

AJR *Information*

Volume LII No. 7
July 1997

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

The camera doesn't necessarily lie

Richard Grunberger p3

Heartland of European Jewry

Ronald Channing p12

Diverse National Days

The new month brings in its train two high-profile National Days: the American Fourth of July and France's Quatorze Juillet. Both have a martial significance, the former commemorating the War of Independence, the latter the Storming of the Bastille. A totally different National Day – not only non-martial, but in fact quite fictitious – is Ireland's June 16. On that day in 1904 Leopold Bloom, a shambling middle-aged Jew, undertook peregrinations across Dublin which form the subject matter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce's sympathetic portrayal of his hero sets him miles apart from such contemporary literary greats as Pound, Eliot, Henry James and Virginia Woolf, who were all to a greater or lesser degree infected with antisemitism. Re Joyce it behoves us to rejoice □

Reflections on news from Bletchley Park and Vienna

Varieties of antisemitism

One of the by-products of the 'Goldhagen controversy' is the realisation that the antisemitic mindset is not all of a piece. We differentiate increasingly between 'ordinary' antisemites opposed to Jewish integration and influence, and eliminationist ones who want Jews wiped off the face of the earth.

Proof that the same individual can readily switch from the merely hate-filled to the actively murderous variant of the mindset was provided by Wilhelm II. Until Germany's defeat in war (for the outbreak of which he bore a major responsibility) the Kaiser still deigned to rub shoulders with Albert Ballin of the Hamburg-America Line and the banker Fuerstenberg; thereafter he advocated the gassing of all Jews. Goldhagen's thesis that, even before the Nazi takeover, the mass of Germans were eliminationist rather than ordinary antisemites has been fiercely contested by German historians. English historians have, by and large, noted the controversy without feeling impelled to pronounce upon it.

There is, however, a distantly related question which agitated English historians several years ago and to which we feel it appropriate to return. The question is whether Britain should have tried to make peace with Hitler in 1941. The historian responsible for raising the question was the notorious Churchill-hating protégé of Alan Clark's, Dr John Charmley (see our August 1995 issue). As part of his indictment of the 'warmonger' Churchill, Charmley argued that Hitler's Final Solution was not premeditated, but a reaction to impending defeat on the Eastern Front.

Now his flawed argument is totally discredited by newly-released documents from Bletchley Park which show massacres of Russian Jews already occurring in 1941, the year of Wehrmacht triumphs in the East.

In considering the subtext of Charmley's script one is tempted to ask at what point of the spectrum his 'scholarly' myth of 'Churchill's War' overlaps with Mosley's demagogic myth of a 'Jews' War?

But enough of such nightmare thoughts! If we turn our gaze from past myths and the more pertinent question whether anti-Jewish prejudice inhibited the Allied response to the Holocaust to the present, we can gauge how much things have changed for the better.

Right now Michael Howard is the most high profile Tory of all and Peter Mandelson runs him a close second on the Labour benches. Both are targets of (not necessarily unjustified) censure, but neither has been – publicly – attacked for his origins. This doesn't prove that Westminster and Wapping are prejudice-free zones, but indicates that we are moving in the right direction.

And à propos of movement: even Austria is inching forward into the Twentieth Century. Exactly a hundred years after he assumed the directorship, the Vienna Opera has named its ornate foyer the Gustav Mahler Saal! It proves the truth of the adage *Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima* (Austria will be the last in the world) □



Ben Helfgott reading the memorial over the command bunker of the Martyrs of 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (see p.12)

Profile

A volunteer in war and peace

Heinze (Jerry) Hoffman was born seventy-five years ago in Vienna, where his father owned menswear shops. Having completed *Untermittelschule* he went to a textile college till 1938. After the Anschluss he gained some months' practical experience in a weaving mill, but the need to emigrate became ever more pressing. He went to Italy and made abortive attempts to smuggle himself aboard a US-bound liner and across the Swiss border. At last, in the nick of time, he managed (with Quaker help) to come to England as an agricultural trainee.

He found work on the land less than appealing. However, when war broke out he wanted to join up immediately, but the pick-and-shovel duties of the Pioneer Corps struck him as so similar to agricultural labour, that he waited till aliens were admitted into the fighting services.

He joined the quaintly named Horse Artillery as a dispatch rider in a mechanised unit. Shipped to India, he transferred to the paratroops and did his practice jumps near the NW Frontier. He next endured three years of jungle warfare in Burma, an experience which he sums up with one word: Hell.

After demob he lived in Westcliff, where his parents, who had come to Britain on domestic permits, ran a boarding house. He began to work as a motor mechanic and this connection with cars eventually led to him being a self-employed driving instructor in London's West End.

In Westcliff, too, he met a girl who introduced him to *Yiddishkeit*, with which he had previously only had nodding acquaintance. Theirs was a give-and-take marriage. He learnt Hebrew prayers and she agreed to holiday visits to Austria, for whose mountain scenery he retains nostalgic affection.

Several years ago, with retirement looming, he took up the hobby of making scale models of famous buildings out of match sticks and cardboard; his accomplishments in this field earned him a mention in the local paper.

Latterly he occupies his time with voluntary work for AJR and – jointly with his wife – for JACs.

□ RG

Beth Shalom, an inspiration to AJR members



Stephen Smith addressing visiting AJR members in Beth Shalom Centre's memorial hall.

Stephen Smith, director of Beth Shalom, and his effervescent mother, Mrs Marina Smith, warmly welcomed more than a hundred AJR members on a visit specially arranged by David Jedwab and the AJR Events Committee.

The rationale behind the creation of the Centre, Stephen Smith explained, was as a focus for Holocaust studies rather than as a museum of its history. He described Beth Shalom as "a bridge from the past to the future, where the past does not get left in the past." Beth Shalom attempted to fulfil the twin objectives of providing a memorial place to the victims of the Shoah, while working for the creation of a caring society in which the rights of all individuals were respected.

Nothing in his Christian background had prepared him for the discovery, during a first visit to Israel, of Jews living in today's world, yet maintaining their ancient traditions. Knowledge of the Holocaust, which should have changed the Christians' age-old perceptions of the Jews, had, in fact, changed little.

Stephen described Christianity as a progenitor of European antisemitism. Consequently, the Churches had found the Holocaust too sensitive an issue to discuss, as it brought into question fundamental tenets of the faith. Their preference was to ignore the subject. Sig-

nificantly, few Christian groups had visited the Centre, though individual Christians had.

Following a delicious vegetarian lunch, the fine weather tempted many to explore the Centre's beautiful memorial gardens and the view over a luscious Nottinghamshire countryside, before entering the Centre's Holocaust exhibition which graphically illustrates the rise of the Third Reich and its persecution of the Jews.

AJR member Eric Kaufman, making his first visit to Beth Shalom, declared that Stephen Smith had established "a unique place, tucked away in a beautiful English landscape. Everything was done with great sensitivity to inform those who had to be informed, the younger generation in particular."

Jane Sigaloff, a member of that third generation, was relieved to find that Beth Shalom was not a conventional museum, but more akin to the home of a large family in a quiet setting which gave visitors the time to contemplate what they had seen.

Edith Arie, a survivor with a self-imposed duty to read Holocaust accounts and visit Holocaust education centres, thought the exhibits were very well presented. She found herself very moved by the love and effort of the Smith family.

□ Ronald Channing
(AJR's next visit 14 June 1998)

The camera doesn't necessarily lie

When Shelley called poets the 'unacknowledged legislators of mankind' he got it wrong. Consider: for 18 years Harold Pinter, John Mortimer, David Hare *et al* excoriated the Tories, and the electorate continued returning Thatcher and Major to Downing Street. No – poets and playwrights do not legislate for the man in the street.

What about film makers, though? In his magisterial study *From Caligari to Hitler* Siegfried Kracauer demonstrated how the output of the UFA studios reflected the popular mindset of the Weimar years; in films like *The Last Laugh* and *The Blue Angel* Emil Jannings was trapped in personal problems which, like the dilemmas besetting the Weimar Republic, seemed to admit of no practical solution. In place of rational ways out of problems filmgoers were fed a diet of Teutonic myths (*Siegfried*), Prussian costume drama (*Fredericus Rex*) and stirring war-time epics.

But if German cinema helped soften up viewers for what was to come, film makers elsewhere had the potential for mobilising anti-Fascist opinion. The Soviet film *Professor Mamlock* (based on the play by Friedrich Wolf) packed London's Academy Cinema for most of 1939. The same year saw the screening of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, the first Hollywood film with an unambiguous anti-Nazi message. With the outbreak of war long-veiled truths about the nature of Fascism could finally be spelled out on cinema screens.

The postwar years saw a regressive development, with Hollywood and other centres of film making engaged in selective whitewash operations. One beneficiary of this celluloid amnesia was Austria, a country disproportionately implicated in Nazi crimes. Now – thanks largely to *The Sound of Music* and *The Angel with the Trumpet* – the Austrians were perceived as dirndl-wearing, yodeling democrats. (One needs to add in fairness that the Austrian-made *Die Hasenjagd*, 1995, has corrected this image – but only among the discerning few!) An even grosser distortion of the truth lay behind the cinematic cliché that the recipients of Hitler's orders divided neatly into evil SS men and chivalrous Wehrmacht soldiers (Prime examples of

this genre were the British-made *Desert Fox* and the American *Cross of Iron*). For the past year or so the *Crimes of the Wehrmacht* exhibition has, at last, been stripping the coats of whitewash from the spurious knights in field grey.

Switzerland is, of course, another whitened sepulchre currently crumbling before our very eyes (which ought to remind us of Leopold Lindberg's *The Last Chance*, an indictment of Swiss war-time inhumanity filmed half a century ago).

But, for all its symbolic *cachet*, the country of Wilhelm Tell and the Red Cross cannot compare in importance with France, the greatest power under Nazi occupation. To substantiate its claim to a seat at the top table in 1945 France projected herself as a nation of *résistants*. How far this was at variance with the truth can be gleaned from the newsreel of Marshall Pétain's visit to Paris in February 1944. The crowd lining his route has reliably been estimated at half the population of the capital (and not much smaller than that which cheered de Gaulle's entry in August).

The ambivalence of the national record found exemplary expression in the career of one man, François Mitterrand – simultaneously a collaborator (and friend of war criminals) and *résistant*.

Now Jacques Audiard's film *Selfmade Hero* shows how a totally unremarkable young man who spent the war tied to his mother's apron strings, subsequently invents a resistance record for himself, and has a meteoric career in the postwar Establishment.

A prize winner at Cannes in 1996, *Selfmade Hero* is more than a tragicomic parody of Mitterrand's career; it is a comment on the Protean character of a country which, a century after storming the Bastille, sent Captain Dreyfus to Devil's Island.

□ Richard Grunberger

AJR Management Committee 1997/1998

At the AGM on Sunday 8 June 1997, the members proposed in the June issue of *AJR Information* for election to the Management Committee and as Trustees of the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain were unopposed and duly declared by the Chairman to be elected.

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Flashback to the appeasement years

Charmian Brinson, *THE STRANGE CASE OF DORA FABIAN AND MATHILDE WURM*, Peter Lang, Berne 1996, £38.

On 4 April 1935 the community of German refugees from Nazism in Britain was catapulted into the glare of publicity when the bodies of two left-wing exiles, Dora Fabian and Mathilde Wurm, were discovered in their flat in Great Ormond Street. The two women had taken poison. The case rapidly became headline news; rumours of Gestapo involvement in the deaths, of an ill-starred love affair of Dora Fabian's – at 33 much the younger of the two women – mingled with reports of covert anti-Nazi activity to create a cocktail of sex and politics eagerly exploited by the press. As Charmian Brinson's analysis of the press coverage shows, the reports in

the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* demonstrate a barely disguised resentment of foreigners, especially Jews who had the temerity to bring their political agitation to British shores.

A verdict of suicide from the coroner's inquest failed to halt the rumours of foul play by Nazi agents, especially given the transparent eagerness of the British authorities to play down the political aspects of the case and treat it as a 'harmless' suicide pact: the last thing the Government wanted was scandal that might upset its policy of establishing settled relations with Hitler.

Using a wealth of sources, Dr Brinson's vivid and painstaking reconstruction of the case explores the murky world of espionage and underground political activity where Nazis and anti-Nazis sought to out-intrigue one another under the watchful eye of Special Branch. Just before her death, Dora Fabian had been helping the official Special Investigator from Switzerland in his inquiries into the

case of the kidnapping of the anti-Nazi journalist Berthold Jacob by German agents. Jacob had been lured to Basel by Hans Wesemann, an ex-Socialist who had secretly gone over to the Gestapo, and had then been abducted across the border into Germany.

We also see the politician Fenner Brockway rubbing shoulders with the playwright Ernst Toller, the journalist and writer Rudolf Olden and his wife Ika crossing swords with the maverick Communist Karl Korsch, now revered as Bertolt Brecht's tutor in Marxism, but then the subject of angry criticism for the shabby and evasive role that he played, as Dora Fabian's lover, at the inquest into her death.

This is an academic book, and may not always suit the lay reader, but its re-creation of a *cause célèbre* of sixty years ago, complete with expert analysis of its political background, makes it a treat for the specialist.

□ Anthony Grenville

Ivory Ghost

Peter Müller, *GLOOMY SUNDAY*, Theatro Technis, NW1

Hungarian Jews are uniquely gifted. For evidence of this one need look no further than a list of Nobel Prize winners for Physics, or the annals of show biz, especially cinema.

Show biz having ill-defined frontiers, its roll of honour presumably includes the composers of popular hit tunes, aka *Schlager*. One of these allegedly facile tune-smiths was Rudi Seress, a Budapest coffeehouse pianist.

If Seress's name doesn't readily trip off the tongue of even pop aficionados the reasons are that he lacked a gift for self-promotion, and never left the confines of his native country. Even so, his *Gloomy Sunday* swept 1930's Europe, reached China and Japan, and was eventually recorded by the American singer Billie Holiday. I well remember singing along with *Gestern am Sonntag da dacht' ich Du kommst zu mir, Stand voller Sehnsucht erwartend vor meiner Tür* on Radio Vienna as a schoolboy.

That was all of sixty years ago. Imagine the skin-prickling nostalgia I felt on hearing the self-same tune intoned in English by three actor-singers at a fringe venue in Camden Town!

Gloomy Sunday is a play with music

depicting Seress's roller-coaster existence from his teenage years as a circus performer onwards. He subsequently settled in the vibrantly Jewish Seventh District of interwar Budapest and embarked on a life-long career of "tinkling the ivories" in a succession of bars and taverns. He fell in love with a married woman. When she left her husband for him, he reciprocated by leaving the faith of his fathers for the Catholic Church. Seress's hour of glory came with the composition of *Gloomy Sunday*, which poignantly caught the mood of Depression-hit Europe and brought him fame, but – for complicated legal reasons – little money. Meanwhile Fascism swept to power, and soon the pro-Nazi Hungarian government impressed him for slave labour duties on the Eastern Front.

Surviving by a miracle, he returned to war-torn Budapest and his less-than-faithful wife. The postwar communist rulers banned *Gloomy Sunday* as "bourgeois-decadent", but Seress stayed out of the '56 Uprising and the subsequent mass exodus. By 1968 the composer of the "suicide song" had grown so tired of his own life that he ended it.

All this was movingly – as well as entertainingly – conveyed in a production marked by all round professionalism. Every aspect of it – acting, direction, decor, the colloquially fluent English adaptation by AJR member Andrew

Merkler – deserves high praise. However, the accolade goes to Howard Samuels, actor/singer and trapeze artist, who carries the audience with him all the way by portraying Seress as half insouciant exhibitionist, half Chaplinesque *shlemiehl*.

□ Richard Grunberger

Dynamic dynast

Amos Elon, *FOUNDER, Meyer Amschel Rothschild and his Time*, Harper Collins, £20, 1996.

Meyer Amschel was born in 1744 in a filthy, malodorous street in Frankfurt. The town, a free city in the Holy Roman Empire, was at the height of its prosperity, a nodal point of commerce. In contrast, the Judengasse was one of the most disgraceful habitations in all Europe. The Russian writer Turgenev was appalled when he visited it; Goethe regarded it with horrified fascination. Having been born into this midden, the founder of a great financial dynasty, Meyer Amschel, refused to leave while other Jews were forced to live there; his wife Guttel stayed in their old dwelling for 37 years after his death, a 'queen' in her own right and mother of five famous sons.

Frankfurt led Germany in anti-Jewish legislation and punitive taxes and mixed

business jealousy with the most amazing chicanery. Jews were not allowed to leave the ghetto except with passes on business and then not more than two abreast. Any lout could stop them with the command *mach mores* (pay respect). Jews were not allowed to trade in silks or wines and were, in fact, confined to deal in the old clothes type of goods... or money-changing. Meyer Amschel opted for the latter, coupled it with a genuine interest in coin collecting, and would not rest until he became the *Schutzjude* – agent or factor – of a prince.

His patron and employer, the Landgrave of Hesse, was probably the richest man in Germany and another enthusiastic numismatist. Thanks to Rothschild his wealth grew even greater and the strictly legitimate profits were the foundations of the Rothschild business which was still in the main money changing; its corollary was currency speculation. (Within Germany alone innumerable currencies were circulating at the time).

Meyer Amschel made it family policy to intermarry his children with those of other agents/factors, and, where possible, cousins. This seems to have yielded positive results both from the eugenic and commercial points of view.

Eventually the sons became notables in the capitals of Europe and were involved in grand politics via finance. Just as the 'founder' facilitated the recruitment of Hessian troops for England's wars, the next generation of Rothschilds enabled the Duke of Wellington to continue his Peninsular campaign.

As to the origin of the name Rothschild, the author was unable to establish that it derived from a red shield; in fact Meyer Amschel's house – or hovel – was graced by a green one.

□ John Rossall

Speak memory

Elie Wiesel, *ALL RIVERS RUN DOWN TO THE SEA, Memoirs Volume One 1928-1969*, Harper Collins, 1996, £20.

Though the author describes this work as memoirs it does not strike one as autobiographical; it is a loose collection of memories rather than a classic memoir.

Wiesel imposes a superficial chronological order on his flood of reminiscences by devising chapter headings like Childhood, Darkness, Paris, New York and Jerusalem. But he lets sequentiality go hang and

branches out forward and backward, putting in stories, and even jokes, as they occur to him, and this method makes the book all the more interesting.

He is much preoccupied with God's 'part in the Holocaust', but as someone brought up in a Chassidic atmosphere, he is unclear as to how far he still clings to fundamentalism.

Still, he is no theologian. In fact, he has for some time been a Jewish grandee, having attained high French and American honours, as well as the Nobel Peace Prize. But he never looks back on his origins from the vantage point of a grandee. Wiesel was born in the Romanian-Hungarian border town of Sighet, which in spite of everything that followed has remained something of a Paradise Lost in his memory. Deported with his family to Auschwitz, he was sixteen at the time of liberation. Owing to a tragic misjudgment he lost his father in the last days and from then he faced the world alone.

With great good humour he describes his post-camp fortunes and misfortunes. In need of succour of all kinds he falls in love with every presentable Jewish girl he meets. But his Chassidic conscience makes him practically unable even to look at them. Still, at forty he won the great prize there, too ... a widow with a small daughter. Meanwhile the awkward, unworldly young man had stumbled through sometimes ridiculous situations and somehow become a prized, but often underpaid, journalist. We leave him on the way to transforming himself into a distinguished writer and an intimate of the great and the good of three countries.

I look forward to the volume to come.

□ JR

Musicmaker's memoir

Annette Saville, *LITTLE GRASS ORPHAN ANNIE*, (£2.50. from ROK)

This is a pamphlet-sized autobiography presented in the third person. It gives the writer's family background in crisis-ridden interwar Austria. The ultimate crisis was, of course the Anschluss, in consequence of which Annie lost – in addition to much else – the chance of completing her musical education. This loss she has only partially made good in the intervening half century.

Written with a young readership in mind, *Little Grass Orphan Annie* is an informative memoir □

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Please remember the AJR

Though we cannot take our worldly possessions with us, we can see that whatever is left behind goes where it will be appreciated, do some good and 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.



Letters to the Editor

BIASED BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Sir – Your April mini-editorial is hardly worthy of an historian. Do you really mean to justify and defend the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of East Jerusalem – highlighted by the BBC on March 10 – by listing the ills previously done to Jews? It isn't only the BBC that is critical of the Israeli Government's recent actions: certainly this Jew, as many others, would condemn them every bit as vigorously. Please don't accuse me of antisemitism!

Hugo Road
London N19
Prof. Leslie Brent

ANOTHER BOUQUET

Sir – I would endorse the ‘Bouquet’ in the May issue. I joined after having ‘piggy-backed’ on one of my friend's copies. I felt that I had received so much good information on pensions that I should join!

Lower Earley
Reading
Anne Selinger

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

Sir – It has been entertaining to be presented with Mr Schmerling's revisionist views. They are now becoming boring. To keep up my interest in the letters page would you perhaps consider publishing Mr Schmerling's ideas at yearly intervals?

Florence Road
London W5
H Adler

CRIMES OF THE WEHRMACHT

Sir – The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* published a large number of letters from ex-members of the Wehrmacht saying they fought an honourable war. I wrote to the Editor, pointing out that a few officers detailed to Theresienstadt picked some pretty Jewish girls and gave them the alternative to be ‘friendly’ or be sent to Auschwitz. One of the girls became pregnant and the officer promptly dispatched her to Auschwitz. My letter was not published.

Anonymous

KING CHRISTIAN X

Sir – Thank you for the short, but very warm article (actually *50 Years Ago* item, Ed) about our Queen's grandfather.

Vestergade, Randers
Denmark
Arne Vesrum

BELSIZE SQUARE JACS

To the regret of all present Stuart Willner retired from his chairmanship at the March AGM.

When JACS Belsize Square was established in October 1994, he became chairman of this new branch. Thanks to his outstanding work we built up a membership of a hundred.

The new Committee would like to express their thanks for all the effort he put into his work over two and a half years.

JACS
Belsize Square Chairman
Rolf Weinberg

DISTINCTION

Sir – How delicious to find Professor Wolfgang Rindler, arguably the most distinguished defender of Einstein's theory of relativity, among your readers' letters, (June 1997).

St Swithun Street
Winchester
Gertrud Walton
Editor, *Special Relativity Letter*

CHARLES WHO?

Sir – I am delighted to read in the June issue that cultural luminaries like Bach, Goethe, Henry James, Charles Ives, come to mind *at once*. Who is Charles Ives?

Aberdare Gardens
London NW6
Ezra Jurmann

The best known serious American composer. Ed

FROM DEICIDE TO RECONCILIATION

Sir – May I, as a non-Jewish, non-Christian Quaker attempt an answer to the correspondent's statement ‘I have never understood why the Jews have been blamed for the crucifixion of Jesus’.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that Jesus did *not* found the Christian faith; he was unquestionably Jewish in

every sense. The true founder of Christianity was Paul of Tarsus. Sadly, anyone who has read the Gospels must see that they are antisemitic, especially the fourth Gospel. It clearly blames the Jews for the death of Jesus and appropriates Jesus for Christianity. It speaks throughout of ‘the Jews’ as blameworthy and reaches absurd levels by stating that Jesus said at the last supper ‘as I told the Jews’ (John 13.34).

Therein is the heart of the dilemma which faces Christians, who, for the most part, *wish* to be reconciled with Jews: how to deny the validity of the Gospel of St. John without shaking the very foundation of the faith. It is almost impossible for Jews to point this out without provoking further antisemitic feelings.

Kilmarnock
Ayrshire
Charles Buckner

BETH SHALOM OUTING

Sir – We would like to thank the AJR Events Committee for arranging the outing to Beth Shalom Memorial Centre, which impressed everyone who took part. It was a very moving experience. The work done by Mr Stephen Smith and his family is quite outstanding and unique. We trust that as many ex-refugees as possible will visit this Holocaust Memorial Centre.

Cheviot Gardens
London NW2
Josie and Albert Dutch

RESEARCH

Sir – Prof Dr Erhard Roy Wiehn, of the University of Konstanz, is conducting research into the history and fate of German-Jewish communities and individuals. A great deal of work has already been done.

He would like to contact organisations or individuals engaged in similar work in this country, and in particular libraries to which he would consider supplying free copies of publications on a selective basis.

Clive Cottage
14 Clive Road
Esher, Surrey KT10 8PS
P Meyer BSc

NON-XENOPHOBE'S MAASTRICHT CRITIQUE

Sir – The UK's annual payment for EU membership is £9,000 million. It receives back – in the form of various supports – *only* £5,000 million. But there is worse to come: As a condition for joining the EMU the Bank of England must surrender

all its gold hoard (estimated value £500,000 million) to the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. That would pay for 100 new hospitals, 100 new ambulances, 100 new fire brigade stations, 100 new schools. Plus doubling the old age pension.

Harrow
Middx

R J Jaray

GOLAN BROUHAHA

Sir - The brouhaha about the Golan Heights and its fine wines (see April and May issues) is best explained by the Newtonian principle that every action causes an equal and opposite reaction.

Nobody had actually asked the Syrians to shell settlements, they took a calculated risk and lost, as did all the others in 1967.

In addition no boundaries are sacrosanct. Those of the Middle East are nothing but the figment of French and British imperialist imagination. If any alteration of boundaries were illegal, we would still have a Holy Roman Empire between France and Poland-Lithuania, with just a tiny Prussia. Maybe that would be better, but history decreed otherwise.

Ipswich, Suffolk

Frank Bright

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR, BETH SHALOM RESEARCH

Dear AJR member,

It has been a pleasure to have you with us here today, 1st June. I hope you have found it a valuable experience.

There is a little something you may be able to help me with. I am interested for my own research purposes in the religious experiences of refugees coming to this country. Of particular interest is the experience of Kindertransport children, and how their religious practice and belief may have altered or been altered during their unfortunate experiences. If you would like to contribute to this research, I would be interested in receiving a short summary of how your faith, belief and practice altered during this period of your life.

If you are interested in contributing, you could either just send me up to two pages outlining your experience or write to me personally for more details.

Holocaust Memorial Centre Stephen Smith
Laxton, Newark, Notts NG22 0PA

SEARCH NOTICES

Gleiwitz (Oberschlesien): Seeking anyone who has knowledge of KAUFHAUS GEBR. BARASCH (Gleiwitz), or who knew the owners of this store, **Salo & Salka Jacob**. Please contact Edgar Lax or Herbert A Keins (formerly of Vienna) at 8 Woodgrange Avenue, Kenton, Harrow HA3 0DX. Tel: 0181 907 2211 (reverse charges if out of London).

Philipp & Helene Kuhn (Metzgerei in Bamberg) were deported to Jungfernhof near Riga on the Nürnberg Transport of 29 November 1941. Their son Philip Kuhn would like to hear first or second hand accounts of life for Jews in Germany between 1938 and 1941, and more specifically from anyone with information about Jungfernhof, the various Reich Transports to Riga, or about Dachau KZ where his grandfather was incarcerated during November and December 1938. Box No. 1233.

Erna Haas (or Hass), former child refugee from the Nazis who lived at 12 Station Road, Keadby, in the Isle of Axholme, Lindsey, Lincs., and at another address before and during the 1939-45 war, is being sought by Veronica E Murphy who is researching a book on Keadby's past and wishes to include Erna's impressions of life there. Write to 2 Upper Brockley Road, Lewisham Way, London SE4 1SU. Tel: 0181 692 1057.

Dr Lothar Richter, who lived in Berlin and worked in the Ministry of Labour & Social Security or Social Insurance, believed to have left for Canada in February 1933 with a 3-year-old son. He or his family are being sought. Please write to Box No. 1234.

Kurt Dreifuss (pen name Offenburg), author/journalist from Frankfurt; daughter, Ruth; wife, Olga (divorced). May have emigrated to Australia. Anyone who remembers or has any information about him please write to his granddaughter Judith Hamilton, 12 Drury Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 7UX.

Joseph Schmidt, popular singer, (1904-1942). Author researching life and career for intended biography requests any personal recollections of him or of his uncle/manager Leo Engel. Photos, programmes and other mementoes safeguarded, photocopied and returned ASAP. M A Burns, 6 Knowle Croft, Ecclesall, Sheffield S11 9SR.

Elfrieda Rosenberg, née Naparstek, born Bad Salzbrunn, near Breslau, December 1930, daughter of Salma and Rislá Naparstek. Kindertransportee with 15-year-old sister Sara in June 1939, lived with West family in Stamford Hill in 1947 and subsequently reunited with her parents in France. Is seeking any information on her experiences as a young child and on those she lived with. 2/46 Oaleigh Road, Carnegie, Victoria 3163, Australia.

Dr Georg Quabbe (1887-1950), lawyer in Breslau 1915-1945, helped Jewish friends to emigrate, moved to Frankfurt after the war where he was involved in 'euthanasia' cases of Eichberg and Hadamar. Biographer Dr Werner von Rosenstiel requests information from Breslau survivors or their children. Please write c/o Karin Steinmann, Karlsruhestr. 110, 69126 Heidelberg, 06221/30225.

Georg Deutsch, fiancé of German film actress Renate Müller (1906-1937). Emigrated from Germany to London in 1930s. Author would be very grateful for any information. Please write to Sue Dyson, 76 Ryeworth Road, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham GL52 6LT.

Rachael Fraenkel, research student at University College, wishes to interview children of refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria (a background she shares) to hear their experiences. Please contact at the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT. Tel: 0181 381 2339 □

Paul Balint
AJR Day Centre

OPEN DAY

Sunday 13th July
at 2pm

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The AJR at Work

COUNCILLOR PRAISES AJR'S VOLUNTEERS



Councillor Barry Peskin presents a Certificate of Recognition award to AJR voluntary worker Uschi Batkin during National Volunteers Week at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre in West Hampstead.

Councillor Barry Peskin, Chairman of Camden's Social Services Committee, presented *Certificates of Recognition* at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre to AJR volunteer workers as part of National Volunteers' Week.

Councillor Peskin, who acknowledged the valuable contribution being made by volunteers to the welfare of AJR members, presented certificates to all those attending a specially arranged supper. As a seven-year-old lad, he recalled his father collecting two young Kindertransport girls from the railway station and bringing them into the family. This experience led eventually to his fight against fascism and intolerance and a life-long involvement in public service.

On behalf of AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman, his wife Susie stressed the importance of Councillor Peskin's presence since he played a key role in deciding how Camden's social services are run and developed, which directly affected many AJR members. AJR's Volunteers' Coordinator, Debbie Picker, said that this was the one time in the year when volunteer workers could share the limelight and accept the appreciation of organisations to which they so generously gave their help. AJR Director Ernest David thanked Councillor Peskin for presenting the awards.

A delicious buffet supper, prepared and served by the staff of the Day Centre, was enjoyed by everyone.

□ Ronald Channing

Discovering ancestors

Jewish Genealogy was the subject at a meeting of South London AJR. Theo Marx spoke about his researches for Jewish data in Germany. He and his family originate from the Rhineland, where Jews held high positions as landowners and judges until punitive taxes were imposed in the twelfth century, though life improved after the 30 Years War. Napoleonic rule was favourable to the Jews, many of whom travelled as cattle dealers and later as insurance

agents, then worked in research and the electrical and oil industries, changing their names to appear more German.

South London's own Ken Ambrose also described his experiences when re-discovering his family's roots with the aid of a suitcase full of memorabilia. The Wiener Library, Sternberg Centre and Jewish Genealogical Society were among those whose help he had obtained.

□ RL

SLAJR's next meeting is on Thursday 17th July at Prentice Road Synagogue at 2pm when the subject will be 'Revisiting my Birthplace'.

Training for new volunteers

Twelve recently recruited AJR volunteers took part in an induction training day, aimed to equip them with enough knowledge successfully to visit and befriend elderly and frail AJR members.

Long-standing volunteer Irene White, with good humour, recalled many of her experiences as a volunteer, dating back to 1941! Occupational therapist Juliette Bieber held a session on physical aspects of volunteering, including the assembly of and correct way to push a wheelchair. They also received guidance on common aids used, such as lifeline alarms and walking frames.

Psychologist Gaby Glassman dealt with some emotional issues which many elderly refugees face. AJR's Volunteers' Coordinator Debbie Picker covered the dos and don'ts of volunteering, including confidentiality, listening skills, insurance, and a session examining the volunteers' own hopes and fears □

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

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It occurs to me...

I am delighted that Matthew Parris has in *The Times* picked up a thought that I have been harbouring for years – “progress may lead backwards”. The word “progress” is a prime example of a word that often hides its meaning behind a cloak of reason. Parris suggests that the phrase ‘there’s no stopping progress’, whether met among gay extremists, Thatcherites or new Labour evangelists should be distrusted. It is as firm, and as brittle, as the crust on a *crème brûlée*.

I am not suggesting that time can stand still or that we would be better off if nothing ever changed. I am sure you did not or would not like to have lived when there was no electricity, no gas or water on tap, no radio, television or telephone, no motor car, aeroplane etc.

However, progress has not been achieved without a cost. The use of fossil fuel to produce power has led to global warming, whose long term effects we still cannot understand. Free supply of water in periods of drought has led to shortages, drying up of rivers, flooding of valleys to create reservoirs. Radio and television, besides providing instantaneous news and cultural entertainment, has also led to the diminution of the use of language, to people becoming spectators rather than participants and to the message that violence is a normal and acceptable aspect of life. The aeroplane has become a powerful weapon of war, while the motor car has killed more Israelis than have the Arabs.

Hospitals, corner shops, banks and many other services are continuously being closed in the name of efficiency which is the handmaiden of progress. The result is increasing unemployment. Don't get me wrong! I am not against change. Giuseppe di Lampedusa said: “If you want things to stay the same, things are going to have to change”.

I cannot offer a solution for preventing a diminution in the quality of life, since much change and progress, for example in medicine, is beneficial to all. All I suggest is that you do not be taken in and remember that “all that glitters is not gold”.

□ Ernest David

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JULY 1997

- | | | |
|-----------|----|---|
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| Wednesday | 2 | CELLO & PIANO DUO – Zoe Solomon & Robert Max |
| Thursday | 3 | THE SUNSHINE SINGERS |
| Sunday | 6 | A PARTY AFTERNOON – Dorothy Sayers (Piano & Accordion) |
| Monday | 7 | THE GEOFFREY STRUM & HELEN BLAKE DUO |
| Tuesday | 8 | OFFERSINGS FROM AOTEAROA – Shelly Alexander (Soprano) accompanied by Geoffrey Whitworth (Piano) |
| Wednesday | 9 | SUMMER MUSIC & SONG – Sue Kennett (Soprano) accompanied by Gordon Weaver (Piano) |
| Thursday | 10 | SONGS FROM MANY LANDS – Rev. Dov Speier (Guitar) |
| Sunday | 13 | O P E N D A Y |
| Monday | 14 | DANCES FOR VIOLINS – Ilya Ushakov (Violin) accompanied by Yaron Shavit (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 15 | SANG u. KLANG – Angela & Nicholas Arratoon – Diana & Elizabeth Legroux – Adam Kolozynski |
| Wednesday | 16 | CONCERT – CABARET – Primrose Powell accompanied by Andrew Wells (Piano) |
| Thursday | 17 | MUSICAL GEMS FROM THE PAST – Bernard Wilcox (Tenor) |

- | | | |
|---------------|----|--|
| | | Julia Beneti (Soprano) accompanied by Ron Wilson (Piano) |
| Sunday | 20 | DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 21 | IT TAKES TWO – Sue Moore (Soprano) & Mark Hansford (Baritone) accompanied by Tim Muller (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 22 | MY SONG OF LOVE – Katinka Seiner accompanied by Leslie Barnes (Piano) with Guest Artist Laszlo Easton (Violin) |
| Wednesday | 23 | DUO KINNOR ENTERTAIN WITH A POT POURRI OF MUSIC – Madeleine Whitelaw (Piano) & David Richmond (Violin) |
| Thursday | 24 | THE DULCET TONES |
| Sunday | 27 | DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Monday | 28 | TWO GIRLS & A MAN – Chiharu Kato (Soprano) – Daisuke Aizawa (Clarinet) accompanied by Misa Mashimo (Piano) |
| Tuesday | 29 | CONTINENTAL COCKTAIL – Helen Mignano (Soprano) accompanied by Sylvia Cohen (Piano) |
| Wednesday | 30 | ON WINGS OF SONG – Antonia Kendall (Soprano) accompanied by Justin Connolly (Piano) |
| Thursday | 31 | DEBBIE O'BRIEN AT THE PIANO |
| AUGUST | | |
| Sunday | 3 | RONNIE GOLDBERG ON GUITAR |
| Monday | 4 | IMMORTAL PIANO PLAYING – LAWRENCE ESTREY |
| Tuesday | 5 | THE GEOFFREY STRUM & HELEN BLAKE DUO |
| Wednesday | 6 | VOCE CAMERATA – Rachel Taite (Soprano) & John Taylor (Baritone) accompanied by Charlotte Ellis (Piano) |

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birthday

Kadisch. Debora - Mazeltov on your 90th birthday celebrated on the 8th June 1997 together with your daughter, grandson and granddaughter-in-law and great granddaughter, family and friends. Mrs Margaret Mager.

Kadisch. Debora - Belated congratulations on your 90th birthday. Health and peace. Your friend Lavra.

Marriages

Treitel-Rankin. The marriage has been celebrated in Chicago between David (third son of Kurt and Renate Treitel) and Rowena Rankin.

Deaths

Lazarus. Nelly Lazarus passed away May 11th 1997. Deeply mourned by her loving son George, daughter-in-law Helga, grandsons Robert, fiancée Maria, and Steven and all her loving friends.

Loebinger. Maria Loebinger, born Lodz, Poland 28.20.1908, formerly of Oslo Court, St John's Wood, died 22nd April, 1997 in Osmond House.

Wolfe. Max Wolfe, formerly Max Erich Wolf of Frankfurt-am-Main, departed this life 9th May 1997 aged 76 years. Greatly missed by Marie and Katherine.

In Memoriam

Jabson. Victor Jabson died 9th July 1965. Gratefully remembered by Oskar Wald's granddaughter, Ingrid Numa.

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Miscellaneous

Legacies. AJR expresses its appreciation to the estate of the late Charles Francis Worel for its generous donation in support of our work.

Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners. Please contact Peter Sinclair 0181-882-1638 for information.

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DIE SIEGBURGER FAMILIE LEVISON

A translation into English is being planned of the above work, written in German by Prof. Wilhelm Levison in 1945. Would anyone interested in receiving a copy in due course, and/or in contributing to the cost, please contact Peter Lobbenberg, 15 Spencer Drive, London N2 0QT. Daytime tel: 0171 430 9300, fax: 0171 430 9315.

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Art Notes

Still to be seen at the Annely Juda Gallery till July 19 *David Hockney* flower paintings and a set of 26 small portrait heads.

The British Museum has a variety of exhibitions at present. The Weston Gallery of Roman Britain, opening on July 7, will show *Treasures from Roman Britain*. Many are recent archaeological discoveries not previously on public display, such as a particularly well-preserved early 4th-century building façade from Meonstoke in Hampshire and the amazing 5th-century hoard from Hoxne, Suffolk, containing jewellery, silver plate and thousands of coins in mint condition.

Also at the British Museum *Printmaking in Paris: Picasso and His Contemporaries* until September 14 in Room 90.

The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, 1997 Exhibitions from *The Royal Collection* until July 13, *Views of Windsor* and from July 23 till October 5 of *Masterpieces in Little, Portrait Miniatures*.

The National Gallery is showing *Cranach: A Closer Look* till September 7. The National Gallery's eight paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder, form the largest representation of any German painter in



Venus and Cupid by Lucas Cranach the Elder, at the National Gallery, London.

the collection. In this exhibition, they are joined by three paintings by Cranach on loan from Copenhagen.

The National Portrait Gallery is showing *Clifford Coffin: The Varnished Truth*. Photographs from *Vogue* 1945-1955 till September 28.

The Royal Academy is having its summer show, the largest contemporary art exhibition in the world, which has been held every year since 1769 □

SB's Column

An elegant actress. Anton Chekhov's plays are well-known. Far less known is the fact that his niece Olga (born 100 years ago) was a beautiful and successful film actress. Olga Tchechova, who was acquainted with the atmosphere of Tsar Nicholas' court, had studied acting in Moscow and arrived in Berlin penniless after the Russian revolution. In a hectic film career she acted in over 200 pictures, such as *Nora* and *Bel Ami*. After a number of personal tragedies (her daughter died in an air crash) she embarked on a second career, founding a cosmetics firm.

The Kalbecks. As an assistant to Max Reinhardt, Paul Kalbeck in the twenties and thirties directed works by playwrights as different as Eugene O'Neill and Von Hofmannstal. His son Florian Kalbeck

spent the Nazi years in Switzerland, studying at Basle.

Moving back to Vienna, he worked as a theatre administrator, drama school teacher and TV script writer. He also published the novel *Haus der Schwestern Lipsky* before dying last summer, aged 76.

Within the framework of the Twelfth London Jewish Film Festival yesteryear's stars of German-Jewish comedy were presented at the National Film Theatre. They included Ernst Lubitsch and Siegfried Arno, both of whom went to Hollywood, where Arno could be seen alongside Greta Garbo in *Ninotchka*, her last film.

The Merry Widow. 92 years after its première, Franz Lehár's masterpiece (whose librettist Viktor Leon died hiding from the Nazis), is achieving glory: the Royal Opera House will stage it at London's Shaftesbury Theatre from October with Thomas Allen, Felicity Lott and Lesley Garrett in the lead parts □

Concert call

Melvyn Tan with the New Mozart Ensemble, Sunday 21st September at 3pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall

Guest artiste at this year's AJR concert, once again at the popular Queen Elizabeth Hall, is pianist Melvyn Tan. Playing with him are the New Mozart Ensemble in a programme of Haydn, Mozart and Jonathan Dove.

Singapore-born Melvyn Tan was only twelve when he left to continue his studies at the Menuhin School in Surrey under such distinguished teachers as Vlado Perlmutter and Nadia Boulanger.

From 1980 until last year, Tan devoted his professional career exclusively to the harpsichord and to the fortepiano, a description reserved for 18th and early 19th century pianos with the distinctive tone and smaller sound made from wooden frames, thinner strings and smaller hammers. More recently, Tan has added a modern Bösendorfer to his keyboard collection and Grieg and Ravel to his repertoire.

In 1991 Tan formed the New Mozart Ensemble, bringing together some of the country's most versatile musicians whom he directs from the keyboard. The Ensemble performs using both period and modern instruments and has rapidly established a formidable reputation.

AJR's Concert programme will be Haydn's Symphony No. 12 in E, Mozart's Piano Concerto in E Flat, K271 and his Piano Concerto in A, K414. Also being performed is the intriguingly entitled 'An Airmail Letter from Mozart' by Jonathan Dove, a work premiered by Tan and the NME at New York's Lincoln Centre. □ RDC

Tickets are available from the AJR Box Office at £11, £14, £16, & £18. Please send your order with SAE to AJR, 1 Hampstead Gate, Fognal, London NW3 6AL.

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('Solution' to the above in next issue).

Heartland of European Jewry

Impressions of a visit to Poland
by Ronald Channing

Warsaw

As I enter Warsaw, 'Never Again Holocaust' proclaims the surprisingly unexplained banner borne aloft by a column of demonstrating students parading through one of Warsaw's main shopping streets – surrounded by no-nonsense police in riot gear. Warsaw had been the capital of a communist country where the Soviets' 'Palace of Culture' still dominates the skyline. Unavoidably, my first impression is of a characterless townscape of anonymous, grey, lego-like public buildings standing privately off wide avenues and wind-swept squares with few people in evidence, though some relief is proffered by the national theatre, museum and several fine Catholic churches. The streets are occasionally enlivened by jam-packed modern trams, busy cars, street markets and proliferating Western advertising signs. Warsaw's old town close by the Vistula River, which after its total destruction in the war has been faithfully reconstructed using old pictures of the quarter, recaptures its former medieval charm and reclaims Polish national pride.

A visit to the Jewish Historical Institute, which holds Dr Emanuel Ringelblum's clandestine archives of the Warsaw Ghetto and other unique records, proves a non-event as this year the displays are closed for refurbishment. Warsaw was, in 1939, home to the second largest Jewish community in the world, after New York, with 380,000 Jewish inhabitants, four large synagogues and more than 1,000 stiebls. The Institute has ambitious plans to record their lives and vibrant culture, commissioning the designer of Beth Hatfutsot Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv and the Holocaust Museum in Washington to create a new Jewish Museum. Today Poland's Jewish population is anywhere between 10,000 and 30,000, if Jews registered as Catholics are included!

The Erev Shabbas service is held in the lofty Nozyk Synagogue. The Chazan chants the traditional evening prayers and the black-hatted Rabbi *davens* in unison. Though the congregation is small, for me the pages of time are turned back and the shul echoes with the memories of a



Nozyk Synagogue

packed congregation and their lost souls. I say a quiet Kaddish. Three weeks earlier an arsonist severely damaged the synagogue's main entrance; Polish antisemites are said to imagine the presence of tens of thousands of Jews in their country. The 'kosher' restaurant nearby offers a warm haven, traditional fare and pleasant company. Karl Tessler, a Jewish actor from Birmingham making films in Warsaw, joins our table.

Later that evening at a meeting in our hotel, newspaper editor Dr Turski faces an uphill struggle to keep the group alert enough to appreciate his keen analysis of the position of Jews in present-day Poland. Significantly, the Polish Senate has enacted legislation that could herald the return of Jewish communal property in line with the post-communist privileges of other religious groups.

Snow begins to fall the following morn-



Prof. Jacob Guttenbaum

ing as we walk into the Warsaw Ghetto, in October 1940 an area demarcated for the incarceration of the Jews of Warsaw and others rounded up by the Germans from neighbouring towns. By November as many as 450,000 people were crammed into this very small area without any means of sustenance and isolated from the rest of Warsaw within high walls. By the end of 1941, 100,00 Jewish men, women and children had perished from hunger and disease. On 22nd June 1942 an order for 'resettlement' was issued by the Germans and every dwelling was systematically and forcibly emptied of its occupants.

Our guide is Professor Jacob Guttenbaum, one of just a few hundred Ghetto survivors, short in stature, wrapped against the cold, with a jaunty beret on his head and a twinkle in his eye. As a lad of 13 he sold cigarettes to workers returning to the Ghetto at night after a day's work for the Germans. He showed us memorial stones, each recalling the name of one of the Jewish fighters who on 19th April 1943 began an heroic struggle, with few arms, to resist the Germans in a near-hopeless uprising which, nevertheless, held out for six weeks.

Professor Guttenbaum recalled he and his mother preparing a basement bunker in anticipation of the impending uprising. First they were flooded, then the houses were set on fire by the Germans which nearly choked them to death. They lay concealed for two weeks before being discovered and led away at gunpoint. His mother asked a soldier if she 'needed her papers as a teacher' (that is whether they were going to live or be shot there and then) but, unlike most others, they were not transported to Treblinka.

The Ghetto uprising's command bunker – preserved as a mound crowned by a memorial stone – I found extremely moving. Mordecai Anielewicz, the young man who led the uprising, began the Jewish fightback at this place, choosing to die as a free man, rather than surrender and perish as a slave.



Israeli schoolchildren at Umschlagplatz

By 1943 the Ghetto had largely been destroyed: in addition to all those who died within its walls, more than 300,000 others were transported to Treblinka and murdered. At *Umschlagplatz* on the north-western edge of the Ghetto, a memorial marks the area from which 5,000 to 6,000 Jews a day were crammed into train waggons. A group of Israeli schoolchildren stand at the memorial site proudly holding the national flag which proclaims the Jews' ultimate victory over Hitler, but at what terrible cost!

□ (to be continued)

The names they are a-changing

When Vienna's neo-Gothic Votivkirche was built in the mid-nineteenth century, the adjoining square was named *Maximilianplatz*. Maximilian I, known as *der letzte Ritter*, the last knight, was a prominent Habsburg king. Nostalgia for the 'chivalric' Middle Ages was a common phenomenon in the nineteenth century, and no-one much cared that in 1496 Maximilian accepted 4,000 guilders from the Carinthian and Styrian estates as purchase price for an edict that expelled all Jews from their provinces.

In 1919, the Square was re-named *Freiheitsplatz* (liberty square); this reflected the disenchantment with the Habsburgs after the debacle of the war. The freedom of the First Republic only lasted 15 years. In 1934 and as a result of the Austro-fascist *putsch* (followed by the assassination of the chief *putschist* in an abortive Nazi *putsch*) the square became the *Dollfussplatz*. This name was to last only until 1938, when – predictably – a Nazi bigwig found himself the godfather of a prominent square. That bigwig was none other than Hermann Göring. As in 1919, the renaming was a deliberate insult to the *ancien régime*, which in this case included the Catholic Church.

The *Hermann-Göring-Platz* was hastily renamed *Freiheitsplatz* in April 1945, a return to the name of 1919. But only a year later the name was changed yet again, to *Rooseveltplatz*. On the surface of it, a curious change, since it was not the US Army, but the Red Army, that had liberated Vienna. But *Joseph-Stalin-Platz* would not have gone down too well with the adaptable Viennese, who realistically calculated that if you have to suck up to an occupying force, it was more profitable to suck up to the Americans.

□ *Adi Wimmer*

Forthcoming exhibition

The Austrian Exile Library, Vienna, is mounting an exhibition on exiled authors of childrens' books under the title *Papagei, Mamagei and Bambi*. It will be opened on December 4 at the Literaturhaus, Vienna. For further information contact Dr Ursula Seeber, A-1070 Wien Seidengasse 13. Tel +43-1-526.20.44-20, Fax +43-1-526.20.44-30 □

Franconia's 'Jerusalem'

My wife and I (and others) were invited by the Oberbürgermeister to visit Fürth in Bavaria, the town of my birth. Fürth is unique in German-Jewish history, with Jews having lived there uninterrupted since the Middle Ages. (Unlike neighbouring Nuremberg it never expelled its Jews). Until the Nazi period all three major religions lived in remarkable harmony, so that some Jews called it the Franconian Jerusalem (the town being in the Franconian province of Bavaria). It had an early Jewish printing press, the first Jewish orphanage in Germany, and Jews financed many public buildings, such as theatres, hospitals and even churches.

I was 12 when I left Fürth, where my ancestors had lived since before 1750, and it was with some apprehension that I accepted the invitation, but like all the others in our party we were glad we had come. While many of the now older generation undoubtedly were enthusiastic Nazis, there is also no doubt that the Mayor and all who participated in the two-week event were very genuine in their friendship and in their regret of past events. The best example of this is the case of a Mrs Blume, a non-Jewish lady who was widowed in an accident as a result of which she receives a reasonable pension. She therefore decided to devote herself to a cause which would give her most satisfaction and chose the restoration and maintenance of the town's Jewish cemeteries, partly destroyed by the Nazis, which had contained 6,000 graves. This has taken her five years so far, and as a result she was able to show me 17 graves of my ancestors (the oldest dated 1785) together with photographs for me to keep. This she did not only for me but for many descendants of those who are buried there.

We arrived on the anniversary of VE Day. For the whole subsequent month special display units in various parts of the town showed different episodes of what the Nazis did to the local Jews. The most poignant example occurred on our visit to the former orphanage now housing the only remaining synagogue. In our party was Mr Halmon, formally Hallermann, from Israel. His father was the last head of the orphanage and he was offered the opportunity to emigrate. He, however, refused to leave without all the orphan children, and when this was turned down he stayed with his own two younger children, letting the two older leave for

Palestine. He, together with his two children and 37 orphans, was finally deported and gassed. The street has been renamed Hallermannstrasse and a large display unit showed a photo of Mr Halmon's little sister together with the names of all those murdered. One can imagine his feelings.

My own experiences were also quite emotional. I found where I was born, where I lived, and my (Jewish) school which now houses the community offices. Visiting the apartment where we lived I noticed that the owner of the top flat still had the same name as 60 years ago. We rang the bell, and the eldest son of the then owner, who now lives there with his wife, and over coffee and cakes filled us in on some of the events in the building in the intervening years.

Fürth's current 200-strong Jewish community – part postwar East European, part Russian – has many problems. The rabbi (from Beersheba) speaks reasonable German, but little Russian. The Russians can't read Hebrew and have poor German, on top of which the Jewish origin of some is in doubt.

Since their arrival though, there are sufficient men for services to be held on Friday night and Shabbat, which we attended, followed by splendid kosher meals provided by the community.

Fürth municipality are planning a large Jewish museum which will occupy a complete multi-storey building and is due to open this year. I hope to go to see it.

□ *Walter Ingram*

LIVING WITH THE ENEMY

BBC-TIMEWATCH wishes to hear from German-Jewish refugees who had contact with GERMAN POWs in BRITAIN. Were you one of their captors, guards or translators? Please contact Sallyann Kleibel, BBC-TIMEWATCH, Room 5435, White City, 201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TS. Tel: 0181 752 6752

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Cooking with Gretel Beer



Zwetschkenknödel

(Plum dumplings)

Any visitor to Vienna with a 'sweet tooth' should make a bee-line for the nearest bookshop and buy *Das Süsse Wien* by Werner Meisinger, the most wonderful guide to Vienna's *Konditoreien*. It not only tells you where to find 'legendary' *Buchteln* – straight from the oven at 10 p.m. and the best *Guglhupf*, but also where to look for the largest selection of *Zuckerln* (practically every type of sweet from acid drops to pralines – all sold by weight) and the most spectacular ice cream buffet with fireworks. In addition to all this there's a good selection of traditional Viennese recipes from which this 'classic' for *Zwetschkenknödel* (plum dumplings) is taken:- (Makes about 20 dumplings. Quantity of flour varies slightly according to water content of potatoes).

20 medium-sized plums
 ¾kg (27oz) floury potatoes
 50g (2oz) butter
 220g (8oz) plain flour approximately
 50g (2oz) semolina
 2 egg yolks
 20 small lumps sugar

For the coating:

100g (3½oz) butter
 120g (4½oz) fine breadcrumbs
 vanilla sugar, cinnamon

Wash the plums, push out the stones with the handle of a wooden cooking spoon and replace with lumps of sugar. Cook potatoes in their skins, peel and push through a potato ricer onto a floured pastryboard. Make a small hollow in the centre of the potatoes, add egg yolks, semolina, flour and melted butter and work to a dough. (The recipe also advocates the addition of a pinch of salt, but I find this unnecessary). The dough

should be compact, but not sticky – according to the water content of the potatoes, the quantity of flour may vary. (If it is too firm, add a little extra melted butter).

Leave the dough to 'rest' for 10 minutes. Roll out the dough on a floured pastryboard to about 1 cm thickness and cut into rounds of about 10 cm diameter. Put plums in centre and wrap the dough firmly around each plum. Drop into boiling salted water and simmer gently for 10 – 15 minutes.

Melt the 100g butter and add the breadcrumbs to brown together with vanilla sugar and cinnamon. Drain dumplings and serve sprinkled liberally with the browned breadcrumbs and dust with extra icing sugar □



Irene White, who has celebrated her 80th Birthday, is as active as ever in her communal work and continuing to produce the greatly appreciated recordings on tape of each issue of AJR Information for the benefit of AJR's visually handicapped members. May she continue to do so for many years to come.



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Obituary

MORITZ ROLL

Dr Moritz Roll's charm and consideration, allied to a deep understanding of their individual problems, was appreciated by his patients for over 40 years.

He was born in 1901 in Kimpolung, (Austria-Hungary) and graduated MD at Vienna University in 1926.

On emigrating to Great Britain in 1939 he stayed at the Kitchener Camp, Sandwich, and was later interned on the Isle of

Man. Subsequently he obtained a medical post at a War Emergency Hospital in the Midlands, afterwards joining a private practice there. After the war he moved to Leeds and continued to serve the community until his retirement at the age of 85.

Moritz was a committed Zionist and co-founder of the first JNF Fellowship in Leeds, as well as a member of AJR. His lifelong love of music, which he shared with his wife, encouraged their only son Michael to take a musical career and become a renowned international concert pianist. He is survived by his wife Grethe, son Michael and his family □

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - JULY 1997

- Mon 7 *Gemütlisches Beisammensein*, End of season get-together with Club 43, 8pm
- Tue 8,9 **The Cemetery Club: Bittersweet Comedy** by Ivan Menchell. Stars Rep. Co. Macabbi House, Compayne Gdns, NW6 at 8pm, £6
- Tue 15 **Jewish Arts & Crafts in the 20th Century: Dr Ran Sapoznik**, Director of Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy, Jewish Museum, Camden Town, £4, 6.30pm
- Thur 17 **Revisiting My Birthplace: Members of South London AJR** speak of their experiences. Prentice Road Synagogue, Streatham, SW16, 2pm

Ongoing **The Life & Times of Miriam Moses and Hannah Billig, The Angel of Cable Street:** Jewish Museum Finchley until 14 Sept
Jewish Carpets: Jewish Museum Camden Town until 14 Sept

ORGANISATION CONTACTS
 Club '43, at Belsize Square Synagogue. Hans Seelig 01442 254 360
Jewish Museum, 129/131 Albert Street, Camden Town, NW1 7NB. Tel: 0171 284 1997, and at Sternberg Centre.
Sternberg Centre for Judaism, 80 East End Road, Finchley, NW3 2SY. Tel: 0181 346 2288

50 YEARS AGO

TRUSTEES OF AN HERITAGE

For the first time since the 'dispersion', since the collapse of German Jewry, the delegates of the organisations representing Jews from Germany in Belgium, Brazil, France, Holland, Palestine, Switzerland, Uruguay, the United States and Great Britain, as well as the representatives of Jews in Germany, met in conference to discuss problems and difficulties common to them all.

The President, Dr Leo Baeck, opened the proceedings. He said the Council for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany, was the trustee of a great responsibility. It represented the right of the dead and the living. The Council was a trustee of a spiritual heritage and of the responsibility of the future. It was a tragic moment when Dr Baeck said that the history of the Jews in Germany had come to an end.

The principal question which occupied the Council, restitution, stood in the centre of the discussions □

AJR Information, July 1947

Yom Ha'Shoah commemoration

The annual commemoration of the *Shoah* and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was again this year organised in London jointly by the Yad Vashem Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Polish Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association and the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women. Eldred Tabachnik, the Board's President, said that no country should ever discriminate against citizens on its territory for reasons of race, religion or colour. Among others who addressed the gathering were the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy, the Israel Ambassador Mr Moshe Raviv, and Dr Leon Kurzer, Chairman of the Polish Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association □

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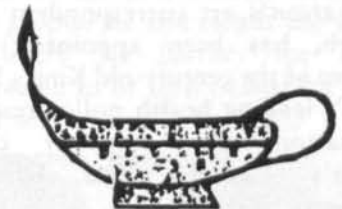
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NEWSROUND

Sorry records

Documents released by the Public Records Office indicate that Britain knew of the mass killings of Jews in the USSR as early as 1941, partially due to Bletchley Park's cracking of the Germans' *Enigma* code. The documents detail the murder of one million Jews and others by the *Einsatzgruppen*, mobile killing squads, which followed the Wehrmacht's invasion of the USSR.

Grand larceny

US Under-Secretary for Commerce Stuart Eizenstat called Nazi Germany's transfer of \$400 million of looted gold to the Swiss National Bank "one of the greatest thefts by a government in history". The trade "had the clear effect of supporting and prolonging Nazi Germany's capacity to wage war".

SS's Swiss accounts

A secret SS account was maintained in *Crédit Suisse*, Switzerland's second largest bank, to hide the origin of gold and money plundered from Holocaust victims, according to Geneva's *Sonntags Zeitung*. Former East German documents showed that the bank dealt directly with the SS towards the war's end when the atrocities committed by Hitler's elite murder unit were known.

Doctor's orders

Rabbi Julia Neuberger, daughter of *AJR Information's* art correspondent Alice Schwarb, has been appointed chief executive of the century-old King's Fund, Britain's leading health policy research organisation. She currently chairs London's Camden and Islington Community NHS Trust.

Right's growing support

France's far-right National Front won only a single seat in the National Assembly, but secured an increased 15% of the total vote during the recent elections. Incoming socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin pledged to continue to fight the NF.

Honour

Dr Viktor Frankl, the 91-year-old founder of logotherapy (an Auschwitz survivor), has been elected an honorary member of the Austrian Academy of Science, a unique honour he shares with Cardinal Koenig of Vienna.

□ RDC

Tales from Benz

In a Wiener Library lecture, Dr Neil Gregor of Southampton University discussed the relationship between the German car, truck and arms manufacturer Daimler-Benz and the Third Reich. The lecturer had unrestricted access to the company's archives and to those of Deutsche Bank, a leading shareholder in the company.

In 1933 Daimler-Benz began a rapid recovery from the depression by increasing armaments production, and the company continued to profit from Germany's military expansion (which by 1939 represented 65% of its total output) throughout the Nazi period.

By 1944 millions of forced workers from all parts of Europe were working in Germany under appalling conditions. Concentration camp inmates were also used to dig huge caves for dispersal of in-

dustrial production. "These people were literally being worked to death," Dr Gregor commented. In his view German industry was neither forced to produce arms, nor to use such a work force. Companies themselves actually made requests for slave labour.

Though Daimler-Benz continued to expand both production and profits, in wartime the company was increasingly concerned with the long-term results of Nazi policy. Though realising in the winter of 1942 that the war was lost, Daimler-Benz carried on its brutal exploitation of slave labour, involving Jews, Russians and other foreign workers.

(This reporter would caution any lecturer who relies on reproducing extracts from his PhD thesis. The expert needs to clarify the subject by steering a course through the massive documentation in order to arrive at some conclusion and then to transmit this to his audience).

□ Ronald Channing



Marcia Goodman

New Head of Social Work

Marcia Goodman has joined AJR as Head of its Social Work Department. She takes over a well-established team with specialist knowledge of the concerns and problems of Britain's Jewish refugee community.

Marcia, who is a Mancunian, graduated from Manchester University in 1963 to begin her social service career in the London Borough of Camden, then broaden her experience with Southampton and Dorset local authorities. In 1993 she joined Jewish Care.

In her new appointment Marcia is planning to extend the caring and professional services provided by AJR for its members.

□ RDC



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