

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The BBC, PC and the PM

Great institutions, after a period of glory, slip into decline. In this they resemble great men. After all, in the 1930s Mahatma Gandhi advised German Jews to adopt a strategy of passive disobedience *vis-à-vis* the Nazi state, and last year Nelson Mandela warned that a war on Iraq would turn into a 'holocaust'.

A similar decline of mental astuteness is observable in the 80-year-old BBC. This institution won huge plaudits during the Second World War (and the Cold War) for its commitment to truth and freedom. Latterly, however, its attachment to these supreme values has been eroded by the ever more dominant ideology of the 1980s and 1990s, i.e. Political Correctness.

PC has swept through the opinion-forming classes of Britain - journalists, academics, lawyers, clergy, etc. - to such a degree that in any dispute their first question is not which party is right and which wrong, but which is First World, and which Third? A prime example of this is the strangely muted criticism of South African President Mbeki over his stance on AIDS and his support for the tyrannical Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe.

Since the United States is the very embodiment of the First World, it appears before the bar of British public opinion as the presumed villain in any dispute to which it is a party and, since the arch-villains of the post-Cold War world - Gaddafi, bin Laden, Arafat, the Taliban, Saddam Hussein - all come from the Third World, PC-oriented opinion-formers readily find extenuating circumstances for their atrocious conduct.

The missing sense of revulsion felt in the UK at the monstrous toll of innocent lives taken by Palestinian suicide bombers owes less to antisemitism than to the fact that Israel is widely perceived as a 'white', US-sponsored implant in the 'brown' Middle East. This perception is strongly fostered by the BBC, whose reporting on the Middle East seems woefully biased. The *Daily Telegraph* characterised Dan



Prime Minister Tony Blair

Cruikshank's 'On the Road to Armageddon', a documentary about the effect of the war on Middle East historical artefacts, as 'a breathtaking farrago of distortions, historical illiteracy and appalling insinuations against Israel. The effect of the programme was to blame Israel for imperilling the historical monuments of the region. There was not a single reference to the shocking defacing of historical architecture in East Jerusalem when it was under Arab control.'

The BBC's bias in this particular area is so blatant that *The Times* commented: 'Reporting the Middle East, it sometimes seems so remorselessly anti-Israeli that Mr Dyke might as well be open about it and allow his reporters to appear speaking Arabic, riding a camel, stopping occasionally to suck from a long pipe in a crowded souk.'

These two quotes from our largest-circulation quality newspapers show that, despite indications to the contrary, the battle against the demonisation of the Jewish state in this country has not yet been comprehensively lost. The fact that Sharon has taken the first tentative steps

along the path towards a settlement must have had a sobering effect on local Israel-baiters from John Pilger to the Muslims in Tower Hamlets who threatened to deselect their sitting MP Oona King unless she did something as obscene as likening the inhabitants of Gaza to Warsaw Ghetto dwellers.

The fact that Israeli-Palestinian tensions have gone into reverse mode from the constantly bloodier escalation of the last two years is due partly to Israel's steadfastness under relentless attack - but, more crucially, to Saddam's overthrow. Regime change in Iraq has radically transformed the situation of that most volatile region of the world. Even if Saddam's malign ghost still hovers over the country, the equation of terror with success which he embodied for so long has at last been challenged - if not entirely laid to rest.

If the world's number one trouble-spot is now an admittedly still dangerous, but even so, vastly better, place than five months ago, the fact has not been recognised by a large section of opinion-formers in this country. The latter, and particularly the BBC, are loath to praise the Prime Minister for his courageous part in transforming the Iraqi situation. Rather than delighting in the torture chambers closed down, and sorrowing over the killing fields revealed, they focus with inquisitorial zeal on the missing weapons of mass destruction. They are, as the Gilligan affair indicates, out to assassinate Tony Blair by depicting him as a warmongering poodle of Uncle Sam. Mary Tudor died with Calais engraved on her heart, and they are intent on incising WMD on the Prime Minister's political corpse. There is a remote possibility that they will ultimately bring him down, as John Wilkes Booth assassinated Abraham Lincoln in 1865. However, just as Booth's bullets could not restore slavery, the poison darts of Blair's detractors will not put Saddam back into power.

Berlusconi's outburst

Richard Grunberger

The Italian Prime Minister is hardly a good advertisement for the democratic process (nor, for that matter, is President Chirac). He proves that the deformation of the Italian body politic, due to such entrenched forces as the Catholic Church, feudalism, bureaucracy and organised crime, is long-lasting and still awaits drastic surgery.

Berlusconi has, moreover, the execrable taste of saying he is comfortable with jokes about the Holocaust. The only possible response to that is outraged silence.

On the other hand, he has shown a refreshing tendency to cut through politically expedient double-talk and articulate uncomfortable truths. He has asserted that Western values were not an optional equivalent to Islamic ones - but actually superior to them. Even his spat with the German Social Democrat deputy in the European Parliament contained a tiny grain of justification. The Germans of today like to project themselves as the goodie-goodies in international affairs - which, given the dreadful burden of their past, is understandable - but pacifist attitudes are of precious little use in the present dangerous world situation, where countries from Iran to North Korea want to go nuclear.

Lastly, the Germans and the French also lay claim to the role of joint spokesmen for Europe. Their notion that Europe should be equidistant from America and the Third World - exemplified by EU Commissioner Patten's fondness for Arafat and President Chirac's for Mugabe - shows the need for someone to take a more Atlanticist stance inside the EU. Currently, Italy and Spain go some way towards redressing the balance - but they, plus the former Soviet-Bloc countries, and (hopefully) the UK, will in the long run build a true bridge across the Atlantic.

Claims Conference - benefactor or villain?

David Rothenberg

As a representative of the AJR (under the aegis of World Jewish Relief) on the Board of the Claims Conference for some years, I have become only too aware of the misconceptions and misunderstandings of its activities.

Traditionally, where someone dies without heirs the state inherits their property. Immediately after the fall of the Nazi regime, it became evident to the occupying powers (initially the Americans, later joined by the British and French but not the Russians) that it would be unconscionable for this to apply in postwar conditions to Germany. Out of this situation the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany Inc. (the Claims Conference) was born. Formally, it is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated in the US, and is recognised under German law as the legal heir of heirless Jewish individual and communal property in Germany. The proceeds of such heirless property were to be dedicated to the Jewish people and to recording the facts and history of the *Shoah* and to education. Subsequently, the Claims Conference was given similar status in Austria.

The Claims Conference was originally led by Nahum Goldmann who, though born in Russia, was educated at the Musterschule in Frankfurt. Over the years it has acted not only as the heir of heirless property, but also as the champion of the dispossessed, leading the drive for compensation from the German government to hundreds of thousands of refugees and survivors in

the form of pensions and cash payments to the most impoverished.

Board membership

When the Claims Conference was originally established, there were 23 founding bodies. Since then there have been many attempts to change or add to these representative bodies to reflect changes in the world Jewish community. Israeli and East European bodies felt they were underrepresented, while many felt the US (and to a lesser extent the UK) was disproportionately represented. Over the last few years there has been some movement to increasing Board numbers to redress this perceived unfairness. The AJR's own position is that we are a founding member of one of the original 23 bodies, the Council of Jews from Germany. Recently we have sat on the Board, together with a representative of Jewish Care, as representing World Jewish Relief (itself, as the CBF, another of the original 23 bodies).

The Claims Conference has attracted bad publicity, much of it unfair, in connection with its actions as the agent of the German Government. In winning unprecedented sums for survivors, the Claims Conference had to accept that it would be responsible for the distribution of the very money it had secured for those survivors while being bound by the formal and bureaucratic rules laid down by the German Government. The Government thus

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AJR Journal

Richard Grunberger Editor-in-Chief
 Ronald Channing Executive Editor
 Howard Spier Editorial and Production
 AJR Journal, Jubilee House,
 Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 4RL
 Tel: 020 8385 3070 Fax: 020 8385 3080
 e-mail: editorial@ajr.org.uk
 www.ajr.org.uk



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Displaced placenames

Richard Grunberger

'After a lifetime of referring to the place as Leningrad', my friend grumbled, 'I can't get used to calling it St Petersburg.' I tactlessly pointed out that at the time of its birth the city had actually been renamed Petrograd. The Bolsheviks finally renamed it after Lenin and, to emphasise the break with the Tsarist past, they also renamed Yekaterinburg (commemorating Catherine the Great) Sverdlovsk, and Tsaritsyn Stalingrad.

The whirligig of time brought further change: the last-mentioned hero city is now simply Volgograd, and Sverdlovsk has reverted to its original name of Yekaterinburg.

The latter change is - to coin a phrase - good for the Jews. Since Yakov Sverdlov was the local Bolshevik commissar who ordered the execution of the Romanovs, the less the Russian public are reminded of his existence, the better.

A Russian town with a far more lighthearted - and tenuous - Jewish connection is Kaliningrad. In its previous incarnation as the capital of East Prussia and coronation city of the Hohenzollern, it was known as Königsberg - which name (minus the umlaut) also happened to be inscribed on Woody Allen's birth certificate. The Woody Allen-Königsberg nexus underlines the irony of history that Jews have bestowed lustre, or at least widespread name recognition, on several German towns whose inhabitants were for the most part Judeophobes. Berlin, of course, would have been well-known even without help from Irving (or Isaiah), but what would Breslau/Bresslaw have amounted to without Bernie, Bonn without Izzy, Kassel without Sir Ernest and Kissingen without Henry? Seriously, though, which US Supreme Court judge outshone Felix Frankfurter, or which British film-maker Emeric Pressburger?

Mention of the great cineaste touches on another interesting issue - the fact that the average town in Eastern Europe boasted three different names. Pressburg (German) is also known as Bratislava (Slovak) and Poszony (Hungarian); Vilnius (Lithuanian) likewise is Wilna (Russian) and Wilno (Polish). Uniquely,

the Austro-Hungarian Lemberg became Lwów in Poland, Litzmannstadt in the Third Reich, and is currently Lviv, capital of West Ukraine.

A similar, but less complex, process of re-naming has been going on in post-colonial Africa. The Congolese capital Leopoldville, named after the Belgian king who was the worst royal slave-driver in history, is nowadays known as Kinshasa; less justifiably Stanleyville, commemorating the intrepid journalist who found Livingstone, has been renamed Kisangani.

Further south, the names of Britain's top Empire-builders have also been erased from the map. Zambia and Zimbabwe have replaced the two states whose names commemorated Cecil Rhodes. Salisbury, the South Rhodesian capital, named for Britain's prime minister in the heyday of Empire, is now called Harare (and is in imminent danger of being dubbed Mugabeville).

Self-designated nation-builders of Mugabe's ilk already existed in the 1930s. One such, President Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, informed the 1938 Evian Conference on Refugees that his country was - uniquely - prepared to accept several thousand German Jewish immigrants (grotesque as it may sound, he wanted 'Aryan-looking' Jews to offset the dark skin of the bulk of the Dominican population). However, the outbreak of war ten months after Evian restricted the immigrants to a few hundred. Sometime later, in the postwar era, the president renamed the capital city San Domingo Ciudad Trujillo as a tribute to himself.

A nation-builder at the opposite end of the spectrum to Mugabe and Trujillo, not only in character but also in the degree of power he could exercise (either over his own people or internationally), was Theodor Herzl. This visionary, imbued with the dream of the rebirth of a people scattered to the four winds, is today most inadequately commemorated. What, after all, is Herzlia, other than a satellite town of Tel Aviv boasting several deluxe hotels flanked by azure swimming pools and verdant golf courses?

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Claims Conference - benefactor or villain?

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obtained the credit for paying, leaving the opprobrium for bureaucratic rejection of individual claims to the Claims Conference.

Similarly, the Claims Conference is the paying agent on behalf of the German Foundation 'Remembrance, Responsibility and Future' for Jewish slave labourers other than those living in the former USSR or Poland. Again, it carries the blame for rejecting claimants and for delays in payment caused frequently by the strict rules of the Foundation.

Support for survivors/education and grant making

Another subject which gives rise to deeply felt and vigorously argued debate is to what extent moneys paid out should be used for assistance to elderly, needy Jewish victims of Nazism and to what extent it should be applied for research, education and documentation of the *Shoah*. The Board agreed a few years ago that 80 per cent of grants should be for assistance and 20 per cent for the educational aspects of its remit. This proportion was reaffirmed this year, but not before emotional pleas to apply more to 'survivors' now.

All grants are recommended by an Allocations Committee, which has very thorough review procedures, and are then approved by the entire Board. There has been a move to create a separate allocations committee for grants to Israel, but this has not been agreed; payments for institutions such as old-age homes in Israel are, however, discussed in advance with the appropriate ministries in Israel.

All this pales into insignificance compared to the fraught question of property recovered in former East Germany by the Claims Conference as successor to heirless property.

The second and concluding part of this article will appear in the October issue.

Stamford Hill *Tannhäuser*

Richard Grunberger

The above heading most emphatically doesn't refer to an actual staging of Wagner's opera in N16. Those familiar with the work will know now that its full title is *Tannhäuser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg*. What I want to write about is a song contest - or, to use Wagner's term - *Sängerkrieg* (singers' war) that took place at a Stamford Hill youth club just over 60 years ago.

I was 17, a newly recruited, fully committed, member of Young Austria. It would be no exaggeration to say that I considered the organisation my spiritual home. For one, it had released me from the debilitating isolation I had felt since my arrival in London. For another, coming from a Social Democrat home, I thrilled to the Marxist message (carefully wrapped in Austrian patriotic packaging) my new mentors were sending out. As an ex-member of the Socialist-Zionist *Hashomer Hatzair*, I didn't even balk at substituting the Vienna Woods for Mount Zion as the focus for an exile's yearning - not least because the process was helped along by camaraderie and a diet of lectures, as well as readings from authors like Schnitzler and Karl Kraus.

Stamford Hill being what it was - and still is - the youngsters Young Austria tried to recruit were of a somewhat more religious cast of mind than their contemporaries in other parts of London. The target 'audience' were either living with observant parents or Jewish landladies, or in single-sex hostels under rabbinical supervision.

Our two-dozen-strong Stamford Hill group accordingly contained a sizable bloc of brand new recruits quite deaf to the siren call of Austrian patriotism (not to mention Marxism). They had joined because we organised socials and rambles, where

they could meet youngsters of similar background and converse in their mother tongue. In addition, the mingling of the sexes provided a not insignificant draw.

However, in that particular respect the situation that confronted the newly recruited intake was far from propitious. Our bobby-soxers - to use a contemporary expression - looked for boys in whose company they might do something glamorous, such as going dancing at the Royal or Paramount dance halls. Alas, most of our lads were not cut out for that role. Bespectacled, walleyed Rudi N, for example, resembled one of Dickens's bedraggled waifs and strays. Running him a close second sartorially was dark, fuzzy-haired Leo W, whose down-covered upper lip still awaited an encounter with the razor. Leo was so proud of having become a munitions worker because (a) it helped the war effort, and (b) it brought him closer to the proletariat - he didn't take off his overalls even after leaving the factory. (No chance of him being admitted to the Royal in that garb!) Another of our stalwarts self-excluded from the Royal was Fritz S, the group leader. Overly serious and stiff of manner, he considered dancing a bourgeois frivolity; besides he had two left feet. As for me, I was no Beau Brummel. I wore shirts with frayed collars, socks with holes and scuffed shoes.

Then one evening two newcomers fetched up at our meeting whose appearance rocked the room. They wore suits (of matching jackets and trousers!), collars and ties and their feet were shod in polished shoes. And what's more, both sported moustaches - a feature unknown among Young Austrians, and frowned upon us as an expression of vanity. The specimen adorning the upper lip of the taller newcomer was

Jewish immigration featured on national website

Ronald Channing

'Moving Here', a new website recording and illustrating the history of immigrant groups settling in Britain in the last 200 years, gives prominence to the Jewish community which was established prior to and during the twentieth century. Sponsored by the National Archive, and the result of two years' research, the website also features the Caribbean, Irish and South Asian immigrant communities.

Drawing on the resources of 30 museums, libraries and archives, the new website offers 150,000 documents, illustrations and historic photographs of all kinds, making it one of the largest projects of its type ever undertaken. 'Moving Here', which can be found on www.movinghere.org.uk, is a free website which enables visitors to see first-hand records of the experiences of people who left their homelands and made a new life in Britain. It also allows migrants to add their own stories to the archive.

Among the documents available for inspection are registers of the Jewish Free School dating back to the nineteenth century, Home Office records of the names and details of Jewish refugees granted asylum during World War II and photographs of the few clothes and mementos brought by a Kindertransport child. Listed as a Hampstead psychoanalyst, Anna Freud was officially designated a female enemy alien, but granted exemption from internment. British Jewry's *Book of Honour* lists the names of all Jewish servicemen who served in the British Army in World War I.

AJR's partner in last year's record-breaking Continental Britons exhibition, the Jewish Museum, is a major contributor to the 'Moving Here' project and provided no fewer than 16,000 images of Jewish migration to, and settlement in, Britain. The website offers a unique resource for those interested in Britain's diverse heritage and an accessible resource for Jewish people keen to explore their roots and cultural origins.

so well-trimmed that it might have secured him employment as a stand-in for Anton Walbrook. Alas, the sojourn of the two men-about-town among us ragged-trousered philanthropists was brief. The Anton Walbrook lookalike took a boat to America; left high and dry, the other swapped socialising for evening class study.

As luck - or, more precisely, ill-luck - would have it, our girls' craving for a touch of glamour did not remain unrequited for long. Within weeks of the 'clotheshorses' departure, three somewhat younger and less standoffish newcomers made their appearance at the group. The trio's lynchpin was the quite impeccably suited Herbert H. Herbert who turned out to be a veritable teenage Svengali with handsome features often screwed up into a lopsided, sardonic grin. His adjunct, Siggie R, had a tendency to go for the jugular under a display of surface affability. 'If you looked at yourself in the mirror', he once told me pointedly, 'you would see you have no choice but to be a Zionist!'

Lowest in the trio's pecking order stood Sam L. This was paradoxical because Sam, offspring of poor Polish immigrants to Germany, was the 'entryists' greatest draw: he was tall and slim and had Rudolf Valentino looks allied to a Tino Rossi-type singing voice.

And it was largely in the sphere of song that the subsequent battle for the allegiance of our Stamford Hill group's two dozen members was fought out. We Young Austria loyalists went through our standard repertoire of anodyne folksongs, roared out to the accompaniment of the slapping of (preferably Lederhosen-clad) thighs, followed by less full-throated attempts at yodelling.

At meetings of Herbert's rival faction, meanwhile, Sam wowed the listeners with Yiddish and Hebrew melodies before launching into an evocation of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan:

Wenn die Sonne untergeht und

wenn die Nacht beginnt/Weht von Transjordaniens Bergen her ein kühler Wind/Um das Lagerfeuer stehen Männer ohne Zahl/Einer spricht und jedes Wort klingt hart wie Stahl:/Niemals wollen, lassen wir's geschehn dass die Grenze bildet der Yarden.

(When the sun sinks and the night begins/A cold wind blows from Transjordan's mountains/Around the campfire stand men without number/One of them speaks and every word sounds hard as steel/We shall never allow it to happen/that the Jordan should form the frontier.)

The reason why we hardcore Young Austrians knew exactly what went on in the enemy camp was that Rudi N had crept into their meeting place ahead of time. Duly discovered, he presented himself as a potential convert eager to hear the Zionist case set out. Naturally he was laughed to derision, and then mock-serenaded with an Alpine folksong of jaw-dropping banality: 'Black-brown is the hazelnut/I am Black-brown too/ Black-brown must be my girl/ Just the same as I.'

Rudi's report was delivered to a rump of 13 Young Austria members - whereas our previous meeting had attracted 25! Were we depressed - you bet! But then, having been worsted by the power of song, we fought back with the only available weapon to us, i.e. more song:

Wie uns die Lüge auch schmähend umkreist/Alles besiegend erhebt sich der Geist/ Kerker und Eisen zerbricht seine Macht/ wenn wir uns rüsten zur letzten Schlacht/ So flieg du flammende, du rote Fahne/ Voran dem Wege den wir ziehn/ Wir sind der Zukunft getreue Kämpfer/ Wir sind die Arbeiter von Wien.

(Although lies mock and encircle us/ The spirit will arise victoriously/ Its power smashes iron and prison. When we prepare for the final battle. Unfurl the flaming scarlet banner/ Lighting the path that we pursue/ We are loyal fighters for the future/ We are the workers of Vienna.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Sir - Jon Rumney (August issue) states that 'the whole world knows that the USA and UK were Iraq's main weapons suppliers.' Well, one source which does not know that is *Jane's 1990 Survey* (pre-Gulf War 1) of the world's armed forces. It clearly shows the Iraqi forces as being equipped mainly with Russian and French weaponry. It would also appear that Mr Rumney is unaware of who supplied Saddam with the Osirac nuclear reactor, namely France. Had it not been destroyed in 1982 by the Israeli air force, Saddam would by 1990 have been in possession of the 'Mother of All Weapons of Mass Destruction'.

Jacob Brauner
London NW11

NO TO THE NAY-SAYERS

Sir - If action against Saddam had to be 'sold' to the Anglo-American public on the WMD premise, to be discarded as a 'wild-goose chase', perhaps it is because there is no international agreement on when, if at all, the humanitarian consideration should prevail.

When does inconvenience, subjectively (perhaps) experienced, become oppression, then persecution, then genocide? At what point are 'outsiders' entitled to intervene? As an internationalist, my answer is 'the sooner the better', but the nationally-inclined may be expected to hesitate. Can you not imagine the reaction in the USA years ago at any suggestion of armed intervention to deal with the 'terrible wrong' being done to the black population of the old South? And would America think otherwise now?

Alan S Kaye
Chalfont St Giles

Sir - I always look forward to reading your front-page leader, if only because it so frequently gets the adrenalin flowing! Maybe it is good for you, like exercise and five portions of fruit, to achieve a beyond-average long life. It is far too soon to argue that the invasion of Iraq was a good thing for the Iraqi people - history will tell. Moreover, it is probably near impossible to plant democracy without extensively preparing the soil. Furthermore, it was the British government that taught the Iraqis and the Kurds that might is right. We used the RAF and gas-filled bombs to do so - weapons of MD! A lesson the Arabs have not forgotten.

The real point at issue is that we were sold this military venture almost solely on the information that Saddam Hussein possessed WMDs and could deploy them in a very short space of time. Knowing this evil character, would he not have used them if he could? Would it have hurt if we had taken Hans Blix's advice and given the UN and their inspection team a few weeks longer? France, Germany and, indeed, many other nations did not share the opinion of Bush and Blair. I see no reason why you should be so inspired by Alistair Campbell. And finally, just to put my money where my mouth is, I will make a donation to the AJR welfare fund if any real weapons of mass destruction are found in Iraq.

Herbert Layton
Gloucester

NUREMBERG COLLOQUY

Sir - Readers might be interested to read about the *Zeitzeugengespräch* (Period Witness Colloquium) in early June. There were five witnesses, two from England and three from the US.

They had been persuaded to take part by Gerhard Jochem, one of the city archivists in Nuremberg much involved with the history of Jews in the city. In his spare time he has created a comprehensive website on this subject.

We had two sessions with teenage schoolchildren who appeared well informed, although none seemed to know any Jews. They wanted to know a great deal about what had happened to us, and we were able to tell them and to stress that they needed to know so as to make sure that such things could not happen again.

We found that the young generation of Nurembergers were sincerely puzzled and distraught at the events of the Hitler years and felt strongly about the guilt of their fathers and grandfathers. We met a great many people who expressed their personal empathy and were involved in activities to make amends. (Herr Jochem's address is: Stadt Nuremberg, Stadtarchiv 90317, Nuremberg.)

Susan Sinclair

VIENNA COMMUNITY'S FINANCIAL PLIGHT

Sir - It would be a laudable gesture if AJR members of Austrian origin would each contribute an affordable sum towards a donation to be sent to the *Augarten Schule* in Vienna. Your compassionately worded appeal will surely call forth a generous response!

Name and address supplied

2003 AGM

Sir - The best conducted and shortest AGM I have ever attended! Many congratulations to the management team. And what a good idea to hold it at the Holocaust Centre in Laxton, to enable our Northern and Midlands members not to have to travel so far, and all of us to meet. May I suggest we hold future AGMs in Laxton every three years.

Eric Neman
Elstree

NARROW FOCUS

Sir - Having been a subscriber to *AJR Journal* for some years, it pains me to point out that the title Association of Jewish Refugees is clearly a misnomer. In your otherwise excellent publication, I have read in great depth about Austro-German refugees, but never at any time has there been any mention of East European Jewish refugees. Am I to take it that your journal/association does not wish to take cognisance of the existence of Polish Jewish refugees?

Bob Kutner
Glasgow

VOLTE-FACE

Sir - How splendid! Germans refuse to go to war!

M Goldenberg
London N6

MATERIAL SOUGHT

The author of two published historical studies, I am gathering material for a book on the nature of British support for Nazism up to 1945. I would welcome any recollections, impressions, sight of any documents, photos, etc. Any readers who feel able to assist my research should contact me through the Editor.

Martin Page
MA Oxon

ACCUSATION

Sir - The subject which Bill Oakfield has raised (August issue) is obviously a very important one. This is the first time I have heard of it. Naturally I have no opinion as to the facts, but I wonder whether this is not a case of historical importance to the Jewish community in the UK. Should it not be investigated by an independent commission of enquiry?

Frederick Hirsch
Pinner, Middx

FENCES AND BRIDGES

Sir - Clare Parker is sickened by the ignorance of anyone daring to blame Sharon for 'trying to protect his people.' His so-called protection has resulted in many more civilian deaths than ever before. He would be better advised to conform fully with the 'road

map' currently on offer. Thank god for the Israeli citizen Daniel Barenboim. He recently gave a concert in Ramallah and is laying the foundations for a Palestinian youth orchestra. This emphasis on our common humanity is building bridges between our two peoples. Surely better than erecting fences.

Inge Trott
Cheam, Surrey

OSTRICHES AND CRABS

Sir - As a regular reader of *AJR Journal*, I am shocked by the continuous venomous letters directed against you. Haven't these people learned anything since 1939, when the world stood by while 6 million Jews were exterminated? They remind me of the so-called *Nauman-Juden* in Germany between 1933 and 1935 who said Hitler didn't mean us - only the *Ostjuden*.

I am surprised to read your review of *Crabwalk* by Gunter Grass, whom I always thought to be a liberal, modern German. According to Frederick Forsyth's *Odessa File*, the *Wilhelm Gustloff* was sunk by the Russians because it contained a large number of German army personnel and several hundred SS men, mostly guards of the Riga ghetto, in which thousands of German Jews were exterminated. I speak from experience as I was a member of the British army party which investigated this affair in late summer 1945.

Ossi Findling
London NW4

ALEXANDER KORDA

Sir - While not detracting from the importance of the films of Sir Alexander Korda (August issue), he certainly was not 'Britain's only movie mogul.' John Schlesinger, whose funeral took place on 5 August at the Liberal Jewish Cemetery in Willesden, made many famous films and was highly regarded in Britain and the US.

He was the son of a Jewish paediatrician who brought 13 German Jewish children to Britain in 1939.

Mrs HL Vajifdar
London SW13

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

What is Paradise? The Greeks had a word for it and their Arcadian myths infused the pastoral traditions of the Renaissance. Now, the **National Gallery** has jointly curated **Paradise** with **Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery** until the end of the month.

Many of the ideas of the Old Masters express love in a rustic setting. But **Claude Lorrain's** *Landscape with Narcissus and Echo*, showing the recumbent Echo sighing at her lover's vain indifference, implies that even Paradise is an imperfect state.



Paradise: Landscape with Narcissus and Echo by Claude Lorrain. Copyright 2000 National Gallery, London

Samuel Colman's *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* evokes all the munificence of a royal visit - but Paradise? Well, Paradise is actually derived from the Persian for royal pleasure garden, so perhaps so. **François Boucher's** *Landscape with a Watermill* may romanticise peasant life but it ignores rural poverty. **John Constable's** *Cornfield* is an elegy of remembered childhood, while in **Poussin's** *Bacchanalian Revel*, with nymphs and satyrs dancing before a fearsome sculpture of Pan, Paradise panders more to sex and ritualism.

Paul Gauguin fled to his Nirvana in the South Pacific. He gave us luminous work idealising primitive rites, but died disappointed. What can one say about **Monet's** incomparable *Water-Lily Pond*? In soft greens and aquamarines, its beauty makes you gasp and long to

enter the painting - but is it Paradise? The remarkable Finnish painter **Gallen-Kallela** followed Gauguin to a pursuit of primitivism, in his case the biting rawness of his own northern landscape.

For me, **Friedrich's** *Winter Landscape* - an icy fir tree mirrors a distant, ghostly gothic church - makes the most formal statement. He offers no easy answers to heavenly seekers but a Christian response. But perhaps of all of them, two opposites most attract. **Mark Rothko's** *Untitled* is an epiphany to yellow. It says least and yet its dazzling, unchallenged colour expresses mood and longing beyond substance. **Stanley Spencer's** *The Lovers or the Dustmen* buys into everyone's real longing - that Paradise is finding our loved ones waiting for us. There is nothing ethereal about his stocky, mouthy dustman's wife, literally lifting him off his feet in her sheer joy at their reunion. Heavy, wooden, expressive, iconic - and utterly heavenly.

William Roberts and his brother-in-law **Jacob Kramer** are respectively the *Tortoise and the Hare* in the **Ben Uri's** celebration of these two remarkable Modernists. Opposite in character and work patterns, they were linked by Roberts's marriage to Kramer's sister, their Muse, Sarah. Kramer was the wildfire talent in tune with the Modernist age. The more circumspect Rogers worked slowly and rigorously to a more precise pattern. Kramer offers us his dazzling and luminous talent, whether it is the portrait of Sarah in blue, or his more stylised Jewish paintings, personified best by his masterpiece *The Day of Atonement* of 1919. Although the genre includes *The Flame*, *Japanese Woman* and *Mother and Child*, it is the Jewish work which seems to foreshadow the terrible events of the mid-century.

Roberts's work anticipates **Stanley Spencer** in its hybrid human forms slotted mechanically into what he might regard as the machine age. Yet his Jewish portraits are astonishingly accurate, and he managed to capture an elusive Jewish essence.

RG's INTERFACE

Enfant terrible Nigel Kennedy, the publicity-generating musical celebrity, studied at the Menuhin School as a child and had his fees paid by the school's founder. Recently he has become fascinated with Poland, where he married, bought a house and recorded with a klezmer band.

Literature Prize Winner György Konrad has just published the Shoah novel *Glück* - good fortune - with Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt. Recounting the fate of an 11-year old Jewish boy in 1944 Hungary, it is, in fact, entirely autobiographical. Critics have faulted the work for its total lack of emotional engagement with the past.

Impotent eyewitness Joseph Roth, the posthumously revered author of *Radetzky March*, spent the 1930s as an embittered exile in Paris, gradually drinking himself to death. His writings during that bleak period have now been published by Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Cologne under the title *Die Filiale der Hölle auf Erden* (A Branch of Hell on Earth).

Birthday The Brooklyn-born children's author and illustrator Maurice Sendak has turned 75. World famous for *Where the Wild Things Are*, Sendak has been dubbed the 'Picasso of childhood' in *Time* magazine.

Treat in store The National Theatre will restage Ödon von Horvath's *Tales of the Vienna Woods*, first shown in the 1970s, in October. The play, a mordant exposé of the typically Austrian mix of sentimentality and sadism, was written in 1930. Despite this, the National Theatre's posters for the play feature photographs taken during the Nazi Anschluss eight years later.

Obituary Leon Uris, who in 1958 achieved overnight fame with his novel *Exodus*, has died aged 78. Though fiction, *Exodus* used the factual background of the Royal Navy turning back Palestine-bound Jewish DPs and generated widespread sympathy for Israel when Otto Preminger transformed it into a Hollywood epic. Uris returned to Jewish themes with *Mila 18* (about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising) and *Miotta Pass*.

A culture brought vividly to life

THE PITY OF IT ALL: A PORTRAIT OF JEWS IN GERMANY 1743-1933

Amos Elon

Allen Lane, 2003

This study of the Jews in Germany - of their close but ultimately tragic relationship with their fellow Germans - will be of great interest to *AJR Journal* readers. It provides a wide-ranging coverage of German-Jewish culture, brought vividly to life by a sympathetic author. Elon discusses the great names from Moses Mendelssohn through Heinrich Heine to Albert Einstein, while skillfully focusing on lesser figures like the banker and liberal politician Ludwig Bamberger and the popular novelist Berthold Auerbach, whose lives and careers embody key aspects of the German-Jewish experience.

Elon makes clear that he is writing history and not sociology and that he aims to depict individuals who are representative of a particular social culture, rather than analysing exhaustively the entire social group, German Jewry, from which that culture grew. And what a culture it was! Starting with the arrival of Moses Mendelssohn in Berlin in 1743, Elon takes us from the early emancipation through the salons of Henriette Herz and Rahel Varnhagen to Heine and Ludwig Börne in the mid-nineteenth century, then to the unique cultural, intellectual and scientific flowering that German Jewry gave to the world under the Wilhelmine Empire and the Weimar Republic. The sheer wealth and profusion of German-Jewish culture in its relatively brief span takes one's breath away; and Elon is the man to celebrate it.

The history of German-Jewish culture cannot be uncontroversial given that it ended in the Holocaust. Surely, the hostile argument runs, the Jews of Germany were utterly misguided in seeking to embrace German 'Bildung', to assimilate into German society as 'German citizens of the Jewish faith', and to adopt the values of German humanism and liberalism. Those who claim, like Daniel Goldhagen, that all German culture was imbued with an 'exterminationist' antisemitism and that the Holocaust was a disaster waiting to happen, look down pityingly at these

REVIEWS

deluded 'yekkes': didn't history teach them a lesson! But this argument is misconceived, based as it is on the deterministic notion that Hitler and the Holocaust were inevitable when plainly they were not, and that events after 1933 somehow devalued the achievements that preceded them, which is illogical.

Elon has the gift of spotting the telling incident and the striking figure, and of bringing out their significance for German Jewry. His book is an enjoyable read, though it conveys some weighty intellectual and cultural history. He does not shrink from examining the problems associated with assimilation and conversion, the tribulations that afflicted German Jews who wished to be accepted as Germans without being scorned as Jews. He carefully examines German antisemitism, as manifested in the nationalistic fervour that swept Prussia after its defeat by Napoleon, in the 'Hep! Hep!' riots of 1819, the political antisemitism of the late 1870s, and the crisis years after 1918.

Unfortunately, the later chapters are marred by factual errors. We are told that Friedrich Wilhelm IV and his successor as King of Prussia, Wilhelm I, were father and son, not brothers, and that 'der alte Fritz' (Friedrich II) was 'one of the founders of the royal house of Hohenzollern'. Eugen Leviné, the Communist leader in Munich in 1919, becomes 'Erich Levine', the campaigning statistician E. J. Gumbel becomes 'Gimbel', and Ernst von Salomon, author of the anti-denazification text *Der Fragebogen*, is rechristened Erich. To compare Karl Kraus with Marshall McLuhan is unsatisfactory, while the view that Theodor Fontane's novels 'celebrated the old-fashioned, straitlaced, frugal common decency of the Prussian rural gentry' will surprise admirers of *Effi Briest* - Elon ignores *Die Poggenpohls*, where relations between Prussian aristocrats and Jews form an important theme. A future edition should correct these blemishes on a fine book.

Anthony Grenville

FILM REVIEW

Grosz-Deutschland

MAX

Directed by Menno Meyjes

(with John Cusack, Noah Taylor)

On selected release

The year is 1919, the place Munich. Here Max, a Jewish gallery owner, who lost an arm in the war, casually encounters a fellow veteran, the dirt-poor, would-be-painter and part-time political agitator Adolf Hitler. They form a tenuous bond. Max tries to wean Hitler off politics and cajole him into concentrating on art. The latter oscillates between the two careers - but the last reel delivers a double whammy. Whipped up by Hitler's first speech to the fledgling Nazi Party, some of his listeners get drunk and beat a Jew - who happens to be Max - to death. Hitler, meanwhile, sits in a nearby bar, waiting to show the gallery owner his paintings in the hope that he might exhibit them.

Max's non-appearance robs Hitler of his last chance of becoming a painter. As the door marked art closes, another, marked politics, opens and he steps through it.

This picture of the late developer Hitler torn between artistic fame and political power is neat, but historically inaccurate. This wouldn't matter overmuch if Max didn't suffer from greater flaws as well. The first of these is the depiction of Max's Jewish family as conspicuously wealthy in contrast with the Germans around them. There were plenty of wealthy non-Jews - such as the Bechstein piano manufacturers - present in Munich who financed Hitler from early on.

Nor does the movie adequately show many Germans' immediate postwar reaction against the Kaiser and Prussian militarism. Because Bavaria had resented Prussia's primacy in the Kaiserreich, it now briefly turned left. In early 1919 Munich actually saw a (somewhat anaemic) Soviet government in power. When this was bloodily overthrown, the region's move to the right was far more pronounced than in other parts of Germany. (In Berlin, for instance, the assassination of the Jewish foreign minister Walter Rathenau in 1922 provoked a general strike.)

Third, the character of Max doesn't quite convince. As a promoter of *avantgarde* art, he doesn't shock us by having an official mistress - but this bohemian touch is at odds with his synagogue attendance and solicitude for his children.

But for all its faults, I would not dismiss the film out of hand. It evokes a time when giants - Georg Grosz, Max Ernst, Otto Dix - bestrode the German art scene and affords us glimpses of their *oeuvre*. Moreover, a longish sequence featuring a giant mincer daringly - and, alas, not very successfully - recreates an Expressionist happening which might have been scripted by Kurt Tucholsky and designed by John Heartfield.

Last but not least, Noah Taylor's portrayal of Hitler, aged 30, should earn him an Oscar. The actor has truly transformed Hannah Arendt's phrase 'the banality of evil' from a verbal construct into palpitating reptilian flesh.

Richard Grunberger

Creative Jewish music in all its forms

THE FIRST JMI BARRY WEINBERG JEWISH CHORAL FESTIVAL

St John's Smith Square, London

This concert was the climax to the first JMI (Jewish Music Institute) Barry Weinberg Jewish Choral Festival, dedicated to the memory of the outstanding Jewish musician and scholar, who died suddenly last year at the age of 53. The exceptionally fine choral singing was the result of ten days of choir leaders' master classes, schools' workshops and massed choir rehearsals conducted by invited guest conductor Stephen Glass (Barry Weinberg's nephew and son of AJR Groups Co-ordinator Myrna Glass), an acclaimed choral conductor and arranger who is now the Music Director of the large Share Hashomayim congregation in Canada.

The festival, presented under the auspices of the JMI and co-ordinated by Vivienne Bellos, Music Director at the North Western Reform Synagogue, was hosted by the Zemel Choir, Alyth Choral Society, the Ne'imah Singers and the Shabbaton

Choir, as well as the Jewish Youth Choir.

One of the highlights of the festival was the whole day of Jewish Choral Workshops at SOAS. The star of the day was Stephen Glass himself, working with all voices on choral techniques. The workshop day culminated in a concert by three choirs which covered a wide range of Jewish musical styles, from traditional synagogue settings by a warm-toned London Jewish Male Choir conducted by Clive Hyman to the modern drama of Julian Dawes's cantata 'The Death of Moses', performed by the Alyth Choral Society under their conductor Vivienne Bellos. The evening ended on a high-note by the Zemel Choir under their new director Benjamin Wolf, with the audience joining in a stirring finale of 'Yerushalayim' and 'Hava Nagila'.

The climax of the festival was the final concert at St John's Smith Square, where individual choirs had a small showcase and the massed choirs were conducted and accompanied charismatically by Stephen Glass, whose strident Star Wars-style setting of 'Baruch Haba' launched the evening. Enthralling was the Puccini-esque lyricism and rhapsodic, improvisatory style of the Canadian cantor soloist Gideon Zelermyer making his UK debut, supported by the sumptuous sonorities of the Shabbaton Choir and Ne'imah Singers, notably in works by the British composer Samuel Alman. Among the mixed choir's fervent renditions Glass's arrangement of the Israeli folksong 'Eli, Eli' was most poignant. Glass's concluding 'Prayer of Thanks' elicited enthusiastic audience participation. Yet the highlight was the incisive, pure-toned singing by the choirs of the Jewish Free School, Ne'imah Preparatory School and the Jewish Youth Choir, with Finkelstein's tuneful 'Prayer for Peace' radiating touching optimism.

Barry would have been very proud. The festival, which hopefully will become an annual event, exemplified those values for which he stood - creative Jewish music in all its forms for the enrichment of the wider community.

Malcolm Miller

Malcolm Miller is a member of the Miller Piano Quartet.

Donations to The Barry Weinberg Fund for Jewish Music are welcomed to support ongoing Jewish choral music festivals. Please send your cheque to 'JMI Barry Weinberg Fund' and further information may be obtained from JMI, PO Box 232, Harrow HA1 2NN and the JMI Website www.jmi.org.uk.

*The Chairman,
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PROFILE

Howard Spier

A humanist first and foremost

What on earth is a humble Jewish refugee from Vienna doing in Saffron Walden, that seemingly pristine Essex market town and reputed repository of undiluted Englishness? Happily I am (to some extent) reassured by Francis Deutsch, a lifelong campaigner for human rights, that the town has a strong liberal, and Quaker, influence. Given that the Deutschs' last address was Hendon - on which thickly populated Jewish neighbourhood they claim to have alighted by chance - their choice of Saffron Walden seems all the more remarkable. In a most timely move (can this be the workings of chance alone?), the AJR's unstoppable Myrna Glass has just started up a group in nearby Cambridge.

In Vienna things weren't easy. Following a period of unemployment, Francis's father took a job as a bank clerk; he died in 1932. Francis's mother was a partner in a milliner's salon. Music played a very important part in the boy's life: his mother was an amateur pianist, her sister a professional opera singer.

A Kindertransportee, Francis was 13 years old when he arrived in the UK. He was taken in by a young Methodist minister and his wife in Bristol. Francis was to all intents and purposes adopted by the family and remains in contact to this day with their three daughters. He recalls a 'cultural-adaptation' difficulty with the minister's wife which is more amusing now than it was then: 'Don't speak with your hands!', she would affectionately tell the Jewish boy from Vienna.

Francis confesses that from the 1940s onwards he was in a state of 'denial' about his Jewish origins. He would have done anything to be English. He joined the Labour Party in order to, as he puts it, 'repay something to England'.

Francis took a course in economics (it would be sociology in today's parlance) at the LSE. Among early influences on his life as a human rights activist were Bishop Mervyn Stockwood, whom he met in Bristol, and Professor Hilde Himmelweit.

Immediately after the war Francis spent three years in Germany with the International Voluntary Service for Peace, working in collaboration with

other voluntary organisations such as the Quakers. On his return to England, he was invited by a Quaker acquaintance to take up a position as a law clerk in Hull. He did the requisite articles and duly qualified as a solicitor. Back in London, the law office where he worked was directly across the road from a juvenile court - at least one influence on Francis's decision to specialise in juvenile law and its reform.

Meanwhile, Francis and his wife Sheila, a child care worker (as their two daughters were to become), threw themselves into the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) movement. In 1961, prior to a mass



Francis Deutsch

sit-down demonstration in Trafalgar Square, of which he was a leading activist, Francis was arrested and charged with incitement, but acquitted after a jury trial. A year later he agreed to be 'bound over to keep the peace.' Francis believes the authorities were alarmed at the growing strength of the unilateralist movement and is as convinced as ever that he was framed by the police.

From CND Francis moved into the wider sphere of civil liberties, being for several years an elected member of the executive committee of Liberty, then the National Council for Civil Liberties. In the 1970s he became the first head of

Britain's second law centre, in London's Paddington district. He regards this as one of the major achievements of his life. Later he moved to the Commission for Racial Equality, as head of its legal section. Latterly, issues of asylum/immigration have occupied his distinguished legal career.

In the late 1970s Francis's decades of 'denial' came to an end. Having been asked to prepare legal guidance on 'ethnic origin', he came to see himself as a Jew not by race or religion, but by ethnicity. A 'very liberating' discovery, he declares. Francis's wife Sheila, a practising Christian from a rural West Country background, ponders over her husband's metamorphosis from 'denial' to 'acceptance'.

Currently, besides being a member of the AJR and its Kindertransport section, Francis is a prominent member of Saffron Walden UN Association and remains committed to CND as well as to Amnesty International. He retains a firm belief in a law-governed system of international relations. In his view, the

Iraq war was illegal. Would he join the Labour Party now? 'Just about!', he answers through clenched teeth.

Last year Francis was awarded a BA in Humanities from the Open University. 'I found studying very enjoyable', he told the local newspaper. 'It keeps the working discipline, having to spend so many hours behind a desk and it also makes you appreciate free time.'

Francis describes himself as a humanist first and foremost. Despite my habitual scepticism, I came away from our meeting convinced that, despite the passing of the years, Francis is no less an idealist now than when he was a teenage transplant from Vienna.

INSIDE the AJR

Inaugural meeting in Cambridge area

Sixteen of us (including a visitor from Tel Aviv) met at the home of Anne Bender, who also provided the splendid refreshments. AJR's Myrna Glass outlined the development and current activities of groups in her area: the South and Midlands. We decided to meet bi-monthly, initially in members' homes with, usually, a speaker. Lisel Eisner - tel 01223 356721 - offered to be our contact person.

Francis Deutsch

Next meeting: Wednesday, 17 September, 2-4.30 pm. Guest speaker Alf Keiles

New group for South West Midlands

At the kind invitation of Ruth Jackson, we held an inaugural meeting to form a new branch. Having exchanged stories about how we came to be where we live now, we ended our discussions by enjoying Ruth's delicious tea. The next meeting will be in the Forest of Dean on 21 September. If you live in or near Gloucestershire, Herefordshire or Worcestershire, please contact Ruth Jackson on 01386 552264.

Richard Newton

We had it all in Bournemouth

It was the best time in Bournemouth I've ever had. On our trip to the beautiful Compton Acres we were looking forward to a relaxing walk in the famous gardens, but we had to seek shelter from the rain in a friendly cafe for a generous tea with clotted cream buns. When the rain turned into a deluge we only had five minutes to get back to our coach. Helped by our guardian angels - Sylvia, Carol and Annie - we made it safely to the Ark and met in good spirits for dinner.

Hana Nermut

Edinburgh Northern get-together

Thirty-eight of us received an update on claims issues and group reports. Among those present were Ernest Levy OBE and his wife, Vicky Gruneberg, who spoke of her recent visit to Germany, and Rabbi Rose of the Edinburgh Jewish community who told us about his grandfather's amazing release by the Gestapo. After a salmon lunch, most

of us went to the Edinburgh Playhouse to see *Fiddler on the Roof*. The essence of the occasion was summed up by Edinburgh branch chairperson Françoise Robertson: 'We carry a burden with us and it is a great relief to share our common background. The most important thing is the social connection, particularly with other groups, and knowing we're not alone.'

Judy Gilbert

It was very stimulating to make contact with members outside our local circle. We also found Marcia Goodman's update most interesting: many of us didn't fully appreciate just how much was being done by AJR Social Services. In addition, it was very encouraging to hear about future plans regarding the formation of new groups. We all enjoyed the day immensely and would like to express our special thanks to Susanne Green for ensuring everything ran so smoothly.

Walter Knoblauch

Northern meeting in Sheffield a great success

Among those present were two magistrates, at least five former university lecturers, several teachers, a former GP, an OBE, and goodness knows who else. There should be a list somewhere (maybe there already is!) of the achievements of former German refugees in this country. Such a list would at least give a flavour of the contribution made to this country by those able to settle here. Any interest?

Dorothy Fleming

Essex group strolls down Memory Lane

It was supposed to be a surprise 75th birthday party for our chairman Otto Deutsch, but then we found out that there were three other birthdays - those of Fritz Spitzer, Miriam Stein and Alfred Buechler. It would have been a really happy occasion, especially as Bertha Leverton was Otto's guest. Among reminiscences about memorable holidays, Otto recalled returning to Vienna in 1953, visiting the home he last saw in 1939 and shedding a few tears remembering the times he had playing with his sister.

Larry Lisner

Next meeting: Tuesday 9 September

Pinner and the 'Napoleon of Excursions'

Joy Hooper gave a highly entertaining talk about Thomas Cook, the 'Napoleon of Excursions' who introduced cheap mass rail

travel in the 1840s, to be supplemented by accommodation, special ticket vouchers, and meal vouchers in all parts of the world. On a sad note, in the last few weeks the group has lost three of its original members: Kurt Glass, Regina Slater and Camilla Topping. We mourn them all.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 4 September. Gerald Hellman will chair a panel on 'The Effects of the Holocaust Through the Eyes of the Second and Third Generations'

Sheffield: an unusual history

Agnes Grunwald Spier told of her arrival in this country as a baby brought out of Hungary by her mother and of the absence of offers of help from the Jewish community she and her mother joined in Surrey. This sparked a lively discussion on the reception given to Jewish refugees or newcomers during both recent and earlier persecutions.

Dorothy Fleming

Next meeting: Thursday 13 November. 'Steve's Story'. 12 noon, lunch at Cafe Simcha, Kingfield Hall, Brincliffe Crescent, Sheffield; 1.30 meeting in the vestibule downstairs from above. Contact Steve Mendelsson on 0114 263 0666

South London: a most enjoyable afternoon

Walter Woyda spoke about, and played records from, the musical *Milk and Honey* by the composer Jerry Herman, the theme of which is a group of Americans visiting Israel. We liked the story, loved the music and had a most enjoyable afternoon.

Anne Poloway

Next meeting: Thursday 18 September. AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro on 'Internment Camp'

Northern groups' day out at Cleve Road

Despite the horrendous heat, we all enjoyed our day out in London, especially the meetings, fellowship and catering at Cleve Road, before a most interesting visit to the Gilbert art collection. It was a wonderful experience and, on behalf of Northern group members, we thank those involved for giving us such a good day.

Bob Rosner (Hull group)

Brighton & Hove Sarid and Jewish business ethics

In his extremely interesting talk Ivor

Richards included many biblical quotations and rabbinic interpretations of the subject with emphasis on the difference between law and ethics. A Jewish Association of Business Ethics has been formed. The subsequent discussion brought up many interesting points.

Rudi Simmonds

Next meeting: Monday 15 September

West Midlands enjoys garden party lunch

Thirty-two of us had a great time at the home of Leon Jessel at the now-annual Garden Luncheon Party which Leon hosts. The food was first class and the service excellent; even the weather stayed fine. We decided that for our next meeting we wanted a film about Israel and we're trying to organise this as well as a date for our upcoming meeting at the Progressive Synagogue.

David Bloom

Next meeting: Thursday 11 September.
Contact Henny Rednall for details

Informality in Harrogate

Informality now seems to be the main object of our meetings and we found ourselves chatting away about the past, present and future, seemingly concentrating on life's coincidences. We heard of the successful day out in London, the forthcoming get-together in Leeds on 9 September, and the planned holiday in St Annes next year.

Inge Little

Next meeting: Wednesday, 24 September at 1 Masham Close, Harrogate

North London: an unusual ambition

Some 30 members attended Stewart McIntosh's talk on how he became a broadcaster with the BBC World Service. Very interesting it was too. The more so as it seemed to have been Stewart's ambition since childhood to become a news reader. Such ambitions offer at least a variance to the usual ones of becoming an engine driver or spaceship pilot.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 18 September

Next meeting: Ilford: Wednesday 17 September. Contact Myrna Glass for details



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Happy landings

At KT-AJR's monthly luncheon at the Day Centre in West Hampstead, Bertha Leverton (left), who chaired the meeting, invited a number of Kinder to recount their own special circumstances and experiences when their parents sent them to seek relative safety in Britain. Among those recalling their 'hard or soft landing' as children were (from Bertha, left to right) Ruth Barnett, Prof Leslie Brent, Elfriede Colman and Peter Langford, with Otto Deutsch from Southend

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Fausta Shelton 01273 734 648

Cambridge
Lisel Eisner 01223 356721

Dundee
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

Glasgow
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

Harrogate
Inge Little 01423 886254

Hull
Bob Rosner 0148 2649156

Leeds HSFA
Trude Silman 0113 2251628

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

North London
Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

Pinner (HA Postal District)
Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Sheffield
Steve Mendelsohn 0114 2630666

South London
Ken Ambrose 020 8852 0262

South West Midlands (Worcester area)
Ruth Jackson 01386 552264

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Henny Rednall 0121 373 5603

Myrna Glass, AJR South and Midlands Groups Co-ordinator
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KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group

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Wed	10	Opdahl Trio
Thur	11	Jack Davidoff
Sun	14	CLOSED
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Tue	16	Nicola Smedley
Wed	17	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	18	Madeleine Whiteson
Sun	21	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon	22	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	23	Jenny Kossev
Wed	24	Wizo Singers
Thur	25	Ronnie Goldberg
Sun	28	CLOSED
Mon	29	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	30	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton

Death

Rothschild. Our dear cousins, the sisters Hanni and Inge Rothschild, passed away in July. Inge died 1 July, Hanni 13 July. They will be greatly missed by their family and friends. Gretchen Cohen, Pat and Rosalynne.

Stern. Lotte Stern born Munich 3 June 1918, died 27 July 2003 at the Royal Free Hospital. Sadly missed by family and friends.

Condolence

The AJR express its condolences to Management Committee member Gaby Glassman on the sad passing of her mother in Amsterdam.

My appreciation to you

I am taking this opportunity through the AJR Journal of thanking my many friends for their very good wishes during my recent stay in hospital. I had so many cards and am so grateful to all of you for thinking of me. I am pleased to say I am now out of hospital and making steady progress. *Margot Magnus, Stanmore, Middlesex.*

Miscellaneous

Where She Comes From, by Helen Epstein. Has anyone a copy I could buy or borrow (I will, of course, pay postage both ways)? Harry Stadler tel 01483 275464.

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Photos of Kinder artefacts exhibited at Terezin

A photographic exhibition of personal objects carried in their suitcases by the children of the Kindertransport when they arrived in Britain from Nazi-occupied Europe in 1938 and 1939, has opened in the former Terezin concentration camp in the Czech Republic. The photographs are complemented by engravings of fragments of original text taken from telephone conversations, letters and interviews with Kinder by British artists Rosie Potter and Patricia Ayre.

The exhibition, which received the support of ex-President Vaclav Havel, was opened in the Ghetto Museum by its director and by today's mayor of Terezin. Music composed in the Ghetto was played at the ceremony and the prize-winning film describing the history of the Kindertransport, *Into the Arms of Strangers*, was shown in the Museum cinema. The exhibition is planned to travel to several other European and UK venues.

This month marks the unveiling of a sculpture at London's Liverpool Street Station, the point of arrival for many of the children of the Kindertransport. The sculpture commemorates the extraordinary campaign which ensured the survival of 10,000 children of the many individuals whose lives were at risk under the Nazi regime in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Holocaust

Alison Macleod

The twilight of the gods comes late
And cannot bring us back to life.
Only our ghosts can see the knife
Drive at the heart that planned our fate.
We hover, silent, in the smoke
Of burning towns that still rejoice
To think us dead. We need no voice
Because the barbarous cannon spoke.

We fly with fliers taking aim.
The dam is down, the river spilled,
The valley drowning, thunder filled.
Judgment was tardy, but it came.
How many innocents have died
In the gods' twilight, who can say?
Mourning, the German mothers lay
Children where we are, side by side.

Arts and Events Diary September

Until 5 September 'Traces' by Julia Winckler, an exhibition of 10 photographs in collaboration with the Goethe Institute. The project focuses on the search for traces of family lives cut short by Nazi persecution. Wiener Library, tel 020 7636 7247

The Bridge The Wiener Library will be holding a fortnightly, early evening study session over an 8-week period in the autumn, looking at post-Holocaust Judaism and faith. Contact Katherine Klinger on 020 7636 7247 or email kklinger@wienerlibrary.co.uk

Sun 7 European Day of Jewish Culture and Heritage 2003. Includes:

Exhibition on rescue from Prague in 1964 of 1,500 Torah scrolls. Westminster Synagogue, Kent House, Rutland Gardens, London SW7, 10 am-4 pm; **'Playing Sinatra'. Comedy by Bernard Kops.** Last performance 3.30 pm, New End Theatre, Hampstead tel 020 7794 0022; **'History and Religious life of the Jewish Community'**, Jewish Museum Camden Town, London NW1, tel 020 7284 1997; **'Jewish Immigration and Settlement in London'**, Jewish Museum Finchley, Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, London N3, tel 020 8349 1143

Mon 8 Dr Charmian Brinson: 'The BBC Austrian Service in Wartime'. Club 43

Mon 15 Dr Sorrel Kerbel: 'German Jewish Writers of the 19th Century'. Club 43

Tues 16 Panel discussion: 'Has the quest for fertility compromised ethical values?' Panel members: **Dame Ruth Deech**, Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), **Dr Simon Fishel**, pioneering embryologist, **Rabbi Chaim Rapoport**, expert on Jewish medical ethics. Chair: **Sara Nathan**, journalist and lay member of HFEA. 7.30 pm. Jewish Museum Camden Town, tel 020 7284 1997

Mon 22 Mr Robin Hanau: 'The "New Age" and the Contemporary World'. Club 43

Mon 29 Dr E. M. Batley: "'Reforming the Whole World": Masonic Secrecy and Treason in 18th-Century Germany'. Club 43

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman and
David Brummer

Insurance claims final deadline

The closing date for submitting applications to the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims is **30 September 2003**. The Commission was established in November 1998 to settle unpaid life insurances bought in pre-war Europe from a range of insurance companies. To date, more than 90,000 claims have been filed and more than \$30 million (approximately £20 million) has been awarded.

Following an agreement signed last October with a German government and industry foundation, a list of almost 400,000 names of Holocaust victims who held insurances has been compiled.

To view the list as well as further details of how to claim, please visit the Insurance Commission's website www.icheic.org.

For information on the status of a claim that has already been filed or to receive an application pack, please freephone 0800 169 8318.

Austrian fund extension

The filing time period for an Austrian compensation fund has been extended until the end of this year. Austrian Holocaust victims who have not yet received the AS 105,000 (approx. £4,500) award in respect of lost tenancy rights and stolen personal valuables must submit claims by **31 December 2003**. The heirs of Austrian survivors who died on or after 24 October 2000 can also apply provided the claim has not been previously settled.

David Brummer

The Claims Office expresses its thanks to David for his diligent work over the past ten months. We wish him well for the future.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL; by fax to 020 8385 3075; or by email to michael@ajr.org.uk. Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, North London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.

The strong ones

Rev Bernd Koschland

'All the men of Israel assembled in the King's [Solomon's] presence at the pilgrim feast [Sukkot] of *Ethanim*, the seventh month' (1 Kings 8:2). They assembled for the dedication of the first Temple in *Tishri*, the seventh month beginning with Nisan. *Ethanim* is one of the four months preserved by name in Hebrew in the Bible; *Tishri*, *Cheshvan* etc. are of post-exilic (Babylonian) origin. Thus *Ethanim* has led to much rabbinic interpretation.

Ethanim comes from *ethan*, meaning 'strong, mighty' and refers to the 'strong ones', the Patriarchs, who, according to one opinion, were born in *Ethanim/Tishri*. In this same month the two Matriarchs, Sarah and Rachel, and also Hannah, were 'remembered' by G-d and gave birth, each to a son. During this month Joseph was also released from prison.

These comments must be understood as midrashic symbolism for they reflect a deeper meaning behind the almost month-long celebration of festivals.

We begin the New Year with a period of serious reflection of the past and present. To use current jargon: 'Have we achieved our targets of the previous year? Where have we missed? What targets are we setting for the coming year?' The bases of these targets lie with the past generations, the Patriarchs, our own patriarchs and matriarchs, our parents. Have we lived up to the standards that were set for us? If not, why not? As individuals we can deceive others with our thoughts and actions; if we are truly honest in our own minds, we cannot deceive ourselves, never mind others. If we look sincerely and honestly into our hearts, we must come to realise our nearness to the targets set.

Both on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we read a section in the *Musaf* service called *Zichronot*, 'Remembrances'. Remembrance works in two ways: we remember ourselves, who and what we are and what we have or have not achieved. Then, hopefully G-d will remember us, as He had remembered the Patriarchs and Matriarchs and will allow us to bear the good fruits of their and our actions of the past. As Joseph was released from prison, so we hopefully free ourselves on Yom Kippur from the prison of our misdeeds and actions, through contrition and humility, fasting and prayer. 'There is none righteous on earth who does only good and never sins' (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

With the solemnity over and peace of mind restored, we turn to joy, the Festival of Joy, *Sukkot*, the harvest festival, which gives physical strength and might for the coming year through the ingathering of the harvest. This completes our re-creation, our spiritual and physical regeneration which we undergo in *Ethanim*, the month in which the world was created and mankind with it.

Ethanim also means 'perennial, ever-flowing streams'. 'Water may flow over us without cleansing or we may use it to cleanse. In this way, we must allow the many *Mitzvot* related to *Ethanim* to take hold of us and not flow over us without any effect: They must raise us to new spiritual heights and help us through the year ahead: 'Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.' (Nehemiah 8:10). These words of Ezra and Nehemiah signify our joy in the Lord is through the fulfilment of His commandments, for then His joy will be in us and He will deal kindly with us in His great mercy.

Shanah Tovah - Happy New Year!

Newsround

Israel renews ties with Austria

Israel has re-established diplomatic relations with Austria. The announcement was made during the visit to Jerusalem of Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the highest-level official visit in the three years since Israel reduced contacts with the Austrian government. Israel recalled its ambassador from Austria in February 2000 when the far-right Freedom Party of Jörg Haider joined the coalition government.

Jewish agency shift on immigration to Germany

In response to the growing number of immigrants from the former Soviet Union choosing to settle in Germany rather than in Israel, the Jewish Agency has decided to make a parallel effort to support reinvigorated Jewish community life in Germany. According to recently released figures, about 19,000 former Soviet Jews moved to Germany in 2002, while about 18,000 went to Israel.

Art works restituted to British and German heirs

German museums have restituted art works to the British and American heirs of Jewish dealers forced to sell up by the Nazis. According to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, one of the pieces, a sculpture of St George and the dragon attributed to a fifteenth-century artist, was later procured by Hermann Goering. The restitution came shortly after the German government had established a commission to find fair solutions in cases of disputed ownership.

'Turkish Schindler' dies

Selahattin Ulkumen, the 'Turkish Schindler', has died in Istanbul aged 89. A Muslim diplomat, he was the Turkish Consul General on the island of Rhodes, where he saved 42 Jewish families from deportation to a Jewish death camp. In 1990, having become known as the 'Turkish Schindler', he was awarded the title of 'Righteous among the Nations' by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Authority.