

The Jewish grandmother

Time was when possession of a Jewish grandmother was a guilty secret; its divulgence ended the career of, for instance, the Stahlhelm leader Düsterberg.

Nowadays possessing one (or two) Jewish grandparent(s) bestows a certain cachet. This applies to politicians both here (Jack Straw, Peter Mandelson) and in the States (Madeleine Albright, Defence Secretary William Cohen.) Better known still are such showbiz legends as Jackie Collins, the late Peter Sellers (descended from the bare-knuckle fighter Mendoza) and Gwyneth Paltrow who hails from Russian rabbinical stock.

Now a four-star general has joined the club: Nato commander Wesley Clark, too, has discovered a Russian-Jewish grandmother. One wonders if this will impress the Serbs □

Reflections on Hitler's legacy of 'inevitable racial strife'

Hundred-and-ten – and still going strong

On what would have been Hitler's 110th birthday two crazed teenage American Neo-Nazis acted out an apocalyptic fantasy and massacred over a dozen of their school mates. Around the same time nailbombs went off in two mixed race areas of London, and ethnic cleansing proceeded on a huge scale in Kosovo.

As the twentieth century draws to a close it seems that Hitler's belief in racial struggle as a cast iron law of (human) nature has triumphed both over Marx's view of class conflict as the motor of history and over the liberal vision of technological progress leading to ever more harmonious co-existence.

However, we must guard against succumbing to *fin-de-siècle* pessimism. It is true that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War failed to usher in the conflict-free golden age conjured up in the phrase 'the end of history'. Even so, one doesn't have to be Dr Pangloss to see our current travails as the painful birth pangs of a new world order.

The notion of an overarching law of humanity enforceable across the boundaries of sovereign states – a notion that underpins NATO action in Kosovo – could well become a cornerstone of interstate relations in the Third Millennium.

But, in the words of the old adage 'there is no gain without pain'. The very Kosovo Albanians NATO is trying to protect from the racist Serbs are, by seeking admission to Western countries of refuge, helping homegrown hate-mongers to fan the flames of racial conflict. The Balkans currently resemble a hospital patient who after a necessary operation feels worse than before, while actually – and imperceptibly – setting out on the road to recovery.

The notion of the inevitability of racial conflict reduces men to the level of instinct-driven creatures obeying the laws of the jungle. Paradoxically, post 1945 Yugoslavia itself pointed in the opposite direction: though the Serbs formed the majority, the country was led by the part-Croat, part-Slovene Marshal Tito. Tito's dominance, admittedly, resulted from an extraordinary concatenation of wartime circumstances. However, in recent years both Argentina and Peru have freely elected foreigners hailing from other continents as their heads of state. (The Lebanese Carlos Menem is President of Argentina, and the Japanese Dr Fujimoro of Peru.)

If South Americans can break free of xenophobia the same ought eventually be possible in Europe, even in the Balkans! □

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES

will be held at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre, 15 Cleve Road, NW6 3RL at 3pm on

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Annual Report for 1998 · Hon. Treasurer's Report · Discussion · Election of Committee of Management

Guest Speaker: Hella Pick, distinguished journalist and author, speaks on 'Austria – Time for the Truth?'

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Profilees



The Bradford Boys – 60th Anniversary of the Kindertransports

This month over a thousand former Kindertransportees will gather in London to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of their arrival in Britain. To coincide with this memorable group celebration, we are making one subgroup of Kinder – rather than the customary individual – the subject of the June profile.

Our profilees are the Bradford Boys, i.e. the residents of the Bradford Jewish Refugee Hostel. This institution owed its inception – within three months(!) of Kristallnacht – to the admirable initiative and generosity of the Bradford Jewish community, who leased a building and engaged a refugee couple to act as warden and cook. The hostel accommodated over two dozen boys who on leaving school went into local employment – textiles, engineering – but not for very long; on reaching 18 most joined up. (One received the Distinguished Flying Medal, one died on RAF duty and one served in Burma, etc.)

After the war their paths diverged widely. Some went abroad – to Israel, the USA, Italy and Ireland – and of those who stayed in the UK only a handful remained in Yorkshire. But although they were widely scattered, they retained a feeling of almost family identity. This came out very clearly in a documentary Yorkshire TV made about them several years ago.

An even more impressive manifestation of a lifelong sense of kinship was their 'half century' reunion in March 1989, accompanied by the production of an anniversary brochure. Included in the brochure are the post-Bradford life stories of seventeen former hostel residents. These make fascinating reading. What they also reveal is an amazing diversity of occupations, ranging from textile manufacturer to kibbutz secretary, and from food importer to lollipop-man.

That was ten years ago. In the interim some ex-Bradfordians have kept meeting intermittently. A most popular participant at their get-togethers has been the daughter of the above-mentioned hostel warden and cook, who, a lifetime ago, acted *in loco parentis* to two dozen lads without parents. □ RG

Jewish renewal in Hungary

Last year Rabbi Baruch Oberlander of the Lubavich Jewish Educational Centre inaugurated a religious seminary, called the Pest Yeshiva. This year he initiated the publication of a Pesach Haggadah in Hebrew and Hungarian, the first to appear in 60 years.

Jewish communal life has been rebuilt in Budapest but in countless towns and villages of provincial Hungary there will never be another synagogue service □

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Ethical cleansers

From the moment NATO went into action against Serbia the British media resounded with opposition voices. John Pilger instantly gave vent to his conditioned anti-American reflex. The *Independent's* Robert Fisk switched from acute empathy with Muslim suffering under Israeli occupation to rhetorical empathy with Muslim suffering in Kosovo. He practically – and perversely – equated the accidental NATO attack on a refugee convoy with Serb atrocities against Albanians. He furthermore wrote about the NATO bombing of Radio Belgrade: 'When you bomb people because you don't like what they say you change the rules of war.'

Now, what Radio Belgrade had been saying about Serbia's neighbours for the last ten years can be boiled down to the

simple formula 'Croat equals *Ustashe*, Bosnian equals *Mujabediin* and Albanian equals *Shiptar*.' (The *Ustashe* were the murderous Croat Nazis in power during the war, when a significant number of Croats fought under their compatriot Tito. *Mujabediin* are Islamicist fanatics, whereas most Bosnian Muslims are secular-minded – and *Shiptar* is the Serbo-Croat equivalent of kaffir or wog).

Other critics of action against Serbia have charged NATO with 'selective' humanitarianism. Why had the Alliance, they ask, not intervened in East Timor, Rwanda or Kurdistan? This is tantamount to saying if you don't stop all crimes you must not, for the sake of consistency, stop any! (Actually the very term North Atlantic Treaty limits the organisation's range to North America and Europe).

An additional criticism of NATO is that it includes Turkey, which treats Kurds not

much better than the Serbs treat Albanians. There is considerable substance in that charge – but even an ethical foreign policy must take account of hard facts.

In the hypothetical situation where the West could force Turkey to grant its Kurds independence, it would trigger a regional 'earthquake' – with the Kurds in Iraq, Iran and Syria all seceding from these countries.

Finally, while Belgrade wants to rid itself of the Albanians by a mixture of massacre and expulsion Ankara wants to 'Turkify' the Kurds. (The Kurdish-born Turgu Özal was actually Prime Minister of Turkey several years ago). Depriving a minority of its identity is, of course, repellent, but not as repellent as slaughter and wholesale expulsion. It is the difference, in Jewish terms, between 1492 and 1942.

□ Richard Grunberger

Israel at the crossroads

An analysis of the concept of 'Post-Zionism' and its implications for the changed Israel of today – not that of 40 years ago – was put by Professor David Newman of Ben-Gurion University in a lecture given to Jewish Policy Research.

The Jewish State's first half-century, dominated by wars of survival and negotiations for peace and security, had marginalised other issues. Yet Israeli society was now markedly different from that of its formative years. Today's younger generation, for example, were far less insular, travelling abroad, using mobile phones, computers and the Internet and watching global television. The demographic composition of Israeli society was also much changed as a consequence of different immigration and birth patterns.

The central tenet of Zionism was the creation of a *Jewish* homeland granting rights and privileges to Jews, forfeited elsewhere, within a liberal democracy. In Prof Newman's view, a population no longer predominantly from countries that eventually fell prey to the Holocaust had failed to take the opportunity provided by Israel's 50th anniversary in 1998 to debate fundamental concepts and to reassess whether it should remain a Zionist state or one for all its citizens.

That 20% of the population who were Arab could be expected neither to identify with the state nor its national anthem,

though an Arab-Israeli candidate for Prime Minister was seen by Prof Newman as significant. Other sections of society which also did not identify with Zionism included the Ultra-Orthodox, who rejected the secular state, and immigrants from Russia who, though loyal citizens, had not grown up with Zionism. A migrant worker population of anything between 250-400,000, from countries as diverse as the Philippines, Korea, Yugoslavia and Romania, represented a new phenomenon in Israel – small ethnic communities who were neither Zionists nor Jews! An aggregate estimate of these groups' numbers suggested that Zionism was irrelevant to some 35% of the population.

Israel's single overwhelming unifying factor – that of a country in conflict – had been supplanted by a burgeoning internal debate on the nature of a peace settlement and many more public demonstrations of dissent. In a 'post-conflict' Israel, social and religious issues had been brought to the fore and democracy, citizenship and human rights focused on, said Prof Newman. While the governing élites remained 'Zionist', an electoral system which encouraged diversity – only 40,000 votes being needed to elect two members of the Knesset – meant that the disproportionate power wielded by minority groups would have to be reversed.

A similar re-assessment of Israel's relations with the Diaspora was also called for, as the era in which Diaspora commu-

nities were expected to act as uncritical paymasters had passed.

Though much would depend on how Israel's diverse citizen population would view the state over the next 10-15 years, it remained unthinkable that Israel would not continue to commemorate the Holocaust in perpetuity.

□ Ronald Channing

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Reviews

Brushed under the carpet

Richard Breitman, *OFFICIAL SECRETS*,
The Penguin Press, £20.00.

This book is subtitled "What the Nazis planned and what the British and Americans knew".

What, then, did the rest of the world know? Once the war started, official communication between Britain and Germany was cut off, but through the breaking of the secret Enigma codes British Intelligence intercepted radio messages from the German Order Police who were carrying out mass shootings of Jews in Eastern Europe. These dealt in euphemisms like "special duties". In a rare admission of intention when someone asked SS Leader Prutzmann where the Jews were to be "resettled", he replied: "In the next world." Nevertheless, there were sufficient clues for the British Intelligence Services to become aware that atrocities were being committed, certainly by September 1941.

Churchill responded to these reports by condemning German atrocities, but without specifically mentioning the Jews. In October 1941 Gerhard Riegner, a German Jewish lawyer who had escaped to Switzerland, sent a report to the World Jewish Congress about killings in Eastern Europe and this reached the Foreign Office in February 1942.

The Americans who still had representatives in Berlin till December 1941 were in an even better position to obtain information. Aware of the false atrocity stories that had circulated in World War 1, it dismissed Riegner's report as "wild rumour". When the American Rabbi Wise tried to pass on information from Riegner, Undersecretary Sumner Welles stated that he "needed further confirmation".

As specific details of the Final Solution reached the Allies through a Polish Underground leader, Jan Karski, and an escaped Auschwitz prisoner, Rudolf Vrba, there could be no more doubts about German genocide.

The Allies were busy waging a desperate war and regarded anything else as a distraction; nor did they want to be thought of as fighting to save Jews. And anyway, who was to take in thousands of

starving and penniless people? Meanwhile the BBC suppressed news of the genocide for its home listeners, but not in its Overseas Service. This may have prompted some Jews to hide and thus escape deportation. Belatedly, in 1944 President Roosevelt and the Pope both protested to the German authorities and the deportation of Hungarian Jews was stopped.

Much of the material the author presents, such as the evidence of Karski and Vrba, is already well-known. Nevertheless, it is here presented clearly and sequentially so as to give a good overview of the subject. Breitman implies that something could have been done if more information had been allowed to get out.

□ Martha Blend

A child's martyrdom

Peter Schubert, *DAS KURZE LEBEN DES JAKOB DEUTSCH*, Klosterneuburg/Wien, 1998, Mayer & Co., pp.60

This little book has been written at the request of Dr Eisenberg, Chief Rabbi of Vienna. (The surname of the author may well be more than coincidence; Professor Kurt Schubert, who during the war rescued the Hebrew treasures and other *Judaica* of Vienna University, is the leading Austrian scholar in matters Jewish and principal authority on Jewish-Christian relations).

The booklet is the fictional diary of a boy at school in Floridsdorf, a suburb of Vienna, written between the evening of 11.03.38 when the German invasion of Austria was announced over the radio, and the 25.09.39 when this Jewish boy decides he can no longer carry on writing, and hands the diary to a Gentile school friend for safekeeping. Jakob is 12 when the story begins, he dies at 14.

To anyone who can remember the time and place, every incident is gloomily familiar; from the shock of that Friday evening, to the continually worsening conditions of every-day life, from forced removal from house and home, the humiliations in public and at work (even where such opportunity still remained), from the restrictions on employment and consequent financial misery, there is nothing new here. But the Chief Rabbi and Dr Schubert are certainly right in

thinking that today's Austrians need to be told.

In the publisher's blurb we learn that while the diary is invented, every incident in it is true.

This reviewer reads these recollections with guilty embarrassment, as he remembers how he and his family were largely exempt from these trials and tribulations, and how undeservedly lucky he has been.

The ultimate tragedy of assimilated Austrian Jewry emerges from the picture on the front cover. An old lady holds a boy of about 8 in her lap, presumably a grandson. And in that picture of exemplary Jewish family life, the little boy is wearing *Lederbosen*.

□ Francis Steiner

Pétainists across the pond

Esther Delisle, *MYTHS, MEMORY AND LIES: The 'Discrete Charm' of the Fascist Dream in Quebec*, Robert Davies Pub.

The motto of the Province of Quebec is "*Je me souviens*" - "I remember". In her book, Dr Esther Delisle shows that Quebec's official memories are highly selective.

She focuses on the re-writing of Quebec's history of the 1940s and 1950s. Nationalist leaders were openly pro-Vichy, to the extent that the American Consul in Quebec City sent reports to Washington expressing his concerns of a pro-fascist base developing in the heart of North America. After the war, Quebec's nationalist elite tried to help Vichy collaborators settle in Quebec. Yet many years later, former members of a key nationalist group were surveyed on their "memories" of those days. The majority could not remember that their organisation had been antisemitic or pro-Pétain - still more proof of Dr Delisle's thesis.

Not all French-Canadian leaders were fooled. Dr Delisle quotes a letter from Louis St Laurent, then Federal Minister of Justice and later (1948 - 57) Prime Minister of Canada. To one would-be Vichy "refugee" who asked only to be granted "British freedoms" in Canada, M. St Laurent replied caustically that the individual had not been too concerned about British freedoms during his time of

influence in Vichy.

Most French-Canadians were also not fooled by their "betters". The Régiment de la Chaudière landed in Normandy on D-day. The Régiment de Maisonneuve took heavy losses at Dieppe, while the 22^e Régiment Royale fought in Italy.

In today's Quebec, World War II is spoken of in ambivalent tones. Quebec nationalists still describe World War II in terms of the grudge they hold against the Canadian government for imposing conscription on Quebec. Dr Delisle has shown how past fascist sympathies have been swept under the carpet by nationalist separatists and even by their more pan-Canadian political opponents.

□ Joseph Aspler, Quebec

Herzl's launch pad

Heiko Haumann, *JUDEN IN BASEL UND UMGEBUNG, Zur Geschichte einer Minderheit, Schwabe Verlag, Basel, 1999, DM 24.*

As the city which hosted not only the first Zionist Congress but also the last before the establishment of the State of Israel, Basel can justly lay claim to a special relationship with the Jewish people and its national aspirations. But Switzerland's second city has also been the scene of some of the worst antisemitic excesses perpetrated during the Middle Ages and in later years, as well as having shown a somewhat ambivalent attitude to refugees from Nazi oppression desperately seeking safety and shelter in the 1930s and 40s. These contrasting aspects of the city's millennial history are now recalled and recorded in exemplary fashion in a book published by the Cantonal authorities in co-operation with the History Department of the city's university.

Intended primarily as a textbook for schools, but clearly of interest to readers of all ages and religious and national affiliations, this slim volume traces the "history of a minority" – the Jews of Basel and the surrounding region – from its beginning in the 13th century to the present day. Murdered in the 14th century, banned from residence within the city walls for 400 years, returning at the beginning of the 19th century, the Jews of Basel have found relative peace and full

civic rights only since the last quarter of the last century. They now constitute a vibrant community, but antisemitic incidents have not been totally eliminated and aliyah and intermarriage tend to reduce the community's size.

The book is excellently written and presented. Its publication is to be warmly welcomed because it strengthens our hope that, in future, "antisemitism, racism and xenophobia will be recognised in their very early stages and therefore overcome".

□ David Maier

Tried and found wanting

Bernice Rubens, *I, DREYFUS, Little Brown, 1999, £16.99.*

When you read this book, remember that what you have before you is fiction with a capital F. There is practically no reality behind it; without suspending disbelief you won't enjoy it. And enjoy it you may, for the narrative is good and there is a happy ending after much unhappiness.

Everybody knows about the French-Jewish staff captain who was falsely accused of spying for the Germans before World War One. He was disgraced, cruelly imprisoned on Devil's Island, and finally rehabilitated.

When you have done with spotting these similarities, you leave reality behind. For Rubens' grand theme is that the antisemitism which activated the lying charges against the French Jew is alive in England – only it is hypocritically concealed behind mannerly politeness.

In order to make this main theme stand up, Rubens contorts all possibility of realism. The narration is clear enough: Alfred Dreyfus' family were deported to Auschwitz, but he was saved. Eventually fostered in the English countryside, he was brought up as a Christian by a kindly village schoolmaster.

Alfred gets to Oxford, making splendid scholarly progress by having practically no idea of his Jewish descent, and by suppressing the vague unease which sometimes enters his soul.

This is where we part with reality. Who on earth would stick to the name Dreyfus

if he wants to deny Jewish descent? Oh yes, this supports the grandeur of the author's stunning title, but it does little else for the novel. It makes one uneasy with the otherwise quite ingenious subplots.

Alfred rises ever upwards. He teaches in public schools and eventually becomes Headmaster of a top Church of England boarding establishment, always playing the Christian card to outward near-perfection. But he makes enemies, especially one history master, Richard Eccles, who craves the headship. But since this is not enough to mirror the French Dreyfus case Rubens invents a sinister cabal of Neo-Nazis. A pupil, George Tilbury, is murdered, and Sir Alfred's enemies succeed in making him prime suspect.

The trial that follows is a travesty of justice; judge and jury allow a whole coterie of liars and perjurers to mislead them. Sir Alfred gets life and his knighthood is withdrawn.

While in jail he is persuaded by a Jewish literary agent to write a true version of the case. Though the prospective English publisher is a closet antisemite, nevertheless he smells a bestseller. This work, aided by a prison governor who secretly believes in Alfred's innocence, somewhat mitigates the horrors of incarceration. In addition a Jewish woman barrister splendidly nails the entire Nazi conspiracy.

However, it is not fair to give away all the twists and turns of the end game. *I, Dreyfus* is a page-turner despite the caveats previously mentioned.

□ John Rossall

50 YEARS AGO

IN THE COMITY OF NATIONS

The admission of the State of Israel into the United Nations has opened a new chapter in Jewish history and has, no doubt, enhanced the prestige of UNO. For it is the idea of justice and understanding once born in Jerusalem, and for which Jews have been fighting ever since, that is also the basis of that great international organisation.

By admitting Israel into its fold, it has redressed some of the iniquities inflicted on Jewry for the past centuries and acted in a spirit of fairness and humanity.

□ AJR Information, June 1949



Letters to the Editor

WRONG ABOUT ROMMEL

Sir – Your April editorial refers to 'Zyklon B canisters carried in the baggage of the Afrika Korps'. If this statement is meant to imply that Rommel was implicated in Nazi extermination policy against the Jews then it is entirely out of place. Regrettably the editorial does not print the German document on the basis of which the allegation has been made. We must remember that a very large quantity of Zyklon B produced during the war was used for fumigation purposes.

As for Rommel, we do have evidence that he disregarded a direct Hitler order (*Gebeime Kommandosache*, of the 9.6.1942) that captured "German political refugees fighting with Free French units" were to be shot without further ado (printed in *Hitler and the Final Solution*). I had a protracted correspondence with Rommel's Chief of Staff, Gen. Westphal, who stated that this order was "burned and disregarded". My enquiries at the historical section of the French Ministry of Defence, did not result in any evidence of this Hitler order having been implemented by the Afrika Korps.

London NW11

Gerald Fleming
Emeritus Reader,
University of Sussex

SPLENDOUR OF THE GRASS

Sir – Richard Grunberger (April issue) advises us to resist a rush of judgment concerning Elia Kazan. We are asked to consider which is worse: "Five-pointed Star or Crescent?" with reference to Afghanistan, "European colonialism or African independence?" with reference to the Congo. Then, on the analogy of these questions we are invited, it seems, not to judge Elia Kazan harshly for having informed on his colleagues to the McCarthy tribunal in the 1950s.

Kazan justified his action by claiming that he perceived US Communists as Soviet agents and that he acted in the national interest. Charlie Chaplin and Sam Wanamaker Soviet agents? Kazan may or may not have acted from patriotic motives, although his saying so does not mean it is true. His actions may or may not have been aimed to benefit his

career, but they did. His denunciations were despicable.

I am not rushing into judgment on the article because I rarely disagree with its author, but in this case, I do. Of course, it may have been a tongue-in-cheek essay.

London W12

Eric Sanders

SHADES OF 1933?

Sir – I gather the recent discussion in Germany about Goldhagen's book has generated something of an antisemitic backlash. Is it coincidence, therefore, that two separate groups of German friends have recently dropped us without a word after having on several occasions over the past 20 or 30 years stayed with us and having eaten at our table? Shades of what happened to our parents back in 1933?

Gt Bookham
Leatherhead

Robert Miller

THE OFFICERS' PLOT AND THE SHOAH

Sir – Mr Meyer (May issue) fails to add anything new to the speculations about a successful outcome of the plot.

The Shoah remains the fact.

By July 20th 1944 the Normandy front had cracked. It was too late for those plotters who favoured coming to terms with the West. They were in any case holding on to their 1941 borders for a Greater Germany. The cause for the Russian orientated faction became even more hopeless after the collapse of Army Group Centre. What was on the table was unconditional surrender – that was another fact.

Mr Meyer comes closest to my view (I think) implying that neither philo-Semitism as an inspiration to plot, nor antisemitism were barriers to be a plotter and that both these were unimportant.

But what could have happened had the plot succeeded is pure speculation and as such is tangential to this discussion which was focused on the question "Did the Shoah induce the officers to become plotters?"

London N6

Hugh Fisher

DOUBLE HEADED EAGLE

Sir – Not all returnees to Austria were 'de-Judaised' Jews. The prominent writer *Friedrich Torberg* never denied his Jewish origins. He had a lifelong affinity with Judaism and stressed the cultural contribution made by the Jews throughout Austrian history in such works as *Die Tante Jolesch und Ihre Erben* and *Süszkind von Trimberg*.

By acting as German translator for Ephraim Kishon, the Israeli satirist, Torberg showed his sympathy for the Jewish State. In his exchanges with Martin Buber, Torberg also displayed chassidic understanding in depth.

The Vienna Jewish community may be numerically small, but they seem to be moving in the right direction. Under the leadership of their dynamic new President, Dr Ariel Muzicant, they not merely show solidarity, but full identity, with Israel. Muzicant's achievements include the reorganisation of the Maimonides Old Peoples' Home and the demolition of the Jewish renegade Peter Sichrovsky's fraudulent attempt to obtain the blessing of three leading Israeli rabbis for Jörg Haider. Chigwell, Essex

FW Rosner

Friedrich Torberg was, alas, not as white as he is painted. He pursued a McCarthy-style vendetta against his fellow-returnee Hilde Spiel because she argued, on democratic grounds, that Brecht's plays (with their Communist message) should be performed in Austria. Ed.

GREAT DANE

Sir – I enjoyed the review of *Shakespeare in Love* – especially the suggested alternative title.

My gripe concerns the April editorial which refers to '...self-deluded King Canutes'. I am surprised that you have allowed this, albeit not uncommon, journalistic canard maligning an excellent king as a foolish blockhead who thought he could stem the tide.

The *Historia Anglorum* of 1879 states (p189) 'King Canute won a competition because a cunning artificer provided him with a floating chair composed of waxed wings, since he alone was able to hold his ground against the incoming tide, before which his rivals had to flee.'

Welwyn Garden City

Andy Mikkelsen

THANK YOU BRITAIN FUND

Sir – I quite agree with Prof Gombrich who said in 1963 (*pace* Victor Ross' letter in the April issue) that the Fund was

misconceived and that the refugees had already done quite enough to repay this country.

In addition, I haven't forgotten being classified as an 'enemy alien' and my internment on the Isle of Man.

London SW15

Anne Pisker

SORCERER AND APPRENTICE

Sir - Aggression by Nazi Germany against inter-war Austria is not a myth, allied manufactured or otherwise. Irrespective of what happened after the first few hours of the *Anschluss*, the aggression and persecution before then is undeniable.

A nation of 66 million subverts and harasses a 6-million neighbour continuously for over five years. During that time it foments armed rebellion, murders the prime minister, kills off its tourist trade (*1000-Mark Sperre*), and, in March 1938, threatens aerial bombardment in case of resistance. What would qualify as aggression if these instances do not?

We were on holiday in Styria in July 1934 when there was fierce fighting with Nazi paramilitaries. The latter lured a busload of unarmed local volunteers into an ambush, killing over twenty of them. Seeing the shell of the coach riddled with bullet holes and seeing on the inside bloodstains and (allegedly) spattered brains, was not an experience a twelve year old would forget.

The curious thing is that if the plebiscite stopped by Hitler *bad* taken place, the Austrian government would probably have won it.

Deddington
Oxfordshire

Francis Steiner

WOUNDS

Sir - Herta Reik asks us (Letters, February issue) to copy Coriolanus, who refused to show his wounds to the Roman populace. This is a wrong comparison. We are the sum total of all our experiences. Our wounds will never stop hurting. They have influenced the way we brought up our children; to show them is as much of a duty as to achieve the greatest potential of our capabilities.

London NW11

Lily Freeman

MISCALCULATION

Sir - I am afraid an error occurred in the article on Mr Wiesenthal (May issue p3); either he was born before World War I or he is not in his 91st year.

P.S. I love *AJR Information* and read it from cover to cover on arrival - carry on the good work!

Poole
Dorset

KJ Land

RICH MAN, POOR MAN

Sir - Mr Channing (see Viewpoint, May issue) seems to live in cloud-cuckoo land. Redistribution of Wealth is *not* the answer to people's poverty.

Jesus said, "The poor you will always have with you." Some people would be "poor" even on £10,000 a week. These are the shiftless, thriftless of low intelligence who squander money on drink, smoke and betting. I lived in the Borough of Lewisham for over 36 years and I know how the "working class" lives: spend, spend, spend and to hell with tomorrow!

Some people have saved, scrimped and gone without, to have an old age free of money worries, and now they have to subsidise the shiftless and thriftless. I resent that.

London NW4

Annette Saville

MAN WITH A MISSION

Sir - In reply to Otto Deutsch (Letters, April issue), I contend that anybody with something to say should have the opportunity. I feel that I have a mission. I am the only survivor of my Jewish school in Prague: I have been through the mill, the great satanic mill of ghetto, Auschwitz and slave labour (unrecompensed) and my theme is that the murderers are still among us, and doing well.

Ipswich

Frank Bright

QUESTION

Sir - The Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners is obviously thriving but where do all the Ex-Leipzigers meet?

London NW11

Lotte Dixon

REJOINDER

Sir - Readers will be familiar with the old clerihew: How odd of God to choose the Jews.

Herewith a rejoinder: Rejoice! The choice annoys the Goys.

London NW6

Leo Wolff

Letters may be edited to
obtain publication.

SEARCH NOTICES

Klinger/Kiwi families. Any relations of **Julius Klinger**, Czech national who lived in Leipzig at the turn of the century, married **Auguste Kiwi**, had two daughters, **Karolina** (also known as Lini) and **Irmgard** (since deceased). Both sisters came to London. Irmgard married a German, name of **Smurka**, and spent the whole of the war in Berlin during which time their only child Gabrielle died and they were divorced. Karolina came to London and married in the 1950s.

Also any information about any relatives of Auguste Kiwi, apart from the families of Rudolph and Simon Kiwi. It is believed there might be issue of Johanna Levi and Ida Leiner. Auguste Kiwi was one of about 10 children of Salomon and Rebecca Kiwi.

Please contact Newtons Solicitors, 22 Fitzjohns Avenue, London NW3 5NB. Tel: 0171 435 5351 Fax: 0171 435 8881.

Liane Warren, née Ehrlich, born 4 April 1929, Vienna, arrived England by Kindertransport 22 February 1939. Information and whereabouts are being urgently sought by her niece Liane Fröhlich, Kurhausstr. 9, 4283 Bad Zell, Austria. Tel: 0043 7263 7566 Fax: 0043 7263 6365.

Ruth Alice Rosenfeld, born Frankfurt 1920 to Caecilia and Max Moses Rosenfeld. Arrived England August 1939 with older sister and worked as domestics in London where an RoK member may have met her 1939-41. Information required for book on her life. Please contact Ruth Barnett, 73 Fortune Green Road, London NW6 IDR Tel/Fax: 0171 431 0837.

Professor Samuel Krauss, who fled Vienna in 1938 for Cambridge where his daughter continued to live. Either his daughter or a son is being sought by doctoral student at Sussex University writing on a pre-war German-Jewish organisation. Please contact Henry Soussan, 21 Ruskin Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 5HA. Tel: 01273 728834.

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AJR Reports

Irene White steps down after 15 years special service



Irene White, centre, accepting a presentation from AJR Chief Executive Michael Radbil, left, and Volunteers Co-ordinator Amanda Clark, in recognition of 15 years voluntary work producing AJR Information on cassette tape for partially sighted members in all parts of the world.

For 15 years the organiser and moving spirit behind the provision of a monthly edition of *AJR Information* on cassette tape for members who are partially sighted, the indefatigable and tireless Irene White has decided to place the responsibility onto a younger pair of shoulders.

At a tea party given at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre, specially arranged for Irene's customers, she recalled that with her excellent team of readers they continued to serve members all the way from Australia to Bournemouth, many becoming real friends who included their own messages on the returned tapes.

AJR Chief Executive Michael Radbil applauded Irene for her wonderful work as one of the AJR's irreplaceable volunteers and presented Irene with a silver photograph frame as a token of appreciation.

Rita Rosenbaum has agreed to oversee the production and distribution of *AJR Information* on tape, with Irene's help and encouragement of course. Any requests for more information should be directed to Amanda Clark at head office.

□ RDC

A coincidence too far!

AJR member Mrs A. Gedye, who came from Vienna and now lives in the beautiful Georgian spa town of Bath, was introduced to one of our volunteer visitors, Nina Trott, in 1996. From their very first regular weekly meeting they got on together like a house on fire, enjoying each other's company and stimulating conversation. Nina even introduced her own mother who always goes for a long chat to Mrs Gedye's whenever she is in Bath.

Last summer Nina injured her hand and ended up in the local hospital's accident and emergency department. Imagine her surprise when, while she was sitting on a bed waiting for treatment, she heard a nurse call out, "you can bring Mrs Gedye for her examination now!". Nina could not believe her ears - she found Mrs Gedye sitting in a chair with a badly swollen hand.

Both patients had to spend a few days in hospital but, with similar injuries, were able to share the same ward and adjacent

beds. With such good company to keep their spirits high, both soon made a full recovery. It was quite a coincidence.

□ AC

If you were at all inspired by this heart-warming story, you too may consider joining our band of AJR volunteers. Please call AJR's Volunteers Coordinator Amanda Clark on 0171 431 6161 for further information.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

East Midlands AJR

An inaugural meeting held by former Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe now living in Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and other East Midlands towns unanimously confirmed the formation of a local branch of the AJR. In view of the large area covered by the group, it was decided to hold meetings some three or four times a year, possibly in different cities.

Bob Norton, who has been the prime mover in tracking down the participants, was pleased to explain the advantages such a group brought. Indeed, though several present warmly greeted old friends, many new acquaintances were made.

Myrna Glass from AJR's head office reported on the successes achieved by similar 'outreach' groups already well established in other parts of the country. If the splendid tea laid on by my wife Gerry is anything to go by, understandably we are all looking forward to the group's next meeting.

□ Bob Norton

Pinner AJR

At a recent 'tea and chat' meeting Ken Burns read us his Bavarian great-grandfather's account of a perilous boat journey from mosquito-infested Panama to gold-rushed California in 1848. In May, Neemah Serota shared with us her memories of being a Land Army girl. She took on everything from milking cows to keeping pigs, all of which called for sheer hard physical labour. At the same time as being received by high society at the ancestral home, she lived with the farm workers in primitive cottages without gas, electricity or running water.

□ Walter Weg

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| | | |
|------------------|-----------|-------------|
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... Viewpoint ...

Three score years ... and then?

According to time-honoured custom, there are landmarks in the passage of life which are accorded special recognition and occasion extra degrees of celebration. The age of 21 years to most of us still demarcates the boundary between adolescence and adulthood. The age of 40 brings an element of gravitas into the hectic schedule of a 30-something-year-old executive fighting his way up the corporate ladder.

What of 60? An age of discretion? A time to savour past successes? An opportunity to action-plan all those travels to far-off lands postponed for decades due to exponentially increasing family commitments? If the truth be told, it is the age when one has to reconcile oneself to the fact that both physical and mental capacities are not going to improve - rather it is the commencement of a battle to retain these faculties as acute and as long as possible.

When I was born - that was in 1939 and it doesn't seem a distant age - life expectancy was far less than today's. Most men would have been entirely happy to fulfil the biblical injunction of three score years and ten, permitting them the opportunity to nurture 2.4 children of their own and to enjoy the

less onerous pleasures brought by the arrival of grandchildren, with renewed opportunities to immortalise some portion of their acquired wisdom and experience.

Today's 60-plus-year-olds are more likely to be jetsetting to all parts of the world as their children, having been supported through higher education, have now left the family home for alternative habitation lifestyles, many frankly unthinkable back then half a century ago!

Normal childhood during World War II with my parents and older brother in suburban wartime London meant the blackout, an Anderson shelter in the garden, food rationing, little or no travel beyond the bounds of the local shops, BBC radio news and morale-boosting 'Itma' with Tommy Handley, a never-to-be-repeated camaraderie among neighbours in the face of a common foe and nightly fear of German bombing, fortunately for us aimed at industrial areas away from our leafy suburb. I vividly recall the passage of a doodle-bug flying bomb whose rasping exhaust passed overhead pinpointed by searchlights. When it fell four unfortunates lost their lives. We have much to be grateful for.

□ Ronald Channing

PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

Afternoon entertainment programme -
JUNE/JULY 1999

| | | | | | |
|------|----|--|------|----|---|
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| Wed | 2 | Amanda Palmer, soprano, accompanied by Angus Cunningham, piano | Mon | 21 | KARD & GAMES KLUB |
| Thur | 3 | Ann Sheffield, cello, & David Richmond, violin, accompanied by Madeleine Whitelaw, piano | Tue | 22 | THE GEOFFREY WHITWORTH DUO |
| Sun | 6 | DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT | Wed | 23 | Yoel Brightman, trumpet, accompanied by Amalia Brightman, piano |
| Mon | 7 | KARD & GAMES KLUB | Thur | 24 | THE JACK & DAPHNE DUO |
| Tue | 8 | THE DULCET TONES | Sun | 27 | DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Wed | 9 | THE BOLD BALLADIERS | Mon | 28 | KARD & GAMES KLUB |
| Thur | 10 | THE KENTERTAINERS | Tue | 29 | MEMORIES LANE SINGING GROUP |
| Sun | 13 | The Geoffrey Strum & Helen Blake duo | Wed | 30 | Angela Arratoon & The Children |
| Mon | 14 | KARD & GAMES KLUB | Thur | 1 | Nicola Smedley accompanied by Jan Cunningham, piano |
| Tue | 15 | Roberta Sugarman & Jane Marciano | Sun | 4 | DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT |
| Wed | 16 | LUNCHEON CLUB | Mon | 5 | KARD & GAMES KLUB |
| Thur | 17 | HOUNSLOW COMMUNITY OPERA | Tue | 6 | Angela Arratoon accompanied by Anthea Weale |
| | | | Wed | 7 | Armand d'Anjour, cello, accompanied by Isobel Koprowski, piano |

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Births

Lazarus. We are all delighted to announce the birth of Oliver James Arney, on 17 April 1999 to Robert and Maria, a grandson for Helga and George, and a great-grandson for the late Nelly Lazarus and the late Wera and Arnold Singer, who would have so much loved to have been able to see him.

Engagement

Preston/Finestone. Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Amanda, youngest daughter of Barbara and the late Phillip Preston to Tony, youngest son of Ruth and Eric Finestone. Mazeltov to grandparents Sylvia Meleson and Frank Henderson.

Deaths

Austin. Luisa Lili (Josepha) Austin, formerly Bock, born Ticho in Policka, Czechoslovakia, and whose two brothers, Rudi and Pepi died in Auschwitz, passed away peacefully at home aged 88. Survived by her husband who lives in London, and son, Peter Gideon Bock, born in Jerusalem, but now living in Oregon, USA.

Landau. Siegbert (Siggi) Landau, born in Berlin, died on 24 March after a long illness. Sadly missed by his brothers Manfred and Benno, sisters-in-law Hanne, Sabine and Ester and nephews and nieces in England and Israel.

Wilson. Lillian Wilson, née Lola Herzberg, died in Surrey after a brief illness on 2 April 1999 aged 89 years. Deeply mourned by her daughter-in-law Rena, sister Leah and family in America and friends.

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

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Art Notes

One of the most exciting periods in modern art is brought into focus in an outstanding exhibition **New Art for a New Era** at the Barbican Art Gallery. In the years before the First World War and in the following decade there emerged in Russia a group of highly innovative artists whose influence was widespread. In 1919, following the Revolution, a new Museum of Artistic Culture was established in St Petersburg to display their work. The present exhibition is the first showing outside Russia of work chosen from the former museum's collection, and includes 84 key paintings and 48 works on paper by the most important figures of the Russian avant-garde, notably Malevich, Tatlin, Kandinsky, Altman and Rodchenko. Among the works by Chagall are "The Red Jew" and a portrait of his father. A small display of icons and folk art is also included in the exhibition, as well as posters and ceramics to illustrate the artists' involvement in the applied arts after the Revolution. Until June 27.

Degas' Bronzes, the first exhibition of bronzes by Edgar Degas to be held in London since 1976, is on view until June 25 at Browse and Darby, 19 Cork Street, W1. Although Degas' paintings, pastels and prints were widely exhibited and admired during his lifetime, little was known about his sculptures until his death in 1917, when some 150 wax sculptures were found in his studio, 74 of which were later cast in bronze. The exhibition comprises 25 bronzes, including nudes, dancers and horses, revealing Degas' sensitiveness and his rare ability to capture movement.

The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms, at the Victoria and Albert Museum until July 26, illustrates the cultural heritage of the Sikhs in a spectacular exhibition of paintings, jewels, textiles, metalwork, armour, photographs and manuscripts. **Stephen Conroy's** recent paintings, etchings and lithographs, depicting the male figure, at the Marlborough Gallery until June 4, make a striking impact. London's newest art fair, **art LONDON**, brings together international art dealers in 20th century and contemporary art. June 16-20 at the Duke of York's barracks, King's Road, SW3. Finally, a retrospective exhibition of 50



Marc Chagall, *The Red Jew*, 1915, at the Barbican Art Gallery

paintings by **Graham Sutherland** is at the Crane Kalman Gallery, Brompton Road, SW3, until June 5.

□ Barry Fealdman

SB's Column

British and continental operetta have co-existed throughout this century, but in separate spheres. Gilbert and Sullivan have hardly ever graced the German stage, nor has Ivor Novello ever gained a foothold across the Channel. Vice versa, Lortzing's charming *light operas* are largely unknown here; last month Austrian TV screened film versions of *Der Waffenschmied*, *Der Wildschütz* and *Zar und Zimmermann* featuring prominent singers of the past.

Award. International opera star Birgit Nilsson was made honorary member by the Vienna Philharmonic orchestra. During her outstanding career she notched up over two hundred appearances at the State Opera.

Birthdays. German actress and international film star Nadja Tiller, a representative of the postwar generation, celebrated her 70th birthday. During the fifties and sixties she was cast as the *femme fatale* opposite Jean Gabin, Jean Marais and Pierre Brasseur. One of her few German films to reach Britain at the time was *Rosen für den Staatsanwalt* wherein she co-starred with Martin Held, Paul Hartmann and her husband Walter

Giller. In 1968 she took the role of Buhlschaft in a Salzburg Festival production of *Jedermann*.

Another septuagenarian is Lotte Rysanek; though less known than her late sister Leonie, she has a loyal following at the Vienna Volksoper, where she sang many Verdi and Puccini parts.

Obituary. **Boleslaw Barlog**, the Berlin theatre director, has died, aged 93. A much respected administrator he guided the Schiller and Schlosspark theatres during the postwar period, assembling a galaxy of stars. His term of office extended over 27 years □

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Though the medical term for high blood pressure is 'hypertension' it has very little to do with feeling tense or being under tension. Indeed, the most tense and anxious person can have a normal blood pressure while the most placid individual may have a blood pressure high enough to require treatment.

Blood pressure is an extremely important health indicator as a high level is a significant factor in determining the risk of suffering from heart attack, angina, or stroke. Substantially lowering the blood pressure may return a patient's risk of severe cardiovascular disease to near normal. Thus, treatment of hypertension is not to make the patient feel any better, but to save them from developing

debilitating heart attacks or stroke in the future.

For most patients diagnosed as suffering from hypertension the answer to their problem will be in the form of daily medication. It is important to understand that no form of medication cures hypertension; it only controls the raised blood pressure whilst the tablets are being taken. As soon as they are stopped blood pressure will rise to its former level, so it is important to ensure that once the medication has begun it must be continued until a doctor advises its cessation. Although tablets for hypertension do have some side effects these are less than they used to be and there are many alternatives which can be tried.

Reducing your blood pressure, together with stopping smoking, are among the few measures which increase your longevity. So, if you have not had your blood pressure checked within the last few years, you should make an appointment to see your doctor or practice nurse at the surgery.

□ Dr Max Bayer

Regretfully, the Doctor cannot enter into personal correspondence

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Q How do I apply for rebate (CTB)?

A The rebates are handled by your local council. Many councils handle Council Tax rebates and Housing Benefit together.

Q How do I get more information?

A Contact your local council about a rebate when you receive your 1999 bill. They will send you a form to complete. You can ask for help to complete the form from AJR, your local Citizens Advice Bureau or similar organisations.

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□ Agi Alexander

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The life that dare not speak its name

I had not been to Auschwitz before seeing Roberto Benigni's film *Life is Beautiful*. I had, however, visited both Dachau, and Terezin, the Nazi *showcase* transit camp, where art, music and drama were used to mask its hidden agenda.

In Auschwitz there is neither art nor irony, only irredeemable anguish: no hope, only hopelessness; no satire, only sadism. Visitors to its museum pass squash-court sized rooms fronted with glass and filled with human hair, greyed by an entirely unnatural ageing process, which some evil Rumpelstiltskin has woven into cloth. Standing out is the forlorn flaxen plait, redolent of a Grimms fairy tale, which I can still see gracing the head of a beautiful young Jewish girl. Other windows show the victims' shoes, many of them children's; now equally grey. But like the plait, there is always one which you stare at, an unfaded, still-red, strappy sandal – a hint of glamour, a whiff of capriciousness – or a child's plimsoll with bright laces. It is the same with the suitcases. They bear names we recognise. And the hairbrushes, the shaving brushes, the toothbrushes.

But it is not just the blonde plait – that Aryan colour on a Jewish head – which makes you pause. When you see coachloads of visitors, schoolchildren, Jewish pilgrims even picnicking in the grounds, you do begin to wonder whether some irony is not indeed present in this Valley of the Shadow. *Auschwitz, 1999*, has become for many a horror glimpsed at through a glass darkly.

And into this walks Roberto Benigni, in the true tradition of the Italian *buffo*. This verbose, hyperactive hero cannot stop talking, cannot stop moving, cannot give you the silence you need to take in the massive tapestry of hell – the Hieronymous Bosch of 20th Century Europe. And yet – in all this vastness of evil, it is the smallness of Benigni that is so overwhelming. More than a human victim, Benigni is like a hamster on its treadwheel; round and round he goes, unable to stop.

And thus he entralls and enraptures his young son. He cannot stop making him laugh. Benigni's *buffo* tradition goes back to the Middle Ages when court clowning was *de rigueur* in Europe. In Italy, especially, the *buffone* – particularly embodied in operas like *Rigoletto* and

Pagliacci – is the flip side of the tragic coin. Laughter is as present as sadness.

But *Life is Beautiful* is not the only example of the cartooning of dreadful events. Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, subtitled *A Survivor's Tale*, won the 1992 Pulitzer Prize and has been acclaimed as a "quiet triumph and a brutally moving work of art". It is the story of Vladek Spiegelman, who survived Nazism, and his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms both with his father and history itself. To tell



the almost untellable, Spiegelman *minimises* events by the act of transferral. True characters become small animals; the Nazis are cats and their victim-Jews, mice. The two densely packed volumes *My Father Bleeds History* and *And Here My Troubles Began*, are particularly graphic because of their miniscule poignancy.

To paraphrase Abraham Heschel, neither the ineffable nor the unspeakable can be approached face on. There has to be a screen. Artists often use the personification of innocence as this screen. In Benigni's case, both the child-like qualities of the father as well as the boy, demonstrate the truth with terrible effect. And so Benigni, making fools of the Nazis at Auschwitz, rushing to the loudspeaker to declare his love to his *Principessa*, has everyone enthralled and captivated, even though everyone knows none of these events could ever have occurred.

The use of magical irony, for example his promise that the whole of Auschwitz is a game and the prize at the end of it

will be a tank, comes magnificently true for the wide-eyed child when his Allied rescuers indeed arrive in a massive tank. Satire and irony blended with poignancy do not make us believe that such things happened or, indeed, could ever happen in a place like Auschwitz. To condemn the film for this reason is surely to miss the point. The innocence of the father, blindly bent on pretence, and the wide-eyed gullibility of the child, speak to us of human purity, of spontaneous play, of the parent's natural desire to protect his child at the risk of his own life. So Benigni's theatrical language contrasts even more sharply with the subhuman brutality of the Nazis. And ultimately the film gives us what we all desperately need from the Auschwitz experience: some sense of *winning*.

This is not to deny that both *Life is Beautiful* and, perhaps to a lesser extent, *Maus*, could offend some survivors. Their memories of humiliation, loss and pain remain so intense that they must be respected. Therefore anyone dealing with the Holocaust risks being accused of behaving with bad taste.

Personally I do not believe you can consider *Life is Beautiful* as anything other than an exercise in romantic surrealism. In a similar way, Leonard Bernstein's Voltaire-based musical, *Candide*, also charts the gruesome journey of an "innocent" through the bloody Europe filled with every brutality known



to man, while he lives out his teacher's philosophy that, however dreadful the experience, the result is always the best of all possible worlds.

And so, like Benigni and his son, like *Candide* and his teacher, Pangloss, it is the innocent, optimistic, who will always shine through in the end. At least this is the affirmation of our best artists.

□ Gloria Tessler

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - JUNE 1999

- Tue 1 **Walter Benjamin's Sceptical Prayers:** Dr Margarete Kohlenbach (Sussex), Sussex University, 5.15pm
- Sun 6 **David Berglas - World of Magic:** Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 2.30pm, £5
- Sun 6 **Zemel Choir:** West London Synagogue, 7.30pm in aid of JAMI Tel: 0181 458 2223
- Tue 8 **Franz Kafka:** Prof Eduard Goldstücker (Prague & Sussex), Sussex University, 5.15pm
- Mon 7 **Chagall & the School of Paris:** Sternberg Centre, ongoing until 7 October (tel to confirm opening times)
- Wed 9 **Arab-Israeli Divide:** Judith Elkan, psychotherapist. Sternberg Centre, 8pm, £5. Leo Baeck College Tel: 0181 349 4525
- Fri 11-13 **Festival of Reform Judaism,** Sternberg Centre
- Mon 14 **The Euro, a Swiss Perspective:** Prof Dr Ralph Anderegg (Cologne University). Club 43, 8pm
- Tue 15-17 **RoK Reunion 1939-1999:** University of London, WC1. Information from Bertha Leverton or Bea Green Tel: 0171 431 1821
- Tue 15 **German-Jewish Studies:** Prof Julius Carlebach (Heidelberg & Sussex), Sussex University, 5.15pm
- Thur 17 **Lunchtime Recital:** Rachel Turner, cello, Rachel Norton, clarinet, & Michiela Connolly, piano, play Brahms. Sternberg Centre, 1.15pm, £2
- Sun 20 **From Conflict to Conciliation:** Link Psychotherapy Centre Seminar 9am-5.30pm at Yakar, 2 Egerton Gardens, NW4. Admission £40 incl kosher.veg lunch, tea etc. from Phillippa Marx, 88 Olive Road NW2 6UP. Tel: 0181 349 0111
- Mon 21 **Growing up in Nazi Berlin:** Eugen Levine. Club 43, 8pm
- Tue 22 **Lucas Memorial Lecture:** Henry Soussan (Sussex). St

Johns Wood Liberal Synagogue, London NW8, 7.30pm. Reservations with Diana Franklin, Sussex University Tel: 01273 678 771 or 1081 381 4721

Thur 24 **Jewish Artists in Paris 1900-1934:** Julia Werner, JC Art Critic. Sternberg Centre, 8pm, £3.50

Sun 27 **Nazi Looted Art:** Documentary film & lectures. Birkbeck College, London, 1.30-5.30pm. Booking Wiener Library

Mon 28 **Britain & the Coming of War 1914:** Dr T Otte. Club 43, 8pm

Wed 30 **Freud, Antisemitism & the Birth of Psychoanalysis:** Estelle Rolth. Sternberg Centre, 8pm, £5. Leo Baeck College Tel: 0181 349 4525

July

Thur 1 **Lunchtime Recital:** Anna Safonova, violin, & Alvin Mosey, piano, play Grieg, Szymanowski & Bloch. Sternberg Centre, 1.15pm, £2

Mon 5 **'Gemütliches Beisammensein' with music & refreshment:** Club 43, 8pm

Tue 6 **Jewish Magic & Kabbalah:** Judith Weill, Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 8pm, £4

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

RoK (Reunion of Kindertransport) 1 Hampstead Gate, Frognal, London NW3 6AL. Tel: 0171 431 1821

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

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

Leo Baeck College, Sternberg Centre for Judaism, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY. Tel: 0181 349 4525

University of Sussex Centre for German-Jewish Studies. David Groiser Tel/Fax: 01273 877 169

Second generation's network

In the United Kingdom we somewhat lagged behind our peers in other parts of the world, especially in the United States and Israel, in gathering together and claiming a distinct identity for the 'second generation' - the sons and daughters of those who were persecuted in Nazi Europe and who empathise with their parents' experiences. In 1994 and 1995 the Link Psychotherapy Centre organised two conferences at which, for the first time in the UK, issues were publicly aired of interest and concern to members of the second generation. One outcome was the foundation of the magazine *Voices*, first published in 1996, advertising in which elicited support for a national organisation and led to the establishment of the Second Generation Network.

The Network set out to increase awareness of individuals who, though well integrated into their respective communities, had nevertheless been affected by their parents' experiences. 'Affected' should not be read as 'damaged' as many felt that they had gained in terms of compassion, understanding or creativity as a result of their rich heritage.

Network's members are predominantly descendants of Jewish refugees and survivors, with a number of other interested parties. *Voices*, which has become the Network's newsletter while maintaining its complete editorial independence, disseminates information and ideas and provides a forum for discussion of educational, historical, psychological and cultural issues.

Members receive reduced-price admission to organised events and can participate in an informal monthly *Schmooze* group in London free of charge. In the last two years we have twice visited Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre in Nottinghamshire and organised several theatre outings, film evenings and workshops. Though activities are still largely London-based, the Network's introduction of people in the provinces to one another hopefully will lead to the formation of regional groups and a truly national organisation.

Anyone wishing to know more about the Second Generation Network please contact answerphone 0171 431 4106 or write to PO Box 14205, London NW3 6WZ.

□ Caroline Blank, Secretary

Obituary

Harold Mayer

Harold Mayer who died at the age of 84, had left Karlsruhe before the war to come to London. In 1948 he joined Griffin & George, a firm of instrument manufacturers, as accountant. He became their managing director some years later. Harold took an active part in the development and concentration of Britain's Scientific Instrument Industry and was largely responsible for the establishment of the Fisons Group's Scientific Equipment Division.

As a member of the AJR's executive for many years he took an active interest in the Old Age Homes, which were then administered in close collaboration with the AJR. He became chairman of the House Committee of the home at Kew and a few years later he joined the management committee of the CBF Residential Care and Housing Association, where he served as Hon. Treasurer. Both AJR and the organisation of the Homes were fortunate to have in Harold Mayer a person whose wide managerial experience and wise council commanded respect and thereby made a considerable contribution to the welfare of the residents.

Like his wife Anne, who predeceased him, he had a keen interest in music and was proud of his grandchildren's musical progress.

□ Ludwig Spiro

Blue's notes

Radio raconteur and master of the homily, Rabbi Lionel Blue, held a packed audience at the Harrow Leisure Centre in the palm of his hands. For two hours non-stop this learned man explained his philosophy of life, and the contribution made by religion, illustrated with the telling of a careful selection of – mostly – Jewish jokes with a sprinkling of stories from clergymen of other denominations.

Rabbi Blue covered a wide subject matter, from Nazi persecution and the Holocaust, to coping with success and failure, sickness and bereavement, including a discussion of the tragic events in Kosovo. His humanity and concern for others shone through; this man's a real mensch.

□ Paul Samet

Relating Jewish history in Germany

Earlier this year the Daniel Libeskind-designed building which will house the new Jewish Museum in Berlin (see March issue) was inaugurated to international acclaim. In October 2000 the museum plans to open with an exhibition on Jewish-German relations 1848-1919 which will form the first part of its permanent displays.

Jews who left Germany after the Nazis' rise to power are being invited to play a key role in building the museum's collection with their memorabilia – such as photographs, documentary records, birth certificates, deeds, religious objects, even furniture and household furnishings. The museum is also interested in any object or document which illustrates the experiences of Jews in Germany from the earliest periods until the

present day. In most cases a description or a copy of the object or document will suffice, while in others the museum may wish to have it on loan.

Not everything in which the museum has an interest was made or written by Jews. Of course it can be an album of wedding or bar-mitzvah photographs, a mezzuzah or a painting, but it can also be a letter written in 1750 or 1941, a postcard, a newspaper clipping or the photograph of a conductor or politician, in short, anything showing the lives, both difficult and pleasant, of Jews among Germans.

If there remains any doubt as to whether what is in your possession may or may not be of importance to the museum, please do not hesitate to ask them. They can be reached at: Jewish Museum Berlin, attn. Franziska Bark, Lindenstr. 9-14, 10969 Berlin, Germany.

□ Inka Bertz and Franziska Bark

Holocaust centre marks Yom Ha'Shoah

Commemoration Day for the victims of the Holocaust was observed at Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre in Nottinghamshire hosted by its Director, Stephen Smith, and the Smith family for 200 invitees from all parts of the country.

Prof Karl Schleunes of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, spoke on the subject *In the Shadow of Auschwitz, Controversies and Problems in Explaining the Holocaust*.

A uniquely distinguished panel of six European academics and memorial curators demonstrated by their participation the prestige in which Beth Shalom is now held. Each in turn indicated the nature of their work and those it aimed to benefit.

Among them were Dr Tom Freudenheim of Berlin's new Jewish Museum and Annegret Ehmman of the Memorial House of the Wannsee Conference.

The presentation of a sculpture was made by the artist Mark Pope, and an exhibition of vivid paintings depicting wartime experiences by the late Stanislaw Brunstein was placed on display by his wife Esther.

□ Ronald Channing

Kindertransport first day cover

The Post Office is to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Kindertransport on May 4th with a special stamp issue accompanying a series of millennium first day covers devoted to workers in traditional British industries.

From Kristallnacht in November 1938 until the outbreak of war, nearly 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were allowed entry to Britain. Put on trains by their parents after heartrending farewells, in most cases never to see them again, they arrived at Liverpool Street Station in London to be dispersed to reception centres.

Those over 16 with German citizenship were classified as enemy aliens after the outbreak of war and many were either interned or deported to Australia on the infamous troopship, the Dunera. The children received vocational training and subsequently made very successful careers both in Britain and in many other parts of the world, including Israel as founder-members of Kibbutz Lavi.

□ Stanley Kacher

The 60th Anniversary Reunion of the Kindertransport is taking place in London from 15th June 1999. Fuller details are available from the RoK office, Tel: 0171 431 1821.

NEWSROUND

Israel's election landslide

Israel's Likud prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was swept from office by an overwhelming victory for his Labour 'One Israel' opponent Ehud Barak, a former and much-decorated Chief of Staff. Netanyahu conceded defeat and resigned from the leadership of his party within half an hour of the polls' closure.

In absentia trial for Brunner

Alois Brunner, aide to Adolf Eichmann during WWII, responsible for the deportation of Jews from Austria, Belgium, Greece and Slovakia and believed by Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld at the age of 87 still to be living in Syria, is to be tried *in absentia* in France for abducting children from Jewish orphanages. In 1943-44 he ran Drancy transit camp near Paris from where Jews were sent to Auschwitz.

Last war crimes trial?

In what could prove to be Germany's last Nazi war crimes trial, 79-year-old Alfons Götzfrid was charged with participating in operation 'harvest festival' at Majdanek extermination camp in 1943 during which some 50,000 Jews were murdered. Götzfrid is a Ukrainian of German descent who served in the Gestapo and was imprisoned for 11 years in a Soviet labour camp.

'Blitz' memorial

The Queen Mother, in her 99th year, unveiled a memorial in London's St Paul's churchyard to the city's 30,000 civilian victims of Germany's World War II bombing campaign. As the consort of King George VI she experienced a direct hit on Buckingham Palace in 1940.

Latvian SS legion's march

Five hundred wartime veterans of Latvia's Waffen SS marched through its capital Riga to both support and opposition and protests from Jewish groups representing Holocaust survivors. Towards the war's end the Latvian Waffen SS legion participated in the mass murder of Russians and Latvia's remaining 70,000 Jews.

Possible insurance breakthrough

Negotiations in London between the World Jewish Congress and five of Europe's major insurance groups – Generali of Italy, Allianz of Germany, AXA of France, and Zürich and Winterthur of Switzerland – produced an agreement that compensation for unpaid policies would be made at current values.

□ RDC

Religious artifacts and selective history in Paris

The imposing and magnificently restored Hotel de Saint-Aignan at 71 Rue du Temple, close by the traditional Jewish quarter of the Marais, provides a splendid home for Paris' new Museum of Art and History of Judaism. President Chirac inaugurated the Museum last December as the first French head of state to acknowledge the role of Vichy in persecuting and deporting France's Jewish population. While Mayor of Paris



Paris's new Museum of the Art and History of Judaism in the Marais district near the Rue des Rosiers and the old Jewish quarter.

he supported the project to which the city and the government each contributed half the £20 million cost and will share its upkeep.

Presenting an overview of Jewish history since the Middle Ages, and recognising that the majority of France's Jewish community are now of North African origin, the museum places equal weight on both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions with displays of exquisite silver *rimonim*, breast-plates and pointers, of centuries-old manuscripts and Pentateuchs, Hannukiot and Torah scrolls in fine cases. Disappointingly, it is neither a history of the Jews in France, nor a Holocaust museum memorialising the fate of 78,000 Jews who were deported during World War II, of whom only 2,000 survived to return. Their fate goes unremarked here save for the names of those living in this chateau during the occupation from May 1940 to August 1944, prior to their own deportation.

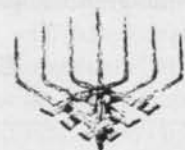
Original documents from the Dreyfus Affair – including the order banishing him to Devil's Island and epoch-making reportage by Theodore Herzl – immedi-

ately bring this cornerstone of modern Jewish history into life. Works by Chagall, Matisse and Utrillo impress. Frank Capra's powerful photographs of immigrants arriving in Haifa in 1947 capture the anticipated uphill struggle in their adopted country.

A number of Holocaust-related museums have been established in Europe in the last few years: Amsterdam's Anne Frank House (1986), Frankfurt (1988), Vienna (1994), London's Jewish Museum at Finchley (1995), Beth Shalom, Nottinghamshire (1996) and now Berlin's. Separate Holocaust memorials or institutes are planned for Berlin, Vienna, London (in the Imperial War Museum) and in Manchester. Should the Holocaust be commemorated as part of an integrated history of the Jews, or should its very magnitude and personal sense of loss demand separate memorialisation?

In Paris the Memorial to the Unknown Jewish Martyr was inaugurated in 1956 at the Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation. A Memorial to the Deportation, a dramatic sculpture stands on the Pont de la Tournelle across the Seine from the Ile de St Louis – though from the bridge it appears virtually impossible to identify. Even the monument on the Ile de la Cité to the memory of 200,000 Deportees to the Camps makes no mention of the Jews.

□ Ronald Channing

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