup Poll' which came in
after the last issue of 'AJR Information' had
gone to print confirm that most of the
members are, broadly speaking, against a
change of name and language. Here are
some quotations from recent letters: 'I
would like to tell you that I, although
technically not a refugee from Germany - I
settled in England in 1925 and became
naturalised in 1933 - so completely iden-
tified myself with the Jewish refugees from
Germany that many a time, quite uncon-
sciously, I described myself as one, in
private as well as in public. I feel that the
name of your excellent paper describes it
correctly and therefore should not be
altered'. - 'Keep the name under which we
and you are so well known in this country
and abroad and under which you have
achieved success and admiration'.

With regard to the language most corre-
spondents expressed the view that the vast
majority is able to read English newspapers
and that also for reasons of principle a
reversal to German would not be
recommendable.

The AJR wishes again to thank all corre-
spondents who, by participating in the
debate, have expressed their active interest.
Whilst it seems that, at least for the time
being, the discussion may be concluded, any
further arguments in one direction or
another are, of course, always welcome.

AJR Information October 1952.

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Obituaries

Susanne Horwell



'Susi' Horwell

Photo: Private.

The death of Susanne Horwell in August meant a most grievous loss not only to her husband Arnold, family and friends, but also to a number of communal organisations.

Susi was born in Berlin in 1913 into an old-established Jewish family. After grammar school she commenced university studies, but in 1933 her parents sent her to England.

Here she served as secretary in turn to the Sephardi Haham, Dr. Moses Gaster, and Otto Schiff, chairman of the Jewish Refugee Committee. She married Arnold, whom she had known from Berlin, in 1943 at a ceremony conducted by Rabbi J. J. Kokotek. When Arnold left the army and established his business, she became his partner as head of three important departments.

During all these years Susi was closely involved in Jewish communal affairs, among others, as Chair of the Belsize Square Synagogue Women's Society, and President of the B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Women's Lodge (1976-78). Here she combined a fine intelligence, organising ability and strong devotion to duty with a deep compassion for everyone in need. In addition she dispensed generous hospitality at home, regularly hosting over twenty family members and friends on Seder nights.

For three years she bore a severe illness with extraordinary fortitude and dignity. She was happy in the love surrounding her, by her husband, son - a gynaecological consultant - daughter-in-law and three grandchildren. To them and to her sister in the U.S.A. goes the very warm sympathy of her countless friends. □ Frank Falk

The AJR Club write: Susi, a member since the Club's inception, was its last Chairman; she worked for it and the welfare of members right to the end. Her 'Happy Memories Party' (the name she gave to the last function of the AJR Club) and the charm and thoughtfulness with which she planned it, will be unforgettable to everyone who attended. We shall also remember the pleasure Susi and Arnold gave to Club members for many years, both at Seder and Chanukah.

Everyone who had the privilege of knowing Susi felt honoured by her friendship. □

Paul Mencer

Bukowina-born Doctor Mencer, who died, aged 91, showed rare dedication to his calling. When, on arriving in the UK, he was initially disbarred from practising, he volunteered his services as an orderly at St Mary's Hospital. During the war he treated fellow refugees who frequented the Austrian Centre, Paddington, free of charge. Later, as a GP in the Old Kent Road, he enjoyed a reputation among his patients that long outlived his retirement. □

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(2nd eve service at BELSIZE SQUARE 6.30 p.m.)

Kol Nidrei: 7.00 p.m.
Yom Kippur: 10.30 a.m.

For tickets of admission apply to the Hon. Secretary, 51 Belsize Square, NW3.

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Yom Kippur at 11.30 a.m.

Youth Mifgash

Yom Kippur 5-5.30 p.m.
There will be a professionally supervised day-time creche for under 6's during the Services

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Eve: 6.30 p.m.
Morning: 10.00 a.m.
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RELIGION SCHOOL

Beginning of the New Term
Sunday, 13th September at 10 a.m.
Registration of new pupils 10 a.m.
Space donated by Pafra Limited

Due to a printers error some of the times given in this space in September were incorrect. We apologise for any inconvenience caused to our readers.

Birthdays

Paul Yogi Mayer - 80

On 8 September Paul Yogi Mayer celebrated his 80th birthday. His energy and vitality bely his four score years. His mind and devotion to work is as keen as ever.

'Yogi' played a leading part in the German Jewish Youth Movement. He was himself an accomplished sportsman and was in charge of the youth department of the Reichsbund juedischer Frontsoldaten.

Mr Mayer came to the U.K. in 1939 and served as a paratrooper with the British army during the war. Later he became a warden of the Brady Boys' Club. His passion for sport and his interest in the rights of young people showed in his professional life. He was an Area Youth Officer in London, a lecturer at the north London College and Training Consultant to the London Union of Youth Clubs.

Yogi Mayer is a founder member of the AJR and has served on the management committee of the Otto Schiff Housing Association. He is also Vice-President of the 45 Society, a school and college governor in Islington and the Life-President of the Bradians Trust and Association.

Yogi remains more active as a octogenarian than many people half his age. He lives with his wife, Ilse, in Hampstead. They

have three children, four grandchildren and a granddaughter. We join them in wishing Mr Mayer many more years of fruitful activity. □

Arthur Ney - 90

Arthur Ney was born in Stuttgart in 1902. When he came to Britain in 1936 he, and two of his friends, founded Londex Ltd, specialising in electrical remote control units. The company's advanced products played an important part in the war effort. The company has since become a part of the giant General Electric group.

Upon retiring from Londex, Mr Ney went into business again, taking on the Clarek Clutch Company. He is now in the unusual position of having retired twice.

Mr Ney was an active member of the B'nai B'rith for over 25 years, initially in the Leo Baeck Lodge and then as a founder member of the Surrey Lodge, of which he became President. When he moved from Croydon to Hampstead he rejoined the Leo Baeck Lodge. He is a long-standing member of the AJR.

Arthur Ney is still a keen theatre and concert goer, but his great interest is history. We hope that he will have many more years to enjoy these pastimes. □

Searching for Petr



Student sitter.

Sketch by Petr Kien.

I visited Prague last year on a vicarious pilgrimage on behalf of my mother, Gina, to whom the Terezin artist, Petr Kien, was a first cousin. Gina had watched Petr's unusual talent develop from the age of five, when he was spotted and encouraged by a Czech painter. Later he studied at Prague's Academy of Fine Arts and at 20 he was working and teaching at the city's school of graphic art.

My mother's final glimpse of Petr in a Prague square in 1939, abruptly removed her from her childhood. She was destined for Britain, and he, via Terezin, for Auschwitz where he died in 1944, at the age of 25.

But in death, the artist-child Petr continued to grow, filling my own childhood with his subtle, invasive presence. I grew up in London regaled by his childish adventures in a strange country under a looming

bleakness. I had no physical sense of him at all, and my mother had salvaged nothing to remember him by. My mission, then, in Prague, was to find at least one drawing from that dismembered past.

Kien, with other gifted Nazi victims – Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein, Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krasa, Bedrich Fritta, Karel Fleischmann, Otto Ungar, Felix Bloch – has become part of an artistic hagiography, celebrated today in touring exhibitions all over the world. Kien's portraits of Jewish subjects, touched with a morbid incandescence, feature prominently in Prague's Jewish Museum and Terezin's Ghetto Museum, and his work appears in several art books and on Prague post-cards.

He is also known for his libretto of the surreal opera *Emperor of Atlantis*, by Viktor Ullmann, in which a personified Death despairs of a world in which he himself is prevented from dying. The opera was due to be performed in Terezin, but at dress rehearsal stage its subversive message penetrated and the authors were despatched to Auschwitz, or so we are told. Another version suggests that Petr Kien willingly followed his wife, Ilse Stransky, and his parents who were on the death-list to Auschwitz. We shall probably never know.

Artist as martyr

The manuscript was smuggled out of Terezin and within the last 15 years the opera has been performed all over Europe. In time Terezin has become a subject of morbid-romantic fascination – the artist as martyr – but this is no consolation for the bereaved. My mother still had nothing tangible by which to remember Petr.

In Prague I was armed with an itinerary of difficult memories: the faded yellow building where my mother lived in Ostrovni Ulice, near the National Theatre, now an information bureau. Her mother's last flat at Na Zborenci above a dismal, shuttered shop front, before the Nazis came for her. Dr Arno Parik, curator of Prague's Jewish Museum, emerged from behind a walnut

dresser in a fusty officed smelling of boiled-water. Democracy had barely dawned. The city's yellowing beauty showed its crushed spirit, and I could imagine Petr waving goodbye in a street of shadows.

Ancient bond

Dr Parik unfurled 15 torn and dog-earned life drawings by the art student Kien, lodged with him by an owner who wanted to sell. He bashed out her phone number on his ancient, rattling typewriter. But the lady proved unobtainable. The time to strike the deal and leave Prague was dwindling. Some awful, preternatural destiny seemed to stand once more between my mother and Petr Kien. In the jumbled streets of the mediaeval Jewish quarter, then celebrating the euphoria of a new liberalism, two sympathetic students offered to help trace the owner. In their sensitive young faces I recognized an ancient bond.

Seeing Kien's original oil paintings in Terezin for the first time hanging besides those of 14 other artists was a moment of pure luminance in a place which still resonates with evil. The original Gestapo restaurant where Jewish girls served as slaves, preserved by the Czechs, is today filled with tourists. Also preserved is the tiny cell in which up to 60 men were crammed for three days en route to Auschwitz. Many died on their feet. 'Petr must have been here,' murmured Jana, our guide. From the tiny memorial outside came the *El Mole Rahamim*, intoned by a passing Israeli cantor.

Next day in Prague an 11th hour deal was concluded – and the 15 drawings – one for each artist exhibited in Terezin – changed hands. I carried them gently to the car.

□ Gloria Tessler

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