

# AJR Information

Volume LI No. 3

March 1996

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Don't miss . . .

**Vanished world**  
Martha Blend p4

**Figures leaping from a vase**  
Richard Grunberger p12

**Reporting Israel**  
Ronald Channing p14

## Monstrous assertion

**T**he Waffen-SS was part of the Wehrmacht and therefore deserves the same public esteem as the latter. Thus spake Haider in his fiefdom Carinthia last October. He had obviously failed to notice that the immediate postwar myth of a chivalrous Wehrmacht has meanwhile been shattered by revelations of its massive involvement in massacres. But this is as nothing compared to his assertion that the perpetrators of Lidice, Babi Yar, Oradour, Marzabotto and Kragujevac deserve public esteem. Truly – *Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima* □

Reflections on Austria past and present

## March of history

In Ancient Rome the Ides of March sounded the death knell of the Republic and the beginning of Caesar worship. In Austrian history not one, but two climacterics occurred in the month of March. March 1848 was sufficient of a turning point for the entire preceding period to be known as *Vor-März* (pre-March). March 1938, of course, saw Austria wiped off the map of Europe. We therefore thought it appropriate to give over a large part of the March issue to that country.

It must be borne in mind from the outset that what we call Austria existed in two incarnations – first as the sizable Habsburg Empire, and then as the much-shrunken post-1918 Republic. The polyglot Habsburg state had been so ethnically diverse that the Emperor's Declaration of War in 1914 had to be published in a dozen different languages.

During the late nineteenth century upsurge of nationalism the Jews were the only imperial subjects with undivided loyalty to the Habsburg crown; even the Austrian *staatsvolk* became, via Schönerer, infected with Pan-Germanism.

In 1918 the age-old Habsburg Empire broke up into modern nation states. In an Austria ethnically defined as German (*Deutsch-Österreich*) the Jews were stigmatized as an outgroup; equally deplorable was the political intransigence which pushed the two main parties, the Catholics and Socialists, down the slippery slope into civil war in 1934.

Four years later, during the Anschluss, many Aus-

trians showed themselves capable of feats of barbarism that aroused envy among German Nazis. Viennese delight in Jew-baiting helped accelerate the Berlin-directed drive towards the Shoah – in the implementation of which Austrians participated in disproportionate numbers.

The Austrians' shared guilt was further compounded by their bland postwar self-exculpation (for which the Allies' illconceived Moscow Declaration of 1943 had provided an all-purpose fig leaf). Denazification became a sad joke when the two parties that had fought the civil war twenty years earlier competed with each other in soliciting the votes of former Nazis.

Prosperity resulting from the country's neutral stance in the Cold War further helped muffle the voice of conscience in a country apostrophized as an 'island of the blessed' (*Insel der Seeligen*).

But a lie cannot receive credence forever. Several things happened in the early nineties: Chancellor Vranitzky admitted Austrian co-responsibility for Nazi crimes, a fund for additional compensation to the victims was set up, and – last but not least – Jörg Haider's hitherto irresistible climb to power ran into the buffers.

This check to 'Hitler's grandson' undoubtedly owed more than a little to the country's admission into the European Union. A growing number of Austrians realised that integration into the democratic EU could not be reconciled with neo-Nazi participation in government.

One could justifiably talk of the country's history coming full circle: Austria was a fairly civilised entity (and, thanks partly to the Jewish impact, a power house of culture) in its multinational incarnation; today, obliged to pay due regard to the wishes of her European partners she shows signs of climbing out of the pit she dug for herself by sharing in, and then glossing over, the greatest crime in history □



Glenda Jackson MP, centre, joins Gretel Lefko, Kate Donaty, Gertrude Stewart and Alice Jacobi at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre's 10th birthday celebrations.

## Profile

## Heine's QC

Fritz Hellendal was born in the last peacetime years of Wilhelminian Germany. He grew up in Düsseldorf, where his gynaecologist father ran a nursing home. (The father, though only a residual Jew, had passed up the chance of an academic career because it would have involved conversion.)

Fritz showed not dissimilar strength of character when, aged sixteen, he contradicted his *Gymnasium* director over a most contentious issue: whether Düsseldorf should erect a statue to its most famous son, Heinrich Heine. When the headmaster asserted that Heine had lacked patriotism the youthful counsel for the defence riposted with a quote from the poet's *Wintermärchen* 'I am ready to shed my blood for a Germany that has hoisted the black-red-gold (i.e. liberal) flag'.

Sad to relate this irrefutable riposte failed to dent the headmaster's – and the City Council's – rightwing convictions. Five years later the majority of Germans were similarly convinced. *Man zählte* 1933 and Fritz was hard pushed to finish his law studies before being kicked out of university. He somehow got his degree – but England, to which an uncle helped him emigrate in 1934, did not recognise German legal qualifications, so Fritz had to set to and go through the entire study course for the second time. When he finished war broke out. From 1940 on he served in the Pioneer Corps, an experience on which he looks back with very mixed feelings.

On the other hand wartime was also when he met and married his wife, a Montessori-trained teacher. After the war he went back to the law and by the sixties he had an office in Holborn from which he eventually transferred to North-West London.

His work, which in part had to do with restitution, occasionally took him back to Düsseldorf. There he learnt in 1968 that the local medical academy had been elevated to university status. He also met one or two local Heine enthusiasts with whom he launched a citizens' initiative to have the new university named in Heine's honour.

Astonishingly this long overdue homage to a poet who ranks alongside Goethe in



Fritz Hellendal

the German pantheon met with opposition yet again. The chief nay-sayer was University Rektor Diemer, a Heidegger disciple who speciously objected to a 'cult of personality'. However, by this time Fritz Hellendal had got the bit between his teeth. He alerted Western journals – not least *AJR Information* – and politicians like Michael Foot to the shenanigans in German academe.

Finally, an incredible 60 years after he had first crossed swords with his headmaster, Fritz Hellendal had the satisfaction of seeing Düsseldorf name its university after his lifelong idol.

This long-delayed triumph – and the more personal satisfaction of being a step-grandfather – buoy him up now that age and uncertain health have forced him to withdraw more and more from legal affairs. □ RG

## Austro-Jewish Parnassus

Before the Anschluss Jews formed three per cent of the Austrian population, but – *pace* Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler, Stefan Zweig, Franz Werfel, Karl Kraus and Hermann Broch – supplied over half of the country's leading writers.

The Nazi murder of every third Austrian Jew and the flight of the rest drastically altered the postwar literary constellation. Even so a handful of Jews – novelists Robert Neumann and Hilde Spiel, poets Paul Celan and Erich Fried,

critics Fredrich Torberg and Hans Waigl – remained prominent in Austrian letters till at least the 1970s.

Now by the mid-1990s, with a mere 10,000 Jews (mainly postwar immigrants) marooned among seven million Austrians, one could have expected the Jewish presence on the Austrian Parnassus to have dwindled to nothing.

And it has indeed dwindled – but not to nothing! At this year's Frankfurt Book Fair the focus theme was Austria, and to maximise their sales opportunities Austrian publishers displayed the work – and frequently the person – of 120 writers.

Of that grand total exactly ten were Jewish – albeit of widely different background and age. Exactly half were quite elderly and had begun their career in pre-Anschluss days. This group comprised the internationally renowned art historian Ernst Gombrich, topflight film director Billy Wilder, playwright-cum-theatre-director Georg Tabori, and the cabaret artists Georg Kreisler and Gerhard Bronner.

A second, considerably younger, group – Erica Fischer, Elizabeth Spira, Peter Sichrovsky – was made up of children whose parents had returned to Austria from wartime exile in Great Britain.

This left two writers whose early survival had itself constituted a miracle: Elfriede Gerstl, a child U-Boat, and Robert Schindel, a wartime baby born to Jewish underground fighters disguised as *Fremdarbeiter*.

All this may not add up to very much, however. Even if it no longer holds true that – *pace* Burgomaster Lueger's henchman Bielohawlek's dictum '*Kultur is wos a Jud vom andern abschreibt*' (culture is what one Jew cribs from the next) – we still have some claim to being the People of the BOOK. □ Richard Grunberger

### 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**

Please phone: 0171 328 0208 for reservations

As there is limited space, regretfully wheelchairs cannot be accommodated

6pm for 6.30pm – £18 per person

## Role-less Royce

If only I was called Huber' was Sigmund Freud's constant refrain. What he meant was that his own surname lacked the authentic homegrown (*bodenständige*) ring that might have secured preferment for him in Austria's anti-semitic academe.

What's in a name? was a question that confronted career-minded Jews in German-speaking countries at some point or other. While Freud of course did not change his name to Huber, others were less steadfast: Witkowski became Harden, Gundelfinger Gundolf, Salzmann Salten, Friedmann Friedell and Goldmann Reinhardt.

If career considerations prompted name changes before 1933, in the years of emigration the search for new non-immigrant identities had a similar effect so that Adolph Wohlbrück became Anton Walbrook, Detlef Sirk Douglas Sirk and Jiri Hoch Robert Maxwell. These are all examples of anglicisation, but what happened when a German Jew emigrated to German speaking Austria, as sometimes happened around the mid-thirties? Leo Reuss was a Galicia-born German-Jewish actor whose ability had earned him an assured, though far from leading, position on interwar Berlin's theatrical firmament.

Denied access to the stage after the Nazi takeover he emigrated to Austria, where, lacking the star status of an Adolph Wohlbrück or Fritz Kortner, he failed to get any engagements at all.

In despair he thought up an ingenious ruse. Adopting the name Kaspar Brandhofer, and disguised by a luxuriant beard and a rustic accent, he pretended to be a Tyrolean peasant with the burning ambition to go on stage. (Amateur theatricals have a venerable tradition in alpine villages like Oberammergau).

Reuss was auditioned at Salzburg by Helene Thimig who, impressed, recommended him to her husband Max Reinhardt. Reinhardt shared his wife's high opinion of the 'newcomer'. *Incredibile dictu* he quite failed to penetrate the 'Tyrolean's' disguise, although the two of them had worked together on the Berlin stage only a few years earlier. As a result of the successful audition with Reinhardt, the alleged peasant without previous stage experience overnight secured the part of the roué in Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else* at the Theater in der Josefstadt, a role in which he scored a veritable triumph.

The reviews were ecstatic, with the Vienna correspondent of the *Völkische Beobachter* lauding the Galician Jew as a 'volksverbundenes (ethnically rooted) Talent' and the Catholic *Reichspost* ascribing 'unique charisma' to him.

Emotionally worn out by the deception, Reuss dropped his mask soon after the first night. The press treated his case as a nine days' wonder and soon forgot about him; so did theatrical agents. At the end of 1937 Reuss emigrated to the USA where he changed his name yet again - this time to Lionel Royce. As Royce he secured bit parts in Hollywood movies, dying in 1946 during a tour of the Philippines.

□ Richard Grunberger

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## Reviews

## Vanished world

Theo Richmond, *KONIN*, Jonathan Cape, 1995, £18.99

Seven years' devoted research have enabled Theo Richmond to recreate a town and a community that have gone forever. He describes the small town on the River Warta with its wooden bridge and the 'Teppermarek' (pot-market) mainly used by Jewish traders. The synagogue and the library date from the 19th century, though there had been Jews in Konin since the Middle Ages.

We get tantalising glimpses into the living conditions of the inhabitants; the hierarchical setup in the synagogue ("the closer to the Eastern wall, the greater the honour") and the cheder with its tyrannical teachers. Some people had to work till late in the evening to scratch a living and whole families were accommodated in very few rooms. The WC was a hut in the yard which was emptied once a week by the nightsoil man. Nevertheless, people still managed to have some enjoyment: there were celebrations of the New Year with nuts and honey, and weddings at which a local factotum acted as coachman, waiter and toastmaster in turn. Nor was humour lacking: the poorest porter in town had the nickname 'Rothschild'.

The 20th century saw the beginnings of political movements which challenged the values of the ghetto - Bundists, Zionists and Communists - while the library satisfied some of the hunger for intellectual contact with a wider world. Jews and Poles lived side by side with little communication. The Poles regarded Jews at best as an alien tribe with strange rituals, a foreign language (Yiddish) and a different religion. Antisemitism gained ground as the century wore on. The 1930s brought a boycott of Jewish shops. The phrase 'dirty Jew' seems to have rung in all survivors' ears.

The saddest part of the book contains the survivors' experiences of German occupation. Nazi atrocities are fleshed out and made meaningful by the stories of individual suffering: the mother who still waits for news of her son; the woman who had to flee to the woods in winter with her baby, and the lad who joined the partisans.

This is a thick book, illustrated with some wonderfully evocative photographs.

One leaves it feeling grateful that a piece of history which has been like a missing wall in a house has been restored to us.

□ Martha Blend

## Slipping into the soul

Sonja Lyndon and Sylvia Paskin, *THE DYBBUK OF DELIGHT*, Five Leaves Publications, 1995, £9.99.

The title of this anthology is taken from Michelene Wandor's poem *Lilith's Dance*:

'I am the dybbuk of delight.

I slip into the souls of those who need me'.

Here we hear the voices of Jewish women, in particular British Jewish women, who have until recently been more reticent than their American sisters.

Are these writers a group? What links them?

Joan Michelson writes: 'Each of us is Jewish in a particular culture. English culture with its long practised language, modes and manner has diverted, if not concealed, my voice'. However, she seems to me to have written clearly and truthfully in her poem about Bogdan 'his arms are bone he cannot stop talking'. Bogdan has come from a Polish ghetto; the writer discards punctuation to give us the reality of his frantic haunted inner dialogue.

The editors have striven to achieve a balance between Holocaust poems and others that reflect women's lives now and in England, joyous illuminating poems such as Shirley Jaffe's *Looking Back...* which is threaded through with the preoccupations of pregnancy, especially in the choosing of the name.

'Looking for anything I can eat.

Looking at Cassandra - or Ezekiel'.

Sue Hubbard's poem about her daughter's first menstrual period leapt from the page..

'She is all woman now  
daughter become sister  
spindle prick of peony  
smearing her whites.'

You will discover a backbone of 'established' writers in the book - Lotte Kramer, Myra Schneider, Elaine Feinstein and many more, but also a groundswell of new voices from women writing with energy and conviction. They are never dull, but if I have a criticism it is that sometimes these writers let the power of their material overwhelm the work, so that occasionally form suffers.

The poetry about the Holocaust gives this anthology unity and underlies the work, demanding to be explored by each succeeding generation, as if it were the touch stone of being Jewish. Hilda Schiff, who has herself recently edited a Holocaust anthology which I reviewed in these pages, wonders whether poems bearing on it exploit the untouchable; or if in creating a work of art out of the wasteland of the Shoah some small atom could count as a victory over it? These poets write of the pain of not belonging.

Adèle Geras gives us insight into a child's loss with her poem *Between the Lines* written by a Kindertransportee to her mother:-

'Everyone is being very kind

England is lovely. Please come soon.'

I hope this anthology will be widely read and that Lilith's dybbuk of delight will continually visit the contributors.

□ Jill Bamber

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lecture by

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## Re-enacting an Austrian death march

In April 1945 the Nazis, attempting to halt the advance of the Red Army, brought about 100,000 Hungarian Jews to the Austrian-Hungarian border, where they were forced to dig trenches and other defence fortifications for the 140 km-long 'Ostwall'. Many died during the weeks of hard labour and, in one particularly shameful incident, SS and local Nazi leaders of Rechberg (in the province of Burgenland) killed about 180 emaciated people and buried them in a mass grave which, despite an extensive and year-long search, has not been found to this day. The man in charge of those murders was arrested after the end of the war, escaped from a British detention camp, and still lives, unapprehended, in South Africa.

Himmler, having personally ordered that no concentration camp inmate fall into Allied hands, meant that those 100,000 Jews too had to be marched all the way to the nearest concentration camp, Mauthausen near Linz. Only about 20,000 survived.

The most appalling incident was a massacre at the Präbichl Pass, in Styria, where the local *Volkssturm* commander, Krenn, 'paid' his men one cigarette for every Jew killed. In this instance the British occupation authorities were tough-minded for once; Krenn was tried, sentenced to death and hanged.

But not everybody had lost all human decency. Although the SS usually told the people along the route that the men and women under their guard were thieves, murderers or rapists, the dismal appearance of the marchers moved some Austrians to give them food. Compassion was greatest in remote Alpine villages, probably because Nazi propaganda did not reach those parts of Austria too well. In the Styrian village of Kaich more than 20 Jews were pulled from the human train. Every farm had its Jews, who were concealed and fed at considerable risk to the farm owners until the end of the war. The greatest act of heroism occurred in Kirchlandl, where a courageous farmer named Maria Maunz saved, incredibly, more than one hundred Jews. Unfortunately Mrs Maunz is no longer with us, and so we do not know how she managed to prise away, conceal and then feed all those starving people. Obviously, saving at least smaller numbers of death march-

ers was possible. If only more had been as courageous as she. If only!

Like so many other details of the Nazi years, the death march through Austria became a non-event for post-war Austrians. I consider myself a fairly well-informed Austrian, but I only learnt about it in 1988, Austria's *Bedenkjahr*. A spine-chilling documentary (*Alles Schweigen*, Dir. Michael Zuzanek and Gudrun Waltenstorfer, 1993) was made; typically, Austrian TV screened it one mid-week evening at 11.30 pm. And then I was contacted by Sigrid Feichtenschlager, who planned a re-enactment of the death march. And so, at 6.30 am on April 1st, I found myself at the Austrian-Hungarian border village of Schachendorf, in the company of about 300 fellow-marchers. I was surprised at how young most of them were, and chastened at the sight of a 75-year-old gentleman and his equally dignified wife.

Soon after we set out, thick snow began to fall. How symbolic it was that the heavens would spread a white sheet over the land which conceals so many bones!

I did quite well on the first day. In the afternoon of the second day I hobbled along with clenched teeth. In the evening, I was almost dead with fatigue and pain. It was a sobering thought that had I been one of those victimised Jews 50 years ago, I would have literally been dead by the fourth or fifth day, first felled by my own incapacitated body, then by a bullet from, possibly, a 14-year-old Hitler youth. A Hitler youth? Yes - each day the SS demanded additional guards from the local communities along the route, who were either *Volkssturm* men, or HJ youngsters. In a restaurant after the first day, I joined a group of four elderly men. One offered his memory of an atrocity which had occurred somewhere near Güssing. About 30-40 Jews, too weak to walk, were herded into a haybarn. Petrol was poured all around and the barn set alight. For good measure, the guards fired into the blazing barn. "It was terrible" said the man. Then he left and his friend, who had remained silent till then, said: "But you know, as an HJ guard he was there too. He fired into that barn too. I know, because I saw it." A stunned silence followed, and I realised that the confession I had just heard had stopped short of his own involvement in the massacre.

We also encountered a few hostile reactions. A man in Kohfidisch told me that before the war, Jews had established a

trading monopoly in agricultural products and were "sucking the country dry." This remark palls in comparison to one who spat in my direction one evening in a pub: "You are walking to Mauthausen? Well it's time that we heated the ovens up again." But there was also much sympathy, and even more curiosity. One woman said that the noise from hundreds of dragging feet (the Jews wore clogs) had stuck in her memory and wouldn't ever leave. There were also official reactions. We were on the TV news. The Governor of Styria gave the whole group a police escort for six days, to prevent any neo-Nazi attacks. (None occurred.) One village mayor put up marchers free in local accommodation; free refreshments were offered on other occasions. People were usually impressed and honestly interested to learn what motivated ordinary folk like us to repeat such an ordeal. And this had been my hope: that the youth of these communities would ask questions from their parents, their teachers, their priests as to why they had not been told for 50 years about such an atrocity having taken place under their very noses.

□ Adi Wimmer

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# Letters to the Editor

## TRANSPLANT THAT DID NOT TAKE

Sir – I wonder why your reviewer of Meta Frank's *Schalom, meine Heimat*, shows so little compassion with her perfectly understandable "hankering after a Germany which had abandoned her" – and where she spent her first 18 formative years! I spent only 11 years in Berlin, and am hooked. As I grow older I recognise more and more the influence it has been on me. Perhaps it would have helped if the author had subtitled the book not "*Lebenserinnerungen einer deutschen Jüdin*" but "*Lebenserinnerungen einer jüdischen Deutschen*". Terrible, what the Germans did to Germans...

Romilly Street  
London W1

Peter Zander

## UN-MERRY WIFE OF WINDSOR

Sir – You wrongly describe Kurt Hahn as Prince Charles's headmaster at Gordonstoun (p3, January issue).

Dr Hahn was certainly founder of Gordonstoun, but by the time Prince Charles enrolled he had ceased being headmaster. He was indeed a legend in his lifetime – very generous and quite inimitable.

Canfield Gardens  
West Hampstead

Kurt Michael Oppen  
(Old Gordonstounian  
1937-40)

## NO-HOLDS BARD

Sir – Perhaps you could enlighten/entertain/educate us, with further examples of Yinglish?!

Shainen Dank

E Lax

## BOUQUET

Sir – I am always looking forward to receiving your journal, which is so informative and has such specially good articles. Your December issue was so interesting after the horrible assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

Sharphorne  
Sussex

G Dann

## RAISE THE ALARM

Sir – RG's distinction between "Arab-baiting" and antisemitism is wrong – fundamentally wrong. The evil is racism and it is immaterial whether we ignore discrimination by the police against persons of Negro or Asiatic appearance, or shut our eyes to racially motivated attempts to kill gypsies in Austria or Romania. If we do, we are as guilty of racism as any war criminal.

Antisemitism should put us in the forefront of those fighting racial abuse or discrimination. Mr and Mrs Goldenberg draw attention to the changes in the Social Security provisions, which will, literally, cause asylum seekers to have to beg and join a cardboard city; worse still is the 'al Mas'ari doctrine'. Consider: had Ambassador von Ribbentrop placed a lucrative order in Britain and threatened to cancel it if asylum were granted to any one of us, none of us would be alive today.

I hope that the Goldenbergs' appeal for representations to MPs is taken seriously by all readers.

West View  
London NW4

Francis Deutsch

## MANX CHAT

Sir – It is to Britain's eternal credit that she was about the only country to make a major effort to help us; approximately 80,000 people from Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany, had found a safe haven here by the time war broke out.

Sure, interment came as a shock – it caused heartache and hardships, but we were collected in a humane manner by police, not by stormtroopers who kicked and punched us! Yes, conditions in some of our camps were primitive when we arrived, but we were given every opportunity to improve the facilities.

I am really disappointed that, after all this time, so many of my fellow internees are still bitter and unreasonable about the "collar the lot" order instead of seeing the facts as they were.

The bulk of the BEF had to be evacuated from Dunkirk and the Luftwaffe

bombed British cities day and night. Invasion seemed imminent. So, was it so incongruous to make sure there were no hidden spies amongst the 80,000 or so immigrants? Such a suspicion may have been well founded.

I have it from personal information given to me by no less a person than the late Lady Rose Henriques, who in 1938/39 was active in the Reception Committees of Bloomsbury House. She unmasked one such spy by asking him trick questions. If there was one, there may well have been more!

So let's stop harking back to this short unpleasant interval! Churchill's strategy won the war!

Broadwood Drive  
Glasgow

Martin Anson  
(ex-Dachau inmate)

## MISSING PAINTING

Sir – I wonder if any of your readers could identify *Sanitätsrat Sachs* as being Markus Sachs 1817-1897 of Breslau, who possibly treated Max Liebermann's broken leg. The enclosed illustration is of a painting by Max Liebermann, but its whereabouts are unknown. (Its last owner was a Frau Professor Seeler).

Any information on this topic would be much appreciated.

Pendle  
Cae Melyn  
Aberystwyth  
Dyfed SY23 2HA

William Dieneman



*Sanitätsrat Dr. Sachs, 1878*

**BEEFSTEAK**

Sir - I was born and lived in Solingen until 1939. In the twenties we had a Communist Mayor and he was removed by the Government and during the thirties most people had to be Nazis. But it was often said that the people in Solingen were Roastbeef - *innen rot und aussen braun*.  
 Forty Close Mrs Ilse Shindel  
 Wembley Park  
 Middlesex

**IN THE WILDERNESS**

Sir - Having moved from London to beautiful rural Suffolk, I find the only thing to mar this, is the lack of the warmth of Jewish people. I know how Moses must have felt in the Wilderness. There is no synagogue near me; yes I have spoken to the Jewish Board of Deputies who put me in touch with a travelling rabbi, who apparently does travel round the country looking for mezuzzahs on houses. I am still waiting for a "Shalom".  
 Are there any AJR readers who can help? I originally came from Austria in 1939. My husband, who unfortunately is not alive anymore, came from Berlin in 1939.  
 36 College Road Mrs N Grant  
 Framlingham  
 Suffolk IP13 9ES

**VERJUDUNG OF JERUSALEM**

Sir - Arab-Christian and English commentators on *Sunday*, the religious programme of Radio 4 have been using the phrase 'Jerusalem is being Jewified'.  
 There are surely better words than 'Jewified'. Why not 'Israeli settlements ring the City' or 'Jews are moving into the area in large numbers'? I am sure that the phrasing was deliberate. It was chosen to express disgust at the snide unfairness of those Jews who dare to settle in Jerusalem. Why don't they go back to Poland?  
 One speaker even described Christians as uniquely placed to mediate between Moslems and Jews on this and other matters in Israel!  
 Since this was to be a religious and not a political programme I fail to understand what the objection to Israeli political control of Jerusalem is. After all, Jews throughout the world worship quite happily in places under Christian political

control, and that includes Auschwitz, surely one of our most painfully holy sites.

Mallwyd Machynlleth  
 Powys

M Landau

**GREAT GERMANS**

Sir - August Thyssen (p13 February issue) did indeed, in the Twenties, support the Nazi party and, in fact, paid for the Brown House because, in his own words, he considered the Nazis a counterweight to the Communists (at that time, a real menace). In late 1939 he broke with Hitler, of whose policies he disapproved, fled to the Argentine via Switzerland and published his anti-Nazi book *I paid Hitler* (available at the Wiener Library). He supported various anti-Hitler causes.

Bishops Close  
 Old Coulsdon, Surrey

G Schmerling

**HARNESSING NATURE**

Sir - The Cunard liner QE2 has a small but fully equipped synagogue on board. For the annual three-months round-the-world cruise a rabbi sails with the ship, but on shorter journeys anyone who is available can take services (as I did).

When the sea is rough and the ship sways I usually recommend the congregation to remain seated and to stand only for very important parts of the service. If they then remained perfectly still the ship's movement would produce the *shokkeling*.

Heaton Park Drive  
 Bradford

Rudi Leavor

**MEMO TO BLUNKETT**

Sirs - As the representative body of Jewish refugees in this country, I think you should comment on the Labour Party's statement that the British education system has failed when compared with the examination results achieved in Germany and France.

Having experienced both the Continental and British education systems I find the British superior in that it is not controlled by the Ministry of Education, which prescribes the textbooks etc - but teaches the pupils to think for themselves rather than to make them memorise facts.

We should remember that the German "superior" system made them elect Hitler.  
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 North Myrms

**GOODBYE VIENNA  
CITY OF A MYRIAD MALADIES****BISHOP KOHN OF OLOMOUC**

Franz Joseph at Ischl  
 Told an official  
 'I fear the Archbishop'll  
 Grow a goitre  
 When Kohn gets the mitre'.

**KARL KRAUS**

From the collapsing Habsburg house  
 Emerged the scribbler Sauerkraus,  
 With rapier wit resembling Swift's  
 He scattered barbs without direction  
 Till death extinguished his great gifts  
 - Then came the Yahoo insurrection.

**FRANZ WERFEL**

Pious Alma told her Franz,  
 A hundred times if she told him once,  
 That his ritual circumcision  
 Made her heart brim with regret...  
 Cut to the quick by such derision  
 He wrote The Song of Bernadette.

**JOSEF SCHMIDT, POCKET TENOR**

On screen he wooed with golden voice  
 Average-sized girls whose heartless choice  
 Inevitably fell on beaus of stature  
 And Alpine stock, he-men by nature...  
 Such were the dictates of show biz  
 As to his death - best ask the Swiss.

**RICHARD TAUBER**

Tauber, idol of Vienna,  
 Improved his hair colour with henna  
 Wore an eyeglass for effect  
 To marriage vows showed disrespect...  
 None of which mattered a thing  
 To anyone who heard him sing.

□ RG

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## The AJR at Work



John Marshall, MP for Hendon South, gets down to some serious bridge with the Day Centre's players during the birthday week celebrations.

### Centre comes of age

Everything was just that much more special for members of the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre during an exciting week of celebrations marking its Tenth Birthday. Colourful decorations, menus and entertainment programmes lent lustre to the occasion, as did special guests Glenda Jackson MP, the Mayor of Camden, Rabbi Rodney Mariner and John Marshall MP.

Glenda Jackson, MP for Hampstead and Highgate, toured the centre and spoke with many of the members. She was particularly impressed by the number of volunteers who gave of their time and energy, describing them as a "store of compassion. It is important to know that human kindness and love still exist."

The Mayor of Camden, Dr. Sada Deshmukh, first dwelt on the lessons of the Holocaust. He then congratulated the AJR and commended everyone involved for achieving so much without any public funding. John Marshall, MP for Hendon South, added his praise and complimented the staff and volunteers for ensuring the centre's success.

The Day Centre has more than 300 members who enjoy personal service, individual attention and a warm family atmosphere. Activities include art classes, keep fit, bridge, chess, bingo, singing and a discussion group. A shop sells essential

household and food items. Advice is given on pensions and social security. Delicious three-course lunches are prepared and cooked on the premises, and a daily programme of musical entertainment provides cultural highlights.

Opened in January 1986, the Day Centre's first home was at Belsize Square Synagogue, but it soon transpired that larger, purpose-built premises available throughout the week were essential to meet demand. The present building in West Hampstead was acquired and adapted to provide not only a modern centre with lounge, dining rooms and kitchens, but also has eight sheltered flats. From the first a team of professionals and volunteers set about creating a 'home from home' atmosphere and many of them have remained at the centre ever since. They are led by the indefatigable Sylvia Matus, her deputy Renée Lee, and catering manager Susie Kaufman.

Ludwig Spiro, then hon. treasurer of the AJR, was among the first to appreciate the need for a day centre and was a moving force in its establishment. The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre continues to offer both pleasure and practical support to AJR members reaching retirement in increasing numbers, bringing companionship, care and happiness into the lives of many former refugees and their dependants.

□ Ronald Channing

### South London AJR

Three representatives of Jewish social services spoke to South London AJR members. Tony Shepherd, recently appointed Director of the Otto Schiff Housing Association, described how Otto Schiff's residential and nursing homes cared for the special needs of Jewish refugees, offering comfort, privacy and dignity in their declining years.

Fruma Mitchell of Jewish Care recalled the organisation's history and described the sterling help they provide to families in need despite the current pressures on charitable income. Maggie Thompson of the Jewish Blind Association outlined some of the difficulties experienced by partially sighted people and demonstrated methods and gadgets used to increase their mobility and independence.

The next meeting of SLAJR will be held with a guest speaker from the Jewish Museum on Thursday 14th March at South London Liberal Synagogue, Prentis Road, Streatham SW16. Please phone SLAJR Chairman Ken Ambrose for details on 0181 852 0262.

□ Ruth Leggett

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If you live in North or North West London and wish to take advantage of this service, phone Susie Kaufman on 0171 328 0208 for details and an assessment interview.

Meals can still be collected from 15 Cleve Road on weekdays (Mondays-Thursday) for £4 each.

## Message from the Director

It seems strange, in an era of internationalisation and at a time when historians like Professor Wasserstein and some religious leaders predict the withering away of Jewry, that A B Yehoshua, a well known Israeli writer, should tell the World Jewish Congress, meeting in Jerusalem, that Israel has no need of Diaspora money, backing, or immigration.

The present State of Israel came into existence because of the continuity of Jewish thought and tradition in the Diaspora. Kings, presidents and politicians from around the world came to Yitzak Rabin's funeral, not merely out of empathy with the man and the peace process he was conducting, but because America in particular and other Western countries were conscious of the role played by Jews in the Diaspora.

The truth is that there is currently, and there has to continue to be, a strong partnership of equals between Israel and the Diaspora. Without the Diaspora, I doubt whether Israel could continue, over the long term, as a viable state in the area, because despite the peace process, I do not underrate the Arabs' length of memory or desire for revenge. Moreover, if Israel were to sever its links with the Diaspora, there is the possibility of it losing its character as a Western style Jewish state.

Equally, I believe the future of the Diaspora, without a link with Israel, might well bear out Prof. Wasserstein's predictions of Jewry vanishing because of low birth rate, inter-marriage, assimilation and secularisation. In many ways Israel provides a common theme to link both religious and secular Jews in the Diaspora. The emergence of Israel, after the Shoah, has provided worldwide Jewry with a new *raison d'être*, a new feeling of continuity, and perhaps has been the catalyst for the church to begin acknowledging its guilt for antisemitism and its debt to Judaism.

□ Ernest David

### AJR INFORMATION is available on tape

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3.30 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.

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chess, etc., keep fit, discussion group, choir  
(Mondays), art class (Tuesdays and Thursdays).

*Afternoon entertainment* -

### MARCH 1996

- |           |    |  |
|-----------|----|--|
| Sunday    | 3  | DAY CENTRE OPEN<br>- NO<br>ENTERTAINMENT   |
| Monday    | 4  | SONGS FOR SPRING<br>- PRIZE-WINNING<br>STUDENTS FROM THE<br>ROYAL ACADEMY OF<br>MUSIC - Emma Bell<br>(Soprano) and Rahel<br>Wagner (Mezzo)<br>accompanied by Clara<br>Taylor (Piano) |
| Tuesday   | 5  | SARAH & GEOFFREY<br>IN HARMONY -<br>Sarah Sweeting (Soprano)<br>accompanied by Geoffrey<br>Whitworth (Piano)   |
| Wednesday | 6  | SHADES OF PALM<br>COURT - Patrick<br>Kilbride (Violin)<br>accompanied by Jennifer<br>Hunt (Piano)  |
| Thursday  | 7  | WELL-KNOWN<br>CLASSICAL MUSIC<br>FOR A MARCH<br>AFTERNOON - Jenny<br>Ewington (Soprano)<br>accompanied by Andrew<br>Pink (Piano)   |
| Sunday    | 10 | DAY CENTRE OPEN<br>- NO<br>ENTERTAINMENT   |
| Monday    | 11 | SUNRISE - SUNSET<br>- Heidi Pegler<br>(Soprano) accompanied<br>by Simon Kent (Piano)   |
| Tuesday   | 12 | A CONCORDE OF<br>SWEET SOUNDS -<br>Jane Rosenberg<br>(Soprano) with Piano<br>Accompaniment   |
| Wednesday | 13 | WOMEN IN OPERA &<br>LIEDER - Noa<br>Lachman (Soprano)<br>accompanied by William<br>Hancock (Piano)   |
| Thursday  | 14 | SONGS AD LIBITUM<br>- Lara Moyler (Mezzo/<br>Soprano) accompanied<br>by Marek Dabrowski<br>(Piano)   |

- |              |    |   |
|--------------|----|---|
| Sunday       | 17 | TEA-TIME MELODIES<br>- Valerie Hewitt<br>(Soprano - Guitar and<br>Piano) accompanied by<br>Anne Berryman (Piano)  |
| Monday       | 18 | SINGING FOR FUN -<br>THE LONGFORD<br>SINGERS accompanied<br>by Margaret Eaves<br>(Piano)                          |
| Tuesday      | 19 | TRINITY COLLEGE<br>OF MUSIC - Julie<br>Leyland (Soprano)<br>accompanied by Piano                                  |
| Wednesday    | 20 | THE GEOFFREY<br>STRUM & HELEN<br>BLAKE DUO  |
| Thursday     | 21 | SPRING MISCELLANY<br>- POPULAR SONGS &<br>ARIAS - Michael Davies<br>(Soprano) accompanied<br>by Christopher Rouse |
| Sunday       | 24 | DAY CENTRE OPEN<br>- NO<br>ENTERTAINMENT  |
| Monday       | 25 | CONTINENTAL<br>COCKTAIL - Helen<br>Mignano (Soprano)<br>accompanied by Sylvia<br>Cohen (Piano)                    |
| Tuesday      | 26 | A POT POURRI OF<br>CONTINENTAL<br>FAVOURITES -<br>Barbara Landman<br>accompanied by Bill<br>Mellors (Piano)       |
| Wednesday    | 27 | MEMBERS OF THE<br>LONDON<br>SYMPHONY<br>ORCHESTRA - Robin<br>& Amalia Brightman<br>(Violin & Piano)               |
| Thursday     | 28 | OPERATIC<br>FAVOURITES -Barbarina<br>Wild (Soprano)<br>accompanied by Richard<br>Hare (Piano)                     |
| Sunday       | 31 | DAY CENTRE OPEN<br>- NO<br>ENTERTAINMENT  |
| <b>APRIL</b> |    |   |
| Monday       | 1  | APRIL MISCELLANY -<br>Louise Lavelles (Mezzo/<br>Soprano) accompanied by<br>Geoffrey Whitworth<br>(Piano)         |
| Tuesday      | 2  | TRINITY DUO -<br>Amanda Palmer<br>(Soprano) accompanied<br>by Marek Dabrowski<br>(Piano)                          |
| Wednesday    | 3  | CLOSED AFTER<br>LUNCH - PESACH  |
| Thursday     | 4  | CLOSED - PESACH   |
| Sunday       | 7  | CLOSED - EASTER<br>Sunday   |

## FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Birthdays

**Reichmann.** Dr Eva Gabrielle Reichmann, born in Upper Silesia, Lublinitz, Germany, in 1897, celebrated her 99th Birthday on 16th January with many of her friends.

**Henderson.** Frank Henderson, born 12 March 1916. Wishing our dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather many happy returns on your 80th birthday. Love from Ruth, Eric, Sharon, George, Judy and Peter.

### Deaths

**Samson.** Helen Ernestine Samson, dental surgeon, devoted wife to the late Dr Kenneth Samson and an adored mother and grandmother. Helen was a tireless campaigner for Amnesty International and many other causes. We all miss her.

**Herzer.** Hilda Emmi Herzer passed away peacefully on 12th January 1996. Will be very sadly missed by her cousins and very many friends.

**Frankel.** Max Frankel passed away on Monday 22nd January 1996. He will be sadly missed by his wife, son, two nieces, their families and close friends.

**Silberman.** Martin Silberman, of Eleanor Rathbone House, Highgate, passed away at Whittington Hospital, aged 75, after a long illness. He was born in Berlin and came to England in August 1939, eventually becoming a lecturer in psychiatric social work. He will be remembered by his friends, and by neighbours at Eleanor Rathbone House.

**Regensburger.** Resi Regensburger, née Oppenheimer, aged 99, died peacefully on 9 February 1996 at Heinrich Stahl House, London. Will be missed by her son, daughter, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and friends.

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### Miscellaneous

**Publisher needed,** for completed (and professionally assessed) autobiography by my late husband (deceased 1995). Subject background mainly sphere of serious music. Should there be amongst the membership a person able to offer advice, kindly write to Box No. 1282.

**World Wars.** I collect cards and envelopes from the camps. Please send with price asked to Peter C. Rickenbach, 14 Rosslyn Hill, London NW3 1PF.

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## SB's Column

**W**omen in Exile. The Vienna Volkstheater (formerly Deutsches Volkstheater) has embarked on a repertoire putting the accent on feminine issues. After Hebbel's *Judith* and Ibsen's *Nora* actress Andrea Eckert has devised a programme in which female suffering dominates the evening with the help of contributions by Heine, Brecht, Nelly Sachs and Else Lasker-Schüler. Entitled *Women in Exile* the programme emphasizes the plight of emigration, regulations for aliens and injustice in general. The actress previously made a name for herself five years ago when, during Kurt Waldheim's term of office as president, she gave a recital, singing songs by Jewish composers under the heading '*An allem sind die Juden schuld.*' It had splendid reviews.

**Forthcoming event.** Nicolai Gedda, reputed to be the most recorded tenor in the world, will give a recital at London's St John's, Smith Square on April 11th when the programme will include works by Dvorak, Grieg and Gounod.

**Elisabeth Schwarzkopf** is the title of a biography written by Alan Jefferson and published by Gollancz at the occasion of the soprano's 80th birthday. Emerging as a particularly gifted young singer during the early days of the Third Reich, her talents did not remain unknown to Goebbels who sponsored her, a fact which cast doubts on her attitudes during the years of her rising popularity. A member of the Vienna State Opera since 1943, she became a generally acclaimed opera singer, Mozart, Strauss and Hugo Wolf specialist and a *Lieder* singer of world-wide repute; she was honoured by several countries and made a Dame Commander of the British Empire. After the end of her operatic career, she held master classes for a new generation of singers.

**Obituaries.** Fritz Eckhardt who has died in Vienna at the age of 88, started as a cabaretist at Vienna's ABC im Regentbogen in the thirties. This little theatre with a strong anti-Nazi flavour was closed immediately after the Anschluss, and Eckhardt (who was half-Jewish) declared 'unacceptable' (*untragbar*) by the authorities. Reappearing after the war, he became an immensely popular actor, author and television favourite; his portly figure, especially conspicuous in the long-running serial *Hotel Sacher* (in which he played the head porter) was

widely regarded as 'most typical Viennese' by German-speaking audience researchers.

Music lovers everywhere are saddened by the death of Austrian-born pianist and music critic Peter Stadlen. He was 85. A highly educated and knowledgeable musician, he toured prewar Europe, arrived in this country in 1939 and became popular by his National Gallery lunchtime piano recitals during the war. An acknowledged expert on every aspect of music, including Schönberg and Boulez, he was chief music critic of the Daily Telegraph until his retirement in 1987 □

## Follow my lieder

**I**s this a record? – no pun intended – astonished radio listeners asked several years ago when Elizabeth Schwarzkopf appeared on the BBC's Desert Island disc programme and chose six recordings she herself had made out of the eight-record total.

No, it was not: Schwarzkopf had exhibited comparable egomania while climbing up the greasy pole to diva status in the opera houses of the Third Reich. Young, gifted and Aryan, she had made all the right moves – joining the Nazi Party, entertaining the Waffen SS, appearing in Goebbels' propaganda films – to earn Brownie points from the brownshirts, as it were. Obeisance to Satan paid off most handsomely: in three short years she advanced from small coloratura parts at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin, to lead roles in Vienna. (Throughout those harsh wartime years the Nazi hierarchy showed her the utmost solicitude: once when, chagrined at not having been cast in a coveted role, she had kicked her shoe through the expensive stage cyclorama the opera director's complaints about indiscipline landed up in the waste paper bin).

After the war she lied to the Allies about her Nazi past and suffered a temporary ban, from which Walter Legge of EMI rescued her; the rescuer in due course became her husband (as well as Svengali). The rest is musical history.

In January Gollancz published Alan Jefferson's life story of the now 80-year old singer. This biography is largely given over to consideration of her work on the opera and concert stage, but fails – as the subject, no doubt, would have preferred – to draw a discreet veil over her Nazi past.

However, the retired diva need not fret: the biographer received a proper wiggling from The Times' Bernard Levin for his lack of tact. 'Who shall be so white and pure' Levin rhetorically asked 'to say no to Adolf Hitler if saying no is likely to mean losing a job, and indeed a life? Mr Jefferson, if you had a choice between signing on as a Nazi and being hung from a fine wire would you not choose the signature?'

Where was the Press Complaints Council, or, better still, the Mental Health Executive when Levin penned this egregious rubbish? If Schwarzkopf had not joined the Party, entertained the Waffen SS or appeared in Goebbels movies, would she really have been threatened with the fate of the July 1944 plotters? Of course not; non-involvement with the Nazis would simply have slowed down her near-vertical ascent into the stratosphere of musical life.

And it is probably because Levin dwells in high aesthetic spheres that Schwarzkopf's well-remembered golden voice inspired him to ride to her defence on a clapped-out charger.

□ RG

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS – MARCH 1996

- Ongoing Leon Greenman, Auschwitz Survivor: Jewish Museum, Finchley.
- Mon 4 A New look at Kafka: Mrs M Yudkin MA. Club '43 8pm
- Tues 5 Purim Review: Rev. Lawrence Fine. JACS 2-4pm
- Weds 6 Sir Martin Gilbert: Churchill & the Holocaust. RIBA Portland Place W1. (org. by Wiener Library) 6.30pm £2
- Thurs 7 Lunchtime Recital: Manor House 1.15pm.
- Sun 10 Jewish Influences on Classical Composers: Liam Abramson. Jewish Museum, Camden Town. 3pm £5
- Tues 12 JACS AGM 2pm. Followed by talk 'My Life with the British Aristocracy': Stuart Willner.
- Tues 12 Lord Dahrendorf: Prosperity, Civility & Liberty – Can We Square the Circle? *Thank You Britain Fund* lecture, British Academy 20 Cornwall Terrace NW1. 5pm all welcome.
- Mon 18 Challenges of European Monetary Union: Jürgen Diethe, editor & broadcaster. Club '43 8pm
- Tues 19 Confessions of a Toastmaster: Peter Jones. JACS 2-4pm
- Tues 19 The Jews of Barnet: Prof. Stanley Waterman. Jewish Museum, Finchley. 8pm £2
- Thurs 21 Lunchtime Recital: Manor House 1.15pm
- Sun 24 Konin, A Quest: Author Theo Richmond on his search for a shtetl and a vanished world. Manor House 8pm
- Mon 25 Wilhelm von Humboldt, life & work: Elsinä Stubbs MA
- Tues 26 Dr Lionel Kopelowitz: 'Life as a General Practitioner'. JACS 2-4pm

### APRIL

- Mon 1 What do we tell our children? Being a second generation Jew in Britain. Simon Maier M.Ed reads his prize-winning poetry.
- Tues 2 Economics in the Jewish Enlightenment: Prof. Derek J. Penslar, Indiana University. Wiener Library 6.30pm £2
- Thurs 18 Theodor Herzl & the Dreyfus Affair: Prof. Julius Schoeps, 6pm Senate House, London University (org. by Sussex University)
- Sun-Mon 21 & 22 De-Nazification, Re-education & Reconstruction in Germany 1946-1949. Wiener Library (at Birkbeck College) £12

### ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club 1943, Anglo-German Cultural Forum, meets at Belsize Square Synagogue. Call Hans Seelig on 01442 254 360 for information.

JACS at Belsize Square Synagogue, NW3 4HX. 0171 794 3949

RSGB/Jewish Museum/Manor House Society, Sternberg Centre for Judaism, 80 East End Road, Finchley, NW3 2SY. 0181 346 2288

Jewish Museum, 129/131 Albert Street, NW1 7NB.

Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1. 0171 636 7247

University of Sussex Centre for German-Jewish Studies. For further information phone Diana Franklin 0181 455 4785.

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

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## Figures leaping from a vase

In the British Museum basement we stood around a glass case full of Black-Figure vases. 'Here', explained the lecturer, 'is Achilles slaying Hector. There King Priam pleads to be allowed to give his son burial... Behold the weeping Hecuba!'

The lecturer broke off and moved briskly into the next room. We trudged after him. He pointed. 'This vase depicts Agamemnon, Captain of the Greeks and his brother Menelaus'. With eyes half-closed I heard '...the grizzled Nestor...the wily Odysseus...the inconstant Cressida...the scoffer Thersites, killed by Achilles with one blow of his fist'.

The drumbeat of half-remembered names had put me into a reverie. In the haze of memory Priam, Hecuba and Hector, Agamemnon and Achilles changed from flat black figures on red glaze into flesh-and-blood actors treading the boards of Vienna's 'Josefstadt', where I, a stagestruck fourth former, had gone to see Jean Girardoux's *The Trojan War will not take place*. In the play the Homeric heroes were impersonated by my personal hero figures – with Albert Bassermann as King Priam, his wife Elsa as Queen Hecuba, Attila Hörbiger as Hector and Egon Friedell as Thersites.

Consequently I had goose pimples even before the curtain went up. The unfolding plot was difficult to follow, but the dénouement had me on the edge of the seat: at the juncture when a peaceful resolution of the conflict appears possible Thersites, with his dying breath, names a Trojan as his attacker – and thereby makes war inevitable. In other words Girardoux ended his drama – written well before the Anschluss and Munich – by negating its optimistic title.

And that was not the only contradiction apparent in the performance I saw. While Homer made King Priam a hapless victim of fate, the stage-Priam, Albert Bassermann, had defied fate. A renowned German actor, he had resisted Nazi pressure to divorce his Jewish wife, and in late 1937 found himself in Vienna *en route* to the USA and Hollywood (where his career failed to flourish).

In perverse contrast to Bassermann/Priam the Josefstadt's Hector – classic exemplar of virtuous courage and loyalty

*Continued on page 13*

Continued

– was acted by Attila Hörbiger, a clandestine Nazi Party member. (Hörbiger and his Reinhardt-trained wife Paula Wessely were interwar Austria's Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh.) Six months after my theatre visit the glamorous couple called on all Austrians to vote for the Anschluss. A little later Paula Wessely starred in the bloodcurdling Nazi movie *Heimat*, (for his part in which a Polish actor was hanged in postwar Warsaw). In postwar Vienna, meanwhile, Attila Hörbiger was made to expiate his Nazi past by a stint of clearing debris from bomb sites.

But the greatest contrast of all was between the character of Thersites and that of his impersonator, Egon Friedell. Friedell, a Jew, disliked having to own up to that fact. Once, asked why his name was Friedell while his brother's was Friedmann, he retorted: '*Ich weiss nicht warum er das macht!*' In other words he was an actor, a wit and a 'character' as well as a playwright, cabaret artist and cultural historian. In addition Friedell was gay. Looking out from his fourth floor apartment a few days after the Anschluss he saw two storm troopers enter the building. Thinking they'd come to arrest him as part of a round up of homosexuals he jumped from the window ledge – and in his last conscious moment shouted a warning to the people on the pavement below.

What greater contrast than between (Girandoux's) Thersites, whose dying words incited war, and Friedell whose last thought was to save others?!

Bassermann, Hörbiger, Wessely, Friedell. If these actors had been cast according to the way they acted off-stage Attila Hörbiger should have played Thersites, Paula Wessely Cressida, Albert Bassermann Hector and Egon Friedell the hapless Priam.

□ RG

## Grave untruths

Cynics allege that the only unquestionably true statement in any newspaper is the date of issue. Karl Kraus went so far as to call newspaper owners 'men who poison the world's wells of truth with printers' ink'.

Kraus particularly excoriated Moritz Benedikt, the proprietor of the *Freie Presse*. His criticism of the latter, though not always justified, contained a grain of truth. Benedikt had in the 1890s employed Theodor Herzl as the paper's

Paris correspondent. Under the influence of the Dreyfus Trial, Herzl had founded the Zionist movement – an initiative which by the time of his death in 1904 had already proved of worldwide significance.

Nonetheless, the obituary of Herzl commissioned by Benedikt concentrated almost entirely on the deceased's journalistic career; just one sentence at the end mentioned his leadership of world Zionism. (This is rather like an obituary of Rossini detailing the composer's recipes for steak, or one of Albert Speer concentrating on architecture).

It could, of course, have been worse. As the Empire's leading Habsburg loyalist the owner of the *Freie Presse* abhorred Zionism with all his heart, and by allowing it to be mentioned at all he, in a curious way, disregarded the age-old pious injunction 'don't speak ill of the dead'.

*De mortuis nil nisi bonum* (to quote the Latin original) in fact provides most unsatisfactory guidance to the compiler of obituaries. When T S Eliot died most obituarists were too discreet, or – to call a spade a spade – mealy-mouthed, to mention the fact that the deceased had published blatantly antisemitic poetry (e.g. *The Jew sits on the window sill*) between the wars. In like manner, at Graham Greene's death they left the link between novels shot through with deception and adultery and the Catholic novelist's own 'freewheeling' lifestyle tactfully unexplored.

The conspiracy of reverential good taste concerning T S Eliot has, incidentally, been breached in recent weeks – and in most bizarre fashion.

The enormous media hype surrounding Princess Di's anticipated divorce has turned a spotlight on her adviser, Anthony Julius (of the law firm Mishcon de Reya). The said legal eagle, previously an English graduate, wrote a PhD thesis on Eliot's antisemitism which is now – for quite extraneous reasons – much referred to in the press.

This is welcome news, not least because our coreligionist Gabriel Josepovici, of Sussex University, recently felt obliged to pen a piece entitled 'T S Eliot taught me how to write', which qualifies him for the special Bernard Levin Award for bending over backwards (see p.11).

Even so the potential effect of Mr Julius' publication will probably be as nothing compared to the fact that *Cats* – based on Eliot's cat poetry – is now the longest running musical ever.

□ Richard Grunberger

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## Reporting Israel

**H**elen Davis, Director of the Britain-Israel Public Affairs Centre, talked to the Guild of Jewish Journalists about BIPAC's initiative in taking leading British journalists on a fact-finding tour of Israel.

BIPAC encounters no difficulties in recruiting senior British journalists specialising in Middle Eastern affairs for a week of in-depth briefings on crucial aspects of Israel's security, the peace process, religious observance and social issues. With journalists having insufficient time for in-depth research, they could hardly refuse the luxury of a whole week spent on "the best media story on the planet".

A typical day's schedule begins early and is packed with briefings, interviews and visits to key areas. The first day commenced with a Cabinet Minister's briefing on the aftermath of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, followed by a talk at the Foreign Ministry on the elements of any rapprochement with Syria. A discussion on defence issues led by the Professor

of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University (who described himself as an orthodox lefty) was complemented with a more right wing perspective from the Jaffe Center.

The rest of the week's schedule included meetings with West Bank settlers (already cooperating with their Arab neighbours) and the leader of the Likud opposition, Benjamin Nathanyahu; sessions with Palestinian-Israeli journalists followed. The journalists also met Nathan Sharansky to be updated on the integration of former Soviet Jews. Visits were made to the first autonomous Palestinian city of Jericho, the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights to meet kibbutz and moshav settlers, to the Ministry of Defence, and to Tel Aviv University for an analysis of Israel's new relationship with Jordan and the dilemmas faced by Israeli Arabs. At the Weizmann Institute the situation vis-à-vis Lebanon was examined.

A sensitively guided tour of Jerusalem took in Mount Herzl, where Rabin's grave is sited, the Old City (including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) and traditional Friday night prayers at the Western

Wall to welcome the Sabbath. The intrepid group even braved the streets of Mea Sharim, home of the ultra-orthodox, during the Sabbath.

By the end of a strenuous week, no-one could be blamed for reacting with initial confusion to the sheer quantity of highly-relevant analyses. Helen Davis was confident, however, that BIPAC's guests were impressed with the "energy and vitality" of Israeli society. As well as getting to know each other better, the journalists' working relationship with BIPAC had been strengthened.

□Ronald Channing

### Master Distiller

The Worshipful Company of Distillers has installed AJR member Peter Hallgarten as its Master, the first Jewish Master of the Distillers.

Peter Hallgarten has enjoyed a distinguished career in the international and UK wine trades. In addition to his expertise in European wines and liqueurs, he has been a major force in the introduction and development of wines from the Golan Heights in Israel □

## Cooking with Gretel Beer



## Styrian Applecake

This is probably a misnomer and not Styrian at all, but I sampled it first in a small inn in Styria - and "Styrian applecake" it has been ever since. It is equally good as a pudding or served with tea or coffee.

### For the pastry:

5oz (140g) plain flour  
pinch of salt  
5oz (140g) unsalted butter  
1 egg yolk  
2 tablespoons double cream  
butter and flour for the baking sheet

### For the topping:

2-3 cooking apples

good dash of rum  
2 tablespoons icing sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla sugar  
2 eggs  
2oz (70g) icing sugar  
2oz (70g) ground almonds

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 4, 350F, 180C. Butter and flour a baking sheet measuring about 7 x 11 inches (18 x 28cm)

Sift together the flour and salt, cut in the butter and work quickly to a smooth paste with the egg yolk and cream. Press out the pastry with your fingers to line the baking sheet - no need to roll it out. Cover with clingfilm and put in a refrigerator whilst preparing the apples.

Peel, core and slice the apples and spread them over the pastry.

Sprinkle with rum, the 2 tablespoons icing sugar and the vanilla sugar. Separate the egg yolks and whites. Whisk the yolks with the 2 oz icing sugar until thick and fluffy, then whisk the egg whites until stiff. Fold egg whites into yolks, alternately with the ground almonds. Spread over the apples, masking them completely. Bake for 35 - 45 minutes. Leave to cool in the tin, but cut into slices whilst still warm - it is one of those cakes which seem to taste best when served straight from the tin in which they were baked □

## SEARCH NOTICES

**Erich Schwartz**, searching for old Vienna friends: Ditta Gottesmann, Walter Heckler, Kitty Kaufmann, Kurt Steinitz-Landsberger, and George Hermann (88 Coy). Please contact Eric Sanders, 117 Wendell Road, London W12 9SD. 0181 743 7966.

**Research into therapy for survivors, refugees or their children.** A psychotherapist and doctoral research student at Keele University is seeking people who have had therapy or counselling who would answer a questionnaire (in complete confidentiality) as to its effectiveness. Please contact Linda Berman, Soma House, 56 Manchester Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA4 4PJ. Tel & fax: 0161 928 1388.

**Zilberman.** Ezra (Yechiel) Zilberman, born 1923 in Lithuania. About 1924 parents Aaron and Chaya emigrated with baby son to Johannesburg, South Africa. Two sisters born in South Africa, now believed to be living in London, are being sought by close relative living in Acco (Acre) Israel. Anyone with knowledge of them please contact Allan Blacher on 0181 458 7141.

## GERMAN PENSION CHANGES

Information has been received from the German insurance authorities that those refugees, who have re-applied for their German nationality and are already in receipt of their pensions, may apply for additional payments in respect of the period between the date of applying for, and the granting of, German nationality, which until now has been the date from which the German pension was calculated.

Applicants affected by the above information should write to:

The Consular Department, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 23 Belgrave Square, London SW1 8PZ who will assist by confirming the date of the original application. Please quote the year of your original application and re-naturalisation.

When you receive the confirmation from the Embassy, you should write to the *Bundesversicherungsanstalt* or *Landesversicherungsanstalt* which pays your pension, quoting your German Social Security number, to ask for back payment in respect of the interim period.

Applicants who have *not yet* received their pensions, after having applied to become German Nationals again, need not make further application as this additional period will be automatically taken into consideration □

## AUSTRIAN PENSIONS UPDATE

We have now received a written statement from the Austrian pension authorities regarding claims for recalculation of pensions, as a consequence of Austria joining the EU.

If you have applied for recalculation on the basis that it should be withdrawn in the event of a lower pension being indicated, no further action is necessary.

If the application for recalculation has been made without this proviso, and the result indicates a lower pension, then the Austrian pension authorities will advise the claimant to withdraw the application. If the application is then withdrawn, the original level of pension will continue □

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## Studying form

Faced with the need to claim Attendance Allowance, to which they are fully entitled, many of our members are daunted by the size and apparent complexity of the form which has to be completed by all applicants.

One AJR member who lives alone and is finding it increasingly difficult to cope without help, said, "I just took one look at the application form, pages and pages of questions which looked so complicated and repetitive, that I knew I could not complete it on my own." He did try telephoning the Attendance Allowance help line, but it was always busy. Finally, after getting through, he was told they would call back; this took many days.

Fortunately, being a member of the AJR, he turned to us for guidance. Within a few days an AJR social worker paid him a visit and together they completed the form and sent it off. Our member was delighted to learn soon afterwards that the DSS had accepted his claim and awarded him the higher allowance – so he can now have the help at home he needs to maintain his independence □

## Making a Will?

### Please remember the AJR

One thing that none of us should avoid is making a Will and keeping it up to date.

We know that we cannot take our worldly possessions with us, but we can – at least – see that whatever is left behind goes:

- \* where it will be appreciated
- \* where it will do some good
- \* where it is needed

Many former refugees have found their association with the AJR a rewarding one. This is an opportunity to support the AJR Charitable Trust. Your solicitor will be able to help you; alternatively you can consult with our welfare rights adviser Mrs. Agi Alexander on 0171 431 6161 (Monday to Friday) or the social workers at the Day Centre.

If you have already made a Will it is quite easy to add a Codicil.

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

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## One Man's War

### Part 7

#### Surviving imprisonment

Quite a number of weeks were spent in a hastily erected barbed wire camp on the Peloponnese. It comprised a large number of wooden huts and I remember sleeping on floorboards with my water bottle substituting as a pillow. We prisoners numbered thousands; the Germans didn't bother to count us. There was water – but no food. Once or twice a week we were given a bagel-shaped roll made of first-class white flour, but so hard that you could break it only with a hammer or between two stones. But then it disintegrated into tiny crumbs. However, soaked in water, it became soft and if you could get hold of a drop of olive oil and fry it, it tasted better than anything from Fortnum & Mason's patisserie. These bagels were Italian army issue, left behind in Greece after Mussolini's earlier defeat by the Greeks.

Our German guards were also starving; they told us they were getting only bread and black pudding every day. For that reason they permitted the Greek farmers to approach the barbed wire, to sell us what they could spare. The poor Greek horses and cows must have had a bad time – we ate all the animal fodder we could afford. Empty peapods were a delicacy, you could cook a very filling soup from it. We sold the Greeks whatever we could spare: boots, socks, fountain pens, watches and rings.

The constitution of every human is as different as the shape of their noses. Some can exist on very little, while others suffer terrible hunger pangs. If starving men were shown a scantily dressed Marilyn Monroe on the left and a mouldy slice of bread on the right, nobody would even glance to the left.

One particular friend of mine was 40-year-old Vienna-born Alfred Palmai. Heavily built and a former physical training instructor, at the Hakoah Sports Club, Vienna, he now sat on a stone crying 'Hob I an Hunger, hob I an Hunger,' in Viennese dialect. He hardly spoke any English or Hebrew.

Some weeks after capture our first guards were replaced by very young members of the elite German parachute regiment in preparation for the airborne

attack on Crete. They, too, had very little to eat, and frequently came to talk to us and do a bit of bartering. They were also much more friendly to us, considering us as comrades in arms. We sensed their feeling that while we had the fighting behind us theirs still lay ahead of them.

Palmai had a beautiful diamond ring inherited from his late mother and debated for a long time if he should sell the ring for some food. Eventually he arranged with a parachutist to exchange it for three loaves of bread. The German insisted that he had only two at present, but would bring him the third loaf the next day. Palmai, unable to hold out for another day, gave way and, while munching a piece of bread, cried that he would never see the German again and that he was an idiot for having sold the ring too cheap. How wrong he was!

The German turned up the next day, and holding the loaf of bread in one hand and the ring in the other looked everywhere for Palmai. He said he had been unable to sleep all night. He had had a good Christian upbringing and if he survived the war he could never confront his mother with the fact that he acquired this ring for a loaf of bread from a starving prisoner. So much for the indoctrination carried out by the Hitler Youth!

Some weeks passed and we found ourselves locked up in a vast military compound inside Salonika. It consisted of nothing but slabs of stone and bricks and mortar. Not a blade of grass. Nor was

there anything to eat, except occasional drops of soup, strategically placed, so that one could not queue up twice for it. There was no need for latrines, since there was nothing going in and nothing passing out. I sat on the same slab of stone every day in the sunshine taking stock of my mental strength, in the knowledge that every movement of the body would burn up calories which I could not replace. Not far away a chap from my company crouched motionless for ten hours. Having seen a small lizard vanish between some rocks he was waiting for it to come back the same way. Not only did he have nothing else to do, but he had the hope that he might catch the animal (supposed to be very tasty).

Over the wall I saw houses and a washing line with football jerseys drying in the sun. Football! – so there was still a world somewhere where people played football. But of course within a split second my mind moved to the hot-dog stand on the football ground of my home town and what I devoured there after a match.

You could hear some fellows arguing about Einstein's theory of relativity, and the next moment they would talk about goulash soup, because the same argument had been discussed in their university canteen which served this marvellous soup and next you would hear somebody shouting: "Shut up you bastards, I can't stand hearing about your blasted soup any more."

(to be continued)

□ H P Weiner

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