

AJR Information

Volume L No. 10
October 1995

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Don't miss...

**US Holocaust
Memorial** p5

**Judith, where
were you?** p12

Shipwrecked p16

Remorse at a snail's pace

An entire century after the Dreyfus Trial the French Army has officially conceded the Jewish officer's innocence. A full half century after the event the Swiss President admitted his country's guilt in denying asylum to desperate Jewish refugees. Countries from France to Lithuania, Austria to the Ukraine have expressed similar remorse. It all smacks of 'too little, too late' – though in the Swiss case the reported readiness to open bank vaults offers a glimmer of hope that something positive may emerge from the welter of pious declarations □

From zhidekomunista to 'Jewish' Hollywood

Myths malign and well-intentioned

Journalists like to refer to the summer months when parliament is in recess as the 'silly season'. How appropriate that term can be was demonstrated when the *Evening Standard* ran an attack on Tony Blair purporting to come from Bryan Gould, but actually written by Michael Howard's son.

Australia's silly season produced a far worse form of imposture. The prize-winning writer Ms Dimidenko, who allegedly based her novel *The Hand that signed the Paper* on recollections of her Ukrainian family, turned out to be of British immigrant stock. (She also turned out to have plagiarised other authors' work.) This could all have been good clean fun if Ms Dimidenko had not 'justified' Ukrainian Jew-hatred by pointing up the Jewishness of Stalin's henchmen responsible for the famine and the Gulag.

In other words, the Australian reading public has been served up a reheated version of the poisonous dish *zhidekomunista* which formed part of the daily bill of fare in interwar Eastern Europe.

The phrase *zhidekomunista* means that Communism and Jewishness are one and the same thing. Such an equivalence is, of course, nonsense although no one would deny that the Russian Revolution's

promise of equality exerted a powerful attraction on hitherto discriminated Jews. Even so, from 1917 onwards prominent Jews of the non-Communist Left (Martov, Axelrod) were on Lenin's hit-list, and the Social Revolutionary Vera Kaplan even tried to assassinate Lenin. Stalin's rise to power proceeded at the expense of Jews (Trotsky, Zinoviev). Of the four KGB bosses during the years of terror Dzerskinsky, Yagoda, Yezhov and Beria – only Yagoda was Jewish. The best known dissident writer Mandelshtam, Babel and Pasternak were all Jewish – as, incidentally, was Ilya Ehrenburg, promoter of the 'Thaw'.

Leaving prominent individuals aside, Russian Jewry had at least as many reasons to regret as to welcome the advent of communism since the Soviets abolished religious observance, prohibited emigration, criminalised Zionism and abolished petty trade (hitherto the main Jewish occupation.) Admittedly a disproportionate number of Jews also benefited from the Soviet system – in academic, the media, etc. – but they were not the majority of the community.

It can be seen that the *zhidekomunista* myth has about as much validity as the medieval blood libel or the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

However, no age is devoid of its own antisemitic myths. These days Jewish control of the media is flavour of the month or year. In Britain the names Michael Grade and Alan Yentob are always bandied about in this context, although a cursory glance at the pro-Palestinian tone of much reporting on the Middle East shows what little control over the UK media Jews exercise.

Across the pond there is much critical talk of Jewish control of Hollywood – talk in which certain Jews happily (or unhappily) join. In *The Sacred Chain* Norman Cantor describes the new Jewish movie moguls as "vulgar, violent, pornographic and poisonous" and predicts an antisemitic backlash.

Could he be talking about the same tinsel town that feted Steven Spielberg, and whose (Jewish-controlled) Disney Studios is delighting a global audience of children with *Aladdin* and *The Jungle Book* ? □



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.

A Holocaust memorial in Britain?

Can the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, which speedily established a reputation as a centre of excellence for educating the general public, provide lessons relevant to the establishment of a Holocaust Museum or educational centre in Britain?

British Jewry should find the establishment of an exhibition within the Imperial War Museum in London, intended to include all persecuted minorities as equal victims, insufficient. Further, the war against the Jews was not simply one aspect of the prosecution of World War II. Persecution of the Jews began in Germany well before the outbreak of war and was unique in its industrial, genocidal ferocity.

It would be more satisfactory for such a centre to be an independent Jewish institute. As a memorial, the institute could record the names of those victims whose relatives found a safe haven in Britain. Should it be thought desirable, eventually every single soul lost in the Holocaust could be accorded a place in the memorial archive. A memorial hall housing an eternal flame could be open for quiet contemplation.

As happens at its counterparts in Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, and in Washington, the UK Memorial should give at least equal emphasis to the education of future generations, particularly non-Jews, on the facts of the Holocaust and the lessons it presents for humanity.

Seeing what large funds Anglo-Jewry needs to maintain and preserve the present community, could this not be the time to jettison the 'edifice complex' and to join the Information Revolution? A relatively small, high-quality research centre could select, produce and publish computerised data, photographs, films, artifacts – even use virtual reality – to create a unique resource open to scholars and students worldwide through the Internet (already a powerful medium), broadband telephones (reaching the home within three years) and other fibre optic channels. The abundance of material already researched and available in Washington and elsewhere does not have to be replicated; association with Holocaust institutions worldwide to make use of existing material would itself be of immense value.

□RDC

Profile

Rising to the challenge

One of the more colourful examples of PC is 'vertically challenged', the politically correct term for dwarfs. Borrowing from the PC vocabulary, one could describe Helga Wolff as spatially challenged. In other words she is of unusually slight build. Slight – but not frail, as the set of her mouth, no less than the story of her life, indicates.

She was born in Frankfurt in 1923 to a book-seller father and a doting mother. There was also an elder brother and diverse uncles and aunts in Berlin. One of the latter ran a fashion business, which she transferred to Paris in 1933. In mid-38 she helped Helga come to Paris, but the French authorities would not renew her visa, and the following May the 15-year-old arrived in the UK.



Helga Wolff

At the London hostel things were chaotic at first, but after some initial alarms and excursions – a scarlet fever outbreak, a headlice scare, temporary evacuation – a kind of wartime stability set in. Helga did a series of secretarial jobs in a barrister's chamber, at John Lewis, and, finally, at the office of Eleanor Rathbone MP, the Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees. In 1944, thanks to Miss Rathbone's help, Helga secured a place at a Teachers' Training College. A year later the war ended and

she discovered that she and her brother (who had gone to South America) were orphans.

Nor did things go smoothly for the novice in her new career. After a disagreement about language teaching methods at her first school she transferred to a Primary, where the Catholic headmistress pressured her to convert. Under the circumstances she was not unhappy to accept an invitation from her brother to join him in Montevideo – but the siblings found that they had become quite estranged.

Helga's return to London ushered in a more tranquil period. She married a fellow refugee whose mother ran a Hampstead boarding house. The fact that their married quarters were, so to speak, on the premises meant that she had to combine teaching – and, a little later – motherhood, with boarding-house chores.

Eventually, though, she returned to unencumbered teaching in two (differently) deprived spheres: among Cockney East Enders and the physically handicapped.

In retirement she has taught Third World students and, more surprisingly, started a literary career. Contact with her native Frankfurt led her to publish a German autobiography – an English version of which *No longer strangers* (World of Books Ltd.) is available from bookshops in N W London. Meanwhile, a drawer full of short stories, mainly about the denizens of Refugia, is looking for a publisher.

□RG

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SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER**

Would the reader resident in NW London who forwarded Judith H. Sherman's account of her return to Ravensbruck (August issue), please contact the editor.

Who shall judge the judges?

Lord Shawcross of Nuremberg Trial fame was one of the most influential voices in the Lords' opposition to the War Crimes Bill. "Punishment for crimes not within the existing memory of most people", he recently told *The Times*, "is not a satisfactory process".

The contentious Act became operative half a century after the crimes had been committed so that an eye witness aged 25 at the time would be 75 plus when called upon to give evidence.

This is, of course, a huge timespan – but the recollection of such traumatic events as the massacre of one's nearest and dearest does not fade with the passing years.

Interestingly enough Lord Shawcross has just published his autobiography *Life Sentence* (Constable) on which, aided only by press cuttings, he embarked in his ninety-first year.

Eager to earn money when young he had, by-passing Oxbridge, gone into the law in his early twenties – which gives his professional recollections a timespan of seventy(!) years.

It is also interesting that in *The Times* interview geared to the publication of his book the former Nuremberg prosecutor called the arraignment of the greatest criminals in human history "just another case from my point of view with historical and political interest".

He also expressed considerable admiration for Goering whom he called "a criminal no doubt – but a courageous one, and a man of great ability, outstanding personality and humour. I take my hat off to him for defeating the gallows by taking poison in his cell".

Given these *obiter dicta* of the man who represented democratic justice at Nuremberg, is it any wonder that the statue at the top of the Old Bailey wears a blindfold? Is it too outrageous to suggest that (the then) Sir Hartley felt a twinge of empathy with the self-aggrandising Reichsmarschall?

Hartley Shawcross (dubbed 'Shortly Floorcross') was, after all, the 'We-are-the-masters-now' Socialist of 1945 who finished up in the private sector, working for Shell and J.P. Morgan. His huge earning potential – both before and after the switch – enabled him to acquire (in the

words of *The Times* report) a 15th century manor house in Sussex, yachts, horses, fast cars and servants.

□RG

Jewish war-time deposits in Swiss banks

It is reported that Swiss banks are holding deposits of cash, securities and valuables which rightfully belong to the descendants of Jews who made deposits with the banks before or during the war and who were subsequently murdered by the Nazis.

It has always been very difficult to establish claims in the absence of evidence and details of such deposits.

The Swiss Bankers Association are looking into the problem of how to identify such deposits and what evidence will be required from claimants.

No information is yet available, but anyone who believes he or she may be entitled to monies etc. deposited in this way and who can give specific details, should contact the Swiss Bankers Association, PO Box 4182, CH 4002 Basel, Switzerland. Their fax number is 004161 272 5382.

As soon as any further information becomes available, it will be published in AJR Information □

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Reviews

Saying the unsayable

Hilda Schiff 'HOLOCAUST POETRY', an anthology published by Harper Collins, £7.99.

This is a wonderful anthology, unique, the only work of its kind so far. Hilda Schiff was sent to England as a child and lost her mother in a death camp. She writes movingly in the poem *When it happened*:- 'I was not listening... now I hear nothing else'. Certainly she has caught whispers and cries in this book. For instance this poem is all the more moving because unfinished:-

Written in Pencil in the Sealed Freight car.

'Here in this carload

I am Eve

With my son Abel

If you see my older boy

Tell him that I...'

by Dan Pagis, (Trans. Stephen Mitchell)

In '*Shipment to Maidanek*' Ephraim Fogel lists with tragic irony the arrivals in terms of their usable shoes, gold teeth.

'Item: Three poets, hopelessly insane..

Seventeen dozen Danes, nine gross of Dutch'.

More than half the poems are translated. I found myself longing to understand them in their native tongue. Poetry inevitably loses in translation and some work better than others. I cannot believe that Abba Kovner's poem *Far, Far a City Lies* was so formless in the original. In contrast, Paul Celan's *Death Fugue* is one of the finest. Translated by Michael Hamburger, the repeated lines, and rhythms are so powerful:-

'Black milk of daybreak we drink you at dusk

we drink you at noon death is a master from Germany'

and the absence of punctuation somewhat conveys the feeling of garbled terror.

However, I ask again, who is the book for? The preponderance of translations does add a burden to the read. The editor's dilemma is acute. Should she open the door to new poets, most of whom, by definition, are not writing in English, or should she, above all, have aimed to attract new readers and concentrated on fewer and more established writers? With great courage she has chosen to widen the scope of the book, opening doors to the relatively unknown writers and seeking

out the amazing diversity of victims of the Holocaust.

Hilda Schiff's way of structuring the material gradually allowed me to find a way to use my critical faculties. She has made a safe pathway through the horror, so that I could continue to read and to go on a voyage of self-exploration. I was continually moved to tears, humbled, but never confused. Who would have dreamt that a love poem could be written in a death camp?

In '*The Sun of Auschwitz*' Tadeusz Borowski writes:-

'I remember your smile
as elusive as a shade
of the colour of the wind,
a leaf trembling on the edge
of sun and shadow, fleeting
yet always there.'

This is a long book. There are 130 poems and 230 pages; the cover design by Shmuel Dresner, 'The Ghost Town', shows a townscape of smouldering newsprint. If you only read one poem from each section your path will be long and in the end your journey would teach you that what you most fear once came true. Yet in her poem '*Discovery*' the editor writes:-

'The total absence of love is God
Whose presence
No clearer moments of rapture could
stamp
in the grain of my heart'.

I think that this sense of order in chaos is a major achievement. There is a good index and each poet has a biographical paragraph at the end. Many who survived took their own lives.

Let me finish with one of them, Primo Levi:

'I commend these words to you.
Engrave them on your hearts
When you are in your house, when you
walk on your way,
When you go to bed, when you rise.
Repeat them to your children.
Or may your house crumble,
Disease render you powerless,
Your offspring avert their faces from
you.

□ Jill Bamber

Singer's black swansong

Isaac Bashevis Singer, *MESHUGAH*,
Hamish Hamilton, £15.99

ASHEVIS SINGER so much justifies his single-word title that I sometimes asked myself whether it may not be unwise to present Jews as such unpleasant and unstable people. There are, after all, enough detractors out there. Of course, the handling of his characters is masterly, and everybody with understanding knows that they are the cripples of, or the refugees from, the Holocaust. But can one take understanding for granted?

The narrator, Singer's representative between the pages, is forty-something Aaron Greidinger, a Yiddish writer, a fugitive from Poland struggling in 1950s New York. Into his humdrum, as well as racket, life comes a ghost from the past, the ageing Max Aberdam, and those two alternately play Faust and Mephistopheles to each other.

Max is an invalid, but that does not stop him from having what one must politely call affairs of the heart. He is married, distantly, but his mistress is Miriam Zalkind. In no time Max and Aaron share the delectable but neurotic Miriam ... who also has a husband, a clown in daily life and an aspiring *litterateur*. He surprises Aaron and Miriam in bed and waves a revolver at them. Aaron flees all but naked across Manhattan and seeks, and finds, refuge with another mistress. Gunman-husband Stanley collapses into Miriam's arms.

Miriam is probably the worst and the most interesting character: she is described as a "whore" and yet she is also writing a dissertation on Greidinger's works. As the story fans out across the globe she is revealed, in Israel, to have been the beast of Stutthof concentration camp, a whip-wielding *kapo* and the mistress of an SS officer.

There is a large cast around them, each as *meshugah* as the next. Yet it is Singer's supreme skill which elevates this madness into an allegory of struggle against irrepressibly remembered suffering.

There is even a kind of happy ending ... Max Aberdam finds release in death; Aaron and Miriam get married, and they are not the only ones who find a solution.

N.B. Readers are advised to take in the book's last four pages, in which the translator provides a key to this masterwork.

□ John Rossall

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The US Holocaust Memorial

To inform Americans about an unprecedented tragedy, to remember those who suffered, and to inspire visitors to contemplate the moral implications of their choices and responsibilities as citizens, is the stated purpose of the Holocaust Memorial at Washington DC.

The Museum, a striking stone and brick-faced building designed by the renowned Pei architecture partnership, is set

in the heart of the capital near the George Washington obelisk and the complex of Smithsonian museums. At the rear of Raoul Wallenberg Place, on which the Museum stands, quotations of American Presidents are carved in stone. Prominent among these is

General Eisenhower's description of a concentration camp which, liberated by the Americans, he chose to enter. It was his personal wish that he witness these unprecedented crimes against humanity and place himself in a position to combat any possible future denial.

Entry to the Museum is free and queues form well before the appointed opening time of 10am for the 1,500 tickets which are daily distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Each has a time of admission. Queuers are kept fully informed about the procedures of the Museum, probable waiting and entry times and the likelihood of obtaining tickets. Contrary to my preconceived expectations, the great majority of visitors were not Jews; indeed, they represented a wide cross-section of ethnicity and language, both American and foreign. Fellow Jews were represented, but not exceptionally so.

Having over an hour to wait before our given entry time, we entered the ground (i.e. first) floor and lower level areas of the Museum which have separate and changing displays. A helpful Jewish lady at the information desk, seeing that I was accompanied by my 14-year-old daughter, recommended an exhibit for children

called *Daniel's Story*, which narrates the Holocaust through the eyes of a child, thoughtfully and effectively utilising reconstructions of the boy's own room, the deteriorating ghetto quarters into which his family were crammed, and the final indignity and inhumanity of a concentration camp.

The first, and for me the most informative and relevant, section of the exhibition relates the history of Germany in the 1930s and the backdrop to Hitler's rise to power. The dramatically large, black-and-white photographs which dominate this gallery, each accompanied by a clear,

written commentary, forcefully illustrate the Browns' street violence, the impotence of Weimar democracy, and the manipulation of the masses whose adulation maintained Hitler in power. The failure to take him at his word, that he actively sought the inhuman deg-

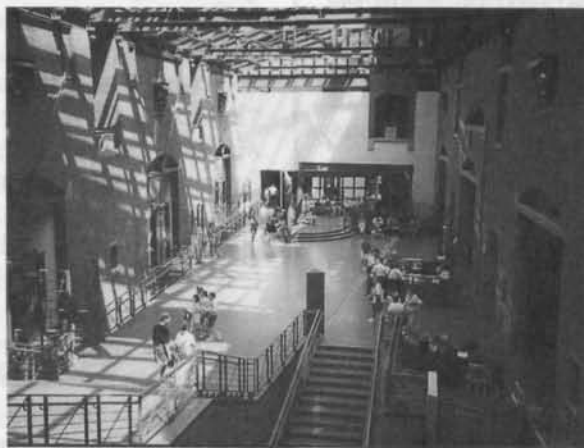
radation and extermination of the Jews, is immediately apparent.

The implementation of the Final Solution is demonstrated in the next section. Most memorable is the cattle-wagon in which who knows how many European Jews were transported to their end. A model of the Auschwitz death process, from selection to the gas chambers and ovens, was too much for your reporter to take. Missing (unless it escaped attention) was a comprehensive map of the hundreds of Jewish communities annihilated by the Germans – the rebuttal of so-called Holocaust denial.

The third and final section deals with the aftermath from 1945 until today. Not surprisingly, emphasis is given to the role that the American forces played, both in prosecuting the war and in caring for its surviving victims.

Other exhibitions on display were *Liberation 1945* which uses photographs, films, artifacts and documents to reveal the reactions of both survivors and their liberators, and *Schindler*, an exhibit commemorating Oskar Schindler's rescue of Jews by finding them work in his factory.

□ Ronald Channing



Interior of Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.



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Letters to the Editor

NO STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

Sir – Opponents of war crimes trials, who stress the age and frailty of prospective defendants like Szymon Serafimowicz, seem to be unaware of the case of Joseph Schwammberger, an equally frail old Nazi.

In 1991-92 a German court in Stuttgart tried him for murders he committed as an SS sergeant in command of the ghetto in Przemyśl and another town in Poland. The fact that Schwammberger was now an old man and his crimes were committed 50 years ago was clearly not considered by the court to be an adequate reason for letting the perpetrator remain untried and unpunished. There was more than sufficient evidence to convict him and he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Indeed, despite his advanced age the German government had gone to some trouble to have Schwammberger tracked down in his hide-out in Argentina and extradited – after a very long delay, it must be said.

The trial was overshadowed by the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall some months earlier, which may be why it seems to be forgotten.

Otto Schiff House
Netherhall Gardens
London NW3

Michael Hellman

BERLIN HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

Sir – The proposed new Jewish museum, as part of a larger state-funded museum in Berlin, does not specify a Holocaust section. The present generation is unable to understand that the Holocaust in Europe, perpetrated by the Nazis, cannot and should not be compared with all other atrocities committed by man. The museum should be housed in a single building and deal only with the Holocaust.

At the Ann Frank House in Amsterdam they too are trying to compare the Holocaust with all atrocities committed today, calling their exhibition *Ann Frank in the World*. In London there is also talk of a Holocaust museum, this time as part of the Imperial War Museum. Surely the

Holocaust has no connection with the war, but was the policy of the Nazi German *civilian* government to destroy its Jewish citizens from 1933 onward.

Frankfurt am Main, the city of my birth, has a Jewish museum housed in a Rothschild house with its own huge Holocaust memorial. Engraved on it are the names of all 9,415 Jews who remained in Frankfurt at the outset of the war and perished, my mother among them. The only museum that really shows the horrors of 50 years ago without a cover-up is Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

There is no sign that we have learned from past history. With all the film records of the Holocaust, some people begin to believe that it was a fairytale after all!

Bulstrode Avenue
Hounslow
Middlesex

Julius Fletcher

GLOBOCNIK

Sir – Much as I appreciated Harald Brainin's "In Memoriam" for the Viennese jeweller Futterweit, murdered by Odilo Globocnik (September issue), this particular Nazi criminal did not, like so many of his ilk, retire with an Austrian state pension to Carinthia.

According to *Grosses Lexicon des Dritten Reiches*, Globocnik was arrested by Allied troops in 1945 and subsequently committed suicide.

The Street
Dalham
Suffolk

George Clare

SS NOT A MONOLITH – ADDENDUM

Sir – A 'little' correction. The rephrasing of item 1 (August issue) may give the wrong impression that poor Horst Schleimer was put into the uniform of an SS officer, being "the Schreibstube". In fact, in September '43 we were still in civies, as it was the transition from ghetto to concentration camp proper with striped uniforms. Perhaps inverted com-

mas instead of underlining may have helped.

On this occasion I offer another curiosity:

A whole Belgian SS company was put with us prisoners in Stutthof in September '44 because they refused to fight on the Western front against the Allies.

North End Way
London NW3

Ernst Mitchell

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

Sir – The linguistic error in *Full circle* (July issue) reminds one of those dreadful refugee English jokes of the 1940s Hampstead coffee houses. "Can I become a beefsteak?", or, gasman on the doorstep: "I've come to see the meter". "I am the Mieter". Meyer, on hearing his friend Jones has passed away, asks "when is he coming back?"

Though still dreadful, my story is at least true. On arrival I was taken straightaway to an elementary school where the headmaster tested my English by pointing to the calendar. "September, sir" was followed by "Oktober, sir". He said, "Perfect, you start at once". Soon after, in class I was asked to describe a poster depicting a dredger on the Thames. This was no problem to the boy from Breslau an der Oder. Fired by the recent success at my adopted language, I began, "That is a Bagger, sir".

The Mount
Eastbourne

Peter Goddard

BRICKBAT/BOUQUET

Sir – Belatedly the remarkable retrospective exhibition of my grandfather Isidor Kaufmann in the Jewish Museum in Vienna (February-May 1995) found mention in your July issue.

No credit was given by you to the non-Jewish curator of the museum who organised the exhibition and compiled and published the beautiful catalogue (which is now out of print) – Dr. G. Tobias Natter who is extraordinarily knowledgeable on my grandfather's paintings, background and work.

Nevertheless, I must emphasize that both I and my husband always look forward to receiving your publication, find it offers varied and interesting reading and congratulate you on the excellent editorial work you do.

Toronto
Canada

Kitty Schafer

HOLOCAUST DENIAL

Sir – I enclose copy of a label I found stuck on a post in South Terrace SW7. I have sent a copy to the Sussex Police in Lewes.

I believe in Germany this would be a criminal offence, hence the U.K. address.

TRANSLATION

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ANOTHER BOUQUET

Sir – Congratulations on your contribution about the Richborough camp. I have been in Richborough and I kept a diary (still have the diary) until January 1940 when I left with the first AMPC Company 69 for France and returned after Dunkirk.

Dr. Isaac Levy is right when he said, "The name of Richborough deserves to be remembered for it represented not just a haven of refuge, but a generating station of valuable service to the cause of freedom".

Chorleywood
Hertfordshire

Gerd Treuhaft

MARRYING OUT

Sir – Greater tolerance would enrich our communities. After all our forefathers married 'out', but their sons were still accepted as Kings of Israel and hence we survived all these centuries.

Brooklawn Drive

GE Feldman (Mrs)

Didsbury

Manchester

DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS

AJR Information apologises for the omission of certain display advertisements from the September issue. These have been placed in the current edition.

German pensions update

Eligibility

Refugees from Nazi oppression who had not made at least one month's contribution to the German insurance system before the war, may still make a voluntary contribution, provided they are under 65 years old and hold, have applied, or apply for reinstatement of German citizenship.

However, even people over 65 years old may be entitled to make such a voluntary contribution if they had originally applied to the German Insurance Authority before 30.6.94 and either before or after that date applied for *Wiedereinbürgerung*, and have a record of at least 60 months contributions, including British contributions. Anyone who has had an application to make such a voluntary contribution rejected because of age, but who satisfies the above requirements, should immediately request a review of his/her case.

Amount of pension

In cases where the right to a pension starts with the making of a voluntary contribution to the German social security scheme, the value of the German pension will be based on such contribution plus substitution periods (*Ersatzzeiten*) in respect of the time of persecution. This is defined as the period up to 31 December 1949.

The value of the credits arising from the substitution period depends on a person's average earnings during a working life between the age of 16 to 65.

European social security regulations do not permit credits for substitution periods which coincide with British contribution periods. Thus UK contribution periods are advantageous where they fall outside the German substitution periods, but disadvantageous if they coincide with the German substitution periods.

Persons entitled to pay voluntary contributions can direct questions on details of calculation of pensions to the German pension office, with which they have filed the application for a pension. The German pension number should always be indicated.

A summary of the conditions of eligibility for a German old age pension for victims of Nazi persecution living in the UK has been made by the Federal Pensions Office. Copies are available from AJR Head Office. Please send SAE.

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The AJR at Work

Sound advice

AJR's Social Services department has been alarmed to note recently the number of members who, having been sensible enough to instal emergency help line 'phones, are thoughtless in not wearing the pendant around their necks. One Social Worker was told, "I keep the pendant in the bathroom", another, "I keep it by my bed". The purpose of having one is that if you should fall and need assistance, a slight pressure on the pendant would operate the equipment immediately and help would be at hand. If you have an accident in the hallway, and the pendant is in the bathroom, the system is rendered useless.

For those not familiar with personal emergency alarms (help line phones), this is an effective way to enable older people and those with special needs to continue living independent lives in their homes, secure in the knowledge that in an emergency help is only moments away.

The equipment comes in the form of a small box connected to your telephone line. Users wear a pendant around their necks. In an emergency such as a fall or fear of an intruder, the pendant button is pressed and it immediately connects to the phone, putting you in touch with a central control office. The operator will speak to you and ask what is wrong. You can speak back to the operator from any distance within your home. If you can't reply, the operator will summon help first from your key holders. If they can't be raised, the police will be called.

To have a help line installed, you will need a modern telephone socket and an adjacent electrical power point. The installation takes very little time and the occupier must have two people living relatively close by, to be key holders. The costs vary for each system, but in most cases there is an initial outlay and then either a quarterly or yearly payment.

For peace of mind we highly recommend anyone living on their own to consider having a system installed. If you require further details, or a trial, contact the AJR Social Services Department. We have details of facilities offered by Local Authorities and other service providers □

International duo

Up-and-coming Korean violinist Jaehong Yim, partnered by pianist Michael Schreider who came to London from Moscow four years ago, presented a scintillating programme of Kreisleriana (with Tchaikovsky, Bach, Brahms and Chopin by way of diversion) to an enthralled gathering of members at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre.

Opening their programme with a charming rendition of *Schön Rosmarin* ensured that they had the audience eating out of their hands all the way. *Liebestraum* was followed by Tchaikovsky's *Melody*, Brahms' *Hungarian Dances*, Bach's *Air on a G String*, and a lively *csárdás*!



Jaehong Yim, violin, and Michael Schreider, piano, entertaining members of the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre to a programme of Kreisleriana.

Kreisler's *Tambourin Chinois* proved very familiar, while the quiet mood of a Tchaikovsky *Serenade* was broken abruptly by the dashing Spanish rhythms of *Dance Español*.

For his piano solos, Michael Schreider chose two demanding Chopin waltzes, though no one was seen to check the exact duration of the *Minute Waltz*.

Day Centre member Mrs. Regine Nathan, whose late husband was a leader of the Scottish National Symphony Orchestra, said that the International Duo had made a wonderful sound and played with feeling. "They really touched me," she added, and that from a real *maven* □

AJR Bridge Section

The first session of the AJR Bridge Section, on Monday 11th September, was well attended and enjoyed by all.

In order to enable us to provide better facilities it has been decided that from October, bridge sessions will be held on Thursday afternoons from 4pm - 6.30pm and *not* on Monday afternoons.

Because of *yomtov*, please note that the first session in October will be on the 12th.

Membership of the group is open only to AJR members (present or future) and their families.

The session fee will be the usual afternoon charge of £1.50, to include tea.

Please telephone Bella Glasner on 0181 346 0552 to let her know that you will be attending □

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

DAY CENTRE CHARGES

Please note the following changes which will take effect on Sunday 1 October 1995.

Sunday afternoon, including refreshment	£1.50
Sunday afternoon, including tea and supper	£3.50

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

TEA DANCE & SING-ALONG

Sunday 26th November

3pm to 6pm

Shelley Weldon

entertains on electric keyboard

Entrance £5 (by ticket only)
Including tea

AJR INFORMATION is available on tape

If anyone would like to take advantage of this service

Please contact
Mrs Irene White 0181-203 2733
before 9am or after 6pm

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Appeals Tribunal of the Landesversicherungsanstalt of the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg recently rejected a claim for a pension arising out of slave labour in 1944, in a German factory on German soil. The principal reason for the rejection of the claim was that there was no free contract between employee and employer.

The claimant had also alleged that it was most unjust that such persons undertaking work on behalf of the Germans should not be granted a pension, whereas Lithuanians and Latvians who had served in the Waffen SS were granted pensions.

The Appeals Tribunal responded that members of the Waffen SS were awarded pensions only if they were part of "fighting troops".

One wonders what is the definition of fighting troops. In his lecture on Hitler and the Holocaust, the eminent historian Lord Bullock state that Battalion 101 of the *Ordnungspolizei*, reserve police from Hamburg, shot 38,000 Jews between July 1942 and November 1943 and deported another 45,200 to concentration camps. The 500 men from Hamburg were part of a force that by January 1943 numbered 300,000 and which was responsible for the murder of two million Jews. Lord Bullock stated: "Throughout, they received indispensable help from the German army and from collaborators from countries like the Ukraine and Lithuania with a long tradition of antisemitism".

Is the Hamburg Appeals Tribunal confident that such people were not awarded pensions?

What if these troops fought the Russians and murdered Jews? Were they murderers or "fighting troops".

I am not confident that murderers were not awarded pensions. Would it not be disgraceful if, to this day, Germany, while refusing to pay pensions based on slave labour for German enterprises or for the state, most probably pays pensions to those who participated in murder?

□ Ernest David

Attendance allowance update

If you telephone the Benefits Enquiry Line to obtain an Attendance Allowance claim pack (refer to report in September issue) the number to ring is now: Freephone 01253-85-6123 □

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

Tel. 071 328 0208

Open Tuesday and Thursday 9.30 a.m. – 6.30 p.m., Monday and Wednesday 9.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.

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

Afternoon entertainment –

OCTOBER

- | | | |
|-----------|----|--|
| Sunday | 1 | DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 2 | THE BERKELEY TRIO |
| Tuesday | 3 | CLOSED AFTER LUNCH – YOM KIPPUR |
| Wednesday | 4 | CLOSED – YOM KIPPUR |
| Thursday | 5 | THE ORCHARD TRIO – (Piano, Flute & Oboe) |
| Sunday | 8 | CLOSED – EREV SUCCOTH |
| Monday | 9 | CLOSED – SUCCOTH |
| Tuesday | 10 | CLOSED – SUCCOTH |
| Wednesday | 11 | a) Outing to Theatre
b) CELLO & PIANO DUO – Zoë Solomon and Robert Max |
| Thursday | 12 | DUO KINNOR ENTERTAIN WITH A POT POURRI OF MUSIC – Madeleine Whitelaw (Piano) & David Richmond (Violin) |
| Sunday | 15 | DAY CENTRE – CLOSED |
| Monday | 16 | CLOSED |
| Tuesday | 17 | CLOSED – SIMCHATH TORAH |
| Wednesday | 18 | TWO IN A BAR – Fiona Cooper (Soprano) accompanied by Marek Dabrowsky-Pernas (Piano) |
| Thursday | 19 | TRINITY DUO – Amanda Palmer (Soprano) accompanied by Marek Dabrowsky-Pernas (Piano) |
| Sunday | 22 | DAY CENTRE OPEN |
| Monday | 23 | LIGHT CLASSICS – Trinity College of Music Students |
| Tuesday | 24 | Jack Davidoff & his PALM COURT ENSEMBLE |

- | | | |
|-----------|----|---|
| Wednesday | 25 | THE WORLD OF THE VIOLIN – Mateje Marinkovic (Violin) with Piano Accompaniment |
| Thursday | 26 | "QUARTISSIMO" – Alison Friend – Norma Roth – Suzanne Goodman – Ann Sadan accompanied by Sheila Games (Piano) |
| Sunday | 29 | DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 30 | MUSICAL GEMS FROM THE PAST – Bernard Wilcox (Tenor) Julia Benneti (Soprano) accompanied by Ron Wilson (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 31 | THE BEST OF THE CANTUS PIANO TRIO – Amanda Palmer (Soprano) Armen Boldy (Tenor) accompanied by Marek Dabrowsky-Pernas (Piano) |
| NOVEMBER | | |
| Wednesday | 1 | THE DULCET TONES |
| Thursday | 2 | ROMANTIC MUSIC FOR FLUTE & PIANO – Nancy Ruffer (Flautist) accompanied by John White (Piano) |
| Sunday | 5 | THE BALATON DANCERS |
| Monday | 6 | YOUNG MUSICIANS ARE PLAYING LISZT – CHOPIN – BEETHOVEN & OTHERS – Anthony Schreider & Nicholas Viric |

AJR 'Drop in' Advice Centre Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6
between 10am and 12 noon on the following dates:

Thursday 5th October
Wednesday 11th October
Thursday 19th October
Monday 23rd October
Tuesday 31st October
Wednesday 8th November

and every Thursday from
10 a.m. to 12 noon at:

**AJR, 1 Hampstead Gate,
1a Frognal, London NW3**

No appointment is necessary, but please bring along all relevant documents, such as Benefit Books, letters, bills, etc.

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Lane. Netta Lane. A most loyal friend, mourned and missed. In loving memory from Resa Roos.

Batkin. Stephen Batkin died 15 August 1995. Deeply missed by his wife Uschi, sons Anthony and Peter, Judith and his beloved grandchildren.

Bennett. Lotte Bennett died peacefully on 25th August and will be sadly missed by her close friends.

Pollak. My dear wife Martha, nee Saphir, died on 28 August 1995 at the Royal Free Hospital. Deeply mourned and never to be forgotten by her husband Ernest who wishes to thank all friends for their kind thoughts and condolences.

Stern. Herta Stern (nee Bruch) passed away peacefully on 10th September 1995.

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German Translation & Correspondence. Good standard of written German required for translation and correspondence. Please telephone 01923 85 5313.

WANTED!

Driver for AJR car to drive members to and from the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
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0181-328 0208

Volunteers needed at
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NW6 3RL

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N.B. THURSDAY
3.30-6.30pm
HELP NEEDED
URGENTLY

2. 'Relief' people to come in when others are sick or on holiday.

Enquiries to Sylvia Matus
Day Centre Organiser
Tel: 0171 328 0208
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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

Big City: Artists from Africa, an exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery (until 5 November), displays contemporary artists from several African countries who together produce objects – installations, drawings, models, photographs, wood carvings and murals – of compelling beauty.

As part of its exhibition *Visions of the Orient*, *Spinks* will be showing (until 27 October) works by Richard Dadd, David Roberts, Edward Lear, etc.

Africa: The Art of a Continent at the *Royal Academy* (until 21 January 1996) is claimed to be the first comprehensive exhibition of African art ever held in Britain. An important catalogue, written by distinguished scholars and experts, will be available at the exhibition.

Also at the *Royal Academy* (in the Sackler Galleries) is an exhibition (until 28 January 1996) **David Hockney: A Drawing Retrospective**. Drawing has always been an essential part of Hockney's work process and the exhibition includes a wide range of portraits of his family and friends, a collection of coloured drawings of his friend Celia Birtwell, as well as portraits of Auden, Isherwood, Spender, Andy Warhol and R B Kitaj.

The 322nd Exhibition of Watercolours by members of the Royal Watercolour Society is at the *Bankside Gallery* (until 22 October).

In Trust for the Nation: Paintings from National Trust Houses is at the *National Gallery* (until 10 March 1996). On show will be a comprehensive selection of paintings from National Trust properties, including works by Titian, Velasquez, Van Dyck, Claude, Chardin, Hobbema, Hogarth and Tissot.

Margaret Mee (1909-1988) spent a large part of her early life in Hampstead: in fact, she shared a flat with the author of this article. In 1952 she moved to Brazil and made no fewer than 15 arduous expeditions up the Amazon to discover and paint the local flora. Many of her paintings are now in the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, but a selection from there, together with some of her notebooks, is on display at the *Camden Arts Centre*, at the same time as drawings by Bill Woodrow, the celebrated British sculptor.



Amazon Studies, Margaret Mee, Camden Arts Centre.

British Wizo in association with the Oxford Institute for Yiddish Studies recently held a one-day exhibition of paintings by Yonia Fain, who was born in Russia and, after an adventurous career, eventually arrived in Mexico, where his work was sponsored by the famous artist Diego Rivera.

Marlborough Graphics are showing new etchings and lithographs by Victor Pasmore (until 21 October), while Carel Weight's war paintings *A War Retrospective* are on show at the *Imperial War Museum* (until 8 October).

SB's Column

Stefan Zweig in Frankfurt. Within the framework of the Frankfurt Book Fair in October there will be a Stefan Zweig exhibition arranged by Klemens Renoldner, chief dramaturg of the theatre in Berne. It repeats the successful 'Stefan Zweig and his work' exhibition staged at Salzburg in 1992.

Going strong at 90. It was 1905 when Franz Lehár's *Merry Widow* had its première in Vienna, shortly followed by performances throughout the world. Despite adverse initial reviews, the operetta went on to become one of the evergreens of light popular music. It has just ended another successful run in Vienna at the renovated Ronacher theatre.

Show business and real life. German actress Lena Stolze, recipient of several

official awards, whose role in the film *The Nasty Girl* involved probing the Nazi past of Passau, seemingly extended those investigations herself. This embroiled her in an unpleasant dispute with the local authorities, who were reportedly most reluctant to give information. She finally gave up her efforts and emigrated to the United States.

Birthday. Irene Prador and her 85th birthday. An actress in her own right and a commentator on BBC radio musical programmes, she is also known as the sister of the late lamented Lilli Palmer. Vienna's city planner Roland Rainer, responsible for the partly new layout of the postwar city and still an active force in the continual reconstruction of the Austrian capital, is also 85.

Obituary. Steffie Spira (sister of UFA star Camilla Spira) whose own acting career started with courageous appearances in anti-Nazi cabaret in Berlin has died aged 86. After marrying a Jewish actor she went into exile; postwar she returned from Mexico to East Berlin, where, acting with the Berliner Ensemble, she made her name in Gerhart Hauptmann parts. A political radical, she published the autobiography *Rote Fahne mit Trauerflor* □

Quartet's Wigmore debut

The Schidlof Quartet, whose first South Bank concert was given for the AJR last May, are to make their Wigmore Hall debut on 23rd October. The quartet currently is playing at concert venues throughout the country, as well as continuing with its residency at De Montfort University, Leicester, and its successful series of recitals at the Sternberg Centre in London. Next season they have been invited to play at Israeli chamber music venues, including a recital at the Tel Aviv Museum.

Both young as an ensemble – the quartet was formed in 1994 – and young in age, the quartet is fast earning recognition as an emerging talent on the musical scene. The international membership, a shared Jewish inheritance and the depth of their experience all add to the quality of their musicality. A programme of Debussy, Goldschmidt and Beethoven at the Wigmore Hall should extend their talents to the full □

Oh Judith, where were you?

Judith, daughter of Merari, we missed you so badly. Where were you in our hour of need? We were desperate for you in 1930s Germany. We remembered you well from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, when your home-town of Berthulia in the Judean hills was in mortal danger. You, alone of all the townspeople, had the courage and determination to save it. Accompanied only by your maid, you went out to face the enemy, and you came back with Holofernes' head in your bag.

You saved the town, and for your heroism you became the second most painted woman in history, (after Mary, mother of Jesus). All the world's great artists, from Botticelli to Veronese, from Michelangelo to Rubens, painted you and you are exhibited from St. Petersburg to Vienna, from Florence to Madrid. But when, two and a half thousand years later, an infinitely more dangerous fiend threatened your people, Judith where were your daughters?

Not that political assassination was absolutely unknown in Twentieth century Europe – after all one such, in Sarajevo, had triggered the First World War. The 'vogue' for assassinations had started in 1881 with the killing of Czar Alexander II (alleged Jewish involvement in which led to a wave of pogroms). Another political assassination with Jewish undertones was that of the Austrian Prime Minister Baron Stuergh by Friedrich Adler in 1916.

The postwar antisemitic climate of Weimar Germany produced the serial assassination of Jews; of Rosa Luxemburg, of Kurt Eisner, of Gustav Landauer and of Walter Rathenau (*Schlagt ihn tot den Rathenau, die Gottverfluchte Judensau*).

Thereafter, though, potential victims turned into perpetrators and individual Jews became avenging assassin figures. In 1926, in Paris, Shalom Schwarzbard killed the Ukrainian leader Simon Petlyura, whose soldiers had massacred some 50,000 Jews during the 1919 pogroms. In 1936 David Frankfurter shot the head of the Swiss Nazi party, Wilhelm Gustloff, in Davos. In November 1938 Polish Herschel Grynszpan, upset by the treatment meted out to his parents in Germany, shot vom Rath, an official in the German embassy in Paris, thus sparking

off Kristallnacht.

Hitler had announced his programme in *Mein Kampf*. Few, if any, politicians had ever been so open about their aims, which in this case were the destruction of Jewry "like vermin", and the acquisition of *Lebensraum* in Russia.

When it became obvious that Hitler, in contrast to others, meant every word he said, it should have been the duty of all Jews, and for that matter all Russians, to do away with him. Before the war it was not unduly difficult to approach him, particularly not if one was a good-looking woman. Lord Redesdale's daughter, Unity Mitford, had no difficulty getting friendly with him by the simple device of eating in the same Munich restaurant.

But instead of taking matters into their own hands and following the example of Judith, the Jews of Germany waited and waited. So did everyone else. The one exception was a communist non-Jewish carpenter, Johann Elser who, acting alone, fixed a time-bomb in the beer-cellar where the anniversary of the 1923 putsch was celebrated. The bomb went off, but Hitler had left early. Oh, Judith, where were you?

□ AW Freud

JACS

at Belsize Square Synagogue
2.00 – 4.00pm
in the Hall

Programme

OCTOBER

Tuesday 24th

A view of Local Government with Councillor Mrs Felicity Rea, Leader of the Liberal Democrats on Camden Council.

Tuesday 31st

'Saga' - the Holiday Company. Terry Turner, a representative from the company, will entertain us with advice, anecdotes and news of the new holidays with Saga.

Tuesday 7th November

A welcome return to actor **Kalman Glass** who will give us readings from his 'Favourite Ladies'.

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Payments from Austria

National Fund of the Republic of Austria for the Victims of National Socialism

Persons who believe they may be entitled to benefits from the above fund, whose objectives were outlined in the August issue of AJR Information and who have not yet registered their names, may do so by writing directly to the Nationalfonds für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus, p.A.Parlamentsdirektion, Dr. Karl Renner Ring 3, A-1010, Vienna.

Persons who have already registered their names with the Fund or with the Wiener Kultusgemeinde, need do nothing further at this stage.

Begünstigtenpension acc. to paragraph 500 ff of the General Social Insurance Act

Readers (who are not already in receipt of an Austrian pension) are reminded that persons who had to emigrate from Austria due to persecution on the grounds of their political and religious beliefs or their descent, who were resident in Austria on 12 March 1938 and who were born up to and including 31 December 1932, may be entitled to an Austrian pension. Further information may be obtained by contacting Mrs R Markey-Böschl, Vice-Consul (Social Affairs) Tel: 0171 235 3731, Ext. 256

Re-acquisition of Austrian nationality

Persons who were citizens of the Republic of Austria on 13 March 1938 and who subsequently lost their Austrian nationality (i.e. due to becoming naturalized British subjects) may apply for re-acquisition of their Austrian nationality. Please contact Mr W Marchardt, Tel: 0171 235 3731, Ext. 243.

Opferfürsorgerente

Austrian nationals, aged 75 and older, who due to imprisonment before emigration (minimum period of 1 year) or their detention in a concentration camp before emigration for at least six months, hold an Amtsbescheinigung and who do not already receive an Opferfürsorgerente may apply directly to: Amt der Wiener Landesregierung

Magistratsabteilung 12

Schottenring 24

A-1010 Vienna

where their application for such a Victims Pension will be considered on the basis of a legally assumed impairment of their working capacity of 30%□

Summary of information from Austrian Embassy

SEARCH NOTICES

Walter Martin Bloch (or Block), born Karlsbad 4 May 1928, son of Richard and Martha Bloch. Last known to have left Prague on a Kindertransport. Being sought by his first cousin, Fred Weil, son of his mother's brother. Any information about him and his whereabouts would be appreciated. 40 Bradmore Way, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, Herts.

Edith Flörsheim, born 7.1.1925 in Kassel, who lived in the 1930s in Leipzig at Weinlig Strasse 11, and emigrated from Leipzig by Kindertransport in 1939. Information on her whereabouts is being sought on behalf of Mr. Moritz Zwick, now living in the USA. Please write to: Dr. B. Kowalzik, Marbachstrasse 4, 04155 Leipzig, Germany.

Erich Kahn (Stuttgart 1904 - London 1980), painter and graphic artist. Publication of his works is being planned. If you knew Erich Kahn, or have any of his works, please contact K.E. Hinrichsen, 13 Hillside Gardens, Highgate, London N6 5SU. Tel: 0181 348 0969.

Hachshara Training Farm, Manor Farm, Tingrith, Bletchley, Bucks. was established in 1928 and managed by Mr. & Mrs. Sheier. Information on the farm, especially any anecdotes, memories and photographs, are being sought. Please contact either Juliette Overlander, 28 Gordon Avenue, Stanmore Middx., Tel: 0181 954 6561, or Charlotte Michaels, nee Anker, 12 Danescroft Ave., London NW4 2NE, Tel: 0181 203 1367.

Rabbi Regina Jonas, who studied, was ordained in Berlin, prior to working for a Berlin synagogue before the war, was deported to Theresienstadt with her mother where she ministered to newly arrived prisoners. She died in 1944. Members of the Women Rabbis' Group would like to talk to anyone who knew her, either before or during the war, in order to write her biography. Please contact Rabbi Sybil Sheridan, c/o The Leo Baeck College, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY.

Elisabeth & Margarethe Warschauer. Any information on either of these two sisters, who lived in Berlin at Hindenburg St. 97 and later at Meraner St. 54, is being sought by Peter Sinclair of AJEB. Please phone him on 0181 882 1638 or write to 33 Church Hill, London N21 1LN.

Joseph Kassner. Possibly in Hampstead/Belsize Park/Swiss Cottage area 1940-1941. Any information will be treated in the strictest confidence and greatly appreciated. Please write to AJR Box No. 1279.

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

- Oct 2** Mr. David Jacobs, writer and one-time broadcaster for "Voice of Israel" Propaganda Warfare. Mr Jacobs is at present working on a book on this subject.
- Oct 9** No lecture (Hall not available)
- Oct 16** No lecture (Hall not available)
- Oct 23** Mr. Harald Leyrer, How the Sudan - underpopulated and irrigated by the two Niles - fell apart.
- Oct 30** Mr. Harry Smolins, B.Sc., M. Inst. of Physics, formerly Slough College of Higher Education: Einstein up-to-date.
- Nov 6** Dr. Jonathan Katz, M.A., D.Phil., teacher of Classics at Westminster School, Consultant to the Indian Institute and Bodleian Library at Oxford. Gujarat to Vienna to Oxford: men and manuscripts. Dr. Katz has been responsible for unearthing several manuscripts.

Members £10 per annum
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For information please call
Mr. Hans Seelig, Chairman,
Tel: 0442 254 360

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MANOR HOUSE SOCIETY

Forthcoming events

Sally Levin Bar: Mixed Media Works, an exhibition from 20th September to 22nd October.

Are Scientists Playing God? A High Holy Day Discussion on Sunday 1st October at 8.00pm.

Lunchtime Recitals. The autumn programme, running from 26th October to 14th December. Thursdays at 1.15pm.

LECTURE

The British Jewish Wartime Experience, Sunday 22 October 10am to 4.30pm. Speakers: Vera Gissing, Audrey Jacobs, Rev. Dr. Isaac Levy, Jack Rosenthal and Ludwig Spiro. Plenary session and group discussions. Apply to Daphne Zimmell, RSGB, tel: 0181 349 4731.

DRAMA

A new Drama Centre has been established, in association with the Manor House Society, known as S.T.A.R.S. An ongoing programme of play readings, productions, workshops, play writing and theatre outings is under way. For further information please contact Nikki Van der Zyl. Tel: 0181 446 5866.

Cooking with Gretel Beer



Cheese soup

Wonderfully comforting on a chilly autumn evening, this soup is practically a meal in itself. You can use Roquefort or Danish Blue instead of the Gorgonzola, but I think that Gorgonzola gives exactly the right piquant touch.

Serves 4

1 heaped tablespoon butter
1 small, finely chopped onion or shallot
2-3 fl.oz. (60-85ml) medium-dry white wine
1 heaped tablespoon plain flour
1 heaped tablespoon finely chopped parsley
1¾ pints (1 litre) good vegetable stock
4oz (125g) crumbled or chopped Gorgonzola cheese
salt, white pepper
chopped chives
fried croutons

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add chopped onion or shallot and simmer gently until transparent. Pour in the white wine and cook until the liquid is reduced to about half. Remove from heat, stir in the flour and chopped parsley. Return the saucepan to heat and gradually pour in the stock. Blend well over low heat – a balloon whisk is best for this – and leave to simmer for ten minutes. Add the cheese and allow to simmer for another five minutes. Season with white pepper and add a little salt if necessary. Sprinkle with chopped chives and serve with fried croutons □

Greek Jews seek compensation

Greek Jews, together with other Greeks, are campaigning for compensation from Germany for the oppression and destruction of their communities during the occupation in World War II. The previous Jewish population of 77,000 is today fewer than 5,000.

Laying a ghost

Kindertransportee Gretel Simon was born at Bodenfelde near Goettingen and now lives in Oxford. In 1991 she was contacted by a teacher at Bodenfelde school who, keen to make moral restitution, set his pupils tasks that ranged from research into the village's past Jewish associations to tidying up the neglected Jewish cemetery.

In mid-1995 the teacher's and pupils' joint efforts culminated in an exhibition about the Jewish contribution to local life since 1800. The centrepiece of the exhibition was a scale model of the long disused Bodenfelde synagogue, put together by the pupils.

Officially invited, Gretel Simon attended the opening, at which she spoke. She also gave talks to schoolchildren and teachers. In addition, she and her husband Rolf Howard went to Friday night service at the nearby 50-strong Goettingen community. "This trip", she said on her return, "has laid a ghost for me after sixty years" □

'Am Yisrael Chai'

Stella Rotenberg, whose poem 'Am Yisrael Chai' appeared in the September issue, has asked us to publish the full name and address of her publisher: *Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, A-1070 WIEN, Kaiserstrasse 91.*

50 YEARS AGO

'OUR WAY INTO THE FUTURE'

Mass Meeting of the AJR

About 800 people attended a Mass Meeting of the AJR on Sunday, May 27th, at the Embassy Theatre, London, and nearly 200 people had to go home because the theatre was overcrowded. It was the first meeting of the AJR in London after VE Day. Mr A. Schoyer, who presided, expressed the gratitude of the Jewish refugees towards this country. Mr K. Alexander outlined the twofold task in safeguarding the interests of the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in this country and their duty to take part in the relief work for their brethren on the Continent. Mr Adler-Rudel gave an account of the deplorable position of the Jews on the Continent and stressed the special difficulties which people have to face without a protective power behind them. Mr Michaelis made it clear that there is no way back for Jews from Germany to their former country. He expressed the hope that Palestine will open her gates widely and that the Jews in the countries of the Galuth will enjoy freedom. All speakers underlined the call for unity among the Jewish Refugees.

The large attendance of the meeting is a vivid vote of confidence of the Jewish refugees to the Association, and we have to tender our apologies to those who could not find admission, though the largest available meeting hall in the district had been taken.

AJR Information, June 1945

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PROPERTY CLAIMS IN SLOVAKIA

Dr. Oscar Rosenberg of the Jewish Community in Slovakia is head of the MOGEN Foundation created to pursue claims for the restitution of Jewish property.

Would interested persons contact him at:
Orlia ul. 9, SK - 040 01 Kosice, Slovakia
Telephone: 0042 95 622 4232, or
Fax: 0042 95 763 041.

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One man's war - Part 2

Jerusalem, Sarafand, Alexandria

After a couple of weeks waiting outside the harbour limits, embarkation began under the strict supervision of the British Army and the Palestine Police.

Exactly four hundred immigrants were then carted off by rail to the vast British army base of Sarafand where a Palestine Police detention centre awaited us. We all served exactly six months in prison as punishment for illegal entry.

The six months' imprisonment passed with intensive lectures in English, games and tournaments; visitors were allowed. The four hundred internees nearly all came from Czechoslovakia and there was a high standard of comradeship and culture. A large number joined the Czech army in exile in Palestine. There were about a dozen families from my home town living in Tel Aviv at the time, who had long connections with the Zionist movement and were able to raise the required amount of £1000 for a capitalist certificate of entry into Palestine. One particular family, whose son was also my best friend, invited me to their home after release. Having free board and lodgings, but desperately short of cash, I tried to find some employment. This was not easy in a strange country at the beginning of wartime.

I found an employer who manufactured wooden souvenirs from cedar wood in Jerusalem's Romema quarter. He had some machinery and employed an old man and a boy and was interested in the wooden toys we had made in my father's factory. I succeeded in making about a dozen samples from off-cuts of wood and the local department store (Kol Bo) promised to buy all we could manufacture, but I could never get my boss to purchase some raw material. One day a huge Arab in flowing robes arrived at the workshop, carrying a tiny lamb on his left arm and a large stick in his right hand. My two co-workers instantly vanished into thin air. The Arab who turned out to be the landlord of the premises, lashed out at everything he could see with his stick because my boss owed him many months of rent. (The two workers told me later that they stayed in the job because they could not afford to lose the amount of money they were owed in unpaid wages).

After this episode, I could see that there was no future in this venture and I ap-

proached a British Army recruiting centre to see if I could join H.M. Forces.

They were glad to have me – they took anybody – but I must have raised a few eyebrows by my point blank refusal to join the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. I had been forewarned and didn't want to join anything auxiliary. Nor did I like the pick and shovel on the badge. They informed me eventually that if I passed an army driving test I could join the Royal Army Service Corps as a driver. So I became PAL/916; the 916th Palestinian RASC driver to enlist. By way of this number I became a bit of a celebrity shortly before the end of the war, but that's another story.

Autumn 1940 found me at the Army Training Centre at Sarafand, the biggest army base in the Middle East. We enjoyed the army life and liked the comradeship – even the two months of square-bashing by drill-sergeants from various British regiments. We ordinary soldiers were a very varied lot, mixed in age and background (Ashkenazi and Sephardi, old-established or newly immigrated, etc.). There were as many different reasons for joining up. The majority of continental backgrounds wanted to fight against Hitler. There was also a money factor: families of serving soldiers received army pay. Some joined out of a love of adventure or because of unhappy love affairs; others still wanted to get away from nagging wives or were on the run from the police or court proceedings.

Most of the recruits tried to do their best in training and were ambitious for promotion, not least because Sergeant's pay, for instance, was about three times that of a private, with own quarters and access to the Sergeants' mess.

My English was quite good at that time, I understood every word of the British NCOs, but their orders had to be translated into Hebrew, and that was where I failed. So I didn't rate my chances for promotion too high. To my surprise I was promoted to Lance Corporal after a few weeks.

After two months we took part in the customary passing-out parade with a dais full of high-ranking officers, even generals of the Dutch Free Forces, to the accompaniment of a band. The corporal trained for the post of Right Marker (a solitary position in front of a company) was ill on the day and I was ordered to fill his place at short notice. Our company was one of the first to pass the generals, and when

the *eyes rrrright* order was given, of course I looked sharp right – I would never have dared not to. By doing so I lost sight of the white line painted on the parade ground; in consequence I started to wander about a bit and so did the company behind me. I only realised what I had done when a red-sashed, moustachioed regimental sergeant-major (whom I had never clapped eyes on before) fell in step next to me and told me out of the corner of his mouth that I had ruined the entire event, and demanded to know my name and number. Besides a few other words I don't want to repeat, he informed me that the only solution to the problems that would ensue for me hereafter were desertion or suicide.

Some time later we received embarkation leave, and after reporting back were informed that drivers were to leave separately for Cairo to collect vehicles from a motor pool. About 25 of us spent a marvellous three weeks in Cairo's Ameria leave and transit camp, doing absolutely nothing, except reporting for morning roll call. On Saturday some of us went to a beautiful synagogue, were welcomed, shown round and invited.

Some dolt in the upper echelons must have read in a manual that we had to be issued with God knows how many vehicles and we were waiting for a shipment to arrive in Egypt. Eventually, we left with one tarpaulin-covered lorry and one measly motorbike. In December 1940, the British Army had nothing to share and nothing to spare.

The company was, by now, stationed a few miles outside Alexandria in a huge, tented camp in a desert of sand. One day on C.O. orders the company marched to a shower complex under corrugated roofs with two-foot gaps at bottom and top of walls. While marching the 20 minutes to the showers it got rather dark and windy. The sergeant-major, unused to desert conditions, cautiously ordered the first section to shower – after all he had his orders. By that time a severe sandstorm was blowing and the men were instantly covered in brown sand from head to foot. Visibility was nil by now. Fortunately somebody dug up some gasmasks which had been donned by the first of the column, as it was impossible to open one's eyes; the entire 300 men wandered around holding hands for hours before they could finally find their way back to camp.

□ H P Weiner

(to be continued)

'Shipwrecked'

In August 1940, any disturbance in the Atlantic Ocean was due to Mars rather than Neptune. Luckily for the passengers on the *SS Quanza*, both gods were on their very best behaviour, and nothing disturbed the smoothness of their passage. The weather was ideal for cruising; the sun shone and a pleasant westerly breeze controlled the climate on board better than any air conditioning.

Among the passengers of this Portuguese vessel were my aunt Lilly, her husband Rudi and their 18-year-old daughter Beatrice. It was the fourth stage of their emigration. In the good old days they had lived in Prague where uncle Rudi Bojko worked in the coal trade.

After the Munich agreement of September 1938, they had left for Paris, whence they had escaped to Biarritz, just ahead of the advancing Germans. This South-Western corner of France was no haven either and they moved on to Spain and then Portugal. Rudi had worked for the Czech Government in exile and was thus able to obtain the necessary visas and permits. In Portugal, Jews were relatively 'safe': unlike the Swiss, the Portuguese did not return refugees to Germany.

I don't know how uncle Rudi managed to obtain a visa for Mexico, and, even more difficult, a passage for three on the *SS Quanza*, which was the dream of thousands. But he was a resourceful person and somehow managed it, and the family embarked from Lisbon early in August 1940.

They travelled in good company. The majority of the 321 passengers were refugees from Nazi oppression, among them quite a few *Prominente*; one had to be prominent to get a visa to the New World and a place on this ship.

During the journey, the *SS Quanza* was lit up like the proverbial Christmas tree, and on both its sides "Portugal" was painted, in 10-foot high letters, in order to warn off the most myopic U-boat captain. Although my vivacious cousin Bea was not very forthcoming about the social life on board, with some unattached young men among the passengers I assume that she was not bored.

After about 10 days, they arrived fit and bronzed in New York, where passengers with the required papers could disembark. The Bojkos, busily learning basic Spanish, sailed on to Veracruz.

There they were all packed and ready to go ashore, when the Mexican Immigra-

tion Officer came aboard to announce that all immigrant visas had been cancelled. One can imagine my relatives' shock and despair – with the 'promised land' only a few feet away across the gang-plank, they were not allowed to set foot in it. But the Mexican authorities remained adamant; immigrants were *verboden*.

The reason for that Mexican U-turn emerged later. The exiled, former Head of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky, had been assassinated on Stalin's orders a few days earlier in Mexico City. The government had to do something in response, if only to show that it was master of the situation. That 'something' was the cancellation of all immigrant visas.

Soon the ship with its load of, by now desperate, passengers turned round to start the return journey. In Norfolk, Virginia, it berthed to take on coal. Here the passengers wrapped SOS messages round stones which they threw ashore. In this way relatives in the USA were alerted, causing a Jewish cabal to go into action. The most effective person involved was a New York lawyer called Jacob Morewitz.

Realising that it was essential to keep the ship from leaving US jurisdiction he filed a breach of contract suit against the shipping company. This worked, and the ship was prohibited from leaving. In the meantime, various high-level political approaches were made, including an appeal to Mrs. Roosevelt. These were successful. An obscure American law was discovered which permitted ship-wrecked sailors asylum in the USA; it was just a small step now to declare the Mexican would-be immigrants, including the Bojkos, to be ship-wrecked sailors and to grant them temporary entry visas. The American State Department, nominally in charge of immigration, was furious about this bending of the rules, and tightened up on further immigration.

Meanwhile in September 1940, the two-year long emigration Odyssey of the Bojkos came to an end and they entered God's own country.

The story had a happy ending. The Quakers offered my cousin a scholarship at the University of Missoula, Montana. Later in the war, she became a physiotherapist and married one of her soldier-patients. Uncle Rudi started work as a mechanic, but 'you cannot keep a good man down'. Soon after the war, he cornered the market in special steel needed for petrochemical plants. Since no self-respecting country felt complete with-

out its own petrochemical plant, he got seriously rich. He died not long ago, aged 94, after a successful life as a ship-wrecked sailor.

□ AW Freud

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