

Don't miss ...

Israel's stymied hopes p9

Science Notebook p12

Mixed marriages p13

Leadership vacuum

If the intemperate and ill-timed visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem by Ariel Sharon was calculated to boost his popularity among Israel's rejectionist right, he totally miscalculated the degree of violence with which Palestinian opponents of any peaceful settlement would grasp this pretext.

Faced with large scale civil disorder, fomented by Arab television and radio stations and clerics, a civilised society cannot lower its defences. Chairman Arafat failed to deploy his 'police force' of 30,000 to dampen the conflagration; rather they used their weapons to join the attackers.

If the prospect of a just settlement is unacceptable to Arafat, who will succeed him? □

Season of mists and anniversaries

Reflections on 'inevitable' wars from Troy to the present

November is a mist-shrouded month replete with anniversaries: the Seventh, the Ninth, the Tenth and the Eleventh. Some of these historic red-letter days marked a beginning, and others an end – and some signified both. Thus 7 November 1917 simultaneously spelt the demise of Tsar Nicholas and the inauguration of Tsar Lenin.

On 9 November 1923 the beerhall *Putsch* transformed Hitler from a Bavarian tub-thumper into a force in national politics. 10 November 1938 tore the veil from the barbarous face of Germany and precipitated the country's slide into the abyss. 11 November 1918 concluded four and a half years of mass slaughter and launched a twenty-year interval between two global wars. Finally, on 10 November 1989 the Fall of the Berlin wall symbolised the wider Soviet collapse and lifted the threat of global war from mankind, probably forever.

However, at the non-global level conflict has remained a running sore disfiguring Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Cynics – and not only they – would say it was ever thus since the dawn of civilisation. Consigning the prophet Isaiah's vision of swords beaten into ploughshares to the realm of fantasy, they invoke Heraclitus' dictum about war being the father of all things. Without the Trojan War, they argue, Homer could not have laid the foundations of world literature in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The protagonists of these epics appear over and over again in the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe and Jean Giraudoux.

As most schoolchildren know Achilles, the Greek hero of the Trojan War, could kill a man with one blow. This is what he did to another Greek, Thersites, who had mocked him. Giraudoux's *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* (Tiger at the Gate) posits a situation where the Greeks and Trojans are on the verge of reaching an accommodation when Thersites, whom Achilles had left to expire miserably, is discovered by some Greeks and with his dying breath denounces his Trojan assailant; this makes war inevitable.

Many a conflict since the siege of Troy has been exacerbated by a Thersites figure. Kaiser Wilhelm played that role on the world stage in the run-up to the Great War. His successor was Goebbels, most vociferous advocate of the Final Solution in wartime Germany. If Goebbels acted Thersites at Hitler's court, Zhdanov did so at Stalin's, and Jiang Qing at Mao's. Though those ogres have long departed the scene, the passage of time has brought no shortage of Thersites look-alikes. Lord Tebbit plays the part in the immigration debate, Ian Paisley in Ulster and Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. Israel, for its part has the Thersites twins Ovadiah Josef and Ariel Sharon.

But the absolute Thersites clone of our time is Yassir Arafat. Giraudoux's Thersites dies gloating because thousands will soon share his fate; the terminally ill Arafat provoked the current conflict out of a craving for posthumous glory as saviour of Arab Jerusalem □



Danish Prime Minister Mr Poul Rasmussen, right, conferring with Prof Dr Uffe Oestergaard, left at the opening of the Danish Centre for Holocaust & Genocide Studies (see page 15)

The Jews' muse

Under the impact of the *Harry Potter* phenomenon some *JC* readers have hazarded the guess that the barmitzvah-aged wizard might be 'one of us'. To me that was obvious from the start, since the whole of English literature is a Jewish creation. The identity of the author of the first epic in Old English is lost in the mists of time, but its very title – *Beowulf* – points (*pace* Leonard and Virginia Woolf, *Wolf Mankowitz et al*) to Jewish provenance.

The next major writer, Geoffrey Chaucer, made a *mikve* attendant the protagonist of *The Wife of the Ritual Bath's Tale*. William Shakespeare composed the transvestite drama *King Leab*, and in his comedy *Voll Ponem*, Ben Jonson created the original 'cheeky chappie'. John Milton's preoccupation with the issue of divorce caused him to write *Samson's Agunot*; in a lighter vein Milton's friend Andrew Marvell addressed a poem to *His Goy Mistress*.

The 18th century was the period of Sheridan's *Shul for Skandal* and of the Scots poet Rabbi Burns; its most quintessentially Jewish creation, Gray's *Allergy to Country Churchyards*, can be attributed to the fact that Thomas Gray was a *cohen*.

The high tide of Romanticism brought us Byron's *Hebrew Melodies*, the gerontophile John Keats' *Ode to Nightingale House*, and Coleridge's *Rhyme of the Modern Mariner* (a poem in the *Belsize Square Ballads* sequence).

Under Queen Victoria, the Jews' muse continued to flourish. The period saw the gestation of Browning's *Pipik Passes*, of Tennyson's *In Menorah* and Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* – particularly the dental epic *Horatio's Bridgework*.

Gradually, though, the literati switched from articulating Jewishness through their titles to expressing it via their names. This trend started with Samuel *Schneider* Coleridge, continued with Jerome *Klapka* Jerome and found its apogee in *Mobel* Coward. *Nomen est omen!*

□ Richard Grunberger

Profile

Gerald Granston

Although born in Chemnitz, Gerald Granston – then Gerd Grünstein – spent most of the first six years of his life in the Baden Württemberg village of Hechingen where he was brought up by his maternal grandparents whose family had lived in the village since the eighteenth century. His father remained with his family textile business in Chemnitz until it was aryanised in 1938. In the same year, Gerald's mother, who had been ill for many years, died. Her illness had meant that the family did not take up the visas for emigration to Palestine. The family business in Hechingen was also aryanised although the buyer subsequently paid the balance of the true market value into a Swiss account which assisted Gerald's maternal grandparents when they left Germany for Switzerland and then the USA.

In May 1939, six-year old Gerald and his father travelled to Hamburg where, with 938 other German Jewish passengers, many released from concentration camps on condition that they left the country, they boarded the luxury liner *St Louis* with visas for Cuba. He recalls the sheer excitement and sense of adventure on the outward voyage, emotions which turned to panic and fear with the implications of the Cuban authorities' refusal to allow the ship to dock and its passengers to disembark. "It was like being in a prison." After six days, the captain was ordered to sail the ship and its passengers back to Germany. He refused and made for Florida where US coastguards were sent to escort the refugee vessel away from the coast. After negotiations on behalf of the passengers, the *St. Louis* deposited its human cargo in

four European countries. Gerald and his father were among those lucky enough to be able to land at Southampton in June 1939 when a cousin agreed to act as guarantor and put them up on arrival.

For three years from 1940, Gerald attended boarding school when his Crystal Palace school was evacuated to Broxbourne in Hertfordshire where he remained until 1943. By this time, his father had been released from internment and had a new partner and a second child. Gerald returned to live at home with his new family in West Hampstead.



Gerald Granston

Leaving school at 16, he spent two years as an apprentice in the tailoring trade, followed by two happy years of national service in the RAF. For a couple of years he worked in the theatre, mainly in stage management but "with the odd cameo Jewish part." A trip to New York in 1956, initially to visit his grandmother, turned into a year in which Gerald discovered the excitement of how the Americans do

business. He returned to London and, on the basis of his American experiences, revolutionised the family belt-making business, entering into an exclusive contract with Marks & Spencer and moving the manufacturing side of the business to the north-east of England. Thanks to the advice of a director of M&S, the business diversified into clothing in the early 1970s and went from strength to strength. In 1987, both Gerald and his half-brother were able to retire when the business was bought out by one of M&S' suppliers.

Since the sale of the business, and regarding himself too young to retire, Gerald has worked part-time headhunting for the industry he knows so well. He takes none of the income which, instead, goes to supporting 35 charities. He is a regular visitor to the USA where he still has family. A sought-after speaker on his *St. Louis* experiences, he lectures at the New York Museum of Jewish Heritage where his artefacts and photographs of the time are on display. He also accepts invitations at home and abroad to speak about his early experiences.

□ Marion Koebner

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What's the Difference...? (continuation)

... between Communists and Nazis

Although both perpetrated previously unimaginable atrocities, they differed in one essential respect: while the Nazis murdered strangers – or people they branded as such (i.e. German Jews) – the Communists, in the main, killed their *own* nationals. What makes the Communists marginally less repellent is the fact that their subsequent victims had actually had a share, however marginal, in elevating their scourges to supreme power. Tens of thousands of Russians fought in the Civil War from which Stalin eventually emerged as a Red Czar more absolute than his Romanov predecessors – and many more battled in China to bestow omnipotence on Mao. In contrast, not a single one of the millions of Nazi victims in Eastern Europe had had any share whatever in bringing Hitler to power in Germany. To put it in a nutshell: the Communists butchered 'their own' and the Nazis 'others'.

... between Stanley Baldwin and TS Eliot

In March 1936 when Hitler ordered the *Wehrmacht* into the demilitarised Rhineland, Britain and France could have stopped him in his tracks. Instead Prime Minister Baldwin stood supinely by and the French followed suit. Thirty-two months later, on the Sunday evening after *Kristallnacht*, ex-PM Baldwin made a radio appeal for funds for the Kindertransports. In other words, the man lauded for 'saving the nation' during the General Strike was salving his conscience as the results of appeasement became clear.

In so doing, he differed markedly from T S Eliot whose interwar poetry had bristled with *Stürmer* imagery – from "the Jew squats on the windowsill" via "Rachel née Rabinowitz, tears at grapes with murderous claws" to "the rats are underneath the pile, the Jew is underneath the lot". For a postwar (and post-Holocaust) reprint of his poems Eliot made one significant alteration: 'the Jew' (who squats, etc) became 'the Jew'.

... between Milner's Kinder and others of that ilk

In 1902 Britain won the Boer War. The top official who oversaw the subsequent incorporation of the Boers into British

South Africa was Lord Milner. He surrounded himself with younger colonial administrators nicknamed 'Milner's Kindergarten'. By the late 1930s some of Milner's *Kinder* had advanced to key positions in the Establishment (Geoffrey Dawson was Editor of The Times, Lord Lothian Ambassador to Washington etc.). They had also mutated from self-confident Empire builders into arch-appeasers and formed an influential lobby nicknamed the Cliveden Set (after Lady Astor's country house).

The late 1930s produced a totally different batch of *Kinder*. These eventually formed a lobby called RoK whose influence can't be compared to that of the Cliveden Set.

...Germany and Austria

The German symbol is the eagle, sovereign of the avian Kingdom under whose mighty wingspan eaglets like Prussia, Saxony and Bavaria all nestle. In law German identity is biologically and not culturally transmitted. Descendants of settlers whom Catherine the Great had 'planted' in the Volga Region automatically receive German citizenship on their return – a privilege denied to German-born second generation immigrants from Turkey or Yugoslavia. But the 'biological' definition does not operate in reverse. A whole phalanx of foreign-descended luminaries – Beethoven (Dutch), Fontane (French), Busoni, Brentano, Chamisso (Italian) – are defined as German. As to Hitler, the Germans classify him as Austrian and the Austrians return the compliment.

The Austrian emblem is the double eagle symbolising the German-speaking and non-German speaking haloes of the Habsburg state. Since its demise the country has been schizoid about national identity. It felt ultra-German in 1938, and deeply Austrian in 1945. No less schizophrenic is the partly Slav-descended population's Slavophobia.

This flies in the face of the heavy Slav input into Austrian culture – with Wessely and Horvath prominent in theatre, and Kokoshka and Wotruba in art. Actually it is in light music, the quintessential Austrian art form, that 'foreigners' like Suppé (French) Johann Strauss (Jewish) Lehár (Hungarian) and Benatzky (Jewish), made the greatest contribution.

□ Richard Grunberger

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Reviews

The country that jumped over its own shadow

Hella Pick, *GUILTY VICTIM*, IB Tauris, 2000, £24.50

Hella Pick came to England on the Kindertransport as a refugee from Austria. Unlike many of us who severed our connection with the country of our birth that rejected us, she has kept in touch with Austria through her work as a journalist and diplomatic editor of *The Guardian* and on private visits. Her time as a journalist has spanned important events in postwar Austrian history and she is therefore well placed to relate and comment on them.

The central point of her book is 'The Big Lie' – that Austria was the Nazis' first victim instead of their enthusiastic collaborator. The Allies provided Austria with this alibi during their 10-year occupation and the country readily accepted it. At first, there were some attempts at denazification, but they were soon superseded by attention to the next threat – Soviet Russia – and so well-known Nazis were restored to prominent positions in many walks of life, including the government.

After Austria regained its independence, the lie was maintained and this policy continued under its long-serving Jewish Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky, a charismatic but flawed personality. (His character assassination of Wiesenthal is well-documented.)

His recipe for postwar recovery was to build up the economy and forget the past. In both these he succeeded. In 1980 he invited back distinguished emigrés who colluded with him by glossing over their losses of family and possessions, thus feeding the hand that bit them, to reverse a popular saying. Kreisky's ambitions for Austria made him a player on the world stage. He was one of the first to realise that a Middle East settlement had to involve talking to the PLO. However, his ambivalent attitude to fellow-Jews (he called them 'an ugly race') made him a hate figure in Israel. His 'amnesia' enabled Austria to evade its responsibilities to its victims.

Cracks appeared in this policy with the discovery of the guilty past of Waldheim,

and in 1991 Chancellor Vranitsky publicly admitted Austrian involvement with Nazi crimes. Since then there have been many, if belated, steps forward. Despite the notorious phrase attributed to Helmer, the Minister of the Interior, "I believe in stretching things out", there have been the offer of pensions to emigrés, the \$6,000 one-off payment, the return of the Mauerbach collection and the visits to Mauthausen by schoolchildren. Whether Haider represents a step back to anti-semitism and xenophobia, time will tell.

Hella Pick's account is clear and curiously unemotional. She lets the veil of objectivity slip only once in telling of her feeling of being reconnected to the land of her birth. As a factual account of an important period of history it is well-researched and informative.

□ Martha Blend

Naïve polemicist

Elie Wiesel, *AND THE SEA IS NEVER FULL*, Harper Collins, 2000, £19.99.

Elie Wiesel, perhaps the most prominent survivor of the Holocaust, has become today the *bête noir* of Holocaust deniers and those who castigate 'the Holocaust industry'. On another level, he has enjoyed considerable acclaim as an author and Nobel-laureate and has rubbed shoulders in a more or less intimate capacity with a number of the movers and shakers of the last three decades of the twentieth century. It is not surprising, then, that this second volume of his memoirs, which contains elements of a polemic, differs greatly from the first, *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, which was written from a more introverted perspective.

On one level, nevertheless, Wiesel remains the young boy from Sighet, whose world has been shattered by the Holocaust and whose nights are often haunted by the father whose last moments he was unable to witness or comfort. As a result, the text is punctuated by a seemingly inexhaustible store of dream sequences.

More mundane, perhaps, is the fundamental tension in Wiesel that is echoed in this memoir. On the one hand is the wonderment experienced by the boy survivor at the honours and distinctions heaped on him by a world held in awe of his achievements and his tragic past.

On the other hand is a pervading, almost cumulative sense of *Weltschmerz* unrelieved by the sudden bursts of creative energy that inspire the Nobel Laureate with projects he hopes will alleviate human misery but which, all too often, turn out to be fruitless.

Inevitably, then, the memoir's title assumes a poignant significance. The sea is never full for this sometimes naïve optimist, disappointed all too often by the vagaries of human nature, the dictates of *realpolitik* and the seeming inability of mankind to learn from the searing disaster which has marked his life and which no one word suffices to encapsulate.

Wiesel's friendship with Cardinal Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, stands out like a light in the darkness amid a catalogue of disillusionment, rivalrous antipathy and petty irritations. President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg cemetery and President Mitterand's long-concealed Vichy past distress Wiesel for whom memory of the Holocaust and reaction to this memory remain the bottom line. The well-documented hostility between Wiesel and Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal gets yet another screening. Numerous run-ins with Israeli politicians and dignitaries and fellow Jews involved in commemorating the Holocaust feature throughout the book. In contrast, Lustiger's warmth and sincerity overcome the author's initial reservations at encountering a converted Jew.

While this book is interspersed with often striking insights into a number of contemporary philosophical issues and reads overall as compellingly as one would expect from a master storyteller, the author's thought-processes, on occasion, might benefit from some pruning and editing.

□ Emma Klein

Night of broken glass

Joshua Goldstein, *MARTIN NIGHT*, Kings Head, Islington.

What is best for a traumatised man? A stiff upper-lip 'get on with life' attitude or consulting the psychiatrist? This is the dilemma the 'perfect' Grove family has to face unconsciously.

Rich American girl Billy Huntingdon

Cont.

falls in love with the sad brown eyes of a German-Jewish Kindertransportee. They marry and Benjamin Lipsky transforms himself into Bennet Grove, successful all-American insurance broker, who has his children baptised to save them from the misery to which being Jewish would, he is convinced, inevitably condemn them. Ben has adopted the stiff upper lip attitude to his past, while his wife thinks that he should not deny his origins or his problems.

However, what Lipsky has learnt from Kristallnacht cannot be unlearnt. It is that the world is divided into window-smashers and those whose windows are smashed – and he is determined that his sensitive overweight son, mockingly dubbed Roundman at school, should not belong to the latter. In fact, this very night is the College's traditional "Martin Night" when the tough boys are coming to beat up the weakling Roundman.

Ben is determined to send his son to Military Academy to toughen him up; mother and son decide to leave him. In Ben's mind the parting stirs memories of Kristallnacht and the murder of his parents in Treblinka, while the sight of his father's tears makes the Roundman want to avenge the wrongs done to his family, and he decides to go to the Military Academy. The irony of the situation escapes Ben; he has turned his gentle son into one of the window-breakers and, as if to emphasise the irony, as the tough boys arrive and begin to break the windows in their house, "Martin Night" turns into Kristallnacht, revealing the terrified little Jewish boy cowering behind Ben's tough-guy façade.

We may think that Ben was wrong to try to toughen up his son into a window-breaker, but are we sure that he would have been right to let his wife turn the boy into one of those whose windows are broken? Is the Holocaust survivor so damaged that he cannot do the right thing because for him there are only perpetrators and victims?

However, the play is not gloomy or didactic; it is full of wit and amusing family situations. Altogether this is a drama that every refugee should see. I took my wife who said to me after the performance: "You see, I'm not the only one to think that you survivors are difficult to live with!"

□ Andrew Herskovits

Saying the unsayable

Pip Simmons, *AN DIE MUSIK*, Tricycle Theatre, Kilburn.

Coming out of the theatre I asked myself: was what I had just seen drama? It lacked the two essentials of Aristotle's definition of tragedy: plot and characterisation. Instead, the cast declaimed bits from *Anne Frank's Diary*, Bruno Bettelheim and Shakespeare. At times this technique is realistic, for example when an SS guard makes prisoners leapfrog and do push-ups for an Olympic 15 minutes. At other times it appears to be surreal; in one sequence an SS man suddenly switches from feeding the Franks bread and human bones to shooting the father dead. A programme note may explain these conundrums: "*An die Musik* was not a scripted play but devised as physical theatre in an attempt to convey a response to the hell that was the reality". As a "response" designed to arouse emotion, the piece is effective.

A scene where a cane-wielding guard turns prisoners into trained animals, alternatively grovelling in self-abasement and performing classical music, not for the guard but for us, the audience, is brilliant and unsettling. It is also useful as information: two Romanian student-actresses told me they had known nothing of the Holocaust until they joined this production.

However, what is missing in Simmons' "response" is the personal element. Apart from the display of Nazi cruelty and Jewish submissiveness, we learn little about how the victims felt as individuals. For example, when the *Häftling* musicians are made to strip on stage, the painful dramatic irony – that they feel shame at their nakedness when going into the gas chamber – is overlooked. The dehumanisation of the prisoners is portrayed with physical precision, but the failure of the Nazi machine to crush the kindness, courage and spirit of resistance of many prisoners is left unexplored. I also wish Pip Simmons had done his homework better. For example he gives the impression that life in the camps was non-stop torture by sadistic guards. I was in four camps between Auschwitz and Belsen from April 1944 to April 1945, hungry, sleepy and eaten alive by skin lice all the time. But I was beaten only once, and then by a Jewish Kapo, because I had fallen asleep during work. I still remember Herr Gross with gratitude: his beating saved me from a worse one by the guard.

□ AH

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Letters to the Editor

AUSTRIAN APOLOGIST?

Sir – I refer to the review of Hella Pick's book *Und welche Rolle spielt Österreich (November 1999)* and wish to express my disagreement with the inaccurate content of Chapter 13 concerning restitution etc. Opinion is one thing, fact quite another and there are so many errors that it difficult to know where to begin. Like Hella Pick, I came to England from Vienna on a Kindertransport. Unlike her, I have an additional 'qualification' namely that I returned to Vienna where I have lived for the last 34 years. It then took me ten years to work out Vienna's main problem: that nothing is as it seems.

Her position at the *Guardian* gave Hella Pick access to all those in the top tier starting with Kreisky; naturally, she was also welcomed in Vienna in her private capacity and would have been told what it was intended she should disseminate abroad about Austria. I would like to issue a warning about the recently published English translation of her book which is likely to transmit to the English-speaking world the superficiality, not to mention the mendacity, which Austrian politicians are able so deftly to convey with their charm and smiles.

A1040 Vienna

Albert Sternfeld

[Hella Pick's book (English version) is reviewed on page 4 – Ed.]

NOT AN ORDINARY JOE

Sir – When dealing with the major political role a number of Jews played in the course of history in various countries one major figure wasn't mentioned. The Austrian Jew Dr Bruno Kreisky was Chancellor of Austria and head of the first Social Democratic government in the history of the country from 1970 to 1983. Before that he had held the post of Foreign Minister from 1959 to 1966 in various coalition governments. Though his conflict with Simon Wiesenthal and his friendly relations with some extremists among the Arab leaders are open to criticism, his statesmanship was never disputed either in Austria or internationally. He died in 1990. He is still a revered personality especially within the

Social Democratic Party, whose chairman he was from 1966 to 1983.

Vienna, Austria

Heinrich Rosenkranz

WORN OUT CASE?

Sir – Am I the only one who came to this country by Kindertransport who is becoming increasingly irritated by the actions of a few enthusiastic, although I feel misguided, people? They are, deliberately or otherwise, trying to perpetuate the 'Oh how I have suffered' syndrome. Those of us who were lucky enough to get here suffered, on the whole, neither physical nor mental abuse. And although I am only too well aware that each of us lost close relatives in unspeakable circumstances, we were by no means unique.

The plaque in the House of Commons to thank the British for letting us in is one thing, but the erection of a statue of a Kind complete with transparent suitcase at Liverpool Street station is completely inappropriate. The latest fad is that some Kinder describe themselves as 'Holocaust survivors'. This is an insult to the gallant few who actually survived the camps and are the true heroes among us. Curiously enough, they are the last ones to talk.

Arundel, West Sussex

F Goldberg

RABID RABBI

Sir – The former Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef says the Holocaust came about because of the sins of our ancestors. My great-great-grandfather, a most saintly man, was the Gaon of Posen. Even the non-Jews respected him and called him "der Judenpapst" because he did a lot of healing. I wonder what 'sins' he committed? I hope that, on Yom Kippur, the Rabbi will have asked forgiveness for what he said.

London SW16

Ruth Leggett

BEYOND HIS KEN

Sir – It is obvious that nasty Mr Livingstone has deeply affected Mr Frank Bright's mind (*October letters*). The alleged loss of 300 jobs by abolishing the golliwogs clearly proves that our Mayor of London is a racist. Of course it is

conceivable that some black citizens felt offended by those golliwogs but Mr Bright is not the kind of person to be influenced by such a possibility. In fact he has come out with a wonderful idea: 'If German and Austrian children had played with golliwogs they would never have become Nazis when growing up.' And if they had played with dolls looking Jewish – huge nose and sidelocks (as portrayed in *Der Stürmer*) there would have been no anti-semitism. Let Israeli children (too late for Mr Sharon) play with dolls looking like Arabs, and Arab children with Israeli-like dolls and we have peace in Israel.

So there you are, Mr Livingstone. You may attempt to remove thousands of cars polluting the London air (also causing loss of employment), you may attempt to remove unlicensed, overcharging ice cream sellers from St James' Park (more unemployment), or get rid of those beloved pigeons from Trafalgar Square (two more job losses) but banning the golliwogs, a reminder of Britain's splendid benevolent colonialism, is indisputable evidence that you are a racist. At least as far as Mr Frank Bright is concerned.

London W12

Eric Sanders

A GLARING OMISSION

Sir – I have just finished reading Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes*. It is a book of 627 pages written by a professional historian in which there is but one single sentence referring to "the horror of the Holocaust", surely the most 'extreme' happening during this period, when about half Europe's Jews (and probably more than half of the Gypsy population) as well as other civilians were murdered with the assistance of German industry and others. If, being an architect, I wrote about architectural history and omitted the discovery of the arch or of reinforced concrete, I could hardly expect to find a serious publisher for my work.

Hobsbawm is neither a neo-Nazi nor an antisemite (for example he refers to outstanding German-Jewish Nobel prize-winners and the damage done to German science by Jewish scientists leaving Germany during the Hitler years.) I cannot understand this near-omission.

Macclesfield, Cheshire

Marianne Walter

RIGA GHETTO MONUMENT

Sir – Your report on the "neglected memorial site" in the Bikernieki forest near Riga (*October 2000*) diverges somewhat from my personal experience

twenty years ago, of a visit to the Rumbuli execution site near Riga. I was working in the Latvian Historical State archive in Riga, when, halfway through my stay, I was informed by my hosts, the Latvian Academy of Sciences, that I would be taken to the Rumbuli forest memorial site by a doctor whose father was shot by the Germans during the war. Spread over the vast site were several enormous stone figures in heroic and mournful poses. In the centre of this meticulously kept area stood a black marble altar-like structure, about two metres high and ten metres long. I remember distinctly that this huge marble slab was inscribed in Latvian, Russian and either Yiddish or Hebrew.

On placing my ear to the flat marble top, I heard a distinct regular ticking which sounded like a metronome in action. The architect of this impressive structure had encased a large metronome in a concrete box a few metres under the commemorative altar, on which flowers had been placed. My companion, looking at me standing there in silence, said: "Unless we blow ourselves up beforehand, this metronome will still be ticking away hundreds of years from now". My visit to the Rumbuli forest murder site was a deeply moving experience.

London NW11

Gerald Fleming

GERMAN PENSION

Sir - F Goldberg (*September 2000 letters*) is correct in assuming that the exchange rate is a factor influencing the amount of his monthly pension. However, the relevant exchange rate is the one between Sterling and the Euro. The Deutschmark ceased to exist as an independent currency when the Euro was born. It then became a constituent part of the Euro at a permanently fixed conversion rate of 1 Euro = 1.95583 DM. The foreign currency markets ceased to trade in Deutschmarks and the other Euro currencies, and traded solely in Euros. Unfortunately for British recipients of German pensions, the Euro has declined in value against Sterling by some 15% since its birth on 1 January 1999, thereby dragging down with it the Sterling value of amounts denominated in DM.

London NW11

Manfred Alweiss

MUSEUM BLUES

Sir - Very sorry to learn that Martin Jaul had difficulties with our timed ticket system. We hope we've now ironed out the gremlins and the signing is not

missed. Generally, the system works well and ensures that the Exhibition doesn't become crowded.

Your readers may be interested to learn that we have now had over 100,000 visitors. The AJR helped the creation of the Exhibition in lots of different ways - thank you for your co-operation, patience and encouragement.

London SW1

Suzanne Bardgett

Project Director, Holocaust Exhibition,
Imperial War Museum

PIANIST'S BOYCOTT

Sir - So, Carinthia managed to attract a number of celebrities this summer (*SB's August column*). One at least who didn't attend was Andras Schiff. He refused to perform at an Austrian Government function and, in an interview, stated his belief that antisemitism in Austria was alive and well.

Leatherhead, Surrey

Robert Miller

ANOTHER MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Sir - Further to your article about Nora Danzig (*September 2000*), a memorial stone to the 150 Jews of Schlüchtern and surrounding villages who died in the Holocaust was formally unveiled in the Schlüchtern Jewish cemetery in September in the presence of members of the Frankfurt Jewish community, dignitaries of Hessen State and the town of Schlüchtern and some former Jewish residents of Schlüchtern. The surviving former members of the Schlüchtern Jewish community together with the Hesse authorities and the town of Schlüchtern contributed equally financially to the project. The stone replaces that erected by the town of Schlüchtern in 1946. Help and encouragement also came from the late Ignatz Bubis. The Burgomaster of Schlüchtern and his colleagues were very sympathetic and helped to make the project successful.

Disley, Cheshire

Gerald V. Wolf

NONSENSE RHYMES AND OTHER SONGS

Sir - Can anyone complete this nonsense rhyme which finishes, "*Finster war's, der Mond schien belle, als ein Wagen blitzeschnelle langsam um die Ecke fuhr. Drinnen sassen... Leute, schweigend ins Gespräch vertieft....*"?

Rochdale, Lancs

Irmgard Treuherz

Sir - In Paul Yogi Mayer's *Jüdische Olympiasieger* I read that the *Horst Wessel Lied* was originally a popular song "...vorbei, vorbei sind nun die schönen Stunden, die wir verlebt am... Nordseestrand." Do any of your readers know when this song first came out, and who wrote the music and the lyric?

London NW3

Ludwig Berlin

Leipzig museum

In 1933 Leipzig had Germany's sixth-largest Jewish community. The Jews' contribution to the economic, cultural and social development of Leipzig, the Leipzig region and beyond, has been largely forgotten. In particular, the younger generations are unaware of Leipzig's Jewish history. There is a significant and growing interest in Leipzig's Jewish history. The City Museum of Leipzig wants to present Jewish history as an integral part of Leipzig's history. The Museum is in the process of establishing a collection illustrating Jewish life in Leipzig. It seeks documents, objects of any kind, advertisements, books published by Jewish publishing houses in Leipzig, ritual objects etc. Our documentation centre will also serve as a meeting place for all Leipcigians and visitors, whether individuals or groups, interested in Leipzig's Jewish history and culture. To preserve the few remaining objects documenting Jewish life in Leipzig we need your assistance. We especially ask former Jewish citizens of Leipzig to support us.

Please contact Dr Volker Rodecamp (Director) or Dr Andrea Lorz, Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig, Altes Rathaus, Markt 1, D-04109 Leipzig. Tel: 0341 965130, Fax: 0341 9651352 or email: Stadtmuseum.Lepizig@t-online.de □

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AJR Reports

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS



South London AJR members visit Nightingale House: From left, Helen Aronson, Herbert Wolff, Lore Robinson

South London

Twenty members took up an invitation from Nightingale House, Clapham, to visit what is reputed to be the largest home for the elderly in Europe. With nearly 400 residents, the home has twelve separate dining rooms serviced from a central kitchen, an extensive medical suite with regular clinics, facilities for physiotherapy, occupational therapy and dentistry as well as a hairdressing salon. An arts and crafts centre, a library and a concert hall cater for leisure activities. There is also a synagogue where one of the residents, aged 90, takes the services. The home is set in an attractive garden. The visitors were treated to a splendid tea and felt reassured that such good facilities can be found on their doorstep.

□ Herbert Wolff

Putting the current debate about refugees and asylum seekers into perspective, the Wiener Library's Dr Jo Reilly spoke about non-Jewish responses to the 1930s 'refugee crisis' when, between 1933 and 1939, 35,000 Jews fled the Nazis, many of them after Kristallnacht. It was said that refugees were unwanted aliens who were stealing the jobs and the bread from British people. Whilst the Jewish community funded the refugees, many non-Jewish groups such as trade unions, the

Christadelphians and the Society of Friends helped; however most Church leaders were more sympathetic to the German churches.

□ Ruth Leggatt

The next meeting will be on Thursday 16 November at 2 pm when the speaker will be Norma Brier from Norwood Ravenswood.

Brighton and Hove

An attentive audience heard Aubrey Milstein talk about his involvement with the Haganah. He first came to Palestine as a youngster in 1939 hoping to attend the Hebrew University but met Yigal Alon who persuaded him to use his skills as 'a good shot' and show kibbutzniks how to use rifles in self-defence. He was also active during the time of the arrival of illegal boats in Palestine. Later he joined the British Army's Ordinance Corps, returning to Palestine in 1946; he also worked with Aliyah B during the siege of Jerusalem.

□ Ellen Rosen

The next meetings are on Monday 30 October at 10.45, when Judy Ironside will talk about the Brighton & Hove Jewish Film Festival, and Monday 20 November at 10.45 when Sandra Barnett will talk about returning to Gombin, Poland searching for roots.

Leeds

Dr Erika Harris, lecturer in political science at Leeds University and member

of the Leeds group, gave a talk on the subject of Jews in Slovakia from the war years to the present. A full report will appear later □

The next meeting will be on Sunday 5 November (postponed from 29 October) when Dayan Refson will speak on "The philosophy of remembering and mourning."

Pinner

That there were few corners of the earth that Anthony Goldsmith had not visited in his work as an exporter became clear as he regaled his audience with stories of vanishing cream from Nigeria, toy pistols disappearing in New York, Thailand after a typhoon, retrieving keys from a car boot in the Malaysian jungle and the talking chiefs of Tonga. Special treats included Chinese music from Singapore, the Australian didgeridoo and a New Zealand Maori choir. Souvenirs on display included a diesel engine and a cobra. Members also met Sharon Druce, just appointed as the new AJR northern regional co-ordinator.

□ Walter Weg

The next meeting will be on Thursday 2 November at 2pm when Sir Horace Phillips will talk about his 'Experiences as a Jewish Ambassador'. The Chanukah party will be on 7 December when Esther & Alf Keiles and family will entertain.

West Midlands

There will be a Chanukah party on 10 December. Further details in next issue.

Regional group functions are open to all AJR members
See AJR Group contact details on page 10

AJR 'Drop in' Advice Centre at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6 3RL
between 10am and 12 noon on the following dates:

Wednesday	1	November
Thursday	9	November
Tuesday	14	November
Thursday	23	November
Wednesday	29	November
Tuesday	5	December

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on

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E-mail: r.lambeth@britac.ac.uk

Please quote *AJR Information*

... Viewpoint ...

Israel's stymied hopes for peace

Israel's senior statesman, former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, asked what possible advantage the Palestinians could gain from initiating a new *intifada*, adding that it was "totally unnecessary". Speaking in London when completing a diplomatic mission to Rome, Paris and Berlin, he visited Downing Street the day that the brutal murder of two Israeli soldiers, by a mob while in the custody of the Palestine-controlled Ramallah police station, had shocked Israeli public opinion to the core.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak had offered the "most generous proposals to the Palestinians" at Camp David, strongly supported by President Clinton, said Shimon Peres, including concessions on the main issue of Jerusalem, but Arafat had made an outright rejection. Jerusalem had never been an Arab capital city and neither the Jordanians nor the Egyptians had conceded territorial sovereignty to the Palestinians; only Israel recognised the Palestinians and had conceded them territory.

The Israeli government's "moral conviction" not to dominate the lives of another people had underlain the Oslo agreement, but would the Palestinian people miss an opportunity for peace a third time? In 1948 the Arabs waged war rather than accept the lion's share of partition; in 1996, after the assassination

of Yizhak Rabin, a government headed by Peres handed 500 villages to the Palestinians, but the terrorist response prior to the elections had probably cost another three years.

Assuming that Arafat was negotiating in good faith, Peres failed to comprehend why he had rejected a settlement. Israel had decidedly *not* rejected his demand for a fact-finding commission as it had nothing to hide, but PM Barak needed to negotiate its composition. In a conflict fought increasingly on television and radio (and Palestinian media were continually fermenting violence) it was unclear just when the Palestinians were attacking outside their own territories. "There was no need for anybody to get killed or injured," said Peres.

Though Israel abhorred violence, she was strong enough to defend lives and to seek peace. With the end of the Cold War, war in the Middle East was not an option. In Peres' view, terror could also prove extremely costly to the Palestinians. A leader of a state in formation – with three million people, 120,000 administrators, trading with many countries – could not act like a terrorist leader. The Palestinian leadership had "no right to sacrifice a generation of young people", he said. Israel would "defend our land and our peace", he added. □ *Ronald Channing*

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NOVEMBER 2000

Afternoon entertainment programme –

- Wed 1 The Eddy Simons Duo
- Thur 2 The Geoffrey Whitworth Duo
- Sun 5 DAY CENTRE CLOSED –
Volunteers' Annual Party
- Mon 6 KARD & GAMES KLUB
- Tues 7 Entertainment with Michael Heaton
(piano)
- Wed 8 Entertainment with Margaret Eaves
(piano)
- Thur 9 Guitar and Piano with Jonathan
Nolan and Mitra Tham
- Sun 12 DAY CENTRE OPEN – no
entertainment
- Mon 13 KARD & GAMES KLUB
- Tues 14 Accordion Plus Trio – Jill Goldman,
Ellen Lanksford (accordion) and
Gordon Mabbett (keyboard)
- Wed 15 LUNCHEON CLUB
- Thur 16 Angela Arratoon accompanied by
Eldad Neumark (piano)

- Sun 19 DAY CENTRE OPEN – no
entertainment
- Mon 20 KARD & GAMES KLUB
- Tues 21 Christine Fisher accompanied by
Geoffrey Whitworth (piano)
- Wed 22 Tricia Dibb (Soprano)
accompanied by Michael Heaton
(piano)
- Thur 23 Colla Voce Camerata accompanied
by Charlotte Ellis (piano)
- Sun 26 DAY CENTRE OPEN – no
entertainment
- Mon 27 KARD & GAMES KLUB
- Tues 28 The Singing Duo – Jack & Rita
Davis
- Wed 29 Jenny Kossew entertains on
accordion
- Thur 30 Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
(violin) with piano
accompaniment

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Brenner. Trude Brenner died peacefully on 20 September 2000 in her 94th year. Beloved mother of Jon and Margrit. Loving Grandmother to Simon, Stephanie, Andrew and Miriam. She will be sadly missed and always remembered with the greatest affection.

Preston. Rudy Preston (Pollack) born 10.6.1927 Vienna, died 1.9.2000, Greenford. Rudy arrived in England on a Kindertransport. He spent some time in a hostel in Sheffield, also a period in Israel. Rudy's last employment was with Sir Robert MacAlpine as an industrial photographer. In 1949, he married Martha (née Wilpred), another Kind from Nuremberg. She survives him, together with their two sons Robert and Stephen, daughter-in-law Linda and grandchildren Leanne and Paul. Rudy will be remembered as a kind, decent, family man, and a good friend.

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Societies

Association of Jewish Ex-Berliners and Ex-Breslauers. Please contact Peter Sinclair 020 8882 1638 for information.

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Leeds HSFA:	Trude Silman 0113 225 1628
West Midlands: (Birmingham)	Henny Rednall 0121 373 5603
North: (Manchester)	Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091
East Midlands (Nottingham)	Bob Norton 01159 212 494
Pinner: (HA Postal District)	Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833
S. London:	Ken Ambrose 020 8852 0262
Surrey:	Ernest Simon 01737 643 900
Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)	Fausta Shelton 01273 688 226
Wessex: (Bournemouth)	Ralph Dale 01202 762 270

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS NOVEMBER 2000

- Until 5 Nov **Julia Pascal:** London Continental. Arcola Theatre, Stoke Newington. 020 7383 0920. £6-£8. 8pm.
- 1 Nov-10 Dec **The Last Goodbye.** The rescue of children from Nazi Europe. Etz Chayim Gallery, Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue 01923 822592.
- Thurs 2 **Lunchtime recital,** John Georgiou, piano. The Manor House, 80 East End Rd., 1.15pm.
Prof Bernard Wasserstein: The end of Jewish history? Inst. of Jewish Studies, UCL. Gustave Tuck Theatre, Gower St. London WC1. 6.30pm.
- Fri 3 **British Library:** Tour with Ilana Tahan (curator) of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts Spiro Ark. 11am. £6.50.
- Mon 6 **Dr Louise London:** Whitehall & the refugees - then and now. Club 43, 7.45pm.
Frederick Cohen (President of the Jersey Jewish Congregation): Remembering the Jews in the Channel Islands during the German Occupation 1940-1945. Wiener Library £2. 6.30pm.
- Thurs 9 **Prof Tony Kushner** and a representative from *Europa Roma* In an evening to commemorate Kristallnacht. Wiener Library. 7pm. £4/£2 (conc.)
- Sun 12 **An evening with Bernard Kops.** Sternberg Centre. 8pm.
- Mon 13 **Dr Edie Friedman:** Jews and Racism. Club 43, 7.45pm.
Peter Sherwood (SEES): Jewish Themes in postwar Hungarian Literature. Inst. of Jewish Studies, UCL. Gustave Tuck Theatre, Gower St., WC1. 6.30pm.
Alexandra Valavelska in *Achtung Kabarett*, New End Theatre, 9.30pm (Sat matinees 3.30pm). 020 7472 5800.
- Tues 14 - 3 Dec **Prof Abraham Steinberg** (Jerusalem): Medical ethics lecture. Inst. of Jewish Studies, UCL. Darwin Theatre. 8pm.
- Wed 15 **Prof Abraham Steinberg** (Jerusalem): Medical ethics lecture. Inst. of Jewish Studies, UCL. Darwin Theatre. 8pm.
- Thur 16 **Lunchtime recital,** Horatia Raphael, piano. The Manor House, 80 East End Rd., 1.15pm.
- Sun 19 & 26 **Film: The Story of Chaim Rumkowski & the Jews of Lodz.** Imperial War Museum. 2pm and 3.30pm.
- Mon 20 **Mr Terry Henderson** (Goldsmith's College): Max Weber and his relevance today. Club 43, 7.45pm.
- Tues 21 **David Mendel:** Primo Levi-Witness, Writer, Man of Genius. Spiro Ark at Ealing Synagogue, 8.30pm. £3.
- Mon 27 **Prof John Klier:** Do Russians remember the Holocaust? Inst. of Jewish Studies, UCL. Gustave Tuck Theatre, Gower St., WC1. 6.30pm.
Dr A. Grenville: AJR Information & the settlement of Jewish Refugees in Britain. Club 43, 7.45pm.
- Thur 30 **Prof David Cesarani:** Holocaust without end - the impact of the Holocaust since 1945. Imperial War Museum 7pm.
Elizabeth Bosworth & Lydia Clatworthy: Violin & piano recital of Brahms, Mozart. Sternberg Centre. 1.15pm.
- Until 28 Jan 2001 **Keeping the Light.** Photographic exhibition on the Jews of Cochín. Jewish Museum, Camden Town.

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club '43, Belsize Square Synagogue. Hans Seelig. Tel: 01442 254360

Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Rd, London SE1. 020 7416 5320

Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL. 020 7679 3520

Spiro Ark 020 8201 7172

Sternberg Centre for Judaism/Jewish Museum, Finchley. 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY. Tel: 020 8346 2288/ 8349 1143

The Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 129-131 Albert Street, NW1 7BN. Tel: 020 7284 1997

The Manor House Society, 80 East End Rd, London N3. 020 8349 5654
Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street. London W1. Tel. 020 7636 7247

YAVNE SCHOOL IN COLOGNE

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Art Notes

Memories of a dying community are often edged with a special tenderness and the Jews of Cochin are no exception. The ancient community was established in Cochin after the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE. Later Jewish settlers arrived as refugees from the Spanish Inquisition. The Rajahs of Cochin allowed Jewish culture to flourish in a climate of tolerance and respect. Thus a rich religious life was maintained in which old traditions blended with local customs.



Visiting the ancient tomb of a revered Jewish scholar, Cochin.

The Jewish Museum's current exhibition, *Keeping the Light*, is a moving photographic biography by photographer, **Suzon Fuks**, who went to India in 1993 to study Judaism among people who have never known persecution. The Belgian-born photographer became interested in the Cochin community because of its contrast to her own threatened European background. (Her parents had been hidden during the war).

The black and white photographs represent a journey through a 2000-year-old Jewish life threatened now not by persecution but by time and secularisation. Fuks' search for her 'Judaicity', as she describes it, led her to a place bluntly called Jewtown. Here we see the ashram

in which she stayed and the formal dining room where she received an open invitation to Shabbat dinner. Other photographs depict a jeweller repairing a silver Hebrew letter on a scroll; kosher cuisine being prepared with coconut curry leaves, turmeric and perfumed spices; headscarved women praying fervently behind a mechitzah and Jews beating the ground outside the synagogue with branches, a custom said to ensure pros-



Seder celebrated by the Jewish community in Cochin

perity. A valuable insight into the community is provided by a glimpse of Hindus, Christians and Jews gathering at the tomb of Nehemia ben Abraham, a Cochin grandee revered as a saint by all faiths. Perhaps most telling is her record of a small group sitting down and discussing the purchase of tickets to Israel. Aliyah is the goal since Cochin Jews believe that this way of life will soon vanish.

Opening the exhibition the writer and broadcaster Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, a Ugandan Indian, spoke emotionally of the loss of the sense of homeland. "Your pictures are drenched in faith" she told the artist. "In metropolitan London, faith is not part of the bloodstream."

A programme of related events at the exhibition will include a talk on Indian Jewish embroidery on 12 November, a talk on the history of the Cochin Jews by journalist and author Percy Gourgey on 3 December and a discussion on the Jews of the Raj by author Mavis Hyman. There will also be a children's programme. The exhibition continues until 28 January 2001.

□ Gloria Tessler

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

SB's Column

The Austrian Orpheus Trust investigates the fate of artists, musicians and composers who had to flee after the Anschluss and of whom little has been heard since. The trust has recently published more names that fall into this category. These include Max Geiger who was in turn concert master at the Komische Oper, Berlin, and conductor of a radio orchestra in Vienna, Ernst Goldner who emigrated to the States, and wrote the film music for *Exodus*, and conductor Karl Alwin, who went from the Vienna Staatsoper to the Opera National, Mexico. (Alwin's wife, Elisabeth Schumann was a famous operatic soprano, a stalwart of the Staatsoper and the Salzburg Festival in the interwar years.)

A theatrical marathon. At Hanover Peter Stein has staged an unabridged production of Goethe's *Faust* lasting 22 hours! The cost for costumes, décor and lighting effects ran into millions. (Some of the critics spoke of Stein's Faustian pact with the devil). The production is due to transfer to Berlin and Vienna later.

Painter Ernst Bloch, 90, a concentration camp survivor who escaped via Shanghai to New York, has bequeathed his paintings to the Dachau-Memorial Museum which is currently exhibiting his work.

Birthdays. Celebrations are planned for Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's forthcoming 85th birthday. A fine soprano with a worldwide following, she was equally in demand by opera houses in New York, Chicago, Milan and Vienna. Her career as an interpreter of Mozart and Richard Strauss peaked in the Forties and Fifties when she also sang in London to which she returned much later to conduct master classes.

International violinist Isaac Stern has turned 80. Also 80 is Romuald Pekny, one of the *grandseigneurs* of the German stage and veteran member of the Munich Kammerspiele □

Blood and dishonour

The German Government has banned the biggest organiser of neo-Nazi concerts in Germany which takes its name from the 1924 Nazi Party manifesto. The prohibition of any neo-Nazi party, which requires the consent of the constitutional court, will take considerably longer □

Science Notebook

The Nobel Prize and the dictators

Each autumn the names are announced of the year's Nobel prizewinners. The Peace prize is awarded by the Norwegian Nobel Committee while the prizes for Chemistry, Physics, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Economic Science are decided by the appropriate Swedish Academy. Any country whose citizen receives such a prize is usually delighted and fêtes the recipient, for such an international accolade bolsters its national pride. But not always!

In 1936 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Carol von Ossietzky, a German journalist and pacifist. His passionate campaign for international disarmament and against German rearmament had already earned him a prison sentence in 1932 by the Weimar government. In 1933 the Nazis rearrested him and sent him to a concentration camp where he contracted TB. A great international press campaign ensued for his release and for his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. When the prize was indeed given to Ossietzky, Hitler was so enraged that he introduced a law forbidding any German citizen from accepting a Nobel Prize. Ossietzky died in 1938.

The consequences of the new law were soon felt. In 1938 the Nobel Prize for Chemistry was awarded to Richard Kuhn of the University of Heidelberg for his work on carotenoids and vitamins; he had determined the structures of vitamins A, B2 and B6. Because of Hitler's edict he had to forego the award until 1949 when it was restored to him at a special ceremony in Stockholm. The German biochemist Gerhard Domagk, who had discovered the antibiotic Prontosil at IG

Farbenindustrie, fared even worse. On notifying the German government in 1939 that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine, he was promptly arrested. Although he was soon released, he was not able to accept his award until 1947.

The Soviet leadership was equally unsympathetic to certain Nobel awards. Boris Pasternak's famous novel *Dr Zhivago* had been banned in the USSR but was published in Italy in 1957 to great acclaim. Pasternak was then expelled from the Soviet Writers Union and was forced to refuse the 1958 Nobel Prize for Literature. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, too, was expelled from the Soviet Writers Union following his novels which unmasked the Soviet camp system, beginning with *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. When the KGB subsequently discovered his manuscript of *The Gulag Archipelago* he was arrested and exiled abroad in 1974. However, this then allowed him to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature which he had been awarded in 1970.

Even the famous Russian physicist Andrei Sakharov was not immune from official disapproval. He had played a crucial role in developing the Soviet hydrogen bomb, believing that parity between the superpowers would prevent nuclear war. Later he called for an end to the arms race, East-West co-operation and human rights. For this he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975. Five years later he was exiled to the town of Gorky as a leading dissident and only released in 1986 after staging several hunger strikes.

The voicing of politically unpalatable opinions, especially when praised abroad, has always been anathema to dictatorships.

□ Prof Michael Spiro

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LAND ARMY GIRLS FOR THE CENOTAPH



Ruth Sellers, née Hirsch, right, with the Land Army in Parkers Piece, Cambridge in 1941.

Ruth Sellers will be marching with her local British Legion on Remembrance Day this year. According to a recent announcement, this will be the first time the Land Army will be permitted to walk past the Cenotaph as part of Remembrance Day events. Ruth arrived in Harwich, Dovercourt, in a Kindertransport in December 1938 and was in the Land Army from 1941 to 1944 □

Mixed marriages in the Third Reich

By 1933, 10% of German Jews had intermarried; of those German Jews who survived the Second World War, 98% were partners in mixed marriages.

Christian husbands in mixed marriages were said to be living in 'privileged marriages'. Their wives were exempt from wearing the Star of David. But the men were denied advancement at work, and eventually faced dismissal. Finally in 1944 they were rounded up and put into a forced labour camp run by the Organisation Todt. Brutally treated, they were told they would be released as soon as they had signed a divorce document. Hardly any of them did because they knew the consequence of their action would be the immediate deportation of their wives.

Jewish men married to Christian wives were regarded as living in a Jewish household. Their children were treated as Jews. In spite of these terrible pressures the overwhelming majority of couples refused divorce, thus becoming a thorn in the Nazis' flesh. Of course, the authorities could have passed a law compulsorily divorcing these couples. At various times they contemplated such a law, but they

always held back. When rumours of compulsory divorce in mixed marriages reached the Catholic hierarchy they let it be known that they would not recognise this. They would continue to treat such couples as married. To prevent such open defiance Hitler and Goebbels dropped the idea.

Finally in February 1943 Goebbels, Gauleiter of Berlin, ordered the *Fabriksaktion* when all remaining labour-conscripted Jewish husbands of Christian wives were to be arrested. February 27 was a Saturday and factory work finished at 2 pm. When the men did not return from work their wives became anxious and made enquiries at their local police stations. They were directed to Rosenstrasse, the Jewish welfare offices in Berlin-Mitte. There, to their surprise, they found other women looking for their husbands. At first they demanded to send messages to their husbands. When this was conceded they asked for their husbands' release. "*Gebt uns unsere Männer wieder!*" they shouted. Goebbels, a pragmatist, gave the order to release the men.

However, twenty-five men had already been sent to Auschwitz. Their wives were not prepared to take this lying down, and besieged the Gestapo headquarters at Burgstrasse. The unbelievable happened and the Gestapo chief ordered the prisoners, who had already been tattooed with their numbers in Auschwitz, to be returned to Berlin. Back in the Burgstrasse they were warned not to give the slightest hint about the real purpose of Auschwitz. They were then sent to a labour camp in Gross-Beeren where their wives could see them daily. They all survived the war.

On May 19 Goebbels officially declared Berlin '*judenfrei*', having previously instructed the employers of Jewish labour conscripts to remove the Star of David from their clothes to fit in with his statement.

Peter Prager

KINDERTRANSPORT NEWS

From David Jedwab

AJR-KT Luncheon Club 20 September

A fascinating talk was given by Tim Angel, ex-Chairman of Bafta and MD of the 200 year-old family business 'Angels', costumiers to the film, theatre and TV industries. This side of the entertainment industry is not known to the general public and it was quite enlightening to learn the historical research required to get the costumes right for the period in which the play/film is set, for example *Schindler's List*. The company literally maintain acres of space for their uniforms and miles of racks and are represented worldwide. Tim Angel enlivened his talk with many amusing anecdotes about well-known stars. He has been honoured with an OBE and by a visit to the company's headquarters by The Queen.

Over 70 people attended the luncheon on 20 September. The AJR-KT audience enjoyed this get-together immensely.

The next Luncheon Club meeting is on 15 November when the Speaker will be Susi Bechhöfer, author of *Rosa's Child*, who will relate how she set about tracing her Jewish roots. On 13 December, Susannah Alexander will talk about her work at the Jewish Museum.

KINDERTRANSPORT Chanukah Party

On Wednesday 20 December at the AJR Day Centre, 15 Cleve Road, West Hampstead. Reception and drinks 6.00-6.30 pm, followed by a full buffet. Musical entertainment at 8.00 pm finishing at 9.00 pm.

Book your place by writing to the Kindertransport Office together with your cheque for £10. (Issued to 'Kindertransport'). We look forward to seeing you there.

50 YEARS AGO

URGENT CALL FROM ISRAEL

The AJR has received the following message from a close friend who is now on a visit in Israel: "I saw some of the camps for the new immigrants. People are living in tents, and now, as the cold season is starting, there is a desperate need for blankets and garments, especially children's wear. Please appeal without delay to AJR members for their immediate help. Every day counts."

□ AJR Information November 1950

Love story or Stalin was my Cyrano

(Continuation)

Time passed. I turned sixteen and the phoney war turned real. Bombs rained down on London. Buildings went up in flames. I slept on tube station platforms. Amid the disruption the underground and buses continued to run, and mail continued to be delivered. One day I received a letter asking me to join an organisation composed of refugee youngsters calling itself Young Austria. I accepted with alacrity, having led a very impoverished social life since arriving in London. From one day to the next my situation changed as I was caught up in an endless round of meetings, lectures, recruiting drives and Sunday excursions. What, however, made my cup run over and turned Young Austria into my spiritual home was the fact that it wore its heart in the physiologically correct place, that is on the Left.

I had grown up in a leftwing family. The reason why my grandparents weren't on speaking terms was because, forty years earlier, my grandmother had burnt the dinner while cheering on the first

ever May Day procession in the street below their window. My mother had joined the Social Democrat Party in 1911, when political women were considered freaks almost on a par with lesbians. Her brother, my uncle, was a shop steward of the Union of Bank Employees. Even my Jewish-oriented father voted the Labour Zionist ticket in the communal elections.

Within a few weeks of joining I was happy to detect that all Young Austria activists were singing from a hymn-sheet that had *The International* printed on it in invisible ink (invisible to avoid the risk of the comrades, enemy aliens in wartime Britain, being unmasked as Communists). I myself had learnt *The International*, with its stirring opening line 'Awake, Damned of this Earth' from a casual holiday acquaintance when I was twelve.

In those halcyon days, before my emotions started their roller-coaster between barmitzvah trauma and epiphany at Schönbrunn, I had also been a devoted stamp collector. This passion for philately was fed by an interest in history, my best school subject, and its link to politics. Stamps also satisfied an adolescent hunger for exotic places. As a long-time Tarzan addict, I thrilled to find a country with the outlandish name Ubangi-Chari-

Chad – how much more resonant than Antananarivo or Timbuktu! – listed in my stamp album. And then there were the glorious Soviet stamps on letters to my fellow philatelist Harry from his uncle in Russia. Stamps showing the icebreaker Chelyuskin which had circumnavigated the Arctic Ocean or Lieutenant Schmitt who had landed his plane on the North Pole; other collectors' items celebrated the completion of the White Sea Canal, of the Dnieper Dam, of the Moscow Metro, and so forth.

I recaptured the heady mood of Socialist construction at our Young Austria group meetings. Here we sang 'The voice of the city is sleepless/the factories thunder and beat/how bitter the wind and relentless/ that echoes our shuffling feet. But we turn to face/the rising sun/thanks to our faith/new life's begun'. The same message of the builders of Socialism triumphing over adversity suffused the pages of Ostrovsky's *How The Steel Was Tempered* and of Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Uplifted* – books from the Young Austria library which I devoured. By now I had risen to the position of a YA cadre and devoted my entire life outside of work to the organisation.

To be continued

□ Richard Grunberger

Kurt Hamburger ("Hambi"). Son of Friedrich Hamburger. Lived at Siegmundshof 6, Berlin and attended Holdheim-Schule, Joachimsthaler Strasse 13 between 1937–1938. May have gone to England on Kindertransport. Sought by his best friend Federico (Fritz) Freudenheim, R. Tomé Portes 110, 04623-050 Sao Paulo, Brazil. Tel. +55 11-240 9429

Otto Wassermann, born June 1, 1914 in Berlin. Arrested on 10 November 1938 and sent to Dachau. Released on 8 February 1939 and came to England in June 1939. His wife and three children fled to Denmark in 1942 but were expelled and killed in Auschwitz.

Karel Platzko, son of Ernst (Ernst) Platzko. Fled from Vienna. Ernst entered Denmark days before the Germans occupation, was expelled in late 1940 and killed in Sachsenhausen. Karel Platzko had a "Palestinian" passport so was not allowed to enter Denmark. He settled in Israel in about 1951.

Information sought about both by researcher. Contact Dr V Vilhjalmsson, Danish Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Nordre Soegade 35, 1370 Copenhagen. Tel: +45 33370070. E mail: vov@dchf.dk

Vickers Hill, Lymington. Did you work here in a large house with Olga (Hungary), Minny (Czechoslovakia) and Erna? If so,

SEARCH NOTICES

please contact Erna and Angi Wright, 67 Rowan Way, Area 4, Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham B37 7QT. 0121 770 4765.

Hermann Kempner. Engineer, born 1871, emigrated to London from Munich in 1939 to join his niece, a daughter of Luise Torsch (née Kempner). Kempner was guardian to Jakob van Hoddis, aka Hans Davidsohn, (German-Jewish poet) between 1922-1939. Information about Kempner's stay in the UK and any of his correspondence concerning van Hoddis are sought for an exhibition in the Centrum Judaicum, Berlin next year. Contact Nicholas Jacobs, 10 Burghley Rd., London NW5 1UE. Tel. 020 7482 2390. Fax 020 7485 4220.

Marianne Schäffer, lived in Berlin, worked for Paul Hirsch at 9 Adams Road, Cambridge in 1938. Please contact Margaret Falconer, 21 Mansionhouse Rd., Edinburgh EH9 1TZ. Tel 0131 667 3285.

Richard Peschek. D.o.b. unknown, may have left Austria in 1930s, last known address 5 The Avenue, London NW6. His or his descendants' whereabouts sought by his curator *absentis* Dr Josef Krist, 1010 Vienna, Liebiggasse 4; Tel +43 4080625; email dr.krist@members.debis.at

Kindertransportee aged 6 when she arrived from Berlin; adopted by non-Jewish family in Hull and given a new name. Now aged 66, she seeks information about her true identity. Any information please contact Marcia Goodman, AJR, 020 7431 6161.

Moshe Wax/Vax. Born April 1927/1928 in Romania, son of Ellya-Laib/Elias and Sara-Golda née Zeidenfeld. Last heard of in hospital in Lübeck in June 1945 following liberation from Bergen-Belsen. Sought by his brother Lazar/Eliezer in USA. Contact British Red Cross International Welfare Dept., 9 Grosvenor Cres., London SW1X 7EJ. Tel 020 7201 5109. BRCS ref. 64173/MCA.

Margot Elizabeth Cooper (née Hirschfeld). Born Berlin 27.3.1920. Last known address in the 1960s: Upper Richmond Road, Richmond, Surrey. Sisters Elizabeth (Sachs) d.o.b. 16.01.1911 who lived in Paris and Gertrude d.o.b. 12.09.1913, died 01.09.1938. Information concerning her or her relatives urgently sought. Please telephone (+44) 020 8908 0582.

Leopold Weiss/Muhammad Asad. Interned as an enemy alien (Austrian) in India between 1939-1945. Would anyone who shared his internment contact Martin Goldenberg, 4 Walden Lodge, 48 Wood Lane, London N6 5UB.

Obituary

Peter Henry Julian Byk

Peter Byk has died aged 71 at his home in Bromley, Kent. Born in 1928 in Berlin, where his father was a successful lawyer, the southern German family paper manufacturing business started his lifelong interest in paper. As a ten-year-old, he arrived in England on a Kindertransport in 1938. He went to Magdalen College School Oxford and gained an exhibition to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in 1946. Later, in 1971, he took an Advanced Business Management Course at Harvard. Having graduated from Cambridge in 1949, Peter went straight into the family business as Managing Director of Swan Mill Paper Company on the death of his two uncles. He had recently celebrated 50 years as Managing Director of Swantex which produces disposable tableware, Christmas crackers and gift wrap. He leaves a highly successful business with a turnover of nearly £30 million per annum and which employs over 300 people in Kent and Wales.

Peter was greatly respected in the trade and was a highly regarded entrepreneur. His interests were walking, reading and politics.

He leaves his wife Eva and three sons; David (who has succeeded him as Managing Director), Andrew and Robert □

Danish Holocaust and Genocide Centre

The latest addition to the Holocaust research community, the Danish Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, has been officially opened by the Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen. The Centre, in Copenhagen, has a staff of 14 including eight researchers and will be a constituent part of the Danish Human Rights Institute. It is financed primarily by Danish Government grants. The Director, Prof Dr Uffe Oestergaard, a European Studies specialist, will spearhead fundraising and ensure that contacts with the academic community are developed and nurtured by inviting foreign academics, prominent in the field of Holocaust and genocide research, to become associated with the work of the Centre.

The first – and senior – researcher to be engaged is Dr Vilhjalmur Vilhjalmsson, an Icelander whose Jewish father was a child survivor in Nazi-occupied Holland and who arrived in Iceland in 1951. Dr Vilhjalmsson was approached by the director to take up the senior research appointment on the strength of his research on the treatment of stateless Jews in Denmark during the Second World War. "My researches revealed that high officials and immigration officers knew what would happen to Jewish refugees to Denmark if they were deported to Germany." Those

researches were conducted against a background of bureaucratic stonewalling in the form of denial of access to Home Office and Immigration Department files until, after a campaign over three years conducted by Dr Vilhjalmsson through the press, he was finally permitted partial access in February last year. On current issues, Dr Vilhjalmsson's hope is that the Institute "...will influence opinion on action against Baltic war criminals living in Latvia and Lithuania who are not being pursued by assisting the Historical Commission in the Baltic."

□ Marion Koebner

National service

Some Israeli women will be able to serve part of their national service in Germany. The women, mostly from Orthodox backgrounds, will teach Judaism and Hebrew to Russian immigrants whose links with Israel it is hoped will be strengthened □

Controversial reconstruction

Plans to restore the Garrison Church tower in Potsdam, where Hitler first assumed power and which was damaged by Allied bombing in 1945, have caused disagreement between local political parties. Those in power favour its restoration as an anti-fascist memorial while their left-wing opponents fear it could become a focus for neo-Nazis □

International Survivors Convention to take place in Buenos Aires

Coinciding with the commemoration of the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 2001, the *Memory of the Holocaust Foundation* in Argentina is planning its first International Survivors Convention in Buenos Aires. The city was an earlier refuge for more than 1,500 Nazi officers, including Adolf Eichmann and Erich Priebke, as well as for almost 8,000 Holocaust survivors. *Memory of the Holocaust Foundation's* main goals are the establishment of the first Spanish-speaking Shoah Education Centre and the first and only Museum of the Shoah in Latin America, catering for a Spanish-speaking population of 450 million.

The Convention is part of a programme to encourage public awareness, in Argentinian and Latin American society, of the dangers of forgetting and repeating and to mobilise support for the construction of the Museum of the Shoah and the creation of official educational programmes by the Argentine and Latin American governments.

Concurrently, the First Latin American Forum on the Shoah will take place in Buenos Aires and some of its programmes will be co-ordinated with those of the International Survivors Convention. President de la Rúa has invited senior political governmental bodies from other Latin American countries. The programme will include visits to the site of the Israeli Embassy which was bombed, a reception attended by government officials, a concert at the Colon Theatre and tours

within Argentina and neighbouring countries.

The Committee of the *Memory of the Holocaust Foundation* counts among its honorary members Elie Wiesel, Ralph Appelbaum (designer of the Washington Holocaust Museum), Simone Veil (former President of the European Parliament and a former French Government Minister), Yehuda Bauer (Emeritus Professor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem) and Israel Singer (General Secretary of the World Jewish Congress).

Further information can be obtained from: Fundacion Memoria del Holocausto, Montevideo 919, Buenos Aires (cp 1019), Argentina. Tel: 0054 11 48113588; Fax 0054 11 8113537; E mail: fumemehol@einstein.com.ar □

Two centuries of family history (continuation)

In Lwowek (Neustadt bei Pinne) a few miles away, visitors to the dance hall unknowingly dance away their Saturday nights on the Jewish burial ground in a 1950s style communal building. How can they know it had once been consecrated ground? No memorial plaque or other clue of an earlier Jewish presence grace the site. Nine generations of Reissners, again our relations through our grandmother, had lived and, in some cases, died in this undistinguished little town. Amongst their number were a rabbi, a trader, a grain merchant, a banker. They reflected the history of their times: Michael Marcus Moses



Gravestone of Clara Köbner

Reissner, a grain merchant and carter, became a naturalised Prussian citizen and subsequently a sub-representative on the council of the Prussian Province of Posen at various times between 1834 and 1844. He died here in 1861. Simon Marcus Reissner, born in 1831 was a veteran of the Prussian wars against Denmark and Austria and died of cholera whilst nursing a comrade in the field. Born in 1865, Leopold Reissner's business was 'aryanised' in 1938 and he was deported to Lodz ghetto (where he died) in October 1941.

Leszno (Lissa) is a somewhat larger town and seems more confident in its interface with the outside world. Until the Second World War, it had a proportionately large Jewish population, as evidenced by the large (and rather ugly) synagogue built in 1626, two decades after Jews first obtained permission to settle in the town. Until restoration work began a few years ago, the building had served as a store for building and other materials. Now the municipal coffers are providing the means to reinstate its former main Jewish place of worship, although there is no Jewish community to use it. The main evidence of Leszno's Jewish past rests in the small Jewish museum where a large number of tombstones – all with Hebrew or Yiddish inscriptions – stand or lie, waiting to be deciphered and then recorded on computer. Here we had wanted to find traces of

grandfather Max's many forebears dating back to the mid-eighteenth century, not least Jakob Koebner, born here in 1744 and father of the founder of the Baptist Movement in Odense (Denmark). Great-grandmother Johanna was born here, as was her father. Many of their cousins were born and buried here.

After visiting Rawicz (Rawitsch), where we looked in vain for any sign of the small town's Jewish history, knowing that at least one branch of our family had been here in the nineteenth century, we made for the provincial capital Wroclaw (Breslau).

Wroclaw has a confident and almost cosmopolitan feel

about it which radiates from the magnificent *rynek* and town hall. As an important city in pre-war Silesia with its university and heavy industry, it boasted two synagogues and Jewish cemeteries until the Nazis decided otherwise. The site of the 'new' synagogue (built in 1872) is now marked by a memorial stone commemorating the arson on *Kristallnacht*, the night of 9/10 November 1938 when Jewish Germany burned. The one hundred practising Jews of present-day Wroclaw, mainly of Polish descent, use the earlier 'Stork' synagogue now undergoing restoration. A plaque in the courtyard testifies to the deportation to extermination camps of Breslau's Jews between 1941 and 1944. Of the two cemeteries, the 'Slesznej' cemetery (named after the street in which it stands), inaugurated in 1856, has survived relatively intact through one of fate's quirks: in 1942, the cemetery was let to a German tree nurseryman and remained so tenanted, and thus untouched, until 1947. It is the largest Jewish cemetery east of the Oder-Neisse line and the dominant inscription language is German. Here, we found Heinrich Köbner, the university bookseller and his wife Laura; Hugo Köbner, a doctor, and his wife Jenny; Clara, who died at age 16, and others new to our family tree. Suddenly, we have a large family who – in death – breathe life into our search for lost roots.

□ Marion Koebner

NEWSROUND

Belgian compensation fund

Belgium's Jewish community is to receive compensation for assets lost by Holocaust victims from a new fund to be financed by the Belgian Government, banks and insurance companies, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*. The fund will also support projects combating antisemitism, racism and violations of human rights.

Israel's secularisation

Introducing civil marriage, ending the ban on Saturday El Al flights and dropping the religious category from identity cards are part of the 'civil revolution' proposed by Israel PM Ehud Barak. His proposals have met with opposition from all sides of the political spectrum.

'Residual' compensation funds

A newly established 'Foundation for the Jewish People', sponsored by the World Jewish Congress, plans to utilise unclaimed restitution funds for community projects and education programmes throughout the Jewish world. The size of funds to be put at its disposal and the use to which these should be put are in dispute.

Auschwitz commemoration ruling

An antisemitic Catholic group will be permitted to commemorate the Poles shot by the SS at a gravel pit on the outskirts of the Auschwitz camp compound. The Polish court ruling adds to other controversial decisions, such as the operation of a discotheque in a former tannery associated with camp atrocities.

Looted art's homecoming

More than eighty works of art, looted by the Nazis, have been returned to their rightful owners, the heirs of Gustav Kirstein, from the city collections of Hanover and Leipzig and from the Federal German Government. The World Jewish Congress' Commission for Art Recovery assisted in the recovery process.

Hitler's favourite film-maker

Plans for a film about Leni Riefenstahl, now 97, are provoking anger and concern in American Jewish circles. Oscar-winning actress Jodie Foster plans to produce and star in the film.

Haider loses

Jörg Haider intended to appeal against his lost libel action against an Austrian newspaper which criticised his trivialisation of concentration camps.

□ MK