

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The demons inside dictators' minds

Whereas May comes on strong on the very first day, June reaches its high point two-thirds of the way through the month. On 21 June, the date of the summer solstice, the sun reaches the northernmost point of its ecliptic - the longest day of the year.

In the Third Reich the occasion used to be marked by *Sonnwendfeiern* - community singing, dancing and athletic contests around bonfires lit on hilltops and in forest glades - as part of the Nazi drive to turn the country back from Christian to pagan practices.

The night of 21 June 1941 was also the date the astrology-conscious Hitler chose to launch his most audacious enterprise, the invasion of Russia. The invading forces were staggeringly successful at first - but failed to land a decisive knock-out blow on the retreating Red Army. Then, in October, the first snowfall heralding the bitter Russian winter brought the Wehrmacht's advance to a temporary halt.

Why did Hitler allow his troops the ludicrously short time-span of four months to vanquish an enemy who had worsted Napoleon? The answer lies in the pathological racism which addled his brain. Reared in a home suffused with Pan-Germanism - his father was a Schönerer supporter - he hated 'mongrelised' Vienna, a city full of Slavs and Jews.

Convinced by his Slavophobia that the Russians were a subhuman rabble, he proceeded on the assumption that the Wehrmacht would 'finish the job' in one brief campaigning season. (Consequently he omitted to provide his troops with adequate winter clothing, causing widespread frostbite.)

His pathological racism also militated against a successful outcome of Operation Barbarossa in another way. Russian - and especially Ukrainian - revulsion at Soviet rule with its forced collectivisation and man-made famines had turned many inhabitants of the German-occupied territories into potential collaborators, but



Lazar Kaganovich

Hitler's Slavophobic inhumanity drove them back into Stalin's arms.

The world Hitler envisioned after victory bore the hallmarks of his race-mania. It was to be 'cleansed' of all Jews, and the vast spaces of Russia were to be inhabited by a severely culled Slav population in a state of perpetual serfdom to their German overlords.

Whereas Hitler's pathological mindset was fully formed by his late twenties, Stalin's proceeded on its downward spiral into total paranoia throughout the best part of his life.

This had something to do with the widely disparate origins of their superficially similar totalitarian ideologies. Nazism harked back - via (ill-digested) Nietzsche to Gobineau's racism and Fichte's Teutomania - to a rejection of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Marxism-Leninism, on the other hand, was a bastardised offspring of that very same Enlightenment.

This meant that the multinational Soviet Union over which Stalin ruled after 1924 subscribed - officially at least - to notions of racial equality. It also meant that in the newly established ruling apparatus minorities that had been discriminated against under the Tsar - such as Poles, Georgians and Jews - were over-represented.

The beginning of Stalin's reign was

taken up by his struggle with Trotsky, whom he fought as an intellectual internationalist - hence Stalin's slogan 'Socialism in one country' - but not as a Jew. In contrast to the polyglot highbrow Trotsky, Stalin would point to his trusted 'buddy', the Jewish proletarian, i.e. ex-cobbler, Lazar Kaganovich. For all that Kaganovich was known by the antisemitically tinged nickname 'Kosherovich' among the Kremlin elite, he never entirely forfeited Stalin's trust. And there was another curious factor. Possibly because well brought up daughters of the Tsarist bourgeoisie disdained professional revolutionaries as marriage partners, an amazing number of Soviet high-ups - Molotov, Marshal Voroshilov, KGB chief Yezhov, etc. - had married less conventionally minded Jewesses.

Early on, these Jewish wives in the Kremlin brought a badly needed touch of glamour to Stalin's court. The whole phenomenon was symbolised by the appointment of Polina Molotov as the first commissar of the Soviet perfumery industry.

In the thirties the rise of Hitler made Stalin stress the Soviet Union's anti-racist credentials and allow another polyglot Jewish intellectual, Maxim Litvinov, to represent Russia *vis-à-vis* the outside world. At Geneva Litvinov tirelessly preached 'collective security' to an unfortunately unresponsive West to preserve peace.

Then in May 1939 Stalin replaced Litvinov with Molotov, signalling to Hitler that the way was open for a Nazi-Soviet pact. (At the same time, he ordered Molotov to 'clear out the synagogue', i.e. purge the many Jews staffing the foreign ministry.)

With the conclusion of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Russian media stopped reporting overnight the antisemitic atrocities that occurred in German-occupied Eastern Europe. Soviet Jews therefore had no



Maxim Litvinov

inkling of the fate that was to overtake them once the Germans invaded - a fate symbolised by the dreadful massacre in Babi Yar near Kiev.

At the height of the war the hard-pressed Stalin, re-enacting his earlier role as a stalwart anti-antisemite, set up a Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow and sent its chairman, the Yiddish actor Solomon Mikhoels, to the USA and Britain to drum up support for the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile in the territories newly liberated from the Germans Soviet officialdom refused to treat Jewish survivors as special cases, saying that all Soviet citizens had suffered equally at the hands of the Nazis. After 1945, in the run-up to the Israeli War of Independence, the Soviets aided the Jewish cause, both diplomatically and with arms shipments from Czechoslovakia.

This was followed by another *volte-face* on Stalin's part. When Golda Meir arrived as Israel's first ambassador to Moscow, Polina Molotov was observed chatting to her in Yiddish. This earned the Soviet Prime Minister's Jewish wife a sentence of eight years' banishment in Siberia, and symbolised his growing suspicion that the sympathies of Soviet Jews did not lie with their socialist homeland, but with Israel and America. As Stalin's paranoia deepened over the last five years of his life, Jews were cumulatively targeted. First came the KGB's murder of Mikhoels, which coincided with a vicious media campaign against 'rootless cosmopolitans'. There followed the judicial murder of exponents of Yiddish culture such as Perets Markish and Leib Kvitko - a chapter of horrors climaxed by the notorious Doctors' Plot.

It is rumoured that Stalin was even contemplating the mass deportation of Soviet Jewry to Siberia when he shuffled off his mortal coil, thereby lifting the shadow of fear from millions.

Clients or friends? The changing role of the befriender

Ronald Channing



Volunteer befrienders at AJR seminar led by Gill Yentis

Volunteers who generously give of their time to visit AJR members in their homes often find a reward in making deep friendships. But the nature of their role is continually subject to change and it is these changes, and how best they can be accommodated, which constituted the theme of a recent seminar for 20 volunteer befrienders led by Gill Yentis at the AJR's offices in Stanmore.

Many people were pleased to become 'befrienders' especially to visit individuals within their own communities, but it is not always clear what they should do. Do they offer listening skills or use talking skills to fill in those embarrassing silences? As time passes, the friend's health, memory and mobility may well deteriorate, though this may not be admitted to. Also, close family and friends are lost, mentally active people can be frustrated by just having the TV to watch all day, and computerised gadgets and much else of modern technology probably prove incomprehensible!

On the positive side, trust and understanding may be increased, and a readiness to listen and share things should enrich the relationship, yet avoid being over-obligated. Knowledge of how to cope with the new technology is helpful - how to tune a radio or set up a

new phone system - though changing a light bulb may be equally important. Organisational changes may be significant too: for example, safe access to the home - the lift, stairs and lighting; moving furniture or taking someone shopping alone may not always be the best thing to do; and the befriender's car insurance should be extended.

There had to be recognised boundaries to the relationship. Befrienders were advised not to give their phone number to the friend, for example. The dangers of being depended on for more and more tasks had to be recognised too.

Most preferred to call their hosts 'friends' though, in the final analysis, 'clients' may be equally valid, as the visits should not impinge on the befriender's own family obligations and lifestyle. In the end, it was clear from the articulate contribution and enthusiasm of the befrienders that, as long as the advice of the AJR's Volunteers Coordinator was followed and a little common sense was applied, being a befriender brought its own special rewards.

To find out more about becoming, or inviting, a befriender please contact AJR's Volunteers Coordinator, Carol Hart, on 0208 385 3070.

AJR Journal

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The longest hatred

Richard Grunberger

Mel Gibson's *The Passion*, which revives the charge of Jewish deicide, also features some antisemitic grace notes. In the scene where the bag with the 30 pieces of silver is flung at Judas Iscariot, he fails to catch it and has to grub around on the dirty floor to collect the spilled coins.

That vignette neatly combines two antisemitic stereotypes: Jewish greed and lack of physical dexterity due to non-participation in sports. The latter charge - which incidentally prompted the founding of the Maccabi and Hakoah clubs - is, of course, nowhere near as poisonous as many others, such as Jewish kinship with the devil.

This notion, most readily believed in rural areas unvisited by any strangers, results from the image of Jews having horns. That image, reproduced in many works of art - including Michelangelo's sculpture of Moses - can be traced back to St Jerome's mistranslation of Hebrew 'beams of light' (that issued from Moses's forehead on his descent from Sinai) as 'horns' in the Latin version of the Bible.

The alleged Jewish kinship with Satan inspired pathological fantasies in medieval Germany; a castle near Nuremberg still features images of Jews engaged in carnal intercourse with pigs. This preoccupation with the Jews' inordinate sexual desires was a recurring theme. In the 1820s Wilhelm Hauff penned a historical novel about Jud Süß-Oppheimer, depicting the court Jew as a self-aggrandising lecher. A century later Hitler in *Mein Kampf* devoted a long paragraph to the description of a young Jew lying in ambush to deflower a German maiden. Once in power the Nazis commissioned a film of the Jud Süß story which portrayed the court Jew as an insatiable rapist responsible for the (blonde) heroine's suicide.

All in all, the sexual sphere afforded German antisemites unlimited scope for attacking Jews. They disrupted theatre performances of Schnitzler's *Der Reigen* (*La Ronde*), denigrated Freud as der

Lustlummel (lascivious lout) of the Berggasse, and charged Dr Ehrlich, discoverer of salvarsan - an antidote to syphilis - of wanting to poison the bloodstream of German men.

Matters sexual also fed into Polish antisemitism. Readers may remember the scene in Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* where elderly Polish women reminiscing about the 1930s allege that *chic*, sophisticated Jewesses threatened the stability of their marriages.

Then the war intervened and by 1945/6 Poland resounded to the cry of *zydokomuna* (Jewish Communism). The only pogrom to stain Europe after the Holocaust occurred in Kielce during the first postwar winter - connived at by Catholic prelates opposed to the Sovietisation of the country.

The compound noun *zydokomuna* likewise encapsulates the creed of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, self-appointed moral tutor to the Russian nation. Solzhenitsyn believes that the 1917 Revolution - which he considers an unmitigated disaster for his country - was largely the work of the Jews. (To be fair to him, he also implicates other nationalities, such as Poles, Letts and Georgians, in the guilt for the imposition of Bolshevik rule on the Russian people.) Which is odd given that Karl Marx, the founding father of Communism, asserted that the capitalist system was suffused with the spirit of Judaism. He actually wrote: 'What is the worldly cult of the Jew? Huckstering! Who is his worldly deity? Money!'

Today of course post-Communist Russia has embraced capitalism, and so, to an extent, has Communist China - which leads one to wonder what the global conflict between the two systems was all about.

The longest hatred, however, is still with us but it has switched location. Today Teheran and Baghdad have replaced pre-war Berlin and Warsaw as places where crowds shout 'Death to the Jews!'

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Truth and fiction: Holocaust on stage and screen

Ronald Channing

The playwright, screenwriter and novelist Ronald Harwood discussed the dilemmas of an author when dealing with the representation of events in the Holocaust at a meeting hosted by Jewish Policy Research and the Spiro Ark. Harwood has gained an international reputation for scripting plays and films, including *The Dresser*, *Taking Sides* and *Mahler's Conversion* as well as *Cry the Beloved Country* and *The Pianist*, for which he received an Academy Award. His most recent novel, *Home*, was awarded the Jewish Quarterly Prize for fiction.

South African-born, he was just five years old when, following the outbreak of World War II, his father enlisted in the forces, believing in the justice of the Allied cause and opposing the barbarities being perpetrated on the Jews.

'History is interpreted, reinterpreted and ignored', said Harwood, even 'obfuscated'. Yet it was possible to reveal the 'truth' best, in his view, through fiction - through the perspective of an individual artist. There were innumerable plays and films on the 'industrial slaughter' of the Jews, from *Anne Frank* to *Conspiracy*, which reconstructed the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. 'Truth is explained' in fiction, he held, and one character can stand in place of many, as in *Schindler's List*. The integrity of the artist was the filter through which the work was



Ronald Harwood portrays Holocaust truths through fiction

produced. The writer had to be true to the events he or she had chosen to dramatise.

Ronald Harwood regarded Holocaust subjects as something of a burden or obsession. As a child he recalled watching news footage of the bodies of concentration camp victims being bulldozed into burial pits, images which have remained in his memory, as they have in mine, through our entire lives.

In mid-1990s Manchester he came across George Clare's book *Berlin Days 1946-48*, which dealt with the extent to which the world-renowned conductor, Wilhelm Furtwängler, did or did not collaborate with the Nazis. Furtwängler was indeed a member of the National Socialist Party but was witnessed as having aided Jewish

orchestral musicians. For Harwood, a play was born.

He adhered to certain 'rules'. These included ruthlessly avoiding manipulation and shunning sentimentality. In *The Pianist*, on which he worked closely with its director, Roman Polanski, both the book's author, Vladislav Spillman, and his film version were spoken and written in the third person. Spillman wrote 'as if it was about someone else', he said. He and Polanski played many reels of archival footage to exorcise all traces of falsehood or sentimental emotion.

Turning to accusations of Holocaust denial made in court by David Irving against Deborah Lipstadt, Irving was found by the judge to be 'demonstrably a liar, falsifier and a rogue'. Regrettably, Harwood's two-hour adaptation of the court drama had not been filmed, but abandoned.

Plays and films were 'informing and educating', he stated, the need for which was greater than ever. Calls for the delegitimisation and destruction of Israel were 'camouflage for antisemitism', threatening all the standards of a decent society. Harwood never imagined he would ever have to defend Israel's right to exist, but his support was unequivocal. While hoping that the need for plays and films on the Holocaust would diminish, he thought this unlikely.



PHOTO: STEPHEN GEE

Deportations from Hungary remembered

Dr Trude Levi, Dr Ladislaus Löb and Mayor of Harrow Cllr Mano Dharmarajah pictured at Pinner Synagogue's Yom HaShoah ceremony, this year commemorating particularly the 60th anniversary of the deportations from Hungary. Members of the 'Third Generation' joined members of the 'First Generation' in an impressive candle-lighting ceremony, while Dr Levi and Dr Löb spoke chillingly of their experiences as Holocaust survivors in Hungary. The Hungarian Ambassador, HE Mr Béla Szombati, also was present. Pinner Synagogue's Yom HaShoah Committee is chaired by Gaby Glassman.

Left to right: Dr Trude Levi, Dr Ladislaus Löb and Mayor of Harrow Cllr Mano Dharmarajah

Remembering the past, shaping the future

Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks

Edited version of address given on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, at the Logan Hall commemoration ceremony

Didn't the Jews of Europe believe that their troubles were behind them, that after all they had suffered for 1,000 years, at last they were safe and free? Now at last there was an age of enlightenment, rationality, high culture, liberty and equality. At the very height of those hopes came the nightmare, a hell-on-earth our imagination still struggles to begin to understand.

Two and a half years ago our world was changed by 9/11, in which 3,000 people were killed on a single day. During the *Shoah*, an average of 3,000 Jews were killed a day, every day of every week of every month for five-and-a-half years. The Jews of Europe loved Europe, had lived in it for 1,000 years - in some places, 2,000 years. They loved its languages, literature and landscapes and enriched every aspect of its life. They helped make the Europe of modern times. But that love was betrayed.

As long as there are Jews on the face of the earth, we will remember the young, the old, the weak, the frail, the children, one-and-a-half million of them, whose only crime was to be born with a Jewish grandparent. We will remember the righteous gentiles, who showed that evil is not inevitable. This year, the sixtieth anniversary of the destruction of Hungarian Jewry, we remember especially Raoul Wallenberg, the hero who saved thousands - perhaps tens of thousands - of lives among the Jews of Budapest. The hero without a grave.

And we will remember the survivors, every one of whom is a hero. Not only did they have the courage to survive, they had the courage to tell the story so that the



Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

world would not forget, and the greater courage to do so not in anger, rage or desire for revenge, but in the name of life and humanity and tolerance and peace.

Now we must turn our eyes to the future and the next generation must shoulder responsibility. Those like me, born after the *Shoah*, believed the world when it said 'Never again'. After the greatest crime of man against man, people would learn and antisemitism itself would die. It hasn't. Today throughout Europe, synagogues are vandalised, Jewish cemeteries are desecrated, Jewish schools set on fire. Terror still seeks Jewish victims, Jews die, antisemitism lives.

People say we exaggerate. We don't. We do not say that today is 1944 or 1933 over again, but we do say that a terrible hate is being born - and let it not be said of us that we saw it as a tiny flame and did nothing until it became a raging fire. People say it is not antisemitism, it is anti-Zionism, criticism of Israel, and different from the antisemitism of the past. No new hate is exactly like the old - the scapegoating, blaming the troubles

of the world on a convenient target - and Jews, whether in the Diaspora or in Israel, as individuals or as a nation, are always a convenient target, because we are small, vulnerable, because we are different.

Those who died in the *Shoah* have left us a sacred responsibility. What they died for, we must live for: the right to be Jews without fear. We will fight this battle in three ways. First, we will fight hatred in all its forms, whoever preaches it and whoever it is directed against. Second, we will seek allies, among Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, among people of conscience, whatever their colour, whatever their creed. Let me say: *Jews must not be left to fight antisemitism alone*. The victim cannot cure the crime. It is not the one who is hated, but the one who hates, who needs to change. Third, we will fight in the name of the sanctity of human life, in the name of the one thing in the universe on which God has set his image, humanity itself.

We say to all those who practise terror in the name of God, who call for murder and martyrdom, who take hate and call it holy, that is not the God of Abraham, the God Jews, Christians and Muslims worship, the God whose name is peace, the God who commands us to love the stranger, the God who shed tears when his children shed blood in his name.

And we say to you, the survivors, we will not let you down. We will not rest until your message is heard, until the flames of hate are extinguished, until your candle of memory lights the way to a world that honours life. May the God of life give us the strength to sanctify, dignify and cherish life.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD

Sir - Francis Deutsch (December issue) should check the facts before he writes about Israel and the Palestinians. There has never been in history an independent Palestine, neither when the area was under Arab control back in the seventh-eighth centuries CE, nor under the Ottomans, and, of course, not under the British. The Palestinians were offered a state twice in the last 60 years. The United Nations voted for a two-state solution in 1947 - a Jewish state and an Arab (Palestinian) state. This was rejected by the Arabs. What could have become a Palestinian state in 1948 was annexed by Jordan and Egypt; Jordan's annexation of the West Bank was recognised only by Britain and Pakistan.

In July 2000 it was Israel under Ehud Barak that handed over to Arafat a Palestinian state on a silver platter. It was again rejected. And it was the Palestinians, by initiating the *intifada*, who broke all agreements (including the Oslo accords) to reach a peaceful solution. It seems that only when the Palestinian leadership becomes far more responsible will a two-state solution be viable.

*Prof Dennis Kurzon
Israel*

LIVERPOOL STREET MEMORIAL

Sir - As we now live in Belgium, my wife and I have only just had the opportunity of seeing the memorial. Having preceded the Kindertransport, I arrived at Liverpool Street on a cold and foggy January 1935 evening as a young boy whose parents had to stay behind in Germany, but who at least was met by a hospitable couple, themselves refugees.

We fully agree with David Doherty (April issue) in his praise for the moving

experience of seeing the statue and the collection of items in the glass cabinet. Unfortunately, because the stone plinth offers good seating and there are no benches around, it was occupied on that sunny afternoon by a family and other rail passengers who obviously had no interest in the exhibits and hardly moved aside sufficiently to allow us to see them. Moreover, the strong sunlight, further magnified by the glass, made us realise that the precious exhibits - originals all - would rapidly fade, especially the documents.

Two suggestions, therefore, to the founding organisations: a sun canopy over the top of the glass cabinet, at least protecting the east, south and west sides; and a small (6-inch high?) metal railing rising from the plinth so as to prevent it being used as seating for coke and sandwich munchers. Not that I can blame the latter for using it in this way, for one thing because the tablet identifying the exhibit as a memorial is a good few yards away on the entrance wall.

*Eric and Miriam Mark
Belgium*

THE KURDS

Sir - Your April editorial states that, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, we were 'burdened with the unique fate of being a people without firm ground under our feet throughout the ensuing 20 centuries.' I wish that were true, but there are 40 million Kurdish people who during the same period have had their land occupied by successive empires such as Persia, Macedonia, the Romans and Byzantines and had forced conversions to Sunni Islam. These people now live in territory occupied by Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq or as refugees in Europe.

Even today they have no citizen's

rights in Syria, and in Turkey the 15 million Kurds have only very limited rights, many thousands of them having been forcibly evacuated from their villages and with no state schools allowing them to speak in their own language. I could go on at length about this major Middle East problem, but the Jews are not unique.

*Ruth Walter
Harrow, Middx*

FRAUGHT ENCOUNTER

Sir - I sympathise with Ruth Schwiening (April issue), who experienced a shocking outburst from her German relatives, for which there can be no excuse. We must, however, face the fact that not only antisemitism but racial abuse is increasing all over the world. The reasons are not difficult to find nor, it seems, is this likely to change in the present climate of vicious conflicts and terrorism.

The Germans have a particular problem in having to live with the guilt of the Holocaust and having to justify their expressed pacifism in an ever-complex political climate, especially the Middle East situation. In the last 60 years successive German governments have done everything possible to eradicate antisemitism and the majority of Germans, who were never tainted by the Nazis, have been sympathetic to the Jewish cause. But this is being eroded, not least by the continuing vilification of all Germans, something the new younger generation rightly refuses to accept. Jews have a special responsibility in this respect. The recent anti-German outbursts of Richard Desmond of the *Daily Express* will without doubt cause much rightful anger in Germany and will add fuel to the hatred spread by these irrational bigots.

*Walter Wolff
London W11*

MISNOMER (I)

Sir - I seem to be of the minority who, while not always agreeing with the subject matter of your editorials, always enjoys your remarkable command of the English language. It is unfortunate that the conciseness

which is its greatest asset is getting lost in today's morass of useless media info.

The *AJR Journal* is invariably well written by all the contributors and its title of course is the acronym of the Association of Jewish Refugees. Analysing it over a period of time, however, it appears to be dealing mostly with all aspects of German refugees and events as though it were the organ of the Association of *German* Refugees. There are occasional references to Austrian or Czech refugees because they also came on the Kindertransports, a possibility obviously denied to children in neighbouring countries.

The greatest number of refugees coming to the UK was, of course, from Germany, but there were quite a number who came from other countries. My family and I, for instance, came from the former Yugoslavia, as did quite a few others. Apart from Austria and Czechoslovakia, there were also a good number from Hungary, Holland, Romania and France, to mention just some countries from which Jews fled. All came to England by their own efforts, had the same struggles to establish and re-build their lives, and some went to the top of their professions, as did refugees from Germany. There were just fewer of them to be noted.

I think it would be only right, and of great interest as well, if the journal would publish a series of articles showing from which other countries refugees managed to come to England, how they established themselves and where they are now. Vignettes which you publish now of (mostly) German refugees should also be of some of them.

*Mrs Nina Hofman
London*

MISNOMER (II)

When, a few years ago, I coined the acronym JACOBS - Jewish Association of Continental Britons - with Lord Jakobovits as our patron (albeit with tongue in cheek) to appease those hyper-sensitive souls who objected to

being referred to as refugees, I thought I had put a line under the perceived malaprop. Now that we are septa- or octogenarians, unless we admit to being in our second or third childhood, how much more inappropriate to call ourselves KINDER. I therefore suggest, again with tongue in cheek, the descriptive acronym CHIRPIES - Children in Retrospect.

*Eric Fisher
Uxbridge*

OUT OF TOUCH

Sir - In reply to Professor Peter Landsberg (January issue), I also do not fit into the usual slot. I came to the UK in July 1938, went straight to school, was evacuated in 1940, and did not meet many other refugees. When I had to prove the date of arrival in the UK, the (then) Woburn House had no record of my arrival as I did not come with a group or need help. My MP was most helpful and established my arrival date with the Home Office. Many years later I read in a friend's *AJR Journal* of 'Young Austria', wrote to them and the rest, as they say, is history. I have made many good friends in the group.

*Anne Selinger
Reading*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EDITOR

Sir - My wife joins me in sending belated birthday wishes. I always enjoy your articles - although I don't agree with some opinions - but would be lost without having a dictionary at hand: such perfect command of English! Long may you continue to stimulate and entertain us.

*Max Hofman
Lugano, Switzerland*

Sir - Good health and many flourishing years as Editor of the *AJR Journal*.

*Eric Kaufman
London NW9*

Sir - Happy Birthday and many, many more, Richard Grunberger!

*Guy Bishop
Port Aransas, Texas*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Jack Vettriano *The Singing Butler*

You can take the beauty out of art, but you can never take the art out of beauty. By degrees, it seems, the art world is returning to images of beauty in spite of itself. Many would rub their hands with glee at popular artist **Jack Vettriano's** snub to snobbish critics with his famous *The Singing Butler*, which fetched nearly £750,000 at auction in Edinburgh after frenzied bidding. It brought the quiet and self-deprecating Scottish painter into the financial league of the world's so-called greatest modern artists. And this despite the fact that none of his works has ever been bought by a British art gallery. Stylised and dreamy, *The Singing Butler*, like Vettriano's other work, appears on greeting cards all over the UK, and, such is its lyrical mood, that it injects romance back into the everyday world.

But while the critics scoff and compare his work with airport fiction, they are impervious to the artist's message. Sentimental art it may be, but there is a subtext of wry humour and cynicism that poses questions and captures most eloquently a quality that is traditionally and eternally British. The butler is presumably the man holding an umbrella over a couple

dancing in the rain, their faces turned away as though the artist himself wants to keep a respectful distance. The girl is wearing a long, sexy red dress and both she and her lover are totally oblivious to the English weather. In the background, a maid is bent double trying to shield herself from a wet and bitter wind, also no doubt to prevent the umbrella from imploding. There is such sweet irony in this portrayal. It can be read as British stiff upper lip in the face of cold reality, true love in the face of reason, British understatement in the time of chaos. The *singing* butler? Well, you can't hear him, but such serenades are surely part of Vettriano's Italian heritage: for a wet, English summer read a Venetian gondolier's gloomy lovesong.

Other images of beauty are pushing out the stuffed cows, bloody heads and maggots which have been our daily and indigestible diet. In fact, it is **Marc Quinn**, the man who cast his head in several frozen pints of his own blood, who will now fill the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square with a courageous and touching 15-foot white marble statue of pregnant thalidomide artist Alison Lapper. Her fragile and understated repose looks out on a world where beauty and celebrity are venerated, but disablement is largely ignored. It is beautiful - of that there is no doubt - and Quinn has given us the eyes to see it, but the artistic intention is always the same: to shock.

Another image of peaceful repose is that of David Beckham, the blond Adonis of Real Madrid, caught napping in a 107-minute film by video artist **Sam Taylor Wood**, on show at the **National Portrait Gallery**. 'Almost transgressive in its intimacy', drools *The Guardian*, which compares football's sleeping saint with Michaelangelo's *David*. In the world of celebrity, sleeping beauties are always the innocents.

RG's INTERFACE

Midwives to genius (continued from May issue) Bertolt Brecht worked as assistant to Max Reinhardt, was befriended by Lion Feuchtwanger, married Helene Weigel and collaborated with the composers Kurt Weill, Hans Eisler and Paul Dessau. (As a Communist, Brecht also had Jewish enemies, e.g. Friedrich Torberg, who wanted his plays banned in postwar Austria.)

Roman Polanski, who survived the Holocaust as a street urchin and had a colourful career as a film director - *Knife in the Water*, the horror film *Rosemary's Baby*, the thriller *Chinatown*, the Oscar-winning *The Pianist* - was the subject of a retrospective at London's National Film Theatre in April.

People of the Book The Nobel Prize winner Canetti's *Auto-da-Fe* climaxes in the burning down of a library. Stefan Zweig made a bookseller living from hand to mouth the hero of his novella *Buchmendl*. Lion Feuchtwanger built up three huge book collections in his lifetime - in Weimar Germany, pre-war France and postwar California. Friedrich Gundolf (né Gundefinger), who taught German literature at Heidelberg and was an expert on Goethe and Stefan George, built up a 7,500-volume library which his widow, an émigrée in London, sold off piecemeal to keep the wolf from the door. The dispersal of Gundolf's library is the subject of a newly published study in Germany.

The name's the same It is a curious fact that quite a number of Jews prominent in the arts share the same surname. Schoenberg: the inventor of the 12-tone system Arnold and the composer of *Les Misérables* Claude-Michel. Miller: the British polymath and director Jonathan and the American playwright Arthur (*The Crucible*). Roth: the Austrian novelist Joseph (*Radetzky March*) and his American colleague Philip (*The Human Stain*). Grossman: the Russian novelist Vassili (*Life and Fate*) and his Israeli colleague David (*See Under Love*).

Neglected masterpiece by a
refugee writer

**KÄSEBIER EROBERT DEN
KURFÜRSTENDAMM**

Gabriele Tergit

Das Neue Berlin, 2004, 271pp.

Journalism and journalists have been a favoured theme of German novelists since Gustav Freytag's *Die Journalisten*, which featured the Jewish hack Schmock. With the modernisation of the German mass media after 1918, journalists bulked large in literary works created during the vibrant artistic life of the Weimar Republic: the provincial nobody Tredup in Hans Fallada's *Bauern, Bonzen und Bomben*, the visit to the editorial offices in Erich Kästner's *Fabian*, the use of newspaper headlines for dramatic purposes in plays like Ernst Toller's *Hoppla, wir leben!*

Gabriele Tergit's *Käsebieer erobert den Kurfürstendamm*, published by Rowohlt in 1931, ranks with the best of these works. It uses the media-manipulated rise and fall of the mediocre comic Käsebieer to provide a panoramic survey of the cultural, commercial and social elites of Berlin society, at the hectic highpoint of its dizzying dance on the edge of the abyss - into which it duly fell, with the financial crisis that engulfs Tergit's entrepreneurs, journalists, bankers and *beau monde* at the end of the novel. The collapse of the fevered speculative bubble engineered by bankers, builders and pressmen latching on to the Käsebieer phenomenon and the ensuing rush of bankruptcies take place against the background of the crisis of the political system of the Republic, with the Nazis achieving their political breakthrough in the elections of September 1930.

Tergit's novel employs the bold experimental techniques pioneered by Alfred Döblin in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* to capture the modern metropolitan experience, combining them with the flippant, cynical humour of *Fabian*, where Kästner leads his hero, Candide-like, from one aspect of modern big-city life to another. Tergit's style has a gripping immediacy and a liveliness that matches the pulsating rhythms of Berlin life in the late 1920s. The story of the staff of her *Berliner Rundschau*, under the revered editor Miermann, is amusing, fascinating and finally, with the destruction of the paper by the manoeuvres of opportunists, moving. The novel is, in short, a pleasure to read.

REVIEWS

We owe a debt of gratitude to Jens Brüning, who has edited this new edition of the novel, for his devoted efforts over many years to bring Gabriele Tergit back into the public eye. It was a particular pleasure to hear him read from the novel at Club 43 in March, a nostalgic experience for those members of the Club who can still remember Tergit herself speaking at its meetings.

Gabriele Tergit was the nom-de-plume of Elise Hirschmann, born in 1894 into a Berlin Jewish family. After studying, she became a journalist, known especially for her court reports in the prestigious *Berliner Tageblatt*. She married the architect H.J. Reifenberg (later responsible for Belsize Square Synagogue), but just when Käsebieer promised to bring her literary success, she, her husband and young son had to flee Germany in March 1933. After a spell in Palestine, they came to London in 1938, where Tergit wrote for a number of newspapers and established herself as something like the doyenne of refugee writers. For almost 25 years she was secretary of the PEN Centre of German Writers Abroad, the 'Deutscher Exil-PEN'.

Gabriele Tergit took British nationality and remained in Britain until her death in 1982. She wrote frequently for *AJR Information*, and some readers will remember the enchanting *Büchlein vom Bett* (1954) and *Kaiserkron und Päonien rot. Kleine Kulturgeschichte der Blumen* (1958), as well as the longer novel *Effingers*, which tells the story of a German-Jewish family. But she never enjoyed the fame that her early novel had promised her and that the Nazis stole from her. Hopefully this new edition of *Käsebieer* will at last secure the novel its rightful place in the sparkling pantheon of Weimar literature.

Anthony Grenville

**A unique testimony
MY WOUNDED HEART
Martin Doerry
Bloomsbury, £16.99**

How often is misfortune the result of personal choice rather than external circumstances? In this moving story of a

personal and public tragedy, both factors are of equal importance.

Lilli Schlüchterer's choice of Ernst Jahn determined her fate. A medical student from a comfortable, liberal Jewish family, Lilli fell in love with Ernst, a recently-qualified doctor, and single-mindedly pursued this depressive young man despite his own, often fluctuating, commitment and her parents' opposition to a mixed marriage. Family photographs show the non-Jewish Ernst, despite his romantic nickname 'Amadé', as anything but an Aryan god: slight, dark and balding, he could easily have passed as Jewish.

If Lilli was to enjoy a few years of domestic harmony in Immenhausen with Ernst and their young children before the eruption of the Nazi inferno, this was meagre compensation for the tribulations that lay before her. While her unmarried sister, Elsa, emigrated to England in 1933, to be joined later by her widowed mother, this option was barred to Lilli when Ernst turned down a position his sister-in-law had arranged for him.

When Ernst divorced her in 1942, Lilli lost the protection afforded Jewish spouses of Aryans and was later detained in prison before being deported to Auschwitz. While her grandchildren were aware that their grandmother had perished in the death camp, the subject remained taboo until the discovery, some 54 years after Lilli's death, of a cache of letters she had written and received. These provided the author, Lilli's grandson, with material for a unique testimony.

It is these remarkable, life-affirming letters, placed in context by Martin Doerry's lucid and objective narrative, which make Lilli's sad history so memorable. From the beginning, the reader is hooked by the correspondence between Lilli and her 'Amadé', while deploring the mistake she is making in choosing him, something she later has the insight to acknowledge. Yet even after their divorce and Ernst's remarriage, Lilli continues to feel for Ernst the unconditional, non-possessive 'agapé' of maternal love.

Other letters between Lilli and various friends illustrate the dramatic changes confronting German Jews. But it is the correspondence between this courageous mother and her adoring

children after her imprisonment in Breitenau which sears the reader with its extraordinary power and humanity. Informative, humorous, heart-rending, these letters capture the essence of each child: Gerhard, the anti-aircraft gunner (later a minister in Willi Brandt's government); Ilse, the mother-substitute; lively Johanna; tomboy Eva; and cosseted toddler Dorle, born in 1940 when her parents' marriage was virtually over. They also provide a riveting depiction of life in wartime Germany, not least the bombing of Kassel, where the family moved after the divorce. The dichotomy experienced by these half-Jewish children between anxiety about their mother's fate and commonality with their fellow citizens in the face of the 'enemy' onslaught is particularly striking.

Unforgettable in its breadth and complexity, and in the depth and intensity of its perspective, Doerry's tribute to his grandmother's 'wounded heart' will live on as a classic of world literature.

Emma Klein

FILM

The getting of Wisden
WONDROUS OBLIVION
 directed by Paul Morrison
On general release

The problem with Anglo-Jewish films is akin to the one frequently experienced with buses: first there isn't one for ages - and then two or three come along together.

I exaggerate, but only slightly. Hard on the heels of *Suzie Gold* (see review in May issue), the brainchild of two newcomers, comes *Wondrous Oblivion*, directed by Paul Morrison, a more seasoned film-maker. His last movie, *Solomon and Gaynor*, was something of a pioneering venture, with trilingual

(English, Welsh and Yiddish) dialogue and a dramatically gory ending.

Wondrous Oblivion displays few of these characteristics although it replicates the tripartite ethnic pattern of the previous film: here, the protagonists are Jewish, English and West Indian. The hero is David Wiseman, 12-year-old son of refugee parents living in a respectable working-class neighbourhood in 1960s London.

David feels doubly isolated. At school, he shines as a scholar, but fails to make the grade as a sportsman; at home, his father is too preoccupied with business matters to show him much love, and the gentile neighbours keep a wary distance.

The seminal moment in David's young life occurs when a West Indian family moves in next door. The father is, of course, a cricket enthusiast, under whose expert tuition the lad sloughs off his erstwhile ineptitude on the pitch. More than that: he begins to discern the music of the spheres in the thwack of leather on willow. Put more prosaically, he now at last feels an appreciated member of the school: cricket, he intuits, has become his passport into wider English society.

The great Rudyard Kipling divided the English into 'flannelled fools' (cricket-lovers) and 'muddied oafs' (football fans). Since I incline slightly towards the latter, I was probably the wrong person to review this film. But I also feel that my readers may be the wrong people to see it!

Richard Grunberger

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Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

How far do you want to go back?

Targeted killings? But each targeted killing was preceded by terrorist attacks that murdered and maimed dozens of Israelis.

The security fence? But before that we had the second *intifada*, with the indiscriminate murder of many Israelis.

The failure of the Oslo Accords? But they had enabled the Palestinians to blow up buses throughout Israel.

Israeli incursions into the Gaza Strip? But before that, in 1994, Israel had allowed Yasser Arafat to return from exile and establish a Palestinian police force, with joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols. After Israel opened the tunnel leading to the Western Wall the Palestinian policemen turned on their Israeli counterparts in an orgy of killing.

The occupation of the western bank of the Suez Canal? But that was preceded by the Yom Kippur War of 1973, when Syria and Egypt attacked Israel in an attempt to wrest the 'occupied territories' away from it.

The occupation of the West Bank and the Sinai Strip? But that was preceded by the Six-Day War of 1967, when the combined forces of Syria, Egypt and Jordan attacked Israel in an attempt to obliterate it.

Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948? But that was preceded by the UN resolution proposing that the problem be resolved by partitioning the disputed territory. The rejection of this by the Arabs led to the War of Independence, when Jewish forces overcame armies that greatly outnumbered it.

The White Paper issued by the British Foreign Office in 1939, which sought to appease Arab anti-Jewish feeling by restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine? But that condemned millions of European Jews to death at the hands of the Nazis.

Jewish immigration to Palestine in general? But that was preceded by centuries of exile, persecution, pogroms and poverty.

Or do you agree with those who say there should be no Jewish state?

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
 AND SCULPTURE

Alf Keiles couldn't understand why *AJR Journal* wanted to profile him. 'You write about professors and achievers!', he protested. 'What have I achieved?' Thankfully he succumbed to a combined onslaught on his false modesty by his doughty wife Esther and myself.

We sat in the 'music room' in Alf's Borehamwood home, a room packed to the rafters with items pertaining to jazz. We made a pact to leave the jazz connection to the end of our meeting, first exploring other aspects of Alf's life as a 'non-achiever'.

Alf was born in Wiesbaden in 1927. His family ran a cigarette factory, apparently the most successful of its kind in Germany. His mother died in 1931. In 1935 his father left for South Africa in search of a new home, leaving him and his sister with their grandmother. In the following year, told that Jews were no longer welcome at his school, he and his sister were put on a train to Genoa to await a place on a ship to Capetown, where they were to rejoin their father. Their father would henceforth never speak of their life in Germany: Alf would not find out about it until a half-century had elapsed.

In South Africa Alf lived a sort of dual-track life. His father did not encourage his interest in music. At the age of 14 he was working in a Johannesburg supermarket. Esther was working there too, though they didn't know each other at the time. He left school at the age of 16, becoming an engineering apprentice. Having taken a degree in engineering, he gained a British university degree in mechanical engineering via a correspondence course.

In 1953 Alf started up a small engineering business. The business was highly successful and he sold it for a good price. In 1964 he opened a toy factory, which became the largest of its kind outside the UK. In defiance of government policies, he employed more than his quota of black workers, ensuring they received equal pay with other workers. Around 1971, displaying

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Alf Keiles The Jazz Man



his customary versatility, he adapted the toy factory to the manufacture of boxes for television sets. Politically though the writing was on the wall. In 1986, exactly 50 years after his emigration to South Africa, Alf and Esther moved to the UK. Soon afterwards they started a plastics company. In 1998, following the sale of the company, came retirement.

Back to Alf's dual-track life. In South Africa, at the age of 14, Alf bought a saxophone, paying, unknown to his father, two shillings and sixpence a week for lessons. From the age of 16 he began to build up a unique collection of jazz recordings and memorabilia. At the age of 17 he was playing Friday nights in a jazz club. He became a founder member of the Johannesburg Jazz Club as well as a founder member and chairman of the Jazz Record Collectors' Club of South Africa. He arranged for many world-renowned jazz artists to appear in South Africa, and assisted in establishing the

first free music school for underprivileged black children in Johannesburg. In 1977 he joined the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors.

In accordance with our 'pact', we turned finally to Alf's present-day jazz connection. Alf's eyes lit up. I saw a transformed man before me. I confessed I wasn't a great jazz fan: I preferred classical music. To which Alf responded that he was interested in all music - jazz, Beatles, Beethoven.

Alf was 'stunned' by jazz at the age of eight. There was plenty of music in the family. His father played the piano, Alf believes - he recalls a baby grand in their Wiesbaden home - while one uncle played the violin and another played the drums. A third uncle was an avid collector of jazz records. Alf's family continues the tradition: Esther is a fine classical pianist and all three of their sons are accomplished musicians, two of them professionals.

Alf has compiled a database of 17,000 jazz items - a figure which represents not even 10 per cent of all the recordings in his house (not forgetting the garage). His collection includes some 40,000 recordings on cassettes, 2,500 78s, 2,000 LPs, 200 EPs, 168 videos, 150 CDs, hundreds of 4-hour reels, hundreds of reference books, complete collections of magazines, and much, much more.

On top of all that, Alf is in regular contact with jazz enthusiasts worldwide, corresponding daily with jazz-lovers as far apart as Siberia and Texas. Almost every minute of the day he is dealing with queries, for instance from the BBC, involved in musical exchange programmes with collectors around the world, compiling CDs, and writing programmes for radio broadcasts, including in the USA. As for lectures/recitals, he is booked solid until at least September.

As I made my way back from this 'non-achiever's' home, my head reeling with statistics, I resolved not be so narrow in my choice of music in the future.

INSIDE the AJR

Harrogate Continental Friends

At our second meeting this year, we spent a pleasant pre-Pesach afternoon, sharing memories of Pesach celebrations of long ago in other countries. Susanne Green reminded us of forthcoming events in Leeds and of the Northern holiday in St Annes in July.

Inge Little

Next meeting: Wednesday 2 June

Weald of Kent: close neighbours

Meeting again in Tunbridge Wells, we discussed venues and possible speakers for future meetings. Our thanks to members who contributed to the very nice refreshments, especially Jane Dickson, who did most of the work at the hall, as well as Myrna Glass, who works so hard on our behalf. When after the meeting several members had lunch together, three of them discovered they had lived near one another in Berlin though they hadn't known each other at the time.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: Wednesday 23 June.
South-East Region get-together

Gastronomic feast in Cambridge

We enjoyed a gastronomic feast when invited to lunch by Rebecca, spouse of Jonathan Djanogly MP, at their constituency home in Alconbury. There were 15 of us, including Rebecca's aunt - an AJR member, a 'second-generation' representative, and a Vienna-born temporary escapee from Hampstead. In addition to enjoying the spring sunshine, the garden, the food and the company, we agreed provisional plans for the remainder of the year.

Francis Deutsch

Next meeting: Wednesday 30 June. Visit to Cabinet War Rooms

Record turnout at North London

We had a record turnout for Walter Woyda's presentation of *Rothschild*, a

musical which regrettably never made it to London. Composed and written by the same people who gave us *Fiddler on the Roof*, the history of the banking family from Frankfurt seemed to be encapsulated in a sensitive musical coating. Very, very enjoyable.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 24 June, 10.30 am. Group discussion

Dazzling talk at Brighton & Hove Sarid

AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro spoke without notes for over an hour on his internment in the Isle of Man in May 1940 to January 1941, reeling off a host of names and figures in dazzling fashion. It was fascinating to hear how the 'enemy aliens' organised their daily existence, working and studying together, organising concerts and never losing their dignity.

Fausta Shelton

Next meeting: Wednesday 23 June.
South-East Region get-together

Iford talk by a superb raconteur

An appreciative audience thoroughly enjoyed Otto Deutsch's youthful reminiscences of the Vienna coffee houses. Otto is a superb raconteur and we were all transported to the Vienna of the thirties, strolling around Grinzing and travelling with him on the local trams. Though I'd heard this talk before I found it no less fascinating.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wednesday 16 June.
Geoffrey Perry, 'When Life Becomes History'

Essex: 'a new Jewish spirit in Vienna'

Our chairman, Otto Deutsch, gave us a vivid picture of Jewish life in pre-war Vienna. The flourishing social life the Jews used to enjoy in the coffee houses was brought to a cruel halt with the German invasion of Austria. But the bittersweet memories of Otto's birthplace have always remained in his heart and during his occasional visits to Vienna he was happy to discover that a new Jewish spirit has triumphed over the years of despair.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 8 June, 11.00 am. A video about Beth Shalom

West Midlands: 'from Vienna to the Forest of Dean'

Fourteen members attended our meeting at the Rake Way Community Centre plus the speaker. Richard Newton, from Coleford in Gloucestershire - whose father was a refugee - gave a most interesting talk on his father's journey 'from Vienna to the Forest of Dean'.

Henny Rednall

Next meeting: Monday 7 June, 2.30 pm

North London reminder of refugee status

A slide presentation by William Kacziynski of pre-war and wartime letters and postcards summed up the poignancy of the refugee status in that period. In many ways it reflected our own experience: the rare letter sent by a most circuitous route, the 25-word Red Cross postcard, and the returned communication marked 'addressee unknown'. Our thanks to William and his wife.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 24 June. Group discussion

Sparks for Marks

The editor of Marks & Spencer's classy customers' magazine, Diane Kenwood Zitcar, revealed to a fascinated audience at the AJR Luncheon Club just how important this way of reaching potential customers is regarded. Only available in the stores, the magazine was the 'voicepiece' of M&S, whose customers, on average, spent 39 minutes reading the magazine, enabling 3,000 messages to be transmitted.

Even with its recent ups and downs, M&S was still an institution; it was unthinkable to have a high street without a store. The M&S magazine has to be of the highest quality with beautiful photographs. Though not a sales brochure, it does try to make the season's offers as desirable as possible. People were very discerning and Diane had to work very hard 'to get the message across'.

Ronald Channing

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Sunday 6 June 2004,
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Guest speaker
Lady Jakobovits
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Lily Freeman

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KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group

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**Michael Rosen from the Embassy
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June Afternoon Entertainment:	
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Wed 2	Michael Heaton
Thur 3	Sheila Games
Sun 6	CLOSED
Mon 7	KT LUNCH Kards & Games Klub
Tue 8	Francoise Geller
Wed 9	Cantor Stephen Robins
Thur 10	Wizo Ladies Choir
Sun 13	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 14	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 15	Paul Coleman
Wed 16	LUNCHEON CLUB Speaker: Rabbi Helen Freeman
Thur 17	Mike Marandi
Sun 20	CLOSED
Mon 21	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 22	Paul Yakov
Wed 23	Margaret Opdahl
Thur 24	Katinka Seiner
Sun 27	CLOSED
Mon 28	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 29	Rita & Jack Davis
Wed 30	Jenny Kossew

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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.

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Engagements

Mazeltov and best wishes to Ronald Channing, AJR's Head of Media and Community Relations, and his wife Sima on the double engagement of their elder son Jonathan to Caroline and elder daughter Joanna to Daniel.

Deaths

Grodzinski. Hilde née Weglein passed away peacefully on 23 April aged 91. She was treasured by Peter, Sheila, Natasha and Sasha. She had no easy life but 'hilfsbereit' was her middle name.

Lippman. Gidon Lippman, born Berlin 2.5.24, died peacefully 28.2.04. Thankfully he got to know his grandson Julen, born last year. Shalom. Gerda, Dan, Jonathan and Teresa.

Classified

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Day Centre

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes sale, separates etc. **Thursday 10 June and Wednesday 23 June, 9.30 - 11.45 am.**

Chiropodist. Trevor Goldman at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre **Wednesday 30 June, 10 am - 11.30 am.**

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Kitchener Camp remembered

The picture which accompanied this article by Hans Jackson in the May issue was of his group listening to the declaration of war on 3 September 1939.

NORTHERN HOLIDAY

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Obituary

Hans W. Cohn, a leading Existential Psychotherapist, has died aged 87. Born in Breslau, he arrived in this country seven months after the outbreak of war.

Having studied for an honours degree at the University of London, he obtained a PhD with his thesis on the psychological aspects of the work of the poet Else Lasker-Schüler, which was published by Cambridge University Press.

Trained as a psychotherapist, he involved himself deeply in existential therapy (Daseinsanalyse). He taught at Regents College, wrote two books on the subject, and helped many individuals privately. In 2003 he was made Honorary Visiting Fellow of the School of Psychotherapy and Counselling at Regents College.

Hans Cohn was a poet until the 1960s. Many of his poems were published in German literary magazines and anthologies. His last poems were published in *Mit allen fünf Sinnen*, which appeared in Germany in 1994. These poems were later translated into English: *With All Five Senses* was published by the Menard Press in 1999. Jill Bamber, reviewing the volume in *AJR Journal*, wrote: 'This poet ... brings us revelation and healing.'

Project on film and emigration

Karin Rausch

Within the framework of an extensive research project on Film and Emigration from Nazi Germany we are completing an encyclopedia with more than 3,000 entries of refugees. Alas, there are still important data missing. If you can help with information (for instance whereabouts, dates of death, relatives) on the following persons, please contact Johannes Gutenberg, Universität Mainz, Filmwissenschaft (Forschungsprojekt Filmemigration), Wallstrasse 11, D 55122 Mainz, Germany, or send an e-mail to Dr.K.Rausch@web.de:

K. C. Alexander, Jane Bess, Eric Victor Cass, Suzan Delison, Henry Edward Fisher, Peter Eric Forest, Gustav Hamber, George Herbert, Anthony Howard, Henry Jacobsen, Walter Jentzsch, Carl Kayser, Liselotte Kristian, Rudolf Carl Liebmann, Siegmund Oehlberg, Mollie Ordeyna, Hermann Pek, Hans Ritter, Ferdinand Stein, Erna Stoll, Alfred Travers, Willi Werder, Cornelia Wildt, Catherine Wilmer, Martin Wronker.

Arts and Events Diary - June

To 28 October 'West End - East End: Jewish Life Across London'. Jewish Museum Finchley

To 24 July Morris Kestelman (1905-1998): an exhibition of his paintings. London Jewish Cultural Centre. 10.00 am to 5 pm

To 20 June 'I Never Saw Another Butterfly ... Children's Art from Theresienstadt'. Jewish Museum Camden Town, in association with the Jewish Museum of Prague

Thursdays at 3 pm Coffee House Chess. London Jewish Cultural Centre

Mon 7 Dr Zhores Medvedev, 'Vladimir Putin: The Changing Perspective'. Club 43

Tues 8 An Evening with Shevah Weiss, Chairman of the Council of Yad Vashem. Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, London N2. 8.00 pm. Spiro Ark. Tel 020 7723 9991

Thur 10 'A Central European Wanderer: Joseph Roth'. Illustrated lecture. London Jewish Cultural Centre 7.30 pm. Tickets £5

Mon 14 Club 43 Annual General Meeting
Tues, Wed, Thur 15, 16, 17 'Maimonides, the Man and his Image', international conference, Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL, tel 020 7679 3520. Admission free

Mon 21 Dr Charmian Brinson and Dr Richard Dove, "The best actor in England" (James Agate): Martin Miller on British Stage and Screen'. Club 43

Mon 28 Roy Clemens, 'Some More Ladies of Ireland'. Club 43

Tues 29 Professor Sigrid Weigel (Technical University of Berlin), 'Walter Benjamin's Critique of Political Theology'. Wiener Library. 7.00 pm. Admission free

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

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

Jewish Museum Finchley Sternberg Centre, London N3 tel 020 8439 1143

London Jewish Cultural Centre, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 tel 020 7431 0345

Wiener Library 4 Devonshire Street, London W1 tel 020 7636 7247

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Austrian pension update

To avoid Austrian bank charges, recipients of a pension from Austria are advised to submit an application for the direct transfer of the pension to the United Kingdom. The specially designed forms must be completed with the applicant's UK account details, including the bank's BI code and IBA number - both of which are available over the counter in your local bank. Receiving a pension through this improved banking system will require a pensioner to complete a life certificate only once a year.

The one-page application forms are available through this office and the AJR Social Work Department and must be returned to the Pensionsversicherungsanstalt in Vienna.

Under the terms of the British Bankers' Association guidelines, British banks have agreed not to charge their customers commission charges on any Holocaust compensation payments.

German bank charges

It has come to the attention of this office that German restitution or compensation awards greater than €12,500 (approximately £8,000) can attract German bank fees that may amount to several hundred Euros. In instances where a restitution authority makes an award to a claimant's lawyer, who then transfers to the UK a sum in excess of €12,500, a commercial bank rate is applied.

Wherever possible, transfers should be made in units of less than €12,500, the limit at which European Union regulations for inner-German bank fees apply.

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.

Schindler on Amy's list

Ronald Channing



Dr Amy Gottlieb, right, who recalled her work in the DP camps at the AJR Luncheon Club, pictured with Club founder Anne Marx, who after eight successful years is to work with Ruth Wald as co-chairman

PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

The emigration of Oscar Schindler from war-torn Europe to Argentina was organised by Amy Gottlieb. Though young and inexperienced, she was among the earliest British volunteers to bring help to Europe's Displaced Persons (DP) camps and she joined the first relief unit in February 1944, one of 20 Jews among a group of 100.

Dr Amy Gottlieb, as she is today, a retired archivist, historian and author, was the guest speaker at a full house of the AJR Luncheon Club, which she held spell-bound with her recollections of rescuing Jewish survivors.

Despite not knowing her destination, she boarded a liner in Liverpool, a welcome escape from the London Blitz. The ship eventually docked in Port Said and she still recalls the train to Cairo being fired on. Amy was put to work setting up schools for evacuated Greek, Serbian and Croatian children, and then, posted to the Suez Canal, she helped young Jewish men on their way to the then Palestine.

As the liberation of Europe

progressed, Amy followed, under the auspices of the American Joint Distribution Committee, to set up camps for Jewish DPs in Greece and Italy and in defeated Austria and Germany. Some people were sent back in trains to their countries of origin, while houses were bought as homes for dispossessed children. Under the 'Joint' it became 'normal' for DPs to settle in the United States and Amy helped to organise the first ship which took Jewish refugees across the Atlantic.

Initially, Amy did not realise how many Jewish lives Oscar Schindler had saved. He appeared to her to be a 'very modest man, quietly spoken and with a sense of humour'. Amy arranged for him and his wife, together with some protective Jewish couples, to embark for Argentina, his chosen destination. The Joint officials paid for his migration; later Schindler went on to Australia. In all, Amy spent 10 years in Germany serving Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.

Newsround

Sharon loses Gaza vote

Likud Party members reject by a 60-40% vote Ariel Sharon's plan for a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. The withdrawal plan was supported by US President George Bush.

Jewish museum opened in Budapest

A Holocaust Memorial Centre has been opened in Hungary. The state-run museum is intended to promote Hungarian awareness of the Holocaust, including the country's own involvement in the murder of the Hungarian Jewish population. Israeli President Moshe Katzav participated in the opening ceremony.

Five charged in neo-Nazi case

German prosecutors charged three women and two men with being members or supporters of the neo-Nazi organisation Kameradschaft FSüd, which they say plotted to bomb the dedication ceremony at a new Munich synagogue last year. (AP)

Race hate on decline in Germany

Antisemitic incidents have fallen dramatically in Germany, but the number of violent attacks has risen. According to a *Jewish Chronicle* report, government sources said there were 1,300 reported antisemitic crimes in 2003, a drop of 20% from the previous year. But the number of violent attacks against Jews rose from 28 to 35, including 12 incidents in Berlin.

Mussolini's home to become Holocaust museum

The estate that was Benito Mussolini's favourite home during his decades as Italy's dictator is to house a museum dedicated to commemorating the Holocaust of Rome's Jews.

Prague Jewish coalition comes to power

A coalition that promised to bring a new era of transparency and openness to Prague's Jewish community has been elected. The success of the 'Coalition for a Democratic Community' has shored up attempts by community chairman Tomas Jelinek to force through democratic measures which he says were being blocked by some officials.

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