

Don't miss ...

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remembrance of
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Neouvelles mixtes

The good news: The emergence of the suave Bruno Megret as challenger to Le Pen for the leadership of the *Front National* has split the most powerful neo-Fascist party in Western Europe. Unless Megret can mould his followers into a cohesive force France will be spared the spectre of a lurch to the far right in the foreseeable future.

The bad news: According to newly opened archives of the Free French Intelligence Service *thousands* of ordinary French men and women worked as spies for the Gestapo. The people they betrayed for filthy lucre were not merely Jews, but patriotic fellow Frenchmen □

Reflections on the fall-out from operation Desert Fox

Saddam's conscience-stricken unconscious helpmeets

Operation Desert Fox produced reactions both on the macro and the micro level. The macro reactions – i.e. those of France, Russia and China – all breathed the spirit of Munich. In addition they were all textbook examples of dissembling.

France is always looking to expand into markets denied to the Anglo-Americans because of their more principled stance. In Russia, Yeltsin played to the gallery of a red-brown Duma infected with superpower nostalgia; in addition Baghdad owes Moscow billions. As for China, her internal body count due to Mao's policies outnumbers Iraqi civilian casualties of operation Desert Fox by a factor of ten thousand!

The micro reaction came from 'dissident' MPs, journalists, playwrights like Harold Pinter and Brian Behan, and unknown contributors to newspaper letter columns. Brian Behan demanded that Tony Blair be hanged as a war criminal – a rehash of the demands made in the late forties that war crimes charges be brought against Air-Chief-Marshal (Bomber) Harris and President Truman. In *The Independent's* letter column a reader suggested that the money spent on operation Desert Fox should have gone into building hospitals – a pale echo of Alan Clark's argument that a Britain neutral in WWII would be much more prosperous now. The chief parliamentary critic of Desert Fox, Tony Benn, when asked in the House how he would have handled Saddam, failed to answer the question.

Another reader's letter, describing Picasso's 1936 *Guernica* painting as 'a cry of pain' claimed that it was equally relevant to Baghdad in 1998.

Rarely in the annals of misinformation could anyone have drawn a more misleading analogy. The express purpose behind the bombing of Guernica was the spreading of terror and death. The raids on Baghdad were carried out with such regard for civilian lives that Saddam's propaganda experts have yet to come up with headline-catching evidence of widespread carnage. In addition, Guernica was the centre of Basque democracy targeted by aggressive

dictatorships – the exact opposite of Saddam's capital.

A superficial parallel can, of course, be drawn between Anglo-American supremacy in Iraqi air space and the Luftwaffe's mastery of the sky above Guernica. But such a parallel is wilfully misleading. In the wider scheme of things the greatest advances in technology – including military technology – are by-products of the freedom of scientific inquiry. That is why America outpaced Germany in the race to build an atom bomb, and why she faced down the Soviets over 'Star Wars'.

It has been argued that the Anglo-Americans adopt an attitude of bullying superiority towards the Muslims of the Middle East. (For the purposes of this argument Israel is also often depicted as the tail that wags the American dog.) But the relative backwardness of oil-rich Iraq, Iran, Libya, etc. has not been foisted upon them by the West. It results from the baleful interaction of corrupt autocracies with the obstacles Islam places in the path of free inquiry.

Critics of tough action against the Iraqi regime are no friends of the Iraqi people. Protesters against Desert Fox may think they occupy the moral high ground; in fact they are caught in the same labyrinth as the prewar Peace Pledge Union and the postwar unilateralists □



Picasso's *Guernica* (detail) 1937

Profile

A fulfilled man

Slim, trim, nattily attired – Ronald Stent could conceivably be a contemporary of mine; in fact he turns out to be my senior by a whole decade. No less envymaking is his perennially upbeat demeanour: *Angst, Weltschmerz*, and all other ills mortal mid-European flesh is heir to, are totally alien to his nature.

He was born in 1914 Berlin into a prosperous Jewish family. (The father, a manufacturer of light fittings, employed 200 workers). The parents being members of the Liberal Jewish community, Ronald belonged to its youth section and was barmitzvah at fifteen. He also enrolled in what could be loosely described as Jewish scout troops, including a rather peculiar breakaway group that attempted to fuse Judaism and Prussianism. A less controversial out-of-school activity was attendance at a *Tanzstunde*, where he met his future marriage partner for 61 years.

As a law student in Bonn Ronald joined the *Kartell Convent*, a student fraternity whose ethos enjoined duelling as essential to Jewish self-respect. Because of the advent of Nazism he did not complete his law studies (although, in a farcical incident, he was medically examined and passed for Wehrmacht service).

In 1935 he emigrated to England where his father had business contacts. In London he worked for a firm specialising in Lalique glassware owned by the father of the biographer Michael Holroyd.

Interned in mid-1940 he joined the Pioneer Corps a few months later, subsequently transferring to the Royal Engineers. In that capacity he was sent to India where, promoted to officer, he gained privileged insight into the workings of the British Raj.

After demob he became a highpowered – and highly peripatetic – salesman of electrical components, spending several years in Southern Africa and the United States. His base, however, remained the UK where his two daughters went to university. Their scholastic achievements inspired Ronald, who was coming up towards retirement, to undertake a switch towards the academic life. He attended evening classes in history at Birkbeck College, took a first degree and went on to an M Phil. Thus qualified, he did Extra-Mural tutoring for several years and became engaged in the work of the



Ronald Stent

University of the Third Age.

Getting a little tired of the travelling involved, he has now found a more sedentary sphere of activity in the composition of autobiographical snippets. The first of them appears on p13 of this issue.

□ RG

Austrian parsimony

A national fund of the Republic of Austria for the victims of National Socialism was established some fifty years after the event to apologise to those still alive and make each of them a payment of 75,000 Austrian shillings.

The legislators, however, determined that those who had escaped in 1938 would have had to be Austrian citizens who had lived in the country for ten years, in other words since 1928. There was a complete disregard for all the German Jews who, having left Germany in 1933 to find a safe haven in Austria, were deliberately excluded under a rule that it took ten years to become an Austrian citizen. But the truth is that up to 13th March 1938 the residential requirement to become an Austrian citizen was only four years; the ten year period was introduced in legislation after 1945.

There are probably only around 100 old people who should receive the same small amount of compensation. Surely it is reprehensible that the German Jews are not remembered, although they too had to flee Austria in March 1938. Fortunately, a concerned member of the Austrian Parliament, Dr Kier, and four of his colleagues have requested a change in the law which may finally obtain those elderly people their due.

□ Peter Frankel

PARTNER

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From *Zhidekommunista* to Communazism

Russia's 180 degree turn

History records that Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev were among the founding fathers of Soviet Russia – a circumstance which enabled Jew and Red-baiters to spread the *Zhidekommunista* myth that Jews and Communists were synonymous. The fact is that in 1917, while all Russian Jews welcomed the democratic February Revolution, large subgroups – religious traditionalists, businessmen, petty traders – regretted the October Revolution, with its attendant onslaught on religion and suppression of private enterprise. Subsequent blows were the prohibition of Hebrew and Zionism and, eventually, of Yiddish culture.

As against this, many Jews undoubtedly carved out careers for themselves in the Party *apparat*, the media and academe. However, with the sacking of Litvinov as Foreign Minister in 1939, a chill wind began to blow. For close on two whole years before Hitler's invasion of Russia there was a news blackout on Nazi atrocities which left Russian Jews ignorant of the fate in store for them. During the invasion itself, the Soviet authorities failed to give the Jews, as the most immediately threatened population group, priority in evacuation schemes.

This resulted in huge Jewish blood-letting in Nazi occupied areas – massively assisted by Ukrainians and Balts – which Soviet officialdom deliberately glossed over after the war. By 1948 Stalin had lapsed into a state of paranoid anti-

semitism which led, via attacks on so-called 'cosmopolitans', to a purge of Jews in the arts and the media, and finally their projected mass deportation which was only cancelled because of the dictator's death. The after effects of all this, coupled with vitriolic anti-Zionist campaigns, led to a nearly million strong Jewish exodus under Brezhnev and Gorbachev.

At the tail end of the exodus the Soviet Union imploded. The rebirth of democracy brought market reform, ie the rebirth of capitalism, in its train with Jews prominent in both areas.

The failure of market reform discredited democracy, enabling the Communists to stage a strong comeback. Stalin's heirs are now so closely linked to ultra nationalists that it is not hyperbole to talk of Communazism.

Hot on the heels of deputy Makashov's pogrom incitement (see January issue), the Communazi Fuehrer Zyuganov has updated the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* so beloved of Julius Streicher. Taking a leaf out of the latter's book, he describes Zionism as a secret conspiracy to seize global power, and Zionists as deadly enemies of the Russian people.

This man leads the largest faction in the Duma. Democratic parliamentarians the world over must sever all links with him and his monstrous crew of would-be gravediggers of Russia's Weimar Republic!

□ Richard Grunberger

Fund payments balked

The AJR has requested the Swiss Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust (also known as the Swiss Humanitarian Fund), set up in March 1997, to use all steps within its power to obtain the release of the sum of £220,000 specifically designated for the relief of former victims resident in the UK. The AJR estimates that there are some 1,000 claimants, all of whom meet the agreed criteria for the receipt of benefit from the Fund and remain in urgent need of financial help.

The Swiss authorities have paid the UK-designated funds to the World Jewish Restitution Organisation (WJRO) in New York for subsequent transfer, rather than

directly to the Board of Deputies in the UK. Inexplicably, the management of the WJRO has failed to respond directly to the AJR's requests for immediate action, reportedly blaming the requirements of Swiss bureaucracy for any delay.

In the interim, payments from the UK Government Humanitarian Fund for Holocaust Victims, established in July 1998, commenced distribution within eight weeks and have been satisfactorily completed.

It is hoped that the Swiss funds will be released this month (February). If so, the AJR, in co-operation with five other Jewish relief organisations, will endeavour to disburse the appropriate amount to each validated recipient at the earliest opportunity.

□ RDC

Gombrich's blotting paper (II)

Sir Ernst's riposte to my original piece faulted me for not giving chapter and verse of his published lecture. I admit to not stating the imprint, but contend that I summarised the contents fairly.

If, as Sir Ernst insists, the lecture was restricted to the visual arts, how is it that I read references to the absence of Jews from the top rank of Viennese composers in the nineteenth century, and from that of philosophers subsequently, in the published version?

Given that fact, Sir Ernst's charge against me of 'bearing false witness' (Letters, November issue) seems hardly warranted by my miniscule offence.

I also contend that another contributor's ploy of depicting me as a Goebbels in reverse (Letters, December issue) deliberately misconstrues my thesis. I focused on the Jews' self-generated culture, not on their racial characteristics. I wonder if my critic would castigate someone who points up the specific black contribution to modern American music as an inverted Nazi?

But to return to *medias res*: I have additional evidence to back up my original argument. Viennese interwar cabaret, I am informed by Hans Veigl, an expert in the field, is the indisputable progeny of the late nineteenth century Leopoldstadt-based Jewish vaudeville theatres, like Heinrich Eisenbach's *Budapester Orpheum*, which satirised the clash between orthodox Jews and assimilated ones. (Even Hans Moser, Austria's greatest comic, served his apprenticeship with *die Budapester*, as demonstrated by his faultlessly inflected Yiddish German on the recording of *Der Patient*).

The interwar *Kleinkunstbühnen*, my informant avers, stood on the shoulders of Heinrich Eisenbach – as did postwar cabaret artists like Qualtinger and Muliar.

Widening the focus somewhat, I would personally assert that, but for Kraus, Polgar, Kuh and Kisch, and their German 'cousins' Heinrich Heine, Thomas Theodor Heine (*Simplizissimus*), Sternheim and Tucholski, German-language satire might not even have seen the light of day. I rest my case.

□ RG

Reviews

Uncertainty principle

Michael Frayn, COPENHAGEN,
Cottesloe Theatre

This is a play about dilemmas, personal and moral. It involves three characters: the Danish physicist Niels Bohr, his wife Margrethe and Bohr's former student, Werner Heisenberg, renowned for his 'uncertainty principle' which earned him a Nobel prize in 1932.

Frayn dramatizes an actual event, a visit to Copenhagen in 1941, when Heisenberg calls on his ex-teacher and mentor at the time when Denmark is occupied by the Germans. Under different circumstances it would be a pleasant reunion of old friends, but now, because of the occupation, it is loaded with tension on the part of the Bohrs, while Heisenberg is depicted as 'the hail-fellow-well-met' character, behaving with German insensitivity. Certainly, as far as Margrethe Bohr is concerned, she sees Heisenberg as an enemy. Her husband, however, is a scientist first and foremost – a citizen of the world, in whose eyes Heisenberg may be a German, but he is also an outstanding fellow scientist. The atmosphere in the home being too emotionally loaded because of Margrethe, they go for a walk alone. On their return Bohr is upset. What took place? It has remained an 'uncertainty' ever since.

The fact is that Niels Bohr and his family, through the Danish underground, left Denmark for neutral Sweden in 1943 and thence flew to the USA to join Robert Oppenheimer's nuclear programme in Los Alamos.

Bohr's contribution to the Allied cause was largely his first-hand information about the German plans for a nuclear weapon, a prospect which horrified him. His preference was that the Allies should get there first, and his calculation about the critical mass of uranium was crucial to the development of the American bomb. However, the German plans were delayed when most of their heavy water production was sunk in Lake Tinn by the Norwegian underground in February 1944.

After the war Heisenberg's 'uncertainty' continued. He had visited Bohr, he claimed, to reveal that he had told the Nazis that the construction of an atomic bomb was not feasible. Moreover he had urged Bohr, in the name of humanity, to tell the Allies that an atomic bomb

project was impossible within the timespan of the war.

Niels Bohr himself, to his death in 1962, remained silent – he would not denounce his former colleague. But Margrethe Bohr emphatically stated that Heisenberg on his visit to Copenhagen had invited her husband to join in a Danish-German scientific partnership – the Germans were going to win the war anyway. In Heisenberg's eyes the fact that Bohr's mother was fully Jewish was of no consequence.

The subsequent publication of Albert Speer's memoirs, showing Heisenberg's definite appointment to the Nazis' atomic bomb project, now leaves little uncertainty about Heisenberg's 'principles'.

□ Andy Mikkelsen

Life and times

Gloria Tessler, AMÉLIE – THE STORY OF LADY JAKOBOVITS, Vallentine Mitchell, 1999, £20.

Amélie Munk's idyllic early childhood in Ansbach, Germany, the family's move to Paris, their flight from German invasion, her daily encounter with occupation in the South of France and eventual internment in Switzerland, are related in but the opening seven chapters of an exhaustive biography which stretches to forty. Narrated with feminine empathy in mature, well-honed language by the author, Gloria Tessler, it is filled to the brim with the results of four years' punctilious interviews and research.

Born in 1928, the first child of Rabbi Eli Munk and his wife Fanny, Amélie's idyll was shattered at the age of four when National Socialism brought her "absolutely horrendous" years at school. In 1936 Rabbi Munk took his family to Paris where he led the Rue Cadet community. Once again life was worth living, until the outbreak of war in 1939 and the invasion of France on 15th May 1940.

After the Rabbi was enlisted in the Foreign Legion his family entrained for the South of France, packed like sardines, for stays in Albi, Marseilles and Nice. Amélie cycled far and queued long hours for meagre supplies. A lax Italian administration ended with Mussolini's capitulation in 1943 and Germany's occupation of the whole of France.

Though many relatives were lost, her immediate family survived the war and, now seven-strong, returned to Paris to

pick up their lives. Amélie, despite having been denied a formal education, was endowed with capabilities beyond her years. The author's delicate touch reveals a young orthodox girl's awakening feelings in anticipation of an arranged marriage. The charming and vivacious 19-year-old was introduced to a reserved young intellectual rabbi, German-born Immanuel Jakobovits, soon to take up his post as Chief Rabbi of Ireland. Their wedding in Paris in 1949 was the first among the city's religious Jewish community since the war.

Many happy years in Ireland within a warm and close community were followed by a further productive eight years at the Fifth Avenue Synagogue in New York observing social etiquette among a wealthy Jewish elite. First approached by Sir Isaac Wolfson in 1963 to accept the post of British Chief Rabbi, the Jakobovitses were reluctant to leave the USA and did so only in 1967, following the *cause célèbre* of the Jacobs Affair. Amélie believed that it took her a full five years to become fully integrated into Anglo-Jewry.

Gloria Tessler's final chapters consider a number of contemporaneous issues: Israel's Six Day War; the Soviet Jewry campaign; expansion of Jewish education; travels abroad; work for charities; the representation of women in the United Synagogue; the Chief's relationship with PM Margaret Thatcher and his elevation to the peerage.

Not least are Lady J's quoted views on the present Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' questionable response to the death of the popular senior Reform rabbi, Hugo Gryn. Caught trying to appease both mainstream opinion and ultra-orthodox rabbanim out of joint with the times, he created an imbroglio. The Jakobovitses had chosen to spend the day after Hugo's death with his wife and family.

Lady Jakobovits' success and popularity as the wife of the Chief Rabbi during his 21 years in office, continues undiminished. For many this biography will provide clues as to how she managed. It captures her innate strengths when facing adversity, explores her attachment to orthodox Judaism and a mother's love for her large family, yet reveals an adventurous and extrovert spirit enjoying a gregarious lifestyle.

□ Ronald Channing

Gloria Tessler is a freelance journalist, author, playwright and contributor to AJR Information.

Galician genocide

Belzec, perhaps the least known of the Nazi extermination camps in Poland, was the subject of a recent lecture given by Robin O'Neil at the Wiener Library.

Building work commenced in November 1941, with the infamous Christian Wirth as its commandant. Belzec's first victims were its own 150-strong Jewish work commando. The killing of groups of 1,000 Jews each from Lublin and Lvov began on 17th March 1942; in all 139 transports of Galician Jews from 440 communities followed prior to the camp's closure in December.

Travel and marshalling of the victims was administered to the last detail. People packed into train wagons were deliberately left for days on end with no means of sustenance. Of one 51-wagon train, carrying 8,205 victims rounded up from within a 50-kilometre radius, any attempting escape were shot by the guards and 2,000 were dead on arrival. Recent investigations, quoted by Robin O'Neil, indicate that between 800,000 and a million people perished at Belzec.

As there were no crematoria, commandos worked for several months in 1943 disinterring and burning the bodies. Finally, the area was levelled and trees planted. Members of the garrison were posted to Italy, where Wirth was shot, possibly by his own men. Of the nine ever brought to trial, only one was



The existing memorial in Belzec's memorial park.

convicted and sentenced to 3½ years, but soon released.

Just 55 people are known to have escaped from Belzec, of whom only six survived the war. One of these, Chaim Hirszmann, was assassinated in 1960 during a Nazi war-crimes trial before which he was giving evidence. An account by Rudolf Reder, perhaps the best known survivor, is currently being translated for publication in English.

A survey of the camp site was undertaken in 1997 under the auspices of Israel's Yad Vashem, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Polish Government, with a view to creating more appropriate memorialisation. Though located near to the Ukrainian border and infrequently visited, Belzec's role as an extermination camp in which many who did survive lost their closest relatives, is being increasingly recognised.

□ Sue Monsell

Confiscated assets: compensation scheme

The British Government has confirmed details of a scheme to compensate victims of the Nazis who had bank accounts and assets in this country confiscated under the wartime Trading with the Enemy Act and who subsequently received inadequate or no reimbursement.

The Government's intentions, announced last April, were for "survivors and relatives of victims of the Nazis to reclaim what is rightfully theirs", and an initial sum of £2 million was set aside for this purpose. An independent adviser, Lord Archer of Sandwell, was appointed to investigate and advise on the most appropriate method to be adopted; the

resulting scheme is based on his recommendations.

The Government has placed the names of 30,000 potential claimants on the Internet. These include former residents of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic States and Yugoslavia, as well as Germany, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. A significant number of claims have already been made. All claims will be evaluated by an independent panel of three assessors and any compensation to be paid to the original owners or their heirs will be made at current values.

For further information please contact the Department of Trade and Industry, Enemy Property (FRM2c), 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET. Tel: 0171 215 6374/6160. Fax: 0171 215 6563. Website: www.enemyproperty.gov.uk

□ RDC

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Letters to the Editor

STOP SHOWING OUR WOUNDS

Sir – Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* takes place in the fifth century BC in Rome. The play begins with the general's return after victory over the enemy. A custom connected with this kind of event is the core of the play: the conquering hero has to put on humble clothes and appear in the market place to show his wounds to the populace and tell them how he got them. This display, obviously intended to please the masses, is a humbling experience for Coriolanus and he refuses to show his wounds.

Shakespeare's drama came to my mind whenever during the past sixty years I saw the newsreels about the death camps. Some of the skeletons lay dead in a heap and some were still walking, but totally dehumanised. I was reminded of the play again more recently when I visited Beth Shalom. I discovered a dark alcove with some chairs and a video; a few survivors, now very old, talk about their experiences in the camps. They describe the stench of burning flesh, the pink smoke and their deprivation of all human necessities. The tape is not very long and goes round and round, and the survivors keep coming on to the screen repeating their story.

There are similar, but much longer tapes going round in some of the museums in Israel. There is just one voice, naming the people shown on the tape. It is a very impressive list of Jews of whom the visitors are told what they achieved during their lives.

I think it is time to stop showing our wounds. This does not mean that we should forget the Shoah, but that we have more to say to the younger generations. The ones who survived have a story to tell about picking up the pieces of a broken life and starting all over again. There is one miracle which the Holocaust wrought: in spite of all they went through, most Jews remained Jews and brought up their children as such.

London NW3

Herta Reik

A PERVERTED SYMBOL

Sir – Might I refer to Mr RO Leavor's article (December 1998 issue) on the

swastika as a symbol of peace and friendship? It is to be found, having the same meaning, in East Africa. It is a central feature in one of the crosses traditionally used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Ethiopians strongly object when Europeans refer to them as Coptic Christians – there are doctrinal differences).

A college administrator was quite upset when he wished to present me with a wooden replica and I instinctively recoiled. I had to explain that in Europe the swastika central to that cross stood for evil, death and destruction. I saw it again as one of the cross-shaped windows in a twelfth century, rock-hewn, church.

Later I asked a couple of Indian academics on secondment about this, having, like Mr Leavor, also met it in North India. They knew not but hypothesised that it was imported from India between AD first and seventh century when the Axumite empire (the origin of modern Ethiopia and Eritrea) extended to both shores of the Red Sea and traded Northwest and Southeast, with both Rome and India.

The Eastern swastika consists of true horizontals and verticals. The 1920s/30s Western version, balancing on its lowest point, is clearly a perversion, to be buried, lost, forgotten, a.s.a.p.

London NW4

Francis Deutsch

THE SHOAH AND THE OFFICERS' PLOT

Sir – I have met the widow of Helmut von Moltke, have personally known Adolf Reichwein, designated Minister of Education in the government envisaged by the Plotters, and am still a friend of his widow and children. I can vouch for the fact that at least they and their families were and are neither antisemitic nor reactionary in any imaginable sense.

I have read that certain other members of the plot are said to have expressed antisemitic and reactionary views, be it out of conviction or political expediency. If you are engaged in a life-and-death struggle, you do not express or solicit a truthful opinion before deciding whether to grasp a helping hand. Beware, Mr

Fisher, of generalised value judgments on groups of people, especially by innuendo!

London SE21

ML Meyer

PINK TRIANGLE AND YELLOW STAR

Sir – There are only two words to be said concerning this article: "absolutely disgusting".

It confirms whose *Geisteskind* the writer is. It is time he packed his bags and disappeared from *AJR Information*. It is of no interest what the sexual life of these people was! As everybody knows, Hitler did not murder Roehm because of his homosexuality, but because he had become too powerful.

Anyway, we do not want to participate in the 1998 "American Republican age", where President Clinton also became too powerful, and therefore had to be "killed" morally.

Wembley Park

Middx

Rolf Weinberg

WAGNER IN JERUSALEM?

Sir – I write as someone steeped in Wagner thanks both to my late father and my husband. As a veteran member of Belsize Square Synagogue, I recall a talk by *Oberkantor* Magnus Davidsohn. Richard Wagner was his hero and he utterly refuted any claims by members of the audience that his antisemitism was all pervasive. He did not convince my husband and me, but it is amazing that I still remember this event, after half a century.

Jane Edwards covers many points in her excellent article. It is a fact that a composer can produce gentle romantic music and yet have sadistic tendencies, *pace* Giacomo Puccini. I love the evocative sounds of Sergei Rachmaninov but, to my chagrin, he was also a rabid antisemite. I have heard of similar prejudices amongst other composers I like.

At least Dmitry Shostakovich venerated the Jewish people and Leo Tolstoy wrote 'the Jew is an emblem of eternity'. Just the same, both Russians, composer and writer, displayed unpleasant tendencies in other areas.

I have come to the conclusion that our democratic State of Israel has now reached a stage of maturity where it can well afford to include the dead composers' music in its repertoire. Who knows – the latter may turn in his grave?

London NW11

L Selo (Mrs)

NAKED

Sir - So early in the New Year I never expected to have cause for a major celebration on behalf of freedom of expression! Thank you, thank you so much for publishing Peter Wright's (address withheld) letter, it being easily the most moronic yet to have graced the pages of *AJR Information* throughout the many decades during which I and so many others have read it from cover to cover. Sincere congratulations to Mr Wright on achieving his unique record.

Just in case of misunderstandings: I have never met Mr Grunberger, am not related to him and do not owe him any money! Whilst I do not agree with him at all times, I consider that the more than ninety percent when I do are significant, and shudder to think of him ever contemplating retirement while I am still around.

Titchfield Road
London NW8

Henry Stanhope

SPRINGS ETERNAL

Sir - As an avid reader of *AJR Information* for many decades, it has crossed my mind that we could reach a stage when the sources of suitable information dry up.

Judging by the exceptional issue of January 1999, nothing could be further from the truth. I should like to convey my heartiest congratulations to the editor and his team of writers for a riveting read. I was unable to put the paper down until I had devoured every line. Nowhere else can one read journalism of this high standard today.

Edgware
Middx

Henry Kuttner

TH VWLLSS LNCG

Sir - It may be of interest to know that Pitman's shorthand is founded on the same principle as the "vowelless language", ie Hebrew (December 1998 issue). As you become more familiar with the 'squiggles', the dots and dashes representing the vowels can be left out and the bare outlines can be read back like the Hebrew consonants.

London NW4

A Saville (Mrs)

AJR SEDER NIGHT

THURSDAY 1ST APRIL

BOOKING DETAILS ON PAGE 10

**Representing
British Jewry**

Observer columnist Melanie Phillips chaired an open forum meeting of Jewish Policy Research which addressed the question of representative organisations in Anglo-Jewry. Ms Phillips, a member of the JPR commission which is considering evidence presented at this and similar meetings before reporting later this year, stressed that all sectors of the community were taking the opportunity to express their views.

Although the gathering was self selected, it became apparent that non-religious Jews believed existing religious institutions (of which they were understandably not members) could not represent 'secular' Jewish interests. The non-affiliated also remained unrepresented.

While some expressed the view that

the Jewish community's diversity made a single representative body an impossibility, a larger number appeared to favour the establishment of an over-arching organisation in order, presumably, to present a united front to the non-Jewish world.

The somewhat naive consensus, that an umbrella body was somehow a 'good thing', failed to recognise the demonstrable strengths provided by a myriad of groups, often local, doing good deeds as well as bringing fulfilment, social contact and Jewish identification to their members. The greater attention and resources claimed, at their expense, by a suprabody, limited in membership and drawn inevitably from the caucuses of mainly self-perpetuating, undemocratic and unrepresentative institutions, would do more to accelerate the exclusion of marginal Jews than retard their assimilation.

□ Ronald Channing

SEARCH NOTICES

Helga & Stephan Fürstenberg lived as children in Lietzenburger Str., Berlin before 1933. Parents owned *Rosenhain* department store. Mother's maiden name was Birnbaum. Children sent to Switzerland in the 30s then on to England. Being sought by Mrs Lieselotte Krüger (née Alitt), Heinrich-Seidel Str. 2, 12167, Berlin. Tel: 798 52 22.

Edith Feder, b 28.3.1907 in Herford, married a Mr Kay, and **Marga Feder**, b 20.3.1909 in Herford, believed to have arrived in Leeds about 1938. Also, **Dr Ernst Ludwig Neustatter**, b 23.7.28, living in Harrow in 1957. John Altmann, a German PhD student currently researching the history of the Jews of Westphalia, would like to hear from them, their descendants or anyone who remembers them. Tel: 0181 458 1866.

Hilda Neumann, née Spiegel (sister of Elsa), b 17 Sept 1902, left A-1200 Vienna, Karl-Meisl-Str. 9, for England, address unknown. Also, **Rudolf Spiegel**, b 17 April 1901, Vienna. (Fate unknown). Anyone with information please write to Jack Young, 85 Lyttelton Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London N2 0DD.

Gerda and Annie Hirsch, sisters from Tuchlauben, Vienna, who studied at the Novarra Gymnasium until 1939. Gerda was an industrial designer in London; Annie a

maid in Coventry, then a postal worker. Please write to their cousin Erika Pinchewsky (née Kende) at 43 Avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France, who wishes to trace them.

Charlotte 'Bimbus' Schlesinger, composer and pedagogue, b Berlin 9.5 1909, d London 4.5.76. Joined Berlin's Hochschule of Music 1925, fled to Austria in 1933, Russia & USA in 1938 where she taught. Lived in London since 1962. Last heard of at 48 Romney Court NW3 in 1971. Please write with any information to research student Dr Anna-Christine Brade, The University, Oberstufen-Kolleg, Postfach 100131, 33501 Bielefeld, Germany.

Wartime exile cabarets, in London & elsewhere. Seeking texts with music: EH Foley-Comer, Suite 23a, 78 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6PD. Tel: 0181 222 3360 Fax: 0181 222 7313.

'Rennie', a European refugee who served in the Pioneer Corps at Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, and may have fought at Arnhem, is being sought by a wartime comrade. Please write to E Brunson, 50 Gardeners Road, Debenham, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 6QY with any information.

Please note that a charge of £2 per five words is made for Search Notice insertions

AJR Reports

ZEMEL CHOIR IN FULL VOICE AT AJR DAY CENTRE



The Zemel Choir singing a medley of Hebrew melodies at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre.

The Zemel Choir, England's leading Jewish mixed voice ensemble, presented a wonderful programme of Hebrew songs for the pleasure of members of the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Among the works were traditional synagogue melodies from Lewandowski, Israeli compositions by Naomi Shemer and modern pieces by Steven Glass. The nostalgia of *Rozbinkes mit Mandlen* was followed by the joy of *Hallelujah*, a popular winner of the Eurovision Song Contest.

The Zemel, which was founded in 1955, still has active original members. As well as national performances, the choir

has gained an international reputation through its tours of Eastern Europe and the USA. Last year they visited Israel during its half-century celebrations, joining choirs from all over the world in Jerusalem for the Zimriyah Choir Festival. The Zemel were chosen to represent all the foreign choirs at the opening ceremony which was broadcast on Israel radio.

Later this year in June the choir is to perform at the Kindertransport reunion in London, led by its recently elected chairman, Rusty Davis, and under its newly appointed musical director Vivienne Bellos.

□ Ronald Channing

LUNCHEON CLUB Unbankable music

Berlin-born Walter Woyda, who came to England in 1939, spoke to members at the AJR Luncheon Club on the subject of *Musicals with a Jewish Theme*.

Walter Woyda, who has always worked in the field of music and the theatre, played his audience excerpts from the musical *Rothschild*. Though written by the same team which had earlier won a smash hit with *Fiddler on the Roof*, Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick, it failed to enjoy anything like

the same success, being produced just once on and once off Broadway.

The action centres around Myer Rothschild, founder of the dynasty in Frankfurt, and his five sons, who together established Europe's leading banking house in the years between 1772 and 1812. It boasts a number of marvellous tunes combined with most intelligent lyrics, though the song 'Give me sons' would certainly upset today's feminist lobby. However, a recording is apparently still available at specialist outlets in London.

□ Pat Finlay

NORTHERN GROUP AJR's unique contribution

AJR Chief Executive, Michael Radbil, presented an interesting and informative abbreviated history of the Association, since its inception in 1941, to members of the Northern Group. At that time, the 60,000 Jewish refugees who had entered the country needed an umbrella organisation to watch over their interests.

Today's Association undertakes important social work, runs a highly successful day centre, provides sheltered accommodation and supports the Otto Schiff Housing Association's residential and nursing homes in London. He recommended *AJR Information*, AJR's monthly journal, whose high standards of analysis and reportage made it essential reading.

The AJR requires a strong membership to exert an influence on the relevant authorities. Myrna Glass, AJR's outreach worker, revealed that there still remained many non-affiliated refugees who would gain great benefit by joining with others sharing a similar background in AJR groups.



Werner Lachs, centre, welcomes Myrna Glass and Michael Radbil of the AJR to a meeting of AJR's Northern Group.

In a lively discussion on the availability of compensation funds, Michael Radbil expressed his disquiet at any avoidable delay to their speedy distribution to help all those eligible. Dr Peter Kurer, chairman of the Morris Feinman Home where the meeting was held, gave the visitors a conducted tour of the Home and its extensive facilities for residents.

□ Werner Lachs

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre Increased charges for 1999

Admission: £4.50 (incl lunch)
Tea: £1.50 Supper: £2.50

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Members: £6 Non-Members: £10

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between 10am and 12 noon on the
following dates:

Tuesday 2 February
Wednesday 10 February
Thursday 18 February
Tuesday 23 February
Wednesday 3 March

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
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Books, letters, bills, etc.*

••• Viewpoint •••

Ashes to ashes

Is cricket the only sport almost entirely to be savoured in retrospect? Nearly half its participants lounge in deckchairs, while the remainder stand around doing nothing in particular, returning to the pavillion at the slightest hint of rain. When he enjoined sacrifice from young soldiers facing the gattling's rapid rattle, it was cricketing metaphor that Sir Henry Newbould turned to with the injunction "Play up and play the game". Cricket is a game intended for gentlemen.

It started going wrong back in the 1930s when England took on their traditional rivals, the Australians, in a bodyline bowling test series. Impeccably upper class captain Douglas Jardine employed working-class foot soldiers, like fast-bowler Harold Larwood, to slam the living daylight out of their opponents in a win-at-any-price ex-coriolation of chivalry.

In the golden age following World War II, when I was a lad, cricket was the national summer game and played in every school where boys were to be found. (Females were sensibly relegated to making tea and sandwiches). Our heroes were Denis Compton and

Len Hutton, Peter May and Fred Trueman.

What happened to our national summer game? Since the English taught it to former colonial subjects – first white, then black – they have had the impudence to take on the mother country and turn the imperial tables by playing far better and winning! This concept does not rest easy in the Englishman's psyche as surely the colonials were predestined to lose!

As a short-term palliative, so-called 'overseas' players were allowed to 'qualify' for membership of county teams. But it was only a matter of time before accents South African, Rhodesian, West Indian, Asian and even Australian appeared to predominate in 'England's' dressing room. Now England's team, with only brief respite, again suffers ignominy at the hands of the Australians.

Cricket is a quaint survival, unworthy of national press coverage, commentary and analysis, the major repository of the nation's jingoism when not at war. To lose one series may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose six takes it beyond redemption. □ **Ronald Channing**

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Call Sylvia Matus - 0171 328 0208

Afternoon entertainment programme –

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1999

Mon 1 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 2 Bernard Wilcox, tenor, Julia Beneti, soprano and Elizabeth Ellwood, piano
Wed 3 Nicola Smedley, soprano and Jan Cunningham, piano
Thur 4 Geraint Parfitt, violin and Andrew Bullough, piano
Sun 7 Day Centre Open – No entertainment
Mon 8 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 9 Young pianists' concert, arranged by Ruther Leber
Wed 10 Angela Arratoon accompanied by Anthea Weale
Thur 11 Sara Meadows and John Field, piano
Sun 14 The Geoffrey Whitworth duo
Mon 15 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 16 Sara Tyler, mezzo and Angela

Rourke-Grayson, piano
Wed 17 LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 18 Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton accompanied by Malcolm Cottle, piano
Sun 21 Day Centre Open – No entertainment
Mon 22 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 23 Geoffrey Strum and Helen Blake
Wed 24 Bridgete Hurst, Myrtle Bruce-Mitford and Timothy Barratt, piano
Thur 25 Jo Parton, soprano, string quartet and Lewis Lev, piano
Sun 28 Judith Silver, voice and guitar
Mon 1 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 2 Francoise Geller, Gordon Griffin and Margaret Eaves, piano
Wed 3 Julie Leyland, soprano and Andrew Wills, piano
Thur 4 Valerie Hewitt with piano accompaniment

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Fridel Radbil

The Chairman, Hon Officers and staff of the AJR extend to Michael Radbil their sincere condolences on the untimely passing of his dear mother Fridel.

Birthday

Simmonds. Laura Simmonds celebrated her 75th birthday on 18 January 1999. Belated best wishes for health and happiness. Your friends Debbie and Margaret.

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Day Centre

Shirley Lever at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. New Clothes for Sale, dresses, underwear, cardigans etc. Wednesday 24 February, 9.45-11.45am.

Societies

Ex-Breslauers. The next meeting of former Breslauers will be held on Wednesday, 3rd March at 4pm, at 15 Cleve Road, NW6. Please let Vera Bass know whether or not you will be able to attend. Tel: 0181-349 3396.

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

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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 01159 212 494

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S. London: Ken Ambrose 0181 852 0262

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Art Notes

Portraits of some of the most celebrated figures of the Victorian age are on view in a major international loan exhibition **Millais: Portraits** at the National Portrait Gallery. The first important exhibition for over thirty years of the work of John Everett Millais (1829-96), it brings together portraits from the Pre-Raphaelite period to his later commissioned portraits of the 1870s and 1880s, ranging from Lillie Langtry to Disraeli, and including the famous portrait of John Ruskin. Millais' sympathetic observation of character and his technical skill provide a remarkable record of his contemporaries. Until June 6.

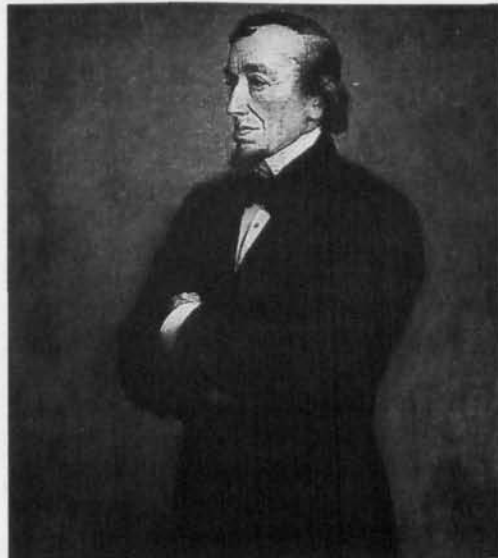
Stefan Knapp, who died two years ago, was an outstanding artist who invented the technique of large scale enamelling on copper and steel. His striking murals can be seen at many public buildings throughout the world, including St Anne's College in Oxford, the Esso Building in London and a synagogue in Ontario. Some of the finest examples of his enamels, sculpture, paintings and ceramics are on display at the Polish Cultural Institute until February 7.

The contribution of photography to Picasso's art is explored in a comprehensive exhibition **Picasso and Photography** at the Barbican Art Gallery until March 28. The display, drawn mainly from the Musée Picasso, Paris, features over 300 works, including oil studies and drawings and Picasso's own photographs (portraits, self-portraits, landscapes and studio views). The evolution of Picasso's artistic styles is followed, showing how he used photographic images in the creative process as a source for his studies and eventual paintings.

Also at the Barbican is **Africa by Africa**, showing the development of photography in Africa from the early 20th century to the present day, and the **Contemporary Print Show**, which displays the work of over 250 printmakers. (February 12-23).

The Ben Uri Annual Picture Fair assures each ticket-holder of acquiring an original work of art from many donated by artists, galleries and collectors. The event takes place on Sunday, February 28 at Ort House, 126 Albert Street, NW1, and the works are on view from February 21. Details: 0171 482 1234.

□ Barry Fealdman



Benjamin Disraeli, by Sir John Millais, 1881.

SB's Column

An actor's farewell. Otto Tausig, Viennese-born son of a Hungarian solicitor, was a child-emigré in the UK who returned to Austria after the war, attended the Reinhardt seminar and became a successful actor. He starred in numerous comedies by Nestroy, Molière and Feydeau in German-speaking countries. He also appeared in French films, calling himself the *Hausjude* of the French cinema, and finally joined the Vienna Burgtheater ensemble during the seventies. But all this did not fulfil him; having seen much misery during a prolonged stay in India, he is now working on aid-projects for that country, dedicating his income to Third World charities. Tausig who, at 76, is leaving the stage, sees this as his main future task.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe, called the 'German Shakespeare', is being duly celebrated in 1999 – the Goethe year – 250 years after his birth. In addition to productions of *Tasso*, *Iphigénie* and *Egmont*, his gigantic *Faust* drama is a focal point of reinterpretations.

A great personality honoured. The German press paid tribute to cabaret singer Lotte Lenya, who was born 100 years ago. Documentaries on her work were also screened by the BBC, and at the London National Film Theatre. Lenya died in 1981.

Birthday. Dutch-born actor Johannes Heesters celebrated an active 95th birthday, having toured many German towns during 1998. A versatile stage and screen actor, he rose to prominence during the thirties. Heesters endeared himself both by his artistry and an anti-Nazi attitude

which his Dutch citizenship enabled him to express. He excelled in the musical *Gigi* and as Danilo in the *Merry Widow*. Today Heesters is a living legend in the German theatre □

Wiener Library awarded Lottery funds

The Wiener Library, the world's oldest institution established to document the Nazi régime and its persecution of the Jews, has been awarded a grant of £184,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will support a quarter-million-pound modernisation programme to transfer its catalogue on to computer, refurbish book storage and improve the Library's educational facilities.

The award was welcomed by the Wiener Library's chairman, Ernst Fraenkel, who arrived in Britain as a refugee in 1939, and by its director, Professor David Cesarani, who described it as "a recognition of the Wiener Library's immense contribution to Holocaust education and remembrance".

Alfred Wiener, a German Jew, fled to Amsterdam in 1933 where he established the Jewish Central Information Office which, when transferred to London in 1939, became known as the Wiener Library. The Library contributed to the Allies' war effort, assisted the prosecution at the Nuremberg War Trials, and since the 1950s has been recognised as a leading European resource centre for studies of the Holocaust and the Third Reich.

□ RDC

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS – FEBRUARY 1999

- Mon 1 **Erich Maria Remarque, a Centenary** (in English): Gerald Holm, Club 43, 8pm
- Sun 7 **Thelma Ruby** sings & performs extracts from *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Cabaret*, etc. Sternberg Centre, 8pm, £5 incl refreshments
- Mon 8 **Nationalism, Culture & a Sense of the Past**: Oliver Pauley MSc, Club 43, 8pm
- Thur 11 **Lunchtime Recital**: Louisa Beard, soprano, & David Dreebin, piano. Sternberg Centre, 1.15pm, £2
- Thur 11 **The Jewish Kulturbund Theatre in Nazi Germany**: Dr Rebecca Rovit. Wiener Library, 6.30pm, £3
- Sun 14 **'Life is Beautiful'**: Screen on the Hill, Hampstead, NW3, 6.50pm, £15. Booking: Spiro Institute
- Mon 15 **The Art of Book Illustration; Millais, the Pre-Raphaelites & Idyllic School artists**: Paul Goldman BA, Club 43, 8pm
- Thur 18 **Face-to-Face Killing in 20th Century Warfare**: Dr Joanna Bourke (Fraenkel Prize winner). Wiener Library, 6.30pm, £3
- Mon 22 **Hitler's Willing Executioners? A critical discussion of Daniel Goldhagen's book**: Michael Faulkner MSc, Club 43, 8pm
- Thur 25 **Lunchtime Recital**: Robert Max, cello, & Peter Hewitt, piano. Sternberg Centre, 1.15pm, £2
- Thur 25 **Dr Bernard Wasserstein: Britain & the Jews of Europe 1939-1945**. Wiener Library, 6.60pm, £3
- Sun 28 **Annual Chess Simul**: Play Jonathan Speelman at Sternberg Centre, 2.30pm, £7. (Registration by 5th Feb)

March:

- Thur 4 **Creativity in the Holocaust**: Monica Bohm-Duchen. Wiener Library, 6.30pm, £3

Reclaiming stolen works of art

Half a century ago many thousands of works of art, now in galleries and private collections, were forcibly taken from their Jewish owners. As the question of their ownership is now out in the open, both governments and the art world wish to find a way to avoid an endless series of expensive, winner-takes-all law suits.

Two recent cases in the United States particularly disturbed the world's art market. The first, which has yet to be decided, concerns two paintings by Egon Schiele displayed in New York's Museum of Modern Art and could jeopardise international art loans. In the second, heirs of Fritz Gutman, a Dutch banker, sued for the return of *Landscape with Smokestacks* by Degas which, though taken by the Nazis, had been bought in good faith in 1987. Resolved out of court, a compromise leaves the work on the walls of the Art Institute in Chicago with a plaque denoting its dual

ownership. With the exception of Britain and the USA, in most countries it is not obligatory to return a work bought in good faith to its original owner.

At the recent Washington conference on assets stolen by the Nazis from victims of the Holocaust, national museums in Britain and the USA published joint guidelines for auditing all works to establish their provenance. In addition, the World Jewish Congress has set up a Commission for Art Recovery which invites survivors or victims' families to enter their claims for cross-referencing on a comprehensive database.

US Under Secretary of State Stuart Eisenstadt said that all 44 participating countries had entered into a strong moral commitment to support an 11-point plan aimed at identifying stolen works to enable their rightful owners to reclaim them. A further conference to evaluate progress is planned for the end of this year.

□ Stephen Ward

Stephen Ward is Associate Director of the Holocaust Educational Trust and co-author of *Nazi Looted Art, Britain and Postwar Restitution*.

The Almond Dome

At Greenwich Reach did Kubla Khan

Raise up a structure from the loam

It was a wonder of the age

An object less of love than rage

That bore the proud name Mandeldome

RG Coleridge

The device of rebranding of the Millennium Dome as Mandeldome accounted for it becoming the world's greatest tourist attraction in the year 2000. The reason was not far to seek. With every country staging its own millennial celebrations, initially the dome did not greatly impinge on the global consciousness. However, things changed quite drastically when the name Mandel was linked to it. Multitudes from the

Francophone world flocked to Greenwich under the impression that the dome commemorated the French wartime Minister of the Interior, Georges Mandel. The second tranche of visitors originated in what can loosely be termed the Pinochet camp. They mistakenly thought that the person being memorialised was Fritz Mandel, the munitions manufacturer who armed the rightwing *Heimwehr* militia in Austria's 1934 civil war.

However, by far the largest number of tourist pilgrims came for quite unpolitical, not to say aesthetic, reasons connected with the aforementioned. Fritz Mandel had married a film star who performed a pathbreaking feat on screen analogous to DH Lawrence's in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. She appeared fully frontal in the movie *Exstasy*. On marrying her the arms tycoon tried to put the genie back in the bottle by buying up all copies of the film, but it was too late! Since then nudity has, of course, spread like wildfire across stage and screen. The upshot is that the multitudes thronging the Mandeldome do so under the impression that it commemorates a screen idol known to the *hoi polloi* in her Hollywood pseudonym of Hedy Lamarr, but whose humble real name was Frau Mandel.

□ RG

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

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

Spiro Institute, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 7SZ. Tel: 0171 431 0345

Stent's remembrance of times past

London 1931

I had been 'confirmed' in 1929 in the Berlin 'Reform Temple'. We shunned the word *barmitzvah* and did not call our house of worship *synagogue*. The building had been consecrated in 1854 and was, I think, the *Ur-Mother* of the worldwide movement for Reform Judaism. In 1929 at the age of fifteen I was head of their youth wing and about to become the youngest member of their executive. We had very little Hebrew in our *siddur* (the very word was unknown to me); we held our main service on Sunday (the secular day of rest - where does it say that the Sabbath had to be kept on Saturday?) We wore no head covering, nor segregated the sexes. Because of these rather extreme practices the Reform Movement had never taken root in Germany and the majority of our co-religionists belonged to the more moderate Liberals.

However, we did have a very active, well-heeled and well-educated membership. It included one of Germany's leading publishers (the son-in-law of the founder, Rudolf Mosse), amongst whose extra-curricular interests were gramophone records, then the somewhat scratchy 78 rpm vinyl ones. At his own expense he had recorded the whole musical part of our service on umpteen such records, the idea being that many small provincial congregations could not afford live choir and organ. He spared no expense in recruiting top singers and instrumentalists. Part of our regular service included Handel's Largo, played on this occasion by Fritz Kreisler.

Cross purposes

Polish Prime Minister, Jerzy Buzek, confirmed in a letter to Jewish organisations in Poland last month that he wished to have the crosses erected last year at Auschwitz removed. However, he made no mention of the eight metre high cross which commemorated the Pope's visit in 1979 and whose retention both the Polish bishops and the Polish Government favour. He suggested that the debate over the crosses should not be allowed to cast a shadow over Polish-Jewish relations.

At the same time, Prime Minister Buzek announced his intention to introduce

The *Reform Gemeinde* was a founder member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, whose meeting that year took place in London, partly at the West London Synagogue and partly at the Liberal one in St John's Wood. As part of the programmed activities we sent over our set of records; St John's Wood was wired up and we conducted the whole of our Sunday Service. Our Rabbi Joseph Lehmann read some of the prayers (including the bits of Hebrew), gave the sermon in German, whilst I read the rest of the prayers and passages. I have no idea just how many congregants knew enough German, but they certainly enjoyed the musical parts. In fact a number of people came up to me afterwards, congratulated me and asked where we had hidden the choir, organ and violins. When I told them that it was all 'canned music' they would not believe it, until I took them behind the scenes and showed them our primitive amplification system.

For this seventeen-year-old neophyte it was a most memorable occasion - my first visit to England, rubbing shoulders with some of Anglo-Jewry's Great and Good, such as the Hon Lily Montagu and Claude Montefiore, as well as meeting leading American Reform lay people and rabbis. I don't think the Union's President, Rabbi Leo Baeck, was present, but other leading luminaries of the German Liberals such as Ignatz Maybaum were. There was a special session for young people and I, too, was asked to spout a few pearls of wisdom - of course, in the language of Goethe and not of Shakespeare. Some anxiety about the menacing political clouds in Germany was expressed, but I don't think that anybody was really worried. We should have been, of course.

□ to be continued

legislation for the protection of 'Places of memory and martyrdom', as well as the speeding up of the return to the Jewish community of confiscated property.

□ FMS

'People' award

The Otto Schiff Housing Association has been awarded the prestigious 'Investors in People' award which establishes a level of good practice for the training and development of staff in all its homes. The Association has provided residential and nursing care for Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution for more than 50 years.

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HOUSE DOCTOR

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis has become one of the fashionable illnesses of the 1990s, probably because it is now more easily detectable and treatable rather than because it is becoming more endemic. It can be defined as a lack of minerals causing the bones to weaken to a degree greater than would otherwise be anticipated for someone of that age.

Bones are a living part of the body with the constant absorption and deposition of calcium occurring throughout life. The maximum amount of bone mineralisation occurs in early adulthood, being maintained by regular exercise and the pull of gravity. (Astronauts in space lose a significant proportion of their bone minerals even though they may be extremely fit.) As people become less mobile, as a consequence of illness or age, less calcium is deposited; while the rate of absorption continues as before, the bones lose strength and density. This process also occurs in women after the menopause since the absence of the normal cyclical hormones changes the rate at which calcium is laid down within the bone.

A weakening of the bones is a normal part of the ageing process, though for some people this seems to be more significant than for others. People who smoke, those with chronic illnesses which make them less mobile, women who have an early menopause, and

those with a family history are all more likely to develop osteoporosis, as are patients given steroids over prolonged periods. The usual symptoms are loss of height, accentuated curvature of the spine and an increased risk of sustaining bone fractures.

Modern imaging techniques can detect the degree of mineralisation of bones and compare the patient's bone density with that of the general population. If the bones are less well mineralised than average, a number of treatments are available, some of which prevent further mineral loss and others which restore some of the calcium of the weakened bone.

Such treatments do not work immediately, but in the long term may bring about considerable recalcification of the bone and increase bone strength. This reduces the chances of an accidental fall or injury producing a fracture, especially at the neck of the femur (the hip bone) which would involve a particularly significant risk.

People with a dramatic loss of height, curvature of the spine, or who suffer recurrent fractures, especially of the upper and lower limbs, are those for whom it is appropriate to measure bone density. Your general practitioner should be able to arrange this for you at a local hospital, though a more accurate test could require attendance at a regional centre.

□ Dr Max Bayer

Personal correspondence cannot be entered into

The Weimar plagiarist?

It is not only Shakespeare whose work is being constantly re-evaluated (as well as re-attributed). Literary researchers in Germany have unearthed a Yiddish poem in manuscript form dating back to 1680, which may have served Friedrich Schiller as model for *Die Glocke* over a century later. (Schiller's knowledge of *mamelosben* is, of course, attested by his use of Yiddish expressions in *Die Räuber*).

The *Ur*-version of *Die Glocke* reads thus:

"Oisgeheizt is schon der oiven
In der lokschentopp bereit.
Alle schabbes jumin-toivim
Werd a kigl ungegreit.

Vunem punim hejss
Rinnen mis der schweiss.
Soll der kigl git geraten
Misn ihm maluchim bruten." □

CBF anniversary

Sixty years to the day after the first Kindertransport children came to Britain, CBF's successor organisation, World Jewish Relief, held its annual dinner in support of Jews in the Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia. Lord Bearstead, Edmund de Rothschild and Dame Simone Prendergast, descendants of CBF's 1933 founders, and a number of Kindertransportees, were among those present.

Obituaries

Esther Simpson, OBE

Esther Simpson, who has died aged 93, did more than any other individual in the UK to help refugee scholars fleeing Nazi persecution in the 1930s.

Born in Leeds in 1903, she graduated from Leeds University in 1924 with a first-class honours degree in French and German, and went first to Germany and then to Paris.

She spent the following six years working for the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, mainly in Vienna, and a brief period with the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva, before finding her life's work with the Academic Assistance Council, which became the Society for the Protection of Scholarship and Learning.

She received an OBE in 1956. It was richly deserved. Her efforts had brought some of the greatest names in science and the arts to Britain – the list today includes 18 knights, 70 Fellows of the Royal Society and 18 Nobel laureates (among them Max Born, James Franck and Erwin Schrödinger) – immeasurably enriching the nation culturally and providing vital additional skills for the Allied war effort.

Her favourite hobby was music. She achieved such distinction as an amateur violinist that Max Rostal accepted her as a pupil in the 1940s.

□ RG

Hanne Norbert-Miller

Hanne Norbert-Miller is remembered by former habitués of the little Austrian theatre in wartime London, the *Laterndl*, as the 'young raven-haired beauty' who performed in a number of its new legendary sketches and plays. Born in Vienna into a Jewish business family with theatrical connections, she had studied at the renowned Reinhardt Seminary and embarked on a promising acting career in Austria that was interrupted by Hitler's *Anschluss*.

Hanne arrived in Britain in 1939 and soon joined the *Laterndl*, the theatre belonging to that most flourishing of refugee organisations, the Austrian Centre. It boasted an impressive company,

Obituaries (cont.)

including such accomplished exiled actors as Marianne Walla, Leo Bieber, Jaro Klüger, Peter Preses and Fritz Schrecker – not to mention the actor-director Martin Miller whom she would later marry. Her first *Laternndl* appearance was in the satirical cabaret show, *Von Adam bis Adolf*. Later she acted in several further reviews and plays at the *Laternndl*, including Nestroy's *Talisman* and Robert Audrey's *Thunder Rock*.

At the same time, Hanne was employed by the BBC German Service in British propaganda broadcasting. After the war, she continued her career in German-language broadcasting.

Her husband, Martin Miller, was one of the few exiled actors who managed to make a career on the British stage. Noted initially for his savage Hitler impersonations at the *Laternndl* and the BBC, he later moved on to parts in such quintessentially English plays as *The Mousetrap* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

He died in 1969. Hanne remained almost until her death in their home in Temple Fortune where, among the numerous theatrical mementos, her programmes and flyers from the *Laternndl* days played a prominent part.

□ Charmian Brinson

Rudi Bamber

Nuremberg-born Rudi Bamber has died aged 78. He was the son of a former bookseller, who had set up a *Jüdisches Familiencafé* to serve as a meeting place for the city's beleaguered community. Rudi left school at sixteen and became a catering student.

On Kristallnacht storm troopers beat up the father so savagely that he died in Rudi's arms.

In mid-1939 Rudi came to England as an agricultural trainee. Within the year he became a *Dunera* boy, returning from Australian internment in 1942. Thereafter he worked as a motor mechanic, repairing tank transporters. Postwar he did various jobs before finding his true vocation in social work. After running two convalescent homes for the Jewish Welfare Board he became deputy director of Nightingale House old age home, where he stayed till retiring in the mid-80s.

His first wife, Helen, had been an

UNRRA worker in Belsen who went on, years later, to set up the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture – which so absorbed her that the couple (who had two sons) separated amicably.

Rudi then married Jill who publishes poetry in (among others) *AJR Information*. Recently he had appeared as an eyewitness in BBC TV's *The Nazis – A warning from History*, where he recounted his Kristallnacht trauma in a most dignified, understated manner.

□ RG

Fridel Radbil

Frankfurt-born Fridel Radbil has died in her late 70's. She was descended from Samuel Zbitkover, a leading benefactor of Polish Jewry at the time of the Partitions.

After the advent of the Nazis, she fled to Paris where she studied nursing. This stood her in good stead in Palestine where she rejoined her parents before the outbreak of war. (A sister left behind was to die in the Holocaust).

On a postwar visit to England she met and married Joe (Joachim) Radbil. Subsequently she established Otto Schiff House, buying it on behalf of the CBF, and became its first matron. Their son Michael (AJR's present Chief Executive) was born there and thought the residents were his uncles and aunts.

After the family's move to Wembley, she became a dynamic force in the local community. She set up a kosher meals-on-wheels service which eventually delivered 20,000 meals annually (to clients each of whose personal preferences she knew). She subsequently instituted a well-equipped day centre, catering for up to 65 members, all of them individually known to her.

Her enormous dedication earned her the 'Unsung Hero' Award, as well as the Chief Rabbi's Award for Excellence; in 1993 she was made Honoured Citizen of Brent.

In 1988 she had suffered a heavy blow with the death of her husband, a warden of Wembley Synagogue. Nonetheless, she carried on as energetically as ever till an illness, whose first symptoms had appeared much earlier, finally struck her down.

□ RG

Sidney Pollard

Viennese-born Professor Sidney Pollard has died aged 73. His father, a commercial traveller, had migrated from Galicia to Vienna before the First World War. He received his early education at a Jewish school where he excelled in mathematics and became an accomplished violinist.

In 1938 Pollard left for England and never saw his parents again. He went to Whittingehame, where he worked on the estate farms of the Balfour family, and later moved to Cambridge as a market gardener.

In 1943 he volunteered for military service and served with the Reconnaissance Corps in Belgium and Germany. Postwar he took a first at the LSE and a PhD in 1950. He taught at Sheffield University where he became the first Professor of Economic History.

Pollard enjoyed an international reputation in his field and frequently lectured abroad – although a permanent post at Berkeley University, California was denied him because of a youthful flirtation with Communism.

He was the author of several works on Labour History as well as on the British Economy, and was himself featured in an anthology about refugee historians. In it he stated: Any feeling of Jewishness has long dropped away ... but it is the consciousness of the continental heritage that obtrudes itself.

□ RG

50 YEARS AGO

RESETTLEMENT OF HOMELESS EUROPEAN JEWS

According to a report of the American Joint Distribution Committee, 85,000 Jewish DPs emigrated from Germany, Austria and Italy between May 1945 and June 1948. In addition, 60,000 Jews emigrated from Eastern European and 10,000 from Western European countries.

Of the total number of emigrants (155,000), about 95,000 went to Palestine, 36,000 to the USA, and 24,000 to the British Dominions and the South American countries. The Jewish Agency estimates that about 75,000 immigrated to Israel between May and November 1948 □

AJR Information, February 1949

NEWSROUND

Swiss funds remain blocked

The first instalment of the \$1.25 billion settlement reached last year between Swiss banks and Holocaust survivors, victims and their heirs remains in a blocked account in New York, reports *The Guardian*. Lack of agreement between Jewish groups and victims' lawyers over its distribution is preventing immediate payments from being made to Holocaust survivors nearing the end of their lives.

Empty wall

Claude Monet's painting 'Waterlilies 1904' has not been hung on the Royal Academy's walls in an exhibition of his work in order to avoid the possibility of legal proceedings, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*. Experts have attributed ownership to the heirs of a Parisian collector, Paul Rosenberg, the painting having been looted by Hitler's Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop.

Inflated numbers

A recent opinion poll in *Die Woche* revealed that a third of those questioned believed the Jewish population of Germany (actually 75,000) to be at least a million, while nearly two-thirds suggested that discussion on the Holocaust should end.

Mass murder charge

A 79-year old Ukrainian-born Gestapo officer has been charged with participation in the murder of 18,000 Jews at Majdanek concentration camp in Poland on 3rd November 1943. Part of the Nazis' 'Operation Harvest Festival', a further 42,000 Jews were also massacred in Lublin's other camps.

Belated recognition

A new book by Michael Smith has revealed that Frank Foley, Britain's Passport Control Officer in Berlin during the 1930s, who was also an undercover MI6 agent, granted visas to more than 10,000 Jews. Among them was the chairman of AJR's Northern group, Werner Lachs.

Jewish President

Ruth Dreifuss, Switzerland's former minister of health and social welfare, has been elected the country's first Jewish President. She intends addressing outstanding compensation issues.

□ RDC

Triumph of a Nazi propagandist?

With a first retrospective exhibition in Germany of her life and work, at the age of 96 Leni Riefenstahl is still fighting for recognition for herself and her 1930s film productions glorifying Hitler and the Third Reich, especially in her homeland. The balance of truth may lie elsewhere, however, for while Jewish artists were falling victim to persecution, the strikingly handsome Riefenstahl was adopted by the régime and granted huge privileges and resources with which to elevate its leader and venerate Nazi Germany.



Photo courtesy Kobal

She is remembered for her massive film projects. Riefenstahl participated fully in planning the 1934 Nuremberg Rally which was conceived as a film spectacle. *Triumph of the Will*, which resulted, shows Hitler's plane flying into Nuremberg to the soundtrack of Wagner's *Meistersingers* while columns of uniformed Nazis march to applaud his tirades at a huge six-day rally. In addition to shooting from unusual angles and using long focus lenses, Riefenstahl had cameramen on roller skates zooming up and down the aisles, while Hitler was shown in close-up for the first time. From a vast footage of exposed celluloid, it took her seven months to edit what many still regard as the most powerful propaganda film ever made.

At Berlin's 1936 Olympic Games, Riefenstahl used a battery of cameramen placed at vantage points throughout the stadium to dramatise competitive sport and emphasize the muscular superiority of Aryan athletes, though three gold medals were won by American negro Jesse Owens. Two long films resulted: *Fest Der Völker*, featuring the pain and perseverance of a three-hour marathon, and *Fest Der Schönheit*. Her fame outside of Germany, which derived

from these films, was short-lived. After promotional visits to Scandinavia and France, her arrival in Hollywood, coinciding with Kristallnacht, led to a hostile reception from German-Jewish refugees and their sympathisers in the film industry.

Omitted from her own acknowledged title list is *Day of Freedom: Our Army* whose blatant propaganda pictures the physical attributes of the Führer's soldiers. The invasion of Poland in 1939 found her in uniform with a camera crew filming the Wehrmacht as an official war correspondent. After being held in Dachau

in 1945 by US soldiers, she made her last feature film *Tiefeland*, using gypsy film extras struggling to survive in a former Austrian concentration camp, which appeared in 1954, and subsequently filmed in the Sudan and undersea.

Riefenstahl had to be, and was, a close friend and admirer of Hitler and Goebbels. Reportedly, though remaining an unrepentant devotee of National Socialism to this day, she is attempting to divorce the artistry and techniques she used in her films from their subject-matter and intended objectives.

Can an art form, making full use of the resources which only a dictatorial régime could provide, and in the service of its evil purposes, be evaluated aesthetically separate from its subject matter? In the case of Leni Riefenstahl, at best she is a flawed genius, but is much more clearly to be seen as the lackey of a system of which she entirely approved and whose aims she espoused. As new generations push Germany's memory of the twentieth century into the past, should she and her work be allowed to escape vilification? In any event, she will not be ignored.

□ Ronald Channing