

AJR Information

Volume XLVIII No. 6
June 1993

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

Schtonk Inc p3

Dissent in the
Cockpit p4

Pensions news –
special report p16

Hitler – the home movie

The footage of Hitler and his henchmen recently screened on Channel 4 showed them in glowing soft pastel shades instead of the customary harsh black-and-white of newsreels. An insinuating medium for an already seductive message: these alleged monsters were human, after all – look at them turning up, in their neatly pressed uniforms, for an arts festival! Should the constraints of political correctness not perhaps be extended from words to images? On the other hand, such an extension might be inimical to the freedom of information, the basis of all true scholarships. □

Questioning editorial policy

Of Prejudice and Pride

Of late several readers have accused the editor of anti-German prejudice. This is a key issue and must be addressed, even if I incline to the view that such criticism arises from a misreading of my actual words.

The December 1991 editorial commenting on the post-unification upsurge of xenophobia concluded: 'There is reasonable hope that Bonn's Europeanism and economic assistance to the *Ossies* will ultimately make rampaging neo-Nazis appear of no greater political consequence than our homegrown lager louts'. In November 1992 I quoted the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* verbatim as saying 'if others won't let the wound of the mass crime heal, (our italics) then almost of necessity generations of Germans will remain identified with the crimes of their fathers'. My February 1993 editorial ended with a reference to Munich staging the country's largest anti-xenophobia demonstration. In March I wrote 'The Bundesrepublik has provided long-term stability through the successful operation of the democratic process'.

In addition, in the half-year between June and December 1992, we carried lengthy reports of municipi-

pally organised refugee reunions with three native towns: Baden-Baden, Aachen and Berlin.

The critical letters, nonetheless, keep arriving. 'In your eyes Israel can do no wrong and Germany no right' said one, and that after a thorough airing of the Vanunu controversy in our letter columns. Another critic objects to part of his membership subscription supporting an 'unacceptable editorial policy' and demands that the journal 'publish information – not one-sided views'. He goes on 'In Hesse the great majority supported the established political parties which have given post-war Germany due recognition as a democratic country'.

If only it were as simple as that! In Hesse on a lower voter turnout than previously, the Republikaner averaged 10% of the vote – far more than previously. In other words, Schönhuber is on a rising curve and the CDU and SPD on gradually declining ones. Schönhuber sprang to prominence with his autobiography *Ich war dabei*, exonerating the Waffen SS. In his election speeches he 'disavows' racism, but demands that no non-German ever be given voting rights in Germany. (NB. M. Balladur, the French Prime Minister, and M. Beregoroy, his predecessor, were, respectively, of Armenian and Ukrainian descent. As regards citizenship, Germany still operates the *jus sanguinis*, the law of blood).

In France the neo-Fascist vote has steadied nationally at 12%.

In Germany, *pace* Hesse, it stands at 10%. Should we say *vive la différence*? Over fifty years ago France produced Pétain, Italy Mussolini and Germany Hitler. That signified a difference!

The lesson of history surely is that, if Germany shows any signs of relapse, alarm bells should be rung. I happen to think it behoves *AJR Information* to be among the bell ringers. I don't believe I am alone in this.

Nor do I believe that the term 'Information' in our masthead, devised under totally different conditions in 1941, enjoins abstention from comment, i.e. anaemic objectivity, upon editors for all time. Any editor worthy of that name would be too proud to be a conduit of news without views. At the same time, though, he must be humble enough to give space – and not only in the letters column – to contrary views.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Will be held on
Thursday 10 June 1993, 7.30 p.m.
at
15 CLEVE ROAD, LONDON NW6 3RL

AGENDA

Annual Report 1992
Hon. Treasurer's Report
Discussion
Election of Executive Committee
Followed by a talk by **Ralph Blumenau** entitled
'The University of the 3rd Age'.
Refreshments will be served after the meeting.
All questions for the Chair should be submitted to
the Administrator at:
1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Frognal, London NW3 6AL
by 3rd June 1993.

Club 43 50th Anniversary

Club 43 was founded in 1943 by mostly Jewish immigrants from the Continent including scientists, artists, musicians, writers and others interested in cultural progress. The Club holds weekly lectures, of a high standard, on a large variety of subjects. These are followed by lively discussions.

In its first year 15 founder members each contributed an Essay to a book called *In Tyrannos*. It was written in English to demonstrate to the English-speaking world that democratic, freedom loving tendencies have been alive in Germany since the 5th century.

During its 50 years of existence the Club has been led by 7 different presidents. The most successful was Hans Jaeger, who shaped the character of the club during his 23 years of service (1952-1975). His great knowledge of history and topical events attracted up to 200 people at a time to his lectures.

Since 1945 many refugees have emigrated to other countries or gone back to Germany. But new members are still joining the Club, which continues in its old traditions at the Communal Hall, Belsize Square Synagogue, every Monday evening at 8pm. □

AJR

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Profile

The seven ages of women



Dora Segall.

Photo: Newman.

'One man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages' wrote the Bard. He did not know of Dora Segall whose acts exceed Shakespeare's number in the same way that her age exceeds the biblical three-score-and-ten; Dora will be ninety next year.

Born into a liberal Berlin family she showed an early penchant for the arts but her practically-minded mother insisted that she train as a secretary. Thus equipped she ran the office of the German Playwrights' and Composers' Association in Weimar days. As a hobby she gave well-received poetry recitals, some of them over the radio. She met and married a Social Democrat journalist working for the German Broadcasting Corporation.

In 1933 he was briefly imprisoned and she lost her job. Hereafter she worked for the *Reichsvertretung* in various capacities; from 1937 she was delegated to the *Jüdische Frauenbund* where she served under Hannah Karminski, with whom she became great friends. In 1939 the Segalls came to London where he eventually headed the group of German Social Democrats in Britain while Dora worked under the tutelage of Anna Schwab in the Welfare Department of the Jewish Refugee Committee.

Postwar she was Secretary of British Aid for German Workers, liaising with such Labour notables as Fenner Brockway, MP, and Victor Gollancz. She also studied for a Social Science Diploma, which she gained in 1947.

After the reorganisation of Bloomsbury House in 1949 Dora managed the Sub-

scription Department of Lange, Maxwell and Springer, the chrysalis of the emerging Maxwell media empire. From 1956 she was the Secretary of the London Office of the Leo Baeck Institute, giving sterling assistance to the late Robert Weltsch up to (and beyond) his emigration to Israel.

Her spare time activities revolved around the AJR Club where she worked closely with Margaret Jacoby. When Hannah Karminski House opened its hospitable doors in the mid-sixties Peter Herz (of Blue Danube Club fame) apostrophised her as *die Seele des Hauses*. A more tangible honour was the Federal Order of Merit – for refugee welfare work and services to German-Jewish reconciliation – she received from the German Ambassador in 1984.

By that date Dora had been a widow for eleven years. She has, however, a sizable family in America, and a 'substitute' daughter – a Kindertransportee she helped bring over – in the U.K. When I visited her in her top floor flat I thought I'd carry up the mail stuffed into her letter box – but there was so much that I had difficulty extracting it all. Cheering evidence, I concluded, that Dora keeps her many friendships in good repair. 'Fellowship is life'.

□ R.G.

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ALL LEGAL WORK UNDERTAKEN

Schtonk Inc

Once again we have to say with Karl Marx that when history repeats itself it does so first as tragedy, and then as farce. When, in 1940, Chaplin-Hitler screamed 'Democracy - schtonk!' in the *Great Dictator*, he was employing the pea-shooter of ridicule against the Nazi juggernaut. Chaplin himself subsequently admitted that if he had known the true tragic state of affairs at the time he would have made a different film.

The farce - the sale of the Hitler Diaries and their exposure as forgeries in the 1980s - is the subject matter of the contemporary German film *Schtonk*. The film's director, Helmut Dietl, attributed the massive interest in the Diaries not only to greed and sensationalism but also to widespread German desire for the portrayal of a more human Hitler.

Such an image would, of course, have been a salve to the conscience of older Germans whose acquiescence had enabled the Nazi regime to function so smoothly.

There is, as the saying has it, more than one way to skin a cat. For instance the blackness of Hitler can be marginally toned down by setting him off against Stalin, whose 'body count' was actually greater. This is the avenue pursued by Alan Clark and Dr Charnley who fault Churchill for having, to put it crudely, helped the greater evil against the lesser one.

Seen in the wider context, the Clark-Charnley thesis is a pernicious fallacy.

Judged by any criterion other than victim numbers Nazism was worse than Communism. The latter was a grandchild of the Enlightenment that had gone to the bad, i.e. Stalin's means had vitiated Marx's ends. The former was a Satanic denial of everything the Enlightenment stood for; its means and ends were one barbaric whole.

Could anyone envisage a 'Nazism with a human face' analogous to Alexander Dubček's (admittedly abortive) experiment in Communism with a human face? Clark-Charnley suggest that in 1941 Britain might have struck a Machiavellian deal with a non-ideological Nazi like Goering.

But could Goering, in fact, be described as non-ideological? On antisemitism the alpha and omega of the Nazi creed, he was certainly rock-solid. In post-Anschluss Vienna he cracked jokes about suicidal Jews who cheated the municipal gas company by inhaling cubic meters of gas they hadn't paid for.

The final proof that Nazism was the worse of the two -isms is provided by the different manner of their end. Soviet rule collapsed with relatively little blood-letting in the satellite states, and simply imploded in Russia. Can a similarly implosive and unwarlike ending be imagined in connection with the Third Reich? Of course not.

No - A. J. P. Taylor just about hit the nail on the head when he said that Communism could only get better and Nazism could only get worse.

□ R.G.

Is Haider's party over?

The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) represents the merger of two tendencies. One, straightforwardly Neo-Nazi, wants another Anschluss; the other, from which the party takes its name, favours a 'free market' as distinct from the mixed-economy model of the Socialist-Catholic government coalition. Under the leadership of Haider the Neo-Nazis gained both ascendancy within the party, and growing support in the country. His core supporters are war veterans enthused by Haider's glorification of war criminals like General Löhr, who ordered the deportation of Salonika's Jews, or SS officer Walter Reder responsible for the Marzabotto massacre of a thousand Italian civilians.

The main ingredient of Haider's appeal to a wider electorate is frustration with the red-black consensus and, of course, xenophobia. This age-old Austrian disease became virulent during the Waldheim

brouhaha, and again when the end of Communism pushed refugees and economic migrants westwards.

Haider warned of swamping by foreigners and initiated an 'Austria First' petition. Liberal elements, alarmed by anti-foreigner outrages in Germany, countered by convening a torchlight demonstration on Heroes' Square (where Hitler had proclaimed the Anschluss 55 years earlier).

A largely young quarter-of-a-million strong audience turned up to clap a pop singer's and Chief Rabbi Eisenberg's joint rendition of *Howenu Schalom Aleichem*.

More importantly, the Catholic Church - mindful of Cardinal Innitzer's craven capitulation in 1938 - spoke out against the 'Austria First' petition. Its call, denounced as clerical meddling in politics by Haider, was heeded, and the would-be Führer garnered under half of the one million signatures (out of a five and a half million strong electorate) he had aimed for.

The relative failure of the petition brought to the surface simmering discontent in the party's ranks. Within a week of the result five Freedom Party MPs seceded; these included last year's presidential candidate Heide Schmid, and ex-Defence Minister Frischenschläger (notorious since his airport handshake for released war criminal Walter Reder).

The latter fact indicates that five secessionists from Haider's party would hardly be suitable Westminster 'lobby fodder'. Even so, the separation of Free Marketeers from the Neo-Nazis within the FPÖ banishes the spectre of 'Hitler's grandson' (Haider's nickname among opponents) entering into his inheritance.

□ R.G.

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Reviews

Dissent in the Cockpit

On this page we carry two conflicting reviews on the play *KINDERTRANSPORT* – performed by the Soho Theatre Company at the Cockpit Theatre, London

Something special

The Pied Piper led the children of Hamelin into the mountain. When they were gone there was only silence and sadness in the town. In her play *Kindertransport* Diane Samuels examines the fate of the children led away from their parents and homeland in the late 1930's.

Eva, a nine year old only child, comes to a new home in Manchester, where she is protected from the outside world and her own inner fears by the bluff, loving Lil. As the years pass Eva becomes anglicised. She forgets her Judaism and changes her name to Evelyn. By the time her mother, traumatised by years in concentration camps, comes to collect her Evelyn is unable to reach back through time and rekindle her feelings. Lil is her mother now.

The play, set in the attic of a suburban London house in the 1980's, shows how the lives of Eva/Evelyn, her daughter, Faith, and Lil have been, and continue to be, affected by the past. In this case a past which has been hidden and, largely, ignored until Faith finds letters, from a grandmother of whom she had never heard, to Evelyn – posted from Nazi Germany.

Flashes of humour and a hopeful ending notwithstanding this is a powerful and emotional play. The slightly cramped accommodation at the Cockpit Theatre suits the claustrophobic attic set well. The performances of the whole cast are excellent. The young Eva is played by 13 year old Sarah Shanson with a magnetic self-confidence which constantly borders, but never quite crosses the line of, precocity. Nigel Hastings, the only male cast member, plays Ratcatcher, the piper who takes voyeuristic pleasure in the pain of the children and haunts the dreams and quiet corners of Evelyn's life. He also plays an SS guard, a customs official and an insensitive postman. His presence is large and exuberant in every role. Doreen Andrew (Lil), Ruth Mitchell (Helga) Suzan Sylvester (Faith) and Elizabeth Bell (Evelyn) all do great work individually and as a team.

Although all set in one dreary room *Kindertransport* fairly rattles along. Upon leaving the theatre one knows one has seen something special. To put it in a nutshell: *Kindertransport* is extremely good.

□ M.N.



Ruth Mitchell (left) and Sarah Shanson.

Photo: Shiela Burnett.

Theatre of untruth

Just as the application of law does not necessarily engender justice, so a piling up of realistic detail doesn't necessarily produce the truth. *Kindertransport* abounds with realistic tropes – the mother's purchase of a too-large coat for Eva, heartbreak at departure, panic at the ill-organised arrival, language problems, doomed attempts to bring out the parents, spy scares, the heartache of evacuation – but lacks inner truth. This is sacrificed to plot contrivance.

Eva's decision to become Evelyn to blot out the painful past is comprehensible up to a point. What strains credulity to breaking point is that, as part of the process of inventing a new identity, she cuts herself off from her Holocaust survivor mother whom she accuses of having abandoned her. The playwright asks us to believe that the little *Kindertransportee's* sense of abandonment has raged on unabated in Eva's breast for eight years. The act of rejection and resultant suppression of the truth opens a Pandora's Box. Evelyn grows into a highly-strung woman neurotically hunting down every speck of dust in her *bijou* home, and incapable of establishing an untroubled relationship with her own daughter. To add to the pervasive hysterical recriminations between Evelyn and her (real) mother and daughter, the audience are also regaled with her harrowing diatribe against the substitute mother Lil.

Moreover, since Lil is Evelyn's chosen mother, one would have expected a degree of affinity between them. In fact they could have come from different planets – with Lil a maternal Mancunian homebody and Evelyn a spiky Home Counties neurotic.

Even the symbolism of the ratcatcher hovering beyond the attic window seems dragged in more for dramatic effect than logical consistency. After all, the children lured by the Pied Piper of Hamelin went into the abyss, whereas those who boarded the *Kindertransport* found life awaiting them at journey's end.

□ R.G.

CLUB 1943

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

at the Communal Hall
Belsize Square Synagogue
51 Belsize Square
London NW3

June 7th. Dr Erich Vio.
Liest aus eigenen Dichtungen.
June 14th. No Lecture. Synagogue AGM.
June 21st. Charmian Brimson &
Dr Marian Malet will talk about *Die Zeitung* published in London between 1941 and 1945.
June 28th. C. Kryslar & H. Seelig.
Zitate aus aller Welt und eigene. Music by Robert Schumann.

De-constructed Christ figure

A. N. Wilson, *JESUS*, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992, £15.

This is a disturbing work, for Jews almost as much as for Christians, which contradicts all received assumptions.

Let me quote from the last paragraph: 'Matthew tells us that, his Messianic hopes in ruins, Jesus died with the words of the Psalmist: My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? on his lips. Perhaps if he had foreseen the whole of Christian history, his despair would have been even greater'. It is the culmination of a trend of thought which lays the blame, directly or indirectly, for persecution (including the Holocaust) on the Gospels, on Paul and on the Gentile Church.

This approach provides a shock. Readers of Wilson's previous work will know that in the past he has purveyed firm Christian attitudes, some of them not free of borderline antisemitism.

But here he deconstructs the foundations of the Christian faith and de-mythologises the figure of Jesus. Who will recognise him as a glutton and a drunkard, a man who consorts with layabouts, heretics and quislings; whose entourage includes a hated tax-gatherer who works for the Roman occupiers of Judaea ('Saint' Matthew himself), as well as a guerrilla fighter (Simon Zelotes) and the assassin Judas Sicarius (soldiers' Latin for knifeman, known to us as Iscariot)?

On the other hand the 'poor fishermen', the chief disciples, were more likely well-off owners and fishmongers, and Jesus lived with them in a good house in Capernaum (Kvar Nahum). And he had rich and powerful friends in Jerusalem, members of the governing Sanhedrin, such as Nikodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (who provided the famous sepulchre).

You may say that anybody can make up stories about the past. That is exactly, alleges Wilson, what the Evangelists and their much later editors have done. Wilson also contends that despite the hostility of the compilers of the Gospels and of the Acts and the Epistles to 'the Jews', it nevertheless

emerges that Jesus was a Jew. He may have been a somewhat anarchically inclined *hasid* with a bend towards reviving prophetic stances; he was almost certainly married – what youngish Jew was not? – and the marriage at Cana was probably his own, with the water-into-wine 'miracle' symbolising a renewal of the Jewish faith. The 'raising from the dead' of Lazarus was mystery play-acting.

And so it goes on. Herod the Great had been dead for four years when he supposedly committed infanticide for fear of the new-born Messiah; Mary Magdalen was not a prostitute; there was no census during the reign of Augustus – but six years later and the Romans, who brutally enforced their peace, certainly did not shift people to their birthplace to be counted. Consequently the (synoptic) Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, which tell the Christmas story as every child knows it, cannot be historically 'true'. No Bethlehem birth, no stable. The fourth Gospel, that of John, ignores this altogether and starts with a treatise on the Logos (the Word), a philosophical view of Christ which ignores all childishness.

Wilson says that given those contradictions, one might conclude that there was no historical Jesus at all. Yet he thinks that the pithy utterances in the Parables reveal a character at variance with the people who purport to record him. He sees him as a true Jew of his time, perhaps a sectarian, almost certainly an exorcist and primitive healer, who may have been toying with an anti-Roman revolt and who kept much from his followers – not least from his family with whom he quarrelled.

The latter thought him insane, and were not reconciled to him till his death. He himself is not reported as having written anything, and since nothing has ever been found, it is perfectly possible to interpret all that he is supposed to have wrought or spoken as symbolic demonstration of the prophecies of, say, Daniel or Isaiah.

□ John Rossall

Helmut Rothenberg's 60th 'anniversary'

Celebrating his 60th anniversary of arriving in England on 3rd April, Helmut Rothenberg could look back on solid achievements. These relate essentially to two spheres: his professional work, and his efforts on behalf of fellow-refugees as well as the wider community.

Professionally he founded and built up the accountancy practice Blick Rothenberg. He was also closely involved with two public companies: one a multi-product company founded by his friend Peter Black, a fellow refugee, the other managed by his late brother Henry, who was appointed OBE for his achievements in exports.

The refugee community's debt of gratitude to Helmut Rothenberg stretches over half a century – from the late 1930s, when he helped bring people over to and settle in Britain, to the early 1990s, when he acted as a major fund raiser for updating the AJR's welfare facilities.

In addition Helmut Rothenberg has been a benefactor to the wider community by virtue of nearly twenty-five years' work for MENCAP, the Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults, of which he is now Vice President. A Rothenberg Fellowship makes it possible for potential leaders and instructors from developing countries to train with MENCAP. (In 1990 Helmut Rothenberg was appointed OBE for charitable services).

As a music lover he has also supported opera through funding the Music Preparation Scheme at Glyndebourne, and by endowing prizes for music and art at Highgate School.

It was thus appropriate that the centre piece of his 60th anniversary-in-England celebration should have been a special performance of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* at the Garrick Club.

Addressing his guests afterwards, Helmut Rothenberg began by recalling his sombre mood on arrival which he contrasted with the contemporary London theatre scene. His aim in arranging the party, he said, was to express gratitude to Britain and to thank friends, specially for kindness shown since becoming a widower two years ago.

Helmut Rothenberg ended by quoting something Robert Morley had said to him – in that very room – about old age: 'One must never be impatient with fingers grown clumsy or bladder unreliable. To grow old gracefully is not always easy, to grow old ungratefully is always unforgivable'. □

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Letters to the Editor



TWOFOLD LOSERS

Sir – According to press reports Holocaust survivors and their heirs must pay a hefty levy if they want to regain property. This proposal in a draft law was approved by Kohl's cabinet and now goes to Parliament.

In other words not only did we not receive rents for the past 50 years – now we have to pay for property that was taken away from us.

Woodlands
London NW11

W. Kaczynski

ASKING THE WRONG QUESTION

Sir – Unlike Mr Grünwald I have found that the Israelis are very appreciative of the vital protection their nuclear arsenal gives them, and consider that Mr Vanunu must be prevented at all cost from divulging further strategic information he is believed to hold. I am astonished he is allowed fortnightly visits from his family. The life of the entire Israeli population is at stake.

Bishops Close
Old Coulsdon, Surrey

G. Schmerling

Sir – From the Bar Kochba rebellion until the advent of Wingate's night squads in Palestine and the Warsaw Ghetto fighters we seem to have forgotten our martial qualities, to the detriment of our people and the comfort of our enemies.

Next time Jews are consigned to another holocaust our enemies may rest assured in the knowledge that they will accompany us on the journey to oblivion.

Mordechai Vanunu? – A traitor to his country deserving neither tea nor sympathy.

Oldfield Lane
Greenford, Middx

Ernest G. Kolman

Sir – To talk of a 'nuclear conspiracy of Israel's authorities' is stupid! Mordechai Vanunu is a disgrace to Israel and to Judaism! He has no conscience whatsoever. For Mr Grünwald to tell us that he is heartened by dissent from what he calls 'the aggressive militarism, so uncharacteristic of our people' is childish. He should restudy his history lessons and thank the good Lord that Israel exists and can defend itself. Unfortunately Israel needs to use a great part of its scant financial resources to maintain an army with modern – including nuclear – weapons to handle any aggression from its neighbours.

Cleve Road
NW6

R. J. Weinberg

MET OFFICE CHEER

Sir – The change of weather to the better on Monday 5 April, Erev Pessach, inspired me to render the following rhyme from German into English:

*Und ist der Yonteff noch so klein
Die Juden haben Sonnenschein*

(Even on minor Holy Days
The Jews are warmed by the sun's rays)

Lynchgate Court
Friern Park N12

Ernest Brown

LOCATING THE ROOTS

Sir – I was greatly surprised by G. Schmerling's astonishing assertion that the roots of Hitlerism are to be found in France and England. Your leading article in February correctly traced the roots of the Third Reich to Luther, Fichte and Wagner. Nothing could be more infectious than the latter's rabble-rousing political prose writings which greatly inspired Hitler, who claimed he himself had no forerunner 'with the exception of Wagner. Whoever wishes to understand National Socialist Germany must know Richard Wagner'. Nazi ideology was solidly based on Wagner's *Weltanschauung*.

Holland Park Avenue
London W11

J. Rotter

SEDER NIGHT WITH A DIFFERENCE

Sir – We spent a most enjoyable Seder when nearly 100 members gathered at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre at Cleve Road, under the auspices of Cantor Marshall Stone. He was humorous, of melodious voice and kept the congregation in Festive Spirit and Order throughout with his wonderful singing and explanation of the religious ritual.

The food was excellent and added to the festive mood created by the wonderful atmosphere of – amongst other things – the beautifully decorated tables.

But the bouquet on this occasion must surely go to the staff and volunteers, who served our meal with the greatest of expertise.

It was a Seder to be remembered and will carry us through to next year's festival.

Steffi Steiner

BLACK AND BLUE

Sir – I do hope that you will ignore Peter W. Johnson's comments. Long may the Editor

continue to lend a lighter touch to *AJR Information* with his largely topical witticisms, thereby upholding the tradition of Jewish humour, in the footsteps of great satirists such as Peter Altenberg, Anton Kuh, Alfred Polgar, Kurt Tucholski, Robert Neumann and many others.

May God protect us and *AJR's* circulation figures from the erudite contributions of Mr Johnson and *tutti quanti*.

Chigwell, Essex

Frederick Rosner

Sir – In the April issue Mr Peter W. Johnson entreats Mrs Lassman to stop the Editor printing 'tripe'. I have known Mr Johnson for many years but I never suspected him of the lack of a sense of humour which he is evincing in his letter. It seems to me that he would condemn e.g. Christian Morgenstern's opus in toto. R.G. is a man of many hats, as every reader of the *AJR Information* will readily affirm, and he wears them all with distinction.

So why should he not add a cap and bells so as to relax from all the serious writing and to get some divertimento; we all, I am sure, would feel better by sharing in this divertimento. I for one was overjoyed to learn that Jewish Mr Venusberg composed the *Tannhäuser*.

Goldhurst Terrace
London NW6

George J. Fletcher

CHIEFS AND INDIANS

Sir – Venusberg did not write *Tannhäuser*. The respected historian H. Heine makes it clear that Venusberg was a hotel or boarding house: '*Dann zog er in den Venusberg*'. The Opera was to celebrate an archetypal female called Shulamit who changed her name to Afro-Dite to go with her new dreadlock hairstyle.

Your theory is only held by discredited historians according to whom he Germanised his name from Liebenthal to Venusberg. P.S. Full marx for your *grêpes-de-chine*.

Aberdare Gardens
London NW6

Ezra Jurmann

GERMANOPHOBIA

Sir – You trivialise immense problems everywhere. 'Perverters of historical truth' is written in the style of the *Völkische Beobachter*. We should know that the view that Churchill should have made peace is very widespread over here. It is, after all, an Anglo-Saxon country. There is a very close connection between the two countries.

Mr Braunsberg is also right: coming closer socially to English people is difficult

in many ways. Many still have the old antipathy.

Let other people from all walks of life, who were in business or the professions, have a say to make *AJR Information* more serious and objective.

Vincent Court

E. J. Freyhan

Bell Lane, London NW4

Sir – Like Dr Hornung I strongly object to the unjustified anti-German bias of the journal.

Roy Gardens

Peter Prager

Ilford, Essex

Sir – It appears that Dr Hornung feels commanded from 'on high' to defend the vast majority of Germans.

He should remember that, in spite of Hitler having stated very clearly in *Mein Kampf* what he intended to do about the German Jews, they voted him into power and supported him right up to the time when the war went wrong for them. Now we have the spectacle of ex-SS Sergeant Schönhuber managing to collect a substantial amount of votes.

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AUSTRIAN PENSIONS

Sir – I wonder why the Kultusgemeinde are pressing for lump sum payments instead of Austrian pensions? Are they afraid the Nazis will come into power again, or do they think the very elderly will be able to leave more money to their families if they are paid lump sums?

Anyway, it would have to be a very large lump sum to yield £50 weekly, after tax! (The Austrian pension is tax-free, whereas any interest from investments would be taxed in this country.)

Not being very elderly and having no children, I prefer to have the Austrian pension as it is at present; or will the lump sum be forced on everybody in future? God forbid!

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Are Israelis 'normal'?

I think it was Bialik who said that once the Jews produced criminals and murderers like other people they would have a claim to be considered a normal nation. According to recent revelations Israel can advance additional claims to normality. Political life in the world's two stablest democracies – Britain and America – has for years been enlivened by sex scandals. The U.K. had Profumo, Thorpe, Archer, Ashdown, and Mellor – and the U.S.A. assorted Kennedys, Gary Hart, Clinton and (posthumously) Hoover.

In Israel till recently the public was more likely to be shocked by financial peccadillos – like Mrs Rabin's dollar account – than sexual ones. Then, earlier this year, it briefly seemed that the bedchamber as well as the counting-house could yield secrets deleterious to a political career. It was alleged that Benjamin Netanyahu, the main contender for the Likud leadership, had committed adultery. 'Bibi', as he is known to his fans, blamed his chief rival, Moroccan-born David Levy for disseminating this rumour. Levy called the rumour-mongering charge libellous. Then Bibi admitted an extra-marital affair. In time-honoured tradition his wife stood by him, and he was selected Shamir's successor. This simultaneously disappointed North African Likud voters, and gave the party a more rightwing stance.

Political fallout apart, the Netanyahu affair has lifted the veil on a hitherto overlooked area of Israeli public life. People in the know revealed that adultery had long been the norm rather than the exception among the political elite. It seems that

almost all the Founding Fathers and Mothers – from President Weizmann to Prime Ministers Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir – fitted some nookie into their crowded schedules. Of Moshe Dayan it was even said that he scored as many victories in the bedroom as on the battlefield.

While Left-Liberals were thus liberty-takers, Rightists appeared models of rectitude – none more than the uxorious Begin – till Netanyahu started evening the score.

But illicit 'straight' sex is not the only offence-giving item among the insults traded by political opponents in the Knesset. The 'gay' issue has also surfaced, propelled to the top of the political agenda by Yael Dayan, MK daughter of the redoubtable Moshe. No stranger to controversy, she outraged the faithful by interpreting the Biblical quote about David's love for Jonathan surpassing the love of women as proof of the hero-king's homosexuality.

At the moment Yael Dayan is therefore, jointly with Shulamit Aloni, the best-hated woman in Israeli public life. The exposure of politicking females to public opprobrium is, of course, *pace* Lady Thatcher, Nancy Reagan and France's Edith Cresson, par for the course in Western democracies. In other words, now that the Jewish state has not only produced criminals as indicators of normality, but also ministerial adulterers, female political firebrands and retrospectively 'outed' monarchs it can really claim to belong to the West.

And if that sets Israel too much apart from her Eastern neighbours she can also point to a homegrown, or even Brooklyn-based, ayatollah – or two, or three, or four – to bridge the gap between the so-called *Morgenland* and the Arabian Night. □ R.G.

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The choices ranged from shopping trips and visits to the cinema to simply relaxing by the pool – while the more adventurous relaxed in nearby Poole.

One evening was filled with a dinner-dance but, as during the days, freedom of choice was the major ethos of the week. For many members of the Day Centre's newly formed Bridge School this freedom offered the opportunity to hone their newly found skills in the plush surroundings of the Cumberland Hotel, with a constant supply of tea and cakes.

Simply top top top

It takes a good deal of meticulous arranging to ensure that group travel of this type provides more pleasure than pain. The Day Centre organisers have gained a great deal of expertise over the years and have become expert at achieving the right balance between organising entertainment and letting the spirit of adventure flourish. In the words of one of the returned holiday-makers: ' Sylvia and Rene are simply top, top, top'. And so say all of us. □

Pictures from this holiday will appear in the July issue.

⊕ Marks the spot

Although a map and compass are not prerequisites, finding the AJR's new offices can be slightly difficult without precise instructions. So here, for those of us without a degree in Geography and a bent for orienteering, are the directions.

Where Frogнал meets Finchley Road there is a Lloyd's bank. On the opposite corner of Frogнал there is a 'Domino's' pizza parlour. Directly behind the building which houses the pizza parlour there is a sloping, asphalted driveway. The drive leads to a *cul-de-sac* called Hampstead Gate around which twelve new office buildings stand. The AJR occupies the first building on your left as you enter the close.

Those visitors coming from the direction of Golders Green will find Frogнал on the left hand side of Finchley Road.

Bus routes 13, 113 and 82 all ply the Finchley Road. Finchley Road tube station is served by the Metropolitan and Jubilee lines. Upon leaving the tube station turn left up the main road. Frogнал will appear on the right.

We hope these instructions will make our new location plain. □



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- Wednesday 2 (a) Outing to House of Commons
(b) The Orchard Trio – Piano, Flute & Oboe
- Thursday 3 Nikki van der Zyl & Rosa Butwick Entertain with Michael Liebermann (Tenor)
- Sunday 6 Summertime Serenade – Joanne Fellermann (Soprano) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano)

- Monday 7 The Pleasures of Music – Sarah-Jane Dale (Soprano) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano)
- Tuesday 8 Songs My Mother Taught Me – Sylvia Hartman (Soprano) accompanied by Hermione Goldsmith (Piano) with Sergei Bezkorvany (Violin)
- Wednesday 9 Tete a Tete – Jennifer Rice & Ian Edwards Sing In Harmony With Guitar Accompaniment
- Thursday 10 Music In Theatre – Kate Taylor (Soprano) accompanied by Ruth Leber (Piano)
- Sunday 13 (a) Outing to Syon Park
(b) Day Centre Open – No Entertainment
- Monday 14 Jack Davidoff & Jules Rubin Entertain on Violin & Piano
- Tuesday 15 A Pot-Pourri of Songs & Arias – Maureen Russell & Ann Kenton-Barker accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano)
- Wednesday 16 The Ellerdale Trio – Sarah Down (Piano) – Melanie Woodcock (Cello) – Martin Smith (Violin)
- Thursday 17 A Little Light Music – Victoria Cooper (Soprano) accompanied by Stuart Wild (Piano)
- Sunday 20 Enjoy The Joys of Music – Debbie O'Brien (Piano)

- Monday 21 Geoffrey Whitworth & Jacqueline Johnson Entertain On Piano & Cello
 - Tuesday 22 Ballads & Songs Of Love – John Cunningham (Baritone) accompanied by Gael Ford (Piano)
 - Wednesday 23 Three-In-Harmony – Alisa Spivack (Soprano) accompanied by Rosa Butwick (Piano) with Harry Collins (Violin)
 - Thursday 24 The Seven Ages Of England – Anne Jacoby (Soprano) with piano accompaniment
 - Sunday 27 Helena Lieberman, Alan Milford & Malcolm Wald Present Influences – Music Inspired By Our Heritage
 - Monday 28 An Hour of Music on a June Afternoon – Sandra Anders accompanied by Giles Turner (Piano)
 - Tuesday 29 Two Gentlemen From Spain – Miguel Ferrando (Baritone) accompanied by Gonzalo Barros (Piano)
 - Wednesday 30 Steven Neugarten & Simon Haram Entertain on Piano & Saxophone
- JULY**
- Thursday 1 Great Musicians of the Past – Presented by Yacov Paul
 - Sunday 4 OPEN DAY – Background Piano Music by Maurice Hermele

FAMILY EVENTS

Deaths

Ables Mrs Ruth Ables, long-time Secretary of Self Aid, died in Berlin on April 23, one month before her 88th birthday.

Orchudesch Fredy Orchudesch passed away peacefully at home, aged 84. He lived for his wife, Hedy, sons, Robert and Tony, and his grandchildren. His memory will live in our hearts forever.

Reif Paula (Polly) Reif died peacefully, aged 90 years. Deeply mourned by her family and many friends.

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Would anyone who knows the present whereabouts of Ernst Michaelis, who came to Britain with his father, a physician, in the mid-thirties, please contact Edward Rosen, 100 McClenaghan Mill Road, Wynnewood, Pa, 19096, USA.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

Michael Hasenclever, the Munich art dealer, has sent me *Überblick* 1993. As usual the catalogue contains fine specimens of works by the likes of Otto Dix and Georg Gross, but it also represents many artists whose lives were violently interrupted by Hitler. Felix Nussbaum died in Auschwitz; Arthur Segal emigrated to England, achieved success as a painter and died here in 1944. Then there was Budapest-born Marcel Ronay, a recipient of the Austrian Staatspreis für Kunst, who emigrated to England and did not paint again, but an exhibition of his work at the Ben Uri Art Gallery about eight years ago was completely sold out. Leah Grundig and her husband Hans Grundig survived and lived in East Germany, but Babette Stratton van Gelder who was born in Amsterdam died in Bergen-Belsen. Then there was Franz Ehrlich, who studied at the Bauhaus and survived Buchenwald, while Otto Freundlich was murdered in Auschwitz. All the pictures shown in the catalogue are for sale; copies can be obtained from Michael Hasenclever Galerie, Baaderstrasse 56c, 8000 München 5.

An exhibition of 83 works by *Georgia O'Keefe* (1887–1986) is being held at the Hayward Gallery (until 27 June). She was an artist of great stature with a clear sense of natural form and pervading sensuality.

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich is showing (until 11 July) *Lee Miller's War*. Lee Miller, a staff photographer for *Vogue Magazine*, became an accredited correspondent to the U.S. army and covered the Allied liberation of Europe. She was amongst the first to document the final horrors of Dachau and on 30 April 1945 cabled her editor 'I implore you to believe this is true'.

The Ben Uri Art Society is showing (until 26 June) works by two young Jewish artists. *Rosalind Jacobs* is a keen jazz enthusiast and her sculptures include representations of well-known jazz musicians. *Louise Korin Benatar* is South African born and studied at the Byam Shaw School in London. She exhibited successfully in 1991 at the Ice House, Holland Park.

Lotte Laserstein, born in Berlin in 1898, recently died in Sweden where she had made her home since 1935, having been forced to leave her Berlin studio because of her close her Berlin studio because of her close her Berlin studio because of her close her Berlin studio because of her close quarter-Jewish origins. She studied under Erich Wolfsefeld, becoming one of the fore-



The Race of the Riderless Horse, Théodore Géricault.

Photo: Courtesy of Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.

most exponents of the German realist style of painting.

Tradition and Revolution in French Art 1700–1800 is the title of an exhibition at the National Gallery (until 11 July). It comprises over 100 eighteenth century French paintings and drawings from the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille. Included are works by David, Delacroix, Courbet, Sisely, Géricault, etc, many of which have

never before been seen in England.

Irene Scheinmann is showing some of her excellent prints in 'Dynamic Structure and Form', a group exhibition at Gagliardi Contemporary Art, 509 Kings Road, Chelsea (4–26 June). She is also showing some of her work at the Argile Gallery, 7 Blenheim Crescent, W11 (4–21 June) and in the Main Entrance, Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester (June–August). □

SB's Column

Quality or Quantity. The two alternatives for an opera house, repertoire or stagione, have been debated for many years; are operas to be newly produced for a short season, often with international stars, to be replaced by other works after a while, or are they to be included in a yearly repertoire containing a large number of operas? London's Royal Opera House steadfastly adheres to the first principle: as a consequence during a whole month (December 1992 and January 1993) only one opera, Verdi's *Stiffelio*, could be heard. (Ballet performances made up for the lack of music drama.) Continental opera houses generally engage an ensemble, consisting of good if not top international artists who during a 10 month season have to sing many rôles, a method which offers considerable choice within a short period. During April this year, Hamburg presented 6 operas, Deutsche Oper Berlin 7, Dresden 7, Munich 8, Prague 13, Vienna 15. Which system is preferable? The debates continue.

Jewish Sponsors. Under this heading, a symposium about the history of Austrian Jews will be presented by the St Pölten (Lower Austria) Institute for history. This documentation will be shown in Vienna,

Prague and Budapest between 27 June and 4 July.

Birthdays. Brigitte Helm, one of the busiest German film actresses, who starred in the Thirties successes *Im Geheimdienst* with Willy Fritsch, and *Die Gräfin von Monte Christo* with Rudolf Forster, celebrated her 85th birthday. Josef Meinrad who began his career before World War II as a cabaretist at Vienna's 'Literatur am Naschmarkt', subsequently a very popular Burg actor, brilliant in Raimund and Nestroy, is 80 years old. Swedish-born Astrid Varnay, the great Wagnerian soprano who sang nearly all Wagner rôles in New York's 'Met' and also appeared in London (1948) and Bayreuth (1951), later moved to Munich and sang at the Bavarian State Opera until her retirement, has just turned 75.

Obituary. It is belatedly learnt that Arthur Maria Rabenalt, ex-German film producer who emigrated to the States, has died there at the age of 86. The Austrian character actor Guido Wieland, banned during the Nazi era on political grounds, a member of the 'Josefstadt' ensemble for over 40 years, who could be seen on Austrian TV until early this year, has died in Vienna, aged 87. Marian Anderson, the American singer who was the first coloured member of the 'Met', has died recently, aged 94. □

*A history of the Jews in the German-speaking lands***Part 9: Progress checked, progress resumed****A period of reaction**

The defeat of Napoleon was a serious setback for the Jews in Germany. Dynasties ousted by the French and now restored could not forgive the Jews for having joyfully greeted the Revolution which had set them free, but which had waged war against the German princes. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815 Hardenberg tried to have Jewish emancipation enshrined in the Constitution of the new German Confederation; but he failed. His proposed text, that the Jews should enjoy 'all the rights heretofore accorded them in the several states' was amended to read '... by the several states': since only the states recreated by the Congress were deemed to have legitimacy, the rights accorded by the Napoleonic satellite governments were not recognised, and the emancipation imposed by the French was rescinded. Hardenberg, overruled by the reactionaries at home, was not even able to make the Emancipation Edict of 1812 applicable to parts of Prussia which had not been under her control at the time the edict was published: these included not only the recovered Polish provinces but also the new territories gained in the Rhineland.

In many other German states – Saxony, Württemberg, Hanover – discrimination against the Jews was resumed; in some places even the ghettos were restored. Lübeck expelled all Jews who settled in that city during the Napoleonic wars; the other Hanseatic cities were also especially hostile. Bavaria continued with the anti-Jewish policies which she had never abandoned. In the Habsburg Empire Joseph II's 1782 Edict of Toleration had been rescinded by his successor Leopold II as long ago as the early 1790s.

Exposed to attack

The reactionary princes of Germany all wanted to protect their sovereignty and battled against the nationalist movement which wanted to submerge the 39 German states in a United Germany. Yet the Jews were as exposed to attack from the populist wing of this opposition as they were to hostile governments policies. The nationalist movement had sprung up in response to the French domination of Germany under Napoleon. Against French aristocratic cosmopolitanism it set up a thoroughly xenophobic culture rooted in the German *Volk*,

represented principally by peasants and artisans; against the 'godlessness' of the French Revolution it set an idealised Christian medievalism (in which hatred of the Jews had, incidentally, played such an important part). The Jews were considered as aliens in this *völkisch* world. To the old charge that, since the Middle Ages, Jewish usurers had exploited the peasant and the artisan was added the new charge that the Jews supported subversive and anti-German revolutionaries. The *völkisch* movement found strong support among the students of the German universities who enlisted in droves in Jahn's nationalistic and paramilitary *Turnvereine* from which Jews were excluded. The students were often supported and sometimes even inspired by their professors, men like Fichte, Friederich Schlegel (married to one of the converted daughters of Moses Mendelssohn!), von Arnim, and Brentano (who had frequented Rahel Levin-Varnhagen's *salon*). And worst of all, the mobs followed the lead of the academics. The year 1819 saw anti-Jewish riots in Bavaria, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, and Hamburg, with the rioters reviving the old crusader cry *Hep! Hep! (Hierosylema est perdita)* as they pelted Jews in the streets.

The Jews and Liberalism

But the reactionaries were not able to put the clock back totally. The nationalist movement also had a liberal wing. This wanted to limit the absolutism of the German princes by parliamentary constitutions and believed that the elected parliamentarians would then vote for a closer union of the various states. Many of these liberal nationalists were members of the growing bourgeoisie, supporters of the still infant industrial revolution in Germany. In order for commerce to prosper, they wanted to remove the internal barriers to trade within Germany; and, rather like their 20th century descendants, they saw an economic union (*Zollverein*) as the first step to a political union.

As liberals, these nationalists on principle supported equal rights for Jews; and they were also conscious of the valuable role that the Jews could play in the economic development of Germany. History was on the side of liberalism: even the conservative governments needed economic progress; and the more they allowed it to happen, the

stronger the liberal movement grew. The Jews, of course, supported liberalism; and some Jews took an active part as publicists for the liberal cause and for Jewish emancipation. These included the academic Gabriel Riesser, the journalist Ludwig Börne, and the poet Heinrich Heine – the latter two perhaps from the relative safety that baptism had given them; but Riesser, in fact, protested against the necessity for Jews to be baptized before they could be allowed to play a full part in public affairs.

Permanent gains

In 1830 a number of German states – Brunswick, Hesse-Cassel, Hanover, and Saxony – experienced a dress-rehearsal for the great revolutionary upheaval of 1848. Their rulers were forced to submit to constitutional demands; but once the disorders subsided the rulers were able to withdraw their concessions. As far as the Jews were concerned, however, there were some permanent gains: the emancipation enacted in Brunswick and in Hessen during the revolution was not revoked. In Prussia, which had been immune from disturbances in 1830, the government nevertheless became sensitive to the mounting pressure from the liberals and began to make reforms just before the 1848 revolutions broke out: these included extending the principles of the 1812 emancipation edict over the whole of the Hohenzollern kingdom. However, the concessions to the constitutionalists were too few and too late to prevent the explosion of 1848.

As always, the fortunes of the Jews rose and fell with the fortunes of the liberal constitutionalists. In the first few months, these were totally triumphant: all the German governments capitulated without a fight; every ruler was forced to grant a parliamentary constitution and to agree to the creation of an all-German elected National Assembly. In all states, Jews were given full civic rights, including the right to vote and to hold office. As Jews had played an active part in liberal politics, some found themselves elected as deputies at state and at national level. Seven Jews were elected to the National Assembly. The baptized Jew Eduard von Simson was elected its President, and the practising Jew Gabriel Riesser was elected Vice-President. Since all German citizens were gaining new rights, Riesser insisted that the new Federal Constitution should state explicitly that the Jews enjoyed their new status not as Jews, but as Germans. 'We demand not rights and freedoms', said Leopold Zunz, 'but Right and Freedom'.

The victories of 1848 were squandered as

the nationalists fell out with each other over areas in which people of different nationalities lived side by side. Bohemia, for example, was claimed by its German-speaking minority as part of Germany and by its Czech-speaking people as an autonomous region of the Habsburg Empire. The Jews of Bohemia spoke German (or Yiddish); they supported the claims of the German National Assembly and were exposed, first to attacks from the Czechs and then to renewed persecution by the Habsburgs when these, taking advantage of the division of their opponents, were able to reassert their power to crush the autonomist movement in Bohemia. In Germany also conservatives were able to recover most of the ground they had lost. By May 1849 the National Assembly at Frankfurt and the assemblies of the various states of Germany had been dissolved and the constitutions which had embodied Jewish emancipation were revoked. In Bavaria the old repressive laws were reenacted, and other states also tried to put the clock back.

The result was huge disappointment, which led many Jews to give up hope of ever

achieving security of status in Germany; and a great wave of emigration began. It was not only the relatively small number of politically active Jews who sought a new life in America, but many poor Jews did likewise (as did many poor Germans, Italians and Scandinavians at this period) because the industries of these countries were not developed enough to absorb the huge population increase in Europe at that time – and the Jewish population was growing at an even faster rate than did that of the non-Jews. Jews from the German-speaking lands were to play an important part in the history of the United States; but their fortunes cannot be followed in these articles.

Liberal programme

Relatively limited though the absorptive capacity of German industry was in the 1850s, the growth of that industry was all the same unstoppable. In Germany as elsewhere that meant also the continuing growth of a liberal middle class. The conservative governments had learnt from the 1848 revolutions that crude repression merely stoked up an explosive opposition;

and in the 1860s they slowly began to accommodate parts of the liberal programme, including those parts which related to Jewish emancipation. The Grand-Duchy of Baden gave the Jews completely equal rights in 1862. But the most significant gains came with Bismarck's unification of Germany. After the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 the North German states were grouped together in a Federation under Prussian leadership; and the Constitution for that Federation in 1867 removed all restrictions from its Jewish citizens. In the same year the weakened Habsburgs had to make concessions to liberal parliamentarianism, and these included the granting of emancipation throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire, too. When, after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 the South was united with the North in the German Empire, the provisions in the 1867 Constitution which related to the Jews were repeated in the Imperial Constitution; and the long march to freedom and equality for the Jews in all the German-speaking lands had at last reached its goal.

□ Ralph Blumenau

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COMPENSATION CLAIMS GERMANY

Under a new Agreement regular hardship payments will be made to victims of the Holocaust who were hitherto unable to apply for or received only inadequate compensation payments.

Claims may be filed by persecutees who were held in concentration camps for at least six months. Those who were confined in ghettos or lived in hiding for at least eighteen months are also entitled to claim.

On instructions our Office will assist you to prepare your Application and pursue the matter with the authorities.

For further information please contact:

ICS—Claims
146–154 Kilburn High Road
London NW6 4JD

Tel: 071-328 7251 (Ext. 107)
Fax: 071-624 5002

Strange destination

For 40 years the two outstanding facts about post-Holocaust German Jewry were (a) that the community was small and (b) largely of non-German origin. From 1945 onwards a handful of native Jews – either survivors or returnees – were outnumbered by ex-Displaced Persons from Poland, Romania or Hungary.

Lately, though, the collapse of the Soviet Union has given another shake to this particular kaleidoscope. In a few short years the size of the German-Jewish community has increased by a third, from under 30,000 to around 40,000. The latter figure, of course, still only constitutes seven per cent of its prewar strength, and is absolutely miniscule in relation to a host population of 80 million.

For all that the Soviet influx has made a significant difference. Berlin, whose *Gemeinde* was 7000 strong, currently accommodates an additional 5,000 ex-Russian Jews. The Duisburg community, which was stagnating with a membership of around a hundred, has seen its numbers quadruple in a relatively short time. Rostock has a rabbi from Odessa; the *kehilla*, in common with Magdeburg and Potsdam, is almost entirely composed of Russians and Ukrainians.

Sociologically these newcomers settling in Germany differ significantly from their ex-DP predecessors of 40 years ago. A quarter are engineers or scientists, and around ten percent each are doctors,

teachers and artists. Under a fifth are industrial workers and craftsmen.

Up till now only about one in six has found a job; two fifths are unemployed, and the rest are studying or re-training. The most surprising statistics concern their reaction to the recent upsurge in German xenophobia: while 90% see it as a threat, only one in eight of Soviet-Jewish immigrants envisage migrating elsewhere or returning to Russia! □ R.G.

40 Years Ago this Month

The Coronation

The sentiments of British Jews at this time in national affairs were well expressed by the Chief Rabbi. 'With affection and loyalty', he said, 'all citizens of the British Commonwealth are waiting the day of crowning and dedication of Her Majesty the Queen. As so movingly requested by Her Majesty, we will join with other creeds in praying for her welfare and prosperity. The Queen rules over a kingdom whose declining fate and future eclipse have often been prophesied by publicists and writers of woe. Crisis has succeeded crisis during recent years. Yet Britain's place in the international field is still high. . . . It abides as a bastion of democracy resplendent with the precious virtue of freedom in its manifold facets'.

The Queen agreed that her Jewish subjects, in addition to playing their full part in the general manifestations of loyalty, should commemorate the Coronation by planting in Israel a forest to be called the Queen Elizabeth Coronation Forest.

AJR Information, June 1953

VERSE AND WORSE

NATIONAL TRUST COUNCIL

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'Tally-ho' sounds another day
The inedible will be pursued
By unspeakables, or am I rude?

GERMANE ISSUE

The Editor is much perplexed
By those who read into his text
A beastliness towards the Hun
And says 'Go, pull the other one!'

EX-MIRRORMAN

Paul Foot, the public schoolboy Trot,
Writer of right-on lefty rot
Had an even worse surprise
After the bouncing Czech's demise.

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Search Notices

Hilde Herzog-Hepner came to London from Danzig in 1935/6. Married medical doctor Herzog. Worked at the Courtauld Institute from 1938. Please contact Prof. Nachum Tim Gidal, P.O.B. 4176, Nili Street 16, Jerusalem 92548, Israel.

Jüdischer Kulturbund Hamburg Suche Zeitzeugen, die in den Jahren 1934 bis 1941 Veranstaltungen des 'Jüdischen Kulturbundes Hamburgs' miterlebt haben. Auch Informationen von Zeugen der zweiten Generation sind willkommen. Auskünfte erbeten an: Jens Kohrs, Frahmstr. 34, 2000 Hamburg, Germany.

Berta Lechner, born in Rumania on 4 April 1912, arrived in London 1938, worked as a domestic, may have moved to the north of England. Any information about her whereabouts to Social Services Dept, Austrian Embassy, Tel: 071-235 3731, ext 29, or to the following address: 18 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU.

Siegfried Placzek: Born Kuestrin-Kietz on 31 August 1903, emigrated to England on 4 July 1939, cattle dealer. Last known address: Salvation Army Hostel, 177 Whitechapel Road, London E1 (3 November 1947). Applied to be repatriated to Germany in January 1948, but no indication if he returned there. Any information regarding the above-named gratefully received by: Jewish Refugees Committee, Drayton House, 30 Gordon Street, London WC1H 0AN, England. Tel: 081-387 3925.

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Obituary

Walter Zander

Erfurt-born AJR member Walter Zander, who died aged 94, deservedly received obituaries in the national press. A Classics graduate from Jena, viola player under Nikisch (conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus), and recipient of the Iron Cross in the Great War, he followed his father into the legal profession.

After emigration he set up a printing business, which he somehow combined with the academic study of economics and finance. Walter Zander found his true vocation, however, on becoming secretary of the British Friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1948. He realised even in Israel's birth-hour how much the Jewish state would need foreign cultural contacts, and worked steadily towards forging close links abroad.

As a scholar at the Middle East Centre of St. Anthony's College, Oxford, he was also the author of important studies on how to reconcile the interests of Israel with the rights of the Palestinians, and with the existence of the Christian Holy Places. □



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Grief encounter

Sixteen men and women, half of them U.S. visitors, recently met in the small German town of Neuenburg, Baden. The visitors were all children of Holocaust survivors – and the others offspring of Nazi murderers. (Also present was a Harvard psychiatrist, who, being neither Jewish or German, could act as mutually trusted intermediary.)

Both groups of participants shared diffuse feelings of guilt, though for drastically different reasons. The Germans felt vicarious guilt on behalf of parents who either denied or repressed their own. The guilt feelings of the Jews stemmed from a privileged upbringing compared to what their parents had gone through; survivors' children also often feel incapable of living up to the high-pitched expectations – for professional success and idyllic family life – their parents have of them.

The encounter aimed to undertake a unique form of group therapy. Under the psychiatrist's guidance the children both of victims and of culprits brought their problems into the open by 'talking through' their personal traumas. The initiator of the

encounter was Ilona Kuphal, the US-resident daughter of an ex-SS officer. She revealed amid tears that she had tried to prevent her own daughter meeting the grandparents, lest they corrupt her with their evil creed.

A Wehrmacht officer's daughter told of how, when she announced that she intended to participate in the meeting, her parents warned her not to 'drag the family name in the mud'. Similarly a Jewish participant was warned off the journey by parents who insisted that Germans were not the sort of people one could either talk to or shake by the hand. She had replied 'My trauma is rooted in Germany; there is nowhere else I can overcome it'.

Mirabile dictu, the encounter ended with the participants embracing one another. The first to do so were Helga and Alan. Helga's father had been responsible for the extermination of Jews in a part of Russia which claimed Alan's entire family, except his father, as victims.

As they left Neuenburg all the participants hoped that in consequence of their meeting the burden of guilt that had hitherto shadowed their lives would be easier to bear. □

The views expressed in *AJR Information* are the editor's – and not necessarily those of the Association.

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Special report

Pensions news

In our February 1993 issue we reported on the rejection by the German Federal Pension Office (*Bundesversicherungsanstalt für Angestellte*, BfA for short) of applications made by Nazi victims resident in this country to make voluntary contributions towards a German old-age pension. We subsequently made enquiries of the BfA, pointing out apparent inconsistencies and taking up the case of the applicants. A lengthy reply has now been received.

The BfA explains that, after examination, it had concluded that the decision of the European Court in the Rönfeld case (which had previously been believed to enable the Nazi victims to make voluntary contributions) did not establish such an entitlement.

The pension applications had to be rejected. It is a condition of the EC law which applies that in order to make voluntary contributions a German contribution must first have been made (*Vorbeitrag*) by non-German nationals resident in EC countries.

Generally, Nazi victims can be credited with *Ersatzzeiten* i.e. credits for notional, not actual, contributions for the time from emigration, due to persecution, to 31 December 1949, which normally satisfy the requirement for 60 contribution credits.

However, if no contribution was made prior to emigration, *Ersatzzeiten* cannot be credited. This is another reason for the rejection of the applications.

The refusal of the BfA to allow voluntary contributions resulting in pensions may be examined by the court, but a final decision may not be expected for some considerable time.

German Nationality

In this connection the BfA has advised that under a provision of the German constitution Nazi persecutees, who were originally German nationals, can reacquire German nationality. We understand that the procedure for this is quite simple. Once German nationality has been reacquired, even if dual nationality is maintained, a person will be entitled to make voluntary contributions, provided at least one such has been made before the age of 65 has been reached.

However, under an EC regulation, British insurance contributions paid prior to age 65 can for this purpose be treated as equivalent to German contributions.

Any member interested in reacquiring German nationality should send a stamped addressed envelope to the AJR office within the next ten days, when further information on this point can be provided. However, we would remind members that AJR is not in a

position to offer legal advice, which should be obtained from a suitably qualified legal, or other, advisor. □

This article is an abstract from a very detailed report by Dr F. E. Falk. We are indebted to Dr Falk for his hard work in researching this complex issue on our behalf. A copy of the complete report can be obtained from the reception desk at the AJR Offices.

MAKING A WILL?

Remember the

AJR CHARITABLE TRUST
(Registered Charity No. 211239)

Something none of us should avoid is making a will and keeping it up to date. We all know that we cannot take our worldly possessions with us but we can – at least – see that what we leave behind goes where it will be needed, do some real good and be appreciated.

Time marches on, and demands on the facilities provided by our Association are growing more and more urgent. In order to keep pace with these demands we are constantly updating our well-established social work departments and introducing new services. Many of our former refugees have found their connection with the AJR a rewarding one. Over the last 50 years legacies have enabled the AJR to significantly improve the quality of life of many members who look to us for practical and emotional support.

If you have already made a will, it is quite easy to add a codicil. If not, contact Lydia Lassman at the AJR office who will be pleased to advise you on the formalities. Alternatively, contact your solicitor.

Whatever amount you leave to the AJR it will be well received, carefully applied and remembered with gratitude.

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