

Don't miss...

OSHA – new plans
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Bloodstained fieldgrey

The 'Crimes of the Wehrmacht' Exhibition, trigger of recent neo-Nazi violence in Kiel, tests the Germans' resolve to confront the past. Even anti-Goldhagen historians attest to the Wehrmacht's share in Nazi atrocities. Many *Bundesbürger*, however, ascribe all such crimes to the SS – a myth designed to absolve their own kin of guilt. This is where humanly understandable self-delusion merges with malevolent political design. The miasma of neo-Nazism will only lift when today's Germans realise that their predecessors, with few exceptions, acted as robotic servants of a monstrous regime □

Reflections on a seven-century-long symbiosis

Poles and Jews

Hitler and his executioners reduced the population of Poland by six million, *half* of them Jews. The latter formed nine tenths of all Polish Jews; the three million Polish victims formed one tenth of the entire Polish nation. These sombre statistics are not quoted out of any sense of 'martyr envy' – although that neurotic emotion infests the world Hitler bequeathed to us.

Polish-Jewish history can be viewed from bewilderingly different angles. Around 1350, at a time when waves of oppression and expulsion swept the rest of Europe, the Polish Crown offered asylum to Jews fleeing the Rhineland massacres and granted their successors wideranging autonomy. A last vestige of this ancient liberal Poland flickered in the multicultural vision of Adam Mickiewicz, the country's revered national poet.

Then, from around 1650 onwards, a series of disasters impacting equally on Poles and Jews – first the Chmelnitzki pogroms and then the Partitions of Poland – led to impoverishment and a deterioration in Polish-Jewish relations that culminated in the Church-approved anti-Jewish boycott between the wars.

Under the Nazi occupation the Polish Home Army was indifferent to Jewish suffering, but fought heroically in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. After the war both Jewish survivors and Poles suffered grave disappointments. The former encountered hostility climaxing in the Kielce Pogrom; the latter were again robbed of independence by the Russians.

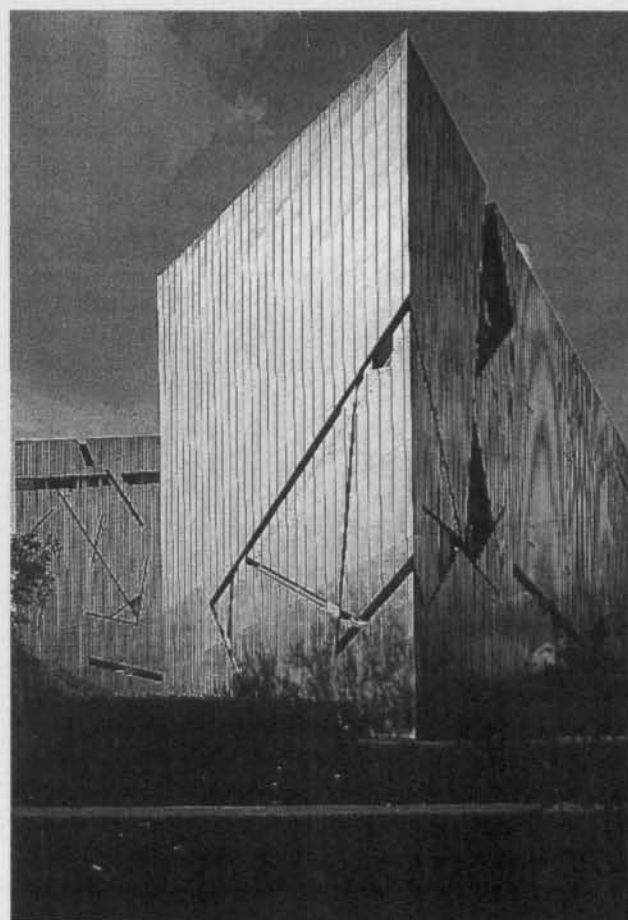
Stalin employed a small number of highly visible Jews in the security services; these Jews, many lone survivors, had ample reason to hate Rightwing Poles. What they failed to realise was their own 'built-in obsolescence'. In 1968 an antisemitic faction in the Polish Communist Party jumped on the Kremlin's anti-Zionist bandwagon and instigated the expulsion of 20,000 Jewish civil servants, journalists etc. from the country.

The sixties also saw a bizarre convergence of anti- and pro-Communist Poles in the 'appropriation' of Auschwitz. Rightwingers, habituated to calling Poland the 'Christ among nations', hyped Auschwitz as a shrine to *Polish* martyrdom while anti-Zionist Soviet propaganda dejudaised martyred Jews as

generalised 'victims of Fascism'.

Things remained frozen till the demise of Soviet power. For the past decade democratic Poland has worked towards a *rapprochement* with Israel and world Jewry – though disputes over the convent (and the crosses) at Auschwitz have created obstacles on the way.

Recently the fraught topic of Jews in Stalin's security apparatus has resurfaced. It now seems that the case against UK resident Helena Brus will not be proceeded with. On the other hand Warsaw is still asking Israel to extradite Solomon Morel, and the Jewish State is refusing to do so. It would require the wisdom of Solomon to decide who is right □



Stark exterior of Berlin's new Jewish Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind. (See report on Page 16.)

Profile

Our friend from the North

Nobody would take her for one of 'us', either in looks or speech. It is a truism that refugees who arrived as children are accent free. Czech-born Suzanne Pearson, however, doesn't merely sound English – she sounds Yorkshire-born and bred.

The only child of an assimilated middle-class family, Suzanne had enjoyed a happy early childhood. Things changed drastically with the Nazi occupation of Prague when she was eleven. War was only a few months away. Like several hundred more Czech-Jewish children, Suzie owes her survival to the intrepid rescue work of Nicholas Winton (plus, in her own case, fundraising efforts by the Woodcraft Folk).



Suzanne Pearson

Arrived in the UK, she lived with a Woodcraft family in Sheffield. Though under these circumstances she picked up English quickly, she did not, because of wartime disruption, receive much of an education. She left school at fourteen and, after a false start in a drawing office,

went to London to train as a nurse. She met her husband and married after his demob. In those days hospital nurses had to be single – so she retrained as a nursery nurse. Later she did teachers' training and eventually became head teacher of a nursery school. In addition she undertook research into nursery teaching – work for which she was made an MBE.

In parallel with her career, she and her woodwork teacher husband not only raised three daughters, but also did additional fostering. Even so the scars of the Holocaust have never healed.

For the last ten years Suzanne has been giving talks to Sheffield schoolchildren about her own experience of racism. Asked about her motivation, she quotes the programme of the Anne Frank Foundation: 'The rejection of discrimination must start at an early age; each of us has a personal responsibility towards achieving that goal.'

□ RG

OSHA Chairman announces new plans for residential care and sheltered accommodation

Over the past few years the Otto Schiff Housing Association has faced increasing pressure on its financial resources, due primarily to the need to provide higher levels of care to increasingly frail residents coupled with the uneconomical fees paid by Local Authorities.

Following an extensive review it became clear that substantial funds would have to be spent on certain properties to ensure the maintenance of high standards of accommodation. As a consequence the OSHA Council has decided to sell two properties – Heinrich Stahl House in the Bishops Avenue and Eleanor Rathbone House (which is one-third owned by the AJR) in Highgate, as both are in need of extensive refurbishment.

These two properties are relatively poorly located for public transport, shops and other facilities and, even after major investment, would be unable to meet the future requirements of tenants and residents.

Heinrich Stahl House stands on an extremely valuable site in the Bishops Avenue and a proportion of its land value could be used to provide new

accommodation in a new location rather than attempt to repair the present building.

The search for a site has commenced. Once a satisfactory location has been identified a further two years or so are likely to be required for completion of the new premises. In the unlikely event that a satisfactory site could not be found, OSHA would of course have to re-examine its long-term strategy.

The Council and Executive Group of OSHA are well aware of the uncertainty that these decisions, no matter how important for the future, will have for tenants, residents, relatives and volunteers. OSHA has undertaken to do all within its power to safeguard the interests of everyone involved. Tenants and residents will be given the utmost consideration and no-one will be asked to move without extensive consultation and discussion of all options.

The Otto Schiff Housing Association remains committed to providing an exceptionally high quality service to its clients for many years to come and is confident that the changes now being initiated will ensure that this commitment will be met.

□ Allan Blacher

German banks' complicity

Firm evidence that Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest, part-funded the construction of the Auschwitz death camp was revealed in recently discovered documents. The bank's historian, Manfred Pohl, said that their branch in the Polish town of Katowice knew of the purpose to which the loan was being put. Degesch, a subsidiary of Frankfurt-based Degussa precious metal smelters which manufactured Zyklon B gas, was also a recipient. Deutsche Bank is currently hoping to secure a \$10 billion takeover of the US Bankers' Trust.

Together with the Dresdner Bank, Deutsche Bank is being sued in New York by 10,000 Holocaust victims and their relatives for profiting from confiscated Jewish property and stolen assets deposited with the banks. Following a study by historian Johannes Baehr, the Dresdner Bank, which had close connections with the SS, is reported to have agreed to contribute to a Government-led compensation fund for former slave labourers due to be established this year.

□ RDC

What a tangled web life weaves

The recent Glenn Hoddle brouhaha refocused attention on an important issue, namely the prejudice surrounding physical handicap. One of the more effective ways of countering such prejudice is to point out that Beethoven and Smetana went deaf, Milton and Jorge Borges became blind, Alexander Pope and Toulouse-Lautrec were deformed, and Dostoevsky suffered from epilepsy.

Painters like El Greco and Guercino ('the squinter') even turned their 'abnormal' vision to advantage. The composer Alexander Zemlinsky dealt with his totally different physical defect – diminutive stature – by making a dwarf the protagonist of his opera *Der Zwerg*. In a textbook example of rationalising, Zemlinsky's youthful lover Alma, who later married Mahler, wrote in her diary: 'Men of genius are always short'.

That sentiment would have appealed to the uniformly pint-sized pioneers of motion pictures. It was said that if all the Hollywood moguls – Louis B Meyer, Sam Goldwyn, Carl Laemmle, William Fox, Jack Warner – had gathered in a room where someone swung a sword at a height of five feet three inches from the floor, not a single hair on their heads would have been harmed.

But not all 'vertically challenged' egomaniacs in history tried to compensate by making movies – quite a few made war. King Louis the Fourteenth conquered Alsace and wore three-inch *peruques*; Napoleon conquered Europe and donned the Imperial crown; Chancellor Dollfuss – *Millimeternich* – conquered the Social Democrats and buckled on a steel helmet which promptly earned him the *soubriquet* 'tortoise'.

The diminutive Stalin liked to pile up corpses, metaphorically speaking, round his feet to elevate himself. That, at any rate, was the writer Elias Canetti's explanation for the recurrent purges in Russia.

It is hardly surprising that Canetti, a quondam resident of Vienna, used the psychological approach pioneered by Sigmund Freud. As for Freud himself, he had an interesting explanation for Dostoevsky's epilepsy, to wit: the latter so hated his father that he secretly wished him dead. When he heard that

the father's own serfs had murdered him, this fulfilment of his repressed wishes brought on his first epileptic fit.

Characteristically the theme of parricide is also central to Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (which novel likewise contains a reference to the blood libel charge against the Jews – a charge Alyosha Karamazov, Dostoevsky's favourite character, signally fails to refute).

Given all this, the epileptic Dostoevsky, an antisemite and fanatical anti-Westerner, would make an unlikely hero for the disabled. The same applies to his fellow-epileptic Rasputin. Equally unsuitable would be Czar Peter the Great, whose facial tic was seized on as proof by the Orthodox church that he was 'the spawn of Satan'.

Alas, it was in Germany that physical deformity was the driving force behind the truly satanic quartet of Kaiser Wilhelm with the withered arm, club-footed Goebbels, myopic, pigeon-chested Himmler, and Hitler of the undescended – or otherwise missing – testicle.

□ Richard Grunberger

Inside the post-war refugee community

Dr Anthony Grenville, who has recently spent much of his time delving into the veritable mine of information to be found in early issues of *AJR Information*, is to present his initial findings at a lecture entitled 'The Formation of a Refugee Community Identity: *AJR Information* 1946-1950'.

Dr Grenville sets out to examine the development of a distinctive identity among the German-speaking Jewish refugees from Hitler who settled in Britain, as reflected in the post-war pages of 'their' journal. He intends exploring the nature and extent of their integration into British society, their attitudes towards their home countries and to Palestine/Israel, their relations with Anglo-Jewry, and their preservation of an identity based largely on German language and culture □

Jointly sponsored by the Wiener Library and the AJR, Dr Grenville's lecture will take place on Sunday 9th May at 3pm (Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, UCL).

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Reviews

Black Marx

Warren Beattie, BULWORTH
On General Release

What Don Juan was to Seville, Casanova to Venice and Jonathan Aitken to Belgravia, Warren Beattie is to Hollywood. But he has another ruling passion, namely Marxism. This has had a variable effect on his film making. *Reds* was an engrossing movie about an American journalist caught up in the Russian Revolution, in which action sequences were punctuated by eye witnesses of the events in 1917 speaking directly to camera.

In contrast to the engrossing and innovative *Reds*, *Bulworth* is a tendentious farrago. Exposés of corruption in US politics have a venerable pedigree dating back to the pre-war *Mr Smith goes to Washington*, but latterly, with *Wag the Dog*, *Primary Colours* etc. they have become formulaic. *Bulworth* has been made from the same template, but it compounds the trademark cynicism of those films with near-childish naiveté.

Actually even its cynicism borders on the infantile. To suggest that Democrats are indistinguishable from Republicans is, in the face of the Clinton impeachment hearings, simply ludicrous. In similarly synthetic-cynical mode the film's Senator Bulworth alleges a conspiracy between media and politicians to hoodwink the US public. (It makes one wonder if Warren Beattie ever heard of Watergate).

The naiveté of Beattie's vision comes out in his syrupy idealisation of Afro-Americans. He credits them with a vivacity and warmth totally lacking in other Americans, and ascribes crime in the ghettos solely to capitalist exploitation. This is an oversimplification on a par with the portrayal of slavery as a purely European imposition on Africa. (In reality it was warrior tribes who sold their fellow African captives as slaves to White traders.) Essentially what Beattie has done is adapt Orwell's 'Four legs good - two legs bad' slogan to read 'Black skin good - white skin bad'. And, I am tempted to add, 'No foreskin - very bad', because he casts Jews among the film's villains. He shows them as linked to the porn movie industry and more concerned about the West Bank than the USA.

Beattie's intellectual bankruptcy is finally revealed in Senator Bulworth's recipe for racial harmony: 'Let everyone have sex with everyone else till all Americans are the same colour.' (If I had couched that recipe in the words on the actual soundtrack *AJR Information* would cease to be a family newspaper.)

□ RG

The guru that failed

David Cesarani, ARTHUR KOESTLER,
THE HOMELESS MIND, William Heineman,
1998, £25.

First I must confess to special pleading in respect of this book. As a teenager there were two luminaries that lit the way ahead for me. One was George Orwell, and the other Arthur Koestler. Both Orwell and Koestler were political activists - and they wrote brilliant books, which in Koestler's case included *The Yogi and the Commissar*, *Darkness at Noon* and *Thieves in the Night*. Although a deeply committed Communist Party member of longstanding, Koestler saw through Marxism comparatively early on. He was brilliant in many spheres. His writings on science introduced millions - his work was translated into many languages - to post-Darwin theories of evolution and the working of the mind.

However, being an unashamed admirer of an idol in one's youth, is one thing. To read about him, warts and all, when one is long in the tooth oneself, is quite another. For Koestler was an impossible, boorish, albeit at times charming, man. He was violent with women, even to the extent of rape. Only recently a bust of his, which had been erected in his honour at a Scottish University, was put under wraps as a result of Cesarani's revelations.

Although Koestler was born in Budapest, his parents moved to Vienna before he reached the age of nine. A few years later he applauded, with precocious adolescent enthusiasm, Bela Kun and the short-lived Soviet style regime he helped install in Hungary. In his early Zionist days Koestler came under the spell of Jabotinsky and resided for many years in mandated Palestine. However, with the upsurge of the extreme right in Germany, Koestler joined the Communist Party in 1931. Theoretically he appeared to be on firm ground. The Soviet Union had not only outlawed antisemitism but had, furthermore, set aside a homeland,

Birobidjan, for Jews. Surely this would be the answer to fascism. But by 1938 Koestler was disillusioned with Soviet Russia and quit the Party. Interestingly, it was in this year, before the outbreak of war, that Koestler revisited Palestine. A year before the end of the war he again travelled to Palestine in order to write *Thieves in the Night*. Here he came under the spell of Begin who, like Jabotinsky earlier, converted him to supporting the Irgun Zvai Leumi in its underground war against the British. This alienated Koestler from mainstream opinion to the extent that he felt he had no place in the emerging country, despite the fact that he had held dual Palestinian and Hungarian nationality since 1928.

At this stage he endeavoured to solve his identity problem by stopping being Jewish. In an interview he gave in 1952, he asserted that the creation of the State of Israel presented Jews in the diaspora with the choice of either making *aliya* or assimilating with their host country. For Koestler, who was a non-believer, the choice was simple - either "go to Israel" or shed your Jewish identity.

In 1976 he published a curiosity, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, in which he argued that European Jews were descended from Khazars, a Caucasian tribe that converted to Judaism in the seventh century. This book was largely poooh-pooohed by historians as being considerably flawed, but it was a final attempt by Koestler to renounce his identity by tracing his genetic origins elsewhere.

Despite his attempts to de-Judaize himself and melt into the English countryside, which he truly loved, he ended his days in virtual Jewish self-hatred, and his search for identity was, not surprisingly, a failure.

It is with good reason that Prof. Cesarani subtitles his biography *The Homeless Mind*, for Koestler was a man uprooted by war and revolution. His search for meaning, identity and belonging took him along the paths of Zionism, Communism, anti-Communism, science and, finally, mysticism.

Prof. Cesarani has researched his subject fully and told the story well. This biography is comprehensively written and well annotated. It will be of interest to anyone concerned with the history of our times. I am grateful to the author for the effort spent on the work of a brilliant, but contradictory person who, all things considered, possessed feet of clay.

□ Martin Hasseck

Home is where the roots aren't

Peter Alter, Ed. *OUT OF THE THIRD REICH: Refugee Historians in Post-war Britain* I B Tauris/ German Historical Institute, London 1998.

"I know where my roots are, but I also know where my home is. I do not want to change either of them." Thus the Vienna-born Peter Pulzer in this anthology of autobiographical essays by historians who fled to Britain from the Third Reich. Prof Peter Alter, University of Duisburg, has put together a distinguished cast who, between them, provide a timely reminder of how deeply British academic history is indebted to its arrivals from *Mittleuropa*. Many of Alter's contributors have helped provide a valuable intellectual bridge between the Germany or Austria of their youth and the Britain in which they settled. For example, Pulzer, Edgar J Feuchtwanger and E P Hennock have written extensively on both British and German political history.

A number tended to gravitate towards topics that would have obsessed their youth, such as the history of European Jewry, antisemitism and Jewish resistance (Pulzer, Arnold Paucker) or the origins and manifestations of European fascism (Francis L Carsten). Others came to identify so strongly with the country in which they settled that it is largely in British history that they have made their name: Sidney Pollard, for example, was to become one of our most distinguished economic historians.

In addition to providing a succession of colourful and often moving personal stories, this collection also raises, at least by implication, larger questions. What are the psychological and intellectual repercussions of escaping from one culture to another, often amidst the most appalling hardship and danger? What cultural baggage do such refugees carry and what new insights, or obfuscations, are incurred? How far, indeed, is the history pursued in academia in part the sublimated autobiography of its practitioners?

Here the book is a little disappointing. Alter's contributors are mostly too guarded for the confessional, though there are revelations if you look for them. Hennock, for example, writes movingly about how congenial he found English history which, as an immigrant, he could never take for granted; 'my concentration on British history', he

acknowledges, 'fitted in with a preferred emphasis on my Englishness and a reluctance to proclaim my German origins'. And Grenville tells us how his non-British background and enforced bi-lingualism gradually pointed him towards comparative and international history. But there's not a lot of Freud (or Woody Allen) in these pages. Maybe our authors were so grateful for the success and recognition that came their way that they were ill-inclined to disturb the smouldering coals of childhood memory. And who can blame them? They are writing, one senses, not for their psychiatrists or their grandchildren but for their professional peers.

□ Daniel Snowman

Kosher nostra

Rich Cohen, *TOUGH JEWS, FATHERS, SONS AND GANGSTER DREAMS*, Jonathan Cape, 1998, £16.99.

Hard though it is to credit, during the twenties and thirties America's most murderously efficient gangsters were Jews. One simply wonders why, while they experienced a Hollywood apotheosis, they did not cause more antisemitism. On the contrary, they managed to generate some twisted admiration.

They were the children of poor East European Jewish immigrants who inhabited the slums of New York's Bronx. The parents were hard-working and apprehensive of their new surroundings. The children hung around street corners, were streetwise and, via fights with similarly disadvantaged Italian, Irish and Polish youths, descended into petty crime and eventually real racketeering.

Rich Cohen, the author, comes from this milieu, although his forebears were honest, with the exception of an uncle by marriage (possibly the prototype of Edward G Robinson's Little Caesar). Of course, this being a Jewish story, it has its bizarrely humorous side. The nicknames these villains gave themselves, or were given, like Tick-Tock Tannenbaum, Abbadabba Berman and Big Yid Zelig, may make the reader laugh, but Legs Diamond, Bugsy Siegel and Dutch Schultz were too bloody to be regarded as Jewish jokes.

Rich Cohen's law-abiding grandparents kept a diner, where the gangsters assembled, planned their crimes and consumed enormous quantities of

beimische food. For ever after, with the gangsters imprisoned, executed or retired, respectable co-religionists still reminisced about those 'heroes' in colourful wiseguy language.

The author contends that, if there had been more Jews like those gangsters, the Holocaust would not have happened. I consider this a questionable theory. He goes so far as to endow them with the virtues – in terms of personal courage and efficiency – of the Israeli Defence Force, and even the heroes of Entebbe! An untenable comparison if one remembers that these gangs included bootleggers like Arnold Rothstein, slimebags like Meyer Lansky and drug barons like Louis (Lepke) Buchalter. Lansky was even deported from Israel, where Golda Meir would not give him houseroom because of his Mafia connections.

The 'tough Jews', who by that time had become assassins known as Murder Incorporated, formed alliances with Italians of similar provenance. Unbelievably, notorious miscreants like Lucky Luciano preferred to hire Jewish killers rather than Sicilians. "They're better at it", he is reported to have said. The brainier Jewish specimens engaged in labour racketeering, and one of them, trade union boss Sidney Hillman, became advisor to President Roosevelt.

To end on a lighter note: in this context of ever shifting alliances there was one thing the Italians and the Jews could never agree on – food. Mafiosi had their own eating places; spaghetti sauce never garnished gefilte fish.

□ John Rossall

50 YEARS AGO

HISTORIC DAYS

With the election of Dr Chaim Weizmann as President of the State of Israel and the opening in the eternal city of Jerusalem of the Constituent Assembly, the first Knesset Israel of our time, the new State leaves the dawn of provisional authority and enters into the broad daylight of orderly democratic rule.

In his opening speech, Dr Weizmann proclaimed that on the fair and solid foundation of freedom and equality, collective responsibility and national self-discipline, an independent nation was dwelling in its own free country.

In his memorable address he spoke of this nation as being conceived as "the ingathering of the exiles." □

AJR Information, March 1949

Letters to the Editor



GOMBRICH'S BLOTTING PAPER II

Sir – To my intense regret, Mr Grunberger's attempt to rebut my charge of having borne false witness (9.11.99), has made matters so much worse that he leaves me no option but to encroach on your space once more.

Having at last admitted that my brief in the lecture at the Liberal Synagogue in November 1996 (and published by the Austrian Cultural Institute as the first of their pamphlets *Occasions*), was to discuss *The Visual Arts in Vienna circa 1900*, he exclaims, with an air of injured innocence: "How is it that I read references to the absence of Jews from the top rank of Viennese composers of the 19th century, and from that of philosophers subsequently...?" Needless to say, these statements are a figment of Mr Grunberger's imagination. Let the reader judge: Referring, quite legitimately (p.24), to the utterance by Stefan Zweig quoted as a motto of the *Festival of Jewish Culture* at which I spoke, that 'nine tenths of what the world celebrated as Viennese culture of the nineteenth century was a culture promoted, nurtured, or in some cases even created by Viennese Jewry', I merely remarked that I did not know what his units of measurement were, but Beethoven and Schubert, Bruckner and Brahms, who lived in Vienna, "were not particularly associated with people of Jewish descent". Where, I ask, did I speak of the "absence of Jews from the top rank of Viennese composers"?

But worse is to come. I also touched on an advertisement circulated by my hosts, the Austrian Cultural Institute, which read (p.25): 'If you want to know why most of the twentieth century intellectual life was invented in Vienna, please contact us'. A claim that prompted me to remark that the founding fathers of the Vienna School of Art History (to which I belong), were not Jewish, nor were the fathers of the 'Vienna Circle' of philosophers, "though some other members of that circle were, or may have been Jews". How could anyone

twist this statement into the assertion that there are no top-rank Jewish philosophers in this century?

There is a final irony in Mr Grunberger's confidence that the Viennese interwar cabaret must confirm his original argument. He could not possibly know that I was marginally involved in that tradition, since together with the late Hans Weigel, I wrote a skit for the *Kleinkunstbuehne*, poking fun at German pomposity and Austrian complacency. I never heard that we 'stood on the shoulders' of one Heinrich Eisenbach, and I do not believe it. I cannot accept Mr Grunberger's version of the history of German language satire, which omits the name of Johann Nestroy, whose witticisms and gags were still frequently quoted in the Vienna of my youth. Incidentally, I never use blotting paper.

London NW3

Prof Sir Ernst Gombrich

It is symptomatic that Sir Ernst's prewar friend and collaborator was Hans Weigel, a 1945 returnee to Vienna who subsequently asserted that he encountered no antisemitism in postwar Austria. Ed.

Sir – May I – a mere proofreader – make so bold as to point out that the offence to which RG owns up, was surely either a "mini" one, or minuscule – but definitely *not* miniscule!

London W1

Helen Gregory

THE SHOAH AND THE OFFICERS PLOT

Sir – Recently I watched a documentary on radar from 1940 onwards.

In the Atlantic German U-boats wrought havoc with Allied shipping. Detectable by early radar built into the noses of long-range aircraft, the Germans learned to listen to pulse-signals and dive out of sight, but when new, shorter wave-lengths were used they failed to find a counter-measure.

Allied advances in cavity magnetrons also enabled bombers to 'see' the land below through clouds, and in the dark, and drop their bombs on target rather than miles away.

On screen a German U-boat captain, and a scientist, complained bitterly that Hitler had interfered with their work by forbidding further research on radar because it was long-term; he wanted quick results, and so they fell behind.

Hitler had also interfered with the generals' plans at Stalingrad, thus causing the beginning of the end. Generals, U-boat captains and scientists resented Hitler interfering with their war for which they had well prepared and had been looking forward to.

It therefore appears to me that the July Plot was caused by corporal Hitler meddling in military affairs, and making a mess of them. Nothing to do with Jews.

Ipswich

Frank Bright

Suffolk

Sir – In answer to HL Meyer's letter (Feb 99 issue) I would like to say that this correspondence was about the possibility of the Shoah influencing the Officer Plotters in their decision to kill Hitler. I did not find this theory substantiated.

It is my belief that the percentage of Non-Eliminationist Germans was 2% and I arrive at the same figure for the Officer Plotters.

In contrast to my previous letters on the subject where my views were supported by reputed historians – at this time I will only point to the paucity of trees commemorating German 'Righteous Gentiles' in Yad Vashem. The number is 324 out of 17000 or just about 2% of this total. This is a fact, not a value judgement or innuendo.

My best hope is that Stauffenberg, Reichwein and Moltke were part of the 2%.

London N6

H Fisher

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

Sir – Among 'our' celebrities who have appeared on the above programme, Sir Claus Moser and Professor George Steiner stand out in my memory. Now I also include Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in my recollections.

Numerous listeners, especially of our background, must have been moved by her reminiscences. Her sorrow at the tragic fate that befell her family appeared ingrained in the intonation of her voice.

Her choice of records included a wonderful rendition of the *Aventu Malkenu* prayer, whose significance she explained.

London NW11

Laura Selo

ACTION AGAINST OBLIVION

Sir – I recently attended a moving ceremony in deep snow to honour and remember the four teachers at the former Luther Lyceum (now Hector Peterson-Oberschule) who had fallen victim to the Holocaust.

Following an invitation to Berlin by the Oberbürgermeister in 1994 I had made contact with my old school and found that there was no mention of the martyred schoolmasters. I then set to work to persuade the school to sponsor a memorial plaque. It took four years to complete this task and I assisted in raising funds for the bronze relief. They held an exhibition last year, proclaiming success in their investigation into the fate of the former teachers. The exhibition reflected great credit on the headmaster, Mr Dietmar Pagel, and his pupils.

Herr Pagel invited me to do the school the 'honour' to come to Berlin and unveil the completed beautiful bronze relief.

My husband and I flew to Berlin to complete the task I had set out to do. It was a most moving and dignified event, involving local dignitaries, the press, Kletzmer musicians and the school.

Wembley
Middx

Eva Freeman

PINK TRIANGLE AND YELLOW STAR

Sir – Mr Rolf Weinberg should sign his letter 'Disgusted, Tunbridge Wells'. It appears perfectly legitimate to me for *AJR Information* to examine Nazi treatment of another persecuted minority, and to describe some distinguished members of that minority, and their contribution to Weimar culture. I escaped wearing either the yellow star or the pink triangle merely by the accident of time and luck: my parents got me out in October 1933. I advise Mr Weinberg to read Magnus Hirschfeld for enlightenment.

London W1

Peter Zander

Sir – May I say how much I enjoyed your compendium of history's 'gays'. Actually, I remember the good old days, when going to see *Gay Rosalinda* meant *Die Fledermaus* in English, with Richard Tauber conducting.

As always, your summary sparkles with wit and erudition.

Alas, it seems that you cannot please all your readers. However, you will do well to continue catering for those of us who

are not afflicted with the Beckmesser syndrome, coupled with total ignorance.

Chigwell,
Essex

Fred Rosner

Sir – There was no monetary compensation for those homosexuals who survived the concentration camps. They had been imprisoned under the law of the Kaiser and not under Nazi laws....the only group that was again shamefully discriminated against.

Isle of Wight

Mrs Erica Preen

PROPAGANDA TRIUMPH

Sir – Why does Mr Channing (Feb 99 issue) think that only a dictatorial regime can provide the resources for political and social propaganda?

Did open market forces not produce, in the inter-war USA, the expression of unpleasant racial stereotyping, of which we may now justifiably be somewhat ashamed?

I also suggest that Mr Channing's basic question has long been answered by history. The post-revolutionary Russian cinema, with its seminal contribution to film technique, is not reviled because of its origins.

The Odessa Steps may have been a mythical construction but, surely, we can distinguish the intention and effect of a cream separator sequence from the banality of a Nazi speech, however well-recorded.

Chalfont St Giles
Buckinghamshire

Alan S Kaye

Sir – Your article (February issue) reveals Riefenstahl's association with an exhibition of her life and work, and her endeavour to justify herself and her support for Hitler.

At 96 she seems to have forgotten whom she served with such dedication and ambition. Talented as she was, she did everything to glorify the régime with her films.

I can live with the new generation of Germans, but I can never forgive those still around for having witnessed and supported callous persecution and murder. Leni Riefenstahl would serve herself better to live on in obscurity and try to come to terms with her conscience – if she has one.

Cascais
Portugal

Peter Frankel

REMEMBERING A BLACK DAY

Sir – Sitting here safe and sound I cannot help reflecting on today's date (30.1.99). 66 years ago, the *Machtübernahme* took place. I was then a student, at an institute situated in a working-class area of Berlin where every window showed a red flag on the eve of the election. When I went back to the institute every window sprouted a swastika. Later that day all students were made to attend the hoisting and saluting of the new flag. All followed like sheep, including Jews, with the exception of myself; I said they would have to carry me out. I was lucky and got away with it, unlike others elsewhere.

Little did I dream I would be alive 66 years – and a spell in a concentration camp – later to remember the date, now a citizen of another, beloved country, which was then regarded as hostile and beyond the moon.

London NW3

E Mitchell

ROME AND JERUSALEM

Sir – The presentation of Edith Stein's canonisation has certainly been mishandled; what looks like a mistaken attempt to hijack her martyrdom has been particularly resented by Bishop Hugh Montefiore and the "Jewish Christians". Whatever the motives, it was certainly ham-handed. On the grounds of personal sanctity this contemplative nun and mystic may well have deserved canonisation, but then the present Pope has created more *Beati* and Saints than any of his predecessors.....I agree with R Channing (December issue) that she cannot have been in Auschwitz long enough to have done many works of mercy there; was she at Westerbork long enough to deserve the reputation of a camp angel?

I always knew that the present Pope has kept up with old school friends from Wadowice, including Holocaust survivors like Jerzy Kluger, but I have just found out that his Cracow friends include Meir Lau, the present Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem.

Deddington
Oxon

Francis Steiner

AJR SEDER NIGHT

THURSDAY 1ST APRIL

BOOKING DETAILS ON PAGE 10

AJR Reports

TEACHING BRIDGE AT AJR KARD & GAMES CLUB



Shirley Tucker, left, leading Trudie Power, Marion Lesser and Fred Wyatt through the subtleties of bridge at AJR's Monday Kard & Games Klub.

The AJR's Kard & Games Club, up and running for the past six months, has gained a regular following of players. Now they are inviting both aspiring and less expert bridge players to join them on Mondays between 9.30am and 3.30pm at 15 Cleve Road, NW6.

Every Monday, volunteer expert bridge teacher Shirley Tucker imparts confidence to wary and novice players, enabling them to take their places at the card tables and join in the social life. Describing herself as "a good club player", on her retirement as administrator at Shalvata counselling centre last year, Shirley decided to bring her skills to benefit AJR Kard & Games

Club members. Every Monday, with patience and understanding, she explains the basics of play, which are soon grasped, before moving on to the subtleties and intricacies of the game. After less than six months Shirley reckons that a novice should be able to hold his or her own in bridge-playing company!

Of course, members can play any of the regular games they prefer. Chess is popular, as are scrabble, kalooki and dominoes. Morning coffee is included and a full buffet lunch includes a glass of wine. Entrance is £6 for Day Centre members and £10 for non-members. Please call Sylvia, Renée & Susie on 0171 328 0208 to make your reservation.

□ Ronald Channing

New appointments

Amanda Clark, three of whose grandparents are refugees, has joined AJR's Head Office as Volunteers Services Co-ordinator. Previously she spent a number of years as a residential homes manager for Norwood Ravenswood.



We also welcome **Sandra Lessman** who has joined the AJR as Meals-on-Wheels Assistant based at the Day Centre. Members wishing to telephone in their requirements will often be placing their orders directly with her □



DEVELOPING AJR GROUPS

AJR Outreach Worker Myrna Glass is soon hoping to establish a tenth AJR-associated group, possibly in the Cardiff area. If you live in South Wales and would like to know more, please call her on Thursdays at 0171 431 6161.

On a recent visit to the **Midlands Group**, Myrna spoke about her new role liaising between the groups and Head Office where specialist help was often available to meet individual needs. Monthly meetings of like-minded people from a common background strengthened the voice of survivors and it was becoming easier to share good ideas and foster common interests.

At **Pinner AJR** music-lover, Jack Kinkler, gave a masterly talk on composers of Jewish ancestry. Among those he selected as having stood the test of time were Felix Mendelssohn, Gustav Mahler, Ernst Bloch, George Gershwin, Kurt Weill, Aaron Copland and the incomparable Leonard Bernstein. The recordings Jack played helped to enliven his insight into their lives and achievements.

Fay Granat will speak about her recent spectacular walk through Sinai in aid of One-to-One, which helps disadvantaged families in Israel. Pinner Synagogue, 4th March at 2pm.

□ WW

South London AJR guests Norah Gittins and Hilde Ambrose discussed the many aspects to be considered when making a claim for compensation. Norah reported that the AJR regularly offered advice on a number of potential sources, including the British Fund, the Swiss Humanitarian Fund and recent developments in Austria. Hilde discussed pensions granted on the grounds of ill health. Claims which may previously have been rejected, such as those for post-traumatic stress, could possibly now be accepted. While any advice from the AJR was free to members, lawyers' fees, of course, had to be paid.

James Taylor, who is working on the Imperial War Museum's new Holocaust exhibition, will speak on 'Holocaust Memoirs' on Thursday 11th March at Prentis Road Synagogue, South London.

□ RL

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Thursday 11 March

Tuesday 16 March

Wednesday 24 March

Tuesday 30 March

Wednesday 14 April

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... **Viewpoint** ...

Houses of cards?

When the mandated powers Britain and France carved nation states from the Near Eastern territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire, they appointed and supported absolute rulers. With the death of King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the area's longest-serving head of government, eyes are turning towards the region's Arab states ruled by ailing septuagenarians.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, whose kingdom also boasts a dynastic name, at 77 continues to spend his not inconsiderable fortune on surgery in western hospitals. Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's confidence in his succession may now be somewhat shaken by recent events which, by the same token, may offer encouragement to his half-brothers.

President Hafez Assad of Syria, at 70 a well-worn credit to modern medicine and ruthless retention of power, plans to cement his line by anointing his second son Bashir. In Cairo, President Hosni Mubarak, past his 71st birthday, remains pre-occupied with Muslim fundamentalists who, having assassinated his predecessor, Anwar Sadat, are now doing their best to

strangle Egypt's vital tourist trade.

Yasser Arafat – whose PLO murdered Ma'alot school-children and Benyamin Netanyahu's brother Jonathan at Entebbe – shows clear signs of trembling and lapses of memory consistent with Parkinsons' disease. Ironically, Saddam Hussein of Iraq appears in rude health, though should he succumb to a stray US guided missile or an assassin's bullet, his sons demonstrate a frightening bestiality.

The new King of the region's key buffer state, unknown and unregarded, is thrust into this situation. Abdullah, King Hussein's eldest son from his union with British Toni Gardiner, was preferred to his uncle, the urbane Hebrew-speaking Hassan who held the reins as Crown Prince for 33 years.

No doubt Hussein's wish to see his favourite son, 18-year-old Hamza (by American-born Queen Noor) succeed, had to be compromised by making Hamza Crown Prince to Abdullah's King. For the stability and progress of peace in the Middle East it was not the decision of a clear-headed statesman. Jordan and its neighbours could pay dearly for this archaic attempt to secure the Hashemite blood line.

□ Ronald Channing

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Afternoon entertainment programme –

MARCH/APRIL 1999

Mon 1 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 2 Angela Arratoon and Margaret Eaves, piano
Wed 3 Tricia Dina, soprano and Gordon Cochran accompanied by Margaret Gibbs, piano
Thur 4 Valerie Hewitt (Voice – Guitar and Piano)
Sun 7 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 8 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 9 Fenella Humphreys, violin and Siobhain O'Higgins, piano
Wed 10 Helen Blake and Kathryn Jenkin
Thur 11 Sylvia Eaves and Margaret Eaves
Sun 14 Mark Rosen and Daphne Lewis
Mon 15 KARD & GAMES KLUB

Tue 16 Leslie Townsend, violin and Bridget Cunningham, piano
Wed 17 LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 18 Carol-Ann Grainger, soprano and Stephen Dickinson, piano
Sun 21 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 22 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 23 Margaret Gibbs, piano
Wed 24 Jenny and her accordion
Thur 25 The Eddy Simmons Duo
Sun 28 Gina Fergione, soprano and Angus Cunningham, piano
Mon 29 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 30 Shelley Weldon entertains for Pesach
Wed 31 CLOSED – PESACH
Thur 1 CLOSED – PESACH
Sun 4 CLOSED – EASTER SUNDAY
Mon 5 CLOSED – EASTER MONDAY

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Michael Radbil

would like to thank The Chairman, Hon Officers, staff and countless members of the AJR for their kind expressions of sympathy and support.

Deaths

Abrahamson. Trixi Abrahamson born in Munich, has died aged 79. She did so much for others and is enormously missed by Hazel, John, family and many friends.

Fuss. Markus Fuss passed away on 10 January 1999. He will be sadly missed by his beloved wife Grete, daughters, Diana and Vivien and grandchildren, Tara, Alexander, Tanya and Adam.

Koebner. Adolf (Männe) Koebner born Ludwigshafen, died on 2 January 1999 aged 85. No words can express how much he will be missed by his family.

Moss. Thea Moss died on 30 December 1998. Sadly missed by all the Sisters of the Leo Baeck Womens Lodge.

Pollard. Eva Pollard, née Perlhoefer, died peacefully at home on 25 January. Dearly loved by her husband Walter, daughter Anita, and by her family abroad.

CLASSIFIED

Miscellaneous

Reichsmark Coins. If anyone still has any Reichsmark coins brought over 60 years ago, please contact Flor Kent, 40 Vineyard Hill Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 7JH. Tel: 0181 944 5350. Fax 0181 944 0028. email <ventec@dircom.co.uk>

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Day Centre

Shirley Lever at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. New Clothes for Sale, dresses, underwear, cardigans etc. Thursday 11 March, 9.45. - 11.45. a.m.

Societies

Ex-Breslauers. The next meeting of former Breslauers will be held on Wednesday, 3 March at 4pm, 15 Cleve Road, NW6. Please let Vera Bass know whether or not you will be able to attend. Tel: 0181-349 3394. (Previous number given in error.)

Beacon Reunion June 17. For information contact Erica Preat, 12 Marlborough Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 1AA. 01983 562747.

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

OPTICIAN

Dr Howard Solomons BSc FBCO

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Art Notes

The exhibition of works by **Francis Bacon** at the Tate Gallery provides the first opportunity for the public to see some of the working drawings that Bacon deliberately kept secret over many years. Included are more than 40 sketches newly acquired by the Tate. Made in pencil, ballpoint pen, gouache and oil, they reveal Bacon's obsessive concern with the human figure. Together with the well-known paintings on view, they convey his violent images of people distorted, depraved or depressed which have earned him international recognition. Until May 2.

At the Whitechapel Art Gallery are works by **Henri Michaux**, an artist much admired by Francis Bacon. This is the first public show of Michaux's work in Britain, coinciding with the anniversary of his birth. Michaux is an enigmatic figure. Born in Paris, he had a successful career as a poet, only turning to painting in the late 1920s as a way of expressing states of mind which were inaccessible to poetry. His vibrant, highly original works in ink, gouache, pencil and crayon, some of which draw on his knowledge of Chinese calligraphy, have a quality which is strangely moving. Also at the Whitechapel are paintings and drawings by the New York-based artist **Terry Winters**. Among them are large striking paintings created with thick, often harsh oil colours, built up in geometric lines, layer by layer. Until April 25.

To mark the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Baal Shem Tov, the Ben Uri Art Society is mounting an exhibition from March 7-21 at ORT House, 126 Albert Street, NW1, of 15 colour lithographs by the Hungarian artist **Ferenc Flamm** entitled **The Legends of the Baal Shem Tov**. Completed over two years, during which the artist studied Chassidic philosophy and legend and the writings of Martin Buber, the images reflect the rich Jewish life of a bygone era.

Two small exhibitions at the National Gallery include superb paintings from the Gallery's own collection not normally on view. Of particular interest are the works of **Zanobi Strozzi** (1412-1468), a little known pupil of Fra Angelico. Until



Study, Portrait of Van Gogh, Francis Bacon, Tate Gallery

March 7. **Orozio Gentileschi** (1563-1639) of Pisa became court painter to Charles I. The paintings, which owe much to Caravaggio, include loans from the Royal Collection and from major museums throughout Europe. Until May 23.

□ **Barry Fealdman**

SB's Column

125 years ago. Born in Bielitz in 1874, the outstanding coloratura **Selma Kurz** was engaged by Gustav Mahler to sing at the Vienna Opera. She appeared at Covent Garden in 1904/5 but owing to Dame Melba's jealousy not again until 1924. Selma Kurz took many popular coloratura parts and was Strauss' Zerbinetta in *Ariadne* in 1916. She and her gynaecologist husband had a daughter who enjoyed a short singing career in the thirties.

Rainer Maria Fassbinder was doubtlessly the most prominent personality in the German postwar cinema. Between 1966 and 1982 (when he died at the young age of 37) he made over 40 films. They were original and imaginative, and featured, among others, Hanna Schygulla, Werner Finck and Luise Ullrich. London's National Film Theatre put on a Fassbinder season during February.

Birthday. 90-year old **Hans Hotter** was honoured by the Vienna State Opera in January. He was their leading baritone from 1937 to 1972 but made frequent guest appearances at Milan, Bayreuth and New York. Towards the end of his career he be-

came an opera producer, in which capacity he directed Wagner's Ring cycle in London during the sixties.

Obituary. Swiss-born **Rolf Liebermann** died aged 88. An opera composer, he administered the opera houses of Hamburg and Paris. While head of the Paris opera he employed Sir Georg Solti as music director; this period is still referred to as the 'Golden Years'. Liebermann was also director of the international academy at the Salzburg Mozarteum □

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REGULAR VISITS TO LONDON

Faith I, Reason 0

Two thousand years ago a certain Paul – formerly Saul – of Tarsus had a blinding vision on the Road to Damascus. The 'vision thing' occurred again at the end of this January. It happened to a well known Englishman with a religious bent by the name of Carey. No, I don't mean Peter Carey, prizewinning author of *Oscar and Lucinda*, a novel about a cathedral made of glass that is floated to Australia. I refer to Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury.

This man of the cloth took the Damascus Road to improve Christian-Muslim relations and had the wool pulled well and truly over his eyes. He described Assad's Syria as a haven of religious toleration in which Moslems and Christians of all stripes co-exist

harmoniously. In fact, Arab nationalism everywhere has a pro-Islamic anti-Christian bias that feeds on ancient folk memories of the Crusades. (Examples abound: the Lebanese Civil War, attacks on Copts in Egypt, the flight of Christian Arabs from places like Bethlehem).

As to President Assad, he is a dictator who wiped out 20,000 inhabitants of the rebel city of Homs. In the past he harboured Eichmann's assistant Alois Brunner – currently he gives housework to Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hizbollah. His soldiers occupy, and virtually govern, the sovereign state of Lebanon, and he has thousands of agents currently exploiting the succession crisis in the Kingdom of Jordan.

No wonder when I first read the encomium on Assad I thought it had been penned by the other Carey, winner of the Booker Prize for Fiction.

□ RG

SEARCH NOTICES

Dr Rudolf Stern and daughter Harriet, last known living in France. Composer Roger Quilter helped their escape from 1930s Vienna. Harriet converted to Catholicism and married Count de Gebhard; son Roger was named after Quilter. Anyone with more information please contact researcher Valerie Langfield MA, 82 Queens Road, Cheshire Hume, Cheshire SK8 5HH. Tel: 0161 486 6605.

Annemarie Benisch or her descendants are being sought as possible owners of a dormant Swiss bank account. Born Vienna 1915, arrived in London from Prague 1938; father Franz, born Strakonice 1886, murdered in Auschwitz. Please contact journalist Sebastian Borger (of 'Facts' magazine) in London, Tel: 0171 272 1748.

Edward Gutman, born 1915 and living in England, is being sought by his relative Angela Tarnovskaya, daughter of Efim (Chaim) Gutman, born 1914 in Uman (Ukraine), died 1974 in Kiev. Edward's father Moshe Isaacovich Gutman was born 1881 in Nesterov near Lvov and his mother Nadel Laura (Lea) 1884 in Geshuv, Poland. Please contact Angela Tarnovskaya, Nahal Katlav 9/12, Ramat Bet-Shemesh, Israel.

Liese Einstein and her brother Siegbert (died 1940) were Kindertransportees

staying with the Hyams family in Westgate-on-Sea in Kent. Liese moved to Brantwood Road, Broughton Park, Salford, Lancashire, then into Booth Hall Hospital in Manchester. Son would like any information on his mother and the Hyams family. Contact David Fischer, 306 W.47 St. 3B, New York, NY 10036. Tel/Fax: 212 265 6610.

Interned in Britain? Post-graduate history student at Sussex University wishes to talk to Jewish refugees who experienced internment during WWII. Please contact Jane Greening, Flat 3, 14 Lewes Crescent, Brighton BN2 1FH. Tel: 01273 674 533.

Jews in France during WWII. Sheffield University history student is seeking French Jews and others who emigrated to France to escape persecution elsewhere, or their descendants, for dissertation. Please contact Gemma Staples, 204 School Road, Crookes, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S10 1GL. Tel: 0114 266 5981.

Aachen, Book of Remembrance. The memories of survivors, their families and friends who lived in Aachen, Germany, between 1933-1945, would be helpful and important to the compilers of a Book of Remembrance. Please contact Judith Ulmer, Merowingerstr. 63, D-52070 Aachen, Germany. Tel: 0049 241 152995.

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US Government's ongoing commitment to Holocaust reparations

Marking the 60th anniversary of the Wiener Library in London, Bennett Freeman, special advisor to US Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat, gave an address on 'Nazi Gold and Holocaust-Era Assets: Completing the Unfinished Business of the Second World War'.

Bennett Freeman blamed the Cold War for having displaced, for half a century, attempts to gain compensation for gold stolen from living and murdered Holocaust victims, as well as looted assets and so-called 'dormant' bank accounts. World Jewish Congress chairman Edgar Bronfman brought the subject back on to the agenda in 1995 and won active support from the White House and the State Department.

The US Government then initiated an enquiry into the whole subject of 'Nazi Gold', including an investigation of the

pivotal role played by neutral Switzerland when, from 1941 onwards, it received German bullion in exchange for internationally tradeable Swiss francs. Published in May 1997, the report caused a considerable stir, not least in Switzerland. A second US Government report which followed in June 1998 investigated other neutral countries – including Argentina, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and Turkey – and the degree to which they too were involved in helping to finance the Nazi war effort.

The Nazi Gold Conference, held in London in December 1997, was regarded by Bennett Freeman as "a landmark event" which focused the attention of the international community and spurred more countries into action. From it emerged a consensus to compensate the survivors. Last year a \$1.25 billion settlement was reached with the Swiss banks.

The issues of unpaid insurance policies and plundered artworks were taken up at a second conference, held in Washington in December 1998. A commission headed by former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger is due to report on Holocaust-related insurance. Progress has

also been made on the recovery of stolen works of art which are being tracked down by organisations such as the Art Loss Register in co-operation with the leading auction houses and art galleries. The Russian Government also agreed to open its archives to reveal looted art. A non-binding consensus was reached in Washington to aid the restitution of Nazi-plundered artworks.

An upsurge in demand for compensatory justice for slave and forced labourers has now brought this issue to the forefront of attention. The present German Government's positive attitude to Holocaust restitution, and recent agreements, gave cause for optimism that further settlements would be reached. The need to enhance the propagation of Holocaust education was also reflected in the Washington Conference.

Since it became apparent that the Washington Conference could not be the last, further conferences have been planned: in Austria, to give consideration to stolen property and works of art, in Poland, on the return of communal property, and in Sweden to further Holocaust education.

□ Ronald Channing

Cedars in the Forest of Arden

Having always suspected a hidden Jewish dimension to the Shakespeare phenomenon, I was not surprised to read that Gwyneth Paltrow, who plays the crossdressing Romeo in *Shakespeare in Love*, had rabbinical forbears. After all, she is only following in the footsteps of Sarah Bernhardt who played Hamlet. (This is all in the best tradition of the transvestite *Purimspiel*; didn't Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and Imogen in *Cymbeline*, likewise disguise themselves as boys?)

More importantly, what chance would *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have stood without Mendelssohn's score, Max Reinhardt's Hollywood film (with Mickey Rooney as Puck!) and Peter Brook's stage version? And would there have been a Globe Theatre at Bankside without Sam Wanamaker? Come to that, what would the lovelorn Shakespeare have had to say for himself but for the words Tom Stoppard (alias Sträussler) put into his mouth.

But why concentrate on all these

Jewish bit-players? What about the great Will himself? Admittedly neither his fore-nor surname sound particularly Jewish? On the other hand, was he not of Mediterranean cast of feature? And hadn't his father been a glover at Stratford – the same calling Kafka senior and Werfel senior followed in Prague?

I concede that John Shakespeare was rumoured to have been Catholic, but that could easily have been a codeword for Jew – both faiths being equally despised in the fiercely anti-Popish atmosphere of Elizabethan England. We do know that John encountered problems in Stratford in 1577 and can only guess at their precise nature. But the pieces of the jigsaw do fall into place if we remember the date of Will's birth: 1564. In other words, he was thirteen in the crisis year 1577 – and which Jewish father doesn't undergo a crisis (either financial or menopausal) at his son's *barmitzvah*?

Later, when Will fell in love, to whom did he address his Sonnets? The 'Dark Lady', who according to the eminent scholar A L Rowse belonged to a family of Italian-Jewish musicians named Lanyado. As to the objection that *The Merchant of Venice* exudes a degree of

antisemitism, I can only make this rejoinder: Shakespeare would not have been the only one of our co-religionist scribblers to suffer from Jewish self-hatred. Think of that other great creative artist, Karl Marx!

□ Bard-of-Avon maven



Sir Sigmund Sternberg, right, receives the award from Hesse PM Hans Eichel.

German award for Sternberg

Sir Sigmund Sternberg has been awarded the Wilhelm Leuschner Medal for his work for the International Council of Christians and Jews by Hesse State PM Hans Eichel. Leuschner, a German trades unionist and pre-Nazi Hesse Interior Minister, was executed for his part in von Stauffenberg's plot to assassinate Hitler.

□ RDC

Resonant names

At the beginning of the – ultimately unachieved – German-Jewish symbiosis stood two men: the Protestant Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and the Jew Moses Mendelssohn, hero of Lessing's play *Nathan der Weise* (1779). Less than half a century later the Prussian Minister Karl August von Hardenberg initiated changes in the law which removed many Jewish disabilities. As a tribute to him the Jewish journalist Witkowski renamed himself Maximilian Harden in the 1880s.

This is a fact from which I extrapolate a pet theory of mine, viz that some Jewish families surnamed Lesser changed their name to Lessing in tribute to the great Enlightenment playwright.

The best known of the Jewish Lessings was the controversial philosopher Theodor Lessing who in 1933 coined the famous *bon mot* 'after Zero – Hindenburg – comes Nero – Hitler'. Theodor Lessing also achieved a sadder sort of fame as the earliest victim of a Nazi murder squad operating outside Germany.

Then there was a Communist emigré to South Africa who married the novelist Doris Lessing, divorced her and became East German ambassador to Uganda.

And now we have a fictitious (non-Jewish) Lessing who will probably become better known than any of the others. In the Italian film *Life is Beautiful* which attempts to treat the camps humorously, Dr Lessing appears as an archetypal stonehearted German. I think it a shame that Roberto Benigni, who scripted and directed the film, should have attached the revered name Lessing to such a morally repellent figure.

One needn't be a linguist to know that Mendelssohn means son of Mendel, just as Ivanovitch means son of Ivan. Interestingly enough, the most famous Mendel was a Moravian monk and botanist who gave his name to the Mendelian laws of genetic inheritance. There were also some half-forgotten fictitious Mendels in early twentieth century literature: the hero of a fictionalised biography of the painter Mark Gertler, and the somewhat better known *Buch Mendel* by Stefan Zweig.

Mendelssohns, on the other hand, were palpable living figures of the most

diverse accomplishment – above all in music, but also in banking, and in architecture. In addition there was an obscure immigrant to Britain with the misspelt name Mandelson, whose grandson is rarely out of the headlines. The latter's tabloid-inspired nickname Mandy, of course, carries unmistakable sexual implications of the 'know-what-I-mean-nudge-nudge' variety.

How one wishes that the immigration officer responsible for the misspelling had been more culturally aware – or less illogical (after all, an almond can't have a son)! Had he been either, our current tabloid headlines would look refreshingly different.

□ RG

Kindertransport model sought

As a permanent reminder of the children who came to Britain on the Kindertransports before the war, and as a token of gratitude to the British people and Parliament of the time, World Jewish Relief has commissioned a sculpture, to be erected on a prominent site in London in the year 2000.

A direct descendant of a Kindertransport child is needed as a model for the sculpture, preferably a granddaughter or great-granddaughter who should be 6-7 years old.

Please contact: Flor Kent, 40 Vineyard Hill Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 7JH. Tel/Fax: 0181 944 5350 □

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – MARCH 1999

Ongoing: Jewish Book Week,

7- 14 March, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1 (Info & bookings: Tel:0181- 201 8206)

Mon 1 **Erik Satie, Composer & Eccentric:** Hans Seelig, Club 43, 8pm

Tue 2 **AJR Information & the Experiences of Refugees:** Richard Grunberger, Sussex University, Room A155, Arts Building, 5.15pm

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

Mon 8 **The Siege of Jerusalem 1948:** A Wittenberg, Club 43, 8pm

Tue 9 **Fiction & Historicity:** Jonathan Long (Durham), Sussex University, 5.15pm

Thur 11 **Lunchtime Recital:** Nicola Rowlands, flute, and Peter Hewitt, piano, play Bach & Hamilton Harty. Sternberg Centre 1.15pm, £2

Thur 11 **Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry:** Daphne Gerlis, Jewish Museum Camden Town, 2pm, £4

Sun 14 **Jerome Kern, the Man & His Music:** Mel Cooper, Spiro Institute, 7.30pm, £10

Sun 14 **The Pianist by Wladislaw Szpilman:** Wiener Library book launch, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, WC1, 8pm, £4

Mon 15 **John Maynard Keynes & Sir Hans Singer:** H Leyrer, Club 43, 8pm

Tue 16 **Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre:** Spiro Institute visit 9am- 6.30pm, £23.50

Thur 18 **German Exile Writers on FBI Files:** Prof Alexander Stephan (Florida University). Wiener Library, 6.30pm, £3

Sun 21 **'A View from the Bridge' by Arthur Miller:** Essential Theatre Company, Sternberg Centre, 7.30pm, £5

Mon 22 **Der Streit zwischen Gabriele Tergit und Kurt Hiller im Exil, 1941:** Jens Brüning (Berlin). Club 43, 8pm

Mon 29 **Kafka's 'In the Penal Colony':** Dr Margot Zutschi, Club 43, 8pm

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

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

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

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

Obituaries

Margot Williams

The first memories of my cousin go back to children's parties in 1920s Berlin. Margot, whose family lived near ours, was close to my mother and in 1937 temporarily acted as my father's dental assistant prior to her emigration to England.

In 1940 we were both interned on the Isle of Man where Margot immediately set to work as a camp nurse for the refugee internees. We only managed one meeting then, at the cinema in Douglas. Towards the war's end, Margot married well-known philatelist Maurice Williams who, due to polio, was confined to a wheelchair. I married about the same time and we all became very close friends, spending holidays together on the Continent and in Israel, my wife and I regarding Margot more as a sister than a cousin.

We shared a love of music and went to concerts together; a performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion was a must at Easter. We also celebrated our silver

weddings with a joint function. Her daughter Diana and our Barbara, being of a similar age, carry on the family ties.

At Margot's funeral her two grandsons spoke with great affection of their grandmother and the influence she had on their lives. Howard recalled her strength of character, their visits to museums, her joy at family gatherings and her wider refugee family, as well as her love of Israel which she visited many times. Matthew remembered her never revealing her true age, accompanying her on visits to homes and hospitals, playing scrabble together, sharing concerts at the Barbican and Royal Festival Hall and her inspirational love of the theatre.

□ Wolf Salinger

Margot Williams was associated with the AJR since 1950 and for 32 years was the Association's homes admissions officer. Although she retired in 1985, as a volunteer she dedicated herself to befriending the residents of OSHA homes and visiting them when in hospital, especially those from Osmond House.

Dr Otto Haas

Würzburg-born Otto Haas, a member of the AJR since its inception, has died aged a hundred. He gained his Doctorate of Law, following in the footsteps of his father Justizrat Dr Gerson Haas, long the President of the Jewish community in Würzburg.

He left Germany in 1933 for Yugoslavia, reaching the UK in 1939. Here he obtained an office job in a Birmingham factory, and contributed to the war effort.

He started to undertake restitution work shortly after the war, and devoted the next 20 years to helping clients obtain compensation and restitution.

In the early 50s he was called to Paris to help ADIVA (an association of Jewish advocates from Germany) which was overloaded with work but understaffed because the low wages failed to attract lawyers. But he held the fort. He became head of the Paris bureau and integrated it with the URO (United Restitution Organisation), which had developed simultaneously in London and other cities. He was much praised for his work by, among others, Professor Norman

Bentwich, Chairman of the Board of URO.

He left the URO in the 70s, on less than amicable terms, after the founders of URO had died and the general directorship changed. Despite the praise he had earned, this inflicted a wound which never healed.

He found solace and recreation in Cornwall, where he replanted a forest, marvelling anew at the progress of the trees on each visit. The locals soon accepted him as a neighbour and friend.

He leaves a widow and a son. His family and friends remember him with love and gratitude.

□ ES

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Model exhibition

Plans for the Holocaust Exhibition to open at the Imperial War Museum in the year 2,000 are well advanced. Lead designer Stephen Greenberg's model layout of the exhibits emphasises the fate of individual victims as well as presenting an historical narrative.

'A purely Jewish war'

Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, which placed the blame for World War II on the Jews, were reported by MI6 as prepared to support Nazi-German invaders. According to recently released papers, the Home Office refused to act on these warnings, though Mosley, who expected to take over Britain's government, was eventually interned.

Heads you win

Headmaster and former AJR management committee member John Dunston, son of AJR volunteer Fred Dunston, has been appointed chairman of the Society of Heads of Independent Schools. Head of a Quaker school since 1996, he was the first chairman of the Association of Children of Jewish Refugees where he met his wife Susie.

Paula Kissinger

Dr Henry Kissinger's mother Paula has died at the age of 97. After Hitler came to power Mrs Kissinger made the decision which took the family from Fürth to New York. Following a visit to Germany, where Dr Kissinger was given an honorary degree, she remarked: "First you get chased away and then you get treated like royalty".

Terror campaigner charged

Far-right Austrian extremist Franz Fuchs went on trial accused of committing a letter-bombing campaign which left four dead and many injured in the past four years. Among those he maimed was Helmut Zilk, former Mayor of Vienna.

Belarus war crimes

Polish-born Anthony Sawoniuk, aged 76, is standing trial at the Old Bailey for his alleged participation in the murder of a number of Jews in the Belarus town of Domachevo, occupied by the Germans in 1942. Sawoniuk volunteered to be a policeman working with the *Einsatzgruppen*.

□ RDC

Berlin Holocaust memorial compromise

A compromise solution is emerging in the stormy ten-year debate over the character and design of a Holocaust Memorial in Berlin.

The new proposal would combine a reduced version of US architect Peter Eisenman's envisaged forest of 2,700 concrete slabs with an archive centre proposed by SDP Culture Minister Michael Naumann. A broadly representative advisory committee, being appointed by the Bundestag's SDP President Wolfgang Thierse, will finalise proposals to be put to a free vote in the Bundestag before the summer recess.

Lea Rosh, whose organisation has been promoting the Holocaust memorial, welcomed the decision in principle, but warned of the dangers of reducing the memorial to the point where it could no longer be recognised as such. Ignatz Bubis, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said that 'he could live' with such an outcome.

None too enthusiastic Berlin CDU Mayor Eberhard Diepgen has reserved his opinion until the new plans have been published. Green Party spokesman Volker Beck, however, welcomed the proposals on the assumption that the new centre complemented and explained the memorial. The compromise plan also received the approval of FDP Parliamentary Chairman Jörg van Essen.

Social Democrat Party Chief Peter Struck said that following a favourable vote in the Bundestag, a foundation-stone would be laid on the previously designated site near the Reichstag later this year. Architect Peter Eisenman had already been commissioned to design a 'House of Remembrance' containing a library, exhibition space and a department for research into the threat of genocide.

□ Ronald Channing

(This report draws on information from the 'Tagesspiegel' translated by Bea Green)

Berlin's inspired Jewish Museum

There could be little more satisfying for a survivor who was hidden in Berlin during World War II than to see the opening of a Jewish Museum in the heart of the city with a powerful message from the Holocaust. It is sited on the Lindenstrasse, within a mile of the place where Hitler blew his brains out.

After many years of discussion, the eminent architect Daniel Libeskind was entrusted with designing a building to exhibit the rich history of German Jewry and, as a lasting memorial to a lost generation, bear witness to the suffering of millions of the Nazis' victims.

I visited this most modern of museums on its opening, though it is still an empty shell awaiting memorabilia, displays, photographs and manuscripts which will take many more months to install. Its unprecedented design and layout, in the shape of a crushed Star of David, is breathtaking.

Though free-standing, the museum's sole entrance, through the basement of the adjacent Baroque Kollegienhaus, is in semi-darkness. Without heating or air-

conditioning, it feels cold and damp. Three alternative routes are presented: to the exhibition centre, to a desolate garden and, most traumatic of all, to a dead end - a Holocaust void.

The cold surfaces of uneven walls and floors of slate-grey concrete are interspersed with arrows expressing the abandonment, hopelessness and beginning of the last journey. Narrow slits of windows set at erratic angles cast sparse rays of light which recall the victims' final journeys in cattle trucks. Claustrophobic funnels, where only one person can stand, offer glimpses of the sky and an outside world meant only for others.

For me, feelings of isolation, terror and utter despair exude from these interiors. Should anyone, however, remain unaffected by the deep symbolism of this structure and be anxious to leave, they could find themselves climbing a seemingly endless staircase which leads to a high stark white wall barring any escape.

□ Margot Linczyk