

AJR Information

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Don't miss...

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German-Jewish Studies

Subscribers will, we hope, be interested in the leaflet received with their usual monthly package. The Brighton Centre for German-Jewish Studies is part of Sussex University, acknowledged 'runner-up' to Oxbridge as a centre of academic excellence in the UK.

Its work will provide valuable lessons for posterity. AJR backs the Centre financially and calls on members to support its very worthwhile programme to the best of their abilities □

Is the German past a pointer?

Red-brown dawn?

During the Nazi takeover of power a weird catchphrase gained currency in Berlin: *beefsteak SA*. Beefsteak is red inside and brown outside; the phrase described storm-troop units made up of ex-Communists who, seeing the way the political wind was blowing, had changed allegiance overnight and donned brown shirts.

Of course the action of some turncoats does not detract from the Communists' overall anti-Nazi record, but if hundreds of street fighters could switch effortlessly from Far Left to Ultra Right, the two extremes must have had something in common.

What exactly, then, were the lowest common denominators of the two ideologies? Both promoted violent upheaval, execrated Weimar democracy, hated the Western powers and demonised a particular social group (Jews and capitalists, respectively).

In addition the Nazis called themselves socialists, put a lot of red into the swastika flag, and used ethnic comrade (*Volksgenosse*) as a mode of address.

Yet beneath that carapace the Third Reich was ultra Right – and uniquely so. No subsequent

rightwing regime – neither Franco's, Pinochet's nor the Greek Colonels' – came anywhere near it in thoroughgoing ferocity.

In fact the relatively smooth return of democracy to Spain, Chile and Greece indicates that in our day conventional rightwing dictatorships are destined for the scrapheap of history.

One cannot, however, be so sanguine that red-brown dictatorships combining Far Left and Right features are *passé*. The Perons held Argentina in thrall even posthumously. (At Juan Peron's death, characteristically, Communist Cuba and Fascist Spain both observed official mourning).

The currently moribund Greek leader Papandreu is another exponent of red-brown (pseudo) dictatorship. Parading as a socialist he stirred up xenophobic passions against all and sundry: Turkey, Albania, Macedonia, the USA, the EU, and so forth.

A similar, though infinitely more lethal, cocktail of leftwing and rightwing extremism could be brewed up in a post-Yeltsin Russia after this June (the date of the presidential elections).

There is a sizable body of undemocratic anti-market reform Russian opinion which oscillates wildly between Right and Left. For the first Duma election it threw its weight behind the Fascist Zhirinovskiy; in the second it largely backed the Communist Zyuganov.

As of now the country shows a worrying resemblance to Weimar Germany in late 1932, and events in July may, heaven forbid! bear out Yeats' prophetic line: 'Things fall apart... the centre cannot hold.'

On the other hand history never repeats itself exactly. By late 1932 Weimar had long lost Stresemann, whereas Russia today – though who knows for how long – still has Yeltsin □



Nuremberg Jews, depicted in a 15th century engraving

Profile

The friendly duellist

Gerhard (Gary) Leon was born in 1911 into the family of a prosperous Berlin clothing manufacturer. He read Law at Heidelberg where he fought 'friendly' duels – an essential part of the university ritual – but only with fellow Jews; non-Jewish students were barred from giving 'satisfaction' to a Jew.

The Nazi accession of power interrupted his preparation for Finals, in spite of which, aided by a helpful supervisor, he managed to complete a doctoral thesis. In 1937 he entered the parental profession, but his Jewish employer was soon forced into liquidation.

By this time Gary was 'commuting' between Berlin and London, where his elder brother was establishing himself in the clothing business. The Anschluss convinced him that war was inevitable. Offered work over here by a coat manufacturer, he stayed on permanently with a renewable residence permit, got married to a fellow-Berliner and moved into a Cricklewood apartment block virtually full of refugees.

War broke out in September 1939; in May 1940 Gary volunteered for service in the Pioneer Corps, rising to the rank of Sergeant Major in the Intelligence Corps prior to demobilisation in May 1946.

With all his contacts in the clothing business gone, the immediate postwar years were a period of struggle for the young couple and their son. In 1953 came his break when Gary joined a city firm of sugar and cocoa brokers who dealt in vast tonnages on a global market. With his capacity for fast thinking and 'feel' for trading profitably, Gary was soon in his element. Dealing in 'futures' and trading in millions of pounds, he saw himself as the Nick Leeson of his day – though strictly legal and honourable in all his dealings. Due to war service, Gary began his career as a commodity broker rather late in life, but was well able to compete in the rough and tumble of the markets with much younger men. Today's dealers, he says, are far younger – starting at 25 and ending their careers by the time they reached 35! He finally retired in 1981 when he was 70.

In retirement he offered his services to the AJR in order to keep busy and to serve the interests of his fellow refugees.



Gary Leon

Today, approaching his 85th birthday, he keeps himself occupied playing bridge, cruising and travelling abroad, spending time with his son, grandchildren and the other members of a large family, as well as voluntary work at the AJR office. Gary is currently completing his memoirs for he wants his grandchildren to know what happened in Nazi Germany. It would act as a warning against similar events happening again, even in Britain. He observes pessimistically, "As a Jew one should always be prepared to leave". Despite which today Gary confesses to being a happy man.

□ RDC

Discord or harmony?

A perspective on Jerusalem

Reform Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman of Jerusalem analysed the city's significance in Israel's search for a comprehensive peace settlement following the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. In an address to the RSGB Israel Action committee, the rabbi described Jerusalem as a key element in the continuing peace process as well as a microcosm of the wider area.

Despite having been united by the Israeli army in the Six-Day War, Jerusalem remained divided – divided between Jews and the large Arab population which rejected Jewish sovereignty and between secular Israelis and the Jews of Mea Shearim who rejected modern values and with them the very concept of modern Jewish sovereignty.

Rabbi Weiman-Kelman saw Israeli society as essentially tribal with a strong

tradition of self-sacrifice, *pace* the kibbutz and the army – subordinating the needs of the individual to those of the group of the state. In Jerusalem all of Israel's tribes were represented.

This situation had been challenged by the arrival of two phenomena: the peace process, and cable television. Just five years ago there had been only the one television channel which everyone watched at the same time. From 1991 onwards cable TV brought an information revolution. Now there were 44 TV channels (BBC, Sky, NBC, CNN, a second Hebrew station, etc.). Israel was well and truly globally connected, and the new openness brought a concomitant surge of materialism.

The peace process was changing Israeli attitudes to the whole region and the wider world. This was effectively demonstrated by the attendance of world Arab leaders at the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin. No longer could it be said that 'the whole world is against us'.

Rabbi Weiman-Kelman asked if Israel could evolve into a pluralist society. The assassination had caused the secular citizens to regard the religious as 'less patriotic'. But it had also brought about a spiritual earthquake, particularly among the young – many thousands of whom had queued to pay their respects at the Knesset and the Prime Minister's home.

"There is the need for a whole generation to rediscover Judaism as a framework in which to answer questions," concluded the rabbi. He looked forward to the resurgence of a Judaism which was open and spoke for social justice. As for Jerusalem, he was confident that a "creative solution", allowing for sovereignty over different areas of the city, could be found.

□ Ronald Channing

AJR SEDER NIGHT

We are pleased to announce that a **SECOND NIGHT SEDER** will be held on **Thursday 4 April** at the **Paul Balint AJR Day Centre** 15 Cleve Road, NW6 led by **Hans Freund**

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As there is limited space, wheelchairs regretfully cannot be accommodated

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Gown and crown

After narrowly losing the Polish presidential election Lech Walensa challenged the validity of its result. The ex-dockyard worker complained that his rival Kwasniewski had won under false pretences by laying claim to a bogus university degree.

This raises the interesting question whether academic training is – or, *pace* Plato, should be – a prerequisite for high political office. In France, of course, only graduates of *Les Grandes Ecoles* are in a position to set their sights on the Elysée Palace. In America Reagan graduated from Hollywood while Clinton was, contrariwise, an Oxford Rhodes scholar.

Our current PM famously is a product neither of Oxbridge nor redbrick. When John Major trumpeted this fact Neil Kinnock, BA, retorted defensively that he, too, had only achieved the permissible minimum of O Level passes.

Joking aside, it is an incontrovertible fact that the two greatest British statesmen of the twentieth century, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, had never graced the halls of academe. Midway between their premierships one Ramsey Macdonald who had actually left school at 12(!) occupied Number Ten. Macdonald's Labour Party colleague, Ernest Bevin, who – Palestine aside – proved an outstanding Foreign Secretary, was similarly under-educated. When shown round his Ministry building for the first time the ex-Trade Union leader Bevin (who, incidentally, had never set foot abroad) noticed a door marked 'Soviet Union' and allegedly asked if that referred to a breakaway from the Transport and General Workers Union.

David Levy, sometime Foreign Minister in Israel's Likud government, laboured under a comparable handicap: North African-born, he grew up speaking French but had little English – which just would not do at a time when Israeli representatives needed to put their case persuasively on Anglo-American TV and radio.

What about the dictators' degrees, I hear you ask. Lenin attended Petersburg University's Law faculty. Stalin got thrown out of a priests' seminary; though degree-less he had pretensions to scholarship and published a (ghost-written?) paper on linguistics in the late 1940s. Mao Tse Tung when young had worked at Peking University library – an astonishing apprenticeship for someone who

later sought to lay waste the groves of academe.

Lastly, Hitler. It is common knowledge that he failed the entrance exam to the Arts Academy and 30 years on produced 'Table Talk' full of pseudo-philosophy, pseudo-history, pseudo-aesthetics and so forth. What is less widely known is that when German universities offered him honorary doctorates (which they did in droves) he invariably refused. The reason: the ex-corporal who projected himself as the embodiment of the common man – as well as the instrument of Providence – didn't want the German populace, many of whom had left school at fourteen, to see him as receptive to the blandishments of Latin-spouting superior persons in academic gowns.

□RG

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Reviews

Audacious survivor

Henry Wermuth, *BREATHE DEEPLY MY SON*,
Valentine Mitchell, £14.50

The title sets the awesome keynote of this story of the Holocaust experience of an adolescent and his father, the deep breath advised by the father when the gas chamber looms (so that suffering may be cut short). But it does not come to that; parent and offspring belong to the fit and resourceful minority who time and again manage to get themselves counted among the 'work Jews'. But it is always touch and go. And, as intended by the SS murderers, the fitness and the alertness are wasting assets as starvation takes its toll despite some tricks and occasional treats.

The author is unsparingly self-critical; he writes and draws well (the cover design is his own), but what most distinguishes the work to my mind is something I have not come across in any other autobiographical account of this kind: glimpses of humour. The dicing with chance is sometimes almost ludicrous and, so occasionally, are the jailors if one can forget the intended end result for a moment.

Imagine: while in a forced labour camp, the author conceived the idea of assassinating Hitler. This was not just a daydream; he really made the attempt. He piled up obstacles on a rail line which the Führer was rumoured to be using for a visit to the Russian front. Of course the attempt failed, but Wermuth got away undiscovered.

The Wermuth family were Polish-Jewish but 'patriotic Germans'. The father had been in the German army in World War I. In 1938 they were deported to Poland as undesirable aliens. He and his sister had no sooner assimilated to life in Krakow than the German army overran their new abode. Before long the Jewish population was ghettoised in the small town of Bochnia.

It must be emphasised again that the author tells the story as he lived it, and in his experience the German military and German industrial exploiters of Jewish labour were less than beastly. He feels that more Germans than Poles helped Jews on occasion. At any rate, the army employed him as a sign writer and mural decorator; father and son were allowed to stay together and food was adequate. But dur-

ing their absence, mother and sister were taken away with all the other non-workers, never to be seen again.

The army period seemed like paradise when father and son were taken to the forced labour camp of Plaszow. There the ghastly Amon Goeth, of 'Schindler's List' infamy, was commandant. He would kill prisoners for sport with a powerful telescopic rifle from the balcony of his living quarters. He fired on young Wermuth, 'scored' a near miss and let himself be fooled by a shammed death.

A brief improvement for the Wermuths occurred at Kielce where German civilian employers and fellow workers behaved quite decently. Alas, the interlude ended in transport to Auschwitz. There they were marched to the showers. By that time they had got to know what these installations really were. Imagine their feelings when water descended on them.

After that, work and starvation diet, aimed at bringing them to a state fit for the real gas chamber selections, was their daily lot. Here they lost their illusions about the decent non-Nazis ... among their worst persecutors were German fellow prisoners and some politicals. This was followed by a death march on which the father died - the victim not of a Nazi, but of a fellow prisoner who believed he had been robbed of his bread ration. The grieving author admits that finally, had not the Americans rescued him, he too would have been capable of such deeds.

□ John Rossall

A child of our time

Martha Blend, *A CHILD ALONE*, Valentine Mitchell, 1995

In her tale, Martha Blend comes over as a child from a happy home in Vienna, a city she loved in pre-Anschluss days, and which she revisited only many years later.

Before leaving on a *Kindertransport* in June 1939, she had already experienced the fury of the Nazis: her father, who had tried to contact Hungarian relatives, was arrested and put into a police prison; she had to say her last goodbye to him there.

Her mother went with her to the railway station and they kept to the rules that had been recommended...they remained dry-eyed and dignified. She noted, though, that other families did not show so much

discipline. She knows little of what happened to her parents.

Little Martha was a poor traveller (in any kind of vehicle) and of the long journey to England she has only vague memories. But she held firm, even in a cabin of a swaying ship, until she boarded a London bus where she was sick. By that time she was in the care of her foster mother.

Her foster parents, the Greenszteins, were kind and, in effect, splendid people but Martha was in some respects disappointed. The couple were quite unlike her assimilated parents. She had seen a picture of them before the transport, and there they appeared smart and opulent with Mrs G in a fur coat. In reality they were working class, immigrants from Poland with little formal education. They were childless (Mrs G had had several miscarriages) and they gave all their love to the newcomer. Their rented, bathroomless house, in Bow, was low and soot-blackened, in a terrace of similar ones - so unlike her Vienna abode. No maid opened the door. And in the kitchen, a pleasant enough room, she was given her first "English" breakfast consisting of banana with cream and tea with milk.

There and then it was decided that she would address taxi-driver Mr G and Mrs G as Uncle and Auntie. During the soon-to-come war they changed homes several times. Martha did not want to be evacuated and experience yet another separation, so Auntie went with her; during the lulls in the air raids they always returned to the London area.

When the author had first tried her bit of English on LNER porters, they looked flabbergasted. But as soon as she went to school she picked up the language. She had to put up with a certain amount of ribbing on account of her name, which was then Immerdauer, and she bore this until her marriage to Dr Blend. She did well at school, passed all her exams, several with distinction, and went to London University where she read English. For twenty-five years she was a teacher, and now she devotes herself to voluntary work under the auspices of the Holocaust Survivors' Centre, speaking to schools and colleges, and works for Christian Jewish understanding.

In addition to the insight it gives into the mind of a young child during that perilous time, the book is very well written and stands high in the literature of Holocaust Testimonies.

□

Counter-riposte

Tom Rosenthal is inclined, probably out of a publisher's sense of professional solidarity, to take an unduly benign view of Gottfried Bermann-Fischer. (January issue).

This son of the leader of the Gleiwitz community undoubtedly had many gifts. Charm and musicianship won him the hand of Brigitte Fischer, while his business acumen impressed her father sufficiently to make him his partner and, eventually, heir to the Fischer Verlag. Gottfried was, moreover, a trained surgeon and a distinguished war veteran.

However, an obsessive ambition to preserve the S. Fischer publishing empire at all costs ran like a red thread through his life. One might have thought that, in order to perpetuate his publishing company's success story, he would give optimal support to his authors. When reading his autobiography *Bedroht - bewahrt* (1967) one is driven to the conclusion that he would regulate his support for, and even friendship with, an author according to the saleability of his books.

Jakob Wassermann and Alfred Döblin (both, incidentally, Jews) were among the big names on the Fischer list who experienced the fatal fickleness of the young publisher.

Marcel Reich-Ranicki, currently Germany's leading critic, provides fascinating snippets of correspondence between Bermann Fischer and his by far most valuable asset, Thomas Mann. Rightly or wrongly, the latter frequently suspected his publisher of cheating him, and did not hesitate to voice his suspicion in so many words. The thick-skinned Bermann swallowed the insults and invariably endeavoured to placate his number one author.

The situation becomes far more distasteful when we find ourselves confronted with the Jewish publisher attempting to persuade his 'Aryan' emigré author to return to Germany in mid-1933:

"Since there is no incriminating evidence against you, you only vindicate the government by staying away... These things can't be judged properly from the emigré milieu... We are wholly at your disposal and would meet you at the border... don't deliberate for too long. Over here one views all these matters much more calmly than it is possible abroad."

When the writer wanted to have the first volume of his *Joseph* cycle published

with Querido in Amsterdam, Bermann Fischer warned him against antagonising his German readers, and Mann gave in and allowed it to be published in Berlin. Worse was to follow, when, once again at Bermann's urging, he publicly distanced himself from his son Klaus's anti-fascist magazine *Die Sammlung*. Mann was to regret these errors of judgement, which were to stain his reputation for quite some time. He never forgave Bermann and it may well be partly for this reason that at a later stage, when Bermann prepared his re-emigration from Sweden to the United States, he repeatedly advised his thick-skinned and resilient publisher to switch back to the medical profession.

Throughout his autobiography Bermann Fischer expresses utmost disdain for collaborators. His criticism of Gerhart Hauptmann is more than justified. But when he, the former *Schutzjude des nationalsozialistischen Verlagsbuchhandels* (protected Jew of the Nazi book trade), has the temerity to accuse Erich Kleiber, who emigrated in open protest against Nazism, of kowtowing to Hitler, he strains credibility to breaking point.

In 1934, the grand old lady of German literature, Annette Kolb, had the courage to insert a footnote in her new novel *Die Schaukel*, which included the sentence: "In to-day's Germany we are a small band of Christians who remain conscious of the debt of gratitude we owe to Judaism."

Bermann claims in his autobiography that it was Annette Kolb herself who asked him to cancel this footnote in the second edition.

Although he included the above episode, he was careful not to mention the famous loyalty declaration for Hitler he circularised among his authors in 1934.

He told them that things were looking up, relations with the Propaganda Ministry were satisfactory and that it was very much in the publishing company's, as well as their own, interest to sign. (The S. Fischer author, Otto Flake, corroborated the circumstances of this loyalty declaration.)

When the situation in Germany eventually became untenable for Jews - even preferentially treated ones - Bermann Fischer did a deal with the Nazis, which in retrospect appears almost unique. The German S. Fischer publishing company was taken over not by an Aryan commissar, but by Peter Suhrkamp, a man of great integrity, who duly ended up in a concentration camp.

After 1936 the Fischer Bermann story was as outlined in Rosenthal's *Riposte*. From a perusal of his autobiography I got the distinct impression that throughout the Nazi period what mattered to the son of the *gabber* of Gleiwitz more than the fate of millions of fellow-Jews was the fact that he and his publishing company were *bedroht*, but *bewahrt* (threatened but preserved).

□Fred Rosner



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Letters to the Editor



BUCHENWALD CAMP SONG

Sir - I have been asked by a survivor of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp to assist in translating into English the enclosed camp song written by Beda Loehner and composed by Hermann Leopoldi.

I wonder if any reader is willing to try her or his hand in this task. I shall be happy to donate a prize of £100 for the best effort.

Hogarth House

W H Marmorek

Paradise Road, Richmond
Surrey TW9 1SE

1) Wenn der Tag erwacht

Eh die Sonne lacht
Die Kolonnen ziehn
Zu das Tages Mühn
Hinein in den grauenden Morgen.
Und der Wald ist schwarz
Und der Himmel rot
Und wir tragen im Brotsack
Ein Stückchen Brot
Und im Herzen, im Herzen die Sorgen.

Refrain.

O Buchenwald, ich kann Dich nicht
vergessen
Weil Du mein Schicksal bist!
Wer Dich verliess, der kann es erst
ermessen,
Wie wundervoll die Freiheit ist.
O Buchenwald, wir jammern nicht und
klagen,
Und was auch unsere Zukunft sei,
Wir wollen trotzdem ja zum Leben
sagen,
Denn einmal kommt der Tag, da sind
wir frei!

2) Und das Blut ist heiss

Und das Mädal fern,
Und der Wind singt leis,
Und ich hab sie so gern
Wenn treu nur, wenn treu nur sie
bliebe!
Und die Steine sind hart,
Aber fest unser Tritt,
Und wir tragen die Picken
Und Spaten mit
Und im Herzen, im Herzen die Liebe!

Refrain.

3) Und die Nacht ist kurz

Und der Tag so lang,
Und es klingt ein Lied
Das die Heimat sang,

wir lassen den Mut uns nicht rauben!
Halte Schritt, Kamerad,
Und verlier nicht den Mut,
Denn wir tragen
Den Willen zum Leben im Blut
Und im Herzen, im Herzen den
Glauben!
Refrain.

BRESLAU (WROCLAW) ALTE SYNAGOGUE

Sir - My efforts to bring about the repair of the *Alte Synagoge*, *Storch* and the *Neue Jüdische Friedhof* in Kosel are finally coming to a conclusion after seven years.

After meetings with the Provincial Governor and the Cardinal, the return of the synagogue property will hopefully be settled by the Polish Minister of Culture in Warsaw. The Cardinal has already intervened and the politicians have acted promptly. We expect a speedy return of the stolen property. Should this not be accomplished, a major demonstration by *Aktion Sühnezeichen* and its European associates would be planned to take place in Wroclaw with an expected 1,000 protesters marching to the Music Academy (which confiscated the synagogue and sold it to a builder for unpaid bills on its own buildings).

Also, through our contacts in Berlin, we have been assured that the Foundation for German/Polish Co-operation, Warsaw, will vote the necessary funds to undertake the reconstruction work for the part-destroyed synagogue and the cemetery.

The Jewish community in Wroclaw now has 400 members out of an estimated total of about 2,000 Jews in the city, with more joining all the time.

It has a kosher kitchen in the basement, Wallstrasse 9, serving 30 meals a day but needs more than double the amount for Russian Jews and others who pass through and need help feeding. Donations should be made to: Gmina Wyznaniowa Zydowska ul. Wlodkowica 9, 50-072 Wroclaw, Poland (Tel & Fax 011 48 71 35401 - ask for: Mr Jerzy Kichler, speaks English) mark cheques for deposit only.

We need photographs of the inside of

the *Alte Synagoge* and any other photographs of communal property in Breslau and surrounding areas in order to substantiate claims.

Palm Isles

Eric F Bowes

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RAISE THE ALARM

Sir - Poor Michael Howard! He is really getting it from all sides - *vide* the Jewish Chronicle headline "Leading Jews attack Howard over Asylum Bill proposals".

Why did 'leading Jews' not attack the Government 1938/39 for its parsimonious policy of admitting only a minute part of Continental Jewry. All they could do was during the Summer of 1940, to join in the vociferous chorus of "Intern the lot!"

How many lives could then really have been saved?!

Mr Howard is anything but racial, but practical, separating "the wheat from the chaff", genuine migrants from opportunists, i.e. economic migrants, thereby saving hundred of millions of taxpayers' money. There must surely be a limit to our altruistic "soft touch" attitude!

Wentworth Hill

Anthony Goldsmith

Wembley, Middx.

DECEMBER EDITORIAL

Sir - The attempt at broad brushstrokes of Jewish historiography linking Rathenau with Rabin, the Gaon of Vilna with the Enlightenment, Arlosoroff with perhaps Dutschke and Kennedy is skirting the edges of credibility and is in considerable danger of overkill.

The Rabin assassination was a tragedy waiting in the wings. It was preceded by several previous clashes that led to bloodshed. Going back to the assassination of Kastner in the early fifties there is an ever present element in the nationalist camp now reinforced by groupings of orthodox and fundamentalist proponents which has always exploited the organisational weaknesses of the state security organs. As in most Western cultures these security organs are never as good as their reputation, their biggest failures being in their lack of intelligence.

If the editor had searched for parallels from examples of security failure, he might well have been on the right track.

Seddon House, Barbican

Eli Ered

London EC2

NO-HOLDS BARD

Sir - As a mere Ostjude fallen among Yekkes, I was fascinated by your offering.

I well recall the pre-war Yiddish Theatre in London's East End, superimposing upon a billboard, advertising whatever Shakespearean play they happened to be producing at the time, a further notice, unequivocally stating *Kurzer and Verbesert* (shorter and improved) in bold, bold letting. Those were the days!

Holden Hill Road
London NW4

Martin Hasseck

Sir - I enjoy *AJR Information* again and again. 'No-holds Bard' was delicious.

Cutcombe, near Minehead
Somerset

Anne Fields

CODEWORD TSIMMES

Sir - Herewith a Yiddish rendering of Shakespeare's French in Henry V (December issue): *Raboine shel Oilam, Ich varshtey niet obi Ihr kennt Eich asoi arob lossen as Ihr kusht dem Yad fun a Dienst vos es vardient dos niet.*

Ezra J.

MANX MEMORIES

Sir - Apropos of Ronald Channing's Manx Chat: Interned in June 1940 I spent my first fortnight in a military barracks and on York Racecourse. I was then shipped to Douglas, Isle of Man. During the first four weeks of internment I wrote to my aged and disabled parents every day, but after having been in Douglas for ten days I received a frantic telegram from my mother asking where I was and whether I was still alive! I took this telegram - God knows how it had reached me - fumingly to the Camp Commander, Major Shepherd. He looked at it, thought for a moment and then asked me if I had a letter for my parents with me. I nodded. He took the letter and promptly posted it outside the camp in a Royal Mail letter box, thus circumventing the military censor's office in London. I later proceeded to make a habit of it, not only for myself but also with letters collected from my friends in the camp.

Some six weeks later after I had been transferred to Peel, the camp intelligence officer, a Captain Thompson, told me he had received complaints from the War Office that letters had been sent without going through the Censor's Office; by then, of course, the operation was already at an end.

I am telling this story to give well-deserved posthumous credit to Major Shepherd who, purely for the sake of being humane, risked a court martial. Captain Thompson (mentioned above) was equally kind, and so was Sir Timothy Eden, Camp Adjutant at Peel, who happened to be Anthony Eden's elder brother.

Carisbrooke Road
Leicester

Henry Mortimer

PERFIDY

Sir - You report (October '95 issue) that Swiss banks are now prepared to repay money deposited by Jews who were later murdered in the Holocaust to the heirs of the victims.

I have recently received evidence from the Landesarchiv, Berlin, that during the Second World War Swiss financial institutions paid money held in Jewish accounts directly to the Nazis.

Nether Street
London N3

John Levy

BOUQUET

Sir - May I once again express my appreciation for Mr Grunberger's contribution to *AJR Information* which keeps me in touch with the present and the past.

Regents Park Road
London NW1

Jonathan Sofer

SAMUEL FISCHER'S IDENTITY

Sir - Allow me to correct an error in your interesting article about Jewish publishers ('Publish and be damned', November issue).

According to my reference books Samuel Fischer, the founder of Fischer Verlag, was born of Jewish stock in 1859 in the small town of Liptovsky Mikulas where at the time a mixture of Slovak, Hungarian and German was spoken. It was part of Hungary until Czechoslovakia came into being in 1920.

My maternal grandparents, born around 1875, hailed from the same region. You could call them, and Samuel Fischer, Jews, Hungarians or citizens of the Monarchy; but they were not Slovaks or Slovak-born. Most Slovaks were, and remain to this day, xenophobic anti-semites.

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The AJR at Work

Meals on Wheels

Delicious and nutritious three-course meals are delivered twice weekly to members of the AJR in all parts of central and north-west London. The service provided by the AJR is greatly appreciated by the housebound, those no longer able to do their own shopping and cooking or to get to the Day Centre for hot meals.

Reorganised four years ago as a comprehensive service tailor-made for the requirements of AJR members, AJR Meals-on-Wheels are prepared and delivered by a hard-working team led by Catering Manager Susie Kaufman. Head Chef Jeffrey Heywood and Assistant Chef Yaacov Azulay offer a wide variety of menus, everything strictly kosher.

A typical three-course menu starts with soup, chopped liver or gefilte fish, has a meat, chicken, vegetable or fish main course, all served with a range of delicious vegetables, and mouth-watering desserts from apple strudel to *rote grütze*.

All meals are freshly cooked in the AJR's own modern kitchens, then placed in containers and frozen before delivery. Meals can either be warmed and eaten within 24 hours, or kept in a freezer for use when required. Either a conventional or a microwave oven may be used.

The delivery team of David Drey, Joseph Pereira and volunteer Lois Bradfield deliver to members twice a week – on Tuesdays and Fridays – with special menus and special arrangements being made for both Jewish and national holidays. Orders are taken by Susie Kaufman and Joan Kupler on the telephone the previous day. The charge of £4 per meal (plus £1 for a delivery) is paid to the driver.

Meals are served to AJR members living in West Hampstead, Hampstead, St. John's Wood, the West End, Lancaster Gate, Regent's Park, Camden Town, Kilburn, Highgate, Hendon, Mill Hill, Edgware, Stanmore, Hatch End, Pinner and Bushey.

Have you thought of trying AJR's Meals-on-Wheels? We already supply over 200 people, including those members who take home their meals after attending the Day Centre. Call or speak to Susie

Kaufman on 0171 328 0208 to discuss any way in which we might be able to help you or another member. In the cold, dark days of winter especially, a well-cooked, nutritious hot meal can make your day. Call us if you would like to try a sample menu



Head Chef Jeffrey Heywood prepares Meals-on-Wheels in the AJR's spotless kosher kitchens.

A treat for the ears

It was billed as the Day Centre's Year-End concert. Deciding that I deserved a break I took off my green eyeshade and sauntered down Cleve Road.

In Fred Rosner (bass/baritone) I found a man after my own heart. Just as I have resisted the temptation to turn *AJR Information* into a tabloid, so he refuses to go pop: every item in his programme stems from the opera repertoire.

Opera, as millions of Italians testify, is a far from highbrow genre. Most of Fred Rosner's arias – especially the spine-tingling Slander Song from *The Barber of Seville* – had me tapping my feet. In a somewhat different mode the excerpt from Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* was projected with such verve that while the eye only beheld one singer and one pianist (the versatile Geoffrey Whitworth) the ear could imagine the whole panoply of the Bolshoi cast, chorus and orchestra. Suffice

it to say that I left the Year-End concert with a spring – as well as Spring – in my step. RG

Manchester AJR group founded

Fifty former Jewish refugees living in the Manchester area met recently at the Morris Feinmann Home to discuss the potential benefits to them of a Manchester AJR group. Following their discussion it was decided overwhelmingly that they wished to establish such a group in Manchester and some ten people volunteered to get the group off the ground.

The meeting, which was called by Werner Lachs and advertised in the *Jewish Telegraph*, *Jewish Chronicle* and *AJR Information*, was addressed by Ernest David, Director of the AJR. Both Werner Lachs and Ernest David were interviewed on BBC Manchester Radio's *It's Kosher* about the formation and possible activities of the new AJR group and the number of refugees who were living in Manchester and the North West of England.

February 18th meeting

Special guest Bill Williams – local historian who has made a special study of Manchester's Jewish community.

Details from Werner Lachs, 0161-773 4091

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Monday 5 February

Tuesday 13 February

Wednesday 21 February

Thursday 29 February

Monday 4 March

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Message from the Director

It is hardly surprising that there is more and more violence on the streets, not only in this country but in most other countries too (and that as I learned recently, there are more armed conflicts in more countries than ever before) when one reads how war criminals manage to live out their years peacefully and quite unworried by any prospect of punishment.

By now, I guess I should not be surprised by the story revealed in *The Times* obituary of 4 January 1996 on Arthur Rudolph, an associate of Wernher von Braun whom the Americans also spirited to the USA after the war to work on the Saturn V rocket programme which made possible the landing on the Moon in 1969. For his work in the USA Rudolph received the Distinguished Service Medal and the Congressional Medal of Honor.

However, during the war Rudolph was the production manager at the Dora-Mittelbau factory which was producing V2 rockets deep in the Harz Mountains. I will not raise your blood pressure by repeating a description of the conditions in that underground factory, but suffice it to say that in 1984 the US Office of Special Investigations had incontrovertible evidence of Rudolph's involvement in the atrocities. He was not prosecuted in America, but renounced his US citizenship and went back to Germany where he settled in Hamburg and – surprise, surprise – the German government could find no charges to bring against him. So he lived out his years till he died peacefully at the age of 89.

What is particularly galling is that here again is an instance of a war criminal, living in honour and undoubtedly receiving his German pension in respect of the years he worked quite willingly for the Nazis, while the slave workers under his control are, according to the principle enunciated by a tribunal of the Hamburg insurance authority, not entitled to pensions because they were not in a voluntary employer/employee relationship.

No wonder that when the youth of today look around for moral leadership, they draw the inescapable conclusion that they will prosper from doing evil. After all, why should they be different from the governments that are supposed to lead them?

□ Ernest David

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Afternoon entertainment –

FEBRUARY 1996

- | | | |
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| Thursday | 1 | CONCERT – CABARET – Primrose Powell (Soprano) accompanied by Andrew Wells (Piano) |
| Sunday | 4 | DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 5 | SYMPHONY IN FEBRUARY – Louise Schorn (Soprano) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 6 | OFFERINGS FROM AOTEAROA – Shelley Alexander (Soprano) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano) |
| Wednesday | 7 | THE MUSIC MAKERS – Elizabeth Winton & Ray Parfrey (Piano) |
| Thursday | 8 | PAUL MOSBY (The Oboe Man) with Pianist HISAYO SHIMIZO |
| Sunday | 11 | DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 12 | CHILDREN FROM THE LONDON SUZUKI MUSIC GROUP – Directed by Jane O'Connor |
| Tuesday | 13 | GOLDEN GREATS OF JEWISH MUSIC – Nina Gottesman (Guitar) |
| Wednesday | 14 | ST. VALENTINE'S DAY – SONGS & MUSIC OF LOVE FROM AROUND THE WORLD – Katinka Seiner accompanied by Daphne Lewis (Piano) with Guest Artist Laszlo Easton (Violin) |
| Thursday | 15 | SHOWTIME AT THE AJR – Amanda Palmer (Soprano) accompanied by Andrew Wills (Piano) |
| Sunday | 18 | CONCERT BY THE HENDON STRING ORCHESTRA – Conducted by Roy Budden |

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|-----------|----|--|
| Monday | 19 | BRIGHT & HAPPY – Musical Entertainment by Jules Bright & Happy Branston |
| Tuesday | 20 | THE GEOFFREY STRUM & HELEN BLAKE DUO |
| Wednesday | 21 | SANG u. KLANG – Angela & Nicholas Arratoon – Diana & Elizabeth Legroux accompanied by Maurice Hermele. Guest Artists Adam Kolczynski & Geoffrey Yeung |
| Thursday | 22 | A MOVABLE FEAST – Melanie Reid (Soprano) accompanied by Rianka Bouwmeester (Piano) |
| Sunday | 25 | DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 26 | THE BEST OF THE TRINITY DUO – Amanda Palmer (Soprano) accompanied by Marek Dabrowski (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 27 | LOVE MERRY-GO-ROUND – Mona Kirianova (Soprano) with Piano accompaniment |
| Wednesday | 28 | THE INTERNATIONAL DUO – Jaehong Yim (Violin) accompanied by Michael Schreider (Piano) |
| Thursday | 29 | FROM BRITTEN & WEIL TO GERSHWIN & FOLK SONGS – Elizabeth Fried (Soprano) accompanied by Marek Dabrowski (Piano) |
| MARCH | | |
| Sunday | 3 | DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 4 | SONGS FOR SPRING – Prizewinning students from the Royal Academy of Music. Emma Bell (Soprano) and Rahel Wagner (Mezzo) accompanied by Clara Taylor (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 5 | SARAH SWEETING & GEOFFREY WHITWORTH IN HARMONY |
| Wednesday | 6 | SHADES OF PALM COURT – Patrick Kilbride (Violin) accompanied by Jennifer Hunt (Piano) |
| Thursday | 7 | WELL-KNOWN CLASSICAL MUSIC FOR A MARCH AFTERNOON – Jenny Ewington (Soprano) accompanied by Andrew Pink (Piano) |

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anniversary

Gabi and Ronnie Stent. Congratulations on your 60th (Diamond) Wedding Anniversary on February 9th. Best wishes from Steffi, Monica, Angela and their families and all your friends - a record to be proud of!

Deaths

Singer. Dr. Leo Singer, born Prague 1904, died Ashted, Surrey, 1st December 1995 at the age of 91. A chartered accountant who came to England in 1939, he left a considerable bequest to further the work of the AJR.

Nussbaum. Alice Nussbaum, née Schindler, Berlin. Died 30th January 1994. Deeply mourned and missed by her husband Helmut.

Schlakman. Helen Schlakman, née Nussbaum, USA. Died 1st February 1995. Husband Stephen, children Julia and Philip, and father Helmut will miss her for ever.

Dachinger. Hugo 'Puck' Dachinger, died 2nd December 1995 at the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead. Deeply grieved by his children Peran and Miri, and missed by all who knew and loved him.

Teitelbaum. Miss Elsa Teitelbaum, born 3rd November 1905, died peacefully in her sleep at Barnet General Hospital on 17th November 1995. Deeply mourned by Gloria, Arthur, Susannah and Tanya Aptowitz, family and friends.

Wells. Henrietta Wells. Born 6 December 1909, Hamburg, died 18 December 1995, London. A diligent worker at the Daleham Gardens Day Centre and a good friend to many.

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes



The National Portrait Gallery's David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa (until 7 July) is a fascinating account of the explorer's life, and also examines the activities of missionaries, hunters and fellow explorers in the early 19th century.

Frederick Leighton (1830-1896), one of the most eminent Victorian painters and distinguished President of the Royal Academy, is the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at the Royal Academy (until 21 April).

Also at the Royal Academy (until 23 June) is an exhibition Gustave Caillebotte, (1848-1894), the unknown Impressionist. About 50 pictures will be shown.

Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929) was the creator of the famous Ballets Russes. A major exhibition focusing on his work is at the Barbican Art Gallery (until 14 April).

Charles Spencer will be giving an illustrated lecture Bakst and the Ballets Russes at the Ben Uri Gallery on 21 February to coincide with the major Diaghilev exhibition at the Barbican.

The Ben Uri Annual Picture Fair will take place on Sunday, 24 March. Tickets are now available from the gallery and the pictures will be on view on Sunday, 17 March (2-5pm) and on Monday-Thursday, 18-21 March (10am-5pm).

In Trust for the Nation, paintings from National Trust Houses is at the National Gallery, sponsored by Barclays Bank plc, (until 10 March). Some wonderful pictures are on show, many rarely seen.

Those who have not yet done so, should



Mrs Garnett by Thomas Barber

make a point of seeing the superb Emil Nolde exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. It continues until 25 February.

The Etz Chayim Gallery and Arts Centre of the Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue is showing (until 18 March) My Mother, My People. Artists participating include our old friend Ruth Taylor Jacobson who now works mainly in stained glass, but is also showing etchings and collage, and the painter Marlene Rolfe, whose work was seen at the Ben Uri Art Gallery in 1993 □

SB's Column

German actors - then and now. In a new impetus to theatre life after the First World War personalities emerged whose gifts were ebullience, accentuated virility and poetic declamation. Among these actors was the



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universally acclaimed Alexander Moissi, Salzburg's first 'Jedermann'; he also starred in plays by Gerhart Hauptmann and Tolstoy, as well as in Sheriff's *Journey's End* (*Die andere Seite*). Albert Basermann, Eugen Klöpfer and Paul Hartmann likewise had many admirers. A total change occurred after the last war: more natural speech, a more conversational tone. Nowadays Ulrich Mühe and Gert Voss are much in demand in Berlin, Munich and Vienna; the latter also won massive critical acclaim in the title role in *Anthony and Cleopatra* at Edinburgh in 1994.

Ibsen - again and again. The lasting popularity of Henry Ibsen, most of whose plays were written over 100 years ago, was recently demonstrated in Germany as well as Britain: Munich revived *Hedda Gabler* while, Berlin staged *Ghosts*, *Klein Eyolf* and *Peer Gynt*, the latter (in a very different interpretation to that of the Barbican). In London, too, the Haymarket's *Master Builder* found an excellent echo from critics and audiences alike.

Birthday. The Austrian actor, Karl Paryla, has turned 90. During the thirties he acted at Vienna's 'Josefstadt', where he met and married Hortense Raky. After a long spell in East Germany the couple returned to Vienna, where their sons Stefan Paryla-Raky and Nikolaus Paryla are acting at the Josefstadt once more.

Obituary. Towards the end of 1995 the Austrian writer Hermann Langbein died at the age of 84. A survivor of Auschwitz about which he wrote several books, he devoted decades of his life exclusively to countering the so called 'Auschwitz lie' □

Refugee jokes

Pioneer Corps

Corporal to member of his squad: "Go and clean your billet." Private: "I don't care Corporal".

Corporal: "Of course you will *kehr*, with a broom you will *kehr*."

Upstairs/downstairs

A refugee couple went on a London bus which was nearly full. Consequently the wife was allowed downstairs and the husband sent upstairs. The conductor approached the wife for her fare. Realising that she had no money on her, she said "My lord is above." The cockney conductor replied "Course 'e is love, but you still 'ave to pay!"

Both these jokes were sent in by subscribers. The editor would appreciate similar contributions from other readers.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS –
FEBRUARY 1996**

- Tues 6 Great Opera Singers 1905 to 1930s: JACS, Martin Grahame. 2-4pm
- Tues 6 Political Leaders in the Modern Era: Wiener Library, Prof. Hugh Freeman FRCPsych, FFPHM. 6.30pm. £2.
- Mon 12 Tamara Wyss (member of PEN) discusses her film based on memories of her German-Jewish grandmother. Club '43. 8pm.
- Tues 13 The United Nations Today: JACS, Percy Gourgey MBE. 2-4pm
- Mon 19 Jewish Women in Philanthropy. Susan Taylor, University of Southampton. Club '43. 8pm
- Tues 30 Rosalind Preston, Vice-President Board of Deputies. 'The Jewish Community Under Threat.' JACS. 2-4pm
- Thurs 22 Jews in the History of Berlin: Prof. Reinhard Rürup (Berlin). University of Sussex. Tel. Prof. Timms on 01273 678 495.
- Sun 25 Was Peace with Hitler ever an Option?: AJR/Yad

- Vashe, Prof. Richard Overy, King's College, London. Logan Hall, London University Inst. of Education. 3pm. Reserved seats £3 from AJR (SAE please).
- Sun 25 Schidlof Quartet at the Sternberg Centre. 7.30pm. Booking at £5 to £10.
- Mon 26 Receiving Foreign Visitors. Rodney Mantle (postponed from December). Club '43. 8pm
- Tues 27 Anglo-Israel Association, a talk by AIA Director Dr. H. Stellman. JACS. 2-4pm


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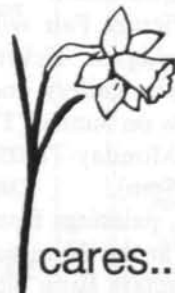
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Fog in Channel – continent cut off

I arrived here from Vienna a lifetime ago, but the shock of English insularity lingers still. Nobody I talked to in those far-off days had heard of Duke Leopold of Babenberg, who avenged a slight received during the Crusades by capturing and imprisoning the homeward-bound Richard the Lion-Heart until the King's minstrel Blondel located and ransomed him. (In view of this ignorance I was less than surprised when the musical *Blondel* flopped at the Old Vic a few years back.) Apropos of musicals, the coincidence that my (future) wife arrived here from Vienna when the Johann Strauss movie *The Great Waltz* was packing the cinemas led to her being asked what it felt like having to wear dresses and skirts instead of crinolines.

But the past, as they say even outside refugee circles, is another country. Today the Anglocentric parochialism that appalls me has switched focus from the Plantagenet-Babenberg powerplay to Windsor-Habsburg parallels.

In my extensive reading of the British press I have noticed only one solitary mention – in a Letter to the Editor – of the astonishing resemblance Princess Diana bears to the Empress Elisabeth (Sissy), the wife of Franz Joseph.

The latter, too, was beautiful, unhappily married and bulimic. She furthermore 'worked out' regularly either on gymnastic apparatus (still displayed at the Hofburg) or by furious participation in equestrian sports. She also craved escape from the constraints of court life. Last, but not least, she, too, became the subject of lively gossip (Her Captain Hewitt, so to speak, was the Hungarian Foreign Minister Count Andrassy).

The amazing thing, though, about the Princess Diana phenomenon is that she not only calls to mind the Empress Elisabeth but also her son Crown Prince Rudolf. (I am not here referring to Rudolf's extra-marital amours, but his intervention in politics.)

Troubled by the tensions within the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire the Crown Prince published articles criticising his father's status quo-ridden government in the columns of the liberal *Neue Wiener Tagblatt*, whose editor Moritz Szepps, incidentally, was Jewish. Though these attacks on the government were any-

mous the identity of their author did not long remain a secret among gossip-addicted members of the k & k Establishment.

A century after Rudolf, Princess Diana feels she need have no qualms about attacking government policy on the homeless in public alongside Labour's Shadow Home Secretary.

Time will tell whether she will turn into a fully-fledged Labour sympathiser in the way Rudolf was an (albeit secret) Liberal sympathiser. Be that as it may, one thing can be taken as read: if the English are not particularly *weltoffen*, they are not much given to melodrama either. Easily alarmed readers may rest assured that, for all her superficial resemblance to Rudolf, Princess Diana will spare the Queen a replay of the drama of Mayerling.

□RG

Great Germans

For 1996 the Federal Government's Information Office has brought out a beautifully produced illustrated desk calendar devoted to the theme of great Germans and their home towns.

It features luminaries like Bach, Bismarck, Dürer and Hegel (though Einstein is unaccountably left out). Even so no fewer than 11 of the 52 listed 'immortals' were Jewish: The critic Walter Benjamin, the physicist Max Born, the chemist Paul Ehrlich, the actress Therese Giehse, the poet Heinrich Heine, the film director Ernst Lubitsch, the architect Erich Mendelsohn, the composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the writer Anna Seghers, the nun/philosopher Edith Stein and the satirist Kurt Tucholsky.

So far so good. But, as always with matters German, doubt creeps in. Was it really necessary to include Ernst Moritz Arndt – so notorious an antisemite that pupils at the Arndt Gymnasium, Bonn, petitioned for a name change – or August Thyssen – whose fortune bankrolled the rising Nazi Party – included among the 'great Germans'?

□RG

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Potato Ramekins

Perfect for supper – or lunch – on a tray, accompanied by a good crisp and crunchy green salad. You can use either one smallish ramekin per person or a larger gratin dish like one measuring 6 by 6 inches or its round equivalent.

butter for the dish
1lb (225g) potatoes
oil or butter for frying
salt, pepper, paprika

pinch powdered rosemary and marjoram
3 – 4 fl. oz (140ml) double cream or crème fraîche
2 eggs
pinch nutmeg and mace

Butter the gratin dish or the ramekins. Peel and slice the potatoes and fry the slices lightly on both sides in butter or oil. Lift out slices with a slotted spoon and dust them with salt, pepper, paprika, rosemary and marjoram. Arrange the potato slices in the dish – or dishes – and moisten with the stock which should just about cover the potatoes. Cover with foil and put the dish into the oven at Gas Mark 5 (375F, 190C) for about 30 minutes, until the potatoes are just soft – by which time most of the liquid will have been absorbed. Whisk together cream – or crème fraîche – eggs, mace and nutmeg and a small pinch of salt and if there is any liquid left with the potatoes, whisk that in as well. Pour over the potatoes and return the dish to the oven – uncovered – at Gas mark 7 (425F, 220c) until all puffed up and nicely brown on top. Serve at once □

AJR's fame spreads

The following are excerpts from a full-page article in the Budapest-based German language paper 'Neue Pester Lloyd'.

Im Jahre 1942 gegründet, sorgt der Verband weitgehend für seine Mitglieder. Mit deren zunehmendem Alter ist allmählich die soziale Versorgung der Seniorinnen und Senioren zum grössten Problem geworden.

Ein 'Day Centre' (Tages-Zentrum), geleitet von Sylvia Matus, besteht schon seit vielen Jahren und in jüngster Zeit hat es sein Domizil im neuen Paul-Balint-Haus erhalten.

Das Zentrum ist zu unterschiedlichen Zeiten an fünf Tagen in der Woche geöffnet. Fast täglich gibt es hier kulturelle Veranstaltungen und für alle, die es selber nicht mehr schaffen können, wird durch den Verband ein entsprechender Transport organisiert. Viele Mitglieder opfern aber auch gerne ihre Freizeit und stellen ihr Auto zu diesem Zweck zur Verfügung. Nach Auskunft von Sylvia Matus hat das Zentrum eine Kapazität von etwa 70 Plätzen; regelmässig nehmen im Durchschnitt bis

zu 40 Mitglieder an den Veranstaltungen teil. Ausserdem gibt es hier auch noch eine Bibliothek, eine Garderobe und eine Einkaufsmöglichkeit. Beliebt sind auch die gemeinsamen Ausflüge an die See.

Der Verband hat heute 3,700 Mitglieder, obwohl das nur etwa die Hälfte der einstigen Mitgliederstärke zum Ausdruck bringt.

Ein öffentliches Konzert wird alljährlich in einer der Prestige-Hallen Londons veranstaltet; dieses Jahr spielte ein Streichquartett. Trotz der 600 Plätze, die in der Halle sind, blieb kein Sitz frei.

Etwa 90 Prozent der Verbandsmitglieder stammen aus Deutschland oder Österreich. Aber auch von den anderen – unter denen es viele Ungarn sowie einige Tschechen und Polen gibt – sprechen die meisten deutsch, – und viele von ihnen können sich noch an den alten 'Pester Lloyd' erinnern.

Der ehemalige Geschichtspräsident, Herr Grünberger, hat u.a. ein Buch unter dem Titel 'A Social History of the Third Reich' verfasst, das auch in deutscher, polnischer und spanischer Sprache erschienen ist. Herr Grünberger ist seit 1988 Redakteur der Verbandszeitschrift *AJR Information*, die übrigens vor zwei Jahren ihr 50-jähriges Bestehen feiern konnte □

SEARCH NOTICES

Desider Klein, Liese Lotte Klein (née Frohlich) and Miriam Klein. Last heard of in Maida Vale and Adelaide Road, Swiss Cottage, London, England in 1945. Being sought by relative Mr. Cohen of 25 Chasewood Park, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex, England. Tel: 0181 864 6888.

German historian is looking for the descendants of **Eduard Bernstein** and his stepchildren **Ernst Schattner** (1879-1944) and **Käte 'Kitty' Schattner-Chajes** (1882-1925). I am aware that the grandchildren of Eduard Bernstein were Grace and Marion Schattner and Hella and Eva Chajes. Please write to Dirk Evers, Fritz-Lang-Strasse 22, 14480 Potsdam, FRG.

Frieda Badrian (née Brisntzer). Kurt Walter Badrian wishes to make contact with anyone who may have known his mother Frieda Badrian or any other member of the Brisntzer or Badrian family. Please write c/o CB Harris, 30 Cheviot Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 4FU.

Mia Annaliese Ritter: born 17th October 1926 in Berlin. Arrived on Kindertransport in December 1938 and lived in Walm Lane, Willesden. Sought by Selma Shrank on behalf of Martin Glass of Jerusalem. Any information most gratefully received. Please contact Selma Shrank, 33 Northway London NW11 6PB or telephone 0181 458 8393.

Alfred Ernst (Ernest) Glogau. Information on other surviving relatives is being sought by his daughter, formerly Amanda Bernadette Glogau. Alfred Glogau was born in Vienna in 1928, came to England by Kindertransport in 1938, lived in Camden Road, London and worked as a draughtsman in 1947, and died in 1964. His daughter, then two years old, was adopted by the Wright family of High Wycombe, Bucks. in 1968. Please write to Mrs. A. Stephens (Glogau) 3 New Barn, Delph, Nr. Oldham OL3 5TN.

Elisabeth Janstein: born 1893 in Iglau, Moravia, emigrated from Austria in 1939, and died 31.12.1944 in Winchcombe. Dr. Ursula Seeber is seeking friends and photos, letters and unpublished materials. Please contact her at Osterreichische Exilbibliothek im Literaturhaus, Seidengasse 13, A-1070 Wien. Tel: +43/1/526 20 44-20. Fax: +43/1/526 20 44-30.

One Man's War

Part 6

Capture

I found myself high up in the Greek mountain wilderness bareheaded with out any personal belongings of my own. No coat against the bitter cold of the night, no cigarettes, no food rations, nothing. I had the feeling of a person who stands in front of his burnt-out house in his pyjamas, but, at least he could have found a bank and a Marks & Spencer round the corner.

I never felt so vulnerable in all my life. But, funnily, the first thought that occurred to me at that moment was the loss of my gold-plated nail clippers, a most useful barmitzvah present. When one is young the thought of death, which was close from many directions, does not readily occur; my only concern at that moment was how I was going to cut my nails in the future.

But, as it so happened, the loss of my coat - not of the nail clippers - was enormously important for aspects of my life in the months to come.

Near the end of the day we were quite exhausted and rested for a while, and when we got up again to follow the mountain path in single file, our Greek

villager had disappeared. Perhaps he grew afraid that once we could see the end of the journey ahead of us, instead of giving him the second half of the agreed amount of money, we might kill him off and retrieve the first instalment. So we had to carry on with the help of the compass, but as it was downhill now we knew that the coast could not be far away. As soon as we passed little fields and olive groves we also noticed that we were not the first in this bay. Other troops, who must have come over different routes, had commandeered all our promised fishing vessels days before and left lots of diverse war paraphernalia lying about.

I started to look around, picked up a few bits and pieces and a rifle, when I saw a motionless body lying in the shade under a tree. I viewed him for a few minutes, but couldn't notice any blood or wound. I could not ascertain if the body was breathing, but I could not fail to notice that he had a beautiful great-coat on, which was of pre-war make. He must have been a professional dragoon or gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery as he had the brass insignia of that regiment on his epaulettes and he also had the L/Cpl. stripes on both sides of his coat sleeves. Eventually I touched him with my boot, noticed that he was not stiff but there was no response otherwise. That's when I gently rolled him over, took his great-coat off

him and found two empty whisky bottles.

My friends, in the meantime, detected a sizeable wooden boat, anchored some distance away in the bay. Two chaps, good swimmers, undressed to their underwear, to swim out and pull the boat back to shore. However, they soon returned, ashen-faced and empty handed. They reported that the boat was riddled with bullet holes, and that inside, half filled with water, were the bloated bodies of two high ranking officers moving with the swell of the sea. They must have tried their getaway long before us, been spotted by German planes and strafed to death.

We were totally exhausted, had to rest and while nobody mentioned the words it must have been in everybody's mind: what now? There seemed no way out (I learned in later years what enormous amount of physical strength the body can muster if there is hope.)

I sat under an olive tree and must have dozed off for a while when I was woken by a commotion nearby which sounded like: "They are here - they are here". The next moment I saw a German soldier with a swastika painted on one side of his helmet, sitting astride a motorbicycle which had a small machine-gun pointing in my direction. The Germans with their efficient preparation for war, of course, found the ideal mode of transport for this kind of terrain. We were surrounded by hundreds of bikes. The Wehrmacht soldier demanded that I hand over my rifle and ammunition and also a hand-grenade, which I didn't possess. He must have been as agitated as myself. He spoke in a strong German dialect and his voice broke frequently with emotion. He then led me a short distance to an assembly point for all captured Britishers.

To be continued

□ H P Weiner

Beacon girls' reunion

In a year of reunion and anniversaries, our girls' hostel reunion last September was a happy and sentimental occasion.

Thanks to Di and John Cullen, the new owners of our old hostel, The Beacon near Tunbridge Wells, about 60 people including old girls, husbands, families and friends attended. Most came from around Britain, two from Germany and seven from the USA.

I helped with the groundwork by tracing girls with whom we had lost contact, and informing them of the reunion. But the Cullens did the hard work of organising this nostalgic event and contacting the local media, which showed great interest.

They also staged a well-arranged mini-exhibition in one of our ex-dormitories, from photos and memorabilia sent in by the "girls". One section of the exhibition dealt with the history of The Beacon itself, which reaches its centenary this year. Originally a private house, it was used as a hostel for refugees from the Spanish Civil War before being taken over by

Bloomsbury House.

Having flown in at the age of seven with a group of children from Prague in March, 1939, I was transferred to The Beacon in mid-1941.

There I found an established community of girls, some of whom had come with various Kindertransports from Germany and Austria and had been there since 1938. We forged close friendships and most of us have stayed in touch.

There was a festive feeling as we renewed acquaintance, some with people not seen for fifty years. Those of us who had the energy even went on a nostalgic ramble through the beautiful grounds where we had spent many a happy hour playing as children.

One of the touches that made the day extra special was the presence of some local people who were part of our childhood: boys from Rustall who used to come to our dances, and girls who went to school and the Girl Guides with us. Their continuing friendship made it a truly memorable occasion.

□ Vera Barron (née Altmann)



Fabrik Aktion memorial

Several months ago a sculpture commemorating the *Fabrik Aktion* of February 1943 was unveiled on the site of the former Jewish welfare office, Rosenstrasse Berlin Mitte.

The Fabrik Aktion, the round-up of the last 2,000 Jewish forced labourers left in Berlin because they lived in mixed marriages, was ordered by Goebbels, Gauleiter of Berlin, who wanted to give Hitler a *judenrein* capital as a birthday present. When their husbands failed to return from work the gentile wives made enquiries and were told that their spouses were held in Rosenstrasse. They made their way there individually and soon hundreds had congregated. Refused entry, they waited. The Gestapo believed that the cold winter's night would soon drive them home, but they stayed on. In the morning some of them had to go to work, and others joined them. Some were accompanied by their brothers on leave from the front and in army uniform. The women, encouraged by numbers, started to chant, "*Gebt uns unsere Männer!*" The SS threatened them with machine guns. The soldiers in uniform shouted back: "Cowards! We fight at the front and you threaten defenceless women!" This disconcerted the SS and they did not shoot. Several days passed and still the women refused to leave. The authorities redirected traffic and closed the nearby railway station Börse so as not to alert the general public to this demonstration. The Gestapo consulted Goebbels. Judging that the machine gunning of almost 2,000 Aryan women in the middle of town would hardly improve the Berliners' morale, just after Stalingrad and a heavy RAF raid, he ordered: "Release the men. We'll deal with them later." Later never came and they all survived the war.

Twenty-five men already had been sent to Auschwitz before the order for their release became known. Their wives were not prepared to take this lying down. They laid siege to the Gestapo headquarters at Burgstrasse and asked the Gestapo chief how he could act against superior orders seeing that Goebbels had ordered the release of these men? This struck a raw nerve. For generations it had been drilled into Prussian officialdom that obedience to orders was a matter of life and death. What was he to do? The unbeliev-

able happened. He ordered the prisoners to be returned to Berlin. They had already been tattooed with their number in Auschwitz and been told of their fate.

On their return to Berlin it was too dangerous to release them among the general population, as ordinary Germans had been kept in the dark about the purpose of Auschwitz. They were sent to a work camp in Gross-Beeren, near Berlin where their wives could see them daily. They too survived the war.



Sculpture commemorating the salvation of 2,000 Jewish Berliners in 1943.

Inge Hunzinger, the sculptress of the monument hails from the former DDR.

Reading about these women, she felt she had to recount this event in stone, but their protest did not fit into the Communist concept of anti-Nazi resistance, and the sculptures remained in Inge Hunzinger's backgarden in Koepenick. Only when the city was unified was it decided to erect the statues in the very place where the events had taken place.

Senator Wolfgang Nagel gave a moving address at the unveiling. He said, "The dockers of Amsterdam struck in protest against the deportation of Dutch Jews, the Danes organised a mass exodus to Sweden, the Italians hid Jews in their thousands, the Bulgarian people prevented the deportation of their Jews, but where were we Germans? It has been alleged that resistance to Nazi terror was useless and would fail, but these women defied death and showed what could be done."

Among the large audience I met Friedrich Hossbach, whose father had commanded an army corps in East Prussia which he withdrew against Hitler's orders to avoid another Stalingrad. He said to me: "Yes, my father was very concerned about his soldiers, but what about the Jews and the Poles? I have to live with this for the rest of my life." Through his efforts the former Steglitzer Synagogue is now a listed building and a glass monument giving the names and addresses of all Steglitz deportees was erected in the main square.

For me this was a very emotional visit. Not for the first time I was struck by the prevailing spirit of remorse which in the end will triumph over the wish to forget.

□Peter Proger

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