

Don't miss . . .

AJR helps Holocaust survivors

Ronald Channing p3

Telling the truth – literally

Richard Grunberger p5

Eye for an eye p13

Castor oil in Soho

Mac the Knife's mock-serenade to Polly starts 'Siebst Du den Mond über Soho?' In locating the *Threepenny Opera* in Victorian Soho Brecht knew whereof he spoke: the place teemed with cut-throats, pimps and whores. Though, 150 years on, Soho is still somewhat sleazy, restaurants now far outnumber brothels. But not every restaurant serves up nutritious fare.

One Soho *trattoria* displays among photos of Italian culture heroes – Visconti, Rocky Marciano, Sinatra – a picture of Mussolini. This constitutes an outrageous affront to the memory of thousands of Ethiopians, Jews and Allied soldiers whose deaths *Il Duce* caused □

Reflections on the nature of politics and of statesmanship

The apolitical fallacy

While the Jews gave the world the Ten Commandments, the Greeks did nearly as well by giving it democracy. The seedbeds of democracy were the Hellenic city states, primarily Athens. The Greek word for city being *polis*, politics literally means matters of concern to all citizens, i.e. public affairs.

To the ancient Greeks man was, *pace* Aristotle, a *zoon politikon* (a political animal) and politics a noble preoccupation.

Today everything connected with politics has somewhat pejorative connotations. To describe someone as a political animal is to imply that the person concerned is engrossed in something less wholesome than sport, gardening, DIY or art. When the term politics occurs in such combinations as office politics or college politics it means manipulation and chicanery. Opinion research in the UK indicates that politicians rank even below journalists in public esteem.

In the famous quote '*politisch Lied ein garstig Lied*' Goethe devalued politics as nasty. Bismarck convinced many Germans that their monarch (and the military) held the country together, while divisive party politicians – of Liberal or Socialist hue – were undermining its cohesion.

The driving force of modern politics is, of course, the competition between parties for electoral support. The undeniable fact that party rivalry isn't always edifying has produced widespread apathy (American presidential elections are especially notorious for low voter turnout). During the Weimar Republic – the *Systemzeit* – or carve-up era of Nazi myth – Hitler claimed that his followers did not constitute a party of sectional interest, but an all-encompassing movement or *Bewegung*. He later elevated Munich, his hometown of choice, into the *Hauptstadt der Bewegung*.

Despite Marxist protestations to the contrary, individuals do make history. There can be little doubt that the death of Gustav Stresemann in 1929 and that of the Weimar Republic three years later were causally connected. Stresemann was a politician with the vision to realise that German-French recon-

ciliation was the only way forward for postwar Europe. Given the interminable enmity of the two countries and the legacy of Versailles, he faced a Sisyphean task – but his French opposite number, Briand, also inclined towards *rapprochement*.

Politicians who have the breadth of vision to transcend traditional modes of thinking are statesman. Stresemann was, alas, the only German statesman – except for the murdered Rathenau – of the interwar years, and his premature death sealed the doom of Weimar.

It sometimes happens that a politician is astigmatic in one eye and endowed with 'vision' in the other. Churchill was myopically wrong about India, but prophetically right about Nazi Germany.

After the demise of Nazism (Western) Europe again produced several leaders – Monnet, Adenauer, Brandt – who transcended the category of mere politicians. Now, in the late nineties, the statesmen's roll of honour should be brought up-to-date by the inclusion of Nelson Mandela and Mo Mowlem. Mandela's achievements need no further explication. The huge problems Mowlem is currently tackling in Ireland are historically deep rooted – they long predate Black-White conflict in South Africa – but she bids fair to overcome them.

Would that the Middle East had more Mo Mowlems and fewer Dr Paisleys! □



Ken Ambrose, left, founder of South London AJR, with Andrew Kaufman, AJR Chairman (see p.8)

The Shoah – an influence on the Officers' Plot?

For all intents and purposes, by 1944 the German Reich was *judenrein*, except for a few 'U-boats', and some protected by their aryan wives. Being almost completely absent, they could hardly be blamed for orchestrating the July plot, but indirectly they were still partly responsible for it.

The political mastermind behind it was Karl Goerdeler, former Mayor of Leipzig – who, in the event of the plot's success, would have become Chancellor. Though an extreme German Nationalist, he was not an antisemite. In 1937, during Goerdeler's temporary absence, the Nazis removed the statue of Felix Mendelssohn

standing in front of the Gewandhaus which caused him to resign as Mayor. His new job as a senior representative of the electrical firm of Bosch allowed him to travel all over Germany without raising suspicion, and liaise with the various members of the conspiracy.

Count Lehndorf, an East Prussian estate owner, had witnessed SS atrocities against Jewish children, and, he told his wife, he would not rest before extirpating this odium. As aide-de-camp to Field-Marshal Bock he sounded out high-ranking officers if they would join in an attempt to overthrow the regime.

Graf von Helldorf was a veteran Nazi who became Police-President of Berlin and an SS Obergruppenführer. In this capacity he sold passports to would-be emigrants, naturally at a price, but at least

it enabled them to get away. At a meeting on the morrow of *Kristallnacht* he reproached his local police-chiefs for having followed orders not to interfere with the SA actions. He happened to have been away from Berlin at the time; had he been there he said he would have ordered his police to shoot at the looters and arsonists. Helldorf was executed on the 15 August 1944.

I am convinced that in the case of these three conspirators, disgust at Hitler's relentless antisemitic policy was the main reason for joining the plot.

I also consider it a good thing that Hitler survived the assassination attempt. Had he been killed, many Germans might have said, "If Hitler had but lived, he would have known how to end the war victoriously". □ AW Freud

Profile

Annie Reichel

By definition AJR members cannot be in the first flush of youth, in fact, quite a few are over eighty. However, in the topsy-turvy cosmos of refugeedom all normal perspectives are distorted to such a degree that mere seventy-somethings like myself may actually envy octogenarians.

The reason? Unlike us 'young 'uns', the latter spent their youth during the Indian summer of mid-European civilisation before the onset of barbarism.

One so favoured was Annie Reichel, born in pre-Great War Vienna to a couple who hailed from Moravia. The father was a jeweller, and the family lived close to the Assay Office in the 7th District. They set great store by culture: Annie learnt French at six and piano at seven. In her teens she attended the Schwarzwaldschule founded by the pioneering (Jewish) pedagogue of that name. Soon after joining the school she met Hilde Spiel, the novelist-to-be; later, at sixth form socials, she mingled with visiting celebrities like Sinclair Lewis, Rudolf Serkin and Adolf Loos.

Around 1930 she spent time in the UK to learn the language. On her return she taught English, was courted by a theatre critic, but married a shoe manufacturer's son. After the Anschluss the young

couple came to England, where the husband's contacts with Lilley and Skinner enabled him to put his professional expertise to good use. In London the Reichels' wartime social circle merits the description of literary *salon* of the refugee community, including as it did Hilde Spiel, writer and broadcaster Peter de Mendelson and journalist Peter Smolka, alias Smolett (whom George Orwell, incidentally, fingered as a Soviet spy). Annie's postwar years were taken up with rearing a family. Widowed in the early 1960s, she joined the Civil Service and embarked on a career within the Department of Education and Science. She was 'righthand woman' to Professors Fred Ayer and Maurice Kogan, and produced the index to the Plowden Report, a landmark in British education.

In retirement she furthered her own education by, among other things, studying Russian in preparation for a trip to the USSR.

Her (self) educational work persists to this day. At Club 1943 meetings she can always be found sitting at the back of the hall in close proximity to the gas ring – which enables her, at the end of the lecture, to provide revivifying cuppas to one and all.

□ RG

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AJR HELPS HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS TO OBTAIN BRITISH FUNDS

At least 600 needy survivors of the Holocaust, now living in Britain, are each to receive a payment of some £400 from a fund established by the British Government. The AJR is undertaking the administration of the fund in full co-operation with the Board of Deputies of British Jews and other representative groups who collectively constitute the only European country presently enjoying a common policy and speaking with a unified voice.

At an international conference held last December in London, seeking to uncover the recipients of £400 millions of gold stolen by the Nazis, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook announced that the British Government was providing £1 million for disbursement among needy victims of Nazi persecution. Fourteen other participating countries, including Argentina, Austria, United States, France, Italy and Greece, pledged a further £35 million for similar acts of relief.

Britain's contribution is being divided between survivors living in Eastern Europe and those in Britain. An estimated 70,000 people in Russia, Moldova (former Bessarabia), Ukraine and Belarus will benefit from a total of £670,000, to go via the World Restitution Organisation for distribution by the American Joint Distribution Committee, most to be spent on medical support services.

Of the remainder, some £200,000 is to be disbursed immediately on receipt to survivors in Britain on low incomes who have already been identified by the AJR, the Board of Deputies, Jewish Care, World Jewish Relief, Agudas and the 45

Aid Committee. The balance of £130,000 will be held in temporary reserve for those yet to be identified, as well as a contingency against special needs. Applications to these funds are still being considered from non-Jewish and Jewish victims. Any balance will be distributed equally among all recipients after one year.

Lord Janner, Chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust, who was a moving spirit behind the holding of the conference, expressed himself pleased that Britain was the first country to distribute their funds. Robin Cook said, "We have a responsibility to ensure that people who survived the greatest crime of our times do not lack the material support they need during their remaining years."

Switzerland's Humanitarian Fund will also make its distribution, when funds become available, to the same Jewish Holocaust survivors.

□ RDC

HITTING THE HEADLINES

Foreign Office official Anthony Layden announced the Government's allocation of £1 million for needy refugees and survivors at a press conference at which Board of Deputies director Neville Nagler described the plight of less fortunate refugees and survivors in the UK today.

When the large press contingent probed to find their particular stories, Marcia Goodman, head of AJR's Social Services, drew on her experience as a leading campaigner for Soviet Jewry and explained the importance of the payments for needy AJR members while hoping that restitution would not end here. She and Michael Radbil, AJR's Chief Executive, were soon surrounded by reporters. Marcia and Bertha Leverton, founder of RoK, were interviewed on Sky Television and appeared on international news bulletins throughout the day. The rest of the national press queued up to obtain copy. Stories appeared in London's *Evening Standard* and the following day in all the country's leading national newspapers.

Argentinian co-operation

Argentina has reached an agreement with Israel, the US and Germany to open its files on fugitive Nazis and neo-Nazi activity. After WWII the country provided a refuge for former Nazis, SS members and concentration camp officers □

Auschwitz protest

A protest was mounted at the Polish embassy in London against commercial developments planned at or near to Auschwitz death camp □

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Reviews

1940s odyssey

Geneviève Pitot, *THE MAURITIUS SHEKEL*,
Vizavi, 1998.

The "Homer" of the odyssey of some 1,600 Palestine-bound Jewish refugees, who were held captive for nearly five years in the Indian Ocean island, is a French-speaking Mauritian who was a schoolgirl when the fugitives arrived.

She never forgot her contact with these brave unfortunates and felt it incumbent on her to record their story. She describes the suffering of the people travelling down the Danube from Vienna towards the Black Sea and on towards Haifa, always bearing in mind that even these hardships were preferable to what they were escaping.

The Danube trip in five miserably overcrowded former pleasure steamers was bad enough, with long delays at Bratislava and chicanery from all authorities, and help only from the already threatened Jewish communities on the way. The real trouble started on the three hulks that awaited them at the Black Sea port of Tulcea in Romania.

Pitot concentrates on the fate of the *Atlantic* whose passengers were those who ended up in Mauritius. So badly were the transportees, several elderly and sick, overcrowded and starved, that members of the Haganah who had got themselves on board, had to keep order and at one stage "imprisoned" the captain and some of the crew.

The real tragedy came as, in spite of all vicissitudes, they reached Haifa and were told that they were to be transhipped into unknown exile. The vessel that should have taken them, the *Patria*, was blown up, probably by elements of the Haganah. Many Jews, British guards and crew were killed or injured. The others were loaded on to Dutch vessels and taken to their unwanted new destination.

That destination turned out to be the prison of Beau Bassin, Mauritius, where they were throughout treated as prisoners in the sense of offenders for attempted illegal entry into Palestine. Pitot points out that this was quite illegal on the part of the authorities, because the White Paper on which the measure was based had not been ratified by the League of Nations as the Mandate required.

The remainder of the book ably intersperses the daily hopes, despairs, miseries and little triumphs of the prisoners with the attitude, part welcoming and helpful, part anxious and xenophobic, of the natives, and the chicaneries and occasional benevolence of the, mostly British, administrators. When some of this came to Churchill's notice, he demanded humane treatment, but the nastiness was concealed from him and they went behind his back. He, of course, was fighting a desperate war. The Colonial Office did the dirty to the best of its ability.

The greatest friends of the unfortunates were the Anglican Archbishop and several doctors, as well as the wife of the first Governor. Families were kept apart until nearly the end and only when the Germans surrendered were the captives of Mauritius allowed to go to Palestine.

Individual parts of this story were not unknown, but none has had the complete overview, the input of so many victims, officials and natives, that Pitot provides. She has spared no effort to demonstrate all points of view. She tries to be fair to all but her total sympathy with the deportees always breaks through.

Finally a word about the curious title: The shekel in question was issued by Zionist organisations, before it ever became an official currency in Israel/Palestine, as a token of encouragement to the exiled prisoners.

□ John Rossall

Will-o'-the-wisp

David Mamet, *THE OLD NEIGHBOURHOOD*,
Royal Court Theatre.

Although David Mamet's new trilogy, *The Old Neighbourhood*, is set in America, it has equal resonance for London's metropolitan Jews looking back at their roots in the shtetl or Nazi Europe. It presents an oblique view, suddenly glimpsed through casual ideas or memories, a forgotten sidetrack in the distorted lives lived in the present moment.

Bobby (Colin Stinton), the passive hero, acts as a catalyst by which more strident voices recapture their past. In the first play he is foil to his more discursive friend Joey (Linal Haft) who recalls a Jewish world long-gone and half-remembered. Joey invokes Bobby's father who would "weep to hear you go that way,"

as well as a host of Jewish princesses and old school friends. Here are two modern Jews whose language carries the secret code of longing for simpler, cosier times. In his whimsical imagination Joey sees himself a great man in old Europe – a physical man – hewer of wood or hauler of stones, while others study Talmud. But Bobby has to rein in his friend's imagination as he tries to convey to him the forgotten reality of Nazism.

In two further plays, *Jolly* and *Deeny*, Bob seeks solace for his broken marriage through a visit to his sister Jolly (Zoe Wanamaker), herself in crisis, and instead is forced through her pain to relive the torment of being uprooted by his mother's marriage to a non-Jew. But it is Deeny (Diana Quick), his old girlfriend, chattering on about *Life* who makes him face the issues of faith and the final loss of hope.

Mamet has an acute ear for inner meanings which he flings out as helpless, truncated, yet moving sentences. The play has a curious, atonal feel, perhaps deliberately conveyed to present the impossibility of return to what might have been.

□ Gloria Tessler

Austrian domicile conditions

We have been informed by the Austrian Embassy of an important change regarding one of the conditions relating to the requirement of domicile in Austria.

Previously the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism stated that the requirement was until at least 13 March 1938. Please note that this date is now being extended to **12 July 1936**.

This means that in practice rejected applications of persons who left Austria before 12 March 1938 are now being reconsidered by the National Fund office. Those who did not apply just because their date of emigration was before 12 March 1938 should do so now. Application forms are available at the Embassy. All other conditions remain unchanged, namely either Austrian citizenship of applicant or – in cases of non-Austrian emigrants – a ten-year residency requirement in Austria before their forced emigration □

Telling the truth — literally

Literary salons have often had Jew(esse)s as their presiding spirits. One thinks of Rahel Varnhagen in early nineteenth-century Berlin, her Viennese contemporary Fanny von Arnstein, Gertrude Stein in interwar Paris, and Dorothy Parker in Jazz Age New York (though, strictly speaking the Algonquin Hotel hardly qualifies as a salon).

Though the English counterpart to all these bookish ladies, Lady Ottoline Morrel, hostess to the Bloomsbury group, was a Duke's daughter, she invited the likes of Leonard Woolf and Mark Gertler to Garsington. Her guest list must have read like a veritable *Who's Who* of cultural heavyweights: Russell, Keynes, Forster, Lytton Strachey, D H Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, etc.

While Bloomsbury was widely ramified, the cultural life of Vienna revolved, to an amazing degree, around just one solitary (non-Jewish) woman: Alma Mahler, née Schindler.

Alma, a painter's daughter, was wooed by the composer Zemlinsky, married the composer Mahler, the architect Gropius and the novelist Werfel, and counted the painter Kokoschka among her lovers.

The Etcetera Theatre, London NW1, recently put on a play about her. In it she was depicted as a heroine suffering blows at the hands of fate — and of men.

And indeed Alma lost her father at a tender age, had to adjust to a stepfather, married the 'elderly' Mahler who forbade her — a gifted musician — to compose, lost a child (as foretold in her husband's *Kindertotenlieder*), was widowed, remarried twice, buried another daughter, and fled to America.

On her return to postwar Austria, the official to whom she handed her passport asked indignantly "How could you, Schindler's daughter, have married people of the ilk of Mahler and Werfel?"

The sentiment behind that remark was widespread. Alma's own stepfather had belonged to the Nazi Party and committed suicide in 1945.

Not that she herself was a total stranger to extreme right-wing opinions. She had been vociferously pro-Franco in the mid-thirties (and, paradoxically, owed her successful escape from Nazi-occupied France in 1940 to pro-Republican Catalan

frontier guards).

Her attitude to Jews can only be described as schizoid. Once, introducing her daughter to a visitor, she commented 'Manon owes her good looks to Gropius... I should always have married tall handsome men like him, instead of stunted Jews...'

In 1941, exiled in an America that cowered before an invincible-looking Hitler, she told visitors of her bitterness at having made the wrong choice. 'Had I not thrown in my lot with you Jews I could now be sitting in Vienna, comfortable in the knowledge that I am on the side of the victors!'

Alas, none of these aspects of Alma's volatile psyche were on view at the Etcetera Theatre. So, while the play steered clear of any falsehood, it didn't tell the whole truth either. Not that the above-mentioned 'Bloomsberries' were whiter than white. In his diaries Lytton Strachey often described Mark Gertler simply as 'the Jew' — and when Virginia Stephen married Leonard Woolf, the bridegroom's father, a humble tailor, was not invited to the wedding.

□ Richard Grunberger

50 YEARS AGO

JEWRY IN HOLLAND

Dutch Jewry, though it has been reduced during Nazi occupation from a community of 140,000 to 20,000, has made a big leap towards recovery. The small remnants who have survived have mostly emerged, after the liberation, from their hiding places and underground lives; only 6,000 have returned out of the 120,000 who had been deported.

The social strata of Dutch Jewry has fundamentally changed. Before the war a not insignificant section were industrial workers, especially in the diamond and textile industries, and in Amsterdam there was even a substantial number of Jewish dockers.

As Dutch families who, at the risk of their own lives, gave hospitality to Jews under the occupation, had to some extent to be paid for their sometimes heavy expenses, survival was a matter which the working classes could not afford, and it is mostly for this reason that Dutch Jewry today is, on the whole, a trading population with some sprinkling of the free professions.

As the whole economy of the country is geared up for export, and textiles and diamonds are the main export goods, the Jews who have some standing in just these two trades, naturally benefit from the favourable market □

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Letters to the Editor

FROM CORPORAL TO CORPORAL IN FOUR GENERATIONS

Sir – In 1914 Hermann Fleischner, was conscripted into the Imperial Austrian Army and became a corporal in the artillery during World War I. He and his wife perished in Auschwitz.

Their son, Otto, escaped from Vienna and joined the British Army in Palestine in July 1942, serving as a medical orderly. In 1949 he qualified as a doctor in England and married kindertransportee Dorothy Oppenheimer.

Their Yorkshire-born son, David, made aliyah, joined the Israel Defence Force, defended the Golan Heights in the Yom Kippur War and is now a Major in the Reserve. He married Michal.

Their daughter – in other words Corporal Hermann's greatgranddaughter – Anat, joined the IDF after Pesach 1998. She is now a corporal... and you could not find a more peaceloving family than ours!

Sheffield *Dorothy Fleming*

AJR WITHOUT R

Sir – I was most interested to read Harry Lue Blake's letter in the July issue. I'm in total agreement with his view: most of us may have begun as refugees, but a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then.

Still, there's a problem: what should we now call our organisation? I'm at a complete loss – so, how about suggestions from our readers (no prizes!).

London NW11 *Peter Block*

Sir – I agree with your correspondent Harry Lue Blake. After 62 years in this country, including RAF war service, various jobs and several years of retirement, I can hardly be called a refugee. On the analogy that I am no longer a serviceman but an ex-serviceman, I could be called an ex-refugee. So why not "The Association of Jewish Ex-Refugees", or AJER for short? Not so different from AJEX, "The Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen".

Blackheath *Ken Ambrose*
London SE3

Sir – I fully agree with Harry Lue Blake. In the not too distant future the first generation will have died out. The subsequent generations would resent being labelled "refugees" and would be reluctant to subscribe to a journal which gives them that designation. Without subscribers, your interesting journal would rapidly fold. I therefore suggest that a new name be found at an early opportunity.

Oxted *AW Freud*
Surrey

Sir – The name makes no difference as far as the original members are concerned; it is still fitting. As is the question: What is a refugee? Answer: Somebody who has lost everything except his accent.

London N12 *Ernest Brown*

DIAMOND REUNION

Sir – A few months ago I read *The Unsung Years* by Lisbeth Fischer Leicht (Minerva Press). To my amazement I found that Lisbeth and I left Vienna on the same Kindertransport on December 10 1938 and were in Holland together until her mother collected her and took her to England mid-February 1939. The same happened to me two weeks later. I contacted her, we corresponded and have just met for the first time in almost sixty years! Lisbeth and I are now wondering whether we can locate anyone who was on the same Kindertransport.

34 Helsby Road *Gertraud Murray (née Fasal)*
Brant Road
Lincoln LN5 8TQ
Tel: 01522 537573

BRESLAU JEWRY

Sir – Some years ago I visited my home town of Breslau and discovered a book entitled *Breslauer Juden 1850-1944*. Containing many photographs of different facets of Jewish life in that period it was unfortunately only available with Polish commentary. My letter about it in *AJR Information* aroused much interest from ex-Breslauers around the world.

On a recent visit to Berlin I came across a bookshop dealing exclusively with Jewish matters and to my surprise and delight found that this book had been updated and translated into German. I bought a copy which is now a most treasured possession. If any reader should be interested in the original Polish text copy I should be pleased to send it to them at cost (£8.00). The German text copy can be obtained from the shop: Literatur zum Judentum, Joachimstaler Strasse 13, D-10719 Berlin. Tel: (0049) 30 882 42 50 Fax (0049) 30 885 47 13. The shop would be happy to send it at a cost of RM 50-60, depending on the country of the potential purchaser.

15 Martlets Court *F Goldberg*
Queen St, Arundel
W Sussex BN18 9NZ
Tel: 01903 883121

SECOND GENERATION

Sir – I am worried about the 'Second Generation' Trust which was recently started for the benefit of the children of Holocaust survivors.

Most of these children are by now in their 40s and 50s; I am sure that if they had been affected by their parents experiences this would have been noticed long ago and they would have been treated by a professional psychotherapist long ago.

I can't see what these new 'helpers' expect to do for the Second Generation. I doubt that they are qualified to give any kind of 'help'. I also wonder how they find these 'patients' and how they assess that they need some form of treatment.

Oakhill Park, London NW3 *Herta Reik*

SHOCK

Sir – Question to the writer of the 'Shock' letter (August issue): Who are these orthodox communities that 'have made it taboo to talk about the Holocaust or even mention the word'. Remember – most Jewish communities including the orthodox have a high percentage of refugees from Nazi persecution; in many cases they are Holocaust survivors. Every organisation has its exceptions.

Albion Gardens *Josephine Woolf*
London NW11

'RETURN' TO FRANKFURT(2)

Sir – Due to injudicious editorial cutting a main point was left out of my August letter. Out of the 138 people who

accepted the invitation to Frankfurt most were from Israel, some from USA and only four families from the UK.

The organisers of the visit were a little concerned that no more people from Britain had taken advantage of their offer.
Netherhall Gardens H May
NW3

ADDRESSING MORMONS

Sir - In May I was invited to speak at a Holocaust Memorial ceremony at a university near Salt Lake City. Utah is very largely hard core Mormon, and I was delighted that they should have made so much of this occasion.

The ceremony began with a march of about 500 people from the university to the high school. The latter had a huge auditorium filled by 1500 faculty members, students and high school pupils. Then came an introduction by a Jewish student, followed by my lecture, which was received in absolute silence with a standing ovation at the end. Then followed some Mormon religious reading, Kaddish was read in Hebrew with a candle lighting ceremony and to round off, the school orchestra gave us a rendering of the theme music of *Schindler's List*.

I was happy to be able to talk to two school classes the next day. They were 13/14 year olds who had studied *Anne Frank's Diary*, but had never met anybody who had been "there".

Deddington, Oxon Marianne Elsley

CRI DU COEUR

Sir - It appears from Inge Trott's letter (July issue) that I need to clarify something I wrote in June: in counting members, the Reform movement count husband and wife as two, whereas in Orthodox congregations only the husbands rank as members.

I wonder whether, if a man is a member of the AJR, his wife is also counted as a member.

Northdene Gardens Henry Schragenheim
London N15

CULINARY OMISSION

Sir - In Gretel Beer's red-currant meringue recipe (July issue), no cooking time was given for the meringue in the final paragraph of the recipe.

I experimented successfully, but it was guess work.

St Leonards-on-Sea Ilse Eton
East Sussex

EATING-WORDS

Sir - Just a note on your stirrup-shaped rolls: an alternative origin is the croissant baked to commemorate the defeat of the Turkish crescent - when Vienna was saved from a Muslim invasion.

Richmond on Thames Elizabeth Rosenthal

CULINARY HERITAGE

Sir - In the July issue, Mr John Levy states that in London only Louis Patisserie, remains to offer a central European ambience to customers.

I invite him to visit 'Cafe Mozart' at Swains Lane, N6. It is a genuine continental café able to compete in food, service and general ambience with everything the few remaining, old fashioned, heavily subsidised Vienna Kaffehäuser can offer today.

Kiriat Shimona Fedor Schön
Israel

LOB(E)OTOMY

Sir - I have recently come across an intriguing puzzle in genetics, or is it anthropology? As you know, most people have ears whose outline is a capital C, but in some cases the ear lobe is extended and fixed to the head, to form a question mark without the dot. Apparently there is an old wives' tale to the effect that the latter is prevalent among, or even characteristic of Jews. I call it 'old wives' tale', because in my experience it is not borne out by facts, but my attention was drawn to this belief by a recent TV broadcast about the life of Joachim von Ribbentrop. Before the latter was setting out for Russia in August 1939, to sign the Non-Agression pact, Hitler asked him to take his camera and to be sure to take some close-up photos of Stalin, in case he had the extended ear lobe, which (of course!) would indicate his Jewish descent.

I have heard instances of this tale before and wonder if any of your readers could enlighten me on how widespread it is.

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AJR News

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE INTRODUCED

AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufmann welcomed volunteers, guests and staff to a special evening to meet Michael Radbil, AJR's new Chief Executive, and outlined the Association's priorities and responsibilities.

The present was a very busy time for the AJR, Andrew Kaufman said, with the appointment of the new Chief Executive, a visit to Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, the Annual General Meeting, Open Day at the Day Centre, the buffet supper to express AJR's appreciation to its 170 volunteers and its many other good friends, and the 50th Anniversary Concert still to come. The Chairman also said how delighted he was to greet the AJR's honoured guests.

The AJR should never forget just why the organisation existed, to help members

as and when help was needed, at a time when their average age now extended well into the 80s. This was achieved by offering help in two main ways: by providing social services, including self aid, and by the work and welcome of the Day Centre.

Without the help of volunteers, the AJR could not function. Among the many tasks they undertook were befriending, shopping, caring, helping at the Day Centre, taking art and keep fit classes, driving members to and from the Centre, and helping in the work of Head Office.

Michael Radbil's inaugural statement

In the short time I have spent with the AJR, I have already become familiar with the various activities which form integral and important parts of the services we provide.

It was soon apparent that the organisation owes its success to its workers, and we are fortunate at the AJR that our excellent staff team are complemented by an equally dedicated team of volunteers.

The AJR has close relationships with other Jewish organisations.

Among others, I am delighted to be working with representatives of the ACJR, Second Generation Trust, Kindertransport, Otto Schiff Housing Association, Belsize Square Synagogue, US Rabbinical Council and its Hospital Visitation Committee, Jewish Care and its Holocaust Survivor Centre, AJEX, the Board of Deputies and its Community Security Trust.

We proudly describe the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre as 'the jewel in our crown'. Its excellent in-house catering also serves meals-on-wheels to the housebound. The Centre has a shop, lending library, the services of a chiropodist, dentist and optician, art classes and first rate entertainment. An Advice Centre helps with pensions, benefits and other related matters, while our popular Lunch-

eon Club has a permanent waiting list! Situated above the Centre are eight residential flats whose residents can enjoy its facilities should they so wish.

In many ways our Social Services team are the unsung heroes as their hard work, to bring financial and personal support to members in need, often takes place behind closed doors. The ably administered AJR Charitable Trust maintains the necessary income. Throughout the country, and abroad, members are kept in touch through the columns of *AJR Information*. We have recently formed local groups in South London, Pinner, Surrey, East and West Midlands, Manchester, Leeds and Cambridge and are inaugurating one in the Bournemouth area. As members become more frail we have to address their changing needs and these groups are proving an excellent way in which the AJR can come to them. We will continue to follow changes in members' needs, relevant legislation and the structure of community care.

Relying on the support of our staff, volunteers, Trustees and Management Committee, we can look forward to the achievement of our aims □

AJR
Tel: 0171-431 6161

AJR COUNTRYWIDE

A new regional AJR group has been formed in Surrey for members living in the Redhill-Ashstead-Epsom area. The group's first meeting, held in July and graciously hosted by Edith Vanstone, was attended by fifteen members while a further ten have already expressed their interest in doing likewise.

Surrey AJR plans to meet and organise social and cultural events every other month. Its next meeting is being held on Monday 7th September from 2-4pm. Please call Debbie Picker for further details.

The AJR now has nine associated groups: in addition to Surrey they are in South London, Pinner, Birmingham and West Midlands, Nottingham and East Midlands, Manchester, Leeds, Cambridge and, shortly to get started, Bournemouth. If you would like further information on any of these groups, call Debbie on 0171-431 6161.

□ DP

SOUTH LONDON AJR Caring for victims

Helen Bamber gave members an inspiring talk on her refugee experiences and the work of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Before the war her father had warned of the danger of genocide and helped refugees to escape to this country.

Shortly after the liberation of Belsen, Helen volunteered to assist the physical and emotional recovery of the survivors. The memory of the horrors she saw then has stayed with her. Tuberculosis patients were set to Switzerland, she recalled, but the implacable Swiss insisted that they were returned after recovery. Back in Britain she helped children from the camps, many still members of the 45 Aid Society. Unbelievably, even today there are an estimated 27 million refugees in the world.

□ Ruth Leggett

Harry Blacker will present his own special brand of Jewish humour at SLAJR's next meeting on Thursday 17th September at 2pm.

Grand opening of the


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Tuesday 8 September
Thursday 17 September
Wednesday 23 September
Wednesday 7 October

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.

... Viewpoint ...

Opéra Comique

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. Is this to be the enduring plot of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, perpetually condemned to serve affluent business-oriented élites, paradoxically heavily subsidised by Britain's taxpayers, most of whom may never ever get a look-in at its expensively refurbished portals?

Not that many years ago it was possible to queue at the box office in Floral Street (or permit one's enthusiastic mother so to do) and be rewarded with two seats in the amphitheatre, which hermetically sealed the hoi polloi – known better as true opera buffs and balletomanes – from the well-heeled supporters stacked in the stalls way below. Yet, for just £2.50 to £5, the knowledgeable enthusiast enjoyed sumptuous orchestral music, dazzling décor and supreme artistic performances, all at the swish of the Garden's majestic curtains. I shall never forget Fonteyn and Nureyev's spell-binding evocation of Prokofiev's haunting *Romeo and Juliet*; it was the experience of a lifetime.

Shall we have the opportunity to return to the people's opera house when it re-opens next year with the

benefit of a £213 million rebuilding programme, £78 million of it from the National Lottery? The ham-fisted way in which the woes of the Jeremy Isaacs-led ROH were revealed to a gobsmacked TV audience in a fly-on-the-wall documentary, well nigh guaranteed its governance's demise. Their antics and shenanigans would have damned a village opera company let alone the nation's showcase for the performing arts.

Fall inevitably followed the pride when Gerald Kaufman got his Select Committee into the act – adding his own virtuoso performance as interlocutor; heads began to roll and the ROH establishment was disestablished.

Shining knights approved by New Labour come garnered with modern money-saving techniques; Sir Colin Southgate enters left to muted applause. Sir Richard Eyre's eagerly-awaited investigations into lugubriously-named 'lyric' theatre shows little enthusiasm for the reconstituted Board of the house or that its business acumen is proving to be more effective than its predecessors'. He suggests that a doubling of their subsidised income would help. *Plus ça change...* □ Ronald Channing

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

15 Cleve Road, West Hampstead, NW6

Mon. & Weds. 9.30am-3.30pm. Tues. 9.30am-5.30pm. Thurs. 9.30am-6.30pm. Suns. 2pm-6.30pm

Call Sylvia Matus – 0171 328 0208

Afternoon entertainment programme –
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1998

- Tue 1 Katinka Seiner, Laszlo Easton & Peter Gellhorn, piano
- Wed 2 Sue Kennett & Gordon Weaver, piano
- Thur 3 Judi, Bimbi & Rufus Merri-Frowde & June Moore, piano
- Sun 6 Jenny Lind, Valerie Hewitt, & Betty Hood, piano
- Mon 7 OPENING OF KARD AND GAMES KLUB – Please phone Sylvia, Renée or Susie to book 0171 328 0208
- Tue 8 Sheila Games & Daphne Lewis
- Wed 9 Alison Wheeler, soprano & Angus Cunningham, piano
- Thur 10 The Geoffrey Whitworth Duo
- Sun 13 NO ENTERTAINMENT
- Mon 14 KARD AND GAMES KLUB – Booking: 0171 328 0208
- Tue 15 Madeleine Whitelaw 7 Students

- Wed 16 Day Centre Open – Luncheon Club
- Thur 17 Jo Parton with String Quarter & Lewis Lev, piano
- Sun 20 DAY CENTRE CLOSED – EREV ROSH HASHONAH
- Mon 21 CLOSED – ROSH HASHONAH
- Tue 22 CLOSED – ROSH HASHONAH
- Wed 23 The Dulcet Tones
- Thur 24 Geoffrey Strum & Helen Blake
- Sun 27 NO ENTERTAINMENT
- Mon 28 KARD AND GAMES CLUB – Booking: 0171 328 0208
- Tue 29 DAY CENTRE OPEN – CLOSED AFTER LUNCH – KOL NIDRE
- Wed 30 DAY CENTRE CLOSED – YOM KIPPUR
- Thur 1 Sylvia Eaves & Margaret Eaves, piano
- Sun 4 CLOSED – EREV SUCCOT
- Mon 5 CLOSED – SUCCOT
- Tue 6 CLOSED – SUCCOT
- Wed 7 The Geoffrey Whitworth Duo

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birthdays

Salomonson. Paula Salomonson will celebrate her 90th birthday on 3.10.98.

Salomonson. Walter Salomonson will celebrate his 95th birthday on 5.10.98.

Deaths

Klaus. Anne Klaus (Neumann) died aged 93. Will be very sadly missed by her daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

CLASSIFIED

Miscellaneous

Member's daughter seeking car to take children on school run. Please telephone (Lincolnshire) 01476 565095.

Ein fünfundsiebzig-jähriger Junggeselle sucht gepflegten Abendtisch zwischen 6 und 7 Uhr im Umkreise von Swiss Cottage und nahe der Bus-Linie. Anschrift mit Kostenanschlag zunächst auf Box Number 1249.

Piano wanted

Amanda Palmer, regular entertainer at AJR Day Centre and post-graduate student of Trinity College, is seeking a standard piano in good working order. Please call Hanna Goldsmith on 0181-958-5080 if you can offer one which is appropriate.

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Day Centre

Shirley Lever at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. New Clothes for Sale, dresses, underwear, cardigans etc. Wednesday 2 September and Thursday 8 October, 9.45. - 11.45. a.m.

Societies

Breslauer meeting takes place 10.9.98. 3pm at 11 Fitzjohns Avenue. Under the auspices of Leo Baeck Lodge.

Reunion - The Hyphen Club 15 November 1998. Further information from Peter Johnson Tel: 0171 794 0682.

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

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Art Notes

Maori, at the British Museum until November 1, is an exhibition devoted to the history, culture and arts of the Maori people. This fascinating exhibition, drawn from the Museum's own extensive collection, demonstrates the splendour and depth of Maori culture from ancient times to the present day. On display are over 500 objects, including the large awe-inspiring wood carvings from Maori meeting houses and war canoes, intricately woven cloaks decorated with brilliantly coloured feathers, and exquisite ornaments of nephrite, bone and ivory.

The Thirties: Influences on Abstract Art in Britain, a major exhibition at Annelly Juda Fine Art, highlights the achievements of the early pioneers of abstract art. In the 1930s, a group of great artists, among them Mondrian, Gabo and Moholy-Nagy, lived in London and inspired the work of their close neighbours and colleagues – Moore, Hepworth and Nicholson. Together they made an enormous contribution to a form of art that is self-sufficient and speaks its own language. Until September 19.

The BP Portrait Award, aimed at encouraging young artists to develop the theme of portraiture in their work, is an annual event that can usually be relied upon to produce stimulating paintings far removed from the conventional boardroom portrait. This year's highly enjoyable exhibition of 62 paintings, at the National Portrait Gallery until September 27, is no exception. Also on view are expressive portraits of Fijian-Indians by **Akash Bhatt**, winner of the 1997 BP Travel Award.

Two new books on **Chagall** have been published by the Phaidon press, coinciding with the Chagall exhibition at the Royal Academy. Monica Bohm-Duchen's 'Chagall' (£12.95) is a scholarly, comprehensive study of the artist's life and art, surveying his vast output not only in painting, but also in printmaking, book illustration, theatre design, stained glass, ceramics and poetry. Particularly valuable is her study of the artist's Russian years – the subject of the current exhibition. In her monograph 'Chagall' (£5.95), Gill Polonsky stresses the influence that



Lovers in Pink, Marc Chagall, 1916.

Chagall's Jewish background had on his work. There are illuminating commentaries on the 48 large colour plates which include some of Chagall's most important paintings. Both books are extremely well written and free from art jargon.

Finally, at the Sternberg Centre for Judaism until October 12, is an exhibition of original lithographs by **Chagall**, together with photographs of the artist taken by his friend, Alfred Neuman.

□ Barry Fealdman

SB's Column

From the German Scene. Once again, last season's musical successes came from the West: *West Side Story* topped the bill, having played to capacity audiences in Bonn, Bremen and Ulm. It was followed by *Anatevka* (Fiddler on the Roof) at theatres in Karlsruhe, Kiel and Wiesbaden. *Evita* was a hit in Halle, and *Hair* in Saarbruecken. On the drama sector *The Diary of Anne Frank* saw productions in Eisenach and Würzburg.

St Pölten. Lower Austria's capital enhances its cultural reputation with a very varied programme for the upcoming season: Swiss drama (*Frisch, Dürrenmatt*), modern comedy (Ephraim Kishon and Karl Farkas) and operettas, e.g. von Suppé's *Boccaccio* and Kreisler's *Sissy*. The city's proximity to Vienna helps it to attract theatregoers from a wide area.

Advance notice. Erich von Stroheim's silent masterpiece *The Wedding March* (1928) will be shown November 16 and

17 at the Sadler's Wells theatre with a new score by Carl Davis. It depicts the love affair between a poor girl and an impoverished prince against the backdrop of the romantically crumbling Habsburg empire, and stars Stroheim himself opposite Fay Wray (who, some years later, achieved fame in *King Kong*).

A Dazzling Meteor. This was Lotte Lehmann's description of Wagner tenor Karl Aagard Oestvig, a Norwegian who died 30 years ago. Prominent in Stuttgart from 1914 and celebrated at the Vienna State opera in the twenties, he was a famous Lohengrin and Parsifal. After retiring as a singer, he directed the Oslo opera house □

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REGULAR VISITS TO LONDON

Polish property claims

Recent declarations by the Polish Government on the return of Jewish property failed to distinguish between communal property, such as synagogues, old age homes, etc., and abandoned private property. Polish law clearly differentiates between the two. Even though communal property is being returned, the opportunities for reclaiming private property are rapidly receding.

All ownership of private property was recorded in the Polish Land Registry whose records pre-date World War II and remain intact. As a consequence, there are still assets in Poland registered in the names of Holocaust victims and survivors. Individual claims may exceed hundreds of thousands of dollars and, under Polish law, descendants are entitled to establish their claim in a Polish court. Once registered, the new owners may either sell or let the property on the open market.

Polish birth, marriage and death registers are generally also found to be intact; such certificates are required to prove claimants' rights. The authorities will issue death certificates for those who perished during the Shoah.

The Polish authorities are currently updating lists of abandoned property and

ently preserved and that these rights will be lost as properties continue to be compulsorily acquired. Indeed, there is only a limited time for private individuals to enforce their absolute right of inheritance of family property.

Compulsory purchase does require cumbersome legal, time-consuming procedures, but more and more Jewish property is being acquired by the authorities in this manner with no requirement to pay compensation to owners who may subsequently lodge claims. Official Jewish bodies dealing with property in Poland only deal with Jewish communal property, not with private property.

To lodge claims successfully and establish rights, complex procedures are necessary and it is advisable that these be handled by experienced Polish lawyers and notaries through the courts. Failure to observe meticulous procedures can lead to the loss of entitlement.

□ Michael Storfer FCA, PP Claims Ltd.

Poldor International Ltd., founded in Israel ten years ago to realise rights to Jewish property in Poland, retain specialist professionals in every Polish city. The company attends to all the requisite procedures, from establishing claims, to the rental and disposal of property in accordance with the wishes of the owner. The company has representative offices in London and New York. Further details can be obtained from Poldor's London representative, PP Claims Ltd., on 0171 430 1581.

PRIVATE PROPERTY IN POLAND

Act Now

The Polish Government & Local Authorities are only now assuming control of 'abandoned' private property. By registering your entitlement you may save your family property.

For further information contact:
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London EC1N 8BA
Tel: 0171 430 1581 Fax: 0171 404 5355

taking the legal steps necessary to acquire unclaimed assets. Once compulsorily acquired, these assets are transferred to private ownership or local councils and the rights of previous owners are thereby lost. Most refugees and their descendants do not realise that their rights are pres-

SEARCH NOTICES

Irmgard Gröschel, b. 24 March 1925 in Forchheim/Oberfranken (Bavaria), daughter of Bernard Gröschel and Rose, née Goldberg, emigrated to London 3 Sept 1939. Contact desired by Rolf Kiessling, Lindenweg 16, D-91301, Forchheim, Germany, who is writing a history of Forchheim's Jews.

Kobe, Japan. I am assembling the personal memories of Jews of German origin who spent the WWII years in Kobe, Japan. Any information or documentation, published or private memories, would be appreciated by Yael Naaman, 39 Midbar Sinai Street, Jerusalem 97805, Israel. Tel: 972-2-581-5279.

Alfred Richter, born 14 August 1920. Taken from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz and perished in 1944. His sister Valerie Javery wishes to speak to anyone who knew Alfred or recalls his last days. 8 Rutland House, Stratton Close, Edgware, Middx. Tel: 0181 952 3503.

Löwenstein family members, offspring of Ludwig and Clara, née Glaser, china manufacturers in Schlackenwerth, are being sought. Also families of Emil, b. 16.8.1878, his son Kurt, b. 1905, Hans Löwenstein and John Bryan. Please write to Verena Wagner, Hauptstrasse 1, 4210 Gallneukirchen, Austria.

Could any readers offer advice/information on locating sources of civil and Jewish family records in Bohemia and Moravia? Any tips, to the following address, would be greatly appreciated. David Kernek, 1 Coburg Villas, Camden Road, Bath, Somerset BA1 5JF.

Wolverhampton University student, researching Romance and the Holocaust, is seeking opportunities to meet couples who met before and after internment or in the camps, and relevant reading material. Please write to Debbie Mainwaring, 30 Smallwood Road, Pendeford, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV8 1UE.

Wartime life of Jews in Shanghai. Where can I obtain a book or memoirs written in English? R Treitel, 14 Dunstan Road, London NW11 8AA. Tel: 0181 458 4674 □

Berlin memorial controversy

The long-drawn-out plan to build a Holocaust memorial near the Brandenburg Gate in the heart of Berlin, has aroused further controversy. An opposition Social Democrat spokesman, Michael Naumann, has suggested that the concentration camps serve as more appropriate reminders, enabling people to reflect on the past and their own shame.

German-Jewish leader Michel Friedman regards the memorial as essential in the capital, one among many needed to warn against Nazi terror and any abuse of democratic and human rights. Chancellor Kohl has pledged that an acceptable design for the memorial will be chosen later this year.

□ RDC

Eye for an eye?

The publication of Joseph Harmatz' memoir as a Vilna partisan (reviewed in June's *AJR Information*) prompted the Spiro Institute to invite a distinguished panel to consider the question of revenge from moral, ethical and psychological perspectives.

Fifteen independent revenge groups set out to implement the Biblical injunction 'an eye for an eye', to repay the Germans in kind - some literally seeking the deaths of six million in retribution. With



Left to right: Prof. Hyam Maccoby, Joseph Harmatz, Dr Helen Bender, Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs, Nitza Spiro and Geoffrey Paul, chairman.

no means of dispatching such numbers at their disposal, the groups set their sights much lower. While the 5,000-strong Jewish Brigade was halted in Italy by the British, who feared the consequences of its arrival on German soil, this failed to prevent its personnel from forming execution squads which settled accounts with individual Nazis hiding in Germany.

The 50-strong independent 'Din' or Justice group, led by Aba Kovner and of which Harmatz was a member, congregated in Lublin in 1944 and played a large part in the *bricha*, the 'illegal' emigration of Jews from Europe to Palestine. Their attempts to poison water and bread supplies only partially succeeded.

Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs observed that while it was impossible to discuss the Holocaust in rational argument, the avengers themselves had reservations about their activities. Jewish tradition took the injunction 'an eye for an eye' to mean obtaining redress by "proper judicial process", not by acts of revenge.

Historian Hyam Maccoby suggested that Jews had invariably resisted oppression when they had the opportunity to do so. He distinguished between resistance, i.e. fighting back, and revenge; the 'revengeful Jew' had rarely figured in Jewish history, but was rather a false view fostered by antisemites.

Psychologist Helen Bender saw the members of the Din as "exceedingly moral

people" who typically shared Harmatz' idyllic childhood before their world was turned upside down. During the war comrades substituted as a surrogate family and provided opportunities for resistance as opposed to remaining powerless individuals. Revenge against six million people was, however, only a "grand fantasy"; in reality, attacks were carried out on a small scale and not indiscriminately. They sought justice, not personal revenge, and when the fighting ended they returned to peaceful occupations.

Joseph Harmatz recognised that in the intervening half-century an older genera-

tion had passed on and the world had changed significantly. In the main, he and his peers were brought up in civilising youth movements, but fought valiantly when called upon and many of his comrades were killed in action. Only at the war's end did they learn of the concentration camps, and found it hard to comprehend why they were left alive and for what purpose? They then decided to exact retribution.

In World War II Jews had no way out, no alternatives such as religious conversion or emigration. "We wanted justice and punishment and nobody but ourselves would pursue it".

□ Ronald Channing

Spectrum revival

Spectrum Radio's Jewish programme, which was in danger of complete closure, is continuing to broadcast from Sunday to Friday, with new presenters, from studios in Battersea. Richard Ford introduces Spectrum's weekday edition from 1pm to 3pm, while John Kaye, who was the station's first and most successful presenter from its launch six years ago, returns to his old microphone to analyse the week's events and discuss the Jewish community's concerns every Sunday between 12 midday and 2pm. □ RDC

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - SEPTEMBER 1998

Ongoing: Coats of Many Colours:

Prints, drawings & costumes from around the world.

Jewish Museum, Camden Town till Jan 99

Thur 3 **Abie Cowen:** Opposition to Mosley at Aldgate and Cable Street. Pinner AJR, Pinner Synagogue, 2pm

Mon 7 **Dr FW Rosner:** Robert Neumann, Eine vespätate hundertste Geburtstagsfeier (in German). Club 43, 8pm

7- London Master Classes,

13 summer courses open to public audience at Rudolph Steiner House, 35 Park Road, and St Cyprian's Church, Clarence Gate, NW1. Tel: 0181 907 2049 for details.

Thur 10 **Children & Their Books,** from Weimar to Nazi Germany: Irene Wise, Roehampton Institute. Wiener Library, 6.30pm, £2

Sun 13 **The Bielski Brothers,** a film about Russian partisans who defied the Nazis, with Jack Kagan. Jewish Museum, Finchley, 3pm

Mon 14 **Trude Levi** reads from her book *A Cat Called Adolf* and talks about Holocaust education. Club 43, 8pm

Thur 17 **Harry Blacker** on *Jewish Humour*, illustrated talk with slides. South London AJR, Lily Montague Hall, 2pm

Mon 28 **Jakob Pesata:** Shell, a Success Story. Club 43, 8pm

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

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

South London AJR. Ken Ambrose 0181 852 0262

Spaces of memory

The current interest in the victims of Nazi persecution has stimulated a number of young academics from Germany, often non-Jewish, to undertake research on the German-speaking refugees from Hitler in Britain. An example of this very welcome development is Marion Hamm, a doctoral student from Tübingen with a background in anthropology and cultural studies, who recently gave two lectures on her work on collective memory and the German-speaking Jewish refugees in contemporary London.

In the first of these, at the Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, she gave an enthralling account of her research on the 'spaces of memory', such as the Wiener Library, Club 43 or the Cosmo Restaurant, which memorialise the refugee community. Her presentation of her findings about the emigrés from Central Europe, arrived at through interviews and other methods of fieldwork across North-West London, led to a lively discussion and greatly entertained an audience composed of academics and former refugees.

Her second talk, given at the Wiener Library, was entitled 'First Generation, Second Generation: a shared memory?' and sought to define the differing relationships of the two generations to the past, as preserved in memory. Drawing

on sociology and modern anthropology, she spoke of memory, and collective memory in particular, as a fluid and dynamic process that changed with the change of generations, not as a fixed entity.

The first generation's mode of remembering its experiences under the Nazis and in exile is, she believes, primarily historical, relying on eye-witness testimony, interviews and the like, whereas the second generation seems predominantly to approach the traumas of the past from a psychoanalytical, therapeutic perspective. Her use of concepts taken from eminent sociologists like Karl Mannheim, himself a refugee scholar in Britain, was demanding; but her enthusiasm transmitted itself to her audience as she showed how, through the structuring of memories, the two generations adopt different strategies in confronting the task of making sense of, and thus of healing, the past.

□ Anthony Grenville

Diamond couple

AJR Day Centre volunteer 85-year-old Max Abraham and his wife Hanni have celebrated their diamond wedding. Max taught engineering at ORT's school in Berlin when in 1938 its pupils and staff were transferred to Leeds by the late Colonel JH Levey □

Cooking with Gretel Beer



Peas cooked with lettuce

There's nothing quite as good as fresh peas cooked in this way, though you can, of course, use frozen peas instead – but the cooking time will be shorter and the result not quite as satisfactory.

Rinse, but do not dry a fairly thick saucepan. Wash the outer leaves of a let-

tuce – do not dry them – and use some of these to line the saucepan. Shell and rinse as many peas as you will need. If there are a few very thin pea pods – like 'mangetout' – amongst them, do not prise them open, just remove the string as for French beans and add them as well. Wash and quarter the lettuce heart and put on top of the peas, together with a few spring onions, salt, pepper and some very generous dots of butter. Cover with remaining lettuce leaves and dot with a little more butter. Cover with saucepan lid and simmer very gently until the peas are tender – this obviously depends on their size and their age, but no extra liquid should be required. That's all – except that when I am uncertain as to the age of the peas I add a small pinch of sugar with the rest of the seasoning. I prefer the peas in their natural liquid, but if you like a slightly thicker sauce, simply work a teaspoon of butter into a teaspoon of flour and add this to the peas towards the end of the cooking time □

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Obituaries

Ludwig Lion

Hamburg-born Ludwig Lion has passed away aged 103. A respected international metal broker who started work over 80 years ago, he was by far the oldest active businessman in England and only 'retired' this year. As the doyen of the metal industry he was held in high esteem and was often called upon as an international arbitrator.

During the First World War he held an important post in the German Embassy in Switzerland.

He had the great foresight to anticipate the dangers of Nazism in 1933 and made preparations to bring his family to England, thus enabling his late wife, Hadassa, to work at Bloomsbury House and save the lives of many other families.

He was an early member of the B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Lodge and of the AJR.

His advice, guidance and wisdom will be sadly missed.

□ Rena Gamsa

Hildegard Cohen

Hildegard Cohen, who has died at the age of 90, generously bequeathed her estate to the AJR to alleviate the hardships of those who came from a refugee background similar to her own.

Miss Cohen (she never married) was born in Coesfeld, Germany, in 1917. With other of her contemporaries, she fled to England in 1939, though her parents and most other members of her family perished in the Holocaust. After working as a domestic in Hendon until 1940, she later moved to Gillingham in Dorset, then in 1958 to Shaftesbury in the same county to take a position as housekeeper to a Scottish lady.

On the death of her employer, Hildegard was left enough funds to ensure her own comfort for life. She bought a local cottage and, as a skilled seamstress, developed her talents and earned a reputation for designing and making wedding gowns. She was a warm-hearted extrovert

woman, and although she did not participate in formal religious practice, she maintained her Jewish identity – receiving *AJR Information* every month – and was a member of Manchester Reform Synagogue. Her sister, Gerta Marcus, who died in 1994, had settled in Manchester and Hildegard paid regular visits. She continued to correspond with her only other living relative, a great-nephew in Israel.

□ RDC

Last surviving
'degenerate' artist

Hans Feibusch died just short of his 100th birthday, an active draughtsman, sculptor and painter of mythology, the Bible and the Holocaust, right to the end of a long and prolific life.

Feibusch was educated at Frankfurt and Munich, prior to serving on the Russian front for the last two years of World War I, following which he recommenced his art studies. By 1930 his painting was

being honoured in Germany, but in 1937 the Nazi régime stigmatised and banned his work.

He had already emigrated to England by 1933, but recognition here came only slowly, though Bishop George Bell of Chichester furthered his career with a commission at the Bishop's Palace. It was after World War II, however, that his popularity rose to its heights. He did murals in old churches like St Ethelburga's in the City of London, as well as in the modern, becoming England's most prolific church artist of the 20th century.

Feibusch also painted secular murals in, for example, the Town Hall in Dudley and the Civic Centre at Newport. His 1946 book on mural painting was extremely influential. With failing eyesight he turned to sculpture with works in Ely Cathedral and St John's Wood Church.

German awards came in 1967, the Order of Merit, and in 1986, the Grand Cross. In England his first major retrospective came belatedly in 1988 and the Tate Gallery hung one of his canvases even later, in 1997.

Though Feibusch converted to Christianity, by 1992 he had reverted to Judaism and, towards the end, called himself as "a very tired, old Jew".

□ RDC

"A Berliner Bounces Back"

is the title of an article in
The Royal Fusiliers Officers' Club Newsletter,
reviewing Peter Perry's book.

The article concludes:

With 433 pages, lots of photographs not previously published, documentation and an excellent index. This is a gem of a book and one that should be in the library of every British and every American university.

The Jewish Chronicle comments that it is ... a superbly presented hardback tale of a German-Jewish schoolboy escaping to England in 1935 and ending up in 1945 back in Berlin as a Captain with the Royal Fusiliers.

The AJEX Journal writes: *this is a unique story ... It also includes a chronology by his wife. Ellen paints a poignant yet terrifying picture of her early life and how, hidden, she remained in Berlin throughout the war ... This book is a most important addition to Holocaust history.*

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NEWSROUND

Confiscated assets report

The return of some proportion of assets confiscated from Jewish refugees in Britain under its 1939 Trading with the Enemy Act, is proposed in Lord Archer of Sandwell's report. Claimants will be required to prove their losses and demonstrate they were never enemy aliens.

Register of stolen art

The Art Loss Register, which is compiled by auctioneers Sothebys, Christies and leading insurance companies, is to include paintings, sculptures and antiques stolen during the Holocaust. Owners seeking to discover and recover lost works are invited to register with the ALR.

Slave workers' compensation?

Car-maker Volkswagen have reversed their policy not to compensate slave labourers who survived working in their factories during WWII. Historian Hans Mommsen established that by 1942 nearly two thirds of Volkswagen workers were foreign slave labourers, Soviet POWs, Jews and Poles sent from Auschwitz. Volkswagen have already paid out £9 million to Holocaust research charities, but 30 Hungarian-Jewish victims are suing for unpaid work.

Assassination plot

Britain's secret service plotted to assassinate Hitler in the closing months of the war, revealed recently released files. He was to be shot by a sniper at Berchtesgarden, bombed or poisoned on his train. The project was abandoned; Hitler's flawed military strategy probably worked to the Allies' advantage.

Longevity

Jewish women in Britain live three years longer than the national average while men live six years longer, according to research published by the Board of Deputies. At an average age of 82, however, women still live three years longer than the men do!

'Beautiful life'

A tragi-comedy film on the Holocaust, *Life is Beautiful*, was the surprising hit of the Jerusalem Film Festival. The story of an Italian-Jewish bookseller under Mussolini who is imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, it received an ovation after its screening.

□ RDC

Enigma variations

Bletchley Park, a Victorian mansion and estate in a small Buckinghamshire town, well-served by railways, linked into a main communications cable and set midway between Oxford and Cambridge, was requisitioned by the authorities in 1938 as Britain's main code-breaking centre as the probability of an impending war increased.

A visit, organised by the Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners, revealed that an ex-



Ex-Berliners get to grips with code-setting on the Germans' infamous Enigma machine.

ceptional effort was being made to preserve a unique collection of German code-machines and replicas of the world's very first computers created to crack the codes, all housed in nondescript out-houses and military-style huts.

The Germans' main code-making machine, known as 'enigma', was first developed in the 1920s for use by banks and later adopted by the German military, Gestapo, police and railways. It faced any code-breaker with odds against of 150 million million!

Bletchley Park relied on receiving coded reports taken from radio listening posts around the country monitoring German, Italian and Japanese signals. By early 1941 they were already achieving significant success and the intelligence obtained was proving increasingly vital to Britain's war effort, especially in the Atlantic. By 1944 there were 12,000 people working on site.

Best known among the mathematicians and technicians working on code-breaking was Alan Turing of King's College, Cambridge. In order to break into Enigma's complex systems and decode the message within a usable timespan, Turing developed his 'bombe', a complex

mechanical-electrical machine which cut down the probabilities to a manageable number.

Even more interesting was the work of a Cambridge mathematician, Max Newman, whose father was a German-Jewish immigrant. Newman and his colleague Tommy Flowers conceived and designed what became the world's first large electronic valve computer, Colossus. It was built at the GPO Research Laboratories in Dollis Hill, London, and assembled at Bletchley Park over Christmas 1943 where it and nine other clones were to operate. It was successful on its very first run in March 1944 in beginning to break Hitler's coded messages to his generals. At the war's end all bombes and Colossuses were destroyed by government decree.

Bletchley Park and its crucial work remained one of the war's best kept secrets until the 1970s. Today, from meagre plans and surviving pictures, both the bombe and Colossus are being reconstructed there. Almost certainly, the Germans never knew of the importance of Bletchley or discovered that their codes had been cracked. It is said that the intelligence gathered shortened the war by some two years, saved many hundreds of thousands of lives and avoided the option of an atom bomb being dropped on Berlin. It is conceivable that without Bletchley Park, Germany would have won the war – and Anglo-Jewry would assuredly have suffered the fate of its European coreligionists.

□ Ronald Channing



The Enigma machine, first taken up by the German military to code their messages in 1924. It is believed that the Germans never knew of the importance of Bletchley Park or discovered that their codes had been cracked.