

AJR *Information*

Volume LV No. 3

March 2000

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

One flew over the net

John Rossall p4

Reporting genocide

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Confiscated accounts

Stuart Gilles p15

Biased historian

In the BBC's *Moral Maze* programme on Austria, Dr Starkie took a gratuitous sideswipe at 'deeply racist' Israel. As a historian he should know that the Jewish state has a genesis different from any other in the world. Judaism, a unique blend of ethnicity and religion, has attracted persecution throughout the two millennia of the dispersion. The subsequent Ingathering of the Exiles had no historic precedent. To judge Israel by the same criteria as well-defined historic entities is therefore itself profoundly unhistorical; it also bespeaks deliberate ill-will □

Black hole at the heart of Europe

On 11 March 1938 Vienna was turned into a nightmare picture by Hieronymos Bosch: it seemed as if lemurs and demons had hatched from mud eggs and crawled out of mired cracks in the ground. The air was filled with the incessant wild screeching emerging from the throats of men and women, which continued to shrill for days and nights; and all the people lost their faces, they had turned into grotesques: some in fear, others in lies, others again in hateful triumph. (Carl Zuckmayer)

Sixty two years later the spawn of the lemurs occupy ministerial office, illustrating the truth of the Habsbrug era acronym *Austria Erit in Orbe Ultima*. Its original meaning was Austria Will Be the Last (Empire) In The World. Nowadays it signifies that Austria is the last place on earth to be properly denazified.

The participation of a Haider-style party in a present-day German Government is simply inconceivable. Former Fascist countries like Spain and Portugal are thoroughly reformed. Even the Croatia that Tudjman bloodily created has forsworn his legacy.

Austria alone goes forward into the past. And how apposite that the power-obsessed Wolfgang Schüssel who levered Haider's xenophobes into cabinet office should hail from the same party as Karl Lueger (Hitler's mentor in antisemitism), Engelbert Dollfuss (gravedigger of the First Republic) and Kurt Waldheim (indelible stain on the Second).

British acceptance of a postwar influx of coloured immigrants from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent was eased by public awareness that Empire builders had gone out to those countries and disrupted their way of life. Similarly the foreigners who are currently targeted by Haider's racists largely originate from places which were once Austrian Imperial possessions.

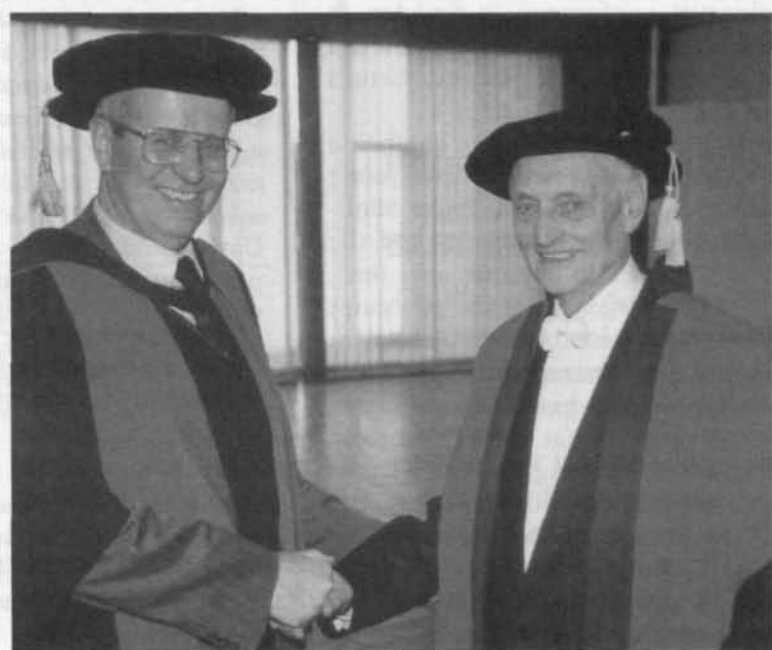
In this deplorable situation we can draw some comfort from the resolute manner in which the EU and the USA have reacted to the black hole that has opened up in the heart of Europe.

What is less comforting is that some influential UK politicians, like Lord Tebbit, have allowed Europhobia to cloud their judgement to the extent that, instead of wholeheartedly con-

demning Haider, they use him as a stick with which to beat Brussels. A letter in the *Independent* justified Haider's praise for the Waffen SS by arguing that 'the courage and almost maniacal self-sacrifice of the Waffen SS on the Eastern Front are etched into the folk history of Austria'. (This is being said about an organisation that was stigmatised as criminal at Nuremberg).

Lord Blaker has prettified some of Haider's other pronouncements – about Hitler's 'orderly' employment policy and concentration camps as 'penal institutions' – by describing them as *authoritarian* statements.

This is the language of prevarication which smudges the divide between democracy and its absence. And as regards Europe, let the Little Englanders ponder John Donne's ever-apposite words 'No man is an island' □



Max Kochmann, right, receiving the congratulations of Prof Edward Timms of the Centre for German Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex on being awarded an honorary doctorate in recognition of his services to the University. (See page 5)

Ronald Channing

Profile

Have lens, will travel

Ernst Flesch comes from Vienna's proletarian Tenth District, where his father was secretary of the local synagogue. Aged ten at the time of the Anschluss, he arrived in Glasgow on a Kindertransport a year later. Placed in a Jewish orphanage, he went to the same *cheder* as the late Chaim Bermant. At the outbreak of war he was evacuated to a hostel near Greenock where he attended school till the age of fifteen. In 1943 he came south to London where his mother's two more fortunate sisters had found refuge.

Here he started out as an apprentice at a photographic studio and subsequently plied that trade for a dozen years. At the same time he became active in Young Austria, whose politics echoed those of

his birthplace. The end of the war brought the near-miraculous news that his mother had survived Auschwitz and Belsen; she soon came to London where she worked in the catering trade. (Of his father there was no trace).

Around this time Ernst started to frequent the Primrose Club set up in Belsize Park for The Boys (to quote Martin Gilbert's title), the child Holocaust survivors brought over from liberated Poland. At the club he later met his wife who had been a child performer at the *Laterndl*, the Swiss Cottage-based Austrian fringe theatre.

After his lengthy stint in photography he felt it was time to move on (and up); years of evening study earned him first a general, and then an honours degree in German, as well as a teaching diploma. The honours qualification enabled him to advance from the 'chalkface' at a Shore-ditch comprehensive to the more sedate learning environment at Barnet College.

Better pay and more leisure enabled him to indulge his favourite hobby – not to say addiction – of travel. His preferred mode of transport was the motor car. In the mid-sixties, driving back from Turkey, he overtired himself, fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident that left him scarred for life. Subsequently the marriage broke up, but after several years' estrangement the former spouses resumed going on holiday together. Then, aged sixty, and after a minor heart attack, Ernst took early retirement.

Since then he has combined his skill as a photographer with his hobby of foreign travel. Late spring usually sees him go off to exotic destinations and on his return he begins a round of slide shows at venues that range from Broadwater Farm to the Paul Balint-AJR Day Centre. Ernst's other spare time activities include membership of the Hampstead Photographic Society and the treasurership of the bilingual Anglo-German Club 43. □ RG

UK Annual Holocaust Remembrance Day

Prime Minister Tony Blair announced the establishment of an annual Holocaust Remembrance Day for the United Kingdom. Beginning next year, it is to be held on 27th January, the date on which the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp was liberated in 1945. His announcement coincided with a Holocaust conference in Sweden at which the same date was designated a memorial day for all Holocaust victims throughout Europe.

Speaking during a visit to an exhibition on the life of Anne Frank, whose young life was cut short in Belsen, Prime Minister Blair said: "The Holocaust, and the lessons it teaches us for our own time, must never be forgotten. As the Holocaust survivors age and become fewer in number, it becomes more and more our duty to take up the mantle and tell each new generation what happened, and what could happen again." All victims are to be remembered, including the Jews, the disabled, homosexuals and gypsies.

While Tony Blair was making his announcement in London, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook was attending the international forum on the Holocaust in Sweden which was attended by presidents, prime ministers and other senior

representatives from 46 countries, the third such conference following that on Nazi gold in London in 1997 and the meeting in Washington on looted art in 1998.

The AJR sees the Remembrance Day as being focused on educating the British public on the facts of the Holocaust and of the necessity to respect the fundamental humanity of our fellow men, irrespective of their religion, nationality or ethnic origin. Specialist Holocaust educational organisations, including university departments, Holocaust museums, libraries and study centres, should receive a measure of support in publishing a wide range of relevant educational materials.

The national Holocaust Remembrance Day should provide an appropriate opportunity for children in their formative years, from every religious background or none, to appreciate the dangers of racism, even in a developed industrial society. This alone would prove a most valuable outcome. □ Ronald Channing

German Government chided

Members of the Central Council of Jews in Germany have expressed disappointment at the German Government's failure to integrate more fully some 50,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants who arrived in the last five years □



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(Im)proper nouns

As a proponent of re-branding I was pleased to have gathered more ayes than nays, but disappointed by the lukewarm reception of *Mosaic*. I specifically chose the term as being both a noun (described by some of my critics as floor covering) and an adjective derived from Moses. As the latter is on a par with Christian, Mohammedan and Buddhist, both in origin and connotation, I see no grounds for embarrassment.

Let us bear in mind that all such appellations are partly descriptive and partly pejorative. Certainly nothing was further from my mind than to hark back to the usage of *Mosaic* as a euphemism for Jewish (as in 'citizens of the *Mosaic* confession').

Jew was, of course, an emotionally charged term putting listeners instantly in mind of Judas, betrayer of Christ, (not to mention the verb 'to jew', i.e. to cheat). But similarly emotive terms were also bandied about among Christians *pace* the English Protestant terms Popish plotters, or Papists, for Catholics.

Sometimes nominal brothers-in-Christ squirted more vitriol at heretical Christians than at out-and-out infidels. The Persian-originated Manichean heresy, which had spread into South-West France, was effectively wiped out in a crusade. But that didn't satisfy the orthodox guardians of the Catholic faith. In addition, they dubbed the country midway between Persia and France that served as conduit for transmitting the heresy 'the land of the bougars (or buggers)'. In other words, Bulgaria derives its name from Rome's demonisation of its heretical inhabitants as depraved homosexuals.

The Balkans are, of course, a notorious religious battleground as shown by the recent triangular war between Serb Orthodox, Croat Catholics and Bosnian Muslims. Serbs and Croats are, incidentally, fellow Slavs who accuse the Bosnians of having forsaken their common Slav identity around 1500 to curry favour with the new Turkish overlords.

This brings me to the curious link between the proper noun 'Slav' and the common noun 'slave', which can presumably be ascribed to the proximity of the huge slave market of Byzantium (Constantinople) to the Slav-populated areas of the Balkans.

Naturally the Nazis exploited this linguistic nexus to the hilt, claiming that

language itself predestined the inferior Slav races to serve the Germans as slaves. An insight into their mindset was offered by the ex-Wehrmacht officer's reminiscence (in a recent BBC documentary): "I had no inhibitions about burning down flimsy Russian dwellings in midwinter; after all, their houses weren't built like ours in Western Europe."

Even such stomach-churning candour was mendacious because proto-Nazis also harboured poisonous prejudice against West Europeans. They lumped French, Italians and other Romance-speakers together as *Welsch* (i.e. as untrustworthy, deceitful and cringing). Wagner has Hans Sachs, in *Meistersinger*, inveigh against *welschen Tand* (dross), and the dictionary definition of *welsche Sitten* is 'dubious morals'. (A sub-species of this pejorative language was the Austrian dialect term for eyeties: *Katzelmacher*, i.e. people without backbone.)

Concerning France, Nazi ideologues concocted a special racial theory. This claimed that the original inhabitants, of inferior Gallic origin, had only been organised into a state by the Germanic Franks. The French Revolution had wiped out the Germanic-aristocratic element in society, leaving the country in the hands of a mongrel-race mob. The hallmarks of mob rule were democracy, race mixing, and decadence – and its representative figure was Georges Clemenceau, German-hating war leader and enforcer of the Versailles Treaty. (Even decades earlier a relatively minor event in the politician's career had already earned him Nazi opprobrium. Clemenceau was the newspaper editor who had published Zola's *J'accuse* at the height of the *Dreyfus affaire*, and helped change the course of the trial.)

□ Richard Grunberger

HOLOCAUST VICTIM ASSETS LITIGATION

The final closing date for applications is 15 March 2000

In August 1999 we circulated our members with a questionnaire, prepared by the United States District court for the Eastern district of New York, inviting eligible victims of Nazi persecution, or their heirs, to apply for compensation.

If you have not yet applied we advise that you do so without delay.

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Reviews

One flew over the net

Howard Jacobson, *THE MIGHTY WALZER*,
Jonathan Cape, 1999, £15.99.

Let me state it straight away – this is the Manchester sage's greatest work to date. It has been described as *Magic Semitism* although it reads at times like magic antisemitism.

The second element of this "novel" (?) is, believe it or not, ping-pong, table-tennis played by a fine collection of Jewish *sblemiels*, and gentile nerds. With this mixture Howard J rises to the heights of a not unfair comparison with Charles Dickens. And that is why I put a question mark behind the word "novel" because, deliberately or accidentally, it resembles autobiography, as is also the case with Dickens. The stage is almost exclusively Manchester in the 1950s when Oliver Walzer (HJ) was on his way from the semi-ghetto to *Golem College*, Cambridge. Yes, Golem – a term which exemplifies the magic input into the sometimes trenchant realism underpinning the structure.

Among the *sblemiels* there are some ripe characters, one of whom sees anti-semitism in the most harmless utterances of the nerds with whom the Akiva Sports Club members struggle for the local table-tennis championship. The former include the Marx Brothers, a non-professional double act with tragic overtones; another couple of generally low-life youths but with rival collections of classical operatic records; an older clown who courts one of Oliver's aunts, sponges on the Walzer family's bagel feasts, then marries another aunt, criticises Oliver's sporting skills and makes a mess of the ensuing marriage. One of Oliver's friends takes awkwardness to near-immolation and still manages to shine at the game.

The Walzer family is closely knit, as well as hopelessly split, between Dad, a daring, gifted swagman, a purveyor of *tsatskes* (knick-knacks) with which he and his lecherous assistant beguile the impecunious Lancashire lasses. Father Joel is so successful and so neglectful of bookkeeping he goes *mechullah* and becomes his assistant's employee. Mother is a somewhat pale figure in the background which includes her three shrinking violet sisters. But they all find husbands of a kind.

Although table-tennis is the weft and

woof of the story, I, though a very amateurish erstwhile practitioner of the game, find the ample descriptions of it less entertaining than the relationships with the attendant trouble and strife. Something else worries me: the Jews, ever the main actors, are so mercilessly, if often humorously, portrayed that one is sometimes reminded of Nazi caricatures. Another shibboleth is the over-frequent, not always explained or comprehensively spelt, use of *Yiddish* words and phrases. They had me worried at times; I wonder what the gentiles make of them. Yet they read him *en masse* and give him his authorial due, although he is often not very nice about the *shiksahs* from the Kardomah Café. But then he is likewise down on our girls, one of whom he marries and divorces. Their two children, who become "born-again" Jews, he abandons.

The end is a little elegiac for a pen so capable of witty acidity. At a meeting of now aged ping-pong nuts he meets his past again, and on the whole he dislikes it.

I would have preferred Jacobson's earlier phrase in (Manchester's) *Grand Central Station I sat down and wept* for an epitaph. □ John Rossall

Dumbed-down hearts

Director: Harry Winterbottom, *WONDERLAND*.
On general release.

Chekhov's turn-of-the-century play *Three Sisters* portrayed the rural gentry, a most influential segment of Russian society just before it fell into a black hole of history. The film *Wonderland* though far more spiky and 'upfront', is a distorted mirror image of Chekhov's classic.

For one, its main protagonists are three South London sisters. For another, the plot unfolds on the cusp of the present century as is spelt out in a pyrotechnically charged Guy Fawkes night sequence evocative of the Millennium celebrations.

Most importantly, though, the film provides a conspectus of an increasingly numerous, and therefore influential, class in contemporary society. It focuses on a network of people who would once have been defined as *lumpenproletariat* but have been transformed into conspicuous consumers within living memory.

One sister is a 'greasy spoon' waitress,

a second is a divorced hairdresser, a brother-in-law works in a kitchen showroom. Yet they all live in well-furnished salubrious (albeit mainly council house) accommodation equipped with up-to-the-minute gadgets and most drive their own cars.

This is a social stratum whose former material deprivation has been replaced by another form of poverty altogether. The sisters are so inarticulate that no emotion-charged exchange between them can proceed without shrill recourse to the f-word. But linguistic impoverishment is not the real hole at the heart of their existence. They have dumbed-down hearts and cannot feel how their words and actions affect others.

Occasionally, not least when the camera focuses on the sisters' ever-querulous parents, the scenes are irradiated by brilliant flashes of bleak humour. *Wonderland* is a film to be observed with one dry and one moist eye. But emotional impact apart, I also came away with the gaudy glamour of night-time London deeply etched on my retina (and Michael Nyman's score resonating in my ears).

□ RG

Sitting pretty

Is he Populist, Nazi or fool?
(He maintains that, like Tony,
he's 'cool...')
Countless Austrians adore him
They would again vote for him
To them he's a king, who should rule.

Who feels sorry for hard-done-by Jörg?
– Not we, for we think him a jerk!
He declaims then retracts
And disguises the facts
And insists that his Party can work.

A Born-Again Hitler? Not he!
'Why, I've never killed Jews' is his plea.
But the world's unimpressed
And they won't let things rest
So we'll all have to just wait and see.

□ Mary Brainin Huttner

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

New home for German-Jewish studies

A new archive and research unit for the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex was opened by its Chancellor, Lord Attenborough, who stressed the significance of the department's historical research and its value as an important resource for the University. Richard Attenborough, one of Britain's foremost film actors and producers, recalled his father, the principal of what later became Leicester University, recruiting German-Jewish academics on to the staff, and his mother's role in rescuing refugee children. On the outbreak of war in 1939 the family welcomed two Jewish refugee girls into their own home to remain as adopted sisters.

Professor Edward Timms, who has headed the department since its formation in 1994, explained how it grew out



Lord Attenborough, Chancellor of the University of Sussex, unveils a plaque commemorating the opening of the University's new Centre for German-Jewish Studies.

of the University's Mass Observation Archives, begun in the 1930s, which included testimonies from refugees from Nazi Germany, as well as attitudes towards them. From the start the Centre had sought and collected German-Jewish refugee archives – many family papers

standing member of the Belsize Square Synagogue and his ability to provide leadership in communal affairs led him to become Honorary Treasurer of the Synagogue, Chairman of the Association of Jewish Refugees and President of the B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Lodge. He thus has an outstanding record of public service both in London and in Basildon.

When the Centre for German-Jewish Studies was established at Sussex in 1994, Max became Chairman of our London Support Group. Together with a small band of enthusiastic supporters, he helped to plan our development strategy and launch a fund-raising campaign. His business experience and his wide-ranging cultural interests have made him an inspiring leader. Working closely with members of the University, he has provided continuous encouragement and support. His efforts have enhanced the reputation not only of the Centre but of the University as a whole.

In honouring Max Kochmann, we also acknowledge a whole generation of German-speaking Jewish refugees who have made significant contributions to British life, among them a young woman trained as a nurse, Hilde Kohn, who came from the town where Max was born, Gleiwitz in Silesia. On 2nd January 1944 Hilde and Max were married and they have been devoted partners ever since. Two years ago, when they revisited their birthplace

having been brought to this country in the 1930s – to preserve knowledge of this important cultural group. The department's current establishment of fifteen academic and administrative staff includes Emeritus Professor Julius Carlebach and the distinguished historian Prof Peter Pulzer who serves as Chairman of the Centre's Board of Academic Advisors.

The Centre studies the contribution of German Jewish communities to modern life and researches the experience and achievements of refugees and their families. A number of projects relating to commemorations of the Shoah are currently being developed, with direct relevance to the character of the newly announced Holocaust Remembrance Day in Britain and to issues related to Holocaust denial.

A special grant enabled the Centre, which originated from within the German Department, to be sited at the heart of the University in an extension to the library. □ Ronald Channing

Tribute to Max Kochmann

Max Kochmann, a Trustee of the AJR Charitable Trust and a former AJR Chairman, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Sussex.

When the young Max Kochmann arrived in England in March 1939 he was one of over fifty thousand refugees from Nazi Germany who found sanctuary in this country. Having graduated from his Berlin high school, Max obtained a visa to take up an apprenticeship in Britain. During the war he worked for engineering companies involved in the armaments industry while pursuing part-time studies in engineering and economics.

After the war he started his own company, Pafra Ltd, manufacturing industrial adhesives, and had a successful business career. His firm is based in Basildon, Essex, and he has served as chairman of the Basildon Industrial Group and Enterprise Agency. He is currently non-executive chairman of Pafra and he still gets up to start work at seven o'clock every morning, except on the Sabbath.

Max has never lost contact with that humanistic tradition which flourished among German-speaking Jews. In addition, he inherited a strong commitment to Jewish community life. He is a long-

(now in Poland), Hilde wrote a moving account of their experience. This included a visit to Auschwitz where some of their relatives perished. In honouring Max Kochmann on the day which has been designated by the British Government as Holocaust Remembrance Day, we should not forget those Jewish communities that were destroyed when he was compelled to become a refugee.

□ Professor Edward Timms,
Director of the Centre for German-Jewish
Studies, University of Sussex

'ENEMY ALIENS'

Sir – I am a BBC journalist researching a radio programme about the internment of 'enemy aliens' in Britain during World War Two – including internment on the Isle of Man, deportation to Canada and the voyages of the Dunera and Arandora Star.

If you have memories of the internment and would be willing to be interviewed on the subject, please contact me, mentioning the AJR.

1362 BBC White City □ Hugh Levinson
201 Wood Lane 0181 752 6203
London W12 7TS hugh.levinson@bbc.co.uk

Apology

Under the heading 'New Year Honours' in the February issue of *AJR Information*, it was reported that Hella Pick received an OBE. She was, in fact, appointed CBE □



Letters to the Editor

SLAVE LABOUR COMPENSATION

Sir – As a prospective recipient of the compensation agreed (January issue) I want to say that the sum works out at 60p per hour, a small fraction of the minimum wage and an insult. It is for work only. There is not a pfennig for “pain and suffering”. There is nothing for lice, for no change of clothing day or night, month in and out, cold, hot, wet or dry, from arriving at Auschwitz to the end of the war in a camp in the Northern Sudeten, for the constant fear in the pit of the stomach, the hunger, endless standing on Appell, for the debilitating interminable 12 hour night shifts, absence of resistance to infection, nothing for being treated worse than a convicted criminal. (German academics even sanitised the term “slave labour” into “forced labour” at Buchenwald.)

The dignitaries were invited to the signing but not the victims who once again remained out in the cold. Rudy Kennedy who speaks for us here was allowed in only on condition that he would not voice our feelings.

Ipswich

Frank Bright

BOMBING AUSCHWITZ

Sir – When will JC Lee (February letters) realise that there was absolutely no desire to save the lives of a few ‘snivelling Jews’ (to quote Anthony Eden).

The RAF managed to reach Koenigsberg, Memel and Tilsit in the summer of 1944. The flying time to Auschwitz would certainly not have been a problem.

Please Mr Lee, come to terms with the fact that as far as the allies were concerned European Jewry was expendable. The immediate postwar government's actions clearly illustrate this point.

Arundel, W Sussex

F Goldberg

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Sir – Do we really need one? To those who lost family – particularly, close family members – in the Holocaust, every day is remembrance day. But is it not unwholesome, for us as a people, to keep looking at the past with an obsession that seems to blot out any

future? Is it not unreasonable to expect the world to genuflect for yet more culprits from whom to extract apologies (and compensation!?) Above all, it is painful to those of us who have suffered human loss in the camps to have the wound constantly probed.

Who, in any case, are those self-appointed spokesmen who purport to act on our behalf? As someone once said: ‘Nobody has asked me for my vote’.

London E4

Gerda Mayer

SHOAH SURVIVORS' TESTIMONIES

Sir – During recent years the Steven Spielberg Foundation has collected 50,000 testimonies and started showing the tapes worldwide. This knowledge is a great comfort. I am grateful that I lived long enough to experience it.

London NW3

Herta Reik

ACROSS THE RELIGIOUS DIVIDE

Sir – I was born in Vienna in 1924. My Jewish father and half Jewish mother both renounced their religion in order to marry and I was brought up *konfessionslos*. Of course I counted as Jewish when Hitler came.

Until then my childhood was very happy. My grandparents on both sides were very loving, particularly my mother's parents. Among my parents' circle of friends were couples in mixed marriages as well as those with other beliefs but they all shared a liberal outlook. Their children and my own school friends provided an experience of harmony despite the religious differences.

I would be interested to hear from any of your readers who either came from mixed marriages or who had friends across the religious divisions.

15 Woodlands Road

Louise Graham

Camberley, Surrey GU15 3LZ

CARDINAL SINS

Sir – Thanks for printing my rejoinder to Prof. Feuchtwanger. The title of my recent book, however, is not as printed but *Juden in Bamberg: die Jahrzehnte vor dem Holocaust*. A comprehensive history

of the Jews of Bamberg from before the first Crusade until 1942 is being prepared. Incidentally, my book sold out in seven weeks, a second, revised edition is expected to be available at the end of this month.

Newcastle

Dr Herbert Loebel

TRANSMITTED TRAUMA

Sir – It seems a matter of some urgency to free Herta Reik (December issue) from her confusions about the purpose of Second Generation Holocaust survivors' organisations. She writes: “The claim that children carry the Holocaust trauma of their parents has never been substantiated.” There has in fact been a vast amount of research and literature giving evidence to the contrary. There are 36 pages of information on the Internet alone on the Transmission of Holocaust Trauma from survivors to the next generation. There are also numerous authors such as Milton Jucovy and Martin S Bergman in *Generations of the Holocaust* and Eva Fogelman, Judith Kestenberg and Yael Danieli on *Group Work with the Second Generation* which contain experience and evidence, and they are only a small fraction of the work available.

Herta Reik alleges that the “Second Generation Trust insists on perpetuating the victim status of the children of refugees”. The purpose of the Second Generation Trust is to advance understanding of the causes of genocide, torture, racism and abuse of human rights as exemplified by the Holocaust. The Trust has organised conferences on these subjects to ensure that the lessons from the past are not forgotten but used to improve the present and the future. Herta Reik talks of ‘treatment’ in these circumstances being dangerous. It will be evident from what has been said about the aims of the Trust that there is no question of ‘treatment’ involved in any of their activities.

The Second Generation Network publishes a journal called Second Generation Voices which keeps members in touch with activities and issues of concern to them. Reunions, meetings and groups do not ‘perpetuate the victim status’ mentioned by Herta Reik, but, on the contrary, they provide a sense of belonging.

London W9

Irene Bloomfield

VALUE OF EURO

Sir – Mrs Anneli Kirsten (January issue) is wrong to think that her pension pay-

ments from Germany have lost value because of the Euro. Since the introduction of the Euro, its value relative to the D-mark and other Eurozone currencies has been permanently fixed, so the pension payments, converted into Sterling are worth exactly the same whether originally denominated in D-mark or in Euros.

The value of the Euro will doubtless rise and fall against the pound, which may be irritating for recipients of pensions from abroad and is certain to prove a major problem for British firms trading with Euroland, since it makes forward planning of pricing and marketing far more hazardous. This uncertainty could, of course, be avoided by Britain's entry into the Euro, as would the not inconsiderable bank charges involved in converting pensions and other payments from Europe into Sterling.

I suspect that Mrs Kirsten has become used over the years to continual rise in the Sterling value of her German pension, because of the constant fall in the value of the pound against the D-mark – an advantage for her, but one that is far outweighed by the corresponding enormous loss of value in all assets denominated in Sterling.

It is worth recalling that the pound bought some eleven D-marks in 1960, and five as recently as 1981; it now stands at just over three. Even its value against the Austrian Schilling has collapsed from 72 to 20 since the 1960s. No wonder, with such a leaky rust-bucket of a currency, that British mortgage holders and industrial investors face the burden of interest rates at 5.75%, nearly double the 3% in the Eurozone. Saving the pound makes about as much sense, in economic terms, as saving Queen Victoria's calico bloomers.

London NW6 Dr Anthony Grenville

Sir – The law enabling the Austrian Rothschilds to get their treasures back was surely about art robbery (=Kunstraub) and not, as stated by Jussy Brainin, the art of robbery (=Raubkunst)? Or is this another Austro-linguistic gem on the lines of *Wer seinen Hund frei herumlaufen lässt wird erschossen (der Hund)?*

Oxford Peter M Oppenheimer

NEW TWIST

Sir – The anagrammatic connection between Fagin and Ganif is as fortuitous

as that between Salvador Dali and Avida Dollars. Fagin or Fagan is an English surname, from Middle English *Fage* (flattery or conceit). Dickens came across the name in his blacking-factory days, when Bob Fagin nursed him during an illness. Why he chose the name of this helpful young man for that of his Jewish villain is a psychological question which Steven Marcus and others have pursued. Perhaps it is not irrelevant to note that the Fagin of *Oliver Twist* takes starving boys from the London streets and feeds and entertains them after his fashion; this helps his transformation into the lovable rogue of the musical *Oliver!*

Oxford

Prof. SS Praver

Sir – When *Dickens* worked in a blacking factory as a child he was befriended by an older boy in the same factory named Bob Fagin. Dickens was grateful for his friendship but at the same time fearful of the degradation he felt would result from the friendship with a boy from the 'lower orders'.

Accused of antisemitism over *Oliver Twist*, Dickens subsequently wrote a very sympathetic Jewish character into *Our Mutual Friend* to absolve himself.

London N8

Sylvia Prager

REFUGEE HUMOUR ETC

Sir – I am in the process of writing a book about refugees, and shall try to approach the subject from a different angle.

One of the chapters will deal with 'refugee humour', change of names and similar matters. There are, of course, dozens of stories everybody knows but, more important, twice that number probably known only to very few. If any readers know such anecdotes or jokes, I should be very grateful for them. If new to me, I shall certainly use them, with permission, and full acknowledgement.

94 Cholmley Gardens CF Flesch
Fortune Green Road, London NW6 IUP
Tel: 0171 794 6420 Fax: 0171 433 1531

CORRECTION

Sir – Henry Morland in his review of my *X steht für unbekannt* says that I have drawn heavily on Peter Master's book *Striking back*. This is not so. My book was ready long before *Striking back* was ever published!

Neumarkt 3
D64625 Bensheim

Peter Leighton-Langer

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – MARCH 2000

- | | | |
|-------|----|--|
| Sat | 4 | Jewish Book Week: Royal |
| – Sun | 12 | National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1 (unless stated otherwise). For ticket enquiries & box office, Tel: 020 8201 8206 |
| Sat | 4 | Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander, Avner Shalev, Sister Margaret Shepherd and Stephen Smith: The Holocaust and the Christian World. Jewish Book Week, 8.30pm |
| Mon | 6 | Music Publishing & Patronage, C F Peters, 1800 to the Holocaust: Irene Lawford. Club 43, 7.30pm |
| Tues | 7 | Bettine Le Beau: Helping Yourself to Happiness. Jewish Book Week, 2.30pm. £5/£3
Traversing Gender and Ethnicity in German Literature: Kader Konuk. University of Sussex, 5.15pm |
| Wed | 8 | An Evening with Moses Montefiore: Prof Jonathan Frankel & Prof John Klier. Institute of Jewish Studies, 6pm
On Jews, Germans & Kurt Weill: David Drew, Norman Lebrecht. Jewish Book Week, 6.15pm. £5/£3 |
| Thur | 9 | Sailing for Freedom: Murray Greenfield. Jewish Book Week, 1pm. £5/£3
Jewish Political Icons 1881-1939: Dr Michael Berkowitz. Wiener Library, 6.30pm, £2 |
| Sat | 11 | Daniel Liebeskind, Rachel Whiteread and Dr James D. Young: At Memory's Edge. Jewish Book Week, 8.30pm. £8 (Students £4) |
| Sun | 12 | Ken Livingstone, Frank Dobson and Glenda Jackson: My Vision for London. Sternberg Centre, 7.30pm. £2.50/£3.50 |
| Mon | 13 | Dreams and their meaning: M. Yudkin. Club 43, 7.30pm |
| Tues | 14 | Victorian Jews through British Eyes: Anne Cowen. Jewish Museum, Camden. £5/£6.50 |
| Wed | 15 | Whitehall and the Jews: Dr Louise London. Institute of Jewish Studies, 6pm |
| Thur | 16 | Dr Tony Grenville: AJR – The Early Years. South London AJR, Prentis Road Synagogue, 2pm
Music Publishing and Patronage: Irene Lawford. Wiener Library, 6.30pm. £2 |
| Thur | 23 | Sporting Jews in England: P Yogi Mayer. Wiener Library, 6.30pm. £2 |
| Mon | 27 | Brazil, a giant but unequal country: Harry Leyrer. Club 43, 7.30pm |
| Tue | 28 | Prof Barry Kosmin: Taxi-driving and other jobs for nice Jewish boys: 8pm. £3/£2 |

AJR Reports

'AN ACTOR'S LIFE FOR ME'



Jeffrey Segal being thanked by Anne Marx for revealing the secrets of an actor's life at AJR's Luncheon Club.

British actor Jeffrey Segal, who has spent a lifetime performing on the stage, in pantomime and musicals, in films and on radio and television, told members of AJR's Luncheon Club that all

Jews were probably actors and that "acting is a job" and a pretty hard and demanding way in which to earn a living. Jeffrey chose the theatre for a career after attending drama classes and performing

in the drama group at the renowned West Central Club, beginning his career as a teenager.

The majority of the members of the thespians' trades union, Equity, had faces that were easily recognised, but names you never quite recalled; his was amongst them. Acting provided no job security, meant being paid weekly and unemployment was "built in", second jobs often being required to supplement meagre incomes. Nevertheless, to hold a theatre audience entranced in a suspension of disbelief was the greatest reward of all.

He described life in repertory theatre, in London's West End, on the fringe and with the national theatre companies. The challenges of 'live' radio, in which everything was conveyed in the voice, and television, were much reduced by the advent of recording. In films – Jeffrey made his first appearance in *Jew Süss* in 1933! – actors worked long 'industrial' hours, often on the set at 6am amidst a host of advanced technology. □ Ronald Channing

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Pinner

A life-long collector of jazz music, Alf Keiles treated an enthusiastic audience of Pinner AJR members to a nostalgic feast of beautifully restored tape recordings from his original 78rpm records. He illustrated the long history of Jewish influence on the development of jazz with a varied selection, including Nat Shilkret's orchestra playing *If You Knew Susie*, Ted Lewis' great band's interpretation of *Glad Rag Doll*, the incomparable clarinettist Benny Goodman *On the Alamo*, the Barry Sisters *Making Whoopee*, finishing with Joe loss *At the Woodchoppers Ball*. Enjoying the afternoon's entertainment with the members were Ronald Channing, who is responsible for AJR's membership development, and Myrna Glass who provides head office support for the AJR's outreach groups.

Appreciation was expressed for the valued work and support of Elizabeth Feldman, whose family commitments now prevent her from continuing on the committee.

At the next meeting of Pinner AJR, on 2nd March at 2pm, Gerald Hellman talks on 'Art Through the Ages', and on 6th

April Harry Hurst presents *Desert Island Discs* with audience participation.

Walter Weg

Bournemouth

Wessex AJR learned some secrets of the music publishing business 'from the inside' when Cyril Gee, chairman of Gee Music Group, talked to its members. Cyril has spent the whole of his working life in the music industry during which time he has represented several performers who were to become household names, Elton John and Tim Rice among them. Cyril explained that the business was divided into three distinct areas: educational, classical and popular, all of which he published, and described how the industry had advanced from discs to tapes and compact discs and now onto the Internet.

Phyllis and Robert Grant provided their kind hospitality and an excellent tea in their seafront flat. □ George Ettinger

Brighton & Hove

Members of Sarid welcomed Doris Levinson as their guest speaker. Doris has for many years reported the activities of Brighton and Hove's

Jewish community and its synagogues.

Born in Milan to German-Jewish parents of Alsatian origin, Doris and her parents came to England in 1940 and lived in West London. By 1963 she was married with two small children when the family moved to Hove where it was not long before she became involved in communal activities, both Jewish and in the wider community. In 1993, with a fellow councillor, she founded *Sussex Jewish News* whose editor she has been ever since.

Published monthly, the paper reports on the activities of four congregations, carries articles of interest to them all and a comprehensive list of activities and events. Doris indicated the enormous amount of work involved in gathering and writing up news and stories, and explained how much care had to be taken not to publish anything which might cause offence. Design, printing and distribution took a further two weeks, then it was back to begin the next month's issue. All of this Doris undertook as a volunteer. If ever there was a labour of love, this was it!

Sarid's next meeting is on Monday 27th March at 10.45am when Walter Woyda will talk about *Rothschild, the Musical*.

□ Rudi Simmonds



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Thursday	19	March
Tuesday	14	March
Wednesday	22	March
Thursday	30	March

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

... Viewpoint ...

Nuclear reaction

The industrialisation of Britain was dependant on the huge reserves of coal with which the country was endowed. Its main utility was its combustibility which provided heat for the forging of iron and steel and for raising steam to drive the machinery of the industrial age. Ships were propelled by coal-fired turbines, houses were warmed by open coal fires and cooking was done on kitchen grates. Coal was burnt in power stations to generate electricity and transmitted along cables as the clean and flexible energy source of the twentieth century. At their peak, half a million men were working in Britain's coalmines, the largest employer in Europe.

Coal remained the British economy's prime source of energy well into the post-war era, but competition from oil imported mainly from former areas of British influence in the Middle East – a much cheaper, cleaner and easily transported fuel – led to the inexorable decline of the traditional British way of life built around the pit.

In the 1950s a new miracle fuel pointed the way to the future – nuclear energy. When the young Queen Elizabeth opened the first of a coastal chain

of British engineered nuclear power stations at Sellafield in Cumbria, it held the promise of cheap and reliable supplies of energy from a recyclable energy source, a view reinforced with the closing of the Suez Canal in the 1956 war. (The state's requirement to manufacture fuel for atomic weapons was not revealed). Nuclear energy never made the inroads anticipated – high capital costs, construction delays, design problems and competition from oil and gas from our own section of the North Sea halted its expansion in Britain. However, countries lacking indigenous sources of energy took the nuclear path, among them Japan, India, China and France.

The near-catastrophic failures at nuclear power installations at Five-Mile Island in the USA and Chernobyl in the USSR put paid to any further development of nuclear energy in Britain for decades. But the industry is preparing a comeback; a new generation of safe, small reactors may possess the potential to compete as a cost-effective energy source. Has the problem of disposal or storage of nuclear waste been resolved? Are we be prepared to accept the siting of nuclear reactors at the bottom of our own gardens? □ **Ronald Channing**

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MARCH/APRIL 2000

Wed 1 Elizabeth Ward, soprano,
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Thurs 2 Curtain Up, accompanied by
Michael Heaton, piano
Sun 5 DAY CENTRE OPEN – No
Entertainment
Mon 6 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 7 Ann Sheffield, cello & David
Richmond, violin, accompanied by
Madeline Whitelaw, piano
Wed 8 Linda Styan, voice & ukulele,
accompanied by Geoffrey
Whitworth, piano
Thurs 9 Doreen Berkman, mezzo,
accompanied by Ronald Pearse,
piano
Sun 12 DAY CENTRE OPEN – No
Entertainment
Mon 13 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 14 Margaret Gibbs entertains on piano
Wed 15 LUNCHEON CLUB
Thurs 16 Paul & Sinikka Coleman
Sun 19 DAY CENTRE OPEN – No
Entertainment

Mon 20 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 21 Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
accompanied by Peter Gellhorn
Wed 22 Francoise Geller & Gordon Griffin
accompanied by Margaret Eaves,
piano
Thurs 23 Katie Bingham-Best, mezzo,
accompanied by Mark Packwood,
piano
Sun 26 DAY CENTRE OPEN – No
Entertainment
Mon 27 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 28 Susanna Bird, soprano,
accompanied by Phil Ley, piano
Wed 29 Julian Barber & David Battersby
entertain
Thurs 30 Tricia Dina, soprano, and Gordon
Cochran accompanied by Margaret
Gibbs, piano
Sun 2 DAY CENTRE OPEN – No
Entertainment
Mon 3 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 4 Robin Richards, violin, Peter Irvine,
baritone, accompanied by Gloria
Moss, piano
Wed 5 Paul & Sinikka Coleman

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marriage

Mazeltov to Sara Lurie and Malcolm Wald on their recent marriage on 12 March.

Deaths

Baum. Arno Baum died 20 December after a long illness, borne with great courage. Will be sadly missed by his wife Thea, children Serena and Jeremy, family and friends.

Hartfield. Joan Hartfield died peacefully on the 13 January 2000 in Chicago, after a long illness at the age of 92. Deeply mourned by her son Robert, his wife, children and grandchildren, and her brother Carl F Fleisch.

Peyser. Heinz Peyser, died peacefully at home in Manchester, on 26 December aged 88 years. Very much missed by wife Marianne, children Katrin, Diana and Julian, plus numerous family and friends.

IN MEMORIAM

Weiss. Karl Weiss, died March 1982, and Tommy Weiss, who left us suddenly March 1956, not quite 11 years old. "Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rat, dass man vom Liebsten das man hat muss scheiden, ja scheiden." Lisl.

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Societies

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

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SEARCH NOTICES

Schäffel, formerly of Worms, Germany, believed to live in USA, sought by cousin, the son of the late Herrman Goldschmidt of Düsseldorf, Germany. Contact Dr H.J Goldsmith, 7 Rose Lane, Liverpool, L18 8AD. Tel: 0151 724 5555

Margot Pottlitzer (née Strausz), journalist and critic, born 22nd May 1906 in Bad Kreuznach, believed to have passed away in 1987. Confirmation and details sought by the Bad Kreuzbach archives where her writings are held. Contact Pamela Barwood, 10 Upper Park Rd, London NW3 2UP Tel: 0171 722 1468

Jewish life in Berlin-Reinickendorf and its environs, 1900-1946. Information sought for planned memorial book about the Jews of Reinickendorf. Contact: Projekt Reinickendorfer Judentum, c/o M.+N. Boesche Verlag, Laurinsteig 14 a, D-13465 Berlin - Frohnau Tel: 0049 30 7842322 Fax: 0049 30 78712028

Nathan Bach of the Paul Bach family, born 1930 or 1931 and known to have lived at 4 Frognaal Way, London NW3 in 1945, sought by Mr Wienerlack. Contact: Bernard Gliksberg, Ave. Dupcétiaux 68, 1060-Bruxelles, Belgium. Tel: 02 534 31 84 Fax 02 534 3180

Margarete Lichtenstein born Altona, 12/ 1/ 21, possibly known as Vivienne Schreiber. Believed to have lived in London NW3 and NW8, moved to South Africa and returned to London. She, any relatives or friends please contact: AJR Information, Box Number 1257

Jewish remedial schools (Hilfsschulen) and remedial classes (Hilfsklassen) in Jewish primary schools (Volksschulen) in Berlin, 1938 - 1942. Information sought for research project. Contact: Dagmar Drows, Im Konkskamp 11, 48727 Billerbeck, Germany. Tel: 0049 254326404 e-mail: ddrows@gmx.de

Descendants of 'Guatemala Transfer' escapees, who emigrated to Guatemala from Germany in June 1944, or any relevant information sought for research. Contact: Dr Klaus Leist, The Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street London W1N 2BH Tel: 0171 636 7247 Fax: 0171 436 6428 e-mail: lib@wl.u-net.com

Erna Riegelhaupt-Reagle (daughter of Malka and David Molkner, born on April 9, 1912 in Krakow, Poland) or her children and grandchildren are being sought by her old friend's daughter. Please contact: Monika Zielinska, skr. Pocz. 432, 30-960 Krakow, Poland

Alexandra Palace internment camp, Wood Green, London. In May-July 1940, 500 refugees returning to occupied France lost their lives when their ship was bombed. Anyone with further information please contact: Yose Salmon, Flat 49, Eleanor Rathbone House, 5 Avenue Road, London N6 5DS Tel: (020) 8341 0697 □

Art Notes

One could describe the winning entry in the **Hunting Art Prizes 2000** at the **Royal College of Art**, as a victory for the human face.

Anita Taylor's massive, brooding charcoal portrait says a great deal for the resurgence of figurative art amid a plethora of wild contemporary forms. Taylor received her prize from art historian and critic, Sister Wendy Beckett. Her subject betrays a sense of innate longing, as though – far from being contained within the canvas – it is exploding with an inexpressible energy and pain. The rest of the series share the subject's raw and resigned edginess, combined with a tragic poise. Taylor is certainly an artist to watch.

Of the 120 works selected from over 1600 sent in by artists all over the country, the majority were figurative in theme. Even from her cloistered serendipity, sister Wendy made the acute observation that art was a raft of sanity in the world. So there were no shocks or surprises in the body of works selected, which in no way challenged Sister Wendy's sense of artistic sanity – or even sanctity.

While the second prize, **Fieldfire** by **Janet Patterson**, was one of the few abstract paintings on display, its brilliant dancing reds and vermilions were close to the natural environment of which the artist is a confessed observer.

Other interesting figurative work by two young artists, **James Lloyd**, a previous BP prizewinner, and **Francis Terry**, though not placed in this competition, is worthy of more attention. Lloyd's **Bedale Street** explores the relationship between a man at the window and his home. The peeling paint, untidy wiring, torn boxes of records and dirty radiator all poignantly reflect the subject's distant, sullen mood. The symbolism may be bolder and less mystical but it shares the same roots as **Botticelli's** painting of **Lorenzo de Medici**, staring winsomely out of a window with all the representations of his sadness – such as the lonely bird which has lost its mate. **Francis Terry** offers an exciting play of light and shade to enhance the isolation of the two subjects in his painting, *My Neighbours, London, E2*.

From fine art to fine artefacts. **The**



'Bible Rocks' by John Addyman. Shortlisted Prize-winner, The Hunting Art Prizes 2000.

Society of Designer Craftsmen's annual exhibition, **Designer Crafts 2000**, a showcase of members' works, was held at London's *Mall Galleries* last month and ranged from jewellery to furniture, much of it betraying a post-modernist simplicity in stark contrast to the romantic embellishments of the *fin de siècle* years. A typically Japanese influence was present in much of the work, from **Ashi Marwaha's** elongated silver or square cut latticework dishes, to the rich timbers used by furniture designer, **Robert Ingham** in which modernism is combined with sharp, traditional craftsmanship. **Stephen Gillies'** dramatic blown glass and **Kirsty Guise's** raku glazed ceramics with embossed copper panels shared this fascination with Japanese formalism. □ **Gloria Tessler**

SB's Column

One of the first emigrants from Nazi-infested Central Europe was Austrian-born filmmaker Fritz Lang who arrived in Hollywood via Paris. As part of a Fritz Lang season the *National Film Theatre* recently showed *Metropolis*, *Liliom* and *Dr Mabuse*.

La Juive. Halevy's masterpiece which was banned in Nazi Germany and seemed forgotten during subsequent decades, was successfully revived at the Vienna State Opera. This sparked an awakening of international interest; after a new production in Tel-Aviv both the New York Met and San Francisco Opera are planning revivals.

Claus Peymann, the longtime director of the Vienna Burgtheater with a penchant for Brecht, has joined the Berliner Ensemble intent on continuing the 'theatre of the left.'

Salzburg. The new manager of the Salzburg Festival declared in an interview that emigré composers like Alexander

von Zemlinsky, Franz Schreker and Erich Wolfgang Korngold deserved a place in the operatic repertoire. The Mozarteum has secured the services of another prominent musician: Berlin-born André Previn began the year 2000 both as accompanist (to Barbara Bonney) and conductor (of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra). His composition *Diversions* was premièred in January.

Obituaries. Opera lovers mourn the death at 84 of Dutch-born soprano **Gré Brouwenstein**. Of strong voice and stylish stage presence, she frequently sang Verdi parts at Covent Garden under the baton of Rafael Kubelik and Sir Thomas Beecham. She also appeared at Glyndebourne, Bayreuth, Chicago and Buenos Aires, staging her farewell as Leonore in Amsterdam in 1971.

Vienna-born **Hedy Lamarr** (originally Hedy Kiesler), who has died aged 86, caused a stir in 1933 by appearing in the nude in the much-banned film *Ecstasy*. The first of her six marriages was to Austrian industrialist Fritz Mandl, an arms supplier to the antisemitic Heimwehr led by Fürst Starhemberg in pre-Anschluss days. Later, in Hollywood, she was under contract to MGM; among many mediocre film parts her Delila opposite Victor Mature's Samson stood out. During the fifties her career declined □

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Science Notebook

What's the temperature?

Many of us – certainly the so-called First Generation – grew up with degrees Celsius. We knew that when our temperature got above 39°C it was time to consult the doctor, and that it was freezing outside when the thermometer recorded 0°C. It took a while to adapt to the British Fahrenheit usage: to thinking of 102°F as indicating fever, and of frost at 32°F. But just as we had become accustomed to this new scale, Celsius came to Britain. It is a minor bonus for us that we got used to this change quite readily – it had a familiar ring.

How did these different temperature scales come about? The earliest inventor of a thermometer appears to have been Galileo in 1600. A century later major improvements were made by Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit. Born in Danzig (now Gdansk) in 1686, and orphaned at age 15, he eventually settled in Amsterdam. He became an excellent instrument maker and, after many trials, succeeded in making reproducible mercury thermometers. To avoid having any negative temperatures, he chose as zero degrees the lowest temperature then available, a (eutectic) mixture of ice, water and sea-salt. As the upper calibration point he selected blood heat and assigned it the value of 96 degrees. The resulting values for the freezing point and the normal boiling point of water were close to 32°F and 212°F, and after his death in 1736 these were decided upon as the

proper calibration points.

It is ironic that Fahrenheit's scale has been superseded by that of Celsius whose contribution to thermometry was much slighter. Anders Celsius was born in 1701 in Uppsala, Sweden, to a family of astronomy professors and in due course became one himself. During a Franco-Swedish expedition to Lapland in 1736 he found unsatisfactory the French Réaumur thermometers filled with alcohol and so he later made one using mercury. To calibrate it he marked the normal boiling point of water as zero on the stem and the freezing point as 100, to produce a centigrade scale. The numbers were inverted by his co-workers after Celsius's death in 1744 to form the Celsius or Centigrade scale we use now.

As time went on, Holland and the British Empire (which included America) adopted the Fahrenheit scale while France and Germany preferred that of Réaumur (based on 0–80 instead of 0–100) until it was gradually replaced by the centigrade one in the 1900s. Nowadays only Americans measure temperature in degrees Fahrenheit, Réaumur has disappeared and Celsius has swept the world.

Are there any limits to how hot or cold it can get? There is no known upper limit: the temperature in the interior of the sun reaches several million degrees. But by a law of nature temperatures cannot go below – 273.16°C! This is "absolute zero". Nicholas Kurti, a refugee who left Germany in 1933 for Oxford, managed to get to just 0.000 001°C above this temperature. He and other researchers into this ultra-cold world have discovered many strange phenomena here: metals, for example, become superconductors.

□ Prof. Michael Spiro

Double-barrelled country

Austria has a long tradition of hyphenation. In happier days it was known as *Österreich-Ungarn*, and described itself as *kaiserlich-königlich*. In 1918 it became *Deutsch-Österreich*, its ethos '*christlich-sozial*'. In 1938 it turned *national-sozialistisch*, was subsumed into *Gross-Deutschland* and became the fief of Artur Seys-Inquart (later hanged at Nuremberg). In 1945 it reappeared on the map as a perpetrator-victim – a creature

known neither to beast or man – with a black-red government. Now, in 2000, it has a black-brown – pardon, black-blue (for easily comprehensible reasons Danube dwellers call brown 'blue') – government. The black (Catholic-Conservative) Foreign Minister is Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and the blue (Neo-Nazi) Vice Chancellor Suzanne Reiss-Passer. To complete the picture it only remains for Chancellor Schüssel to rename himself Wolfgang Leib-Schüssel, or bedpan, and for Haider to come clean as Jörg Haider-Ändsieker.

□ RG

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Reporting genocide in the media

Beth Shalom Holocaust Education Centre in Nottinghamshire invited a number of senior BBC broadcasting correspondents and leading academics to participate in a seminar on 'Reporting in the Age of Mass Death'. Their individual statuses and combined appearance would have done credit to any university department.

The broadcasters, who lectured or participated in panel discussions, included Jon Silverman, BBC Home Affairs Correspondent, Jonathan Charles, BBC European Correspondent, Liz Leonard, producer of BBC Radio 4's *Sunday* and *Thought for the Day*, Jake Lynch, a



Jon Silverman, BBC Home Affairs correspondent, left, listens to Ned Temko, Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, contributing to the seminar 'Reporting in an Age of Mass Death' at Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire.

former BBC reporter and now a Sky News correspondent, and Fergal Keane, widely respected for his reporting of genocidal conflicts in Northern Ireland, South Africa and Rwanda for the BBC. They were complemented by Ned Temko, Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, Prof David Cesarani, Director of the Wiener Library, Dr Frank Furedi of the University of Kent and Dr Mark Levene of the University of Warwick, and joined by the seminar's convenors Dr James Smith and Stephen Smith of Beth Shalom.

Stephen Smith observed that mass death still occurred in the contemporary world and was chronicled by the media. Publicity presently being given to the Holocaust could prompt the charge that "it must be the Jewish lobby", followed by another canard, "why can't they just forgive and forget". Despite extensive media coverage of Holocaust history, it



Jonathan Charles, BBC European correspondent.

was his view that too few readers knew the subject adequately or that it might contain personal implications. Though permitting genocide and mass death to enter our homes via the television, it was a "them not us" situation which also begged the question "was it possible to have too much?"

Ned Temko recalled his days as a war correspondent in Beirut. No reporting was "too much", in his opinion, as it was the duty of editors and correspondents to do their jobs. After World War II the Holocaust was a taboo subject, even amongst Jews, but the last few years had witnessed a radical change with the Holocaust being featured widely, from school curricula to film epics. The impossibility of describing the Holocaust without over-simplification was partially ameliorated by the use of images despite becoming clichés in their turn.

Jon Silverman pointed to the increasing number of Holocaust stories he reported on as Home Affairs correspondent, though, of necessity, they were presented to the general public with an insufficiency of background information. There was an increased availability of film footage and archive material relating to the period, but the issue of how best genocidal news stories were to be covered had yet to be resolved.

"Holocaust stories are big and international", said Prof David Cesarani, and had easily-identifiable 'goodies' and 'baddies'. Postwar reticence had given way to Jewry's new-found confidence following the Six-Day War of 1967, the collapse of the Iron Curtain and access to new archive material, the filming of the camps in Poland following *Schindler's List* in 1993, the advent of a number of anniversaries, and the use of the Holocaust as a medium through which to combat assimilation. Though the news

media were obsessed with the past, the ignorance of history shown by many young journalists, said Prof Cesarani, led to a trivialisation of news reporting.

Prof Frank Furedi questioned the "unremitting appetite" for Holocaust stories. Lack of clarity in today's moral values – what was right and what wrong – had made the Holocaust a unique symbol of evil. He also observed a politicisation of emotion and memory in which "acts of suffering had become a virtue" and successor generations "will show increasing traumas" and "question their identity". His main concern was that people would forget what the Holocaust experience really meant.

From his experiences as a war correspondent in Chechnya, Jonathan Charles discussed the extent to which "disturbing pictures" could be shown in his reports. While the correspondent's role was to bear witness and thereby act as a constraint on untrammelled government action, the public had become more conservative and did not wish to see pictures of dead bodies – including civilian casualties – and destruction. However, in his



Fergal Keane discusses genocide in the 20th century.

opinion "evidence gathered should be broadcast." Dr Mark Levene spoke of the "Holocaust industry" as a brand. Liz Leonard observed that most conflicts had been instigated by religion. It was the media's responsibility to ask questions, report and challenge 'I'm right, you're wrong' entrenched attitudes.

Fergal Keane "struggled for belief" when he was faced with the Rwandan genocide in 1994 in which one million people were killed in 100 days, but accepted a personal duty to deal with the issue. Chillingly, he remained convinced that "there will be more genocide, more murder", and that politicians would continue to turn away.

□ Ronald Channing

NEWSROUND

World leaders at Holocaust forum

Heads of government, Jewish leaders and historians meeting in Stockholm discussed Holocaust remembrance and the growth of neo-Nazism. Participants from over 40 countries included Robin Cook, Gerhard Schröder, Ehud Barak and Sweden's Prime Minister Goran Persson, who had called the conference.

Swedes confront war guilt

Sweden's past is being questioned following revelations of collaboration with Germany in WWII and profits made from Nazi loot. Goran Persson, who recently granted \$5 million to the Association of Jewish Communities in Sweden and announced the establishment of a Holocaust museum, promised legislation to bring war criminals to justice.

Neo-Nazis' Berlin protest

Hundreds of neo-Nazis gathered to protest against the building of a Holocaust memorial in Berlin. Their march route, approved by a Berlin court, led through the Brandenburg Gate.

German Beth Din

The first Beth Din (religious court) in Germany since the end of WWII has been established in Munich with the help of Dayan Ehrentreu who heads the London Beth Din.

Speer life-story for the National

The Royal National Theatre is planning to stage a play based on the life of Hitler's architect and confidant Albert Speer. Gitta Sereny's controversial biography is being adapted by David Edgar.

New Yad Vashem head

Polish-born Holocaust survivor and former Knesset speaker, Shevach Weiss, has been appointed chairman of Yad Vashem, Israel's national memorial to the victims of the Shoah. He succeeds Dr Yosef Burg who died last year.

'War criminal' faces investigation

Detectives in Lithuania have re-opened an inquiry into 84-year-old Anton Gecas, who was branded a war criminal by the Edinburgh High Court in 1992. Gecas, who was granted British citizenship in 1947, attempted to sue Scottish Television after it broadcast a documentary which implicated him in the murder of 32,000 Jews in Eastern European concentration camps.

□ RA

Journey to a lost world

The graveyard was our first port of call. Dubious of finding any living relic of my husband's paternal family's long sojourn in Surani, it seemed safest to seek out their resting place.

In a gypsy's backyard, amid chickens and tangled undergrowth, stood a few solitary tombstones with Hebrew inscriptions. Many more had been smashed or knocked to the ground; some mounds had had their headstones wrenched off.

Thrusting some 100 Kc notes into the gypsy's hand so she would leave him alone with his tears, my husband started breaking the brittle branches of young trees hiding more graves. In his mind's eye were the two black tombs of his grandparents, Heinrich and Ida Klein, he had seen in a photograph as a child. Of these there was no trace. Fearing that this faceless Slovak village with its concrete shopping centre and travesty of a hotel would prove a wasteland for memories, we nevertheless drove on to the 'old town'.

There my husband was profligate with his camera. After all, he reasoned, something might be recognised by his father's surviving sister, now living in Israel. Suddenly he stopped. Facing him was an imposing building, obviously used as a warehouse, with a new roof but otherwise derelict. On its walls of warm stone, which matched those of the nearby church, was the tell-tale sign: a Star of David. And there were Hebrew words carved in the stone.

"I've found the synagogue," he yelled to me as I sat scribbling in the car. Just then we were joined by a talkative stranger. None other than Jozef Sutka, the village mayor; he would wave a magic wand to bring the past to life.

"The Klein family? I knew them. Follow me." We walked past a car-park, once a thriving yeshiva; next door had been the Jewish school. Across what was 'the Jewish street' were the houses of the rabbi and the shochet. In the adjoining synagogue forecourt the Nazis had rounded up Surani's Jews before marching them to the railway station.

Round the corner was where my husband's ancestors had lived for over two hundred years. The large house was now inhabited by gypsies. The family had been traders; behind the shacks stood the ruins of a large warehouse.

"They used to give me sweets when I was a child," Sutka, who had acted as a *Shabbas goy*, reminisced. "When the Jews were marched away, many of us were in tears."

Back at the town hall, Sutka plied us with mementos. A cone of sugar from the local factory. Books and a banner commemorating Surani's 850th anniversary in 1988. A strong Jewish community had shared the village's history; even the local football team, famed for its success in the 1930s, had several Jewish players.

In 1939, almost half of Surani's population of 4,500 were Jews. "12,000 today, but not one Jew." Sutka shared our sense of desolation.

The small Slovak spa town of Piestany some 80 kilometres away is also virtually *judenrein*, but that apart, it was very different. The Urban family, maternal ancestors, had lived there since before 1800. A family plot still stands in the small Jewish cemetery, overgrown, certainly, but still tended, and boasting a few impressive gravestones. Of the many cemeteries we visited in Slovakia this was one of the very few that had not been vandalised and destroyed.

Sigmund and Thérèse Urban, my husband's great grandparents, are interred under black marble inscribed in Hebrew and German. Nearby are the decaying tombs of various family members and ancestors, the most fascinating being a small greyish one whose fading message reads – in Hebrew – Abarbanel Urban, suggesting Sephardi origins.

Of Sigmund and Thérèse's thirteen children, however, only one is remembered in the cemetery, the simple inscription, Alexander Urban 1901 – 1984, indicating that his ashes have been interred with his parents. One more child survived World War II. The rest vanished without trace.

Hannah Urban, Alexander's postwar daughter, still lives, with her elderly mother, in the ancestral home in Piestany's most select quarter, a veritable mausoleum of the Urban family. It is she who has taken on the burden of preserving the family heritage and keeping up with the handful of Urban relatives scattered all over the world.

The many whose final resting place has vanished join their children who vanished in the extermination camps as those 'who have no memorial, who are perished as though they had never been'.

□ Emma Klein