

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The third incarnation

In the aftermath of the Great War two types of Fascism arose. One was the Nazi variant, the other its distorted Communist mirror image. The two types shared a number of characteristics: the *Fuehrerprinzip*, denial of human rights, brainwashing, intolerance of dissent, secret police, concentration camps and the pointless sacrifice of millions. The two systems, admittedly, differed in their Jewish policy. While the Nazis pursued physical extermination, the Communists 'merely' enforced compulsory assimilation.

In the decades after the Second World War a third incarnation of Fascism arose in the Arab world. Its first upsurge, Nasserism, was short-lived, but Ba'ath Socialism, the state ideology of Syria and Iraq, proved more durable. Ba'athist rule exhibited all the above-mentioned Fascist characteristics, though the Syrian dictator Assad had a below-average body count, running to a mere 20,000. On the other hand, he established a dynasty, in which he was copied by his Iraqi counterpart. This feature linked the secular Ba'athist regimes to the medieval Saudi monarchy - just as the latter, in turn, shared its archaic religious fervour with the ruling theocracy of post-Shah Iran.

The quartet of Syria, Iraq, Saudi and Iran - veritable Four Horsemen of the Middle Eastern Apocalypse - squabbled interminably among themselves. However, they formed a monolith of unity, as well as indissoluble bonds, with their scandalously disenfranchised populations via one magic formula: all-encompassing, relentless hatred of Israel. Three of the four had brutally expelled their ancient Jewish communities; all had waged war against the fledgling Jewish state, and had



President Putin

President Chirac

more recently bankrolled terrorist murder gangs inside Israel. All this was allegedly done for the sake of the Palestinians - but if Israel had ever been pushed into the sea, the area between the Mediterranean and the Jordan would, in all likelihood, have been partitioned by its fraternal Arab neighbours. Syria would assuredly have incorporated Galilee, Egypt Gaza, and Jordan Jerusalem.

Fortunately, we no longer have to contemplate such a nightmare scenario. Israel has - at huge cost - weathered five wars, two *intifadas* and an epidemic of suicide bombings. Today, after the victorious conclusion of the coalition's Iraq War, she can look forward to benefiting from the fact that one of the four apocalyptic horsemen has been knocked off his steed. The awesome demise of the Arabic Hitler - even his toppled statue in Central Baghdad pointed symbolically in the direction of Jerusalem - must surely have shone an illuminating light into the hate-befogged collective Arab consciousness. Saddam's downfall should suggest to the Palestinians, and the Muslim world as a whole, that the way forward is to eschew a *guerre à outrance* against Israel and futile displays of anti-American mass hysteria in the streets.

In as far as Arabs are amenable to reason, and clear-sighted enough to discern the only possible path forward through the thicket of mutual hatreds and recriminations, they ought to be encouraged by Ariel Sharon's stated readiness to make painful concessions - i.e. abandon some settlements - as an earnest of his commitment to the peace process.

Turning nearer to home, it is a sad indication of the depths to which the liberal organs of the British press have sunk that the *Independent's* Robert Fisk could state he was only prepared to put the dictator Saddam Hussein in the dock in the company of the elected Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. No less deplorable was the sight of the peace lobby self-righteously chanting 'no blood for oil' - and in the next breath cheering Chirac and Putin, whose advocacy of supine inaction over the UN Security Council's Resolution 1441 stemmed from nothing more elevated than cynical considerations of profit. They essentially propped up Saddam so he could use Iraq's oil revenues to repay the huge debts owed to his principal arms suppliers, i.e. themselves! In fact, were the Americans to use their up-to-date plant and technical know-how to increase the output of the investment-starved Iraqi oil industry, the entire global economy would benefit from cheaper energy costs consequent upon the dissolution of the price-fixing OPEC cartel.

Nor could it be said that the polemics that preceded and accompanied the war indicated a high level of public discourse. The peace lobby monotonously resorted to crying wolf as a substitute for informed debate. They made spine-chilling

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AJR OFFICE RELOCATION

The head office of the AJR is to be relocated to Stanmore in July 2003 (further details will appear in the next issue).

The Paul Balint Day Centre will not be affected by this move.

Everest of illogicality

Richard Grunberger

On the eve of the Iraq War the serried ranks of luvviedom gathered at a Concert for Peace in London's Theatre Royal. The director of the Globe recited appropriate lines from Shakespeare. Harold Pinter read a poem articulating the Roman precept 'If you want peace prepare for war' - which in the violently peace-addicted playwright's mind means war on America. The evening reached its climax with Dame Judy Dench belting out the title song from *Cabaret*.

This high point struck me as the Mount Everest of illogicality. After all, *Cabaret*, the musical of Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*, was imbued with regret that so little had been done to thwart Hitler. Pressing the title song into service to impede politicians with the courage to thwart the Arab mini-Hitler is like showing the 'birth of the Ku-Klux-Klan' sequence from *Gone with the Wind* at Martin Luther King's funeral.

Harold Pinter's poem was commissioned by the current editor of the *Guardian* - the ill-chosen successor to the legendary CP Scott who, as intermediary between Chaim Weizmann and Lloyd George, helped bring about the Balfour Declaration. The *Guardian*-sponsored rant ended 'Your eyes have gone out and your nose/ Sniffs only the pong of the dead/ And all the dead air is alive/ With the smell of America's God.'

Around 1900 the German Social Democrat leader August Bebel dubbed antisemitism 'the socialism of fools'. Given that Pinter's constituency are the *Guardian* and *Le Monde* reading classes, one is tempted to say that now - 100 years on from Bebel - anti-Americanism is the antisemitism of the intelligentsia. In the contest between fools and thinkers the former had a built-in advantage. The antisemites had the sound instinct to make the most impotent people on earth their quarry. Anti-Americans, on the other hand, are gormless enough to tangle with the preponderant guardians of world order.

German insurers reveal names of Holocaust victims

Michael Newman and David Brummer

At the end of April 2003 a number of German insurance companies made public the names of 363,232 victims of the Holocaust who were covered by life insurance policies but whose records were previously sealed. The names are available from the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims.

A further 16,000 names will become available from the Commission's ongoing research in insurance and state archives across Europe.

This development follows a landmark agreement in September 2002 in which German insurance companies set aside \$100m (£62.5m) to settle individual claims. A further \$175m is to go to Jewish charities, some of it to organisations which work with refugees and Holocaust survivors.

American scholars of the Holocaust, insurance experts and lawyers for Holocaust victims expressed satisfaction with the publication of these lists. However, many still acknowledged that the names of hundreds of thousands of other Holocaust-era policy-holders across Europe remained concealed in insurance company files. Coupled with this dilemma is the position of the German insurers and, to some extent, the US government, neither of which has the appetite for a

wave of class action suits and individual claims.

The Commission must hope that the publication of these additional names will improve its image and reputation, which have come under increasing criticism on account of its failure to pay claims to Holocaust survivors swiftly. In more than four years of operation, the Commission has made offers totalling \$38.2m to a mere 3,006 claimants. At the same time, it has reportedly spent over \$40m on administration, expenses and salaries.

Many survivors received payments in respect of insurance bought before the end of the Second World War through the 1950s and 1960s restitution programmes. Now, families of unpaid policy-holders have until **30 September 2003** to file claims. This too has caused controversy. 'It's going to take time for the information to get out', said Deborah Senn, a former insurance commissioner in Washington. 'I can't think of a reason in the world for any deadline at all on this.'

Information about the names of identified policy-holders, as well as details of how to search for family names and submit applications for unpaid insurances, is available from the Central Office for Holocaust Claims at AJR head office and from the Insurance Commission's website www.icheic.org.

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predictions about another Vietnam quagmire, talked ominously about the Muslim world spawning 500 new bin Ladens, and presented gung-ho George Bush as more deserving of public obloquy than Saddam Hussein.

During the war the French public, likewise, was so infected with the anti-American virus that every third person questioned in a *Le Monde* poll would have

preferred an Iraqi victory to the actual outcome. Of course, France is a country with 6 million Muslims - which circumstance may also account for the doubled rate of Jewish emigration to Israel between the first and second year of the current *intifada*. These statistics, compounded by the pro-Arabist Fisk's flippant coupling of Sharon's name with Saddam's, show that the ghost of the third incarnation of Fascism still waits to be laid.

AJR Journal

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Is there a Jewish *shmaltz* gene?

Richard Grunberger

Last year, when Prime Minister Sharon (and, through him, Israel) was comprehensively demonised, I attempted a bit of Jewish morale-boosting in an editorial entitled 'The contentious issue of national pride', for which I received more brickbats than bouquets. One reader, who has since quit the AJR, even accused me of 'racism'.

If, today, I draw attention to a particular Jewish penchant for *shmaltz*, it is less from a desire to woo my lapsed readers back into the fold than because I genuinely believe it to be the case. Anyone who doubts that Jews have a greater propensity for generating *shmaltz* need only look at the difference between American and British movies. The archetypal Hollywood weepie was *The Jazz Singer*, the 1927 Al Jolson film which heralded the advent of sound. In it Jolson played the son of a rabbi who, defying his father's wishes, deserted *chazanut* for jazz - but had a deathbed reconciliation with his progenitor.

About half a century later the father-and-son theme was still a staple of Hollywood Jewish existence. Kirk Douglas, asked what winning an Oscar felt like, replied it was as nothing compared to the thrill he experienced as a seven-year old when his father, having sneaked in unannounced to watch him perform in a school play, had afterwards bought him an ice-cream cone. When the star later set up his own production company, he characteristically named it after his mother Bryna. (It is also worthy of note that Kirk Douglas, his several sons and a grandson are currently making a film entitled *It Runs in the Family*).

There is, however, also a higher level of *shmaltz* dispensed by highbrow Jewish novelists or playwrights as diverse as Lion Feuchtwanger, Stefan Zweig, Arthur Miller and Arthur

Schnitzler. Feuchtwanger's novel *Jud Süß* (filmed in the UK in 1934 and Nazi Germany in 1940) has a storyline bearing an uncanny resemblance to that of Verdi's *Rigoletto* - and what could be more *schmalzioso* than the plot of an Italian opera! Stefan Zweig's novel *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (a US film in 1948) features a heroine who wastes her entire life in unrequited love for a rakish concert pianist. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* has the eponymous salesman's wife burst out at recurring moments of crisis with the cry - addressed to no one in particular, unless it is to God - of 'Attention, attention must finally be paid! A man is drowning!' Arthur Schnitzler's *Liebelein* focuses on a janitor's daughter, who, when her officer boyfriend is killed - in a duel over another woman - commits suicide.

However, having labelled great Jewish literati as - occasional - purveyors of *shmaltz*, I feel honour bound to draw attention to another who did the very opposite. Nathaniel West, who died tragically early, wrote a coruscating account of the Hollywood *shmaltz* factory in *The Day of the Locust* (filmed in 1975) and did a similar hatchet job on newspaper agony aunts in *Lonelyhearts* (1958).

Finally, just to prove that a propensity for *shmaltz* extends beyond Jews prominent in the arts to co-religionists in academe, let me quote a 'personal' anecdote. When long-term AJR member Fred Worms OBE forwarded my plea that someone of the eminence of Simon Schama step forward and plead the cause for Israel as eloquently as Isaiah Berlin had once done, the eminent historian responded with a modest disclaimer. Far from stepping into Isaiah Berlin's boots, he wrote, 'I am not fit to lick them.' Am I alone in thinking that this excessive display of modesty borders on the *schmalzty*?

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Beside the seaside

Martha Blend

I arrived in England in late June 1939, a bewildered nine-year-old catapulted from parents and everything I knew into the care of foster parents I had never met. Nowadays there would be counselling for such a child, but then distraction was the name of the game.

In England everybody who could afford it took a summer holiday by the sea - not in Goa or Palm Springs, but at the nearest coastal resort. For Londoners, Southend, with its funny hats, vulgar postcards, cockles and mussels, sticky candyfloss and a pleasure ground called the Kursaal (pronounced Kursel), was a popular choice. Jewish families preferred the more genteel Margate or, better still, Cliftonville.

Preparations for this event began weeks before we were due to leave. Suitcases were hauled down from the attic and special clothes were made up or bought - a white skirt and jacket for my foster mother, a sun suit for me, and an alpaca jacket for my foster father topped by a straw hat to protect his balding crown. The cases had to be packed with two weeks' worth of underwear, clothes for the beach and quantities of suntan lotion. On the day, a taxi took you and your luggage to the station, where a porter, duly tipped, wheeled your cases to the train. At the other end, another taxi took you to your hotel by the sea.

You arrived in a different world - houses with balconies and verandas and the sound of screeching birds ducking and diving by the sea. The advertisement for the boarding house had said 'a washbasin in every room' and, sure enough, as you entered your allotted bedroom, there it was to help you freshen up from your travels. Supper was served in the dining room amid a gaggle of other guests similarly bent on enjoying themselves. There

was much banter, chaffing and laughter from the tables.

Next day, weather permitting, was for the beach. On went the sun lotion and the beach clothes and shoes. Before you got to the lift that was to take you down the cliff-face to the water's edge, there were treats to be savoured: peaches at 3d, 4d and 5d (in old money) - wickedly expensive but luscious - and Walls ice-cream cones in vanilla or strawberry flavours (not a patch on the Italian ices I had been accustomed to in Vienna, but welcome nevertheless).

Down below, the sand got between your toes as you tramped the beach looking for deckchairs. For a child brought up in landlocked Austria there were so many strange and new experiences. The sea had tides which brought the water almost to the cliffs or, in retreat, left a large stretch of wet sand, good for building castles. Some of the architecture produced by other children had elaborate towers, moats and bridges. My efforts were more modest.

In the afternoon there were visits to the bandstand or concerts, where you sang along to tunes like 'I Do Like To Be Beside the Seaside', 'Every Nice Girl Loves a Sailor' and 'If You Were the Only Girl in the World'. Shirley Temple look-alikes were encouraged by ambitious mothers to sing 'On the Good Ship Lollipop', recite poems or tap-dance in red shoes with bows.

After what seemed a long day you returned to your room (with basin) and soothed your hot skin with pink calamine lotion. Tomorrow there would be a promised donkey-ride on the sands. Before you went to sleep a letter would have to be written giving details of all the delights of the day. Not a word about homesickness.

Celebrating 60 years of German-Jewish culture in England

Ronald Channing



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Hans Seelig, Club 43's industrious chairman, maintains its longstanding reputation

Club 1943, named for the year of its establishment in wartime London, maintains its reputation of presenting the history and culture brought to Britain by refugees from Nazi persecution in the years immediately prior to World War II. Lecturers of the highest academic standing in their chosen fields are pleased to accept the Club's invitation.

Its 60th anniversary was duly celebrated at a supper attended by many of its long-standing members and friends at Belsize Square Synagogue, with delightful choral singing in English, Ivrit and German by the belles of *Pandemonium*, readings in German and English, and the participation of distinguished visitors.

Hans Seelig, Club 43's energetic chairman, confidently greeted the guests, stating that "Club 43 is still here and very much alive." It remained a forum for the culture which refugees of German-Jewish extraction had left behind, as well as the culture into which they had immigrated, which offered "one of the best series of lectures in the whole of London." However, that its audiences were once again on the increase Hans described as "almost a miracle!" Here's to Club 43 for many more years to come.

Brighton hosts AJR's first Southern Region Get-together

Ronald Channing

One hundred members from all parts of Southern England gathered in Brighton to meet and greet fellow Continental Jewish refugees long settled in this country at the very first Southern Region 'Get-together' introduced by the AJR. The event was arranged by regional organiser Myrna Glass following the success of last year's pioneering Northern Get-togethers held at Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire and Manchester.

On arrival, members were invited to add their names to the lists displayed on the walls of the hall based on their original towns of origin or as part of the Kindertransport. Herbert Haberberg and Ron Stevens, who went to school together in Dortmund no less than 60 years ago, were delighted to renew their old friendship - and had their remarkable reunion pictured in the *Jewish Chronicle*.

Ronald Channing, AJR's Head of Media, Development and Community Relations, presented an overview of the AJR's activities. He reported that of the present 18 AJR groups, half were in the South of England and several more were planned to be established in the coming year. He described the wide range of services to which members of the Association had access, from social services support and visits from volunteers to the monthly *AJR Journal* and help with compensation claims.

Marcia Goodman, Head of AJR's Social Services, disclosed that the social work team could now offer a response to nationwide referrals, an advance of special value to members who were rather isolated. David Brummer, of the Central Office for Holocaust Claims, referred to their recent success in obtaining the refund of British bank charges on reparation payments. Both Marcia and David provided informed advice and professional guidance at one-to-one advisory consultations. Carol



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

At the Southern Region Get-together, Jack Grossman relates 'The Story of Beth Shalom', his cinematic history of a unique Holocaust educational and memorial centre

Hart, AJR's Volunteers' Co-ordinator, spoke of the recruitment and key role of volunteers and reminded the gathering of the audiotaped version of the *AJR Journal*, for those whose sight was not as good as it used to be, which was read and recorded by a volunteer team every month.

Reports of each group's activities were given by their respective chairman with exceptional clarity, articulacy and enthusiasm. The reporters were led off by Ken Ambrose, who began the first group with South London, Ron Stevens from Pinner, Walter Kammerling from Bournemouth (Wessex), Frank Goldberg for the home territory, Brighton (*Sarid*), Hanno Fry on behalf of Surrey, and Ruth Jacobs, who travelled with other members all the way from North London, as had Otto Deutsch from Westcliff (Essex).

Following a vegetarian lunch, Brighton film producer Jack Grossman introduced the film he had made about the Beth Shalom Holocaust Education Centre. His admiration for the conception, realisation and immense influence of the Centre was enhanced by his well-photographed and edited film, with its telling commentary from founding director Stephen Smith. The day's proceedings concluded with a question-and-answer session before tea and the journey home.

Science Notebook

More about coffee

Prof Michael Spiro

A *Money Programme* on BBC2 examined the 'coffee wars' between Caffe Nero, Coffee Republic, Costa Coffee and Starbucks. Their ubiquitous outlets now offer customers pleasant venues for indulging in many varieties of coffee drinks ranging from black Italian espressos to American-style lattes with frothy milk. The latter is obviously a slimmed-down version of the whipped cream on *Kaffee mit Schlag* in Central European cafes.

Where did coffee originate? The traditional story tells of an Ethiopian goatherd named Kaldi who, some 12 centuries ago, noticed that his goats became frisky after eating the coloured berries from a certain bush. It was soon discovered that the large seeds inside the berries - the coffee beans - contained a strong stimulant. This substance was caffeine, first extracted from coffee beans in 1820 by the German chemist Runge after his friend, the poet Goethe, had asked him to find out why he could not sleep after drinking coffee. In 1900 another chemist, Roselius, discovered that the caffeine could easily be removed with a suitable solvent after the raw beans had been pre-treated with steam to swell them. To make decaffeinated coffee commercially, he set up the company Kaffee HAG, whose name suffered a public image problem when its product was marketed in England. Nowadays, some 11% of coffee sold in Britain is decaffeinated. The extracted caffeine is not wasted - it is used in cola drinks and in certain preparations like headache powders.

Despite its stimulating effect, coffee did not become popular until the thirteenth century, when the crucial step of roasting the coffee beans was introduced. This turned infusions of the beans from an insipid to an extremely palatable beverage. Today, roasting is carried out in industry by passing hot gases at around 400°C through a bed of tumbling coffee beans. During this process the sucrose sugar and proteins in the raw beans decompose to form a large variety of other compounds which are responsible for the agreeable flavour and smell of coffee. Its pleasant aroma is now known to be made up of over 850 different substances.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

EDITOR IN CROSSFIRE

Sir - *AJR Journal* remains among my favourites and, given your January complaint that 2002 was an *annus miserabilis* for you, I thought you deserved some positive feedback. It's not that I agree with your relatively uncritical views of Israel and its fascist prime minister. It's rather that I don't enjoy reading only those writers who confirm my own political views. And, in any case, your often acerbic views are thoughtful and challenging.

Tom Freudenheim
Mass, USA

Sir - I regret to note that my old friend of 50 years' standing, F Goldberg, has turned into a nasty, aggressive letter-writer. May I add that I enjoy reading your *Journal*.

Eric D Richmond
New Barnet

Sir - Could it be that all the fan letters (April issue) have gone to your head? In your otherwise interesting review of Fritz Spiegl's book, you wrote that if it were true that the nastiest couple in European culture (the Wagners) had a Jewish genetic input, 'it would lessen our revulsion at Harold Pinter and Will Self.' When you say 'our', are you talking about yourself in the royal plural, like Queen Victoria or Mrs Thatcher? I hope so: I would hate to think you have the presumption to speak for all members of the *AJR*.

Jon Rumney
London N20

Sir - Victor Ross, Fred Rosner, CP Carter, IM Sadan and others have said it all, and eloquently so. I would like to add my few words in praise of *AJR Journal*, and in support of its editor. I would also like to mention that, unlike a previous correspondent, I found your reminiscences very interesting and evocative.

Michael Hellman
London NW3

PLEA FOR READERS' FORUM

Sir - It is a pity when people who do not share the same opinions cannot discuss them. It is good to have an editor who does not pretend to have no point of view. I do not always share his views but you do publish letters by those who don't. Could we have opposing points of view expressed within the *Journal*, not only in the letters column? *AJR* members are a minority of people: they may be Orthodox Jewish, Reform and Liberal, or Humanist Agnostic or Atheist. Thanks to all of you for keeping *AJR* going.

Bettina Cohn
Bishop Sutton, Bristol

GOOD FOR THE JEWS?

Sir - Peter Phillips wonders (March issue) how good Joe Lieberman would be for Jews if he were to become US president - because Bruno Kreisky was no good for Austrian Jews. A strange analogy, since no Austrian politicians were good for Jews - not Dollfuss, Starhemberg, Schuschnigg or Waldheim, while, starting with Harry S Truman, all US presidents were strong supporters of Israel, which one can construe as being good for Jews.

Guy Bishop
Port Aransa, TX

BLEAK CONSOLATION IN TROUBLED TIMES

Sir - Things, at least as perceived by the media these days, aren't very cheerful. But of course they can't be compared with the events of 60-odd years ago.

During the traumatic days of 1938, an elderly relative (possibly influenced by the grandiloquent phrases flying about praising 'these great and historic events') sadly proclaimed: 'Wir leben nebbich in einer grossen Zeit.'

CP Carter
Richmond

NOSES

Sir - A propos of your article in the April issue, Jiri Weil's novel *Mendelssohn on the Roof* relates how Heydrich, appointed Reich protector of Bohemia, ordered the caretaker of the Prague Rudolfinum to remove the statue of the Jew Mendelssohn-Bartholdy from the balustrade. The caretaker, advised to look for the figure with the largest nose, homed in on Richard Wagner.

Prof EH Sondheimer
London N6

BLIND OPTIMISM

Sir - I admire Ruth Barnett's blind optimism (February issue). She states that 'Mainstream Muslims have been at great pains to point out that the fundamentalist belief in martyrdom through suicide bombing is not based on the Koran.' Would she be kind enough to let us know who these mainstream Muslims are and in what publication we can read their renunciation of murder as un-Islamic? Her letter also refers to Christian and Jewish fundamentalist groups who 'put power and death before life and justice.' May we also have her list of these groups, and a very approximate estimate of the number of school buses, discotheques and World Trade Centers that these groups have blown up?

L Roman
London N22

REFUGEE FOLKLORE

Sir - At last a light note amid the too many sombre articles in the *AJR Journal* recently! What a delightful anecdote as recounted by F Reichmann (March edition). My parents, who escaped from Germany in January 1939, used to recall how Australians were taken aback when they repeatedly heard that many of the refugees had become physically fit and that this had somehow led them to become undertakers. Of course, the Germans were trying to explain that they had been to a *Gymnasium* and then had become entrepreneurs (*Unternehmer*)! Let's keep this folklore going in future editions: it's a priceless 'heritage'.

Dorothy Graff
Melbourne, Australia

FALSE NOTE STRUCK

Sir - I am surprised by Andrew Herskovits's comments on the film *The Pianist* (April issue). Is there any reason for the aspersions cast on Wladyslaw Szpielmann as 'not-so-admirable'? As to being a 'lucky' survivor, after all Szpielmann endured, would he have been able to establish any sort of normality in his life, any satisfying human relationships or even sleep peacefully at night during the rest of his 88 years? A mandatory 'happy ending'? I wonder. A grain of imagination would not have come amiss, it seems to me.

Mrs A Rosney
Ealing

feeling for the plight of today's refugee 'underclass'. Not only was the film highly regarded by many reviewers, but it has been nominated by the London Film Critics' Circle for awards in the Best British Screenwriter and Best British Actor categories. Refugees' problems are not eliminated by the fact that charities exist to help them - any more than the reality of the NSPCC abolishes child abuse. I have always assumed that members of the AJR have compassion for others who find themselves in an alien land: 'for you know the heart of a stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' (Exodus XXIII, 9).

Arthur Oppenheimer
Hove, Sussex

NOT A MIXED-RACE COUPLE

Sir - I am surprised and saddened by the error perpetrated by the late Fritz Spiegl in his book, *Lives, Wives and Loves of the Great Composers*, reviewed in the April issue.

What is certain is that Wagner felt, all his life, that there might be Jewish blood in his veins. Evidence to the contrary exists in Wahnfried, the house in which he lived in Bayreuth, now a museum. His background has also long been assiduously researched by British musicologists. Equally, Cosima Wagner, Richard's wife, the bastard daughter of the composer Franz Liszt and Countess Marie d'Agoue, had no Jewish blood in her family.

Eric Adler
London N20

GEORGE ELIOT'S SOURCE

Sir - George Eliot may have fallen under the spell of Heine (February issue), but her interest in, and critical knowledge of, Judaism came from the autobiography of Solomon Maimon, which Deronda bought in a 'second-hand bookshop' in Holborn (chapter 33). Solomon Maimon (1754-1800) was a Polish Jew, an eccentric philosopher befriended by Moses Mendelssohn, whose autobiography attracted the praise of Goethe and Schiller. For further information, see the essay 'George Eliot and Solomon Maimon' in Israel Abrahams's *The Book of Delight* (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1912).

Michael S Morris
London NW7

CORRECTION

Sir - Unfortunately, there is a misprint in my letter in the April issue. The line '... men and women who will now allow the dreadful past to die' should, of course, have read 'who will not allow'.

M Maynard
London N22

THE 'POPE'S DAUGHTER'

Sir - In your January profile you describe Gerhart Hauptmann as the greatest German playwright since Goethe. What about Friedrich Hebbel and Franz Grillparzer? Alfred Kerr ranked Hauptmann, especially in *Die Weber* and *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*, as the leading playwright of his era alongside Arthur Schnitzler. However, in November 1933 the exiled Kerr expressed disgust with the playwright, Hauptmann's one-time admirer, whose opportunism had made him attend a celebration in honour of Horst Wessel.

Fred Rosner
Chigwell, Essex

DIRTY PRETTY THINGS

Sir - RG's review of the film *Dirty Pretty Things* (February issue) lacks two qualities - aesthetic judgment and compassion for today's refugees. The first is personal and debatable; the second shows an unacceptable lack of

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The term 'photogenic' could have been invented for **Marilyn Monroe**. Blonde bombshell, waif, 50s siren, our lady of sorrows - Marilyn so enraptured the celluloid city that she became her own art form. The muse of her day, she made many photographic reputations and inspired some rather tacky paintings. They are featured in an exhibition at **County Hall**, where photographers like **Henri Cartier-Bresson**, **Eve Arnold**, **Milton H Greene**, **David Burke** and **Tom Kelley** - he of the famous calendar prints - line up with their tributes. The cartography of her life is exposed: marriages, divorces, celebrity status, early death. Some photographers, like **Bert Stern** with his ten colour photographs taken just weeks before her death, present her at the peak of her luminous beauty; others expose her bitter loneliness. In his last photographs of her, taken in 1962, **George Barnis** alone manages to capture a fleeting precognition of Marilyn ageing. But Marilyn, like Diana, survived because she never grew old. One of the better paintings, **Daniel Authouart's** *Adieu Marilyn*, shows her lying on a bier, with the numbers 1-12 printed above her. The artefacts around her imply the hand of the pathologist - a potent metaphor for this diva.

The trouble with Marilyn as art form is that her purity does not lend itself to burlesque. Her glamour is the real thing. It comes from her soul. You cannot parody her any more than you can Ghandi. That's why **Corinna Halthusen's** digitally manipulated Marilyn triptych does not work. That's why **Yongbo Zhao's** spider-Marilyn is offensive and absurd. That's why morphing her into **Andy Warhol** is pointless. Marilyn is the



Marilyn Monroe

tragic creation of us all - a star sacrificed on the altar of relentless public demand.

Glossy red lips like Marilyn's are part of the glamour trawl of French fashion photographer **Guy Bourdin**, who was at his zenith from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. He died in Paris in 1991 aged 62. Bourdin's first retrospective at the **V & A** (until 17 August) is an exposé of the rapacious fashion world not so far removed from the one which devoured Marilyn. But Bourdin, who worked for *Vogue* and promoted the shoe industry, was something of a visionary, because there is a hard edge to his sassy depiction of extreme glamour. There is a story behind his work that he's not telling you. He often obscures the faces of his models: a girl wearing very little in red peers into a mirror to view her darker side; one face peeps out of a sea of black umbrellas. Everywhere are metaphors: bikinis, lipstick, a desert. Sometimes the girls are wooden mannequins, but it hardly matters because in Bourdin's lexicon, flesh-and-blood women aren't real either. You are led up blind alleys; it is your job to finish the story. On fashion shoots Bourdin would photograph landscapes and cityscapes, always showing an obsession with shape and texture rather than content. They appear as a counterweight to the fashion world he regards with such a cynical eye.

RG's INTERFACE

The Oscars The 2003 Oscars focused on the Holocaust in several ways. *The Pianist*, based on Wladyslaw Szpylman's autobiography, gathered awards for best director, actor and screenplay. The best foreign-language film Oscar went to *Nowhere in Africa*, a dramatisation of Stefanie Zweig's autobiographical novel about a German Jewish family who found refuge in Kenya. A no less worthy contender for the award was *Prisoners of Paradise*, a documentary about Kurt Gerron. The actor, who had played the eponymous cabaret owner in *The Blue Angel*, was a prisoner in Terezin, where the Nazis tricked him into directing the propaganda film *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* with a promise to save his life.

German film The 84-year-old prolific producer Arthur Brauner, himself a Holocaust survivor whose output of over 50 films ranged from shlock to the Oscar-nominated *Hitlerjunge Salomon*, has completed a pet project by bringing the massacre of Baby Yar, in which he lost 12 relatives, to the screen.

Musical EL Doctorow's best-selling 1960s novel *Ragtime* has inspired a Broadway musical with the same title, currently running at the Piccadilly Theatre. It features such archetypal Jewish American figures of the 1900s as the anarchist Emma Goldman, the escapologist Houdini and a dirt-poor immigrant who strikes it rich as a film pioneer.

Obituary The bestselling American novelist Howard Fast has died, aged 88. The son of a New York garment worker, Fast showed early literary talent and wrote scripts for Voice of America broadcasts during the war. Afterwards, he began a steady output of left-leaning historical novels culminating in *Spartacus* (filmed by and with Kirk Douglas) in 1960. By this date Fast had broken with Communism, of which he had previously been an impassioned adherent. In subsequent novels such as *Moses*, *Prince of Egypt* he reprised the Jewish theme he had previously broached in the Maccabee epic *My Glorious Brothers*.

More than a word-spinner

WHAT I SAW: REPORTS FROM
BERLIN 1920-33

Joseph Roth
Granta, 2003

The renowned novelist Joseph Roth was also an accomplished journalist, as is evident in these reports. Published in English for the first time in *Granta's* series of Roth titles, with a helpful introduction by the respected translator Michael Hofmann, these vignettes of the Weimar years are insightful and often disturbingly prescient.

On one level, Roth's reports provide a vivid overview of the life of the city, with its traffic congestion, skyscrapers and department stores, its dives and nightclubs, the UFA movie palace, the amusement park, the steam baths at night, the Potsdamer Platz and the monstrosously endless Kurfürstendamm.

The personalities who figure prominently in the extracts are, for the most part, the dispossessed - Jews, rough-sleepers, ex-criminals, the unnamed dead. Some are particularly colourful - Richard, the hunchbacked 'newspaper waiter' without a cafe, a 'king in exile'; Franz, the doyen of master burglars; Geza Furst, a 17-year-old Jewish refugee from Hungary, 'ex-Red Guard, adventurer, and pirate in spe'.

Clearly, Roth was much more than a gifted word-spinner. His profound and perceptive reflections imbue this anthology with enduring literary significance. His report on the 'Unnamed Dead', whose photographs line the display cabinets of Berlin's police stations, is a masterpiece of compassion. For Roth, more concerned with a reality which remains valid 'sub specie eternitatis' than with the superficial and the immediate, these distressing photographs are the true reflection of the city rather than the smiling faces adorning the windows of society photographers and Pathé newsreels.

Roth's reflections on the 'Jewish question', eloquently voiced in his principal work of non-fiction, 'The Wandering Jews', also find expression here. Two pieces are particularly striking, the first 'Wailing Wall' written

REVIEWS

in 1929 after the massacre of Jews in Hebron. While clearly sensitive to the tragic paradox of the Jewish condition - 'sow love on earth and reap hatred' - Roth finds no solution in the Zionist 'experiment' and cannot conceive of the Jews as a nation. His concern with the revival of Judaism's 'warlike traditions' and his wish that young Jews 'returning' to Palestine could see themselves as 'grandchildren' of the priests and prophets rather than the Maccabees seem astonishingly relevant today.

The second extract, 'The Auto-da-Fé of the Mind', a bitter epilogue from Paris in 1933 after Weimar's collapse, is a tragically ironic counterpoint to the underlying fragility of Weimar democracy evident in two pieces in 1924, when Roth, an 'a-political observer' of Berlin's political scene, noted first the public indifference to the election campaign and then the foolish posturings of politicians at the Reichstag's opening. Now, amid the burning of books and the expulsion of Jewish writers, many of whom he lists as having greatly contributed to the pantheon of German literature, Roth foresees the murder of Jews as one of the principal objectives of the Fascist totalitarianism of the Third Reich.

Emma Klein

Full circle

SPANNING THE CENTURY: THE
STORY OF AN ORDINARY MAN IN
EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Tony Hare
Memoir Club, 2002

I'm not too sure about the word 'ordinary' in the subtitle. Tony Hare seems to have a talent for getting involved in important happenings. To this is added a shrewd grasp of the geographical and historical context which has bedevilled relations between various ethnic groups in Central Europe. On all the events he witnesses he turns a clear but unsentimental eye.

Unlike those of us who, because of our youth, have few good memories of Europe, he is able to give us a glimpse of more pleasant times in his native Czechoslovakia - of foreign holidays and ski trips. Coming from an entrepreneurial family, when he leaves school he is apprenticed to an uncle in the textile business. There follows national service in the Czech army in what is an unusual setting for a *yiddisher* boy - a cavalry regiment! He writes with some bitterness of the Munich agreement, which robbed his country of this and all other means of defence.

When, following the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, it is no longer safe for him to stay at home, he is lucky enough to be given an exit permit by a former school teacher who has joined the Nazi Party. Sailing from Hamburg to Cuba, he is trapped, along with hundreds of other Jewish refugees, aboard the ill-fated *St Louis*. Once again, luck is with him: he is permitted to enter England through the sponsorship of an aunt who is already here, so escaping the tragic end of some of the other refugees who are eventually allowed into Holland and France, only to be deported later. He gives an interesting account of cloth-making in his subsequent work in the woollen trade in Yorkshire, where he becomes a member of the Home Guard.

Enrolled, because of his knowledge of several languages, in the Intelligence Service, Hare is privy to much then unpublicised information. According to him, the Dieppe landings were a failure due to an unfortunate coincidence: a detachment of German troops on an 'invasion exercise' got to Dieppe two hours earlier than anticipated and so managed to wipe out large numbers of Canadian troops.

A more chilling account is of a former German schoolteacher who was ordered to take lorry loads of concentration camp prisoners westwards without food or water. Those unable to stand up were thrown out. The teacher expresses surprise that anyone should bother to ask what happened to them. During the course of his interrogations, he has to listen to all manner of alibis and excuses by the no longer arrogant but still heavily

indoctrinated Nazis. Finally, he gets to question the commandant of Belsen himself, who cries like a child as the enormity of his behaviour begins to dawn on him.

The last part of the book is concerned with Hare's exploration of his Jewish roots through Torah studies. The wheel has come full circle: with a happy family life 'goodness and mercy' certainly seem to have followed him. This is a story plainly told but one of compelling interest.

Martha Blend

When Stephen evolved from Stefan

SPIES

Michael Frayn

Faber and Faber, 2002

Don't be fooled by the title. This novel is not about British Intelligence or the Abwehr. Its chief protagonists, Keith and Stephen, are two lads on the cusp of adolescence who construct a fantasy that Keith's mother is a German spy. They start following her around logging the tiniest detail of every shopping trip. In the process, Stephen inadvertently stumbles upon a secret that has nothing whatsoever to do with espionage and everything with doomed romance. The dénouement is so emotionally charged that it reminded me of *The English Patient*.

Though the story eventually fizzles like a firework, for long stretches it can hardly be described as action-packed. I thought this quite appropriate: early adolescence is, after all, a time for mooning about and drifting aimlessly.

It can also be a season for intense introspection. Stephen lacks self-esteem and is content - in fact feels privileged - to take orders from the boneheaded Keith, who thinks of himself as pre-ordained officer material. At first, the reader is expected to ascribe Stephen's indecisiveness to growing pains and hormonal change. After a while, though, the author's random remarks are bound to set antennae twitching.

Thus, Stephen is described as uncomfortable with his name. At school he is bullied and called a 'sheeny' - a term he doesn't

understand. He is equally uncomprehending when Keith mentions the 'Juice', a sinister group of plotters and swindlers. At home he hears his English-speaking father use strange locutions like 'coodle-moodle'.

The reader has to wait till the epilogue to connect the phrase with *kuddel-muddel*. In other words, it transpires that Stephen is one of us: a child refugee too young to remember his native Germany.

This realisation lends an extra *frisson* to a story already full of heart-stopping surprises. *Spies* is stylistically accomplished and combines unsentimental humanity with rueful humour. One cannot but concur with the judgment of the Whitbread Prize jury.

Richard Grunberger

Unknown hero

A GOOD MAN IN EVIL TIMES: THE STORY OF AN UNKNOWN HERO WHO SAVED COUNTLESS LIVES IN WORLD WAR II

Jose-Alain Fralon (translated by Peter Graham)

Penguin Books

This remarkable little book tells the story of a man who wrestled with his conscience, rather like the biblical Jacob wrestled with the angel. Aristides and Cesar de Sousa Mendes were twin sons of a Catholic judge in the province of Coimbra in Portugal. The twins studied at Coimbra University, as did Antonio Salazar, the future fascist dictator of Portugal. For reasons which are not quite clear, Salazar bore a grudge against Aristides which he took to his grave.

Aristides and Cesar followed their father in studying law but both took embassy posts overseas. In 1940, when the Nazis invaded France, Aristides was the Portuguese consul in Bordeaux. Refugees flocked to his consulate. He was issued with a highly restricted list of 'categories' of applicants. Caught in a dilemma between his consular duty and his conscience, he shut himself in his room for several days and wrestled with this conflict. Once decided, he organised a team and issued visas all day and into

the night, providing escape for about 10,000 refugees, mostly Jewish, via Spain and Portugal to the Americas.

Aristides was recalled to Lisbon, stripped of his consular duties, ostracised from society and left without means of earning to provide for his wife, Angelina, and children. Aristides and Angelina lived their last years in poverty. He died in 1948, she in 1954.

Eventually, in 1967, Aristides was honoured by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. In 1986 a son in America, Jose Paulo, organised a petition, co-sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy. This led to Aristides's rehabilitation in the Portuguese embassy in Washington in 1987. Finally, in 1988, the Lisbon parliament officially rehabilitated him - 48 years after his rescue operation in Bordeaux, 34 years after his death and 14 years after the overthrow of the Salazar dictatorship. Why did it take so long?

Ruth Barnett

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PROFILE

Howard Spier

Offering a hand in reconciliation



Peter Prager

The Pragers were one of the oldest Jewish families in Prussia. The great-grandfather, a master carpenter, took advantage of the 1812 Prussian award of citizenship to the Jews by moving from Silesia to Berlin, where, in 1821, he founded a suitcase factory. In 1897 the factory was appointed manufacturer to the Imperial Court and the Court of Prussia. It made suitcases for the army and for the Kaiser and, on one occasion, even for Queen Victoria. It existed until 1936, when the Nazis took it over.

When Hitler took power, Peter, aged ten, was about to enter the Grunewald Gymnasium in Berlin. As the Nazification process went ahead, Peter recalls, with typical honesty, that he was secretly keen to join in the fun and excitement accompanying a visit to the district by the Nazi leader - if only he had belonged to the 'superior Aryan race'!

With the anti-Semitic atmosphere intensifying, Peter moved to the Jüdische Privatschule Dr Leonore Goldschmidt. The history teacher joked that as a child Disraeli tried desperately to alter the shape of his nose by pushing up the end of it with his finger. Peter took this seriously and did likewise each night in bed. But when he looked in the mirror there was no difference: 'I just would not look "Germanic".'

Following Kristallnacht Peter was packed off to England as a Kindertransportee. He was taken in by the Flateaus, a wealthy Jewish communist family in Ilford (in which area, incidentally, Peter lives now). They owned a factory, ran a car and lived in a large house with a servant. But the high point of his existence there was visiting relatives of the Flateau family at nearby Hoses Farm, a large Tudor mansion house in spacious grounds with a full-time gardener and two servants. Here Peter really saw how the English upper crust lived. Hoses Farm was also frequented by prominent friends of the family, including a politician and a journalist. Many were left-wing socialists, but Peter found a 'serious discrepancy' between their ideals and

their style of living.

When, a year later, the Flateaus announced they could no longer afford to keep him, Peter was dumbfounded. Feeling totally rejected, he moved to a B'nai B'rith hostel in Finchley Road. Eventually he found a place in a hostel run by the Refugee Children's Committee in Primrose Hill.

Peter found work as, among other things, a tailor's apprentice - a job so boring that he welcomed a short spell of internment at the former Lingfield racecourse. Afterwards, he went back to tailoring, working in any number of workshops and loathing every second of it.

He joined the Free German Youth, a communist front organisation recruiting young German Jewish refugees. In 1943, wanting nothing more to do with Germany or German organisations, he and a dozen others quit. Shortly afterwards they told Werner Rosenstock, the AJR's then General Secretary, that they wished to integrate into Jewish society instead of returning to Germany. Dr Rosenstock helped them to form what was to become the Jewish Youth Group. Peter has been a member of the AJR ever since.

As the end of the war approached, Peter, moved by the plight of his mother, who had remained in Berlin throughout the war, felt he must go back to the German capital. He had promised his parents he would one day return in the uniform of an occupying army. In 1945-47 he worked for US intelligence in Germany, specialising in postal censorship.

Back in England, having been accepted for teacher training under the postwar Emergency Training Scheme, Peter applied for a teaching post, the first in a long and successful teaching career. Later he took a correspondence course leading to an economics degree. Asked by a headmaster to teach German, he was at first deeply resistant: he detested everything about Germany. But, putting his prejudices aside, he began to teach German. In 1974 he became Head of the Languages Department at Leyton Senior High Boys' School.

In 1978 Peter spent four months teaching English at the St Josef Schule in Jülich. His stay coincided with the fortieth anniversary of Kristallnacht. As Germany sought to make amends with a programme of events commemorating the Holocaust, he came close to tears: 'An entire nation was repenting for what they had done to me and my family.'

In 1982 Peter became a part-time tutor at the Leo Baeck College, teaching methodology to Jewish religion teachers. He learnt about Judaism and Israel, becoming a stern critic - not least in the correspondence columns of the *AJR Journal* - of what he sees as Israel's hardline policies.

In 2002 Peter published his autobiography,* which is dedicated to his wife Sylvia. Currently, this tolerant, intellectually rigorous man is engaged in writing a book on Frederick the Great, based on the 'enlightened despot's' numerous letters.

Peter regularly attends reunions of the Old Boys' Association of Grunewald Gymnasium. 'When people repent you must offer your hand in reconciliation', he insists.

**From Berlin to England and Back: Experiences of a Jewish Berliner* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, Library of Holocaust Testimonies)

INSIDE the AJR

Group formed in Dundee

At our inaugural meeting, which took place in the Queens Hotel, it was proposed that a branch should be founded in Dundee which could also attract members from Aberdeen. Northern Groups Co-ordinator Susanne Green informed us of the aims of the AJR. Among those present was one survivor and one Kindertransportee, who has published a book about her personal experiences (Hannele Zurndorfer: *9th November* (Quertal Publishers)). A lively two-hour discussion took place in which many experiences were exchanged.

John S MacKay

Next meeting: Thursday 3 July

Glasgow: 'Not many things nicer than a continental apple cake'

We had a very enjoyable meeting. Taking the taste of the past as our theme, we invited members to talk about the foods they remembered from their childhoods. Even better, many members brought along delicious cakes to share - there are not many things nicer than a continental apple cake! There was much friendly banter over whether herring salad is one of the best dishes on earth, or a punishment invented for children. Susanne Green updated us on AJR matters. We are looking forward to our get-together with the Edinburgh group when we visit that city next month.

Claire Singerman

Edinburgh's musical evening

We had a splendid musical evening at the home of David Goldberg. Members reminisced with music and songs from the Continent and listened to Jewish music and humour over a delicious tea. Plans are going ahead for the get-together with Glasgow and Newcastle members next month.

Susanne Green

Italy in Liverpool

Dr Italo Calma spoke on the theme of 'Recollections of the 1930s'. By 1938, he said, the intense antisemitism in Germany was reflected in Italy, making life impossible for the Jewish population there. He managed, however, to complete his medical degree, coming to England in August 1939. While his brother escaped to the USA, his mother remained in Italy, surviving the war by hiding in deserted farm buildings. When Italy entered the war Dr Calma was interned on the Isle of Man, but he was later released to act as an interpreter in the BBC Italian Service. After the war he worked for many years as a medical physiologist at Liverpool University.

Germany in Liverpool

Over 20 people from the first and second generations listened to nephrologist consultant Dr John Goldsmith relate his life story. When the Nazis came to power in 1933 they murdered his father, a dentist, and he and his mother, also a dentist, fled to Holland. As she was unable to make a living there, they emigrated to Cambridge. He was fortunate enough to attend a good school but, at the age of 16, he was interned and sent to Canada. A year later he returned to his school. He eventually graduated as a doctor, becoming a consultant physician in the NHS.

Gerry Jason

**Next meeting: Wednesday 18 June.
Annual lunch**

Foot tapping in Pinner

Over 30 of us came to listen to Alf Keiles, one of our own members, present 'The Jewish Influence on Jazz and Popular Music', a follow-up to an earlier talk. Mostly, of course, Alf plays original recordings, with short linking pieces. Starting with the 1924 recording of George Gershwin on the piano in his 'Rhapsody in Blue', we had a varied set of pieces of jazz and swing, fabulous trumpet and saxophone playing, and some vocals too. For some of the pieces Alf had merged two recordings - for instance, a Benny Goodman with 'Mahzel' together with singing by a group of Jewish OAP musicians. To

judge from the tapping feet and heads nodding in time, Alf had caught our mood exactly. The usual excellent tea and chat completed the afternoon's entertainment nicely.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 12 June, 2.00 pm: 'How we Rebuilt our Lives' (note the date, not the first Thursday of the month)

Essex: remembering the 'Dunera Boys'

Sadly two of our members had passed away and we spent a few quiet moments remembering them. Then we discussed the 'Dunera Boys', a large number of young Jews who were shipped on the *Dunera* to Australia as enemy aliens. On their way they encountered a German U-boat, but were saved by a miracle: the Nazis found papers in the water with German writing and, mistaking them for compatriots, allowed them to pass unharmed.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 10 June, 11.00 am. Alf Keiles, 'The Jewish Contribution to Jazz'

Kindertransportee audiotape in Hull

Meeting over tea and cakes at the home of a member, we listened intently as Susanne Green briefed us about recent AJR developments and proposed activities. Following a discussion on the above, Dina presented an interesting audiotape of a US 'Desert Island Discs' talk in which she discussed her personal experiences as a Kindertransportee in Sheffield looked after by a non-Jewish couple. Much of her experience, unfortunately, was not happy. Four of those present at the meeting became subscribing members; at least seven said they meant to attend the AGM and get-together at Beth Shalom on 1 June; and many expressed interest in a potential get-together in London on 15 July. Also, we hope to attend a function to be hosted by the Leeds group on 14 September.

Bob Rosner

Next meeting: Thursday 29 June at the home of Bobby Seewald

North London briefed on Middle East 'road map'

Some 20 of us were privileged to hear an update by Israel Embassy spokesman Abbie Ben-Arie on the current situation in the Middle East, made more poignant by the publication of the 'road map'. It was a pleasure to hear this matter presented in such a detailed and lucid matter. Our speaker did not hide the difficulties which may be encountered on the road to a permanent peace. Hopefully, given the co-operation and wisdom of all the parties involved, this will be at last achieved.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 26 June, 10.30 am: the musical 'Milk and Honey', presented by Walter Woyda

Helping Hand for Brighton & Hove Sarid

Sarah Wilkes and Liz Shaw gave an informative and very well-received talk on Helping Hand, a Brighton-based organisation of which they are co-founders. In a short time it has grown to an outfit which looks after the needs of people from as far east as Eastbourne to as far west as Worthing. It is staffed entirely by volunteers, who provide a range of services from transport to a listening ear for lonely members of the community. Practical and, occasionally, legal advice is also available. The service is mostly free.

Frank Goldberg

Next meeting: Monday 16 June, 10.45 am. Otto Deutsch: 'The Vienna Coffee Houses'

Next meetings

North London and South London: Thursday 12 June. All-day joint outing to Waddesdon Manor: The Rothschild Collection

East Midlands (Nottingham): Wednesday 13 August (not 18 June). Get-together

West Midlands (Birmingham): Sunday 20 July (not 29 June). Garden party

Wessex (Bournemouth): Wednesday 25 June. Outing to Isle of Wight

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Tue 3	Kentertainers
Wed 4	Jenny Kossew
Thur 5	Ronnie Goldberg
Sun 8	CLOSED
Mon 9	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 10	Roy Douglas
Wed 11	Jack Davidoff
Thur 12	Opdahl Trio
Sun 15	CLOSED
Mon 16	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 17	Sylvia Eaves - Act 1 Scene 11
Wed 18	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 19	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
Sun 22	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 23	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 24	Madelaine Whiteson - Trio Kinnor
Wed 25	Joe Kay & Shirley
Thur 26	Mike Marandi
Sun 29	CLOSED
Mon 30	Kards & Games Klub

Deaths

Malinow. Herbert Malinow, born in Breslau, died on 4 April 2003 aged 82, after a short and sudden illness.

Lobel. Melanie Lobel née Fischbach, died 11 April in her 90th year. She will be sadly missed by her friends.

Classified

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Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes sale, separates etc. **Wednesday 25 June 9.30 - 11.45 am.**

Chiropodist. Trevor Goldman at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre **Wednesday 25 June, 10-11.30 am.**

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Obituary Sir Bernard Katz

Professor Sir Bernard Katz, who has died at the age of 92, was one of three scientists awarded the 1970 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for their separate work in unravelling how nerve messages are transmitted.

He was born in Leipzig of Russian and Polish parents who had emigrated to Germany. He was educated at the Albert Gymnasium in Leipzig, then studied medicine at Leipzig University. In 1935 the family left Germany. Thanks to Professor A. V. Hill, who worked tirelessly to help Jewish refugees, he became a postgraduate student at University College London (UCL). Four years later he joined J C Eccles's laboratory at Sydney Hospital in Australia as Beit Memorial Research Fellow and then as a Carnegie Research Fellow. In 1942 he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force, where he served as a radar operator in the south west Pacific until the end of the war.

In 1946 he returned to London to take up the post of Assistant Director of Research at UCL's Biophysics Research Unit. In 1950 he was appointed Reader in Physiology and, two years later, head of department and Professor of Biophysics. In 1978 he retired.

He wrote many scientific papers on nerve and muscle physiology. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1952 and served as vice-president of the Society in 1965 and again from 1968 to 1976, when he was also Biological Secretary. He was knighted in 1969.

Sir Bernard loved music, history and literature. He played chess with the same intensity as that with which he conducted experiments, becoming exasperated when things did not go as planned. He was a very private person, with a love for truth and high ideals and a detestation of showmanship and dishonesty.

Arts and Events Diary June

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

Mon 2 Dr F Rosner, 'Otto Klemperer and his Time with the Philharmonia Orchestra'. Club 43

Wed 4 Lecture on Chagall Exhibition in Paris with Monica Bohm-Duchen. 6.00 pm. London Jewish Cultural Centre

Mon 9 Club 43. No lecture (hall not available)

Wed 11 'Young Austria' members annual gathering. Domeyer Cafe, Hietzing. 3.00 pm

Wed 11 to Thur 12 Kindertransport Research Workshop: Experience, Narratives and Archival Resources. University of Sussex, Arts Seminar Room A71. Information Samira Teuteberg, Centre for German-Jewish Studies tel 01273 877184 or email s.teuteberg@sussex.ac.uk

Sun 15 Cabaret Workshop with Alexandra Valavelska. Exploring cabaret music from Berlin via London to New York of the 1920s-30s. Entry free. London Jewish Cultural Centre

Mon 16 Professor Ralph Andereg (Switzerland and Cologne University), 'Global Financial Structures'. Club 43

Thur 19 Mediterranean Muse: Aspects of New Piano Music from Israel. Lecture recital with Malcolm Miller. 7.30 pm. London Jewish Cultural Centre

Mon 23 Dr Nicholas Worrall (formerly Middlesex University), 'Chekhov the Visionary'. Club 43

Sun 29 More Than a Change of Address: Second Generation Conference. For information, tel Wiener Library on 020 7636 7247 or email sgc@wienerlibrary.co.uk

Mon 30 Dr Peter Barker (Reading University), 'Edgar Bauer, a German Spy in London'. Club 43

Mon 7 July 'Gemuettliches Beisammensein' with music and refreshments. Club 43

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

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

Central Office for Holocaust Claims Michael Newman

Ghetto applications deadline

In order to be entitled to receive a six-year back payment, Holocaust survivors interned in Nazi-controlled ghettos during the Second World War have until **30 June 2003** to apply for a social security pension from the German government. Successful applications made after this date will not receive the back payment. Applicants will have to show that they were interned in a ghetto and that they voluntarily worked for remuneration.

Further information is available from the German government social security department: Landesversicherungsanstalt Freie und Hansstadt Hamburg, Postfach 701125, 22011 Hamburg, Germany.

Insurance claims deadline extended

A further extension to file applications to the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims has been announced in order to 'provide sufficient time to publish additional policy-holder names and thus allow more time to file possible claims' (see story on page 2).

The new deadline is **30 September 2003**. A partial list of names of policy-holders is available on the Commission website www.icheic.org.

Dutch asset claims deadline extension

An extension to the deadline in respect of claims for the looting of safe-deposit boxes in Dutch banks has been announced. During the Second World War Jewish clients were charged for their deposit-boxes to be broken into. Claims must now be received by **1 July 2003**.

To receive claim forms, please write to Foundation for Individual Securities Claims Shoah, Postbus 94200, 1090 GE Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Further details are available at www.sie-sjoa.nl.

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.

'Churchill in Whitehall'

Ronald Channing

James Taylor, the senior researcher for the internationally acclaimed Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum, fascinated members of AJR's Luncheon Club with anecdotes on the late Sir Winston Churchill, an exhibition about whose life is to be opened in Whitehall next year. As the exhibition's Head of Research, James Taylor has the key task of doing justice to the man many regard as the saviour of Britain, if not free Europe and the Western democracies, and certainly as the hero of Jewish refugees who escaped to Britain from Nazi-dominated Europe.

The new exhibition, surprisingly the country's first for the wartime prime minister outside his home at Chartwell, will be a much-enlarged extension of the present Cabinet War Rooms, a labyrinth which runs underneath the Treasury, parts of which served as Churchill's fortified bunker, office, cabinet room, bedroom, map room and centre of operations.

Although Churchill did not favour the bunker's "troglodyte existence", and its unpleasant atmosphere, the War Rooms were used from May 1940, especially following the bombing of 10 Downing Street on 15 October 1940 and during the V-bomb raids from June 1944 to the war's end in May 1945. One well-directed bomb, according to James, would have destroyed it all but, reportedly, the Germans never discovered its existence. The rooms were abandoned and left undisturbed until 1983.

As a wartime leader, Churchill was to inspire people to believe in themselves, a quality surely lacking in his rival for the premiership, Lord Halifax. Having been born two months premature in 1874 (in the ancestral Blenheim Palace), Churchill was not a young man when he became PM in May 1940, but his personal military bravado, journalistic exploits and long experience of the major offices of state (all except foreign



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

James Taylor, who heads the research team creating an exhibition on the life of Sir Winston Churchill

secretary), which commenced as father of the welfare state in 1908, eventually spanned a 63-year political career,

Churchill, who counted many Jews among his friends, was "incredibly philosemetic", according to James, taking the view of a Victorian and valuing people for their abilities. In 1904 Churchill opposed the legislation restricting immigration into Britain. He represented a North Manchester constituency with a large Jewish population, and was pro-Zionist, supporting the foundation of a Jewish state in Palestine and those who wished to go from Britain to build it. He also grasped the threat of National Socialism at an early stage. Sympathetic to the bombing of Auschwitz as PM, he asked the RAF to consider its feasibility, but could not prevent this request from being buried by the military and civil servants, who regarded even such a minor diversion as the use of resources to save the lives of Continental Jewry as detracting from the war effort.

Paradoxically, James Taylor was possibly the only one in the room who was not a contemporary of Churchill; equally, every member knew that they owed their very lives to the great man.

Veteran Nazi-hunter retires

Simon Wiesenthal, 94, is to retire after almost five decades of searching for the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Wiesenthal succeeded in finding more than 1,000 Nazi war criminals.

Berlin Holocaust memorial given go-ahead

The construction of Germany's national Holocaust memorial begins this spring. Designed by American architect Peter Eisenman, the memorial was approved four years ago by the German parliament after ten years of debate.

German call to strengthen Israeli relations with Europe

On a recent visit to Israel, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said he was deeply disturbed by the state of Israeli-European ties. He called for steps to improve relations, including visits by Israeli officials to Europe.

Israeli schools to teach German

Israeli schools are to teach German for the first time following a cultural exchange agreement between the two countries. As part of the agreement, Hebrew will be studied in German high schools, while pupils in each country will be offered programmes on each other's history, with emphasis on the Holocaust.

Yad Vashem awarded prestigious prize

The Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial institute, established 50 years ago, has been awarded the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement for 2003. The Israel Prize is awarded by the State of Israel to individuals and institutions that have made outstanding contributions to Israeli society. Previous recipients of the Israel Prize include Martin Buber (1958), Golda Meir (1975), and Abba Eban (2001).

Jewish-Christian Relations Centre to tackle relations with Islam

The Cambridge-based Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations has launched its first Interfaith Fellowship. The intention is to apply its expertise in Jewish-Christian dialogue to wider interfaith encounters, particularly with Islam.