

# AJR *Information*

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October 1993

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Don't miss . . .

**President Berta**  
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## Israel- PLO accord Thoughts

As late as August it would have taken a brave man indeed to hazard a forecast about the September signing on the White House Lawn. How much braver are Rabin and Perez – and even Arafat – in their endeavours to reverse a blood-suffused tide that has been flowing for close on a century. We must all pray – and, in our limited way, act – that another Middle East miracle on a par with the creation of Israel in 1948 becomes reality. That miracle is peace – *shalom* – which all Israelis have invoked daily throughout their war-shadowed lives. □

## Notice

Part 14 of Ralph Blumenau's History series will appear in the November issue.

## Defining our Identity

# Are Jewish and Israeli synonymous?

After the Israeli bombardment that killed over a hundred Lebanese a reader wrote to the *Independent* that she was ashamed to be Jewish. Her *cri de coeur* prompted a co-religionist to write that distinction must be drawn between Jews and Israelis.

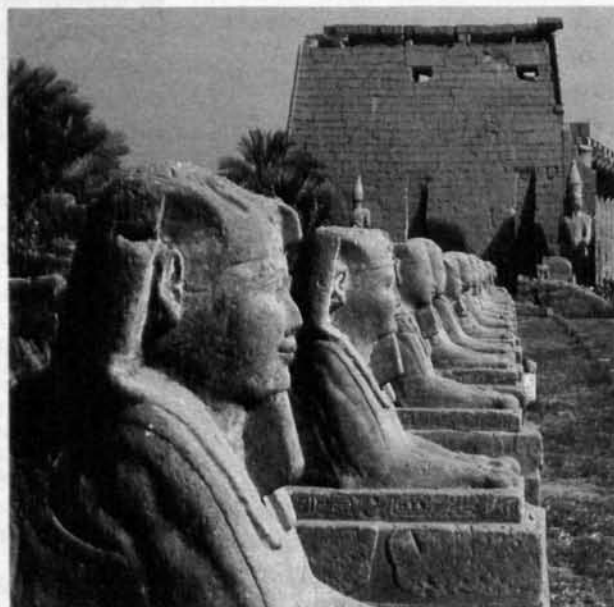
This exchange raises several questions which admit of no easy, clear answers. Also one must bear in mind that 93% of the Israeli public approved of Rabin's action – a far larger proportion than supported the invasion of Lebanon eleven years ago. Do we deduce from this that 9 out of 10 Israelis lack common humanity? Can Jewish readers of *The Independent* stand above the battle – as cynics would say – because they live here rather than in Kiryat Sh'mona? Drawing a clear-cut distinction between Jews and Israelis resembles attempts at squaring the circle. At the simplest level there is the persistence of prayer; the majority of Jews worldwide intone 'Next Year in Jerusalem' at each Passover.

Then there is the degree to which one's self-perception is shaped by the perception of others. Can

one really envisage a situation in which Israel will not be referred to as the 'Jewish State' by the rest of the world? Thirdly: why is it that so-called hyphenated sections of the USA population include Irish-Americans, Polish-Americans etc., but no English-Americans? Answer: the English were *the* original (white) Americans. Their Englishness notwithstanding, the Pilgrim Fathers, however, had deliberately cut their links with King James's England. The Jewish Pioneers in Palestine had likewise deliberately cut all links with Czarist Russia – but not with the Jews of the Pale, who they hoped would one day follow them. To this day Israel sees itself as the potential home of all the Jews in the world – though in reality it would be impossible for the State to accommodate nine million immigrants. Not that the need seems likely to arise as far as North America and Western Europe – home to two-thirds of Diaspora Jewry – are concerned. But that still leaves a number of larger or smaller Jewish communities for whom Israel may turn out to be an indispensable haven. Russia still teems with bigots who blame the Jews for everything from the murder of the Romanovs to the supremacy of the dollar; the Ukraine is gripped by Demjanjuk fever; scapegoats are in demand across Eastern Europe; South Africa faces ethnic turmoil.

If things take a drastic turn for the worse in those countries, or in volatile South America, even Jews hitherto reluctant to leave will *faute de mieux* have to go to Israel.

Following this line of reasoning we arrive at a two-track approach to Jewish identity. One track accommodates us who, living where we do, can afford to draw a distinction between ourselves and Israel. The other will comprise fellow Jews inhabiting unstable countries they might have to flee for the safe haven of Israel. Such an attitude is manifestly untenable. Even though the question 'Who is a Jew' has not been conclusively settled, Jewry can be described without recourse to religious or ethnic criteria as a community of fate. And fate has decreed that Israel, whose democratic framework still stands despite the battering of five wars in as many decades, is integral to Jewish self-perception. □



The Avenue of the Sphinxes at Luxor Temple. (See *Wayfarer in Pharaohland* p. 3.)

## ACJR 8th AGM

The Association of Children of Jewish Refugees (ACJR) will be holding its 8th Annual General Meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, 16 October at the Mapam premises, 37 Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6. The ACJR is a thriving, energetic group whose membership is constantly growing. Enquiries about the AGM, or the ACJR in general, should be addressed to Box No. 1250 at the AJR offices from where it will be forwarded. □

## Friends of Akim Concert

Since our own concert, planned for 17 October, is unfortunately not taking place members may wish instead to attend the Musical Evening of the Friends of Akim which will take place on Sunday, 24 October 1993 at the Theatre of University College School, Froggnal, London NW3. A champagne reception will be held at 6.30 p.m., the concert starts at 7.15 p.m. Akim (The Israel Association for the Habitation of the Mentally Handicapped) is the Israeli equivalent of our Royal Society for the Mentally Handicapped (Mencap). The proceeds of the concert will go towards supporting this worthy Israeli charity.

The Programme includes performances by the British Tuba Quartet, Rhonda Kess, playing Mozart's piano sonata in F (K332), and a selection of songs by soprano Constance Novice.

Tickets, calling for a minimum donation of £12.50, can be obtained from Mr W. Raychbart, Friends of Akim, 32 Raffles House, Brampton Grove, London NW4 4AH. Telephone: 081-202 4022. □

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## Profile

### President Berta

*Sadly, Berta Sterly passed away shortly after this profile went to press. It was decided that it should stand as a tribute to her and her life's work.*



Berta Sterly.

Photo: Newman.

Every Monday night for the last 50 years a group of people of refugee background have joined together to listen to lectures and talks and discuss the issues of the day with friends who share a similar perspective on world events. They call themselves the 1943 Club.

The Sterlys, Berta (née Wagener) and Helmut, joined the club in 1950, when Hans Jaeger was its Chairman. Berta became the club Secretary soon afterwards. Mr Jaeger died in 1975 and Dr Irving Zeligmann stepped into the breach as Hon. Secretary. When he died in 1979 the members elected Mrs Sterly as the club's President. She has held this position ever since.

Berta Sterly was born in Hamburg, where her father owned a printing shop. After leaving school she trained as a social worker. It seemed like a natural progression when, during the 1920s, she became a policewoman. In this period she gained a great deal of personal experience and came into contact with the seamier side of life. 'It was often interesting', she says of this time, 'but rarely pleasant'. However, the police force at that time offered little scope for someone with an educational bent, so she left to continue her education, taking a degree in Education and Textile Technology at Hamburg University in 1934. (Although she was officially barred from higher education by Nazi legislation her tutor, Professor Flitner, made a special plea on her behalf as an outstanding student.)

For the next four years she taught at the Jewish school in Hamburg Carolinen Strasse. It was through this job that she was, subsequently, to find her way to Britain. Some of Berta's former students went to boarding school in Kent. One of their parents, whilst on a visit, suggested to the Headmistress that she employ Berta as a Domestic Science teacher. The Headmistress agreed and, in 1938, Berta took up her new position. Luckily, her parents also managed to gain entry permits via the Liberal Synagogue in St John's Wood and came to London in 1939.

Berta taught in Kent until 1942, when she moved to London and took up a position as a cutter in Great Tichfield Street, at the heart of the West End garment district. Unfortunately, her mother died soon afterwards so Berta moved to her father's home in Hampstead Garden Suburb and opened a dressmaking workshop. Before long she was recommended to the Headmaster of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute and for the next 21 years taught classes in design and dressmaking.

Helmut and Berta married in 1948 and were together for 31 years until Helmut's death in 1979.

When Berta became President of the 1943 Club it had around a hundred members. Now numbers have dwindled to just over 40. However, it is still a demanding position. Until recently Berta would recruit speakers by personally attending talks, lectures and other events all over London and approaching those whom she considered of interest to address the 1943 Club. Nowadays she is becoming a little restricted in her movements and so recruits speakers by word of mouth, on the recommendation of people she trusts. As can be seen by glancing at the 1943 Club's calendar of events, which appears regularly in *AJR Information*, she is still doing a fine job.

□ M.N.

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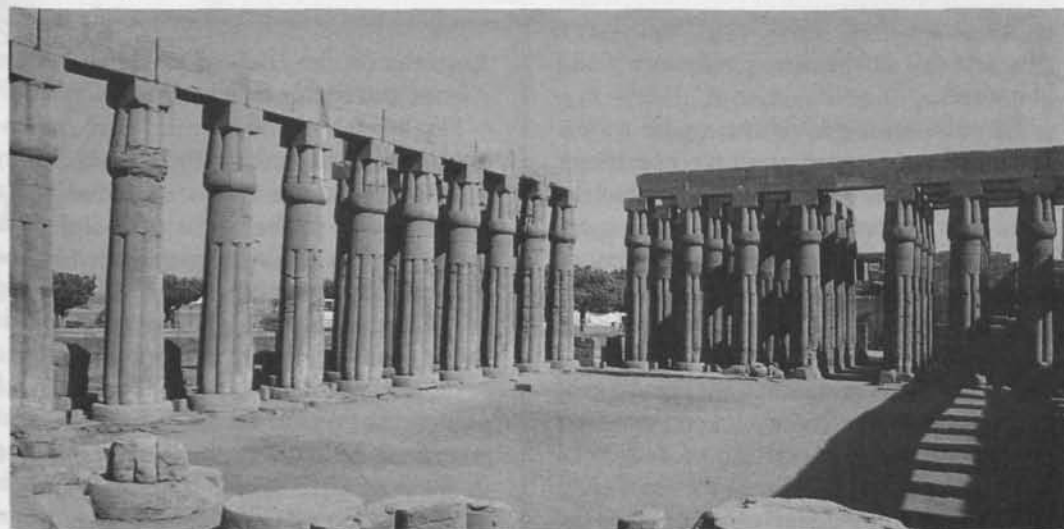
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## A wayfarer in Pharaohland



Columns in the form of papyrus, Luxor Temple.

Photo: Private.

Ruth and I sit in an open kind of carriage; the dust whirls behind us; the great river flows beside us. We are dedicated walkers, but the heat has beaten us. No taxi came along, there was no public transport, so we rode in state along the palm-fringed Luxor/Karnak 'corniche' to the modern hotel in a small town where 4,000 years are like yesterday.

At the gates to the hotel's approach road the gharry stops. The driver, a cross between a friendly Yasser Arafat and an African, makes us understand that he can take us no further. Taxis yes, horses no. I don't blame the management, not after we had faced the spavined animal's rear end for half an hour. The man stretches out his hand. Ruth gives him three Egyptian pounds (the then cost of a taxi). The hand remains extended.

'Bucksheesh', he says. We place a further pound. The hand is still outstretched. 'Bucksheesh', he repeats.

We indicate he has had his bucksheesh.

'Bucksheesh for horse', he says. Even he has to laugh. I give him another pound. The horse leaves a visiting card and we walk through the heat, still quite a distance, to the hotel.

That was in the halcyon days, only the other day as it were, when Egypt was safe for all comers, a feast for the eyes and for the imagination.

The incredible monuments, the teeming daily life, the wonderful colours, we went to see them twice . . . once on a purely holiday Nile boat trip and once on our own, researching the short life and dramatic death of a Pharaoh. I am ensconced in the romance of history and I do not like bargaining. In no time did I learn to bargain with the best (worst?) of them. Perhaps it is after all in the genes passed down from my

ancestors who presumably helped to build those palaces of death, the royal tombs known as Pyramids, and in between times those Hebrews probably bargained for poor dear life.

The Egyptians do not hold with the stories of forced labour and overseers' whips. They 'remember' that the building of their super-State was a labour of love. The truth probably lies half-way. It is now believed that there were many volunteer craftsmen and artists involved in the creation of the grandeur that was, but they almost certainly had labour conscription as well. And slavery was known in all civilisations throughout antiquity.

About the bargaining: at first I stayed aloof whereas Ruth gingerly tried her luck. It is like gambling . . . it gets you eventually when everybody else is at it. After all, one wants to take some of those wonderful (fake) papyrus home. But the prices they ask . . . a hundred times the value. And you hear from fellow travellers how they screwed them down.

Let me tell you about Kom Ombo (pronounced Koom Oomboo). It is a place on the way to Aswan and is overtopped by the ruins of a temple sacred to the crocodile god Sobek. It contains numerous embalmed corpses of the reptiles. In the dusty street below the temple the traders are dedicated to selling Arab gowns. Pc or not pc, they look like embroidered nightshirts and all the fool Europeans were vying with each other to buy them.

Ruth wanted one for an impending on-board party. 'A hundred', the trader said. 'Fifty', Ruth countered. 'Seventy', he came back. I suddenly joined in. 'Ten', I offered. 'Crazy', he shouted, 'I've got to live; my family'. We walked away, he came after us. 'Thirty then, just for you'. We bought at

twenty-five, beat back an attempt to sell me one, too, ('you'd look even more handsome in it'), and allowed him to beg a pen (pronounced bin) off us. We felt we had a bargain. Back at the boat we found out that others had paid fifteen apiece.

In Cairo our tour was put up in the Mena House Hotel, once a palace and the venue of Churchill's stay in Egypt during the war, and where Begin and Sadat made peace. Relaxing in the swimming pool there, idly floating on my back, I suddenly saw the three Giza Pyramids looming over me in the searing sun of which they were a sacred symbol. Was Giza Goshen? Did our ancestors labour on these proud Pharaonic mortuary skyscrapers? It was like an historic vision. We walked there in the heat; they had looked so near but were a respectable distance away and the Sphinx, signifying the Dreaming Pharaoh, perhaps him whom Joseph knew, was even further away in the desert. Alas, the tourist razzmatazz of camel rides and googah stands is such a spoiler.

I vowed to come back, and did so with the help of the Egyptian Culture Ministry, investigating Tutankhamun. Bizarrely, at his famous tomb I had a run-in with the Germans. Accompanied by an Antiquities inspector, Ruth and I made our way past a long queue of middle-aged *Wunderkinder*.

Then I heard it. '*Typisch, was? Mal wieder vorne.*' ('Typical, once again at the head of the queue'). I don't know whether this was anti-Sem or anti-Brit. I let them have it: '*Das geht Sie überhaupt nichts an. Ich arbeite hier.*' ('None of your business; I work here.') It was the truth, if only problem. They looked sheepish, but we only had eyes for the refulgent mural paintings of a ruler in the Judgment Hall of the Dead and for the sarcophagus containing his earthly remains.

The Greek super-tourist and Father of History, Herodotus (c. 480-425 BC), wrote 'Egypt is the gift of the Nile'. True, and now the wonderful river is a gift to any visitor who has eyes to see, and so are the world's most comprehensive relics of a past which, in a way, is ours as much as theirs.

□ John Rossall

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## Review

## Friendly enemies

Eds. David Cesarani and Tony Kushner. *THE INTERNMENT OF ALIENS IN 20th CENTURY BRITAIN*, 272 pp. Frank Cass Publications, 1993. £25 hardback, £13.50 paperback.

Whilst nobody has ever claimed that the internment of Jewish refugees in May and June of 1940 was anything other than a disturbing and upsetting experience, most of the internees have made fairly light of it after (and often even during) the event. True, it was shocking and alarming that, having escaped from Nazi persecution, refugees were rounded up and interned because it was felt that they might be Nazi spies or sympathizers; true, they were separated from their families and for the first few weeks could not even communicate with them; true, the loss of liberty is always an indignity.

But once the shock and distress had worn off, many internees were really quite 'understanding': under the stress of the Blitzkrieg across the Channel, the government could take no risks with possible Fifth Columnists; the regime in most of the camps was really quite benign; Nazis and anti-Nazis were, for the most part, quickly segregated; and the internees were soon able to organize a lively social and cultural life for themselves. Besides, the whole experience did not last long. Public opinion on the whole became uneasy at the injustice of interning 'friendly enemy aliens', and Members of Parliament made representations on their behalf. Tribunals were soon set up to look into each case and worked with exemplary fairness. Already by the autumn of 1940 releases began and the process was soon completed. Internment was seen as a temporary aberration from the noble tradition

of British hospitality, tolerance and liberalism.

The editors of the volume under review find the above account excessively sanitized, and in their own contributions they put the story of internment into a much more sinister setting. They regard anti-alienism not as a peripheral but as a central feature of British politics ever since the 1860s. Landmarks are the Aliens' Act of 1905; the indiscriminate internment or deportation of Germans and Austrians during the First World War; the deportation of 26,000 of them after the war; and the exclusion provisions of the Aliens Act of 1919 and the Aliens Order of 1920. Only after the *Kristallnacht* were Jewish refugees more freely admitted, so that by the outbreak of the Second World War Britain had admitted some 55,000 Jewish and several thousand non-Jewish refugees.

27,000 aliens were interned during the Second World War. They were not, of course, all refugees: they included residents from Germany and Austria who were not refugees, and also about 4,200 Italians. The most 'dangerous' (Category A) Italians and Germans were to be deported to Australia on the *Arandora Star*; in the event several Category B (doubtful) and even Category C (harmless) detainees were included. When, in July 1940, the *Arandora Star* was torpedoed by the Germans, 175 of the 479 Germans and 486 out of the 734 Italians were drowned. The survivors were rescued by a Canadian destroyer and brought back to Britain, only to be reembarked for

Australia on the *Dunera*, where they were robbed and maltreated by the crew.

Finally, the editors say in their conclusion, the anti-alienism in Britain which they trace back to the 1860s is a continuing strand today, so that during the Gulf War the same injustices were perpetrated by the indiscriminate internment of 176 Iraqis and other Arabs, some of whom were unpolitical or even opposed to Saddam Hussein.

In 1960 *AJR Information* published a collection of reminiscences by internees that were on the whole light-hearted and lacking in anger or bitterness. But injustices, muddles, violation of civil rights, and undemocratic procedures certainly did take place, and these must be protested. And the editors are right when they say that the story of the internments should not be judged by comparison with the horrors of concentration camps, but by comparison with what we have a right to expect from a country which claims to protect civil liberties.

And yet it seems to this reviewer that there is something awry when the book makes illiberalism and injustice so much more central than the idea, conveyed by so many Jewish ex-internees, that in the end they were more impressed by the liberalism and fairness which ended their ordeal. This reviewer is inclined to align himself with the quotation in the book from Lord Beloff: 'The reaction of the refugees themselves proved considerably more understanding than that of the historians who were not even born at that time, or were infants then'.

□ Ralph Blumenau

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## Pink triangle, yellow star

Reflections on Judaism and homosexuality

After a protracted debate about whether homosexuality is the product of environment or heredity, nurture or nature, the discovery of a 'gay gene' seems to have tilted the scale decisively towards the latter. Within days of the announcement of this discovery Lord Jakobovits, the ex-Chief Rabbi, restated the Orthodox Jewish position on homosexuality by likening it to kleptomania, adultery and murder. (This catalogue of black sins, incidentally, shows Orthodox opinion to be widely at variance with contemporary social mores: while murder and kleptomania – pace Lady Barnett's sad end – are still abhorred, adultery merely prompts some mild tut-tutting nowadays.)

Lord Jakobovits's statement elicited a pained response from Ian McKellan who couched his message as 'pink triangle to yellow star'. In other words the country's leading homosexual intimated to its leading Jew that since both groups had endured Nazi terror he ought to have expressed solidarity instead of condemnation.

McKellan had a point: as outsiders Jews and gays share a history of ostracism and – lesser or greater – persecution. On the other hand, they are separated by an unbridgeable gulf in their attitude to human procreation. While homosexuals cheerfully embrace barrenness, Judaism puts such a premium on fruitfulness that the celibacy of Catholic priests, Greek-Orthodox monks or Hindu swamis is totally alien to its character.

There is also a perception in some minds that, in consequence of their experience of victimisation, both Jews and gays are particularly sensitive and artistic. If Jewish sensitivity has been somewhat exaggerated – thugs like KGB chief Yagoda and assorted US gangsters spring to mind – homosexuals have figured among history's malefactors from Ivan the Terrible's *oprichniki* through Frederick the Great and Edgar Hoover to Captain Röhm and the SA top brass.

It is, nonetheless, true that both Jews and gays have enriched human culture to an extent out of all proportion to their numbers. Jews gave the world the modern trinity Marx-Freud-Einstein and a staggering number of Nobel Prize winners; homosexuals have been prominent in art (Leonardo, Michelangelo, Caravaggio) music (Tschaikovski, Britten, Tippett) drama (Coward, Rattigan, Tennessee Williams,

Genet) and belles-lettres (Maugham, Forster, Proust, Gide). Marcel Proust was, of course, both Jewish and gay, as were Gertrude Stein and Egon Friedell.

If the ex-Chief Rabbi's adherence to Leviticus 20.13 'Thou shalt not suffer a man to lie with mankind as with womankind... it is an abomination' leads him to advocate engineering to 'breed out' the so-called gay gene, he runs the risk of depriving the world of future Leonardos. When gay activists, for their part, dub Nazi gas chambers an 'earlier, cruder example of genetic engineering' (*Guardian*, 27 July 1993) they drain words of their true meaning. For victims of real or alleged homophobia to invoke the spectre of Auschwitz in this self-dramatising manner is just another nauseous example of a widespread contemporary syndrome Robert Hughes has dubbed 'the culture of complaint'. When it came to the crunch Jews were existential Nazi victims – while 'all' gays have to do to take the wind out of the sails of homophobes is beget children (as James I of England, Louis XIII of France and Oscar Wilde actually did).

□ R.G.

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REGULAR VISITS TO LONDON

# Letters to the Editor



## ANTON RAPHAEL MENGES

Sir – Neither the sumptuous catalogue, nor any other material available at Kenwood these days, mention the fact that Anton Raphael Menges, whose pictures are at present shown in a special exhibition there, was Jewish. I wonder why, because his Jewishness forms an integral part of his and his equally interesting father's amazing life stories.

Lawrence Drive, Bedrich Rohan  
Ickenham, Middx.

## TERMINOLOGICAL INEXACTITUDE

Sir – I really must take Mr Ralph Blumenau to task. To call the Jews – whoever they are – a nation or even a race, is pure Nazi-style racism. The Jews as a nation exist only as Israelis, and as a race only in the diseased minds of race theories.

No 'race' having lived in Europe through the last 2,000 years can call itself pure. In modern Europe Jews legally cannot be anything else than members of the Mosaic religious community, a denomination on a par with Catholics, Protestants, Mohammedans, Hindus etc.

It follows that the terms self-hating Jew or – as you called Karl Marx – baptised Jew are contradictions in term. Anyone leaving the Jewish religion is no longer a Jew, whatever else he might become afterwards.

Connaught Avenue E. H. Kenneth  
Grimbsby

## FRIENDLY FIRE CASUALTY

Sir – Apropos of 'execrable taste' and 'deplorable lack of sensitivity': in a recent programme about Jews on TV a co-religionist, deploring the wastage of Jews from the community by lapsing or intermarriage, likened this loss to 'continuing Hitler's work for him'. Ouergh!

Romilly Street, Peter Zander  
London W1

## BRICKBAT

Sir – 'Whoppers out of Wapping' is yet another example of the violent (this time anonymous) anti-German contributions appearing regularly in your paper.

Incidentally in the article the name Honecker is misspelt twice! How one yearns for the excellent magazine of the Rosenstock era.

Belsize Lane Edwin Scott  
London NW3

## BOUQUET

Sir – May I congratulate you on the form and content of *AJR Information*? Not only is it an excellent journalistic effort – it is also a most valuable source of knowledge for Jewish people.

Westminster Gardens Dr Andrew Short  
Marsham Street, SW1

## MEMORIES

Sir – I would like to hear from former pupils at the Jewish School in the Klopstock Strasse, Berlin, who remember a song starting 'Ja, das ist das Leben in der Penneljeden Morgen gibt es Krach . . .

Our classroom was in the basement.  
The Paddocks L. Hacker (nee Eick)  
Wembley Park, Middx

## THE LANGUAGE OF PC

Sir – English dictionaries may no longer contain 'to jew'; the prejudice, however, persists. Michael Argyle thus sums up his ode on benevolence (oddly reminiscent of strength through joy) *Cooperation: The Basis of Sociability* (1991, Routledge, p. 248): 'Research on helping behaviour by social psychologists is more in line with Christian ethics than with the Jewish approach of tit-for-tat'.

In a recent searching paper on the meaning of biblical precepts for secular morality, Oswald Hanfling (*Philosophy*, April 1993) also regards the ethics of Jesus as unproblematic, if utopian; not once does it occur to him that Jews, Jewish Bibles and Jewish exegesis exist and that secular morality is not constrained by Christian bigotry.

For a predominantly Christian and post-Christian culture to jew and not to jew remain universal archetypes. This antisemitism is aided and abetted by Jewish romantics who are fascinated by Jesus as a Jew.  
St. Swithun Street, Gertrud Walton  
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## A child of our time

I was born in January 1945 in the Budapest ghetto in a cellar so dark that my mother could not see the sex of her child, and had to use her sense of touch to find out. When she did, she named me Katyi in tribute to the advancing Russians. Bombs were raining down on the city, but to the surviving Jews this precipitation spelt a new beginning.

My mother had fled to Hungary from Slovakia and for years fought to avoid detection by the fascist authorities. Soon after she married, the Germans marched in and the Hungarians transferred all Jewish army conscripts, including my father, to forced labour camps. My mother's papers were discovered as forgeries, and she was thrown into gaol. Classified as an 'intellectual criminal', she spent most of her pregnancy there – helped by one particular woman, an accessory to murder and later hanged. My father, too, had several close brushes with death: first, in the shape of the Hungarians from whom he escaped twice (taking several fellow Jews with him), then the Germans whom he next encountered, and finally the Russians who took him to be a *njemetzki offisir*. Having at last accepted that my father was a Jew, one Russian nonetheless led him away at gun point, only it transpired, to heap on him food and provisions. What has always struck me about my parents' story was not just their great good fortune but how hard they had to work for it. In those terrible days, one, two or even three lucky breaks were not enough; you had to get every subsequent move right as well. Thus it was that all my grandparents perished in Auschwitz – my maternal grandmother betrayed, probably by the *Hausmeisterin*, after a successful spell of hiding.

After the war my father rebuilt his family business manufacturing tapestries and other items of embroidery with the blessing of the authorities who were already plotting the communist takeover and nationalisation. This was preceded by a degermanisation programme which entailed changing all German family names. The more assimilated the Jews, the more Magyar the names they adopted. But a Hungarian name did not appeal much to my father, remembering that at the beginning of the century Hungarians had beaten his uncle to death while he had been travelling on a train, indulging his hobby of writing Hungarian verse. My father therefore changed his name from Goldberger to Gordon – whether from Zionist sympathies (inspired by A. D. Gor-

don) or from Anglophilia, both of which he had in abundance, I am not sure.

No-one could have had a happier childhood than my younger sister and I had in Budapest – nor a more comfortable one. At a Jewish nursery school we learned about the holidays and I recall my father placing a Chanukia in the window of our city home – something which would be impossible a few years later. With hindsight I can think of only one sinister aspect of our young lives in Budapest: at some point our teachers must have become too frightened not to instruct us in the pervading doctrine because I seem to remember running like all the other children to the poster of ‘uncle Stalin’, visible all over the city, to kiss it.

In January 1951 we were finally permitted to emigrate to Israel. Having confiscated my father’s business, the Communists had no further use for bourgeois like us and were also probably glad to get rid of Jews. Besides, the Soviets had voted for the creation of Israel. At the Hungarian border the guards stripped us and took everything – even our children’s books. Once on board the ‘Galila’ my father took time to tell us the truth about ‘uncle Stalin’ and to explain about the Jewish state where we need not fear men in uniform as they were our friends. No sooner did we arrive in Jerusalem than further explanations were required, this time about men wearing furry black hats and coats, and ringlets on their faces.

We settled in Tel Aviv – or, as one of my parents’ friends used to call it, ‘Tel am W’. These were hard times in Israel. Olim were arriving in their hundreds of thousands and there was neither work nor accommodation for them. The welfare state was still a long way off; the first wave of immigrants for whom Israel was in a position to provide was the one to arrive after the Hungarian uprising. Expert though he was in his field, my father was denied a job at the Arts and Crafts Co-operative, run in those days by Dayan’s wife, because he lacked the all-important *protektzia*. So my mother worked a ten to twelve hour day preparing high-school children for their English matriculation. We shared a small rented flat with another family and, because my mother taught at home, there was no room for us children. There was no choice but to put us into a children’s home even though we were only six and seven at the time. It had a dedicated staff but many violent and disturbed children. However, there were good times as well. In the summer holidays we could not get enough of the beach and in those days in Tel Aviv we waded through sand to reach not just the sea but our

friends’ homes too. Most of my parents’ friends were fellow immigrants from Hungary and so they never forgot the art of *mulatieren* – in the blackout during the Suez campaign. Finally, naive as it may sound today, there were the joys of Zionism. These were early days and the creation of the state was celebrated daily in song and dance both at school and by the population at large.

Nonetheless in 1955, when he lost even his menial job and by now, 54 years old, had little prospect of finding another, and with credit exhausted at the *makolet*, my father felt he had to concede defeat. He therefore returned to the only other country where we had friends and relatives – Austria. These same relatives had met our train from Budapest in 1951 and had urged us to get off in Vienna and join them. But in those days my parents would not hear of the idea. In 1958 my mother, sister and I arrived in Vienna and were beside ourselves with joy at being reunited with our father after a three-year separation. But my mother was beside herself for another reason: she had caught sight of Austrian soldiers in their familiar uniforms. Her reaction was to prove justified because while antisemitism was no longer politically correct we were to encounter it everywhere. When my mother, her German still impeccable after 20 years, started a job at the University of Vienna teaching German to foreigners, her boss, a convert, advised her under no circumstances to reveal her religion to anyone. My father, too, learnt the hard way not to mention his background to his business associates. Once when he challenged an antisemite with declaration of his own Jewishness he was told ‘Don’t try to kid me, I can smell them a mile off!’

My sister and I were relatively sheltered because the girls’ gymnasium in Josephstadt where we lived had a Headmistress and another teacher with sufficient Jewish background to have had to spend the war years abroad. Even so I was harassed by other teachers, at least one of whom, my form teacher for a while, was known to have been an active Nazi party member. Things could have been worse though. Our doctor’s son

was so persecuted in the nearby Albertgasse gymnasium by both staff and schoolmates that he had to change schools. In our school, too, many of the pupils had Nazi parents; one girl’s uncle, I remember, dared not return from Egypt at all. The History teacher, with a half-Jewish brother-in-law, did her best to raise the issue of the Holocaust but her words, for the most part, either fell on deaf ears or elicited some alarming responses. When I tried to reason with one of the best pupils, a girl from Carinthia, she told me without a hint of regret ‘you are wasting your breath, antisemitism is in our blood.’ I suppose this is a variation on the Austrian theme *mir san mir* (we are who we are). But it was at university that I heard the most public antisemitic remarks, made by the Professor of old German law, a Catholic priest, to an audience of about one thousand in the auditorium Maximum. Sneering at Jewish scholarship he spoke as if it were still 1944, not 1964.

My parents did everything to make our adolescence in Vienna happy. My mother took us to the opera, plays, concerts, museums and exhibitions. My father took us hiking and skiing. We also went on holidays throughout this scenic country, often with other Jewish families. On weekdays my sister and I went swimming in the Dianabad in winter and the Gänsehäufel in summer with friends from Hakoah and other Jewish clubs, most of whose members were recent arrivals from Hungary; for cultural films we frequented Urania, and to acquire dancing skills we enrolled at Willi Elmaier’s. But the fact remained that we were living in a country where even Jews were antisemitic. Many friends and acquaintances would not tell their own children that they were Jewish and most issues of the *Gemeinde* contained notices listing persons who had officially left the Jewish community. I would have had to do likewise, my Headmistress told me, when I suggested to her that my religion was a private matter and should be left off my *Matura Zeugnis* (‘A’ level certificate).

All this made it a foregone conclusion that both my sister and I would leave Vienna: in fact, we both married Englishmen. I find England both weird and wonderful. It really has an island culture, different from that of any other country I have lived in. It is also the most civilised. If I do feel a debt of gratitude to Austria it is for the first-class education which I received there. Perhaps it is not too ironic, then, that I teach German language and literature for a living.

□ E. K. Mclean

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## Greetings

**O**ur members will be aware that this year's Annual Charity Concert has had to be cancelled due to unforeseen difficulties. Obviously, this also means the cancellation of the Souvenir Concert Brochure. However, advertisers who intended to take space in the brochure have very kindly agreed to allow their messages to appear in this issue of *AJR Information*. Our thanks go to all those who have refused to let an ill wind chill their warm generosity. □

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# The AJR at Work

## In the mood

As the Italian Tenor delivered a soulful rendition of the Neapolitan song *Core n' grato* the whole audience was enraptured. A frail lady with a zimmer-frame produced an inhaler from her handbag and took a series of deep breaths. When the song came to an end the rest of the audience clapped and cheered enthusiastically while she turned to me and said: 'That was lovely, I'd take him home with me if I could'.

The Tenor's name is Domenico Colonna. He and three of his fellow students from Trinity College of Music make up the Trinity Quartet who performed at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre on 18 August. Day Centre audiences are used to high quality entertainment, but this quartet received an



From the left: Devon Harrison, Vasiliki Fikaris and Gilmour MacLeod. Far right: Domenico Colonna.



Photos: Newman.

extraordinarily warm welcome. Devon Anthony Harrison, a Baritone who had the hall ringing with excerpts from Schubert, and Vasiliki Fikaris, the group's soprano,

also received accolades. The accompanist, Gilmour MacLeod, earned great praise for his own arrangements of two Gershwin classics, including a dreamy version of *I'm in the mood for love*.

After the hour long show the whole audience was overwhelmed and many came 'backstage' to offer their personal thanks to these young musicians for a wonderful performance. As another Day Centre member put it: 'A really good show can take years off you. I feel like dancing now'.

□ M.N.

## Charting the course

Although those members who have already visited the AJR's new offices in Froggnal will be aware that finding them isn't that difficult – once you know the way – there have been a number of enquiries which suggest that there is still an element of confusion about our exact whereabouts. In order to clarify this situation we are publishing our map of the area again. In addition we are reprinting the written directions:

Where Froggnal meets Finchley Road there is a Lloyd's bank. On the opposite corner of Froggnal 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 into a *cul-de-sac* called Hampstead Gate, around which 12 new office buildings stand. The AJR occupies the first building on the left as you enter the close.

Visitors coming from the direction of Golders Green will find Froggnal on the left hand side of Finchley Road. The nearest bus stop is opposite Finchley Road and Froggnal station. Visitors coming by train (on Network South East) should alight at Finchley Road and Froggnal station. When exiting the station, turn right. Froggnal is the first turning on the left, across the main 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. Froggnal will appear on the right.

Hopefully, these instructions will clarify our situation to the satisfaction of all. Needless to say, if you are visiting the AJR offices and are in any doubt whatsoever, simply phone beforehand and our staff will be happy to help. □

## AJR MEALS ON WHEELS

A wide variety of high quality kosher frozen food is available, ready made and delivered to your door, via the AJR meals on wheels service. The food is cooked in our own kitchens in Cleve Road, NW6 by our experienced staff.

This service is available to those members with mobility problems or other difficulties.

The cost for a kosher 3 course meal is £3.00. Delivery charge 50p. Payment for meals to be made to the Driver.

If you live in North or North West London and wish to take advantage of this service phone Mrs Ruth Finestone on 071-328 0208 for details and an assessment interview.

Meals can still be collected from 15 Cleve Road on weekdays (Mondays–Thursdays) for £3.00 per meal.

## AJR Social Services Update:

### I. DUAL NATIONALITY

Following the item 'Special Report - Pension News', in the June issue of our journal, some members telephoned to ask what would be the effect if one made the change from British Nationality to British/German nationality. Accordingly our Social Services Department wrote to the Home Office for advice and they replied as follows:

'... Under the generally accepted 'Master Nationality Rule' when a dual citizen is in one of the countries whose citizenship he possesses, the authorities of that country have the right to treat him as if he possessed only the citizenship of that country, and the representative of the other country whose citizenship he possesses will be unable to afford him any assistance or protection against those authorities.

British citizenship is not, therefore, lost on the acquisition of another citizenship.

The acquisition of visas for travelling into other countries is dependent on the country being visited and it is advisable to contact the authorities of the country concerned to determine whether visas will be required ...'

We regret we are unable to give further advice on the matter of dual nationality - if you have any inquiries you may write direct to the Home Office at:

The Home Office, Immigration and Nationality Department, Nationality Division, 3rd Floor, India Buildings, Water Street, Liverpool L2 0QN □

### 2. LEBENSBSCHNEINIGUNG/ BESTÄTIGUNG (Life Certificate)

The Majority of our members who receive a pension from Germany or Austria have been in the habit of having their Life Certificate certified at the local police station. However, we have recently had complaints that some police officers have refused to do so. We have taken up this matter with the police auth-

ority who have assured us that Life Certificates may be signed at any local police station. The following is an extract from a letter we received from the Association of Chief Police Officers:

'... I have now written to my colleague Chief Constables reminding them that, during a meeting of the ACPO General Purposes Committee, the matter of police officers signing Certificates of Life was discussed and it was agreed to endorse the provision of this facility ...'

We suggest that you take a copy of this article with you when visiting a police station to have your Life Certificate signed, in case of a refusal. However, if there are any further problems please telephone AJR Social Services and we will take up the matter with the appropriate authority. □

*AJR Social Services Updates appear on an ad hoc basis. If you require further information on any of the subjects raised, or on any other matter relating to this field, AJR Social Service department can be contacted on 071-431 6161.*

## PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

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

Open Tuesday and Thursday 9.30 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday and Wednesday 9.30 a.m.-3.30 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m.-7 p.m.

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

*Afternoon entertainment* -

#### OCTOBER

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>Sunday 3</i>    | Autumn Serenade - Jane Faulkner (Violin) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano)  |
| <i>Monday 4</i>    | A Little Light Music - Victoria Cooper (Soprano) accompanied by Stuart Wild (Piano) |
| <i>Tuesday 5</i>   | 'Just When You Thought It Was Safe To Sign Your Name' - Alan Conway (Graphologist)  |
| <i>Wednesday 6</i> | Students from the Trinity College of Music Entertain                                |
| <i>Thursday 7</i>  | CLOSED  |
| <i>Sunday 10</i>   | The Sugarinanos - Jane Marciano & Roberta Sugarman                                  |

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Monday 11</i>    | A Musical Trio - Sandra Anders & Peter Tarl accompanied by Giles Turner (Piano)   |
| <i>Tuesday 12</i>   | The Two R'S Cabaret - Richard Moody (Tenor) accompanied by Robert Douglas (Piano)   |
| <i>Wednesday 13</i> | European Songtime - Ariane Prussner (Soprano) accompanied by Elizabeth Upchurch (Piano)   |
| <i>Thursday 14</i>  | 'Chic-To-Chic' - Mixed Programme of Light Operetta & Musical - Bahiya Callan (Soprano) & Richard Moody (Tenor) accompanied by Gael Ford (Piano) |
| <i>Sunday 17</i>    | One-Plus-Two presents Singalongs for You - Bill Moses (Keyboard)  |
| <i>Monday 18</i>    | DUO-KINNOR Entertain with a Pot-Pourri of Music - Madeleine Whitelaw (Piano) & David Richmond (Piano)   |
| <i>Tuesday 19</i>   | Share A Tune - Judy Magnus & Gillian Sonin (Piano Duo)  |
| <i>Wednesday 20</i> | Opera, Pops & Piano Lollipops - John Freeman (Bass) accompanied by Robert Schuck (Piano)  |
| <i>Thursday 21</i>  | The Ellerdale Trio - Sarah Down (Piano), Melanie Woodcock (Cello) & Martin Smith (Violin)   |

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>Sunday 24</i>    | A Selection of Musical Delicacies from the Classics & Beyond - Malcolm Miller & Friends  |
| <i>Monday 25</i>    | A Party Afternoon with Dorothy Sayers (Piano & Accordion)                                |
| <i>Tuesday 26</i>   | Melody Hour - David Jedwab (Tenor) & Avril Kaye (Soprano) accompanied by Piano           |
| <i>Wednesday 27</i> | 'Sang und Klang' - Angela & Nicholas Arratoon accompanied by Maurice Hermele (Piano)     |
| <i>Thursday 28</i>  | Music for a While - John Freeman (Bass) & Helen Blake (Soprano) with Piano accompaniment |
| <i>Sunday 31</i>    | East Meets West in Music - Naoko Matsubara & Suzuyo Kuriyama (Piano)                     |

#### NOVEMBER

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>Monday 1</i>    | Musical Miscellany - Jane Rosenberg accompanied by Annette Saville (Piano & Accordion) |
| <i>Tuesday 2</i>   | A Winter Recital for Cello & Piano - Richard Jenkinson                                 |
| <i>Wednesday 3</i> | French Soprano Florence Daguerre Entertains with Piano Accompaniment by William Hancox |
| <i>Thursday 4</i>  | The Trinity College of Music Entertains  |

**FAMILY EVENTS**

**Barmitzvah**

Rosenthal On Saturday, 2 October Edward Rosenthal, elder grandson of Mr and Mrs Smith of Kingsbury.

**Deaths**

Frank James Frank (Julius Frankfurter), born 4 February, 1911 in Vienna, died 25 August, 1993 in London after a long illness very bravely borne. He will be sadly missed and always remembered for his wonderful friendship and kindness by his old friends Mia Guttenstein and Herta Taylor.

Ramsay Margaret Ramsay, née Held, beloved wife of the late Rudi Ramsay, died on September 15, 1993, aged 91. Deeply mourned by her daughter Ellen Ehrlich and family and her many friends in Manchester.

Selo Walter Selo died peacefully one week before his 73rd birthday. He is mourned by his wife, two sons and their families, his sister and other relations in America and his good friends.

Sterly Berta Sterly (née Wagener) born in Hamburg, February 1904, died peacefully in London August 1993, aged 89. She will always be remembered by her sister Heddy, family and friends.

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3. Paul Balint AJR Day Centre would like more helpers on Tuesdays and Thursdays 3.30 to 7.00 pm. Enquiries and information about these voluntary jobs from Laura Howe, AJR offices on: 071-431 6161, Tuesday to Friday.

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Alice Schwab

## Art Notes

Our members will be pleased to know that Susan Lackner, the sculptress, participated in the *5 Women Artists Plus* exhibition at the Heifer Gallery (until 30 September). One of her exhibits was a delightful wooden carving of a weasel.

The 318th exhibition of watercolours by the *Royal Watercolour Society* is at the Bankside Gallery (until 24 October). Informal tours of the exhibition are being held on 5, 12 and 19 October, starting at 1 pm.

The *National Gallery* has received a magnificent donation from the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation as a gift to the people of the United Kingdom. The donation is being used to meet the cost of the refurbishment of Room 34, one of the grandest rooms in the Gallery, which is being restored to its original splendour. The Sackler Room will become the primary British gallery, where masterpieces by Gainsborough, Reynolds, Lawrence, Constable and Turner, will be shown.

Who remembers Woolton Pie, Air Raid Soup and other 'delicacies' of the war years! The Imperial War Museum is mounting an exhibition *The Wartime Kitchen and Garden* (until 2 May 1994) to coincide with a BBC2 programme to be screened in the autumn. The exhibition shows the conversion of flower gardens into vegetable plots, the expansion of the allotment movement, the work of the Women's Land Army and changes 'down on the farm'.

The *Ben Uri Art Society* is holding its Annual Open Exhibition (11-24 October). Entry is open to amateur and professional artists who support the Society's aims and objectives. The entries are being judged by a jury of experts and prizes are being given.

### VERSE AND WORSE

#### FAX TO JERUSALEM

Cyril Stein of Ladbroke fame  
Asks with a bookie's well-honed tact  
- And in all Anglo-Jewry's name -  
That Ms Aloni should be sacked  
Or Shas withdraw from Rabin's pact

#### FAX FROM JERUSALEM

Sage after sage deeply deploras  
Reliance placed on dinosaurs  
'Are Darwinists demented midgits  
To think earth's age exceeds four digits?'

All the works on display will be for sale.

The *Tate Gallery*, as is well-known, is desperately short of space and, until a major solution can be found, they have adopted a policy of rotating their exhibits in order to show more of their vast collection. Now they have given rooms of their own to two artists, David Bomberg and Edward Wadsworth. They were fellow students at the Slade, but Bomberg refused to join Wadsworth's Vorticist movement although he was clearly influenced in his early work by the abstraction of the machine age. After the war Bomberg turned to landscape, first to Palestine and then to the Andalusian town of Ronda and its gorge. The exhibition of Bomberg's work in Room 16 (until 6 December) is really impressive, as is that of Wadsworth in Room 19 (until 3 January).

*Reno Widson*, now aged 70, lives in London but has spent many years capturing the essence of Cyprus in photography. These photographs are now on show at the Commonwealth Institute (until 31 October). His book, *Images of a Lifetime*, is available at the exhibition. It contains nearly 500 photographs and a text taken from notes in his personal diaries.

The *Old Royal Observatory* at Greenwich has recently been re-opened after a £2 million transformation. It is well worth a visit, especially if thinking of something for the children, with hands-on science stations, a sound and light show in the famous Telescope Dome, a digital clock showing GMT to within a hundredth of a second and the world's finest collection of time pieces, telescopes and scientific instruments.

The *Art of Pamela Kay* is the title of an exhibition at the Catto Gallery (until 3 October). Examples of her work will be available at the gallery after the exhibition closes. On show are oils, pastels, pencil drawings and watercolours. Particularly striking are the lovely flower paintings (prices £250-£6,250). Her published book on her work is available at the gallery. □



### John Denham Gallery

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I wish to purchase paintings  
and drawings by German,  
Austrian or British Artists,  
pre-war or earlier, also  
paintings of Jewish interest.

## SB's Column

**H**ungary between the wars. The cultural vitality of this relatively small country made a particular impact on German-speaking regions some 60 years ago when many representatives of Hungaro-Judaica achieved international renown. It was the time when the dramatic works of Molnar, Lengyel and Herczeg swept the stage, when Koermendi and Karinthy wrote their bestsellers, when young Georg Solti made his debut in Budapest and operetta composers Emmerich Kalman and Paul Abraham were the most popular men in that field. Singers Gitta Alpar and Martha Eggerth had their first successes, Rosi Barszony danced, and film actors Szöke Szakal, Ernst Verebes and Franziska Gáal amused audiences in their most original German. Long-running comedies were written by the two Lacis—Fodor and Bus-Fekete—and the Gabor sisters occupied the gossip columns. Today, the resurrected state is thriving once more: Budapest has two opera houses, and works by Bartok, Kodály (who died in 1967) and Ligeti can be heard at international music festivals.

**Birthdays.** Soprano Ljuba Welitsch, the Bulgarian-born opera singer, had her 80th birthday. One of the popular members of the Vienna State Opera, she was a famous Tosca and Donna Anna and a most fascinating Salome, a part she sang at Covent Garden when the Vienna Opera ensemble visited London in 1947.

**Obituaries.** With the death at 84 of Fred Liewehr, Vienna's Burgtheater has lost its *doyen* who, over a period of 60 years had played hundreds of rôles from classical heroes to the great character parts. His clear, sonorous voice enabled him to expand into the field of operetta, and he excelled at the Vienna Volksoper as Eisenstein in *Fledermaus*, as well as in the first Austrian production of the musical *Kiss me Kate*. He was the last Burg actor to have combined traditional style with modern production techniques. - The death of Hans Beirer took place in Berlin at the age of 82; a Wagner tenor at the 'Deutsche Oper' and a long-standing member of the Bayreuth ensemble, particularly as Stolzing, Tristan and Parsifal, he still sang in 1989 and will be remembered as a real 'trouper'. - Hans Hopf, who recently died in Munich, aged 76, had a powerful tenor voice and very special poetical expression. He sang all over Germany, but mainly at the Bavarian National Opera. □

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## Obituaries

## Meir Faerber

Meir (Marcel) Faerber, Czech-born journalist, and playwright, founder-president of the Israel 'Association of German-language authors' has died, aged 85.

Born in Moravská Ostrava, the son of a rabbi he had studied in Brno and gone into industry after graduation. An active Zionist, he emigrated to Palestine in 1934 and became one of the editors of the German-language daily *Yedioth Chadashoth*, and a contributor to many Jewish periodicals in Europe and the USA.

After World War II, Meir Faerber became one of the leading bridge-builders in German-Israeli cultural relations. Close contacts with his publishers, the Bleicher Verlag, enabled him to open the door for other Israeli German-language authors, and promote Holocaust awareness among the younger generation of Germany.

His oeuvre included an anthology of the German-language literature of Israel, a number of novels, collections of short stories and poems, as well as the plays, *Shot whilst Escaping* (on the murder of Walter Rathenau) and *Motives Unknown*.

□ K. Baum

## Robert Kempner

Robert Kempner who died, aged 93, achieved considerable prominence as one of the chief public prosecutors at the Nuremberg war crimes trial. Born at Freiburg, he studied law and worked as a judge. After an unsuccessful attempt in 1931 to have Hitler

deported from Germany as an alien he became an official at the Prussian Ministry of the Interior.

Criticism of Reich Interior Minister Frick led to his dismissal and after a spell in a Gestapo prison he fled, via Italy, to the USA. In Washington he worked as a government advisor, especially to the Department of Justice. In 1945 he was chosen to join the US prosecution team at Nuremberg.

The chief of the American contingent was Robert Jackson, a rather private man who lacked many of the talents of a successful courtroom advocate. In these circumstances Kempner's forensic gifts and his ability to gauge German public opinion proved invaluable.

After Nuremberg, where he prepared the case against Göring and Frick, he was involved in the Wilhelmstrassen-Prozess; in 1947 he had a major coup with the discovery of the Wannsee Protocol adumbrating the destruction of Europe's eleven million Jews.

From the 1950s onwards he worked as a restitution lawyer, legal consultant to the Israeli government, and author of such works as *SS im Kreuzverhör*, 1964, and *Edith Stein und Anne Frank - Zwei von Hunderttausend*, 1968. In 1985, fortieth anniversary of Nuremberg, he dismissed criticism that it had imposed the law of the victor on the vanquished. 'Those who are against Nuremberg today are those who want war, friends or successors of the war criminals, or right-wing extremists.' Never were truer words spoken! □

## Birthday

## Fred Grubel - 85

When Fred Grubel celebrated his eightieth birthday in October 1988, the then President of the Leo Baeck Institute, the late Max Gruenewald, paid him a forceful and elegant tribute. Fred's friends and colleagues certainly cannot improve on this. He will forgive them therefore if five years later they take the slightly unusual step of referring readers of *AJR Information* to that article (volume XLIII, No. 11, November 1988). One of his most successful achievements, however, was not recorded previously in this journal: an international conference on the Jews in Nazi Germany. Fittingly, it took place in Berlin, in 1985, on the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Europe, with both the president and chancellor of the German Federal Republic in attendance at some of the functions. The great success of this, the largest convention of the Leo Baeck Institute ever, owed much to the organisational talents that Fred displayed during nearly twenty-five years as Director of the New York LBI. Some three years ago he relinquished his task in a retirement which was never to be, to become the Institute's Vice-President. Certainly his activity has not diminished. The first comprehensive history of German Jewry, digesting post-war German-Jewish historiography, to be published in English, German and Hebrew (general editor: Michael Meyer) was his concern. He was instrumental in raising the necessary funds and he is still administrator of this project. This four-volume edition should be completed in 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Leo Baeck Institute. Fred Grubel's dedicated work continues. □

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## Word shpiel

**M**rs Thatcher's 'The Lady is not for Turning' was a pun her speech-writer Ronald Miller constructed from the title of his fellow-playwright Christopher Fry's *The Lady is not for Burning*. Along the same lines a recent profile in the *Independent* on Education Minister Baroness Blatch was headed 'The Lady is for Learning'.

Punning is a variety of wordplay, which is itself as old as civilisation. In *Bereshis*, the First Book of Moses, the name Adam contains the roots of the Hebrew words for red, earth and blood. Whether Ancient Greek affords similar examples is beyond my ken, but Latin certainly does. The 6th century Pope Gregory called fair-haired English slaves displayed in Rome *non Angli, sed angeli* (not Angles, but angels), and the Dominican Order (*Dominicanes*), a sort of medieval thought police, gloried in the nickname *Domini canes* (the dogs of God).

Shakespeare carried on the tradition with *Et tu, Brute* in *Julius Caesar*. In *Hamlet* the Prince, hearing someone had lost his reason, asks the gravedigger 'Upon what grounds?' and is told 'Why, here in Denmark'.

So much for puns. What about homophones – similar-sounding words with different spellings and meanings (like bough and bow, for instance)? These form a particularly rich source of bilingual

humour, as in 'one man's meat is another man's *poisson*'; in a similar vein '*Voila cet Anglais avec son sang-froid habituel*' has been rendered as 'Look at that Englishman with his usual bloody cold'.

Linguistically Anglo-German, we have our own homophonic folklore of the 'Could-I-see-the-meter?' 'But-I-am-the-Mieter!' variety. To bring it up to date one could describe the *Taggart* series on TV as *Scotch Mist*, and the musical *Lust* at the Haymarket as imposing a heavy *Last* on sensitive theatre-goers.

With these verbal jokes I hark after a tradition that extracted risqué amusement from subverting the German Classics. The subversives coarsened Schiller's line *Louise du bist so blass, du scheinst zu beben*, in *Kabale und Liebe*, to read *Louise du p.....t so blass, du s.....t Zibeben*. Likewise Lohengrin's vow *Ewig will ich Elsa dienen* was turned into the early commercial *Ewig will ich Ölsardinen*. Still in the realm of opera there was the mis-translation of Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* as *Die Macht des Schicksels* – a Yiddishism which afforded as much innocent pleasure as the curt request '*Vil-lach vill ach*' overheard at the booking office of Vienna South Railway Station.

Would that it were possible to infiltrate similar verbal hybrids into modern English usage! I look forward to the day when a marriage bureau will advertise itself as *Er and Sie Rescue*, doctors' brass plates will be engraved with the caveat *Farshteit a krenk*, and the firm responsible for Johnsons' baby lotion will market a range of products under the brand-name *mamme-loschen*. □ R.G.

### Search Notices

**Salomon and Charlotte Silbiger** (née Holländer) who owned a *Gastwirtschaft* in Königshütte (now Chorzow) between 1904 and 1926. Would anyone with information about the location of the business or where they lived with their son Wilhelm Silbiger please contact Dr Colin Selby, Prospect House, 4 Prospect Place, Beechen Cliff, Bath, Avon BA2 4QP. (Information about Jewish organisations in Poland who may be able to help would also be appreciated).

**Edith Gollmann** formerly of Vienna, then London and later in South America. Please contact Dr A. Short, 70 Westminster Gardens, Marsham Street, London SW1 4JG.

**Suche für eine Dissertation** Informationen zu Dr Norbert Hoffmann, 1891 in Wien geboren, Rechtsanwalt, 1938 nach England emigriert: Hoffman war der Herausgeber der Wiener jüdischen Zeitschrift *Menorah* (1923–1932). Isabella Gartner, Universität Innsbruck, Institut für Germanistik, Zeitungsarchiv, Innrain 52, A-6020 Innsbruck.

**The Mayor of Steyr and the Komitee Mauthausen Aktive Steyr** wish to invite Jewish emigrants to the launch of the book *The History of the Jews of Steyr* on 9 November, 1993. Members of the families Kamenovic, Pollak and Skalla are thought to be living in London. If they, or other ex-residents of Steyr, wish to receive an official invitation for a two day visit to the town please contact: Komitee Mauthausen Aktive Steyr, Mag. Waltraud Neuhauser, Gugerlehnerstrasse 31, A-4400 Steyr, Austria.

### 40 Years Ago this Month

#### Cultural Activities

Anglo-Jewry's cultural maturity was the subject of some pertinent reflexions in the second issue of the 'Jewish Quarterly.' Criticising those 'loudest' critics who had doubted whether a serious cultural magazine of this kind could long survive, the editor, Mr. J. Sontag, asked what they had done, or were prepared to do, to help break down apathy and indifference: 'One is left with the uneasy suspicion that at the back of their minds lies a deep-rooted disbelief in the possibility of popular education and, perhaps too, in their own ability to contribute towards it.'

Jewish artists at and visitors to the International Festival of Music and Drama at Edinburgh were welcomed at a reception organised by the local B'nai B'rith. The reception, the first of its kind, is to become an annual event.

*AJR Information, October 1953*

### PROGENITOR

The hat broadbrimmed,  
Flatcrowned, furtrimmed,  
The sidelocks curled,  
White-flecked beard whorled,  
Grandfather with wig-wearing wife.  
Unknown to me he left this life  
In dimly distant Hungary  
Around the time that I was three.

Were we descended from Khazars  
Who, from the Sultan's and the Czar's  
Clashing religions forced to choose,  
Instead elected to be Jews?  
I ask it for my daddy's eyes,  
As I beheld them with surprise,  
Pince nez-enhanced, were watery blue,  
His skin and hair of gingery hue.

And is, perhaps, the family name –  
Last link to which I can lay claim –  
Derived from Grünberg in Silesia,  
The garden dear to Maria Theresa?  
Did we seek other Habsburg lands  
When the Empress' garden left her hands?  
Grünberg is now Zielona Gora,  
Change is earth's law – but for the  
Torah. □

### THIS ENGLAND



### MIDDLE EAST LATEST



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