

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Proportionate response

The phrase proportionality of response, which is much bandied about these days, connotes that if one party to a conflict uses a certain class of weapons, the other ought not to raise the ante by retaliating with more advanced - and therefore more devastating - armaments.

Thus, when Israeli soldiers used rubber-coated bullets to disperse stone-throwing Palestinian youths, the IDF was widely accused of a disproportionate response - and this sort of criticism has exponentially increased since.

Among Israel's most influential UK critics are the left-of-centre broadsheets *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. In his anti-Sharon zeal, the *Guardian* editor notoriously drew an analogy between the armed Israeli incursion into Jenin and al-Qaeda's attack on the twin towers. Over at the *Independent*, the cartoonist Dave Brown is an equally vehement scourge of the Jewish state. His cartoon of a naked, baby-eating Sharon, published on the eve of the Israeli elections (and on Holocaust Memorial Day), stung both the Israeli Embassy and the Board of Deputies into strongly-worded public protests.

In reply, the offending cartoonist contended that he merely meant to produce a topical variation on Goya's flesh-creeping painting *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons*. Persuasively seconded by Gerald Kaufman MP, he refuted the charge of antisemitism, although the image of the Israeli leader devouring babies chimes eerily with the age-old blood libel, according to which Jews bake Passover *matzos* in the blood of slain Christian children.

Since Britain, unlike Continental Europe, has not witnessed a modern recrudescence of the medieval blood libel, Dave Brown could probably enter a plea of ignorance in the wholly hypothetical event of the case coming to court. No mitigating circumstances, however, can absolve him



The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse
by Albrecht Dürer

of the charge of disproportionality. Thanks to his cartoons (and Robert Fisk's dispatches), *Independent* readers, if asked to name the single individual who most gravely threatens the peace of the Middle East, would undoubtedly say Israel's Sharon - and not one of those Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Saddam of Iraq, Assad of Syria, Khatami of Iran, and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

In the sheer number of their individual victims - not to mention their denial of human rights - they are all villains of a far deeper die than Sharon. Each of the four, moreover, finances Palestinian terror organisations which specifically target Israeli children on school buses and in discotheques. And why does the double-dealing Arafat, who is perfidy incarnate and the virtual instigator of Sharon's political resurrection, not receive commensurately savage treatment from Dave Brown?

What about the monstrous Robert Mugabe, who threatens to starve an astronomically larger number of his own subjects than Sharon's tally of Palestinian

civilian casualties? And isn't what Putin did to Grozny far worse than the 'massacre' of Jenin, which cost 57 civilian lives? Not to mention nuclear-armed Kim Yong Il, who has turned North Korea into a stage set for Orwell's *1984*.

The reason why these miscreants receive less harsh treatment from the cartoonist probably lies in a mixture of double standards and ignorance. Double standards means that a Third World dictator is less harshly judged than a First World one. After all, Mugabe was exonerated by South Africa's Premier Tom Mbeki, chosen heir of Nelson Mandela. The ANC leaders even collude at UN elections with Colonel Gaddafi, the man behind Lockerbie. (In consequence of an African/Muslim bloc vote, a Libyan now heads the UN Human Rights Commission, and, as if that were not grotesque enough, thanks to the bloc's numerical preponderance within the world body, an Iraqi is about to chair the UN Disarmament Commission.)

More important still is ignorance. Left-Liberal opinion-formers in the UK simply lack any conception of the dehumanising fanaticism driving the godfathers of Hamas and Hezbollah terror gangs, and sundry other enemies of Israel. Non-acquaintance with real evil also determines attitudes in the wider world. Western Europe has not experienced dictatorship since 1945, while for the East of the continent, liberation only dawned in 1989. Therefore two generations have grown up in France and (West) Germany that take the luxury of freedom for granted, and indulge in the perverse sport of biting the hand that both fed and liberated them. Czechs and Poles experienced repression until a mere 13 years ago. That is why President Bush - Dave Brown's other favourite target alongside Sharon - draws jeers in Paris and Berlin, but cheers in Prague and Warsaw.

Mock-profound punditry

Richard Grunberger

Late on Friday evenings *Arts Review* follows BBC Two's *Newsnight* - the latter programme being about politics, and the former about culture. Frequently this demarcation guideline is followed more in the breach than in the observance - which seems unavoidable, since the Israel-baiting academic Tom Paulin is a regular contributor (as is the Afro-American playwright Bonnie Greer).

Early in February the latter was asked to comment on an exhibition of photographs of contemporary Afghanistan at the Imperial War Museum. She answered in her trademark tones of no-contradiction-brooking self-regard: 'War never solved anything!'

In other words, invited to pass aesthetic judgement, Ms Greer characteristically vouchsafed viewers what she clearly considers a cosmic philosophical insight instead. However, one hardly needs to be a graduate historian to instantly call to mind several wars that quite evidently solved 'something'.

Thus, the Persian Wars saved Greece and democracy and the struggle with the Spanish Armada saved England and Protestantism. Above all, who in their right mind would question that the Second World War solved the problem of Nazi aggression?

Finally, a 'close-up and personal' question to Ms Greer: would she rather her great-grandparents, grandparents, parents and herself had continued to live in slavery, than that Abraham Lincoln prosecuted the bloody Civil War against the South?

Vapid *bien-pensant* sentiments like those of Ms Greer, which put the speaker on the side of the angels, trip easily off the tongue. What is harder, and infinitely more responsible, is to think of a way forward that eschews the appeasement path to perdition. In a world where the number of megalomaniac dictators - Saddam Hussein, Kim Jong Il, Robert Mugabe - shows no sign of diminishing, what are committed democrats to do?

Hitler's willing victim

Ronald Channing

An Austrian Government commission of independent historians which has examined the country's wartime role - the first such investigation since 1945 - confirmed that between 1938 and 1945 the Austrian people commonly plundered Jewish property, motivated by antisemitism, social factors and greed. It also denounced Austria's lack of generosity to Jewish victims and concluded that restitution had been made grudgingly. The commission's work took four years to complete and involved 160 historians and other experts on the Nazi persecution of the country's Jewish population and the expropriation of its property.

For half a century Austria claimed that it was Hitler's 'first victim', a myth suited to the agenda of the Western powers at the end of World War II. When Germany annexed Austria in March 1938, to an enthusiastic reception by the general public, Austria's Jewish population was some 200,000-strong. While about half were forced to flee the country, they, as well as those destined for extermination in concentration camps outside Germany's borders, had to pay a special 'flight tax' and a 'Jewish property levy' to leave the Third Reich. A total of 65,000 were murdered in the death camps and, by the end of the war, just 1,000 survived on Austrian soil.

Of some 25,000 Jewish businesses that existed before World War II, the report indicates that two-thirds were closed down, private banks were sequestered by the state, and others were taken over by 'Aryans'. Jewish homes and properties also were systematically looted by the authorities, Nazi Party factions and private citizens, and at least 59,000 Jewish tenants were driven from their homes, says the report.

Reliable historical records show that a disproportionately high number of



Austrian youth greet Anschluss

Austrians were identified as having played leading roles in the Nazi death machine, and that thousands of Austrians enriched themselves. Hitler, of course, was an Austrian, as was Adolf Eichmann.

In 2001 the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany negotiated a restitution and compensation agreement, worth approximately \$500 million, with Austria's government and industry. This covered payments for stolen assets, including businesses, apartment leases and household items, and welfare benefits for needy and aging former Austrian Jews. The Claims Conference's executive vice president, Gideon Taylor, welcomed the report: 'For decades, Austria did not attempt to right the wrongs done to its former Jewish community. There now seems to be a new outlook on this matter and we welcome the change.'

The commission's report could open the way to previously unmet restitution claims from Jewish victims of the Nazis and their heirs, which, some speculate, may amount to £6.3 billion. The historians warned, however, that the idea that compensation might bring the matter to an end for Austria could well be 'mistaken', as it might lead to a 'conversion of guilt into debts'. The commission concluded that it was impossible to quantify either what had been lost by Austrian Jews or what had been paid back over the years.

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Noses - from the toffee to the hook variety

Richard Grunberger

Recently the late Virginia Woolf has had more attention paid to the dimensions of her nose than any other woman since Queen Cleopatra, consort of Caesar and Mark Anthony. ('Had Cleopatra's nose been shorter', the French philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote in his *Pensées*, 'the whole face of the earth would have changed.')

The contemporary focus on the most famous female profile in 1920s Bloomsbury stems from the fact that for the film *The Hours*, snub-nosed Nicole Kidman was fitted with a plastic prosthesis to achieve a passing likeness to Virginia Woolf. Readers only fleetingly acquainted with the personalities of the Bloomsbury Group may assume that, being surnamed Woolf, Virginia owed her 'Grecian nose' to Jewish birth. Not so: as the daughter of Leslie Stevens, editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, she only acquired her surname through marriage to Leonard, a prominent Fabian.

Interestingly enough, two other female celebrities of London's interwar *Bohème* - Ottoline Morell and Edith Sitwell - likewise had noble hooters.

It seems that this particular physical endowment often goes hand in hand with literary genius. The Roman poet Ovid, of *Metamorphoses* fame, who ended his days in miserable exile on the Black Sea shore, bore the self-explanatory name Publius Ovidius Naso.

I also remember reading an Ignazio Silone novel set in the Mussolini era where a Fascist official rebuked a teacher for displaying the bust of a Jew on his mantelpiece - only to be told that it bore a likeness to Italy's 'national poet' Dante.

Then there was the French poet and dramatist Cyrano de Bergerac, equally renowned for his inordinately long nose and his skill as a duelist. The two were closely connected because whenever a bystander gave his nose more than a passing glance, Cyrano drew his sword. (In Rostand's eponymous play he was also a heroically unrequited lover.)

As time went by, noses transmuted

from the stuff of heroic tragic into that of fantasy. Gogol's *The Nose*, which Shostakovich turned into an opera, is the story of a St Petersburg civil servant whose nose abruptly leaves him to gad about the city clad in fancy clothes and riding in fine carriages. At the beginning of his career Shostakovich earned a precarious living as a cinema pianist accompanying silent films. At around the time silent movies gave way to 'talkies', big-nosed comics figured in films on both sides of the Atlantic. In Germany, Siegfried Arno starred in the cycle-racing film *Um eine Nasenlänge*. In Hollywood, Jimmy Durante alias Shnozzle became a fixture in showbiz movies. The heyday of that genre also conferred (relative) stardom on the vocally supremely gifted (and delightfully Jewish-looking) Andrew Sisters.

Eventually Hollywood produced a star - Barbra Streisand - whose romantic and vocal appeal caused her to be cast as love interest without prior plastic surgery. But before this happened, the British film industry became guilty of a near-unforgivable lapse of taste. In David Lean's otherwise brilliant adaptation of Dickens's *Oliver Twist* for the screen, Alec Guinness, as Fagin, sported a monstrous nose, which provoked cinema-goers' jeers in occupied Germany.

Even today the image of the repulsively hook-nosed Jewish villain has not been entirely consigned to the rubbish-bin of history. In a broad swathe of Muslim countries stretching from Morocco in the West to Indonesia in the East, posters, newspaper cartoons, television graphics and book illustrations portray the Jews as people whose rapaciousness is made manifest in their prehensile noses. Paradoxically, Arab countries, where aquiline noses have traditionally been regarded as aristocratic, are still copying *Stürmer* cartoons 57 years after Julius Streicher mounted the scaffold at Nuremberg.

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Cambridge University honours refugee scholars

The University of Cambridge's Faculty of Divinity is actively fundraising for a permanent research post in Jewish Studies to commemorate the scholars who fled from Hitler's Germany and settled in Britain, as well as those who helped to bring them here. Many such refugees came to Cambridge and were instrumental in the advancement of research in both the sciences and the humanities.

This post will enable a recognised scholar in Jewish Studies to contribute not only to research in his or her particular field, but also to undergraduate and graduate teaching of

Jewish Studies in the Faculty of Divinity. The benefactor(s) of this post (which will cost in the region of £2 million to endow in perpetuity) will have the opportunity to name it after the person of their choice.

To initiate this exciting new venture, Daniel Snowman, the author of *The Hitler Emigrés: the Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism*, will give a public lecture in the Faculty on 14 May at 5 pm. All are welcome to attend. For information about the lecture and the post, please contact Ms Rosalind Paul, Faculty of Divinity, West Road, Cambridge CB3 9BS (telephone 01223 763017; email rmp24@cam.ac.uk).

Search Notices*

Norbert Wegner, Sgt, Intelligence Corps, Jewish Chaplain card number 13805634, said Missing in North West Europe 1.9.44, information provided by his aunt, Pte M Roth on 23.3.46. Information, please contact Martin Sugarman, AJEX, tel 020 7819 3328 day, 020 8986 4868 evening or email martin.sugarman@westking.ac.uk.

Ruth Kahn née Freund (Berlin), last known address 15 Wellman Street, Brookline, MA 02446-2828, USA. Information, please contact AJR.

Wilhelm Guggenheim, b. 23.4.1887, Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel, Alsterkrugchaussee 459. Former owner of beer company. In 1939 emigrated to Brazil. Sons: Fritz Walter Guggenheim, b. 11.9.1921 and Heinrich Guggenheim, b. 15.10.1923. Heinrich possibly came to England as Kindertransportee, probably living under name of Henry Griffith. Information, please contact Margot Löhr, Wacholderweg 12, 22335, Hamburg, Germany.

Bernard Klugman (AKA Buzio), born c 1898. Lived in Graz in 1920s-30s with wife Fanny Halberg Klugmann and daughter Henriette (Naomi), born 1922. Wife and daughter killed near Sniatyn, Poland in 1942. Registered with Jewish Refugees Committee in London June

1942. Served at Bergen-Belsen with Military Government of British Army of the Rhine. Left UK for USA February 1948. Any information on my father's cousin, please email kloogwein@aol.com.

Ilse Salzer, refugee, lived in Brighton September 1943 to April 1944 with foster-sister (or other family member), who married Gerald at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London 19 September 1943. Maiden name of Ilse's foster-sister Woolf or Gerald's surname was Woolf. The Woolf parents then lived in London. Information, please contact The Secretary, Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue, Palmeira Avenue, Hove, Sussex.

Stone. Apparently my family was from Germany. In Virginia they changed their name from Stein to Stone. The names of my first relatives are Joshua, Isaac and William. This is all I have to go on. Any information please, Debbie Stone Musick, 702 Concord Street, Chandler, TX 75758, USA.

I am researching **Jewish refugees in North Devon in WWII**. Readers who escaped Nazi Europe, were sheltered by Maurice Prince in his cinemas in Barnstaple and Bideford as temporary safe-houses, please contact Helen Fry, 38 Temple Gardens, London NW11 0LL.

* Includes Notices following screening of *Winton's Children* on Carlton Television.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Austrian Fund deadline

Applicants to the Austrian General Settlement Fund are reminded that the deadline for filing claims is **28 May 2003**. The fund will pay compensation in respect of properties and other assets owned in Austria before the Second World War. Claims for loss of education for Austrian survivors can also be submitted through the programme.

Completed applications should be sent to the Austrian National Fund, Parliament, Vienna 1017, Austria.

Article II and Hardship Funds

The Claims Conference makes monthly and one-time grants to Holocaust survivors with specific histories of Nazi persecution from money allocated by the Federal German government.

Eligible to receive monthly Article II awards are survivors who, for specific amounts of time, were interned in concentration camps and ghettos or who lived in hiding or under a false identity. Those excluded are survivors who have received more than DM35,000 or £12,000 in previous reparations and those in receipt of a German indemnification pension (BEG).

The Hardship Fund pays a one-time grant of DM5,000 principally to survivors who fled Nazi persecution but who were later trapped in the former Soviet Union or other communist countries.

Following the conclusion of recent negotiations, Article II payments to some 46,000 recipients will increase to € 270 or £185.

Personal tribute

David Jedwab was a close colleague and friend and someone who was of great help in developing the work of the Central Office for Holocaust Claims. His enthusiasm and great sense of humour will be missed.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Froggnal, London NW3 6AL. For assistance with the completion of application forms, please telephone 020 7431 6161 for an appointment.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Kindertransport Research Workshop: Narratives, Archives and Educational Resources

An interdisciplinary workshop organised by the Centre for German-Jewish Studies to be held at the University of Sussex on 11-12 June 2003.

For further details, please contact Andrea Hamel, Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex Library, Brighton BN1 9QJ (a.hammel@sussex.ac.uk).

Unsung heroes of the Holocaust

Ronald Channing

Sir Martin Gilbert has earned his enviable reputation as an historian and prolific author not least as an authority on both Churchill and the twentieth-century history of the Jewish people. He drew on his latest publication, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust*, to give a fascinating review of the extent of

humanitarian acts to provide refuge and assistance to Jews under threat of immediate death or deportation to death camps by the Nazis, often at considerable risk to the rescuers' own lives.

In his infamous 1943 diatribe in Posnan commending the Einsatzgruppen killers for writing a page in history "that could never be acknowledged," Himmler pointedly also alluded to each of the 80 million Germans having their own "A1 Jew".

To date, some 20,000 people had been recognised as being 'righteous among the nations' by Israel's Holocaust

remembrance authority, Yad Vashem. The concept emerged at the time of the Eichmann trial in 1961, when, according to Sir Martin, Israel's founding prime minister expressed concern that Jews in Israel would regard themselves only as victims. He asked Yad Vashem to find 24 people from abroad who would receive recognition and for whom a tree would be planted at Yad Vashem. Even though the chosen German was Oskar Schindler, public protest allowed him to plant his tree some time later without attendant publicity.

Science Notebook Have a coffee! Prof Michael Spiro

Question: What is the connection between Jews and coffee?

Incorrect answer (given by my aunt): 'Juden gehören ins Kaffeehaus' (Jews belong in the café).

Correct answer: Both Jews and coffee came to England during Cromwell's Commonwealth. After their expulsion in 1290 by Edward I, Jews were not allowed to live in England until Oliver Cromwell permitted their return. It was also in the mid-seventeenth century that coffee was introduced into this country. The first coffee house was opened in 1650 in Oxford by a Jewish man from Turkey. Customers enjoyed this new, hot stimulating beverage and more coffee houses were quickly established in London and elsewhere. They were patronised by men for gossip and for political and literary discussion (similar coffee houses on the continent became cafés). However, the government began to regard them as places of sedition and in 1675 Charles II issued a proclamation that all coffee houses were to be closed within three weeks. The resulting uproar from customers as well as dealers, who pointed out that the Crown would thereby lose considerable tax revenue, caused the royal order to be swiftly revoked.

Many London coffee houses attracted a specific clientele. Jonathan's coffee house in Change Alley was frequented by stockbrokers and this eventually

gave rise to the London Stock Exchange. Since Edward Lloyd's coffee house in Lombard Street was patronised by men interested in marine insurance, he published lists of shipping news and this led to the creation of Lloyds Insurance. The attendants here are still called waiters. Customers of coffee houses placed their money in boxes labelled TIP (To Insure Promptness): the habit of tipping has been with us ever since.

Although tea replaced coffee as the most popular hot drink in Britain, there was a coffee resurgence after the Second World War with the introduction of instant coffee. This was made by extracting all the soluble components from roasted coffee beans with hot water followed by spray drying and later by freeze-drying, producing larger granules which smelled and tasted more like 'real' coffee. Another resurgence has occurred recently with the advent of specialist coffee house chains offering a variety of different brews.

In the 1850s an Analytical and Sanitary Commission on food adulteration found that coffee had invariably been diluted with cheaper additives such as chicory, acorns or mangelwurzel (a type of beet). Increasingly tough laws were made to prevent adulteration and government laboratories were set up to test foods. However, in France chicory has remained a popular additive and many Austrians prefer coffee containing dried figs.

Arts and Events Diary - April

Until 6 April 'By the Rivers of Babylon: The Story of the Jews of Iraq'. Major new exhibition following the successful Continental Britons exhibition. Jewish Museum, Camden Town

Until 12 April 'Crossing Jerusalem' by Julia Pascal. Tricycle Theatre telephone 020 7328 1000

Until 8 June Am I My Brother's Keeper? Rescue in the Holocaust. Jewish Museum, Finchley

Mon 7 April Robin Hanau BSc, 'The History of the Ishmaeli Sect and the Aga Khan'. Club 43

Fri 11 Commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising One-day symposium to commemorate the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and to celebrate those who resisted and those who rescued during the Holocaust. Details to be announced. London Jewish Cultural Centre

Mon 14 Hans Seelig MA, 'Prokofiev (died 1953)'. Club 43

Mon 21 No lecture (Easter Monday). Club 43

Mon 28 Yom HaShoah, An Evening of Remembrance, including a 60th anniversary tribute to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Guest speakers: Janina David, Harry Fox. Pinner Synagogue, 1 Cecil Park, Pinner, 8-10 pm

Mon 28 Roy Clements BA, 'Some Ladies of Ireland'. Club 43

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club 43 Belsize Square Synagogue. Meetings 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig telephone 01442 254360

Jewish Museum, Camden Town 129-131 Albert Street, London NW1 telephone 020 7284 1997

Jewish Museum, Finchley Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, London N3 telephone 020 8349 1143

London Jewish Cultural Centre King's College, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 telephone 020 7431 0345

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

EDITOR IN CROSSFIRE

Sir - I refer to the letters criticising RG (February issue), with most of which I agree. I too have rapped his knuckles once or twice during the past few years. However, I was impressed with the erudition he displayed in his article 'Lost in transit', in which he deals with musical and literary topics in a most distinguished manner.

To RG's critics, I would suggest that perhaps his political and historical attitudes are a result of his being a refugee first and an editor second: everybody knows that being a refugee can play havoc with one's emotional balance. To RG, I would respectfully say this: keep off the politics and stick to the literature and music and I, for one, will love you for ever.

*Mrs A Rosney
London W5*

Sir - I find F Goldberg's letter (February issue) nasty and extremely insulting. RG certainly has not deserved this. One may not agree with his one-sided attitude towards Israel and support for Sharon's treatment of the Palestinians, which many people find unforgivable and leading to more violence all round. However, this cannot be compared to the Nazis trying to destroy the Jews, who had not blown up anybody with suicide bombs or other weapons.

*Marianne Herz
Northwood, Middx*

Sir - I hope that by now F Goldberg has made good his threat to resign from the AJR. We can all do without him and his ilk. As far as Jurgen Möllemann is concerned, Mr Goldberg states that he has been forced to resign from the FDP. Not so: his resignation was only as the leading member of the FDP of North Rhine-Westphalia. The leaflet he published at his stated own expense

was designed to appeal to a latent antisemitism still to be found in Germany.

Mr Möllemann is, incidentally, a leading light in an Arab-German association, so one can draw one's own conclusions as to his values. As to Mr Goldberg's motives in writing such an obscene letter to *AJR Journal*, they are harder to follow.

*Ernest G Kolman
Greenford, Middx*

Sir - Relying on the British media, your readers seem to be worryingly ignorant about the real situation in Israel. Even Melanie Phillips may not have known that in Jenin the terrorists used women and children as shields and fired from behind them. Readers draw false conclusions, as the letter pages in recent issues of *AJR Journal* would indicate. I think a bit of self-hate is involved too!

*Dr Herbert Loebel OBE
Newcastle*

Sir - Having criticised you in the past, I now want to congratulate you on your leading article in the February issue. It is all that the *Journal* should be: erudite, informative, well-written and interesting. I hadn't heard of Emma Lazarus but, as far as George Eliot is concerned, you have hit the jackpot. I am sure I am not the only one who considers *Middlemarch* the greatest novel in the English language.

*Leslie Baruch Brent (Prof Emeritus)
London N19*

Sir - As a reader not only of *AJR Journal*, but also of *Aufbau*, Vienna's *Gemeinde* magazine, and the *Jewish Chronicle*, I have come across only one editor, whose own personal dynamic and erudite contributions in so many different fields provide so

much food for thought. At the same time, I would add that the editors of the other Jewish journals, who apparently prefer a lower profile, are rarely subjected to mud-slinging by their own readers. Viennese legal friends assure me that anybody libelling an editor by referring to him as Gauleiter would face serious charges of *Ehrenbeleidigung* (defamation of character).

*Fred Rosner
Chigwell, Essex*

Sir - As a regular reader of your publication since its inception, I have enjoyed virtually every issue, particularly your own contributions. The editorial policy seems to be fair, rational and balanced, and there is also the occasional light touch of humour: what more can one ask?

Unfortunately, that's not the view of some whose letters appear in your columns. Fair enough. But that's no excuse for resorting to invective and unsubtle sarcasm ('Gauleiter RG', etc.). In any case, it is counter-productive: when one hears someone shouting and ranting, it is a clear indication that they haven't got much of a case; they obviously hope that their indignant noises will conceal the absence of rationality. Looking forward to many more of your issues in general, and your own contributions in particular.

*CP Carter
Richmond*

Sir - For the past few years I have looked forward to receiving your journal every month and still do, scrutinising its contents and paying special attention to the editor's comments. One admires Richard Grunberger's wide range of knowledge of subjects ranging from the arts to international affairs, his outspokenness on Jewish affairs and Israel, as well as his outstanding journalism in style and substance.

The fact that Martin Walser has the audacity to demand a 'statute of limitations' for Auschwitz, followed by Möllemann's antisemitic outbursts, should dampen

F Goldberg's apparent aspiration to be more German than the Germans, as if this is something to be admired.

*Shmuel Geller
London NW4*

Sir - I always enjoy reading the magazine, and especially Richard Grunberger, whose erudition amazes me. His unconventional views and humour are refreshing, and I love reading about his earlier life. It must have taken a great deal to overcome his childhood refugee setbacks and turn into an excellent journalist, able to write about anything and everything, in a highly readable style. I like his columns, and am sure many others do too. For instance, in his profile in the January edition, he describes an event as 'champagne-lubricated'. Those two words say it all.

So keep writing, and don't take any notice of tut-tutting old ladies who are not amused or interested in his articles or humour. I also find comfort in his understanding of the Middle East situation, though of course this might tread on the sensibilities of more pacifist-minded nouveau-British Jews.

*IM Sadan
Jerusalem*

Sir - The personal attacks on you by some readers amaze and appal me. I deplore this unpleasant type of personalising disagreement on issues and in discussion. You certainly have our full support.

*Eric & Margaret Sanders
London W12*

Sir - The time has come, I believe, for some of my ('bloody' is my usual adjective) co-religionists to discard the annoying, and usually quite irrelevant, habit of calling and treating anyone who dares to differ from their fundamentalist views as a 'fascist' or worse. *AJR Journal* readers should consider themselves fortunate indeed in having talented and knowledgeable writers, whose elegant treatment of the English language in all its facets should be enjoyed and savoured like a good

cigar or a mature wine - even at the risk of occasionally disagreeing with editorial opinion. Far from attempting to stifle argument, I believe it should be encouraged.

*Harold Becker
Twickenham*

PETER KIEN

Sir - Richard Grunberger's profile of Käthe Strenitz was most stimulating. However, with regard to the final paragraph concerning Peter Kien's literary estate, I would point out that the Wiener Library has had an archive on Kien for a number of years now, and this includes his libretto for Viktor Ullmann's opera *The Emperor of Atlantis*. As for Kien's poetry, Dr Mary Heukaeufer of St Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia is currently preparing a volume of his German poems.

*Gloria Tessler
Arts Correspondent, AJR Journal*

MIXED SIGNALS

Sir - Many of the venomous comments you are receiving could be alleviated if more account were given of the praiseworthy activities within Germany by many ordinary - but in fact extraordinary - men and women who will now allow the dreadful past to die in the minds of their local fellow citizens.

I have just returned from a ceremony in the Berlin parliament, in the presence of Walter Momper, Speaker of the House, and Dr Friedman, Vice-President of the Zentralrat, to honour six men and women, who worked for years to gather records of Jews in their area, rebuilt and restored 'lost' small synagogues and cemeteries in villages and towns, published books of their findings, organized commemorative events and provided material for schools on the Nazi crimes.

In any case, it is important that such worthy efforts find a mention in the Journal, if only to modify the gloom which you spread so assiduously in your unique style.

*M Maynard
London N22*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Acrobat on Trapeze 1940 by Max Beckmann
(Courtesy of Saint Louis Art Museum)

In the late 1920s **Max Beckmann** (**Tate Modern** until 5 May 2003) was regarded as the most important figurative German artist of his generation. He did not flinch from offering compelling and disturbing insights into the human mind during the horrors of the First World War. By 1933, captivated by the modernism of **Picasso, Matisse and Braque**, he fell foul of the Nazis, who branded him a 'degenerate' and dismissed him from his teaching job at the Frankfurt School of Art. In 1937 he heard a broadcast of Hitler's speech to the House of German Art in Munich, and the following day he left for Holland, where he spent the next ten years working on a series of triptychs that became his life's work.

'What I want to show in my work is the idea which hides itself behind so-called reality,' Beckman said of his art. 'I am seeking the bridge which leads from the visible to the invisible.' There is nothing invisible about Beckmann's courageous and powerful art. But his initially Christian imagery gave way to a more

voyeuristic detachment, from which the spiritual message seemed, at first glance, to be hidden. His *Large Death Scene* and *Small Death Scene* paintings, inspired by his mother's early death from cancer, move the deathbed scene to an obscure background, while the mourners themselves, isolated in a solidity of pain and disbelief, become the subject.

Beckmann's work gradually develops an unusual blend of cynicism and empathy. You become aware of an almost pornographic interplay between physicality and the deeper, internal force that drives human existence. This is the invisibility to which he refers. His early Christian imagery is not entirely lost; indeed, it is filtered through his recurring religious symbolism of fish and water, if you like, juxtaposed with very solid carnal forms. Between 1937 and 1941, during his self-imposed Dutch exile, Beckmann looked back on his early work and, like many Expressionists, at the internal world that spiritually changed him.

As the internal world of the artist becomes ravaged by political events, so, too, does Beckmann's style. The formal nineteenth-century treatment of his self-portrait with his first wife, where each seems to accept a separate identity, gives way to a much looser application of the paint, evident in the portraits of his second wife, Quappi, and the carnival imagery that he frequently adopts. Beckmann began to regard himself as a European rather than a German, launching himself onto the salons of Paris and New York. His later work has a power and energy freed from the constraints of formalism. The horror of fatality and violence are generated with a blunt objectivity that clearly derives from an artist working during the Nazi era. There is a recurring carnival humour, a bleak distance with which he paints, for instance, *Music while Drowning*. His own most vivid self-portraits hold the key; *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo* has Max, the successful artist, looking as complacent as a banker in 1927. His final *Self-Portrait in Blue Jacket*, in similar stance, shows him having come to terms with his own success.

RG's INTERFACE

Stefan Zweig The reissue of *Confusion*, a vaguely *Death-in-Venice*-type novella 75 years after its first publication as *Verwirrung der Gefühle*, reminds us what a rare literary phenomenon the author was, capable of producing essays, biographies, novels, poetry and libretti. Despite his preoccupation with culture heroes like Tolstoy and Freud, Zweig also supplied the subject matter for a series of popular films: *Amok* (France), *Letters from an Unknown Woman* (USA), *Beware of Pity* (UK) and *Burning Secret* (UK/US).

Joseph Roth The reissue of Roth's classic *Radetzky March* (in a new translation by Michael Hofmann) likewise refocuses readers' attention on the literary efflorescence of interwar Central Europe. Although Roth's was less of a name to conjure with at the time than Zweig's, the roles seem reversed now.

Renaissance man Jeroen Krabbé, son of a Dutch father and a Jewish mother, is a painter, script-writer, director and actor. He made *Left Luggage*, a film set among Antwerp's Hasidic community, some years ago. Recently he completed *The Discovery of Heaven*, a film with a supernatural theme based on a novel by Harry Mulish, whose background mirrors his own.

Oscar hopefuls Among this year's contestants for Tinseltown's supreme accolade are Daniel Day-Lewis (see last month's Interface), fellow actor Adrian Brody, and director Roman Polanski. Brody plays the protagonist in *The Pianist*, the making of which must have been a painful experience for Polanski, who spent the Holocaust years as a near-feral street urchin in Crakow.

Unforgotten thespian A current exhibition at Berlin's Akademie der Künste features documents and photographs about the life and work of actor/director Fritz Kortner. Kortner, a major figure on the German stage before and after the Nazis, spent his exile in the USA.

CDs issued Trikont in Munich has issued the following CDs, covering 1903-33: *Populaere juedische Kuenstler - Berlin, Hamburg, Muenchen* (2 CDs) and *Populaere juedische Kuenstler - Wien* (1 CD) (contact Heidi and Martin Mauthner, Bonn tel +49(0)228 93 29 762).

Out-of-focus masterpiece

THE PIANIST

Directed by Roman Polanski

On limited release

This extraordinary film, based on Wladislaw Szpielmann's autobiographical account, can be divided into three parts: pre-war life, ghetto existence and deportation, and the pianist's relations with those who helped him survive.

The first and third parts work well. What diminishes the impact of the middle part is the depiction of gratuitous violence in the long deportation sequence. It is one thing to show the slavish brutality of the baton-wielding Jewish police, but another to represent in detail butchery which arouses only revulsion. The lush green fields in Claude Landmann's *Shoah*, where the death factories of Treblinka stood, conjure up the horror of the place more effectively than Polanski's naturalism.

This is far from run-of-the-mill screen fare: the director had the responsibility of selecting and recording unique historical events. As he devotes more than an hour to representing the murder of thousands of passive Jewish victims, it is a misjudgement to dismiss in a few frames the fight to the death of a handful of ill-armed Jewish men and women who, for four months, challenged the might of two Waffen SS regiments supported by Tiger tanks and Stuka bombers. Here, Polanski missed a golden opportunity to tell the world that not all Jews were sheep to the slaughter; rather than minimising the uprising, he would have done better not to mention it.

Through the eyes of the not-so-admirable Szpielmann, the film follows, with detachment and compassion, the day-by-day process of the destruction of the great pre-war Jewish community of Warsaw, from the laying of the first bricks of the ghetto wall to the mandatory 'happy ending', with Szpielmann, the lucky survivor, giving a concert in a Warsaw ruled no longer by Hitler, but by Stalin.

The handsome Adrien Brody charms as a man who could survive on an ice-

REVIEWS

flow, and Maureen Lipman is impressive as a mother trying to keep her family alive and together in the ghetto. All in all, a film you must see for Polanski's masterly handling of the huge crowd scenes and his ability to build up suspense.

Andrew Herskovits

Unsettling scores

Fritz Spiegl

LIVES, WIVES AND LOVES OF THE GREAT COMPOSERS

Maryon Boyars Publishers

Though Seville may have been the setting of many famous operas - *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Carmen* - Vienna holds pride of place as the habitat of nearly all the world's greatest composers: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Mahler.

As a schoolboy I couldn't get away from Schubert. Mushy *Dreimäderlhaus* and *Leise flehen meine Lieder* posters were everywhere, and in class we sang *Die Forelle*. 'Poor Franz!', our teacher said, 'Unhappy in love, unrecognised, and dead at 31!' Why Schubert died so young he didn't tell us. It took me several years to find out that syphilis carried off half the geniuses of the nineteenth century. Thanks to this knowledge I, a teenage innocent, became sophisticated beyond my years. I now assumed that all composers who died in their thirties - e.g. Weber, Chopin, Bizet - had succumbed to VD.

This impression lingered at the back of my mind for decades - in fact, until I picked up Fritz Spiegl's instructive and hugely diverting compendium. I had half-expected a *chronique scandaleuse* and was somewhat disappointed. For example, I remember reading somewhere that the much-publicised Alma Mahler-

Werfel had regular assignations with her Jesuit father confessor and, expecting further 'enlightenment', was vouchsafed none. Instead, I found that Franz Werfel acted as go-between in an adulterous affair between his married sister and the (similarly married) Viennese composer Alban Berg of *Wozzek* and *Lulu* fame.

As an ex-flautist, Spiegl enhances his innate readability with a thorough grounding in music. Thus he is able to illustrate how Berg's ardent infatuation with Hanna Fuchs-Robertin was encrypted in the musical notation of his *Lyric Suite*. Adultery leads to mendacity, which is a character defect. Weakness of character led Berg - long stigmatised by the Nazis as *entartet* (degenerate) - to complain in 1934: 'Since the Reichstag fire not a single note of mine has been heard in Germany, although I am not a Jew. For, with the present tendency in Austria to glorify the Jews, I am hardly ever performed.'

This contrasts markedly with the stance of his soon-to-be-widowed wife Helene. After the Anschluss she turned down the suggestion that she petition Gauleiter Baldur von Schirach to lift the ban on her late husband's work with the rejoinder 'I shall wait till this hell-on-earth has worked itself out.'

How discombobulating to turn from this deceived wife to the two greatest deceivers among the composers: Franz Liszt and his son-in-law Richard Wagner. Liszt was duplicity incarnate - simultaneously an *abbé* and the greatest bedhopper among the European 'upper crust'. In addition, he excelled at self-aggrandizement and manipulation of his image.

In all these respects - except the number of amorous conquests - Wagner outstripped Cosima's father. Wagner was not merely a monster of selfishness - a liar, a sponger, a sexual predator - but also of self-deification. While composing *Tristan* he wrote to Mathilde von Wesendonck: 'I have just played through the first half of the Act and had to say to myself what our dear God said to himself when he found that it Was Good. Like God, about 6000 years ago, I have no one to praise me.'

Despite accepting the Jewish calendar Wagner was, of course, a vicious antisemite, and I was disappointed that Spiegl had nothing to say about his indebtedness - and ingratitude - to Meyerbeer. Instead, Spiegl delivers a *coup de foudre* by stating that Richard and Cosima Wagner had one Jewish parent each: he the actor Ludwig Geyer, she the Countess Marie d'Agoue.

Can it really be true that the nastiest couple in the history of European culture had a Jewish genetic input? It is too horrible to contemplate - but, if proven, it would lessen our revulsion at Harold Pinter and Will Self.

Richard Grunberger

Remembering is not enough

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER? RESCUE IN THE HOLOCAUST

*Jewish Museum, Finchley; runs until
8 June 2003*

This exhibition, which opened on 27 January - National Holocaust Day - looks at why a number of people were courageous enough to risk their own lives in order to save those of others, what specific forms this rescue took, and the ethical issues which are raised by their actions. The exhibition looks at rescue by both individuals - Jews, non-Jews, those in and outside Nazi-occupied territory - and governments and highlights stories of rescued and rescuers with particular emphasis on those now living in the UK.

For me, by far the most potent exhibit is a model of a tiny structure of wooden planks in which the Alters, a tailoring family from the Hague, lived for the best part of three years. One can only imagine what those who created this small but intriguing exhibition would have achieved had they had substantial additional space at their disposal!

Following its initial showing *Am I My Brother's Keeper?* will be available as a permanent resource for exhibiting in schools, colleges and libraries. It will be accompanied by a specially written educational resource pack, providing a range of activities to augment the

exhibition in the classroom.

Also on display in the museum is *Forgive and Do Not Forget*, an exhibition of shoes by local ceramic artist Jenny Stolzenberg, which symbolises the millions of individual lives lost in the Holocaust. Ms Stolzenberg's father, William Powell, is a survivor of the Nazi death camps. According to her, 'Shoes can tell us so much about their owner. In so many accounts of survivors there was invariably a story about shoes. They caused pain, infection, death and, occasionally ... they saved lives.' A further exhibition currently on display in the museum - on the life of Holocaust survivor Leon Greenman - also should not be missed on any account.

Prominently displayed in the *Am I My Brother's Keeper?* exhibition is a statement made by Sir Nicholas Winton in 1999. It seems difficult to improve upon it: 'Just remembering is not enough. I don't think the world can go on living like that. I feel very strongly that people have to live more ethical, honest lives ...'.

Howard Spier

After the Velvet Revolution

NO SAINTS OR ANGELS

Ivan Klima

Translated by Gerald Turner

Granta 2002, £14.99

The Czech writer Klima's latest novel is in keeping with the classic style of his work. Compounding the shadow of the Holocaust, which still hangs over the mostly 'non-Aryan' characters, are the lingering effects of the recently departed Red dictatorship. Under the benevolent dispensation of President Havel, opponents and previous supporters of the Communists live side-by-side, most of the latter in total denial.

Kristyna Pilna, now 45, was born on the day Stalin died. Her father mourned the tyrant. She struggles with the dichotomy between filial feelings and abhorrence of past events. For good measure her lover, who is more than ten years her junior, is employed in the

pursuit of the former villains.

Kristyna constantly receives anonymous threatening letters, but her greatest worry centres on her deeply loved - and yet sometimes almost hated - 16-year-old daughter Jana, a drop-out and drug-taker. In fact, her troubles come, in Shakespeare's phrase, not as single spies, but in whole battalions. As a teacher, she is engaged in seemingly endless contention with recalcitrant pupils as well. In addition, she is divorced from someone she calls her 'only husband'; he is desperately ill and she still looks after him. Everything she tries to do for both her dependants seems in vain.

The book ends on a somewhat fragile 'optimistic' note: death finally dissolves the marriage, and psychiatry holds out the promise of rescuing Jana. But Kristyna's love affair hits the rocks, alas.

John Rossall

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PROFILE

Howard Spier

A low boredom threshold: Stella Mann at 91



sergeant in the British army. They married in April 1946 and, in the following month, came to live in England. In that year, Stella says, she tried to join the AJR but was informed that, as the bride of an English soldier, she did not qualify for membership.

Right away Stella began to teach again, at Dyneley Studios, in a prestigious West End location. Soon after, she opened her own school, at Netherhall Gardens in Hampstead. She started off with 20-30 part-time pupils, mostly children of refugees from Vienna. Being herself a modern dance specialist, she hired a classical ballet expert. Gradually, as the school took on full-time students, more staff were employed. A grant from Kent Council opened the way to grants from numerous other sources.

In 1952 - bored, as she says, and having time on her hands - Stella founded Tunics Limited, which was to become one of the leading manufacturers of dance garments in the UK.

... And still they joke, they laugh, are funny and kind.

Long live England and its open mind.

Stella Mann, from 'This is England'

Stella Mann is short in height, but commanding of presence. I had indeed imagined that she remained a highly active personality. She warned me soon enough: 'I get bored easily!'

Stella was born in Vienna in 1912. Her father was a top legal adviser for Singer Sewing Machines. She was always acutely aware of her Jewishness: 'I was never proud of it and never ashamed of it - it was simply an accident of birth!'

She began teaching modern dance at the age of 17. By 1938 she was running a dance and gymnastics school with 500 students. Following the Anschluss, she 'danced for a while', as she puts it, in Brussels, then in Holland, and returned to Brussels in 1940, a few months before the German occupation of Belgium.

Having failed, along with five Austrians, to cross the border into France, Stella was incarcerated by the Belgian authorities in a prison cell near Bruges. Being at the time the possessor of a Yugoslav passport, she was released within days. She never saw the other five again. Later, together with a Czech family, she spent 48 hours in a cellar with the din of British and German guns from the Belgian border ever increasing in the background.

In occupied Belgium there was at first employment for all. Later came the curfew, the yellow star - and, in 1942, a summons from the German government to make her way to the northern town of Malines (Mechelen) with blankets and sufficient food for 'work' in Germany. Given that Malines was an assembly point for deporting Belgian Jews to the extermination camps, she 'declined' the summons. Belgian friends hid her for two years until the British army entered Brussels in 1944. She never saw her parents again. They were deported to Minsk, but never arrived; they were shot en route.

Stella met Derrick Ashby Mott, a

She ran the Stella Mann School of Dancing right up to her retirement in 1985. The Stella Mann College is still to be found on Finchley Road. Stella remains a benefactor of the Imperial Classical Ballet Faculty, providing an annual bursary for a student aged between 15 and 17.

Stella proudly showed me an email from a grateful ex-pupil who had opened a dance school in America; the school now had 600 students.

Following her retirement from the School, Stella and her husband left London for Majorca, where she taught her specialty of choreography and improvisation in a local ballet school. When her husband died in 1991 she returned to London, now able to join the AJR 'without any difficulty'.

Stella took up painting. The walls of her comfortable flat are lined with her paintings, bursting with colour: still-lives, portraits, landscapes, some with a strong Spanish flavour, reflecting the years she spent in Majorca. She shows me a painting she did of her mother. 'No, it's no good, she was much prettier than that!', she exclaims, dissatisfied with a portrait which looks splendid to me. In August 2000 Stella was nominated Painter of the Month by a World Wide Web gallery. As can be seen from her website, she has held a number of exhibitions of her paintings, all of which are for sale.

Stella also writes poetry on her computer - an intriguing mix ranging from doggerel to serious verses on a variety of subjects, including the Holocaust and life in England. As if all this isn't enough, she is a competent pianist too. She has often been advised to write her autobiography, but says she is 'a dancer and teacher, not a writer.'

Recently, Stella sent documentation, including contemporary press reports, concerning her dance school in the Austrian capital to the Vienna Jewish community, who forwarded the material to the city's Jewish Museum.

As I left, Stella turned her attention to a dozen other matters.

INSIDE the AJR

Bertha's big birthday



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Bertha Leverton celebrated her 80th birthday with a special party for more than 300 guests - Kinder, communal leaders, friends, visitors from the United States, and close family from Britain and Israel - which she planned, prepared and cooked herself - with a little help from her friends! The Director of London's Jewish Museum, Rickie Burman, pictured right, presented Bertha with a beautiful bouquet in appreciation of her and the Kinders' support for the creation of a new book for schools on the history of the Kindertransport, as well as to accompany the Museum's most popular exhibition, *The Last Goodbye, The Rescue of Children from Nazi Europe*. Bertha specifically requested that all gifts should be made in favour of the special education project. As a result, with many personal donations and a popular tombola, a large sum was passed to Rickie by KT-AJR Chairman David Jedwab, who extended happy birthday wishes to Bertha on behalf of the guests. Hermann Hirschberger acted as master of ceremonies and his wife Eva, who donated many of her artworks, organised the tombola.

Ronald Channing

Brighton & Hove Sarid, the BBC and Israel

We had a most interesting talk by Stewart Macintosh, a BBC World Service newsreader, who shared the 2002 Sony Award with John Simpson for their work in Afghanistan. Stewart worked as a telephone engineer before joining the BBC and, as a novice newsreader, spent some time in Belfast,

where he had close encounters of a dangerous kind with the IRA. In a lively question-and-answer session which followed the talk, there was only one question which, for reasons of professional etiquette, our guest speaker could not answer: why is the BBC ill-disposed towards Israel?

Fausta Shelton

Next meeting: Monday 28 April

Pinner: the two Shalvatas

Our speaker was Dr David Wogroch, a health psychologist who works at the Shalvata Centre for Holocaust Survivors. Shalvata has the connotation of 'contentment, being at peace with oneself'. David gave us a quick but informative survey of the facilities available in Hendon, where there are actually two centres: one has a social function (meeting place, food, classes, activity clubs); the other is a therapy centre, offering counselling and medical advice. The only qualification for using these free services is that of being a Holocaust survivor. After a lively discussion, we adjourned for the usual excellent tea.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 3 April, 2 pm.
Alf Keiles: 'Musical Special'

Surrey in congenial conversation

Twenty-two members enjoyed a social get-together at the home of Jutta and Vernon Saunders. A new member was amazed to come face to face with someone he had last seen over 60 years ago. Members participated in congenial conversation and were treated to delicious refreshments in a room overlooking a garden which contains a huge 500-year-old sweet chestnut tree - truly an amazing specimen. The group agreed to explore the possibility of an outing in July or September.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: Wednesday 30 April.
For details contact Edmée Barta tel 01372 727 412

Essex birthdays

Our group's first birthday began on a sombre note: Larry Lisner read a

moving poem about a concentration camp prisoner, written by his 13-year-old son Simon. But we soon got into the party spirit when Boris played cheerful music on his mandolin as we enjoyed a lovely tea. Several members recalled memorable birthdays of their own. On Ursula's 21st birthday, her workmates pushed her onto a blanket and gave her 21 'bumps' according to the ancient custom. For Larry, the most thrilling event was the birthday party he gave for his dad, who returned home from a concentration camp at the end of the war.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 8 April, 11 am:
'A Video about the Duneira Boys'



Party spirit: Essex celebrates first birthday

Wessex: virility in diversity?

Meeting in Bournemouth, we discussed the contribution of the so-called Continental Britons to their new homeland. Continental Britons participated in an array of professions and vocations, including a number who served in the British Armed Forces. The largest contingent, however, went on to engineering and allied trades. Other members participated in the modern arts. Homemaking and catering also featured largely in people's achievements. All this left the writer pondering whether our nation's virility emanates from our diversity.

William Bergman

North London: 'Making the best of internment'

Some 30 members enjoyed Ludwig Spiro's talk on 'Making the Best of It - The Internment of Refugees, 1940-42', not least because it was incisive and laced with good humour. Ludwig explained how the detainees not only set up their own democratic institutions in the various camps but also educational facilities in which eminent

detained academics participated. The fact that so many of the 28,000 people involved went on to play a part in the commercial, educational and artistic life of this and other host countries is really something to view with pride.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 1 May (NB: no meeting in April because of Passover)

Celebrating and playing at 100



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Otti Geduldiger, formerly from Prague, celebrated her 100th birthday in fine style at the specially adorned AJR Day Centre. After enjoying a celebratory lunch, at which she was joined by friends and other AJR members, Otti blew out the candles on her birthday cake and cut all her guests a slice, with the help of Day Centre Manager Sylvia Matus. Still active and capable of living in her own home, Otti completed the day's celebrations by entertaining with classical pieces on the piano to the amazement and delight of all present.

RDC

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Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

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Larry Lisner 01702 300812

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and National Get-together

of the

ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES

SUNDAY 1 JUNE 2003 at

Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre
Laxton, near Newark, Nottinghamshire

Guest speaker

Dr Stephen Smith

Director, Beth Shalom

Agenda

Annual Report 2002

Hon. Treasurer's Report

Discussion

Election of Committee of
Management*

* No person other than a committee member retiring by rotation shall be elected or re-elected a committee member at any general meeting unless:-

(a) he or she is recommended by the Committee of Management, or

(b) not less than twenty one clear days before the date appointed for the meeting, notice executed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting has been given to the Association of the intention to propose that person for election or re-election together with notice executed by that person of his or her willingness to be elected or re-elected.

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THE LUNCHEON CLUB

Monday 7 April 2003

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Joint meeting with KT-AJR

James Taylor

Imperial War Museum

'Winston Churchill in Whitehall'

Creating the country's
first Churchill exhibition

Early reservations please!

Lunch now only £5

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Monday - Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm,
Sunday 2 pm - 5.30 pm

APRIL	Afternoon Entertainment:
Tue 1	Roy Douglas
Wed 2	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 3	Jenny Kossew
Sun 6	CLOSED
Mon 7	Joint KT-AJR Lunch - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 8	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
Wed 9	Lynda Styan
Thur 10	Jack Davidoff
Sun 13	CLOSED
Mon 14	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 15	Opdahl Trio
Wed 16-24	CLOSED - PASSOVER
Sun 27	OPEN
Mon 28	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 29	Nicola Smedley
Wed 30	Joe Kay

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THE DAY CENTRE IS OPEN ONLY
ONE SUNDAY IN EVERY MONTH -
PLEASE SEE PROGRAMME ABOVE.

YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION

60th Anniversary of the
Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Logan Hall, University of London

Sunday 4 May 2003

For further details, please telephone
the Board of Deputies on
020 7543 5400

Deaths

Sarle. Bernard Sarle, formerly Bernhard Sahlmann of Fürth, died suddenly but peacefully on 7 February 2003, aged 91.

In Memoriam

Martin and Lotte Reichenback and the other 281 Jews deported from Hellerberg camp Dresden to Auschwitz and murdered there between 3-4 March 1943.

Classified

Companion/Carer. Highly experienced, energetic, good-natured and responsible woman offers her services, 020 8922 0336. Tova.

Seeking information on Dr Markus Hoffmann (born Breslau), wife Margarete née Schenierer, daughters Eva and Renate, concerning property East Berlin. Please contact Box No. 1265.

Miscellaneous

Conference for the Second Generation: More Than a Change of Address

The Second Generation Network, Second Generation Trust and the Wiener Library are planning a conference aimed specifically at the second generation, to be held on 29 June 2003 in London. For further information, please contact the administrative co-ordinator at the Wiener Library tel 020 7636 7247 fax 020 7436 6428 or email: info@wienerlibrary.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 1 May 9.45-11.45am.**

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes sale, separates etc. **Wednesday 2 April 9.30 - 11.45 am.**

A HOME FROM HOME

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Obituaries

Helmut Rothenberg

A founder member of the AJR, Helmut Rothenberg believed strongly in making way for new people to come forward and play their part.

A member of the Executive (now Management) Committee from 1983, he promoted a younger generation of honorary officers and members, sponsoring Andrew Kaufman, son of a prominent AJR member, and his own son David for election to the Management Committee, when he stepped down in 1988. Andrew advanced to become AJR Chairman and David Vice-chairman in 1996. He similarly encouraged Frank Harding, son of another old AJR family, on to the AJR Charitable Trust in 1994.

He took a keen interest in the AJR's work from early days, when it dealt with naturalisation and restitution, to today's concern for the elderly. He helped push through the building of the Day Centre, which opened in 1987.

Running throughout were problems of physical and spiritual welfare for those who could not readjust. Helmut helped quietly and generously. He was a fount of advice on personal financial matters and known as the confidant of a wide section of the community.

Founding a successful accountancy practice in 1945 together with Bernard Blick, he built Blick Rothenberg into a leading independent firm and went into business partnerships with his brother Henry and others. He was known for his kindness, courtesy, optimism, common sense and discretion.

Born in Halberstadt and brought up in Frankfurt, Helmut came to Britain in 1933 as a school-leaver of 18, the forerunner of his family. With his late wife, Annema, whom he married in 1945, he hosted numerous social gatherings as a bon viveur, enjoying good food, wine and company. At the heart of his wide circle of friends was his family of five children.

His special love was music and his passion was opera, including Glyndebourne, of which he was a

generous patron. He also funded educational projects for Mencap, the charity for people with learning disability. His involvement was recognised with an OBE appointment in the New Year Honours List of December 1990.

David Jedwab

David Jedwab, Chairman of KT-AJR (Kindertransport) and good friend to all his colleagues at the AJR, where he maintained a Kinder office, has died at the age of 77. In 1999 he chaired the highly successful Reunion of Kindertransport (RoK) in London and, after the (active) retirement of RoK founder Bertha Leverton, accepted the leadership, and secured the continuation, of the Kinder movement by negotiating entry as a special interest group within the AJR. Elected a member of the AJR Management Committee, he was disappointed to have to step down on reaching the age of 75.

He was particularly concerned to retain the special links which existed between the Kinder, who came to Britain as refugee children. He introduced and edited a new-style KT-AJR magazine and introduced monthly gatherings and Chanukah parties at the AJR's Day Centre in West Hampstead. A warm-hearted extrovert with boundless energy and a continual stream of ideas, both practical and ambitious, David was always keen to make things happen and was impatient with those who could not keep up with his pace.

Born in Berlin of orthodox Polish parents, David arrived in England in 1939 and was evacuated to the country. He trained in agriculture, *hachsharah*, with the intention of settling in Israel, but his group volunteered to work in the coalmines as 'Bevin Boys'. After helping ORT to rehabilitate survivors, he followed a career in agricultural engineering and journalism, then turned to merchant banking before directing his own export company. Possessing a fine

tenor voice, David was Chairman and Concert Manager of the Apollo Male Voice Choir and gave many concerts for charity.

David's last public appearance, with his wife Sarah, he shared with 300 Kinder and other guests at Bertha Leverton's 80th birthday party, where he expressed their good wishes. He also presented Jewish Museum Director Rickie Burman with the funds collected by the Kinder to publish a teacher's book on the history of the Kindertransport, a project he held dear. All his life he identified strongly with Jewish history and tradition, and with the State of Israel.

Ronald Channing

Felix Hutterer

Vienna-born Felix Hutterer, who has died aged 77, made a success of his life after beginnings shadowed by tragedy. Losing his father when he was eight, he attended the prestigious Chajes Gymnasium; in the Anschluss year of 1938, burning synagogues put an end to his preparations for *barmitzvah*.

In March 1939 he arrived in England on a Kindertransport and found a temporary home at a Yorkshire boarding school. Having gained the school certificate, he went to an orthodox hostel in Bradford. He found employment first in a garage, then in a radio repair shop, and studied in the evening. At 18 he moved to London, where, by dint of hard work and diligent study, he was ready by 1958 - four years after marrying into the redoubtable Brainin clan - to set up a firm specialising in the application of technology to medicine. Over the years his firm introduced valuable new techniques in cancer research and orthopaedic surgery into the UK.

Felix was a rather private person but he maintained strong links to the refugee community. A loyal AJR member, he felt a special attachment to fellow ex-Bradfordians, for whom he helped organise several reunions over the years.

Richard Grunberger

Legacy of the Jews of Leipzig - Part 2

Andrea Lorz

The development of Leipzig into a great city owed much to the achievements of the city's Jews. Jewish entrepreneurs erected imposing, modern commercial buildings, often on the sites of the small shops where they had begun their business careers.

The struggle of the Jews in Germany for civil rights was long and painful. But only under National Socialism did they face physical annihilation. The Jewish community in Leipzig, which had numbered over 13,000, was reduced by August 1938 to some 10,500. A further 1,300 Jews with Polish nationality were deported to Poland in October 1938.

During Kristallnacht 553 Jewish men were arrested in Leipzig, centres of Jewish communal life were destroyed, and business premises looted or burnt out. Around 2,700 members of the community managed to emigrate in 1938/39, but very few in 1940.

The deportations from Leipzig began on 21 January 1942. The remaining Jews were sent in nine 'waves' to their deaths in camps in the East. On 13 February 1945 the 220 Jews remaining in Leipzig were compelled to assemble in a school. Two days later they were deported to Theresienstadt. They survived.

After 1945 the Jewish community was reconstituted, thanks to the efforts of the few survivors who returned from the camps or emerged from hiding places in Leipzig. Twenty-four members attended the first postwar meeting.

The Brodyer Synagogue at Keilstr. 4 - the only synagogue in Leipzig to survive Kristallnacht, because there had been 'Aryan' tenants in the building's upper stories - was restored and re-consecrated. The two cemeteries and the ceremonial hall of the Neuer Israelitischer Friedhof were restored.

In 1949 the community numbered 368 members. But in the early years of the DDR anti-Semitism led to the flight of the leaders of the Leipzig community and of many younger members. The situation improved only after 1956. Until 1990 the congregation was overseen by the East Berlin Rabbinate. Werner Sander was its

cantor until his death in 1972.

After unification, membership grew, mainly through the immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union. Since January 1998 Leipzig has had a rabbi again. Rabbi Salomon Almekias-Siegl is in charge of the three Saxon congregations, Dresden, Leipzig and Chemnitz. Leipzig has the largest community. Since 1992 Rolf Isaacsohn has been its tireless president.

Gratifying though the growth of the Leipzig community is - in October 2002 it numbered 840 members - today's community cannot be compared with the former community, one of the six largest in Germany. Social problems, unemployment and difficulties with a new language hinder the integration of new members. To identify with a new community in a new city is difficult, especially as many have to be taught the religious practices. Services on the high holidays are held in Hebrew, German and Russian.

The process of integration is helped by the *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Religionsgemeinde zu Leipzig*, which has appeared monthly since January 2001 in Russian and German and is the shared responsibility of new and 'old-established' members. It carries information on many aspects of Jewish life.

Few traces of the former richness of Jewish life in Leipzig remain. But to the survivors of the Holocaust these documents and photos are precious - often their only possessions from the past - while to the younger generations they provide a unique link to family members.

Only in December 1999 did the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig set up a collection of Jewish documents and artifacts. This would have been impossible without the assistance of citizens of Leipzig both past and present. The Museum is also grateful to the *AJR Journal* for publicising its collection.

The first part of this article appeared in the March issue of AJR Journal.

Newsround

Shlomo Argov dies in Jerusalem rehabilitation centre

Former Israeli ambassador to London Shlomo Argov has died at the age of 73. In 1982 he was shot in a terrorist attack in London, spending the rest of his life in a Jerusalem rehabilitation centre. The attack was cited by the Israeli government as an act of war that prompted its invasion of Lebanon.

First *eruv* set up in Britain

After a decade of planning, the first *eruv* in Britain is now operative in North-West London. It will enable Sabbath observers to push prams and wheelchairs and to carry items such as prayer books, keys and food for use on the Sabbath.

Memorial to Holocaust rescuer vandalised

A memorial in the northern Italian town of Cernobbio to Giorgio Perlasca, who saved thousands of Jews from the Holocaust, has been vandalised. Giorgio Perlasca, who was in Budapest in 1944, claimed he was a Spanish diplomat and signed numerous false documents which saved Jews from deportation.

'Hitlerisation' of secondary school history syllabus

In a response to criticism by education watchdog Ofsted that the study of Nazi Germany predominates at GCSE and A-level, the Holocaust Educational Trust said that it understood 'the fascination with Hitler. But when we are teaching about the Holocaust, we must remember that he was just one aspect.'

Claims Conference asked to re-open applications procedure

According to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the Board of Deputies has asked the Claims Conference to re-open its application procedure for restitution of property from wartime Germany. This move follows approaches from a number of UK citizens who came to Britain on the Kindertransports.

Holocaust-denier seeks asylum in Canada

German Holocaust-denier Ernest Zundel, recently deported from the USA and currently in a Toronto jail, has applied for asylum in Canada. He claims that he faces persecution if he is sent back to his native Germany.