

AJR *Information*

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£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

A craving for poison
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Honorary Jews

These are not to be confused with the Nazi-designated 'white Jews', i.e. scientists who refused to subscribe to the nonsense of 'Aryan Physics'. When, in '68, the French authorities called Danny Cohn-Bendit a foreign agitator, thousands of students took to the streets chanting 'we are all German Jews'. In a less facile assumption of Jewish identity the late Ted Hughes, Poet Laureate, was wont to describe himself as a Holocaust survivor. What lay behind this self-characterisation was his father's psychic scarring in the Great War, and the suicide of Sylvia Plath, as well as of his second – part-Jewish – partner □

Reflections on the Wye Accord and its possible consequences

The peace caravan trundles on

Abba Eban once described Menachem Begin as 'the dark at the end of the tunnel'. Eban had a rare gift for aphorisms – he dubbed Chamberlain's Britain a 'brollygarchy' – but his judgement on Begin was somewhat half-baked. The latter embarked on the futile invasion of the Lebanon, yet he also made the breakthrough peace with Egypt at the heavy cost of handing back Sinai.

Benjamin Netanyahu seems cast in the Begin mould. He, too, perpetrated egregious mini-Lebanons, but is to be recommended on concluding, in the face of last-ditch opposition, the Wye Plantation Agreement which takes the Oslo-initiated peace process forward on its obstacle strewn path.

This interim agreement is one in which there are no real losers – except Hamas who now come under CIA surveillance. There are, of course, self-perceived losers, primarily the West Bank settlers, whose intransigence can only point in one direction: Armageddon.

Just as Netanyahu's cabinet intermingles politicians – in the sense of politics being the art of the possible – with purblind zealots, so Netanyahu is himself a mixture of ideologue and pragmatist. Rightwing Zionism is in his 'genes', since his father was a disciple of Jabotinsky's. His intermittent pragmatism stems from acute awareness of Israel's closeness to America (where he himself lived for a while). The link is so intimate that at times the fortunes of American presidents come close to hinging on Israeli compliance with their plans. This had tempted Netanyahu into what is best described as a tail-wags-dog ploy. Feeling unduly pressured by Clinton to make concessions, he has drawn close to the Republican opposition in Congress. However, the backlash against the Starr Report, prefiguring the Republican fiasco at the mid-term elections, seems to have brought him back to the path of sanity.

The Wye Accord has already played a small part in altering the American political landscape. In Israel Netanyahu's apparent volte-face has redrawn the faultlines separating the Likud and Labour blocs, and

has rendered the old maps – not only of the West Bank, but also of the political landscape – obsolete.

All this is happening at a time when the geopolitical pattern of the entire Middle East is highly fluid. In the area of the Palestinian Authority Arafat and Hamas are locked in battle to the death, and in Jordan King Hussein is battling death. On the other hand, in Iran the Ayatollahs are facing their Taliban enemies outside, and modernisers inside, the country. In Turkey the secular Establishment have seized the initiative from the Islamicists, and have scored a foreign policy success by forcing Syrian President Assad to lose face by abandoning the Kurdish insurgents.

Although the Middle East is still highly volatile, it can now be said that it is a safer place at the end of 1998 than it was at the beginning of the year □



Life or Theatre? The work of Charlotte Salomon is being exhibited at the Royal Academy of Art until 17 January 1999.

Profile

The gift of tongues

According to a disdainful aphorism of Somerset Maugham's, only card-sharps and diplomats are fluent in several languages. Ewald Osers' distinguished record as a translator mediating between English, the tongue of his adopted homeland, and an astonishing variety of European languages, refutes that proposition. Born in Prague in 1917, into an affluent, German-speaking Jewish family, Ewald and his younger brother were largely brought up by their mother, the daughter of Austria-Hungary's first Jewish high court judge, after the early death of their father.

Ewald's mother's family name was Anders. It had been 'Abeles', but when her father became a high court judge it was suggested to him that he should change his name, so he called himself 'Anders'. A further promotion would have required him to change his religion, which he refused to do.

Educated in the legendary culture of Prague Jewry – his father had met Kafka, and Franz Werfel and Max Brod were old boys of his school – Ewald studied chemistry at the German University in Prague. But in spring 1938 antisemitic harassment drove him from Prague; he was admitted as a doctoral student at University College,



Ewald Osers

London, thanks to the intervention, life-saving as it turned out, of Professor Heyrovsky, Czech winner of a Nobel Prize for chemistry. During the war, his mother was deported to her death; his brother, however, survived Theresienstadt and deportation to Poland.

When war broke out, he got a job at the BBC's Monitoring Service, where he enjoyed a distinguished career, working on highly important confidential material both during and after the war, and rising to become Assistant Head of Department before

his retirement in 1977. His great love, however, was translating. Alongside a formidable number of books translated from German and Czech into English, he has established a pioneering role as a distinguished translator of Bulgarian and Macedonian poetry. Among the many offices he has held are those of Chairman of the Translators' Association and the Translators' Guild, Vice-Chairman of the Institute of Linguists and leader of the British delegation to four World Congresses of Translators.

He has been showered with prizes and honours for his literary translations, including the Schlegel-Tieck Prize for the best translation from German, 1971, the European Poetry Translation Prize, 1987, and most recently the Kafka Medal of the Masaryk Academy of Arts, Prague. Besides important works of history, biography and philosophy, he has translated from German such eminent writers as Reiner Kunze, Rose Ausländer and Thomas Bernhard, as well as the correspondence between Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Jaroslav Seifert, Miroslav Holub and Ivan Klima from the Czech.

Ewald Osers lives with his wife Mary, whom he married in 1942, in the delightful Thames Valley surroundings of Sonning Common; they have two children and two grandchildren. He remains creatively active in his long and productive 'retirement'.

□ Anthony Grenville

Peace in our time?

Prof Barry Rubin of Bar-Ilan University, cutting through confused thinking and misinformed opinion, presented a clearly argued and timely analysis of 'Projects for Peace in the Middle East' at an Institute of Jewish Studies lecture given at University College London. He spoke during the later stages of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations hosted by the USA at Wye Plantation in Maryland.

Professor Rubin pinpointed key factors influencing the Israel-Palestinian relationship, including the fact that more significant changes had taken place in the last eight years in the Middle East than in the previous half century. In addition, the dissipation of pan-Arab nationalism, the collapse of the Soviet Union and its decline as an Arab ally, the weakening of the more radical régimes, and the shift of Arab states

towards Israel had brought diminishing support for the PLO.

The 1993 Oslo Agreement was, in his view, "of tremendous importance". While recognising that every step agreed at Oslo had been delayed, progress had been made. Palestine elections had been held and won by Arafat and his supporters, and Israel had withdrawn from parts of the West Bank and Gaza, though the Palestine Authority had notably failed to achieve a deal with Hamas.

The greatest setback had come in 1995 with the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, followed by an escalation in attacks carried out by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Terrorism, he pointed out, was carried out by people who did not want the peace process to succeed – indeed they had set out to wreck it. Binyamin Netanyahu, on the other hand, favoured the pursuit of peace, but on his own terms and

within his interpretation of the Oslo accords. Nevertheless, Prof Rubin proved rightly confident in predicting that an interim agreement would be reached in the USA and a second Israeli withdrawal accomplished. The achievement of a final status agreement, however, was quite another matter.

In Prof Rubin's opinion, the Palestine Authority, with up to 2.8 million people within the territories, faced an uphill task, not least because the Arab world now gave the Palestinian cause lower priority. The past decade's strengthening momentum towards an Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement had led to agreements being achieved only through incredibly tough negotiations. As both sides needed a peace agreement, in Prof Rubin's analysis, neither was prepared to walk away from the process established by the Oslo accords.

□ Ronald Channing

A craving for poison

The fact that Yevgeni Primakov, Russia's top Arabist and special envoy to Saddam in the run-up to the Gulf War is a Jew, has shocked many people. They find it hard to conceive of a Jew having a mindset geared towards accommodation with a lethal madman bent on wiping out Israel.

The most plausible explanation of the Primakov phenomenon is that the KGB-trained Intelligence specialist long ago shed the last vestige of Jewish identity. It is a curiosity of history that there has never been a dearth of individuals of pronounced Jewish identity who found a *modus vivendi* with Jewbaiters.

The prime example of the species was the conductor Hermann Levi, who rendered invaluable assistance to Richard Wagner at Bayreuth – for which he was recompensed with antisemitic jibes. Levi, nonetheless, wrote to his father, a provincial rabbi, that Wagner was far removed from petty antisemitism (*kleinlichem Rischbes*).

The climax of the fraught relationship between composer and conductor occurred at the première of *Parsifal* in 1882. Wagner balked at letting a Jew conduct a work 'imbued with Christian symbolism', but had to entrust the launch of the opera to Levi's baton at the insistence of King Ludwig of Bavaria, his financial backer.

Wagner's major contribution to anti-semitic ideology was his assertion – in *Judaism and Music* – that Jews lacked any true creativity, and infiltrated cultural life merely as clever copyists with an eye to the main chance. (A similar view was expressed early in the twentieth century by the Jewish-born Protestant convert Egon Friedell. His *Kulturgeschichte* depicts the Jews as agents of corrosive rationalism which destroys faith and rots the cultural fabric.)

From Judeophobia as *the* central Wagnerite tenet it seems a far cry to T S Eliot's occasional antisemitic excesses (*pace* 'The rats are underneath the pile/The Jew is underneath the lot'). But Eliot also argued in a public lecture that '*freethinking Jews should be kept beyond the city*'. Even so Leonard Woolf (Virginia's Jewish husband) disarmingly labelled Eliot's antisemitism as the conventional prejudice of the Edwardian middle-classes.

But antisemites not only had Jewish collaborators, imitators and trivialisers like the aforementioned – in one wartime instance a Jew(ess) literally saved a Jewbaiter from

the firing squad. The man concerned was the Vichy propagandist Drieu le Rochelle whom his Jewish ex-wife hid in the immediate aftermath of Liberation (when many collaborators were summarily executed). When, several months later, Drieu left his hideaway, he mistakenly thought that the executions were continuing, and committed suicide.

It has been said of French collaborators like Drieu that they were the only ones in Europe with literary talent. The most talented of that coterie was, without doubt, Louis-Ferdinand Celine. Celine indulged in hysterically boundless Judeophobia, viewing the League of Nations, Wall Street, the City of London and the Kremlin all alike as Jewish-dominated. In 1935 he raved about native French writing being 'crushed' by Jewish imports à la Vicky Baum, Rosamond Lehmann and Virginia Woolf. Two years later he published a genocidal diatribe with the self-explanatory title *Bagatelle pour un massacre*.

In 1944 the retreating Germans considered him so important that they evacuated him back to the Reich together with Pétain and Laval. From Germany he managed to reach Denmark – and the Danes delayed complying with French extradition demands till he no longer faced retribution.

In the 1950s this wayward, not to say psychopathic, literary genius desired nothing more than acquittal on charges of collaboration and an opportunity for writing.

His legal, as well as literary, rehabilitation was greatly helped by the US academic Maurice Hindus, author of a critical study on Celine. Additional support for his re-admission into the literary pantheon came from the novelist Philip Roth and Prof George Steiner. Readers will, perhaps, not be surprised to learn that Hindus, Roth and Steiner are all Jews.

□ Richard Grunberger

\$90 million insurance fund

Six leading European insurance companies are establishing a \$90 (£54) million humanitarian aid fund for Holocaust victims. The companies' records will also be re-examined to identify victims' unpaid policies.

The agreement was reached in London by the international commission – chaired by former US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger – representatives of World Jewish Congress, US insurance companies and the six European companies □

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Review

A dream come true

Heiko Haumann (ed.) *DER TRAUM VON ISRAEL. DIE URSPRÜNGE DES MODERNEN ZIONISMUS*. Beltz Athenaeum Verlag, Weinheim/Bergstrasse, 1998. Pp. DM58.00.

With the specific aim of establishing an academic link between the 1997 centenary of the First Zionist Congress and the 1998 Golden Jubilee of Israel, the History Department of the University of Basle carried out a special project of research into the origins of modern Zionism.

Professor Haumann's keynote paper takes the form of an analysis of the arguments for and against political Zionism at the time of its conception, and the conflicts of opposing ideologies which have continued throughout its first century.

That Herzl was by no means the only one to dream of his people's return to their ancestral soil is a well-known fact. Less well-known is that not all these dreamers were of the Jewish faith. Indeed, a number of his helpers (and predecessors) were devout Christians. This historical phenomenon is the subject of an essay dealing with the attitude of Basle's citizens towards the ten Zionist congresses held there. Some of the opinions expressed were predictably hostile. Others displayed belief in the "prophetic promise to the Jewish people that they would regain their once-lost Holy Land". Some descendants of Jewish converts to Protestantism were active as 'Friends of Israel' without any apparent missionary purposes, although the hope that *returning* to Judaism would be a preparation for *turning* to Christianity cannot have been absent.

A quite unusual 'Christian Zionist', the Swiss physician Titus Tobler, aimed to establish a 'Christenstaat' on the soil once trodden by his Saviour. Such an evangelically orientated entity was to be established by means of a "peaceful crusade". Tobler evolved into an authority on the Holy Land, which he came to know rather better than Herzl ever did.

The reaction of Jews and non-Jews in other European countries, particularly Tsarist Russia and Austro-Hungary, to the proposed return to Zion is the subject of several essays. One of these describes how the reborn love for Zion in the increasingly unattractive Pale of Settlement was captured in Abraham Mapu's novel, the first full-length work of fiction written in mod-

ern Hebrew. Published 50 years before the 1897 Congress, this book acted as a catalyst for Zionism as a cultural East European movement, to which Herzl gave political substance in West European terms.

At the time of the first Basle Congress a number of East European *olim* were already struggling to survive in Palestine.

Other subjects covered in this collection include a new and fascinating look at the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and an evaluation of the concept of the *bodybuilding* Jew versus his *effeminate* counterpart.

At a time when some aspects of Zionist history are being questioned by revisionist historians – and Jewish ones at that – it is important for anyone concerned with this subject to be able to rely upon the impeccable objectivity displayed by Professor Haumann and his team.

□ David Maier

Personal and collective drama on the silver screen

Jeroen Krabbé *LEFT LUGGAGE*
Artur Brauner *FROM HELL TO HELL*

Chaja, the young heroine of *Left Luggage*, pursues a somewhat rackerety lifestyle in 1970s Antwerp. She has left home to dabble in student radicalism and casual affairs. Occasionally she visits her quarrelling Holocaust survivor parents, one of whom can't let go of the past while the other tries to blot it out via frenetic housewifely routine.

Tired of drifting, Chaja takes on the job of a nanny to a prolific Chassidic family, and enters a strange ambience which attracts and repels her in almost equal measure. There she eventually works a minor miracle: her solicitude and youthful high spirits make a sensitive little boy, who, reacting to his father's intimidating sternness, had retreated into tongue-tied silence, 'recover' speech.

In the process she, too, is transformed and recovers her own authentic self. Although the film ends with a funeral, the tragedy is offset by Chaja's re-integration into the Jewish world.

Over and above this emotionally draining, and yet dramatically satisfying, finale *Left Luggage* has several strengths. It's starry cast is headed by Isabella Rossellini who brings tremendous authenticity to her role as uncomplaining, overburdened

Chassidic wife. It is directed by Jeroen Krabbé, a Dutch half-Jew for whom the film constituted a labour of love. It also depicts Antwerp's Pelikanstraat as contemporary Europe's last *shtetl*, whose denizens ritually rend their garments at funeral, and where the pre-Passover burning of *chometz* forms as much part of the street scene as Guy Fawkes' bonfires do in our season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.

But the film also has discernible weaknesses. Its portrayal of dysfunctional Holocaust survivors' families sometimes teeters on the edge of the grotesque, while at moments of crisis in the heroine's life a preternaturally benign and wise old Jew (Chaim Topol) offers her Talmudic consolation and gobbets of folk wisdom.

Left Luggage is currently showing in selected N. London cinemas.

The basic plot device of the German-Belorussian co-production *From Hell to Hell* goes back to the reign of King Solomon: the quarrel of two mothers claiming the same child. The film focuses on a little Jewish girl entrusted to a Polish couple by parents facing deportation from Kielce. Miraculously the latter both survive – she as a slave labourer, and he, after a daring escape from a camp, as a partisan.

On the strength of his resistance record he becomes the postwar police chief of Kielce, where his wife also resurfaces. Desperate for the return of her daughter she encounters a little stranger, and meets with the hysterical hostility of the 'foster mother'. This individual hostility is subsumed within the collective poisonous illwill the townspeople bear Jewish survivors claiming their property back. It all ends horribly in the Kielce pogrom, which claimed fifty Jewish lives a year after the Holocaust. At the end of the film the fifty victims' names fill the screen.

No one would deny that the film makers had their hearts in the right place. Where, though, were their heads? At times their childish approach to the *sujet* beggars belief. Thus they indicate the outbreak of war by showing the carefree inhabitants of Kielce dancing in the town square on 1 September 1939, and being dive bombed by German planes.

Earlier the – obviously Disney-trained – scriptwriters have the two pairs of newlyweds coincide at the photographer's studio and decide on a joint wedding photo! (As if in 1930s Poland the gulf between Catholics and Jews could have been bridged so easily!)

But even these defects don't weigh as

continued on page 5

A saint for the Holocaust?

Perhaps the recent canonisation of Jewish-born Edith Stein as St Benedicta of the Cross is a genuine attempt by the Pope from Krakow, John Paul II, to further reconciliation. Indeed, Edith appears to be the first 'Jew' to be so honoured since the earliest days of Christianity.

This creation is intended perpetually to enshrine her acts of charity and her ethnic origins within the ambit of Catholic veneration. It demonstrates the Church's acknowledgement of the Holocaust as being directed primarily at the Jews. To underscore this intent, the Pope designated August 9th, the saint's day of "the Martyr Saint of Auschwitz – the daughter of Israel", for Catholics to commemorate the loss of the six million.

Less charitably, it can be argued that the canonisation is but an ill-advised attempt to deflect criticism of centuries of Christian antisemitism, culminating in the heinous crimes being committed against Jews, gypsies and other victims of the Final Solution, by Germany throughout the conquered territories and, more specifically, Pope Pius XII's refusal to declare moral outrage in opposition to them.

Edith Stein was born on Yom Kippur 1891, the seventh child of a devout Jewish family in Breslau, Germany, though her father died when she was only two and her mother had then to spend time running the family's timber business. Judaism had little appeal for the acculturated and assimilated Edith, who provocatively declared her atheism at the age of fourteen.

Following studies in psychology at Breslau, she entered into the realm of phi-

continued . . .

heavily as the overall wrongness of the film's tone. For the last seventy years the impact of films has depended as much on what the audience hears as what it sees. Here cinemagoers hear three distinct groups of people – Germans, Poles and Jews – all speaking undifferentiated German.

That is far from satisfactory, but what compounds the offence is the use of a colloquial, snappy Prussian variant of German. To hear a Polish-Jewish police chief refer to his subordinates as 'meine Jungs' and a Polish peasant assure fugitive Jews 'wir werden die Sache schon schaukeln' strikes a jarringly false note. □ RG



Edith Stein

losophy at Göttingen where, as one of the few women to gain acceptance, she was able to demonstrate her brilliance. Both academic problems and unrequited love were confided to an unfinished biography, revealingly entitled *Life in a Jewish family*.

While Edith served as a volunteer Red Cross nurse in World War I, colleagues fell in combat, leaving her lonely and disillusioned. Stein revealed little about her motivation for converting to Christianity in 1922. Refused immediate entry into a convent, she nevertheless imposed the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience on herself and taught at Catholic institutions.

Consequent to the Aryan racial laws of 1933, Edith lost her teaching post. While her mother was prepared to leave Germany, Edith entered the Carmelite convent in Cologne as a novice nun, known now as Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Her anti-Nazi abbot was denounced by a subordinate, Pater Herman Keller, who turned a deaf ear to her pleas for sanctuary in a Bethlehem convent. Keller, in all likelihood spying for both Germany and Egypt, was himself transferred to the Middle East.

After Kristallnacht, asylum was found for her at the Carmelite convent in Echt in neutral Holland. After the occupation Edith desperately sought permission for refuge in a Swiss convent, thwarted only by the intransigence of the church to which she had pledged her allegiance. The Dutch bishops' condemnation of the deportations brought retribution when Jewish-born nuns and priests were arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Westerbork transit camp on 2nd August 1942, among them Edith and her sister Rosa, who had also converted. From there they were sent to Auschwitz and murdered on 9th August, hardly sufficient time for a saintly 'angel of Auschwitz' to care for many of the sick and dying. □ Ronald Channing



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Letters to the Editor

GROMBRICH'S BLOTTING PAPER

Sir – Instead of heading Professor Sir Ernst Gombrich's letter with "Brickbat" would an apology by the Editor not have been more appropriate?

Cheam
Surrey

Inge Trott

Sir – Emancipation in the second half of the nineteenth century released the pent-up intellectual and cultural potential of European Jewry, locked in their 'synagogue and shtetl' prison. The resulting explosion of creativity and enterprise reverberated throughout the Western world. If they, and succeeding generations, avidly absorbed what they found around them 'like blotting paper', what is wrong with that?

Grunberger chides Gombrich for being what he calls an 'elitist Austro-Jewish escapee from his Jewish heritage'. A strange resentment. Would he have wanted him to detect a specific Jewishness in Schoenberg's music, Kafka's writing, Mendelsohn's architecture, Einstein's physics? Like Goebbels and Rosenberg did?

Grunberger finds Gombrich's view invalidated by the existence of the rich Yiddish culture of a long list of writers, from Gebirtig to Scholem Aleichem, who chose to remain in the cosy warmth of the shtetl. I fail to see the logic in this assertion.

London NW3

Rudolf Strauss

Sir – According to Richard Grunberger (October issue), Gombrich's recently published lecture discounted the Jewish element in Austrian culture. The lecture turns out to have been restricted to the Jewish contribution, specifically to the visual arts, specifically at the *fin de siècle* and specifically in Vienna. Gombrich states that this particular contribution was relatively small. I assume that he knew what he was talking about – art history being his field of expertise. The lecture reveals a definite uneasiness about being non-religious but still recognised as Jewish but that is another matter.

In the circumstances, Grunberger's listing of the substantial contributions of Viennese, non-Viennese and non-Austrian (e.g. Canetti,

Celan) Jews to other fields and/or at other periods is irrelevant and rather reminds me of the traditional Burns night toast "Here's tae us, Wha's like us?" However, I agree with him (and disagree with Gombrich) that the influence of Jews on culture in general has probably not been unrelated to shtetl attitudes, i.e. respect for learning, albeit of a narrow kind.

Ruislip,
Middx

G Curzon

Professor Gombrich's lecture, as published by the Austrian Cultural Institute, refers on p24 to Schubert, Bruckner and Brahms, and on p26 to the interwar philosophers Moritz von Schlick and Rudolf Carnap. Ergo it was not confined to the visual arts at the fin de siècle. In addition, the distinction between Viennese and other Austrian (in the Habsburg sense) Jews is spurious. Did Joseph Roth's Galician birth make him anything other than an Austrian (aka Viennese) Jew? Told that it did, he would surely spin in his grave. Ed.

EXTORTION PRECEDED EXTERMINATION

Sir – It seems to me that to rob the Jews was the Nazis' guiding principle before they decided to commit the perfect crime by doing away with the bodies of the victims.

The reason why so many Jews were released from concentration camps just before the war (and why they had been taken there in the first place) was that they had to pay a ransom to the Gestapo before being allowed to leave the country.

Those spared such experience but who wanted to emigrate "at all cost" had to pay *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (escape tax), some 20,000 US dollars.

Once the war had started and foreign opinion didn't matter, they took every possession from those left behind or found in occupied Europe. Therefore, when the Germans mention the billions they have paid out since '45 I would like to remind them that this is peanuts in comparison with the material value of the proceeds of extortion and robbery.

Ipswich
Suffolk

Frank Bright

REICHSFLUCHTSTEUER

Sir – The office of the German Chancellor Kohl wrote to me recently in answer to a request for extension of the second claims deadline of December 1969.

(Claimants living in the eastern parts were excluded under the Federal Republic's claim to be the legitimate successor of the Reich).

The Chancellor's office wrote that it would be prejudicial to extend once more the deadline of 1969. The actual word used was *benachteiligend*.

The Thuringian state law offices, however, wrote that the time limit for appealing against *Reichsfluchtsteuer* was 1944. Enough said!

New Barnet, Herts

KG Speyer

PROTEST

Sir – May I draw your attention to a report in the *Daily Telegraph* according to which "Spielberg's Holocaust archives could replace memorial in Berlin".

As a 94-year-old contributor to the Los Angeles archives I am horrified at the thought of endangering those irreplaceable memories of around 50,000 survivors of the Shoah. Those archives should forever be kept in a place safe from antisemitism!

What do your other readers think about this?

Wembley Park, Middx

Mrs H Heim

THE PHILOSEMITE, THE JEW AND THE ANTISEMITE

Sir – Would Strindberg now see Jews as world citizens, free from bigoted patriotism? Some attitudes currently expressed within and on behalf of Israel are to the contrary, whether based on the biblical promise or having their origins in the fear of a fresh holocaust.

Either way – "What price emancipation now?"

Chalfont St Giles
Buckinghamshire

Alan S Kaye

THE AJR FLEDERMAUS

Sir – Having read the critical letter in the November issue I must write and say how much we enjoyed the performance of *Die Fledermaus*. It was beautifully done, as was the funny 'intermezzo' with Hinge and Bracket.

We thank all the performers and the orchestra.

London, SW18

Margaret Kahn

HALLENSER

Sir – In pre-Nazi days 1,300 Jews lived in Halle (Saxony Anhalt). At the invitation of the Mayor 36 Hallenser recently returned to the city for one week to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Crystal Night.

The programme included a visit to an exhibition about Halle's Jews, an official reception at the Town Hall, discussions with school pupils, a visit to both Jewish cemeteries and a Friday evening service at the synagogue.

In 1989 the Jewish congregation numbered a mere seven. It is now just over two hundred, but as it consists almost exclusively of Russians and Ukrainians, it is also the end of an era.

The visit was a moving experience for many and an attempt to build a bridge between the present and the past.

London
NW3
Gerald Holm

AJR WITHOUT R

Sir – May I suggest a new title for our organisation: "JACOB". The Acronym stands for Jewish Association of Continentally Originated Brits. It rolls off the tongue quite easily, though firmly in my cheek.

Furthermore, we could ask Lord Jakobovits to be our patron, and be known as Jacobites.

As an ex-refugee, ex-Kindertransportee, ex-Austrian, let me now make a serious suggestion: ACJ – Association of Continental Jews.

May your correspondents never have anything more serious to concern them than to be referred to as refugees, as though it were a term of abuse.

Uxbridge
Middx
E Fisher

BANKING (MAL)PRACTICE

Sir – The Midland Bank advised me about a year ago that they are discontinuing their earlier practice of monthly written advice setting out (a) German DM amounts received and (b) their rate of conversion applied. This, in my opinion, is not only bad banking practice but also precludes one from checking the correctness of the figures, conversion rates, etc. involved.

The problem now is what, if anything, to do about Midland's discontinuance of their earlier practice over many years which, they now state, they had been under no obligation to facilitate in the first place.

Name and address withheld

SAINSBURY TRIBUTE

Sir – Lord Sainsbury of Drury Lane who died recently aged 96, did a great deal of philanthropic work. One example of this was his setting up of a hostel for about 20 Jewish refugee children in Putney in 1939. Lord Sainsbury took great personal interest in our welfare. Even after our wartime evacuation to various homes this support, including financial help, continued.

Some years later we invited Lord Sainsbury to a special function to thank him. He was very touched and maintained contact with some of us for a long time afterwards.

Hatch End
Middx
Erica H Plaut

AFTER THE FATWA

There is an alternative and less optimistic view of the political changes in Iran.

Since the Foreign Secretary has succeeded in obtaining a partial modification of the Fatwa on Salman Rushdie we can now have more normal and friendly relations with Iran and much needed trade. Has anyone considered how much more difficult this is going to make any decisive and effective action against Iran's nuclear bomb?

Mallwyd
Powys
Manfred Landau

Stolen Austrian savings

Austrian banks expropriated thousands of accounts belonging to their Jewish clients after the *Anschluss*, according to the Holocaust Educational Trust. The chairman of the *Oesterreichische Postsparkasse* (PSK), while accepting no responsibility for funds which had been taken by the Nazis, has published details of 7,000 dormant accounts and announced the setting aside of £120,000 to meet genuine claims.

A copy of the list can be referred to at the AJR office. The names of lawyers in New York and Vienna possessing the relevant expertise and willing to act for potential claimants are also available, though it would appear that the PSK may be dealt with directly □

AJR's key role in distributing UK funds

British Government funds, made available earlier this year to provide immediate help for Holocaust survivors and refugees living in this country, should have been distributed to 825 eligible applicants in the UK, each of whom receives a timely and welcome allocation of £400.

Administration of the scheme, which included answering the hundreds of enquiries and evaluating applications against the Government criteria, was carried out exclusively by the AJR's own Social Services Department on behalf of the six Jewish relief organisations involved. Once authorised, each individual payment was subsequently made by the Board of Deputies.

The AJR was among the first to appreciate the urgency of meeting the needs of elderly and often isolated people before the onset of winter weather, and consequently pressed vigorously to overcome any unanticipated delays in forwarding the payments.

In addition to a significant number of members of the AJR and other co-operating organisations who have now benefited, on virtually every working day new enquiries are made at the AJR office from as many as five former refugees and survivors in all parts of the country, many of whom have only tenuous connections with the Jewish community. As applications from those meeting the criteria continue, AJR Chief Executive, Michael Radbil, is actively considering applying to Anthony Layden at the Foreign Office for additional funds in order to provide similar assistance and meet these equally deserving needs.

With the support and good offices of Swiss Embassy Minister Robert Reich, payments from the Swiss Humanitarian Fund have been passed to the World Jewish Restitution Organisation (WJRO) for distribution. These include the UK's allocation of some £220,000 which is to be disbursed on a similar basis as the UK fund. It is anticipated that the continuing interest of the AJR on behalf of members, allied to pressure from other communal organisations and the *Jewish Chronicle* (see interview with AJR Chief Executive 30th October) will bring about a satisfactory result.

□ RDC

AJR Reports

NORTHERN AJR

Jewish art

Despite Manchester's atrocious weather conditions, some 40 members attended an illustrated talk intriguingly entitled *The Shocking Tradition of Jewish Art*, given by Jon Dyson. He suggested that over the centuries the Torah's Second Commandment (Thou shalt not make for thyself graven images...) was a custom often ignored, if not flouted. Jon Dyson's erudition fascinated this knowledgeable audience which also enjoyed another social success.

□ Werner Lachs

MIDLANDS AJR

Made to last

Leon Jessell MBE JP, guest speaker at the Midlands Group, talked about his many years experience of working in the manufacture of different kinds of leather goods. He demonstrated how purses, handbags, satchels and golf club cases were made and showed samples of the types of leather that were used. A most informative and enjoyable afternoon was had by everyone.

□ EG

The piano

Amanda Palmer, a graduate of Trinity College of Music, began entertaining members at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre more than five years ago, singing initially with Marek Dabrowski at the piano before she turned to accompanying herself.

Amanda shared a flat with a couple who had a piano, but when they moved, naturally they took their piano with them. In response to Amanda's predicament, Hannah Goldsmith, who arranges the Day centre's much-enjoyed daily entertainment programmes, thought that the AJR should reciprocate by placing an advertisement in *AJR Information* for a piano that was no longer in use. Hannah was delighted to receive a response from the daughter-in-law of the late Else Nathan, an AJR member who loved playing the piano and accompanying singers. Donated in memory of Else Nathan as a generous tribute to the work of the AJR, her piano will continue to play its melodies and accompany singers as a much appreciated gift.

□ HG

Heartfelt appreciation

For the past 3½ months, since breaking my leg, I have had the good fortune to receive AJR's Meals-on-Wheels. They have been a real life-saver as I was unable to cook for myself.

This is the third time that I have benefited from your wonderful service. I have now recovered sufficiently to prepare meals again and would like to say thankyou, from the bottom of my heart!

□ Marion Kreindler



Recipients of AJR Information on tape.

A most rewarding job

It is nearly fifteen years since I started taping *AJR Information* for visually disabled members. Initially, they were only names to me, but very soon they became my friends. Those unable to speak to me on the 'phone, whether in Bournemouth or Australia, answered on tape. Placing a rubber band round the cassette when it was returned to me signified that I should listen to it and enjoy their conversations and many requests.

After recording my first *AJR Information* onto tape, I confess that on playing it back I dozed off. As I didn't want to send our clients to sleep, I recruited some of my friends to join in the reading, thereby providing a variety of voices.

Though I am now getting older, I would like my many friends to continue to enjoy listening to *AJR Information*, so I am asking for some help. The basic requirements are a good, warm and sympathetic voice, and reliability. In all, it takes about six to eight hours a month and I will gladly train and help you, as well as supply all the tapes and wallets. Age and gender are unimportant; wheelchair or home bound people can do it just as well. I guarantee that it is one of the most rewarding jobs imaginable, so if you think that you may be able to volunteer help, please call me, Irene White, on 0181 203 2733 □

NEWS FROM OTTO SCHIFF HOMES

Currently undergoing major refurbishment, Osmond House Residential and Nursing Care Home in The Bishop's Avenue, when completed (phase I is due for completion by Spring 1999), will offer 49 single rooms, each with full en-suite facilities.

Osmond House specialises in caring for the elderly mentally frail, in particular those with Alzheimer's Disease or with other forms of dementia. Staff have received special training both to appreciate the Jewish way of life and the continental culture of most of the residents, as well as to care for people who may be confused or have distressing memories.

The new and up-to-date design being introduced at Osmond House will provide a more homely atmosphere which, together with all the latest equipment and facilities, will help to offer the very best in care. The AJR is making a major contribution to facilitate the financing of this much needed and worthy project.

□ LW

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
presents the

ZEMEL CHOIR

Lighting of last Chanukah candle

Sunday 20th December
at 3.15pm

Entrance £5 including tea by ticket only
Contact Sylvia, Renée or Susie

AJR 'Drop in' Advice Centre at the

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6 3RL
between 10am and 12 noon on the
following dates:

Tuesday	1 December
Wednesday	9 December
Thursday	17 December
Tuesday	22 December
Thursday	7 January

and every Thursday from
10am to 12 noon at:

AJR, 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Frognal,
London NW3 6AL

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

HOUSE DOCTOR

Shingles is not in itself a serious illness, though it can be uncomfortable and in some cases painful. Caused by the same virus responsible for chicken pox in children, it is a re-activation of this virus which never completely went away.

Patients suffer from red itchy spots in a line around either half of their body, or down one limb, and in common with childhood chicken pox, the rash becomes itchy and scabby before fading in about two weeks. In a proportion of patients, most of whom are elderly, the pain can last for longer periods and be extremely uncomfortable, but there are drugs which offer alleviation if prescribed in the early stages.

Shingles can be transmitted if the recipient has never had chicken pox or is extremely weak or unwell from treatments such as radiotherapy. It cannot be transmitted to anyone else by contact.

While shingles can be extremely painful, it is not life-threatening. Very rarely, shingles may indicate some damage to the body's immunity by a disease not yet apparent, so it is always advisable to consult your doctor. Though no treatment is available to prevent shingles, any inherent pain and discomfort can be significantly reduced.

□ Dr Max Bayer

Dr Bayer is unable to enter into any personal correspondence.

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... Viewpoint ...

Light years

The First World War takes much of the blame for challenging the senseless sacrifice of millions of proletarian lives on the battlefield, for liberating women from a permanently inferior, disenfranchised and domestic-servant-cum-procreator status, for rattling down the staid social structures and privileges of the nineteenth century's ruling class, for licensing public house opening and closing hours to safeguard munitions' manufacture and the war effort. From it also derives the tradition of 'putting the clocks back' or 'forward', as the equinox dictates, no doubt to save on scarce energy and maximise daylight working hours, to become what is known as Summer Time.

Continental time – should we now be more PC in saying 'European time'? – is one hour in advance of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), admittedly pretty troublesome for all those earnest business types regularly scuttling through Eurotunnel to Paris, Brussels and beyond on expense accounts, prepared to sacrifice all in the battle for the nation's wealth creation, kitted out for their European campaigns with mobile phones, faxes and laptop computers.

What if we were to tear ourselves away from declaring GMT as God given, irrevocable and hands-off because it's British. Just accept, if you will, that the Charles II inspired, Wren-designed observatory, with its navigation and chronometer-based history and naval Empire-designated zero line of longitude which still passes through Greenwich (no doubt against the envy of less happier lands), plays a sufficient role in providing visiting schoolboys with the delight of straddling it to place one foot in each hemisphere.

Retaining British Summer Time would significantly reduce road casualties – particularly those of children returning home from school, lower the incidence of crime, boost trade and tourism, lift the gloom of winter afternoons and save some £250 million in energy costs. Unfortunately, opposition to this reform is still provided by the Scots who imagine themselves bound to myths of land and nature, and have yet to master the knack of getting up at any time which suits and returning themselves to the bedchamber in a similarly calculated action, whatever time the clockface displays.

□ Ronald Channing

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

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Call Sylvia Matus – 0171 328 0208

Afternoon entertainment programme –

DECEMBER/JANUARY 1998/99

Tue 1 Karen Grace, soprano and Joan Oates, piano
Wed 2 HOUNSLOW COMMUNITY OPERA
Thur 3 Amanda Palmer, opera
Sun 6 Sue Kennett, soprano and Gordon Weaver, piano
Mon 7 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 8 Marek Dabrowski, piano and Amanada Palmer, soprano
Wed 9 Opera Pops, accompanied by Margaret Gibbs, piano
Thur 10 The Eddy Simmons Duo
Sun 13 TEA DANCE – with Shelly Weldon
Mon 14 Wizo Choir
Tue 15 Katinka Seiner and Laszlo Easton, accompanied by Malcolm Cottle, piano

Wed 16 LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 17 Nikki van der Zyl accompanied by Daphne Lewis, piano
Sun 20 THE ZEMEL CHOIR
Mon 21 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 22 Yoel Brightman, trumpet accompanied by Amalia Brightman, piano
Wed 23 Joanna McDonald accompanied by Yeu-Meng Chan, piano
Thur 24 CLOSED AFTER LUNCH – Christmas Eve
Sun 27 CLOSED
Mon 28 CLOSED
Tue 29 CLOSED
Wed 30 CLOSED
Thur 31 CLOSED
Sun 3 Katinka Seiner and Laszlo Easton accompanied by Malcolm Cottle, piano
Mon 4 KARD & GAMES KLUB

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Hellman. Leonora Hellman passed away peacefully on 20 October aged 102 years and 5 months. Greatly missed by all her family and friends.

Reimann. Marianne Reimann, much loved sister of Ingeborg, died September 18, aged 84. Greatly missed by relatives and friends.

Zimmermann. Klaus Zimmermann died 26 October 1998 aged 88 after a long illness. Greatly mourned by his wife, daughter, son-in-law, granddaughters Katie and Zoe.

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Miscellaneous

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Day Centre

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Societies

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

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Sylvia Matus, Tel: 0171 328 0208

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bournemouth: **Ralph Dale**
01202 762 270
Leeds HSFA: **Heinz Skyte**
0113 268 5739
Midlands: **Edgar Glazer**
0121 777 6537
North: **Werner Lachs**
0161 773 4091
Nottingham: **Bob Norton**
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0181 866 0185
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Art Notes



Lady Agnes, by John Singer Sargent, 1892, at the Tate Gallery until 17 January 1999.

To mark the centenary of the death of **Aubrey Beardsley** (1872-1898), the Victoria & Albert Museum has mounted a notable exhibition of over 200 drawings, prints, posters and books created during his short, frenetic life. The show explores the diverse influences that shaped his own vision, including ancient Greek vase paintings, Japanese prints, European old masters and the pre-Raphaelites. His exquisite black and white erotic drawings and prints reflect his friendship with the so-called decadent artistic and literary figures of the day. The exhibition presents a splendid impression of the *fin de siècle* epoch. Until January 10.

The V & A is also showing the work of **Grinling Gibbons** (1648-1721), the great decorative woodcarver, best known for his work for Sir Christopher Wren at St Paul's Cathedral. Exhibits have been drawn from all over the country to demonstrate Gibbons' remarkable style that creates an illusion of reality. Until January 24.

A major exhibition of old master drawings **Mantegna to Rubens**, on loan from the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, is on view until January 10 at the British Museum. The

show is particularly strong in Italian works, with masterpieces by Mantegna, Guercino and Tintoretto. Among the Northern schools are four works by Rubens, including 'The Creation of Adam (after Michaelangelo).' In the adjacent gallery is a fine exhibition of drawings and etchings by the 17th century French landscape painter **Claude Lorrain**.

British Sporting Heroes, at the National Portrait Gallery until January 24, is devoted to Britain's greatest sporting heroes from the mid 18th century to the present day. Some 250 paintings, drawings, prints sculptures and photographs reflect the national obsession with sport. Also showing is a display of drawings by the celebrated caricaturist, **Gerald Scarfe**.

At the Sternberg Centre is an exhibition of expressive woodcuts, dating mainly from the 1930s, by the Slovakian artist **Imro Weiner-Král**, depicting the people and townscape of Bratislava, including the Jewish quarter. Until January 4.

□ **Barry Fealdman**

*The John Denham Gallery, 50 Mill Lane, London NW6, are showing paintings, drawings and prints by **Katerina Wilczynski** until 13th December. Posen-born Wilczynski studied under Emil Orlik, was awarded the prestigious Prix de Rome, came to England as a refugee and postwar spent much time in Greece. Her work is in many public collections, including the National Portrait Gallery and the V & A.*

SB's Column

Opera Problems. The Royal Opera House is not the only one that has to fight for its existence; even in Germany where opera has high priority among the arts and where over 40 cities and towns stage opera regularly, there are financial constraints. Problems are also increasing in Berlin where the three(!) opera houses face ever-rising costs.

A Jewish Odyssey. Anatol Regnier, chanson singer, lyric writer, composer (and grandson of Franz Wedekind) gave a reading in Munich. His book *Damals in Bolechov, eine jüdische Odyssee* deals with the destruction of the century-old Jewish culture in Eastern Galicia. The event drew a large audience.

Remarkable Revivals. Current productions on German-speaking stages include Menotti's opera *The Consul* (the struggle of emigrants with inexorable officialdom) at the Vienna Volksoper, Zuckmayer's near forgotten *Der fröhliche Weinberg* at

Landestheater Linz, and Erich Kästner's childrens' play *Emil und die Detektive* at the Schauspielhaus, Hamburg.

Obituaries. The actress Kitty Mattern (wife of Siegfried Arno) an emigré from Vienna where, during the thirties, she appeared in cabaret, has died in the USA. Hans Joachim Kuhlenkampff, who has died in Germany at the age of 77, was one of the first German television personalities, quizmasters and raconteurs. His death recalls that of another allround entertainer: the Jewish survivor Hans Rosenthal, whose quiz programme *Dalli, dalli* had made him one of the most popular figures on German TV. Rosenthal died during the eighties, mourned by many faithful viewers □

Relief fund

The Axel Springer Foundation administers a fund for actors, singers, musicians, journalists and writers who can no longer work on grounds of ill-health. Would-be applicants are advised to contact Ernst Cramer, Axel Springer Stiftung, 10888 Berlin □

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Perverted symbol: the swastika

No symbol in any century has been more hated than the Nazi emblem of the swastika. Yet it was as a symbol of peace and friendship that it found its true form in Asia in the sixth-century BCE. Its earliest manifestation was as fertility symbols, as seen in a phallus from the Indus civilisation and a female idol discovered in Troy from the third millennium BCE. The Egyptian *ankh* or key of life which we would recognise as a capital T surmounted by an oval, is also viewed by some as the possible evolution of the swastika. The Egyptians see the

ankh as the key which unlocks the mysteries of heaven and earth. Also it combines the symbols of Osiris and of Isis, and thus becomes a sign of immortality.

A connection is the *Yang-Yin*, a circle divided into equal parts by a sigmoid or S-shaped line across the diameter, the white section having a black spot in it and the black portion a white spot, implying that there is always something masculine in the feminine and vice versa. The sigmoid line implies rotation, like the swastika.

Pre-Christian bronze artefacts found in the necropolis in Koban in the Caucasus show swastikas implying eternal life after death. From there the symbol migrated to India where it was particularly revered by the Jains, Buddhists and followers of

Vishnu. Essentially it is a cross spinning at its centre with angles at the end of each arm representing light streaming out as the cross turns.

In the fourth century BCE the son of a cowherdsman in India had a dream. His vision was that humans should be kind to animals and he founded the Jain offshoot of Buddhism. They are so fanatically vegetarian that on a recent visit to India I saw Jains wearing pieces of muslin across their mouth for fear of insects ingressing and being swallowed.

I also saw several buildings, including Delhi's Lakshmi Narayan temple, the largest Hindu temple in India, with swastika decorations on their walls.

□ R O Leavor

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - DECEMBER 1998

Ongoing: Coats of Many Colours:

Prints, drawings & costumes from around the world.
Jewish Museum, Camden Town till Jan 99

Kristallnacht

Commemoration: a small exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Finchley till Jan 99

- Tue 1 **The Right Words in the Right Order:** Gabriel Josipovici, Sussex University, 5.15pm
- Wed 2 **Modern Jew as City Dweller Par Excellence:** Seminar, University College London, Room 216, Foster Court, 6pm, free admission
- Thur 3 **Lunchtime Recital:** Opera Gala, Verdi Puccini & Bizet. Sternberg Centre, 1.15pm, £2
- Thur 3 **Chanukah afternoon with Latkas & Donuts:** Pinner AJR, Pinner Synagogue, 2pm
- Sun 6 **Schidlof String Quartet** play Haydn, Shostakovitch & Beethoven, Conway Hall, 6.30pm, £4
- Sun 6 **London Archduke Trio** play Beethoven, Mendelssohn & Lakner. Sternberg Centre, 7.30pm, £8
- Mon 7 **Tel-Aviv, Marvel or Monstrosity?** Seminar, University College London, Room 216, Foster Court, 6pm, free admission

- Mon 7 **Germany's General Election:** Dr Edgar Flacker, Georgetown University. Club 43, 8pm
- Tue 8 **What is the Berlin Republic?** Charles Lees. Sussex University, 5.15pm
- Mon 14 **Music on record & refreshments:** Club 43, 8pm
- Thur 17 **Music & Current Affairs Quiz:** Walter Woyda, SLAJR. Phone 0181 852 0262 for details.
- Sun 20 **Emperor String Quartet** play Mozart, Beethoven & Dvorak. Conway Hall, 6.30pm, £4

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club '43, at Belsize Square Synagogue. Hans Seelig 01442 254 360

University of Sussex Centre for German-Jewish Studies. David Groiser Tel/Fax: 01273 678 495

Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 129/131 Albert Street, NW1 7NB. Tel: 0171 284 1997, and at Sternberg Centre

Sternberg Centre for Judaism/Jewish Museum, Finchley, 80 East End Road, N3 2SY. Tel: 0181 346 2288/349 1143

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relating to the social, political & cultural history of German speaking Jewry.

Materials concerning German/Austrian Jewish refugees & commemorations of the Shoah are also of interest.

For further information please contact:
David Groiser, Deputy Director,
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Naked

The Pirandello play *Naked* recently packed the Almeida Theatre in Islington. On leaving, some theatre-goers were heard to express surprise – or possibly disappointment – that the performers had kept their clothes on throughout.

They need be disappointed no longer. Nudity figures prominently in two productions currently playing in London: *Antony and Cleopatra* by Shakespeare, and *The Blue Room*, which David Hare adapted from Schnitzler's *Reigen* (aka *La Ronde*).

In the latter play the sight of Hollywood value-added female flesh caused veteran critics to go weak at the knees. They drooled into their laptops about Nicole Kidman's 'alabaster skin' and – pre-empting charges of sexism – praised Iain Glen's 'Chippendale pectorals'. In all this steamy hoopla poor old Schnitzler was totally forgotten. Entire Scandinavian forests were converted into newsprint to inform us about Kidman's husband Tom Cruise, their babysitting arrangements, their white stretch limo, and similar trivia. I searched in vain for a single mention of Schnitzler's fraught encounters with the Habsburg censor, Catholic bigots and the early Nazi rowdies who threw stinkbombs during performances of *Der Reigen*; everything of cultural-historical interest was drowned out by raunchy hype.

Meanwhile the pre-run publicity for *Antony and Cleopatra* conveyed heavy hints that Helen Mirren would similarly reveal all, thereby arousing expectations which could not possibly have entered the play's creator's mind. In the event, bare bosoms enhanced Bard appeal and the entire run was sold out even before the first night.

The above-mentioned plays are *literal* in-the-buff productions, but on the London stage one can currently also glimpse a form of *metaphorical* nakedness summed up in the phrase 'the Emperor's new clothes'.

My heavy-duty theatregoing during the 1997/98 season has been considerably eased by the purchase of a wristwatch with a luminous dial. Since every theatre programme nowadays lists a play's running time, a quick glance at this watch enables me to compute the length of the *longueurs* to be endured before the final curtain.

In this connection *muchas gracias*, David Mamet! Mamet's *Old Neighbourhood*, an opaque brain-teaser about a dysfunctional family of Chicago Jews wallowing in *Weltschmerz*, lasted only eighty minutes,

i.e. less time than a single act of *Götterdämmerung*.

Almost as mercifully brief was Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*. This turned out to be less of a play than a dramatised lecture about quantum mechanics and the splitting of the atom. Having 'left' school without 'O' level Physics under my belt, I had little interest in, or motivation for, following the exchanges Frayn puts in the mouths of Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg at their mysterious wartime meeting in Occupied Denmark.

The only thing that seemed to filter through the verbal fog generated on stage was this: the non-Nazi (but far from anti-Nazi) Heisenberg may, *or may not*, have slowed down the German nuclear programme – not for nothing is the *Uncertainty* principle named after him – whereas Bohr definitely helped America to develop the atom bomb and to destroy Hiroshima.

If *Copenhagen* left me floundering in somnolent incomprehension, Tom Stoppard's *Invention of Love* induced the Brecht-prescribed 'alienation effect' from the very first line. This happened to be 'belay the painter' and is surely all Greek to any ordinary mortal unversed in the arcane Oxbridge vocabulary of punting. (Punting, I notice, also features on the poster advertising the play.)

From punting Stoppard modulated to a pastiche of *Three Men in a Boat*, and a turgid debate about art and scholarship between the bearded Victorian worthies Ruskin and Walter Pater. He then expatiated on AE Housman's passion for textual criticism of Latin texts and his nostalgia for Shropshire and its lads.

Sheer yawn-including, not to say jaw-dislocating, tosh – and this from the playwright who gave us the manifold delights of *Arcadia*, just as a younger Michael Frayn made us split our sides over *Noises Off*.

Thus do two disrobed Emperors strut their stuff in invisible new clothes, while at other packed-out theatrical venues Kidman, Glen and Mirren 'got their kit off'. Cromwell, thou shouldst be living at this hour! Send the Roundheads down Shaftesbury Avenue!! □ RG

Robert's memorial

Gem-cutting expert and AJR member Robert Acker-Holt presented the Queen with a silver-gilt model of Kensington Gardens' newly restored Albert Memorial. He arrived in Britain from Austria in 1939 and

SEARCH NOTICES

Last Jews in Berlin. Channel 4 is researching a documentary for its *Secret History* series on Jews who survived the war in Berlin. If you or someone you know stayed in Berlin or has any information, please contact the producer, Peter Kessler, 24 Tredegar Square, Bow, London E3 5AG. Tel: 0181 980 5461.

Granddaughter of Hedwig Oppenheim née Lippmann, born Chemnitz 1879, lived in Stettin. Daughter Eva Moritz or Morris, who became English domestic, had a daughter who attended funeral of George Lippmann in 1973 in London. Being sought by family in USA. Please contact Ken Sheridan, 19 Wordsworth Place, London NW5 4HG.

Lance Skinner (Hayman) would like to hear from any children who were in an orphanage together with him after the war or any member of his natural family who may be searching for him. Please write to AJR, Box 1250.

Oskar Moravitz, born in Prague, taken to Theresienstadt 30.11.41 then to Riga 9.1.42 where he was last heard of working as a barber. His niece would like to hear from anyone who knew him or may recall his last days. Please write to Valerie Javeri, 8 Rutland House, Stratton Close, Edgware, Middx. Tel: 0181 952 3503.

Peter Langford (Laufer) would like to hear from any of the Jewish refugee children who lived in a hostel in Linslade (near Leighton Buzzard) called 'The Laundry', in 1939/40. Their names were: Ernst Caspari, Bernhard Goldmann, Franz Oppenheimer, Bruno Berger, Wolfgang Zernik, Hannah Hirsch and Marion Frischauer. Please contact him at 75 Quickswood, London NW3 3RT. Tel: 0171 722 1200.

Berta Heyman, née Stern, and Jean Heyman. Last heard of at Terezin in 1945 after liberation. Anyone recalling having met them, or what happened to them, please contact their daughter on (0044+) 0171 722 7582 □

set up his Hatton Garden company in 1948.

Chairman from Germany

Ignatz Bubis, leader of German Jewry, was elected chairman of the European Jewish Congress at its meeting in London.

Cooking with Gretel Beer



Cod cooked in beer the Flemish way

Although the original recipe calls for cod, any firm-fleshed white fish can be used.

butter for the dish

3 oz (90g) butter

6 oz (180g) onions cut into rings

salt

4 cod fillets each weighing 6-8oz (180-240g)

seasoned flour

7 fl oz (200ml) strong lager

1 bay leaf

4 slices lemon

4 tablespoons fresh white breadcrumbs

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 4 (350°F, 160°C). Butter a deep gratin dish, large enough to take the four fillets side by side. Melt a tablespoon of the butter and soften the onion rings in this. Cover the base of the gratin dish with the onion rings and sprinkle with a little salt.

Add a tablespoon of the butter in the pan in which the onions were fried. Dust the fillets with seasoned flour and fry them quickly on both sides. Transfer to the gratin dish. Swill out the pan with the beer and pour over the fillets. Add the bayleaf. Dot the fish with the remaining butter and place a slice of lemon on each fillet. Bake for about 12 minutes.

Sprinkle the fillets with the breadcrumbs and bake for another 3-5 minutes. Remove bay leaf before serving □

Kindertransport

They came on the wheels of the train
pounding along the continent,
walking the waves, grinning with ignorance
and welcomed by some coastal scene.

And her parents will arrive soon.
They all knew that.

Arms, those arms, wrapped about
porridge and kippers which sent
the scent wheeling past her nostrils.
She sighed the goodness of England
and smiled with the frozen air.
Parents, chattels, will come about now -
"gulls, bring Oma in your beak".
But the bird shrieked to ignore.
And the train slid through.

These hundreds of children
swaddled in worsted
bore wide black eyes
which saw heaven as a
single marshmallow.

Her parents were shortly to come.
They all knew that.

Steadily, stealthily, time fell, never to
recover itself,

leaves rose up juicing their greens
because trees stand up to war.

Her mother/father photograph
her violin
her new leather shoes
breathing beneath a pillow
were used to placate other weeping girls
while she wept on.

Her parents should be coming
but something had re-routed them
onto a different set of tracks.

□ Charlotte Peplow

German compensation plans

Germany's new Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, plans a speedy resolution to the payment of outstanding insurance policies and bank accounts, as well as compensation to former slave labourers, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*. He has invited the co-operation of several major German companies, including Volkswagen and Siemens, which have already established compensation funds, BMW, Krupp, Degussa, BASF, the Allianz insurance company and the Dresdner and Deutsche banks.

According to figures quoted by the 'JC', as at January 1998, Germany has already paid some £34 billion (DM 102.1 billion) in reparations or compensation since World War II. Further claims of £8 billion (DM 24 billion) were still anticipated.

Earlier this year the Jewish Claims Conference and the German Government agreed that Holocaust survivors now living in Central and Eastern Europe, who suffered imprisonment and damage to health, would receive payments from a specially-designated £66 million (DM 200 million) fund, over the next four years.

□ RDC

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Refugee contribution — an introduction

At a meeting of the Leo Baeck Lodge, Dr Ulrike Walton-Jordan, recently appointed to Sussex University's Centre for German-Jewish Studies under Professor Edward Timms, gave a preliminary analysis of her planned researches into the contribution that was made by German-speaking refugees to British culture and public life, a contribution of which the British people were, on the whole, unaware.

Most literature on the subject, said Dr Walton-Jordan, was not comprehensive, having dealt with 'niches' such as politicians and musicians. Her analysis would extend chronologically from 1933 to the 1950s and include organisations which brought refugees together then, and those that still do.

By way of example, she chose to discuss the lawyer, Ernst Kohn, who brought his skills to the service of the German-Jewish and the wider community; the violinist, Marianne Liebke, who having studied under Max Rostal in Berlin, played and broadcast widely in the UK; the author, Hermynia zur Mühlen; and the half-Jewish artist, Oskar Kokoschka, who arrived from Prague, imbued himself with English language and culture, then went on to explore humanitarian issues. Members of the audience, in recalling their own experiences, contributed to a lively and informative discussion.

□ RDC

Anticipating British Jewry's future

Jewish Policy Research has launched a four-year research project aimed at producing a long-term strategy mapping the progress of British Jewry in the twenty-first century.

The UK's Jewish voluntary sector constitutes more than 2,000 agencies serving some 300,000 people. These include synagogues, educational institutions, youth movements, membership associations, charities, and social welfare agencies of which the AJR is a leading provider.

As a first step, the project is to examine the Jewish voluntary sector's financial resources and sources of income, and then make valid comparisons with the entire UK charitable sector. Further analyses will research human resources (both salaried and voluntary), the governance of voluntary organisations, community activities, services and delivery systems. Most importantly, the project will explore trends in the demography and social characteristics of the country's Jewish population.

Professor Barry Kosmin, JPR's Director of Research, explained that the project originated out of the organisation's seminar on the future of the Jewish voluntary sector and was a direct response to the themes and issues raised by the participants.

This enterprise, the like of which has never before been attempted in British Jewry, utilises JPR's role as a community

'think-tank' capable of producing innovative and practical ideas and policies, to benefit the entire Jewish community.

□ RDC

Terezin requiem

On 10 October the Wigmore Hall witnessed the London première of Sylvie Bodorová's *Terezin Requiem* in a superb and deeply moving performance by the baritone Christopher Maltman and the Skampa Quartet. It is a remarkable work by a young Czech composer commissioned by the Warwick Arts Foundation and inspired by the twenty performances of Verdi's Requiem which took place in the Terezin Ghetto during 1943 and 1944. Jewish and Catholic religious texts are juxtaposed to represent the two cultures.

It opens thunderously with a Lacrymosa to the words *Shema Yisrael adoshem elo-keinu...* (Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God...); continues with the Latin words of the *Dies irae*, and concludes with a mixed Hebrew and Latin *Libera me*. Sylvie Bodorová is a composer of whose music we shall hear a great deal more, and the choice of Maltman's powerful, yet intensely lyrical baritone was ideal for this eminently approachable work which makes a nonsense of the widespread belief that serious contemporary music must always be obscure.

□ Walter Elkan

Th Vwlss Lngg

I am continuously amazed at how the Israelis manage to read and write the equivalent of a vowelless language. Unaccustomed as I am, in German, French and English, to dispense with these vital five components of the alphabet, I am prepared to put up with consonants only in the Torah, but in books and newspapers!?

You have to develop a sixth sense and look at the context and grammar of the paragraph to make sense of the sentence. Let us take a simple three-word example: "Uncle David's boiler" literally transcribed "*Hadud Shell Dod David*" but spelled "Hdd Shl Dd Dvd". How come my grandchildren under eight, the computer experts, can decipher this instantly?

Alas, it does not always work. The other day I climbed up the stairs leading from

our house in Yemin Moshe to the car park. A stubble-chinned Israeli with a large bunch of artistically wrapped flowers stopped me. "*Ata gar po?*" (Do you live here?) I assured him that I did. "*Ani mevakesh Rchov Tura 39*". I said that this was actually my address. He then told me that the flowers (according to the Hebrew lettering of the address) were for Family Farad Vermes. I asked him to hand the flowers to me, since I was indeed Fred Worms in person. "*Haim lo bishvilcha, haim le Farad Vermes*" (They are not for you. They are for Farad Vermes).

I realised that I could not convince him of my double identity but thought that seeing was believing. "*Vayeilchu sbneihem yachdav*" ...and just like Abraham and Isaac, we walked together to the gate of our house. There is a small inscription on the letter box in Hebrew and in English... "Della & Fred Worms followed by Hebrew

letters — *Fai, Resh, Daled, Vav Vav Reish Mem Samach*", i.e. Frd Wrms. I unlocked the gate as a token of ownership identification. He gave me the flowers and pointed triumphantly to the vowel-less Hebrew name. "*Ani amarti lecha — Farad Vermes*". There it was in writing, black on gilt — my name was Farad Vermes according to his interpretation. No vowels, no certainty.

I was reminded of the Frenchman who struggled with the illogical differences in the pronunciation of English words of similar spelling. Door v poor; Slough v enough; though v rough etc.

When he arrived at Victoria station and saw a large poster referring to the musical "Chicago — pronounced Success" he shot himself.

In Israel you have to grn (groan, grin) and br it.

□ Fred S Worms

NEWSROUND

Speak no evil

Historian Richard Breitman has published evidence in his book *Official Secrets* that from July 1941 the British concealed their knowledge of German massacres of Jews gleaned from secret radio interceptions decoded at Bletchley Park. Mass killings on the Eastern front were known by September 1941 and that Hitler was intent on genocide by January 1942. Britain and the USA eventually issued a joint statement in December 1942.

Spielberg Foundation for Berlin?

German press reports that the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, established by *Schindler's List* film producer Steven Spielberg, may be invited to establish a branch of this educational organisation in Berlin, possibly occupying the site previously designated for a Holocaust memorial.

Nobel prizewinner

Vienna-born Prof Walter Kohn of the University of California is the joint winner of this year's Nobel prize for chemistry. Both his parents died in Auschwitz and he was interned on the Isle of Man and in Canada.

Proof of complicity

Documents itemising the sale of the expropriated possessions of Cologne Jews in the 1940s, the existence of which has been denied by officialdom, have been revealed by the researches of Prof Wolfgang Dressen. Similar files, believed to be held in embargo for another 70 years in all parts of Germany, demonstrate the general population's awareness of the theft of property and the removal of all rights from German Jews.

Assisting Mengele

Dr Hans Muench, 87, who arrived at Auschwitz in 1943 the same day as Joseph Mengele, is under investigation by the Bavarian authorities. Muench, who assisted in Mengele's inhuman experiments, is quoted as regarding the gas chambers as "humanitarian" and still admires his mentor.

Czech forum

A number of eminent Jewish political, academic and religious figures participated in a Prague conference at the invitation of President Vaclav Havel, among them Israel Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau, Henry Kissinger and Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander of Leo Baeck College.

□ RDC

The great facilitator

The work of Max Newman was admired in a recent visit by the Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners to Bletchley Park (September issue). In addition to his work on deciphering German codes during World War II, Newman was a distinguished mathematician who greatly influenced the subject's postwar development in Britain.

Max Newman, né Neumann, was born in London in 1897 where his grandfather, from Bromberg, Jacob Salomon Neumann, had settled in the 1880s. Max went to school in Dulwich and later to the City of



Max Newman

London School. After war service he went up to Cambridge, being elected a Fellow of St John's College in 1923. His research was in topology, a branch of mathematics sometimes called 'rubber-sheet geometry', in which he pioneered new methods.

In 1942, the year he wrote a paper which came to play an important role in theoretical computer science, he was recruited to do secret work at Bletchley Park. Besides the famous Enigma machine used for enciphering messages, the Germans had developed another highgrade cryptographic system, part of a group collectively known as 'Fish'. Messages from these machines were first intercepted in 1941, but the deciphering of Fish messages was very slow on account of the vast number of possibilities that had to be examined.

Newman realized that the search process had to be mechanized, and a group called the 'Newmanry' was set up for this purpose. Newman used his mathematical

expertise in the development of the machinery, but his real achievement was of getting the best out of his team. This resulted in the development of the 'Colossus', which was used on a cipher machine known as 'Tunny', employed mainly by the German Army to communicate between Hitler and his High Command. The growing number of messages were deciphered with so little delay that they could be acted upon immediately. The information gathered enabled Churchill and Eisenhower to gain accurate information on German Army movements during the last twelve months of the war and it is likely that the war was shortened significantly as a result.

In 1945 Newman took up an appointment at the University of Manchester where, for nearly 20 years, he worked with Sydney Goldstein, professor of Applied Mathematics, and his successor James Lighthill. The staff included many of his former Bletchley colleagues, as well as a substantial number of refugees from Germany. Of the latter not all were Jewish; they included GEH (Harry) Reuter, the son of Ernst Reuter who became Mayor of West Berlin in 1948.

The development of computers in this country took place mainly at the National Physical Laboratory, also in Manchester, and later in Cambridge. This was largely due to Newman's actions in appointing staff (such as Alan Turing in 1948) and obtaining funds. At the same time he continued his mathematical research and helped to initiate the annual British Mathematical Colloquium which now forms an important part of the mathematical scene.

Newman died in 1984.

□ Prof Paul M Cohn

The author is indebted to Sandy Green, Peter Hilton and especially to Max Newman's younger son, William, for their help.

50 YEARS AGO**EX-SERVICEMEN'S PARADE**

The Annual Parade of Jewish ex-servicemen and women was an impressive spectacle. Fifteen thousand marched past the Cenotaph after the Chief Rabbi, assisted by the newly appointed Senior Jewish Chaplain to the Forces, Rev. I. Levy, had conducted the service and Admiral of the Fleet, Viscount Cunningham, had taken the salute. At a reunion in the Albert Hall, the Minister of Defence, Mr A.V. Alexander, recalled the great services Jews had rendered to the cause of freedom throughout the ages.

AJR Information, December 1948