

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Let's not be heedless over the headscarf!

It is an incontrovertible, if inconvenient, fact that different societies evolve at a different pace. Some fail to evolve altogether, but regress. Around 1000 AD China could justifiably have dubbed Europe 'barbaric', yet today millions of Chinese practise female infanticide. Around 1300 AD the Muslim Emirate of Cordova was a haven of multi-culturalism; today the Arab League doesn't number a single democracy among its 22 member states.

Simultaneously, President Chirac stands accused of destroying French multi-culturalism through his ban on the wearing of the *hajib* at school.

The headscarf is considered an intrinsic symbol of Islamic female identity - but what purpose does it really serve? To hide a woman's hair - in other words, part of her sexual allure. More radical devices for stripping women of their dangerous seductiveness are, of course, the veil and the *burquah*. All these items of apparel are about more than sex: they exemplify women's subordinate status in Islamic society.

If pupils could wear the *hajib* in French schools, non-wearers would be targeted and bullied by their clergy-indoctrinated peers (millions of Saudi petrodollars are annually transmitted to France for the construction of mosques and Islamic academies).

Chirac's law safeguards girls in the chrysalis stage of their development against fundamentally inspired peer pressure. What has been represented as a restriction on religious freedom, in fact, helps to emancipate the weakest section of Muslim society from the tutelage of men - whether they be mullahs, fathers or husbands.

I anticipate that for writing the above I will be accused of illiberalism and of condoning Chirac's ban on the wearing of Jewish skull-caps in schools (actually, I am not convinced that the Bible enjoins head-covering in public places).

My rejoinder to the charge of illiberalism is *incipiis obsta* or *wehret den Anfängen* (resist the beginnings). For Islamists the *hajib* is only the opening shot in a campaign that would expand into demands for no sex education, no sport for girls, no swimming, no mixed classes, no teaching of pupils by members of the opposite sex, etc.

Freedom can be either 'of' or 'from'. There is such a thing as freedom of religious belief - as well as freedom from religion. In Britain



President Jacques Chirac

Anglicans, Nonconformists and Catholics have happily coexisted since the 1780s. France struggled long to free itself from Catholic hegemony, until the law of 1905 established *laïcité* (secularism) as the governing principle of state education. The 1905 Reform amounted to more than legislative change; it could be described as a shift of tectonic plates on which the edifice of the French state stood. By appropriate coincidence the new reformist government included Georges Clemenceau, in whose newspaper *L'Aurore* Emile Zola had published 'J'accuse', the article that famously turned the tide in the Dreyfus trial. The collapse of the charges against Dreyfus had gravely undermined the standing of three pillars of the French

establishment: the judiciary, the army and - particularly relevant in this connection - the Catholic Church. Ever since 1905 - except for the Vichy years - French pupils have had a day off from school, when they can have religious instruction of their parents' choice.

One can draw a loose parallel between Clemenceau, the originator of the Law of 1905, and Atatürk's reforms in 1920s Turkey. The 'father of the Turks' abolished the veil and the fez in favour of Western dress, and substituted the Latin script for the Arabic one. The long-term consequence of this is that Turkey is now a semi-Westernised Muslim nation, and a member of NATO. Also there are as many Turkish guest workers in Germany as North African immigrants in France - yet one hardly ever hears of the former attacking synagogues and Jewish schools, as almost routinely happens in France.

Chirac has a deplorable record in foreign affairs as the profit-oriented contractor for Saddam's nuclear reactor, and a subverter of the Atlantic alliance - but his stance on matters of race and religion is to be applauded. France has five million Muslims (compared to the UK's two), whose not entirely unjustified discontent over social conditions in the *bidonvilles* where they live offers a fruitful field for exploitation by Islamo-Fascist agitators. Islamo-Fascism is the ideology - composed of rejection of Western democratic values, attachment to Sharia Law, rule by mullahs and the subjugation of women - which inspired the Taliban and the horrendously sanguinary Algerian Islamists.

Its most visible recent expression is Iranian President Khatami's rejection of proffered earthquake relief from Israel. Iran's acceptance of help from America, the 'Great Satan', but not from Israel, the 'Little Satan', shows the ayatollahs to be as infected with antisemitism as the Nazi leadership.

Some rulers of the world!

Richard Grunberger

As if to substantiate ex-Malaysian premier Mahathir Mohamed's assertion that Jews rule the world, the Tory Party has now taken up the so-called triple Disraeli option and entrusted the recovery of its electoral fortunes to a Michael Howard-Oliver Letwin-Lord Saatchi triumvirate. Simultaneously, it has become embarrassingly clear that nearly all Russia's super-rich oligarchs - some currently on the run from Putin's ex-KGB agents, one in jail, and one ensconced at Chelsea FC - are 'co-religionists'.

They used to order these matters better under Stalin. In those far-off days both some of the dictator's minions, such as Kaganovich and Yagoda, and his best-known victims - ranging from the culpable Trotsky to the innocent Mandelstam - were Jewish. Similarly, in Cold War Hungary the Stalin-and-Beria clones Rakosi and Farkas persecuted fellow Jews like the writers Gyula Hay and Tibor Dery without fear and favour.

But enough of nasty politics. In the 1900s Berlin emerged as the theatre capital of Europe thanks to the directors Brahms, Reinhardt, Jessner and Bernauer - every man-jack of them a Jew. At around the same time, the more rough-hewn artistic pioneers Goldwyn, Laemmle and Schenk were laying the foundations of Hollywood as the world's movie capital. Fast forward to the McCarthyite fifties and the pilloried Hollywood Ten sported surnames of similar provenance like Biberman, Malz and Ornitz.

The McCarthy phenomenon strongly suggests that politics - like the poor - will always be with us. Given that inescapable fact, one wishes that Israel were more Jewish - not in the ethnic or religious sense, but in the IQ sense of the word! How one longs for a Michael Howard sound-alike to resuscitate the country's 'natural party of government' from its seemingly inevitable demise - and for a Saatchi sibling to present the case of the Jewish state to an increasingly sceptical world audience.

Limmud, leading festival of Jewish learning

Gloria Tessler

Limmud these days is a mini-Edinburgh Festival, although, judging from its 2,200 participants, there is really nothing diminutive about this ambitious complex of ideas, symposia, workshops and monologues on anything from Israeli politics to Bible studies, liturgy, metaphysics and healing. When I last attended Limmud some five years ago, I was virtually ambushed to the left and right of me by hundreds of delegates zooming in and leaving me gasping from the benign assault. Never in the field of human learning, it seemed, did so many descend with so much thirst for knowledge on so confined a space.

This time, the scope of Limmud has expanded, with buses ferrying delegates from one end of the campus to another. Launched 23 years ago into what its

sponsors claim is the world's leading festival of Jewish learning, Limmud is the place where you can find leading United Synagogue rabbis sitting down to eat or debate with their Reform opposites, and where you can choose from 900 sessions - though by the time you select from all the simultaneous options, you could well miss out. Particularly popular, of course, was *Jewish Chronicle* editor Ned Temko's interview with Deborah Lipstadt, who successfully saw off the libel action by Holocaust-denying historian David Irving. People queued to get in and were turned away disappointed, but a few moments later I sneaked in with a few others, and heard Lipstadt movingly recount her odyssey, throughout which she had felt the hand of Holocaust history upon her, as she tried to vindicate the Jewish victims.

Jewish communal professionals meet in Jerusalem

Twenty countries were represented at a conference organised in Jerusalem by the World Council of Jewish Communal Services and attended by 500 delegates. The delegates included Michael Newman, who directs the UK's Central Office for Holocaust Claims operating from the AJR's offices under an umbrella group. He spoke to the conference on the role of the Central Office's free advisory service on Holocaust compensation claims and on its achievements resulting from the help given to victims of Nazi persecution in their continual fight for recognition and restitution.

The Tel Aviv-based *Irgun Olei Merkas Europa* (Association of Olim from Central Europe) was, like the AJR, established by refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, for whom it continues to provide essential services. Also in Tel

Aviv are the offices of the Claims Conference, which they share with the United Restitution Organisation (URO). The URO supports claims for the restitution of properties in Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania, though progress is painfully slow. Of the half-million applications received by the Claims Conference, payments have been made to 65,000 former slave labourers and 150,000 hardship fund claimants.

Yad Vashem, foremost in Holocaust studies, memorialisation and research, uses phonetic matching to compare the names of those who perished against the names in their records. It houses more than 50 million documents and a quarter of a million photographs, together with references to 20 million names on lists of camp inmates and deportation orders.

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Corrections, please!

Richard Grunberger

I am constantly amazed at the 'porkies' uttered by interviewees that go unchallenged by their interlocutors - both in newspapers and on the airwaves. Such untruths either serve a dramatic effect or obfuscate political reality. A good example of the former is the assertion by the director of Liverpool's Walker Gallery that wartime internees (a) risked being shot if they tried to escape, and (b) were prone to commit suicide (see also Interface, p.8).

Political obfuscation is an absolute growth industry nowadays, as proven by three recent examples. Oona King, MP for Tower Hamlets, has equated Gaza City with the Warsaw Ghetto (the comparison is so mind boggling that I abstain from comment). In a similar vein - and with only slightly less grandiose hyperbole - John le Carré has compared himself to Viktor Klemperer on Radio Four. The thinking behind this audacious, as well as hysterically overdramatised, trope is that, just as the great diarist of the Final Solution, who, marooned in Dresden, waited for the 'real Germans' to come back, so Carré is waiting for the real - i.e. peace-loving - Americans to come back. Last, but not least, the Rastafarian poet Benjamin Zephaniah publicly rejected the OBE on offer, saying the very expression 'British Empire' reminded him of slavery. He informed the press: 'I get angry when I hear that word "empire". It reminds me of thousands of years of brutality - it reminds me of how my foremothers were raped and my forefathers brutalised.' Correction, please! The British Empire lasted not thousands of years, but exactly 350 - from 1600 to 1950! Moreover, the British did not introduce slavery to Africa, where it had been widely practised by warrior tribes (and Arabs) since time immemorial.

Englishmen, from the Elizabethan sea-dog Hawkins onwards, certainly did expand the abominable slave trade, and grew rich on it. But the British government was also the very first to

abolish it, employing the Royal Navy to force other European powers to follow suit.

Today the British Empire lives on as the Commonwealth, within which the UK plays a hugely positive role - as evidenced by settling the murderous civil war in Sierra Leone and opposing Mugabe's enslavement of Zimbabwe.

Zephaniah also said he rejected the proffered OBE because he disapproved of the war on Iraq. In other words, he does not object to empires in principle: after all, Saddam saw himself as a latter-day Nebuchadnezzar, Emperor of Babylon, with Kuwait as his first conquest. This logical mismatch in the poet's mind is compounded by another. As a Rastafarian, Zephaniah pays obeisance to the departed shade of Ras Tafari, alias the Negus (Emperor of Abyssinia) Haile Selassie, alias Lion of Judah. If the Islamists - and even secular Arab nationalists like Assad - ever defeated the Jewish state, they would expunge ancient place-names like Jerusalem, Israel and Judah from the map.

In fact, Rastafarianism clashes with Islam not only because of its deification of the 'Lion of Judah'. Its whole laid-back - not to say drug-fuelled - lifestyle is sharply at odds with the strictly regimented and rule-bound Muslim way of life.

Readers may think I am focusing overmuch on the illogicality of a minor figure among opinion formers. However, Zephaniah is a 'bard of the people' in the same way as the Notting Hill Carnival is a People's Festival. As such, he could be a positive force. Instead, he blatantly distorts the historical record and simply rants, hurling anathemas and shaking his dreadlocks at such venerable Aunt Sallies as the Honours system and the personage he quaintly dubs 'Mrs Queen'.

So - no more 'porkies' please! We are kosher, or, if you prefer, halal.

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Warm touch from OSHA volunteers

Judy Miller

Kate sits silently eating her lunch at Osmond House. Two newcomers arrive at her table and begin a conversation about journalism and politics. Kate literally bursts into life. She tells them that she worked as a political journalist and she would really like to write her memoirs. 'If you'll lend me your manual typewriter, I'll have a go', she says. 'I can't get on with the electric machine. When I type, all I can think of is walking sticks.'

A telling glimpse of life at Osmond House, one of the three homes of the Otto Schiff Housing Association (OSHA) that are run by Jewish Care. Outsiders bring in a fresh breath of life. The reaction from the residents is usually warm and instant. At the lunch table, Henry arrives. He is a retired book wholesaler and volunteer befriender and he has come to visit his friend Isabel. The two chat and joke and Isabel beams delightedly.

The hundred residents of Osmond House, Balint House and Leo Baeck House, situated in Bishops Avenue, live in comfortable, beautifully maintained surroundings. The former refugees and Holocaust survivors from Continental and Eastern Europe for whom OSHA homes were originally established now live alongside British-born residents. Each home runs its own activities programme: at OSHA establishments there is always plenty to do.

But there is a serious problem: most volunteers are now as old as - or in some cases even older than - the elderly residents they dedicate their time to. Befrienders like Henry and the volunteers who help to run activities are part of OSHA's life blood - and it is running thin. Long-serving volunteers like Hilde Davis and Marianne Hasseck are precious



Volunteer Marianne Hasseck chats to Leo Baeck resident Dr Fanny Stang

PHOTOGRAPHER: RENA PEARL

regarded. Hilde, 80, still wheels her trolley shop round each week buying items and administering finances. Her daughter Susan Packman now tends to the flowers and plants. Hilde and her husband John also organise Friday *kiddushim* with volunteers from their local synagogue.

Berlin-born Marianne Hasseck, petite, elegant and in her early 80s, runs the Book Club, where residents of all three homes meet up in Balint's bright conservatory. She selects talking books and, as a former head teacher, is expert at stimulating discussion. She has been an OSHA volunteer for 18 years. But many other jobs still need volunteers: for playing board games with residents, leading cultural or current affairs discussion groups, helping to feed the frail at meal times, taking residents for walks, and reading short stories to individuals or small groups and speakers of German, Russian or Yiddish.

Rosemary Lewis, volunteer coordinator and chair of the house committee at Osmond House, has been an OSHA volunteer for 25 years. 'We all need human contact, even if

it's only a short visit for a chat', she says. 'Some people here have no relatives or their families live abroad and have few or no visitors at all.'

Rosemary is helping to lead the drive for new OSHA volunteers. The latest initiative, the Cultural Care Exchange, has seen a team from Jewish Care and OSHA meet recently with groups of newly enrolled students at the London Jewish Cultural Centre in Hampstead to discuss sharing cultural interests with OSHA residents. Interested parties are now beginning to get involved.

Meanwhile Leo Baeck resident Dr Fanny Stang, a published author, gives a warm welcome to new befriender Frank, who is a member of a writers' group. The pair have enthusiastically exchanged their respective autobiographies and have plenty to talk about. Another Leo Baeck resident, Eric, would like a befriender to listen to his favourite classical music on tape with him, while Ann and Lillian of Balint House would love fresh faces to chat with, 'about everything and anything, from the East End of London to radio programmes and great-grandsons.'

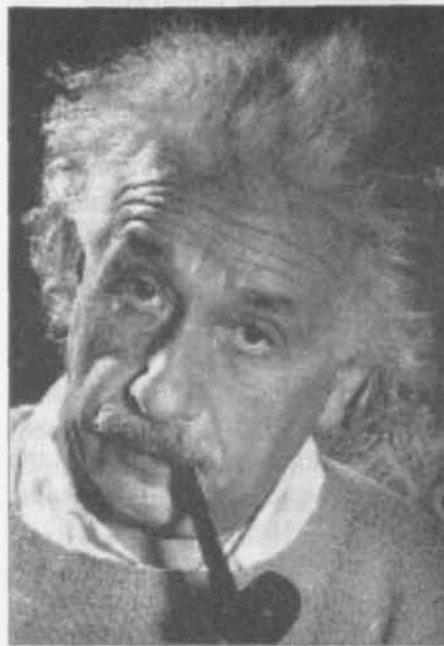
'Sebastian Flyte, Meet Albert Einstein...'

Anthony Grenville

When one thinks of Christ Church, Oxford, in the interwar years, one thinks of it as the college where Sebastian Flyte in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* holds court, or where the Bollinger Club dinner is held at the start of *Decline and Fall*. But there was more to the college than effete and dim-witted aristocrats, for it was also keen to add to its scholarly lustre by taking on German-Jewish professors who had been removed from their posts by the Nazis after 1933.

The first German-Jewish academic to take up a post at Christ Church, already before 1933, was Albert Einstein. That Einstein enjoyed a connection with the college in the early 1930s is remarkably little known. He first came to Oxford in 1931, through the initiative of Frederick Lindemann, Professor of Physics at Oxford, who had excellent connections with scientists in Germany. Lindemann, later Lord Cherwell, is most famous as Churchill's wartime scientific adviser, his 'Prof. Einstein stayed in Oxford for three short periods between May 1931 and June 1933. He was accommodated at Christ Church, 'the calm cloisters of which he relished as much as Oxford relished him', according to a historian of science at Oxford; he was happy to accept the offer of a research studentship (fellowship) at Christ Church for five years, at an annual salary of £400.

The correspondence in Einstein's file at Christ Church shows that relations between the scientist and the college were cordial. In late May 1931 Einstein wrote to the Dean of Christ Church to thank him for the hospitality he had enjoyed. The following month the Dean wrote to Einstein, offering him a research studentship, 'for something like a month during term time in the course of the year at such periods as may be convenient to you'. In July 1931 Einstein replied, expressing in fulsome terms his pleasure at the prospect of spending time in surroundings that were unfamiliar but highly congenial. On 23 October 1931 the Dean was able to



Albert Einstein

inform Einstein that the college's Governing Body had elected him to a research studentship and to express 'our earnest hope that we may often have the pleasure and honour of seeing you in our Society'.

However, on 24 October the Dean received a letter from Professor J.G.C. Anderson protesting vehemently against Einstein's appointment, on the grounds that those who had framed the relevant statutes had never intended emoluments to go to people of non-British nationality, and that it was wrong to 'send money out of the country' in the dire economic situation of the Great Depression, especially as the university was receiving a large grant from public funds. The Dean replied the same day, arguing that the academic benefits to the college from the appointment far outweighed narrow nationalism: 'I think that in electing Einstein we are securing for our Society perhaps the greatest authority in the world on physical science; his attainments and reputation are so high that they transcend national boundaries, and any university in the world ought to be proud of having him.'

Einstein, unaware that he had incurred the wrath of Little Englanders reluctant to burden the British taxpayer

with foreign scientists, was delighted to accept the appointment on 29 October. But on 2 November Anderson wrote to the Dean a further letter covering over three tightly packed sides. His argument that 'Oxford emoluments were never meant to be used for the benefit of foreigners, however eminent' was openly xenophobic, though cloaked in patriotism: 'it does not seem to me to be patriotic, especially in such times as the present, to use College revenues to endow foreigners ... The University cannot carry on its work without a very large Government grant, and yet a College can pay out money to subsidise a German.'

Faced with such a blinkered interpretation of college (and national) interests, the Dean circulated the missive to his colleagues, asking for comments. Only one response appears on file, evidently from the one 'outsider' mentioned by Professor Anderson as having been appointed to a studentship. This simply reads 'Is the Professor quite accurate in describing me as an English-speaking member?', and is signed 'A.S.R.'. Alexander Stuart Russell had been appointed Dr. Lee's Reader in Chemistry in 1919 and a Student of Christ Church in 1920. He had studied at Glasgow, and presumably spoke with a Scots accent to match. This ended the exchanges; indeed, after such a withering put-down, it is hard to imagine what any further nationalistic tirades by Anderson could have achieved.

That Christ Church was far from sharing Anderson's attitude to refugee academics shows that scholarship flourished there in the interwar years, alongside the antics of the *jeunesse dorée*. After 1933 Einstein could not return to Christ Church, so he proposed that his salary be used to create posts for scholars for whom regular funding was not available. Thanks in part to his generosity, German-Jewish refugee scholars deprived of their positions by the Nazis became dons at Christ Church. (*To be continued*)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

COMPENSATION

Sir - Like thousands of others, I recently received a letter from the General Settlement Fund in Vienna informing me that I will have to wait even longer, possibly indefinitely, for any compensation payment, and that, in any case, no money will be paid until two cases now before American courts are rejected. How can those who believe they have strong claims against the Austrian state or Austrian companies be expected to drop their cases?

The late admission of responsibility, the offer of a limited fund only, and now the decision to tie the setting up of the fund to individuals dropping their claims now before the courts or for these claims to be dismissed, indicate to me a deplorable lack of goodwill on the part of the Austrian authorities. It is beyond belief that Austria is still stalling on paying compensation to Jews two generations after the end of the war. As a reason for further research being necessary, Ms Lessing's office dare remind applicants that a 'long time has elapsed since then'. It is, as everybody knows, the authorities' reluctance to face up to their responsibilities that has created this time span in the first place.

Moreover, I notice a significant difference between the German, presumably authentic, version and the English rendering. While the German speaks of *Erst wenn diese Klagen von den zuständigen amerikanischen Gerichten abgewiesen worden sind, wird der Fonds mit den UDS 210 Millionen ausgestattet*, the English text omits this sentence altogether. Can this be accidental or are applicants not conversant with German not to know that the fund will not be set up until

the cases now before American courts are dismissed? I think the Settlement Fund owes us an explanation.

Ruth Schwiening
Market Bosworth, Nuneaton

Sir - My experience with the Claims Conference (CC) was most disappointing. I qualified under the terms of the CC publication Guide, page 5. After five years of correspondence they stated that nothing untoward happened to the Jews until 1938. That is correct in Austria, not Germany.

In Germany the persecution commenced much earlier, in particular the penal 1935 Race Laws. My problems commenced in 1937 in Frankfurt a/M, my birth place, which I left in 1939. I was wanted by the Gestapo. I obtained from the Wiener Library in London publications dating from 1933 of unjust discriminatory laws against the Jewish people and sent copies to the CC.

The reply I received was 'Under my mandate my decision is final and I am not aware of any institute that can review my decision', signed Zeev Sher. I am not aware that in any democratic country any organisation requests from an applicant a signature from the outset that their ultimate decision cannot be tested or challenged in a court of law, with the exception of the Claims Conference.

Erwin Dobson
Altrincham, Cheshire

Sir - The two articles by David Rothenberg (September-October 2003) were most interesting and timely in that it has now been announced that the Claims Commission is scheduled to wind down its activities. Let me say that I consider them neither benefactors nor

villains. It is just that they would appear to have taken the easy way out before shutting up shop.

The easy way was to concentrate on reclaiming the value of Jewish properties and fixed assets. Even there the commission found themselves in controversy and accusations of interfering where not wanted. There are, however, still at least two areas where little, if anything, has been done: the proceeds of the so-called *Aktion 3* (some 30 billion Reichsmark) and the recovery of the *Judensteuer* levied on Jewish citizens following *Kristallnacht*.

Herbert Haberberg
Barnet, Herts

KINDERTRANSPORT MEMORIAL

Sir - Ronald Channing's account and historic photographs in the November issue of the *AJR Journal* prompt me to share a happy experience and a worry. During a recent brief stay in London I made a point of visiting our Kinder memorial at Liverpool Street Station. I felt that what has emerged after much thinking and re-thinking is a striking and symbolic monument to our escape to these shores in 1939.

By a strange coincidence, two young girls, aged perhaps 14 or 15, out on a Saturday afternoon stroll in the city, joined me as I peered inside the glass case to make out its contents. 'What's this about?', they asked and there ensued minutes of engaged curiosity across two generations that will stick in my memory and perhaps also in theirs. One thing only left me worried - the separation of the beautifully worded plaque from the memorial. I fear many passers-by will, as I observed, feel bewildered because they will try to fathom 'what it's about' without ever finding the answer. Is it too late even now to put this right by, say, re-mounting the plaque on the plinth at the base of the glass case?

Karl Overton
Edinburgh

An explanatory plaque is being designed and will stand adjacent to the Kinder statue. It will be erected

when formal approval has been received - Ed.

'ZIONIST' MUSIC

Sir - Allow me to add a gloss to your strictures on Dr Mahathir Mohamed (December issue). When I had an appointment to interview him in Kuala Lumpur, I sent some of my questions in advance, among them one asking why he had cancelled the visit of a prominent American orchestra. Came the answer: 'Because they were going to play a piece of Zionist music. We don't have to listen to Zionist music if we don't want to.' The composition in question was by Aaron Copland - and about as Zionist as the hit tunes from *Oklahoma*. But I must say no more, lest Mr H Edward Levy (see same issue) forces me to apologise alongside you for our racist views.

Victor Ross
Great Chart, Kent

FAGIN'S NOSE

Sir - I read with interest Richard Grunberger's tongue-in-cheek article about Sir Alec Guinness and Fagin's nose. Many years ago, as a young journalist working in London, I interviewed Guinness and discussed briefly the Fagin role. His attitude, if I remember correctly, was that an actor's duty is to play a role as 'strongly' as possible. In this case he created an odious character who, nevertheless, exercised a certain charm in comparison with the even more repugnant Bill Sykes.

Some years later Guinness played Adolf Hitler in a film about the Führer's final days. His task was to play a trapped animal, loyal to his Nazi creed to the end. This he did with such conviction that he was accused of making Hitler almost likeable. Fans of the actor took this as a demonstration of his great skill.

Alan Gill
Sydney, Australia

BRICKBAT

Sir - With regret, I wish to end my associate membership of the AJR. This

I do with a heavy heart. I am proud of my Jewishness and of British Jewry's contribution to national life; a new mezuzah has just gone on the doorpost. But the exposure - month in, month out - to Richard Grunberger's views is, quite simply, increasingly unpleasant and unacceptable.

Dr Peter Foot
Faringdon, Oxon

BOUQUET

Sir - I have been a reader of your journal for many years and I greatly admire your political insight and robust editorials. I was therefore not surprised to see that your readership is much wider than the world of north-west London. In your December issue Mr Patrick Guinness wrote to you in defence of his dear old gran Lady Diana Mosley. He stated that 'she did not actually kill anyone'. As far as I know, neither did Adolf Hitler or Goebbels - but they were very good at persuading others to do it for them.

Ruth Sommerfeld
London NW3

PROLIFERATION

Sir - I found your review on *Democracy* (December issue) very interesting. I go to a theatre appreciation class and will be studying the play next year. I am told that as there are so many groups now - which is really wonderful - there is sometimes insufficient space to include all the reports in the journal. Is there any chance that there could be a separate leaflet giving us details of all the groups' meetings? The membership is getting quite elderly and a separate reminder of the forthcoming events might be helpful. It would be something they could put on their notice boards and possibly encourage more people to come to the meetings! This is only an idea and I hope you can consider this suggestion.

Vera Gellman
Pinner Area AJR Group Organiser

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Feet are highly symbolic in the liturgy of the Holocaust. They evoke death marches on frozen European roads during the Third Reich - that nadir of human experience - and sometimes the fleet-footed escape of the lucky ones. When visitors to Auschwitz first caught sight of the shoe mountain that represented the earthly remains of the victims, it was this that most evoked the pathos of their extinction. Here were a child's perfect little red shoes, the court shoes of a fashionable woman, boots meant for walking, and ballet shoes.

As millions of shoes were emptied of the soles - and souls - of their victims, it was this protection that was lost. All support for the body fell away. How profound, then, that ceramicist **Jenny Stolzenberg**, should choose to convey the important message of these shoes in her first solo exhibition at the **Ben Uri Gallery**. Timed to coincide with Holocaust Memorial Day in January, **Forgive and do not Forget** is an installation of almost 200 pairs of glazed and fired ceramic shoes, evoking the heap of shoes - worn, shabby and unfashionable to the modern eye, but the final vestige of personal destruction to their owners. They suggest both the glamour and despair of a life and times so cruelly terminated.

Stolzenberg is a former drama teacher and psychotherapist. Her epiphany was

a cycle ride from Berlin to Auschwitz, an experience she describes as overwhelming. Her own, Polish-born father spent 18 months in Buchenwald, but to her deep sorrow she was unable to share the memory of his experiences before he died. To create this installation, the artist studied the footwear fashionable in Europe during the 1930s and early 1940s which survived their owners who died in the death camps of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau and others.

As the child of a survivor, Jenny Stolzenberg also undertook long hours of research at the Holocaust Exhibition in the Imperial War Museum and the Jewish Museum, and read the personal accounts of Elie Wiesel, Viktor Frankl and Primo Levi. The exhibition continues at the Ben Uri until 14 March.

'Life of Kien' on stage

Ronald Channing

The Windmill, a new play on the all-too-short life and works of Czech artist Peter Kien, is premiered for a limited season until 14 February at the Union Theatre, Southwark. Its author, acclaimed journalist, writer and *AJR* Journal arts correspondent Gloria Tessler, is a cousin of Kien.

The play narrates the creative and romantic life-story of a gifted young painter, poet, writer and librettist whose extraordinary output during his enforced internment in the garrison town of Terezin in occupied Czechoslovakia was ended tragically with his deportation to Auschwitz at the age of 25 in the company of fellow creative talents. Kien was the librettist for Viktor Ullman's acclaimed and highly courageous opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, a subversive piece written under the very nose of the Nazis, who banned it at the dress rehearsal prior to sending both composer and librettist to their deaths.

The Windmill is staged by award-winning director Ben de Wynter. Tickets at £10 (£8 concessions) are available from the box office at the Union Theatre, 204 Union Street, off The Cut, Southwark, London SE1, tel 0207 261 9876.

RG's INTERFACE

Artist's resourcefulness When 'Puck' Dachinger, a Jewish refugee from Gmunden, Austria, was in Huyton internment camp in 1940/41, he made brushes out of sticks and his own hair, and paints from toothpaste, soil and grass. Then he painted watercolours on copies of *The Times* primed with gelatine from boiled bone. Some of his work will be on display at Liverpool's Walker Gallery for the next three months.

Survivors' adaptability As children in Nazi-occupied Poland, both Jerzy Kosinski and Ludwik Begleiter (alias Louis Begley) escaped the Holocaust by the skin of their teeth. Postwar, both settled in the USA and became writers, scoring their greatest successes with typically American yarns - Kosinski with the gardener-into-guru fable *Being There* (starring Peter Sellers), and Begley with the widower's saga *About Schmidt* (starring Jack Nicholson). Kosinski described his childhood traumas in *The Painted Veil*, and Begley in *Wartime Lies*.

125th anniversary celebration The first-ever Yiddish theatre was founded by Avram Goldfaden, actor, director and playwright of *Kuny Lemel*, in 1878 in Iasi (Bessarabia). It lives on nowadays in the shape of the Bucharest Yiddish State Theatre, whose repertoire ranges from S. Ansky's *Dibbuk* to George Kreisler's *Lola Blau*. The company of 25 actors does a lot of touring; their last trip abroad was to the Jewish community centre at Berlin's Fasanenstrasse.

Left cultural heroes' Judeophobia The Greek composer Theodorakis's recent vicious antisemitic outburst has found a worthy sequel in Michael Moore's latest book. Moore, who earned a Hollywood Oscar for his documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, writes in *Dude, Where's my Country?* that Israelis use US weaponry deliberately to kill Palestinian children. Elsewhere in the book, he substitutes Jews for Israelis, asserting that their economy rests on the slave-like labour of Palestinians.

CONCERT

Chanukah declared

'IT'S CHANUKAH!'

Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

'Don't let the light go out: it's burned for so many years', the refrain of Pete Yarrow's 'Light a Candle for Chanukah' sung by colourfully uniformed children's choirs from the stage of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, might have been the message of the concert as a whole, delivered to a capacity audience. 'It's Chanukah!', the second choral concert presented by the Jewish Music Institute SOAS (JMI) and the Barry Weinberg Fund for Jewish Music, following their highly acclaimed St Johns' Smith Square concert last June, was aimed at inspiring a revival of pride in the rich traditions of Jewish music and nurturing the wealth of talented youth in the UK. And, upholding the ideals for which Barry Weinberg stood, the event was certainly successful, both because of the smooth co-ordination of the organiser Viv Bellos and the dynamic direction of the conductor and composer Stephen Glass, Barry's nephew, who had come from his base in Montreal.

Stephen Glass also compered the evening with aplomb. From Glass's own catchy arrangement of the well-known 'S'vivon Sov Sov Sov', sung by the massed mixed choir to a rousing version of Handel's 'Hallelujah' (the little-known one from *Judas Maccabeus*) this was a feast of musical styles. We heard a poignant, unaccompanied group sing 'Boroch Ate, Zingt der Tate', arranged by the American Yiddishist Zalman Mlotek, and then the rhythms of the Ladino song 'Ocho Kandelikas'. The small choir, including Stephen Glass, produced rich sonorities that attested to the beauty of this early creative interface between high art and Jewish musical heritage.

Outstanding vocally was the soloist of the evening, Gideon Zelermyer, cantor at the Shaare Zion Congregation in Montreal, whose operatic and liturgical style was displayed in several settings, starting with 'Haneirot Halalu' by Todros Greenberg. It was interesting to compare this setting with a more popular version by Meir Finkelstein performed by the massed mixed choir. Zelermyer's rich high baritone also

REVIEWS

brought tonal finesse to several Hallel settings, 'B'tzeit Yisrael' sung to the 'Moditzer theme' and Sholom Secunda's Broadway style 'Pichu Li', while he lifted the audience's spirits in the Hallalu sung to a New Year's Eve theme and the 'Eight Days of Chanukah', which disguised a medley of Chanukah songs as a Christmas carol.

Yet it was the performance by the Massed Children's Voices that made this a special evening. The swing of Paul Zim's 'Chanukah Chanukah' was contrasted by the jazzy zest of 'Al Hanissim' in a tuneful setting by Michael Isaacson, and finally the Pete Yarrow song mentioned above. The children's choir also gave an impromptu rendition of 'I have a little Dreidl' as an encore - only neither the children nor the audience were prepared for what was to follow: Cantor Zelermyer in dark glasses and microphone in hand, crooning the song in Elvis Presley rock'n'roll style to the delight of all. Chanukah was well and truly declared.

Malcolm Miller

The Barry Weinberg Fund is aimed at promoting Jewish music education in many forms, for example through Choral Festivals and a Series of Education Packs for teachers and pupils. Further details may be obtained from The Barry Weinberg Fund, JMI, PO Box 232, Harrow HA1 2NN.

A man grappling with his conscience

CONFESSION OF A MURDERER

Joseph Roth

Granta, £7.99 (paperback)

The striking title of Joseph Roth's novel is deceptively simple. Behind it lies a complex and riveting tale of intrigue, deception and split identity. Set in Paris in the years between the two world wars, the narrator, an impersonation of the author, is living among Russian émigrés and hears an extraordinary story over late-night drinks in a local Russian restaurant.

This is the 'confession' of the so-called murderer, Golubchik, a former member of the tsarist secret police, who surprises the narrator by appearing quite familiar with his background. Rather than being shunned as a criminal, however, Golubchik is affectionately known to the habitués of the restaurant as 'our murderer'. Central to the 'confession' is the confused picture that emerges of Golubchik's origins. Ostensibly the son of a forester of that name, he is, in fact, the illegitimate progeny of a 'Prince Krapotkin' and it is the internal struggle between the disparate identities that consumes him and leaves him vulnerable to unsavoury influences.

His 'Mephistopheles' turns out to be a mysterious Hungarian, Lakatos, ever-present but generally invisible, who, as his name 'locksmith', suggests, 'locks' the aspiring 'Krapotkin' into a corrosive spiral of envy, hatred and revenge. His 'nemesis' is the young Prince Krapotkin, the favourite and heir of his biological father, who, according to Lakatos, is not a Krapotkin by blood. Added to the equation is a French mannequin, Lutetia, with whom Golubchik falls passionately in love.

It is the consequence of being the 'loser', at least initially, in this love triangle that propels Golubchik to actions which ensnare him ever more deeply in the machinations of the secret police, forcing him to adopt a manner of being that, at the deepest level, alienates him from himself. On the surface, however, this is less apparent. Condemned to follow Lutetia to Paris, with a passport and papers which pronounce him a Krapotkin and an adequate salary from his task of informing on émigré dissidents, Golubchik, at the outset, would appear to be experiencing 'la vie en rose'.

Into this moral vacuum Roth subtly introduces a few Jewish victims of the secret police, in Russia and in Paris, who stir Golubchik into evincing a principled sensitivity. Inadvertently, he is instrumental in condemning them to a doomed fate and this consciousness never leaves him. Ironically, his noblest act is to attempt to save a 'brave little Jewess' and her crippled brother but providence - and the outbreak of the First World War - conspire against him. In his moments of lucidity, Golubchik

recognises that it is the Jewess, Chana Lea Rifkin, whom he really loves rather than Lutetia, whom he desires but despises.

Among the many fascinating elements of this suspenseful tale are the glimpses it affords into Russia before the Revolution and Paris before the Great War. Most powerful, perhaps, is Roth's skill in depicting a man constantly grappling with his conscience.

Emma Klein

CINEMA

Gripping, but tangled, yarn

TRILOGY ONE - ON THE RUN (CAVALE)

Directed by Lucas Delvaux

In selected cinemas

The trilogy format has proved irresistible to creative spirits from Schiller (*Wallenstein*) to Tolkien (*Lord of the Rings*), with Wagner even going one better with his own Ring tetralogy.

The French film director/scriptwriter Lucas Delvaux has now produced an epic three-parter, of which the first section focuses on Bruno, a murderous left-wing terrorist who, 15 years into a life sentence, escapes from jail to resume lethal anti-capitalist warfare. However, he elicits little support, since

his former comrades are either dead or have foresworn violence.

Just when things look utterly hopeless for Bruno the local police chief's opium-addicted wife offers him a bolthole. However, her addiction has made her dependent on supplies from the local crime boss. This precipitates a situation reminiscent of Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*, where Peachum commands his henchmen to 'bring in' Mack the Knife in order to get the police off his back. Bruno escapes every trap the combined forces of law and disorder set for him, and by the end of the film it looks as if by superhuman exertion he might contrive his escape across a snowbound Alpine wilderness into Italy. Having kept the entire audience on the edge of their seats for what seemed an eternity, the hero-villain eventually plunges to icy death in a crevasse.

Although I found the ramifications of the plot rather opaque, the film combines sharp crispness of direction with beautiful camera work - especially in the Alpine sequences.

And how refreshing to come across a terrorist who, ready to destroy the lives of others, actually wants to preserve his own! In a way, Delvaux's trilogy can be viewed as an *hommage* to a bygone age before the rise of Islamic suicide bombers.

Richard Grunberger

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Letter from Israel Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

It was a first-night gala. Jerusalem's Gerard Behar Auditorium was packed. But this was a performance with a difference. Under the auspices of Shekel, an association set up to help people with developmental problems, a performance of Lionel Bart's musical *Oliver* was being given. All the participants were children and young adults with special needs. Produced in conjunction with the Nissan Nativ Acting Studio in Jerusalem, this was *Oliver* with a twist.

The proceedings began fairly formally. A large number of people had been involved in the enterprise, both voluntarily and professionally, and all had to be thanked by the (voluntary) compere. Some of them were also given the opportunity to speak. In addition, several ministers and public figures were in the audience and some of these also felt impelled to address the audience.

Finally, the show began. The actors, backed up by a small choir, moved about the stage in period costume, recited their lines more or less on cue, and even ad-libbed occasionally. At times the prompter could be heard while at others the actors prompted one another, but everyone entered into the spirit of the somewhat convoluted plot and enjoyed themselves in the process. The principal actors were all equipped with head microphones so that they could be clearly heard. The concept and execution were admirable, and everything added up to produce a unique event.

The British ambassador, addressing the audience afterwards, was clearly moved. Everyone applauded loudly when he remarked what an enjoyable experience the evening had been for him. It had given him immense pleasure, he said, to get away from the problems of politics and affairs of state and see the real Israel coping with the normal problems of everyday life. Everyone agreed that it had been inspiring to see what the youngsters had been able to achieve.

An energetic, diminutive woman greets me at her apartment in Belsize Park, the North West London haunt of so many refugee and immigrant Jewish intellectuals. Concert pianist Alice Hertz Sommer has lived through every triumph, every upheaval, of the twentieth century. One wall, around her piano, is adorned with pictures of musical celebrities. As she relates a cascade of memories, her expressive hands probe the air to emphasise a point, or rest in her lap, heavy with music.

I have to remind myself that she came into this world in the same year as the Wright brothers made man's first powered flight. She was born on 26 November 1903, in Prague, one of five children; her mother came from the Moravian town of Iglau, Mahler's birthplace. 'My mother played with little Gustav,' she says, 'and told us that other children used to laugh at him because he was shy.'

Alice's first piano teacher was her elder sister, Irma, whose husband, Felix Weltsch, was a close friend of the writers Franz Kafka and Max Brod. She recalls Kafka in his twenties. 'He took me with my twin sister to the park and sat on a bench telling us stories.' At 16 Alice studied piano with Conrad Ansoerge, one of Franz Liszt's last pupils, completing her studies at the German conservatoire in Prague.

In 1931 she married Leopold Sommer, who spoke several languages and was an excellent violinist. From the age of two their son Raphael - 'Raffi' - was seen by his mother as being highly musical: 'He sat by the piano trying to find the melodies I played and had perfect pitch.' Raphael Sommer gained an international reputation as a cellist, but died suddenly in Israel after completing a concert tour in November 2001. He was 64.

When Hitler occupied the Sudetenland in 1939, the Jews of Prague were confined to a ghetto. 'The worst thing,' says Alice Sommer, 'was the yellow star. You were afraid to meet somebody in case you damaged them through your existence.' Leopold was

PROFILE

Rodney Greenberg

Alice Hertz Sommer



PHOTOGRAPHER: JOHN RIFKIN

forced to help the Nazis arrange deportations to Terezin, the Czech garrison town in which the Germans had established a concentration camp cynically disguised as a haven for intellectuals; it even fooled the Red Cross. Alice's mother was sent there, and thence to a death camp, a year before the rest of the family. 'It was the lowest point in my life. An inner voice told me: "only you can help yourself," so I began working on the greatest challenge for pianists - Chopin's 24 *Etudes*. It was my way out of despair.'

On the eve of deportation in 1943, Alice and Leopold sat with their precious luggage, not switching on the light, so that Raphael could sleep. 'Suddenly our previously good Czech friends burst in and took the carpets, the pictures, the furniture. They didn't even say, "Good evening," or, "We hope you come back." We were already dead for them.' Thousands of prisoners were assembled. 'It was an enormous building, like a railway station. Outside were open toilets. Already, human

dignity disappeared.' At Terezin, men lived in separate barracks from women and children. 'We could only see our husbands for one hour a day. There was a hospital, offices, a beautiful concert hall - organised by the Jews themselves. Concerts were from six to seven-thirty, curfew at eight.'

Alice was engaged to give recitals and the organisers knew she had a musical son: 'They wanted him to sing the role of the sparrow in a children's opera, *Brundibar*, written by my good friend Hans Krasa.' Krasa was himself an inmate (he later perished at Auschwitz) and seven-year-old Raphael sang in all 55 performances.

'Food was black water called coffee, or white water with potato in it, called soup. We performers got a little bit of margarine, and this I could give to my son. Once, the morning after I had played a Bach *Partita*, the prisoners serving the soup said: "You are getting two portions, because last night you played the *Gigue* so beautifully.'" Leopold was sent to Dachau, where he died six weeks before it was liberated.

After the war, mother and son reached Israel, where she taught at the Rubin Academy. Raphael won a scholarship to the Paris Conservatoire and eventually settled in London. I had 37 wonderful years in Israel and I am proud of my Israeli passport, Alice says. At the age of 84, she moved to London to be near Raphael, his two sons, and his second wife, the cellist Geneviève Teulières.

Alice still practises the piano for two hours a day, attends lectures, reads voraciously, and has only recently stopped walking several blocks for a daily swim. 'Musicians are privileged people. We were happy in Terezin, knowing in the evening we could play, because it saved our lives and the lives of our listeners.'

This is an edited version of an article which appeared in the Jewish Chronicle on 7 November 2003. Rodney Greenberg will be speaking on 'Babylon to Broadway' at the Ralli Hall, Hove, on 2 May, and on 'The Glory of Gershwin' at the New West End Synagogue, London, on 9 May.

INSIDE the AJR

Group founded in North Oxfordshire

We gathered at the home of Heinz and Polly Zimran in Charlbury. The hospitality provided by the hostess, with the help of her daughter, was fabulous. This was an initial meeting for people who in the main had not met before. Like other meetings in rural areas, everyone attending had to travel some distance and most of those present were more 'integrated' than in, say, north-west London. One 85-year-old lady was surprised to learn that there were many Kinder under 70. Given the need to get to know each other, there was no time for any formal activity or even an agenda. But the meeting was enjoyed by all present and it was agreed to meet again.

Francis Steiner

Liverpool: the triumph of survival

Käte Klein (later Carmela or Kay Fyne) described the increasing antisemitism in Germany, the heartbreaking goodbye from her parents, the Kindertransport with brothers and sisters, growing up in the UK during the war, marriage and life on an Israeli kibbutz, return to the UK, and much more. Listeners felt compelled to compare their own refugee experiences, always a combination of the bitterness of loss and the triumph of survival.

Gerry Jayson

Hungarian fervour in Pinner

Some 50 members attended our Chanukah party, where we were entertained by Katinka Seiner and Laszlo Eckstein with a selection of festive songs together with violin accompaniment. All done with Hungarian fervour and much appreciated by the audience. We also gave our good wishes to the Hellmans on their golden wedding and to Annette Saville on a significant birthday.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 5 February,

2 pm. Walter Woyda will quiz us on 'Music and Nostalgia'

Essex party goes with a swing

Our Chanukah party went with a swing, with David Ball playing the music on his keyboard and with an almost endless supply of latkes, doughnuts and other goodies. One member had brought a charming little *menorah*, triggering a lively discussion on the symbolism of the candles. Another member sang Chanukah songs in a most beautiful voice and in perfect Hebrew. *Julie Franks*

Next meeting: Tuesday 10 February, 11.00 am. Second anniversary Tu B'Shevat party and video

Ilford and the Rothschilds

We listened to a recording of *The Rothschilds' the Musical* under the guidance of Walter Woyda. We were sorry to learn there was no prospect at present of seeing this musical produced on the English stage, though it had run for 600 performances in New York.

Meta RoseNeil

Next meeting: Wednesday 18 February, 10.30 am. Stewart Macintosh, 'From Broom Cupboard to Bush House'

North London Chanukah party a great success

Our Chanukah party, attended by over 20 people, was a great success. Our thanks to Helena and Leo Horn for providing both doughnuts and latkes, which were absolutely delicious. The excellent quiz, organised by Edith Schablin, required a knowledge of London streets and squares.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meetings (no January meeting owing to synagogue function): Thursday 5 February, 10.30 am. Otto Deutsch, 'Vienna Coffee Houses'; and Wednesday 25 February, 10.30 am. Dr Amy Gottlieb, 'Postwar Rescue'

Brighton & Hove Sarid eat, drink and light candles

Chanukah parties would not be complete without latkes, doughnuts and various types of fruit and all these items were provided by Fausta Shelton and Myrna Glass. A convivial morning was

experienced by a well attended group and the time was passed eating, drinking and lighting the appropriate number of candles.

Next meeting: Monday 16 February, 10.45 am. Rabbi David Meyer, 'The Differences between Orthodox, Reform and Liberal Judaism'

Chanukah quiz at Bournemouth

We had an attendance of 27 members at our pre-Chanukah party and quiz. The general knowledge quiz was quite a challenge to all of us but the teams performed very well and deserved their prizes. Then came the Chanukah tea with plenty of doughnuts and with Chanukah Gelt for all, and we concluded with reports on recent trips to Israel. Sadly, when the names of 'our' prisoners - Ron Arad and others - were read out, there were no reports of any progress towards their release. *George Ettinger*

South West Midlands (Worcester area): sitting and nattering

We are again indebted to Ruth and Allan Jackson for letting us meet in their home. Ruth had prepared a delicious lunch and we enjoyed the opportunity to sit and natter in very congenial surroundings. Kindertransportee Ruth played her CD of the 60th anniversary reunion concert and showed us her photographs of the unveiling of the Kindertransport statue at Liverpool Street Station.

Richard Newton

Next meeting: Probably in late March - please contact Ruth on 01386 552 264

Leeds HSFA

Dr Peter Liddle, who recently spoke to the Leeds HSFA (see January 2004 issue), is Director 2nd World War Experience Centre and is no longer associated with the University of Leeds.

Next meetings

Birmingham (West Midlands): Monday 23 February. New venue. Contact Henny Rednall on 0121 373 5603

Weald of Kent: Wednesday 4 February, 10.30 am. Contact Max and Jane Dickson on 01892 541026



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Leading manufacturing jeweller and member of the Hall Marking Council Freddie Durst, right, explored 'The Magic of Gold' with Hermann Hirschberger and fellow members at a KT-AJR luncheon meeting. Gold, Freddie Durst said, was a symbol of perfection over which people had fought for 6,000 years. Pure gold, he added, was used in the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem; hall marking was introduced in Britain 600 years ago to guarantee consistency of quality; and the California Gold Rush in 1848 and gold mining in Africa had created a whole new industry. Apart from acting as a store of wealth, gold was used for jewellery and, being virtually indestructible, in science and industry.

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Thur 5	Mike Marandi
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Tue 10	Robert Lowe
Wed 11	Jack Davidoff
Thur 12	Katinka Seiner
Sun 15	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 16	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 17	Margaret Gruneberg
Wed 18	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 19	Margaret Opdahl
Sun 22	CLOSED
Mon 23	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 24	Sara Meadows
Wed 25	Geoffrey Whitworth
Thur 26	Francoise Geller
Sun 29	CLOSED

Editorials and articles published, and opinions expressed in, *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Engagement

Mazeltov and best wishes to Carol Rossen, AJR's Administrator, and her husband Adrian, on the engagement of their daughter Sara to Ohad Kastro, and to his family in Israel.

Deaths

Le Fevre. Tony Fevre, née Myer, born 1907 in Cologne, died unexpectedly on 26 November 2003 at home in London. She had a welcoming heart and touched many in her life. She loved life and was truly an inspiration to others. She will be dearly remembered by her sons Alan and David, grandson Richard, many relatives, and by those who knew her.

Condolences

The Chairman, Honorary Officers and Staff of the AJR extend their condolences to the family of Hilde Kochmann, wife of the late Max Kochmann.

Stone Setting

The Memorial Stone for David Jedwab will be consecrated at Waltham Abbey on Sunday 15 February 2004 at 10.30 am.

Classified

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Day Centre

Barbara Isaacs will be coming to the Day Centre on Wednesday 11 February and Thursday 25 March from 10.00 - 12.00 hours. She will be selling Marks & Spencer gifts, toiletries, costume jewellery, scarves, gloves and vases.

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

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Search Notices

Richard and Martha Weinstock. Richard, born 23.5.1901 in Vienna, where he lived until 25.5.1939 in Zirkusgasse 38, second district. Martha, née Grossbard, was born 7.4.1886. They migrated to London after 25.5.1939. Information please contact Austrian Embassy London, tel 020 7235 3731.

Edith Esther Seager, formerly mayor of Smethwick. 'By guaranteeing jobs in Britain, she was instrumental in obtaining freedom for fifty refugees [including my mother] from Vienna, Germany and Holland' (*Smethwick Telephone*, 25 February 1955). I wish to find at least some of the refugees saved by Ms Seager. Information please contact Jean Adler, 3312 Inverness Street, Vancouver BC, V5V 4V4, Canada; fax 604 677 8753; email jvadler@sprint.ca.

Wolfratshausen/Oberbayern. Does anyone know of any person who was at the Wirtschaftliche Frauenschule (School of Household Management) in this location in 1926-38? We are a group of women who are carrying out research on this school but we have found only the following names of former students who appear to have emigrated to the UK: Minna Kocherthaler, Hanna Lichtenauer, Gertrud Fanny Maier and Hertha Mannheim. Information please contact Hannelore Greiner tel 0049 8171 10512; fax 0049 08171 407959.

Winifred Ellerman. I am an author writing on the activities of this English author, who used the pseudonym *Bryher*. She was a wealthy woman who was said to have helped many to escape the Holocaust between 1930 and 1939 while living in Switzerland. Information on her refugee work, please contact Professor Jacob Korg at KorgO@attglobal.net.

Return of the tide

During World War II Ludwig Frank was deported to a Canadian refugee camp at Sherbrooke in Quebec. Having time to kill, and being good with his hands, Ludwig designed, and made, a rather beautiful seascape in inlaid woods. He presented his creation to an officer at the camp, Major Angus Cameron, as appreciation for the kindness shown to him. He signed his work 'L Frank 1942'.

Professor Moyra McDill, who now possesses and treasures the work, would nevertheless like it to be returned either to Ludwig himself (last heard of at 4 Hilltop Road, London NW11) or to his children or grandchildren. Professor McDill can be reached by email at mmcdill@mae.carleton.ca

Arts and Events Diary February

To 18 March 'German Jews at the Turn of the Century'. New course at London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC). Monday 1.30-3.30 pm

To 18 March 'Britain and America's Gain: The Cultural Impact of Hitler's Refugees'. Thursday 10.00-12 pm. LJCC

To 18 March 'Eugen Spiro (1874-1972): A Retrospective'. LJCC

Mon 2 Feb Mary Shakeshaft MA, 'John Masefield, Forgotten Laureate'. **Club 43**

Tues 3 Esther Dischereit, author of *Mit Eichmann an der Boerse*, talks to the BBC's Rosie Goldsmith. **Goethe Institute**, 50 Princess Gate, Exhibition Road, London SW7. 7.00 pm. For tickets tel LJCC

Mon 9 Prof Michael Alpert, 'A German Businessman and a Spanish General: How Germany Became Involved in the Spanish Civil War'. **Club 43**

Thur 12 Professor Joanna Bourke (Birkbeck College, London), 'Memory in an Age of Trauma'. **Wiener Library**, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1. 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

Fri 13 Bertha Leverton, *Kindertransport Founder President*, 'Aspects of the Holocaust'. **Museum of London**. 1.00 pm. Tel (0)870 444 3852. Entry free

Fri 13 Professor Marita Krauss, 'Exilerfahrung und Wissenstransfer. Remigranten in Deutschland nach 1945', Institute of Germanic Studies, 29 Russell Square, London WC1, 6.00pm

Mon 16 Dr Christine Pullen, 'Wildes Farm and the Hampstead Socialists'. **Club 43**

Tues 17 Doron Rabinovici, author *The Search for M*, talks to Rosie Goldsmith. **Austrian Cultural Forum**, 28 Rutland Gate, London SW7. 7.00 pm. For tickets tel LJCC

Sun 22 Professor Michael Ignatieff (Harvard University), 'The Development of Human Rights in the 20th Century'. **Wiener Library**, 3.00 pm

Mon 23 Terry Ward MA, 'The Origins of Human Society: The Babylonian Empire'. **Club 43**

Tues 24 'Bearing the Holocaust: The Second Generation and the Shaping of Memory'. Talk by Professor Efraim Sicher. 7.45 pm. Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, Norrice Lea, London N2. Tel **Spiro Ark** 020 7723 9991

Tues 24 'Eyes in the Big City: A Night of Berlin Cabaret with Eva Meier'. 7.30 pm. **Phoenix Theatre**, Ivy House. For tickets tel LJCC

Tues 24 'Why Faith Schools?' Panel discussion. **Jewish Museum**, 129-131 Albert Street, London NW1. Tel 020 7284 1997. 6.30 pm

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Austrian Assistance Fund

Improvements to the Austrian Holocaust Survivor Emergency Assistance Programme (AHSEAP) will enable more former Austrian refugees to benefit from a wide range of essential social and care services.

As well as a liberalisation of the financial criteria - allowing some survivors with higher savings to apply - it is hoped that the new guidelines, including a more comprehensive list of the types of assistance available, will both entitle those previously restricted from receiving funds and attract new applicants.

Those eligible to receive awards from the fund include Austrian Nazi victims who have both a medical condition requiring urgent attention and those who have modest savings and a reduced income.

Awards from the fund are capped, with eligible applicants receiving up to £4,500 a year for medical needs, including financing the cost of wheelchairs, the installation of appliances for the housebound disabled, and grants to cover the cost of dental care and hearing aids.

Also entitled to receive awards are victims with limited means who require funds to buy into the Austrian Social Security Pension scheme and grants to cover emergency housing matters, including assistance to prevent eviction and funds to avoid utility disconnection.

In the light of the changes to the programme, those previously ineligible to receive funds may now be entitled. For further information, please contact the Association of Jewish Refugees Social Services Department on 020 8385 3070.

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.

Caring for older people Realities and responses in the 21st century

Ronald Channing

Britain's Jewish community benefits from the services and support of 2,000 financially independent Jewish voluntary sector organisations. These have their origins in Jewish immigrant traditions of self-help which accept responsibility for maintaining and improving the health, education and social well-being of all those who identify as members of the country's Jewish community. Indeed, these agencies form a central pillar around which much of the community's activities and identification revolve.

Though many of these organisations limit their activities to a specific geographical area and limit the scope of the services they offer, others have metamorphosed into multi-million-pound agencies employing hundreds of paid staff and volunteers. Jewish Policy Research (JPR), the community's highly respected think-tank and source of research-based solutions, has published the results of a mammoth six-year study into the state of the 'nation': *Long-term Planning for Anglo-Jewry*.

JPR does not provide a recipe for revolution; rather it believes that we have entered a new era in which good intentions and muddling through can no longer rely on the conspicuous generosity of a handful of community-spirited millionaire philanthropists to foot the bills. This era is coming, or has already drawn, to its close. When ever-increasing demands are met from increasingly scarce resources, something has to give. For the Jewish voluntary sector 'to remain viable and vibrant in the twenty-first century', says the report, 'organisations need to be more responsive to the needs of their clients and to plan their activities using research-based evidence rather than instinct and supposition ... The funds are too limited for services to be duplicated or badly planned.'

Care for the elderly is second only to education as the recipient of the community's largesse, yet surprisingly little research has hitherto been devoted to this key area of communal concern. There are 21 formal Jewish day centres for

older people catering for 3,000 people a week. Some are independent, while others are run by larger community organisations such as Jewish Care and the Association of Jewish Refugees. Among services provided in people's own homes are kosher meals-on-wheels and dedicated social service teams who assess the care needs of older people and can usually organise a range of supportive domiciliary services.

In sheltered housing Jewish organisations have a total stock of 4,000 flats and houses, three-quarters in Greater London. B'nai B'rith JGB is the largest provider of specifically Jewish social housing with more than 650 units. Residential and nursing homes are the largest component in social care funding for older people. There are 36 Jewish residential and nursing sector care homes with 2,500 beds, proportionately higher in the provinces. While in the 1960s and 1970s the average age of residents was around 70, today's is a startling 88 years, rising to 90 years in London! Thankfully, the functional abilities of older people are being maintained much longer by means of improved medical and domiciliary services. Although most people express a strong preference for staying in their own homes, if they did need to be looked after in residential care, 67 per cent expressed a preference for a Jewish home.

With greater longevity, Jews are 'demographic pioneers' for the expansion of social services. Concomitantly, the elderly are using up their accumulated wealth to meet the substantial costs of sheltered accommodation and residential care, leaving diminished resources for their families and the charitable institutions providing these services. However, the acceptance of responsibility for the elderly over and above the provisions of the state remains accepted by virtually all sectors of the Jewish community. Improvements in the efficiency of delivery, targeting of resources and co-operation between service providers - as well as a sharing of the financial burden - has to be the way ahead.

Newsround

Memorial Day

Belfast's Waterfront Hall was the central venue for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration on 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. This year's theme, *From the Holocaust to Rwanda*, recognised the genocide of up to a million people ten years ago in Rwanda. Commemorations were held in all parts of Britain.

Armed guards on British planes

To deter and counter hijacks or terrorist attacks on British airliners, the government announced its intent to deploy armed air marshals travelling *incognito* on international flights. Israel's national airline, *El Al*, has operated similar protective schemes for many years.

German attitudes

Most Germans resent being reminded of Nazi crimes, according to a study by Bielefeld University, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*. While 69% were regarded as annoyed by references to Germany's Nazi history, some 15% held to stereotypical and antisemitic views.

Nazi singer imprisoned

The leader of a neo-Nazi skinhead rock band, Michael Regener, was convicted in a Berlin court of inciting racial hatred against Jews and foreigners and sentenced to three years, reports *London Jewish News*. Regener's band, originally called 'final solution', was part of a growing neo-Nazi movement in Germany.

Still seeking perpetrators

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles is continuing its European campaign of offering rewards for information leading to the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. Since 2002 they have received information on perpetrators of war crimes in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and have now reached Austria, which has not convicted a Nazi war criminal for at least 25 years, with Poland and Romania targeted.

Antisemitism conference cancelled

Citing a European Union opinion poll which declared Israel to be the biggest threat to world security, while suppressing an EU-financed study that found Muslim minorities to be responsible for growing antisemitism, EU President Romano Prodi responded to criticism from the World and European Jewish Congresses by postponing a planned conference on antisemitism.