

AJR *Information*

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Rabid rabbi

Voltaire saw the Lisbon earthquake, with its 80,000 victims, as disproving the Church-transmitted myth of a beneficent deity. Some Jews have viewed the Holocaust in a similar light, but since Judaism denotes a cultural-ethnic identity as much as it does a religious faith, the number of post-Shoah defectors remained small. For all that, the Shoah placed a well-nigh unsustainable burden on anyone searching for a Divine Plan at work in the universe. Now Israel's former Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef has interpreted the Holocaust as "the punishment for souls who had sinned time and again."

This not only flicks all mourners on the raw but distorts historical reality: the bulk of Shoah victims were religiously observant East European Jews.

Not content with distorting the past, the Ayatollah rabbi is also poisoning the future. His denigration of Arabs as 'snakes' – echoing Nazi slogans about Jewish

Untermenschen – could turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy in which Israel remains an armed camp unable ever to conclude peace with her neighbours □

A Pfefferkorn rant

Reflections on a book by an attention-seeking academic

The question of 'Who is a Jew' has been frequently and inconclusively debated. The question of 'who doesn't want to be a Jew' almost answers itself since lapsed Jews have a habit of turning on their former coreligionists.

Half a millennium ago the apostate Johannes Pfefferkorn helped the Dominican friars to generate a wave of Judeophobia in the Rhineland with allegations that the Talmud was full of anti-Christian blasphemy. Several centuries later another Rhenish Jew, Karl Marx, excoriated Jews as germ carriers of the "spirit of capitalism". Marx's Jewish self-hate was far exceeded by that of Otto Weininger, who regarded Jews (and women) as the lowest form of human life; feeling incapable of transcending his own Jewishness – as Jesus had done – Weininger committed suicide.

Around 1920 the satirists Kurt Tucholsky and Karl Kraus created Herr Wendriner and 'der alte Biach' as risible Jewish hate figures. Simultaneously, activists of the *yevseksia* persecuted rabbis and closed down *chedarim* all over Russia.

Then came the Holocaust in whose aftermath any outright disavowal of Judaism would plainly have been untenable. However, a substitute soon arose. This was anti-Zionism – which appealed to Jews anxious to appear untouched by gut feelings of 'my people right or wrong', and above all to *terribles simplificateurs* of the Left who pilloried Israel as a catspaw of the U.S. in the Middle East.

The latest of these *simplificateurs* is Professor Norman Finkelstein. He was unfortunate in that his *The Holocaust Industry* (Verso, 2000) came out in the UK at around the time Prime Minister Barak was offering unprecedented concessions to the Palestinians – unfortunate because the book repeats the wellworn litany of Israel's 'appalling' human rights record.

Where Finkelstein does break new ground is in his assertion that Holocaust awareness is an artificial construct manufactured by the US and Israeli Governments *after* the Six-Day War to underpin Israel's victory (and with it American dominance in the Middle East). He argues that by equating anti-Zionism with antisemitism, the two have created a

situation in which the pressing of Arab claims can be ruled out of court as antisemitic.

This is an allegation the falsehood of which almost approximates to that of Holocaust denial itself. The slow pace at which awareness of the Holocaust seeped into the world's consciousness can be ascribed to a variety of causes: the pressing needs of postwar reconstruction; the reluctance of survivors to relive traumas by telling their tale (a reluctance compounded by the fear of being disbelieved); the unfathomable enormity of what had happened; the time lapse between the Nuremberg Trials, the publication of the Wannsee Protokoll and the Eichmann Trial; cold war pressures and so forth.

Who, apart from the US and Israeli Governments, are the beneficiaries – in Finkelstein's book – of this artificially created, exaggerated Holocaust awareness?

They are, as it were, the tycoons of the 'Holocaust industry' whom the professorial author bespatters with remarkably unacademic *ad hominem* invective. His hit list includes Edgar Bronfman of the World Jewish Congress, Saul Kagan of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, Rabbi Israel Singer of the World Jewish Restitution Organisation, Simon Wiesenthal and Eli Wiesel.

The aforementioned, and their lawyer accomplices, stand accused of using the Holocaust to blackmail diverse governments, German firms and Swiss banks in pursuit of nefarious political aims as well as of fat salaries.

To make the charge stick, Finkelstein constructs a Marxist model of postwar Jewry, in which a ruling class of 'Holocaust industrialists' manipulate and exploit a proletariat of genuine camp survivors (who include his own mother) and ordinary Jews.

To crown it all, this latterday Pfefferkorn claims that by integrating the Holocaust into the chain of disasters that befell the native Americans, the Armenians, the Rwandans etc, and by querying hugely inflated compensation claims, he mitigates the damage the Holocaust lobby has inflicted on the good name of Jews □

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Profile

Gyorgy Pauk

Born in 1936 in Budapest, Gyorgy Pauk was the only child of a concert pianist mother and a businessman father. His musical talent became apparent when he was only three years old and at five he started learning the violin. He lived with his parents in the Jewish Quarter of Budapest, but in 1942 his father was taken for forced labour in another part of Hungary and in 1944 the family was compelled to move to the ghetto. Shortly thereafter, Gyorgy's mother was deported to Auschwitz in 1944 and died en route. Almost all his other family perished in the Holocaust.

From the age of eight, Gyorgy lived with his grandmother and attributes their survival to Eichmann's preoccupation with other matters – including negotiating with Wallenberg – rather than the execution of his plan to blow up the ghetto. What he certainly remembers is the hunger, fear and cold which were ever-present during those times.

Once the war was over, Gyorgy returned with his grandmother to the family's apartment, went to school, played football and took up the violin again. From the age of 13 he attended the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest where he studied under his revered teacher Professor Zathureczky. Whilst he recalls the years between 1948 and 1956 as the "darkest years of Communism", he also recognises that as a talented young musician he was largely protected from the hardships because his talent was encouraged. He had a musical education "second to none" and experienced a happy childhood.

In 1956, having won the Paganini international violin competition, Gyorgy began to travel abroad and realised that his future was in the West. Whilst in Paris in 1958 for the Jacques Thibaud competition (which he won), he applied for political asylum and lived for three years in Holland, before settling in London in 1961. In 1967 he was granted British nationality. It was Yehudi Menuhin who encouraged him to come to London after hearing the young Gyorgy Pauk play. He also acted as his guarantor.



Gyorgy Pauk

Early in his career Gyorgy was invited by Georg Solti to play in Chicago. At the end of the concert he was invited to the home of an American violin collector who asked him to play some of his instruments. After hearing the talented Pauk play some of his valuable collection, the host asked the young violinist to choose an instrument for himself. This was how Gyorgy Pauk came to acquire the 1714 Massart Stradivarius which he has played ever since.

Gyorgy now juggles his busy international playing schedule, both as a soloist and as a member of a chamber ensemble, with his teaching commitments at the Royal Academy of Music and master classes. He returns to Hungary once a year to perform, it being

important to him to continue the Hungarian violin tradition. Despite his view of Hungary, even today, as a "fascist and antisemitic country", a country which he no longer regards as home, Gyorgy Pauk has accepted the Order of the Hungarian Republic, the highest honour which can be bestowed on a civilian, for his outstanding performances and contribution to education. His music room is filled with photographs of both great and lesser-known figures of the world of music, including one autographed by the composer Witold Lutoslawski.

□ Marion Koebner

French compensation

On 13 July this year, the French Government issued a decree providing for payment of compensation to orphans of parents who were victims of antisemitic persecution.

Compensation is payable to anyone who was under 21 when their mother or father was – during the Occupation – deported from France as a result of antisemitic measures and who died as a result of deportation. The decree specifies certain exclusions.

Compensation payments can be taken in the form of a lump sum of 180,000 FF or an annuity of 3,000 FF per month.

For further information, contact the French Embassy, 020 7201 1000 □

Has art got a heart?

The French differentiate between *succès d'estime* and *succès de scandale*. Over here, an example of the one would be Steven Hawking's widely unread *Brief History of Time* – and of the other, round-the-block queues for *The Graduate* where an actress past the first flush of youth takes off her clothes on stage.

The sort of shocking conduct that today guarantees success on Shaftesbury Avenue has long flourished on the slopes of Parnassus. To start at the very peak: when two of the greatest culture heroes of all time, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, looked for patrons, neither scrupled to place his expertise in designing lethal ordinance at the disposal of war-minded dukes and popes. Albrecht Altdorfer looted a synagogue, Veit Stosz stood accused of counterfeiting, Caravaggio actually killed a man over a disputed tennis score. Paul Gauguin walked out on his wife and numerous children. Picasso set his mistresses at each others' throats in pursuit of artistic copy – as well as of sadistic *frisson*.

If painters had splinters of ice in their hearts, composers almost outdid them. Richard Wagner was a monster in human form. Puccini's womanising drove his wife to distraction, and indirectly caused a servant girl's suicide. Leos Janacek, composer of two deeply felt operas about tragic heroines, was likewise given to serial infidelity, which pushed his spouse to the edge of suicide. Benjamin Britten presided over a 'court' at Aldeburgh, from which he would expel an erstwhile favourite whenever he felt like it, and bestow the epithet 'corpse' on him.

Richard Strauss composed a song dedicated to Goebbels, as well as a cantata commissioned by Emperor Hirohito whose soldiers were wreaking havoc in China. However, Strauss deserves some credit for insisting that the Jew Stefan Zweig's name appear as librettist at the première of *Die Schweigsame Frau*.

With Zweig, we move from music to literature where the outlook, alas, is no brighter. Literati, in fact, revealed quite stupefying irresponsibility in their dealings with suicide and madness. Zweig induced his much younger, second wife to throw her life away in a double suicide (a hubris-laden act in which he was subsequently followed by Arthur Koestler). When Klaus Mann took his own life his father, Thomas, stayed away from the

funeral. As for Ted Hughes one is almost tempted to quote Lady Bracknell's quip that to lose *both* parents shows carelessness; Hughes' wife and mistress *both* committed suicide. T. S. Eliot consigned his disturbed wife to an institution where he never visited her. He was, moreover, both antisemitic and deeply religious – attributes shared (albeit in unequal measure) by Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh. Greene somehow squared acceptance of Papal doctrine with using the wife of his next-door neighbour at the exclusive Albany as his mistress-muse. Waugh served an apprenticeship in snobbery in the Twenties, backed Franco in the Thirties, and while soldiering in the Forties, had nightmare visions of a plebs-ridden postwar Britain.

So much for the *goy* literati. For the Jewish ones we must hop across the pond – where, however, the picture is equally bleak. Norman Mailer is a failed wife murderer and *ersatz* Hemingway. The reclusive J D Salinger aims loaded shotguns at anyone straying near his home. Octogenarian Saul Bellow is on his fifth marriage, and Arthur Miller feels totally alienated from present-day society. He goes so far as to interpret mass tourism as the frantic attempt of millions of value-starved individuals to get away from their own selves!

And who said '*ars longa, vita brevis*'?

□ Richard Grunberger

Club 1943's AGM

Chairman Hans Seelig stated that Club 43's standard of lectures and discussions had been maintained, catering for a discerning audience without being unnecessarily highbrow. Treasurer Ernst Flesch reported that the finances were sound due to the support received from the German Embassy. Refugees from Nazi Germany, not exclusively Jewish, who founded the Association to cater for their cultural needs, would have been astonished to see Club '43 still flourishing in the new century. The original aims had been strengthened, the range of subjects expanded to include the culture and concerns of Britain and Europe. It was disappointing not to see many 'second generation' members, whose interests would be accommodated in the programme of lectures and discussions. Closer association with the AJR would be a welcome innovation, perhaps beginning with some joint lectures. □ Hans Seelig

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Reviews

From dandy to PM

Edgar Feuchtwanger, *DISRAELI*, Arnold, London, 2000, £12.99.

The striking achievements of those refugee scholars from Hitler who became historians at British universities formed the subject of a recent book by Peter Alter, *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*. One of their number, Edgar Feuchtwanger of Southampton University, has followed his study of the Weimar Republic with a book on Disraeli – one recalls that it was the doyen of an older generation of refugee historians, Erich Eyck, who wrote a study of Gladstone, Dizzy's great antagonist.

Disraeli's story is indeed extraordinary: the grandson of Jewish immigrants from Italy, baptised at twelve, he began as a literary dandy and rose to become leader of the Conservative Party and in 1868 Prime Minister. Defying antisemitism, he enjoyed a political career arguably unmatched by any other Jewish-born politician.

Feuchtwanger guides his reader skilfully through the famous milestones: the fiasco of Disraeli's maiden speech in the Commons (1841); his emergence as a leading figure in the Tory party after its split over the Corn Laws; his creation of the idea of 'One Nation' Tory democracy with his programme of electoral reform (1867); his appropriation of Empire, flag and country for the Conservative programme; and his key role at the power-broking Congress of Berlin (1878).

Perhaps the book's strongest interest lies in Disraeli the man, and in his manufacture of his own image. In line with the postmodern fascination with identity as a construct and with the self as self-fashioned, Feuchtwanger claims that for Disraeli, more than for most men, "...identity was not predetermined, but could be constructed and reinvented to suit the circumstances in which he found himself." – a condition far from uncommon amongst politicians.

This leads to an emphasis on image and myth, on slogans and rhetoric and, correspondingly, to a certain downgrading of the objective historical realities that also shaped Disraeli's achievements. Feuchtwanger discusses his relations with the Rothschilds, for example, principally in

the context of attitudes to Judaism, treating rather briefly the loan that enabled the British Government to purchase shares in the Suez Canal Company. Disraeli's attitude to his origins, though fascinating, lacks the historical weight of the Canal, the Imperial lifeline to India and motive for British involvement in the Middle East.

This is a most elegantly written and intellectually engrossing study of a major figure of natural interest to AJR members, though one whose ascent to the highest office would have been inconceivable in their countries of origin.

□ Dr Anthony Grenville

Blue-blood in a brownshirt hell

Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen, *DIARY OF A MAN IN DESPAIR*, Duckworth, 1995, £7.95.

Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen was a German anti-Nazi shot in Dachau on February 16 1945. He wrote topical comments – not really a diary – at various dates between May 1936 and October 1944, when he was arrested. After the war his writings were dug up from their hiding place. This book was published in Germany in 1947, in America in 1970 and in Britain not until 1995.

Why isn't it famous? Probably because the first 60 pages, at least, are off-putting to the English reader. The writer's own membership of the aristocracy is emphasised until it begins to seem that his only objection to Hitler was his humble origin. There is a great deal of philosophising about "mass man". Reck-Malleczewen was a friend of Oswald Spengler, who wrote *The Decline of the West*. Before his death in 1936 Spengler let it be understood that his latest book, being anti-Nazi, was hidden in a Swiss bank. There was no such book; Spengler had omitted to write it, apparently because he was too busy eating. (A whole goose at one go! No wonder he died in his fifties.)

Reck-Malleczewen believed the story about the Swiss bank, and the imaginary book inspired him to some real writing. The reader who persists will find, inside the snob, a decent man. The Kristallnacht made him break off his philosophising, to tell two simple stories about Jewish women. One "was driven from one refuge to the next, until finally, deathly

tired, and beyond wanting to live any more, she simply walked up into the mountains on one of the first freezing nights of this fall. After days of searching, we finally found her; she was dead." Another, too old to walk into the mountains, knew she had been denounced by a Nazi who wanted her flat. With great difficulty, she obtained some cyanide. The friend who brought it to her was a singer. The old woman had one last request. She wanted to hear Brahms' *Vier Ernste Gesänge*. Only after her friend had sung it did she take the poison. Her body was found when the man who wanted her flat impatiently banged at the door.

How much did the ordinary German know? All about the Kristallnacht, because it happened in public. Later Reck-Malleczewen met a man who had seen 30,000 Jews massacred in Russia. "When machine-gun bullets gave out, flame-throwers were used." This cannot have been the only such conversation. And everybody knew what was on the BBC, despite the death penalty for listening. "The news of the Anglo-American landing in Africa ... spread within an hour," Reck-Malleczewen wrote in February 1943. He described the effect on a Bavarian village.

"The local schoolteacher... suddenly and demonstratively began using the old greeting: 'Grüss Gott' instead of 'Heil Hitler'. The district's chief Nazi called a meeting to plead that people for God's sake stop threatening to burn down his house, since he had, after all, only been carrying out orders from the Party."

If Reck-Malleczewen had survived, he would doubtless have explained why he ascribed these good effects to the landings in North Africa (November 7 1942) and not to the German surrender at Stalingrad (January 31 1943). He might have told us what news he had of his son, missing on the Russian front, and who the young man was who gloated over the bombing of Poland. Were they, perhaps, the same person?

The American translator, Paul Rubens, has not done half enough elucidation. He does provide notes about some obscure figures, but does not say (for example) that Emil Jannings was the most famous German film actor of his day. So much of the story is enigmatic, or missing, that we need to know more.

□ Alison MacLeod

Cont.

Birth of a nation

Linda Grant, *WHEN I LIVED IN MODERN TIMES*, Granta, £9.99. (paperback).

Linda Grant won the Orange Prize for fiction and ran straight into an accusation of plagiarism in *The Times*. Despite her English name, her focus is refreshingly different from the conventional novel of Middle England. Not the towns and villages of the Home Counties, but the streets of Tel Aviv: Allenby, Mapu, Hayarkon; her characters not Mrs Dalloways and Mrs Minivers, but a young Jewish girl in search of her identity.

Evelyn Sert, granddaughter of Latvian immigrants and a Jewish courtesane (sic) based in Soho, feels oppressed and alienated.

"Inside my head the kings and queens of England were stacked like pancakes, but no-one I was related to had set foot on English soil till 45 years ago. What could an immigrant child like me be except an impersonator?"

She decides to leave this country with its long history and go to Palestine where all is still to play for. Masquerading as a Christian tourist, she lands at Haifa. The Jewish Agency directs her to a kibbutz in Galilee. After a stint at menial jobs, she makes for Tel Aviv, the white city designed by refugees from the Bauhaus. Here she meets a variety of types – *Yekke*, *Sabra*, Greek and a mysterious young man who becomes her lover. She adds another complication to her troubled identity by posing in the daytime as an English hairdresser, with a fictitious husband in Tiberias. This device gives her access to the views of the English army-wives.

Linda Grant's senses are ever alert to the sights, smells and sounds of places and she is at her best in describing Tel Aviv, the originally white city, later turning brown through neglect, and the violence-charged atmosphere of the last days of the Mandate.

Sometimes she packs in whole swathes of historical fact, and here her touch is less sure. Her characters, particularly the English ones, then become mouthpieces of particular prejudices rather than fully rounded human beings. However, where she writes with personal involvement her novel touches many chords and, despite some improbabilities of plot, makes engrossing reading. □ Martha Blend

Eurydice among the rednecks

Tennessee Williams, *ORPHEUS DESCENDING*, Donmar Warehouse.

Orpheus' is, paradoxically, Williams' earliest and latest play; it was "on the workbench", as he says, for nearly 20 years from 1940 and so combines the author's young, rebellious heart with his mature understanding. Williams describes the play as "on its surface, a tale of a wild-spirited boy who wanders into a conventional community of the South and creates the commotion of a fox in a chicken coop." Calling the community 'conventional' must have been the theatrical understatement of the century; the tyrannical men of the small town are possessed by murderous racism equalled only by their violent misogyny and jealousy of everything joyful. To their emotionally starved womenfolk, the wild-spirited boy Val presents a breath of fresh air in a foetid dungeon. Val's employer's wife, Lady, starts a torrid affair with him. He senses danger and suggests they run away together but she, craving revenge for the murder of her father, delays their escape – with fatal consequences.

The parallel of Val and Lady's story with the ancient Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is striking and enriches the modern tale; Lady, as Eurydice, is a prisoner of Death in the Underworld and Val, like Orpheus, comes to rescue her; Eurydice can be saved only if she does not look back, but she does and is taken by Death; Lady also 'looks back', to the past, to exact revenge and is killed. In both stories the indifference of the gods enables evil to triumph over good.

This play, perhaps Williams' best, is directed imaginatively and with speed by Nicholas Hytner; Stuart Townsend plays the innocently-sexy Val with total conviction and a welcome spice of self-mockery; Helen Mirren offers us a miraculous transformation from a middle-aged frump to a young woman radiant with sexual satisfaction in a deeply moving performance as the 'older woman' hopelessly in love with a young man. All in all, an unforgettable experience. □ Andrew Herskovits

Intellectual Migration and Cultural Transformation

The movement of ideas from German-speaking Europe to the Anglo-Saxon world

An international conference to be held at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton from 25-28 September 2000

The enforced migration of writers and intellectuals from National Socialist-ruled Europe has been the subject of intensive historical research.

This conference will extend the focus by analysing the impact of intellectual migration on divergent social and cultural environments. The exodus of the Vienna Circle serves as a model for the intricate relations between individual biographies, institutional histories and theoretical constructs, which accompanied the process of reintegration.

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Letters to the Editor

RAF CZECH PERSONNEL

Sir – Whilst you never miss an opportunity to praise the non-combatant Pioneer Corps, you may not be aware that half of the flying personnel of the RAF 311 Czech Bomber Squadron were Jews. Some, however, registered themselves as of no religious affiliation, based on the simple fact that as citizens of the *Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren* they were technically German citizens and, if shot down over Germany, were murdered.

Six months ago the Czech Government decreed that they should receive some £1,500 for wartime services. However, as the Czech Commission does not communicate with the Czech Defence Ministry, nor react to testimonials sent to them, payment is not forthcoming. Maybe they are hoping that the survivors, now in their eighties, will not live much longer and qualify for payment. Anyway, one third of them perished either in combat or training.

Name & address supplied

WE HAVE ARRIVED!

Sir – When I saw the picture of the Queen visiting the Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum (*July 2000*), I said to myself: "We've made it!" and a tear ran down my cheek. During the 1950s, I worked at the AJR with Dr Reichmann, Dr Rosenstock and Dr Adelheid Levy and feel proud of what has been achieved.

London NW3

Alice Schwab

GERMAN PENSION

Sir – Could someone please explain to a financial and mathematical idiot like me how the conversion of the Deutschmark to Euro can possibly influence the amount of the monthly pension? As far as I am aware, the relationship between the two currencies is cast in stone and cannot vary by more than about 2%. Perhaps the exchange rate between Sterling and the Deutschmark/Euro could be a factor?

Arundel

F Goldberg

West Sussex

PITFALLS OF POLITICS

Sir – I fully agree with Mr Eric Sanders (*August letters*) about the advantages of a system of proportional representation. One matter needs clarification. It is time the canard about the endless changes of Government in Italy and the political instability they caused was laid to rest. In fact for about 45 years after the war, Italy had the most stable government among European democracies. The over fifty "changes of government" were nothing more than reshuffles. The same coalitions, the same names appeared again and again. Members of government were busy playing musical chairs with their posts, swapping them, returning to them. The emphasis might be at times slightly more to the right or to the left but the policies remained fundamentally the same and there was no new effective opposition. To adapt an old saying: "The more it changed the more it remained the same".

London NW11

Eric Conrad

YIDDISH ABC

Sir – In the important and most serious matter of explaining the source of the Yiddish expression 'Hoben chaisek tsu', Mr Grunberger is wrong. 'Tsu' and 'hoben' are clearly from the German 'to have'. 'Chaisek' comes from the ancient Hebrew root for desire. In no Slavic language does anything similar exist. I believe this misleading disinformation was introduced only for the purpose of testing his readers' attention.

Kiryat Shmonah, Israel

Fedor Schon

MUSEUM BLUES

Sir – I recently visited the Imperial War Museum with the express purpose of seeing the newly opened Holocaust exhibition.

After purchasing my ticket for entry to the museum I made my way up to the Holocaust Exhibition but was told that I needed a (free) timed ticket for entry for which I had to return to the main entrance to the museum. After returning to the waiting area outside the Holocaust exhibition I noticed that many others

had experienced the same problem. There must be a better way of finding out how to get into the Holocaust Exhibition!

Sydney, Australia

Martin Jaul

MANX ENIGMA

Sir – Your correspondent H Schragenheim seems troubled by the use of the word 'humankind' instead of 'mankind'. Whether he speaks tongue in cheek or seriously I do not know, but I suspect he is unnerved by the modern habit of showing consideration for women rather than treating them as afterthoughts. He would probably choke on his cholent to hear those of us (men) who are not affronted by the use of 'God of our ancestors' instead of 'fathers' or the (old German) practice of rendering 'Adonai' by 'Eternal' rather than 'Lord'.

It is easy to mock attempts at sensitivity to people's feelings, but it is easier to acknowledge them. Suppose the generic were to have been 'womankind'. Would Mr Schragenheim have felt included? I doubt it.

Bushey Heath
Herts

Barry Hyman (or Hy-person)

ON THE FENCE

Sir – Istvan Szabo's film 'Sunshine' (*August issue*) has many fencing episodes. It is not, perhaps, well-known that towards the end of the 19th century Hungarian Jews became very keen on sports. The first Hungarian Olympic champions were mostly Jews who excelled in sabre fencing. Endre Kabos won the gold medal for fencing. At the 1936 Berlin Olympics, ten gold medals were won by Hungary, three of them by Jews. The Jewish Hungarian women's fencing champion Ilona Elek won the gold in 1936, whilst Helen Mayer took the silver. According to the Nuremberg laws, Mayer, too, was a Jew, and although living in the USA, she competed in the German team.

Attila Petschauer, another Jewish fencer, also won several gold and silver Olympic medals, although not at the Berlin games.

London NW3

Gerald Holm

NON-JEWISH RESCUERS

Sir – In response to my search notice (*August issue*), a lady telephoned me saying she was one of 30 people rescued by one person. She did not leave her

name and I may have made a mistake when noting her Westcliff telephone number. With apologies for my carelessness, would she please contact me again as I am most interested in her story.

Sheffield

Agnes Grunwald-Spier

LOWER-CASE LIBERAL?

Sir – If you take it upon yourself to write about the despicable Elias Canetti, it is regrettable that you got the name of the eminent painter Marie-Louise von Motesiczky wrong. However, you are in good company as Canetti did not bother to get the name right in all but half a century.

London NW11

Doris Winter

Sir – Black mark for an Editor who writes badly, yet considers himself superior to Nobel Prize Winner Elias Canetti (*August* issue).

London N2

Peter Frankl

ENGLISH AS SHE IS WRIT

Sir – I wonder whether Mr Ernest Brown (*July letters*) realised that he picked on a very common hot potato i.e. English trade and commerce nicking words from French trying to sound 'posh' to impress the English bumpkins. 'Suite' – that which follows, suits, goes with, fits into – from *sivre* = to follow. In this case, into a room or with a set of other pieces of furniture.

There are other linguistic scandals such as the mysterious jargon of the wine aficionados. A wine can be *sec* (dry), it can have *fleur* (flower fragrance).

Grimsby

EH Kenneth

NE Lincs

SHABBAT SERVICE IN AUSTRIA

Sir – During our recent stay in the spa town of Baden (near Vienna), which had a flourishing Jewish community before the *Anschluss*, we were able to attend a Friday Evening Shabbat Service with a lovely Kiddush in the restored Bethaus next to the main synagogue which is still derelict. Although there was barely a *minyán*, a visiting cantor came specially from Vienna to conduct the prayers, making it a memorable and nostalgic occasion. Any visitors from abroad are very welcome.

London NW2

A Dutch

Queen Mother honours Free French old soldiers

AJR member Rolf Weinberg was a member of a delegation of Free French Forces who, to mark the 60th anniversary of their foundation on 18 June 1940 by General Charles de Gaulle, were invited to a reception by the Queen Mother at Clarence House. They congratulated Her Majesty on reaching her 100th birthday.

"The Queen Mother spoke in fluent French," Rolf Weinberg reported, "and had a smile and personal word for each of us." On being informed that Rolf had volunteered to join the Free French Forces in Uruguay, in a remarkable feat of memory she asked whether he had known the British Ambassador in Montevideo at the time, Sir Millington Drake. He confirmed that, because of the naval battle in December 1939 which brought the destruction of the German battleship *Graf Spee*, he did indeed.

The previous week Rolf Weinberg had addressed an audience of eight hundred, including members of the French diplomatic corps, Patrick Churchill and



Rolf Weinberg, left, and other members of the Free French Forces at a reception given by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Air Vice-Marshal John Herrington, at the French Ambassador's residence. He recalled the important contribution made by the Jews who had joined General de Gaulle and his forces. □ MK

Finding common ground

The overriding importance of reaching a consensus and avoiding confrontation within the Jewish community was the core theme of a talk given in London to Anglo-Jewry's think-tank, Jewish Policy Research, by Malcolm Hoenlein, director of the influential New-York based Presidents' Conference. The community can contain differences within it, he said, but stress should be placed on tolerance and not on issues that divide us. Indeed, the recognition of differences acted to strengthen the community. "Finding common ground is more important than ever," is Hoenlein's view.

Warning that there was a Haider in every European country today, Hoenlein believed that it was a "critical time to assess where the Jewish community is going." Most European Jewish communities had an outdated governing structure of World War II vintage and faced a crisis in both lay and professional leadership.



Malcolm Hoenlein talking to JPR in London.

The movement towards globalisation was inevitably having its effect too but, perhaps surprisingly, Jews were well behind others in the use of the electronic media. Merely to seek a common identification through remembrance of the Holocaust was certainly insufficient.

Challenges to the Jewish communities in the European Union included demographic decline, apathy and indifference, and lack of Jewish unity. Taking the US experience as a guide, Jewish interests in the EU should seek to exercise power and be seen as a main player on economic and social issues. Having learned what he termed "the lesson of silence," they should never be silent again.

The Jewish people had a lot to be proud of and this generation had witnessed miracles that older generations could not have imagined. It was necessary to extend the interests of our community, to broaden the base of leadership and to train a new generation of professionals. Young people had to be attracted back into the community by experiencing all the positive aspects of being a Jew, rather than the negative.

"Unity is not the same as homogeneity," Hoenlein concluded, "but it does mean that we have to respect one another."

□ Ronald Channing

REMEMBERING FOR THE FUTURE 2000

A thousand delegates witnessed the opening in London of the third *Remembering for the Future 2000* conference by its founder and chairman Dr Elisabeth Maxwell who welcomed the participants to one of the largest gatherings of its kind ever held. A French Christian of Huguenot origin, Dr Maxwell recalled that it had been 58 years to the day since Parisian Jews were rounded up by French police, to be held captive in Drancy prior to entrainment for Auschwitz, with only a handful surviving.

The conference reconvened in Oxford where 280 papers were presented and discussed by 600 leading scholars from Israel, USA, UK and other European countries, Japan, Australia and South America and specialists in the study of genocide and the Holocaust □

Recollections

Nicky Gavron, newly elected Deputy Mayor of London, related how her mother, as a Jewish child, was stopped from participating in the opening ceremonies at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Aged 16, she was sent to London on her own; her grandparents remained hidden in Berlin throughout the war but other family members perished in the camps. Historian of the Holocaust, Prof Sir Martin Gilbert, stressed the significance of written testimonies and memoirs remaining on the record to be available to future scholars, together with testimonies on video.



Dr Samuel Pizar addressing the opening plenary session in London of *Remembering for the Future, 2000*.

Samuel Pizar, an international lawyer and a camp survivor, recalled that 9,000 French police and gendarmes divided into teams of three or four had systematically arrested 12,884 Jews in Paris. Led by a fascist cabal around Marshal Pétain, the Vichy authorities also rounded up Jews within their area of control. Dr Pizar pointed to the uniqueness of French complicity – these actions being carried out by the French authorities alone. However, 1,800 people were awarded the title of 'righteous gentile' in recognition of the

survival of the majority of French Jewry. Nicholas Winton, saviour of many Czech *Kinder*, added his plea to "work for a common denominator between all human beings and to help one's fellow man" □

Remembering *shtetl* life

Prof Yaffa Eliach, a child survivor from Lithuania and now an historian, delivered her keynote address on retaining knowledge of the vanished world of the *shtetl*.



Prof Yaffa Eliach delivering a keynote address on 'the bridge between a vanished past and a safe future'.

With the continuing destruction of records and other traces of former Jewish communities throughout Eastern Europe, a responsibility was placed on Jews living in other countries, including Israel, to perpetuate their memory. As the Jewish people were the Holocaust's "ultimate victims", it was incumbent on future generations "to learn the proper lessons of the Holocaust and to close the gates to genocide and the suffering of humanity."

Delegates dispersed into a number of panel discussions covering memorialisation, survivors' testimony, the legacy of memory to descendants, rescuers, restitution, Kindertransport, victims and perpetrators, and Holocaust education □

Restitution and testimony

The well-attended, though poorly chaired, discussion on 'Current Issues of Restitution', from which the press was excluded, developed into a passionate debate between former slave labourers and members of the Claims Conference. While Claims Conference representatives had been involved in the negotiations leading to the recent agreement with the German Government for compensation to both forced and slave labourers for the Third Reich, the former slave labourers were aggrieved at not having been represented in the confidential negotiations – in which the US Government and American Jewish organisations were. They also opposed any implication that the burdens of forced labour could be equated with the virtual

sentence of death passed on Jewish slave labourers, and they objected to the negotiated payment (limited as it will be to £5,000 per person) being made in two instalments.

An American lawyer involved in the litigation from an early stage cautioned that, like any other legal settlement, no funds would be paid out until the eligibility of the recipients had been established. Unfortunately, a number of those claiming to have been slave labourers had no such entitlement.

In the panel 'From Living Memory to History, the use of Survivors' Testimony', a British historian and an American psychiatrist discussed why historians needed to evaluate testimonies rather than accept them at face value. Survivors often believed there to be a hierarchy of suffering in which their experiences ranked low and were reluctant to provide a testimony. Survivors may be selective and omit events they regret or include events which put them in a more favourable light. Events may not even have registered as one way to survive was to close one's mind. □ FB

Kindertransport and memory

Kindertransportees Bertha Leverton, Bea Green and David Jedwab discussed the effect of mass exodus of unaccompanied children on them and on their descendants. With a universal blueprint unattainable, each Kind related his or her own experiences and heartaches.

At the panel on 'Transmission of Memory and Legacy to Descendants', Helen Epstein, author of *Children of the Holocaust*, considered as the spiritual foundation of the second generation movement, gave an interesting and down-to-earth address. Anne Karpf, however, who wrote *The War After*, presented a dissenting voice in taking the view that the Holocaust was being turned into an industry (though disavowing sympathy for the more extreme views of Norman Finkelstein), and deprecated the tendency to "overdo the Holocaust thing". □ DJ

Festival of film

Throughout the week of the conference, a special season of films and discussions exploring the

Ambitious conference in London and Oxford

Ronald Channing reports

legacy of the Holocaust in an age of genocide, was presented at the ICA Gallery in Central London. Organised by Nitza Spiro, director of the Spiro Ark, working in consultation with film-makers and festival organisers Luke Holland and Judy Ironside, the programme presented a wide spectrum of films. Among them were Luke Holland's recent production *I Was a Slave Labourer*, *Kapo* from Israel, *Abraham's Gold* from Germany, and *Rosenzweig's Freedom* which deals with right-wing extremism in a reunified Germany □

'Lying and denying'

Prof Deborah Lipstadt, whose accusations against David Irving, in her book *Denying the Holocaust*, of racism, antisemitism and historical falsification, were vindicated in their entirety by the High Court, was joined by



Prof Deborah Lipstadt discussing 'Denial and the Irving Trial', with Prof Yehuda Bauer of Yad Vashem, right, and BBC legal correspondent Joshua Rozenberg who took the chair.

Prof Yehuda Bauer of Yad Vashem and Prof Philippe Sands, an international lawyer particularly concerned with crimes against humanity, at a panel discussion on 'Lying and Denying' at the ICA Gallery.

Deborah Lipstadt stressed that had she or her publisher Penguin not decided to contest the libel action brought against them, in which she described David Irving as a "Holocaust denier", the book would have had to be withdrawn and Irving's view of the Holocaust "would have been recognised as legitimate." In her view, the verdict handed down earlier this year went "far further than the five pages in my book."

The trial did not put the "veracity of the Holocaust" on trial. Rather it was Irving's "twists" of the facts to fit a "neo-Nazi racist agenda". The defence proved that Irving was a man who "bends the truth", who knowingly lies to support his own agenda and demonstrated that he was a racist and antisemite. No eye-witnesses

were called to testify, the possibility of cross examination being considered too burdensome; rather it was left to the historians. The defence were also granted access to Irving's diaries and his collection of videotapes, which demonstrated his attachment to neo-Nazis.

Prof Yehuda Bauer considered why people were motivated to deny the event of the Holocaust. In 1933 Hitler reportedly described the impending genocide against the Jews as "a great chapter in history that would never become known". The Nazis were proud of their murderous actions, but nevertheless sought to prevent the Allies acquiring knowledge of it.

Today denial was centred in the USA, with Canada, Austria and the Arab countries prominent. What all deniers have in common is a wish to destroy the liberal democracies, to which end their activities are concentrated. Prof Bauer advised that the stand against denial should be active, not passive □

Genocide studies institute launched

Founder Director of Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre in Nottinghamshire, Stephen Smith, working with his brother James, launched a new initiative to study the history and causes of the crime of genocide. To be known as 'Aegis', their new genocide prevention research institute has garnered the support of a number of leading Holocaust scholars and, though a separate operation from Beth Shalom, draws on their five years' experience and astonishingly rapid progress in promoting Holocaust education.

While building Beth Shalom in 1994, the massacre of the Tutsis in Rwanda left them helpless and unable to do anything, said Stephen Smith. With the 'ethnic cleansing' of Kosovo, people of good will wished to respond, but did not know how. Out of this need grew the concept of Aegis, to bring together researchers into genocide, establish educational programmes and raise public awareness. A long-term, concentrated effort was required to ascertain the consequences of ordinary people continuing to do nothing – some would be the victims. To value every human life and to care for all humankind meant that we had to try to understand and seek solutions □

Auschwitz Jewish Centre

Dr Jonathan Webber, a member of the Auschwitz Museum council, reported that a Jewish centre was to be opened in Auschwitz in September this year, an addition to the existing Catholic and German centres. He appealed for tolerance to be shown for the memorials of all religious persuasions, provided they showed "a dignified manner," and suggested that the erection of individual tombstones at Auschwitz



Dr Jonathan Webber appealed for tolerance

could be permitted. Dr Webber recommended that a European Holocaust body should find and maintain Holocaust sites and encourage remembrance. Improved laws of asylum were also required to rescue people from any threat of genocide □

Common experience

Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the London Assembly, addressed the closing session of RFTF 2000 in Central London and applauded the spirit shown by survivors of the Holocaust. He observed that, "people came here to work and to keep London's ethnic diversity alive." Remembering his own upbringing as the son of "refugees" from the Caribbean, he recalled his parents' friendship with Jews and the Irish who shared a common experience as ethnic minorities.

He paid tribute to Sir Sigmund Sternberg, the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn and other survivors for their determination to rebuild their lives in a democratic and multi-cultural city. Pointedly, he recalled the two biggest crimes against humanity, the African slave trade on which Britain's industrialisation and prosperity was founded, and the Holocaust, describing the concentration camps as "monstrous perversions of human progress" □

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

BENDER. Edgar Bender, born in Frankfurt/Main in 1920, died in Cambridge on 17 July. Sadly missed by his wife Anneliese and family and friends.

GUNZ. Susan Gunz passed away peacefully in Toronto on 21 July. Sadly missed by daughter Evelyn, son-in-law Roger Reynolds, brother and sister-in-law Ernest and Lotte Jacob and family.

KLUGMANN. Else Klugmann (née Mayer), born Frankfurt/Main, passed away peacefully on 17 July aged 93. She will be sadly missed by sister Hilde, daughter Margot, son-in-law Freddie, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, family and friends. We will always remember her with great love and affection.

SACHS. Jakob Sachs (formerly Leipzig) died 13 June 2000. Devoted husband of Ruth, and devoted father of Bianca, Benjamin and Leonard.

WEISS. Margaret 'Muli' Weiss, former deputy matron of Rokefield, the Jewish Blind Society Home for the Blind in Surrey, has passed away. Born Bratislava in 1911, survived three years in Auschwitz and death march to Belsen to join uncle in England after the war. Her warmth and humanity lightened the stay of Rokefield's residents for 21 years prior to retirement. She will be missed by her many friends and family.

Personal

Lady, 52, divorced, journalist, living in Germany, speaks 6 languages, wishes to find new partner 55-63 for partnership. Letter with photo please to AJR Information, Box no.1260.

Viennese lady living in Northumberland wishes to visit the Day Centre and attend the AJR concert in October. Anyone willing to offer hospitality please contact Marcia Goodman, AJR Head Office, 020 7431 6161.

CLASSIFIED

LINK Psychotherapy Trust have planned a further meeting for intergenerational dialogue for Sunday 24 September 2000, 10am to 3pm, at 73 Fortune Green Road, NW6, for former Kindertransportees and their second and third generation offspring. Another meeting for intergenerational dialogue could be offered to include people with other experiences than the Kindertransport if enough people are interested. Further details from Ruth Barnett 020 7431 0837.

Continental Jewish Club, 60+, established 14 years, monthly meetings. For further details telephone 020 8554 0443

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Societies

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

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SEARCH NOTICES

Sylvia Kalson (now deceased) from Hull/Grimsby area. Would anyone who knew her at the Jewish Hospital in Stepney in mid-1930s please contact Leon & Alida Steinfeld, 47 Prestonville Court, Dyke Road, Brighton, East Sussex. BNI 3UG.

Harry Bryant (formerly Rosenstiel) or anyone knowing where he may be contacted. Please contact Margaret Rosenthal, c/o Magnolia Court Nursing Home, 181 Granville Road, London NW2 2LH.

Samuel Gonzwa, born Czestochowa 1897, lived in Frankfurt/Main from 1918 to 1939. Meta Roseneil (née Gonzwa) seeks any survivors with this family name. Reply to 40 Ardmore Lane, Buckhurst Hill, IG9 5SA.

Julius Edelstein, born 9.11.1882 in Kummetschen, Kreis Pillkallen, E. Prussia. China and glass wholesaler, proprietor of factory called "Edelstein", in Küps, Bavaria from 1919-1932, registered in Berlin, Alexandrinenstraße 95/96. In May 1939 census, personally registered in Berlin-Schöneberg, Augsburger Straße 74. Before his deportation, in Berlin-Willmersdorf, Güntzelstraße 62. He was deported to Riga on 27.11.1942 on the 7th Transport. Thereafter, reported missing. His daughter (or sister?) is Ms Marianne Wald née Edelstein. She emigrated to London, from where she tried to regain possession of the china factory from the German and Allied authorities in 1948/49. Researcher seeks information on the whereabouts of relatives of Julius Edelstein or Marianne Wald. Confidentiality guaranteed. Please contact in English or German: Mr Jens R. Christ, c/o London First Centre, 1 Hobhouse Court, Suffolk Street, London SW1Y 4HH. Tel 020 7665 1577, fax 020 7925 2022, email jchrist@lfc.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS
SEPTEMBER 2000

- Mon 4 **Charles Dreyfus MA:**
The Crusades. Club 43.
7.45pm.
- Mon 11 **Lesung des schweizer Schriftstellers Franz Hohler** (in German).
Joint meeting with Swiss Embassy (at Belsize Square).
Club 43. 7.45pm.
- Mon 18 **Geoffrey Ben-Nathan MA:** The Mayoral campaign debacle.
Club 43, 7.45pm.
- Mon 25 **Joy Puritz:** Elisabeth Schumann - portrait of a beloved singer (with illustrations).
Club 43. 7.45pm.

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

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

Art Notes

Whether intellectual power has much to do with **Tate Britain's Intelligence: New British Art 2000** depends on your taste in conceptual art. Certainly it takes wit and energy to summon up three walls full of names of everyone you've ever met or can remember meeting, as **Douglas Gordon** has done. But – a video of two men crawling beneath each other's legs? Or the semi-literate outpourings of wall-to-wall fury in another text installation?

Martin Creed's one-inch cube of masking tape stuck on the wall, like a blob of wood the builders forgot to remove, is possibly the nadir of the show. Moving nearer to get a better look I was reproved by a security-conscious guard who felt I was too close for comfort. I moved on to the participative art of **Bob and Roberta Smith**, whose coloured squares, oblongs and rectangles all contain a brief message to the world, to which they invite you to contribute. So the silent majority can spew out its anger against Tony Blair or William Hague, call for the repeal of the death penalty or for China to free Tibet. You can have your say, and the Smiths will put it up for you against a colourful background, just like teacher did when you were a kid.

Sarah Lucas' Life's a Drag Organs consists of two burnt-out cars in which cigarettes are piled deeply into the chassis, creating a fusion of two killers. I admired **Julian Opie's** reductive, vinyl outlines for their witty commentary on how we are influenced by the immediacy of cartoon and pop art. Most of his faces have surprised dots for eyes beneath black eyebrow lines or else circles for heads. Opie shows us a simple solidity in his work which mocks the way we dispense with character for style. They are clever pieces that evoke languid humanity in all its ease and dexterity. **Yinka Shonibare's Vacation 2000** family of astronauts en route for some interplanetary holiday, whose spacesuits are made from vivid African textiles, demonstrate the slow deliberateness of divers or astronauts in an eternity of space or sea. Like Opie's faceless nonentities, we are faced with their bewilderment at entering the technological space of the 21st century.

For all its little digs and hilarity, con-



Julian Opie: *Installation*.

ceptual art often breaks new ground with its potential for experiments in sights and sounds denied previous generations of artists whose chosen media were inhibited by the orthodoxy of their times. Sound installations or videos such as **Gillian Wearing's** intensely personal *Prelude 2000*, a black and white single film of a doomed young street drinker, work very well. The film offers a touching and penetrating view of a tragic young woman's life and death on the hinterland of society.

Israeli artist **Moish Sokal's** watercolours at the **Manor House Society, East of Eden**, until October 27 also offer bold colour, plenty of symbolism and a sense of *déjà vu*. Largely stylised or over-romanticised, such as his repetitive portrayals of Bedouin on horseback, his work is expressive, vital and easy on the eye, notably *Silent Prayer* and *Into the Alleyways*.

Since *The Bed* is the new chair in the artist's lexicon, **Erich Fischl** has certainly made good use of his in his latest exhibition at the **Gagosian Gallery** in London's Heddon Street. The bed largely remains in the background in his descriptive essays of lust, love and post-coital reflection. From the baying dog to the girl performing the yogic Plough on a red and white spattered chair, his paintings introduce the mood play of light and shade always hinting at some interior darkness. The anatomy of the figures is sometimes incongruous but the white bed in the background always retains a mysterious life of its own. Fischl's unusual watercolours are like free-floating forms seen underwater where movement is enhanced. □ *Gloria Tessler*

Berlin's Jewish Museum re-opens next year

Berlin's Jewish Museum plans to re-open in September 2001 with its permanent exhibition, a journey through German-Jewish history and

culture from its earliest days to the present, taking in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Emancipation, the Imperial Reich, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and the postwar period. The collection will reflect the history of the Jews, not only in Berlin, but in Germany as a whole.

Tours of the empty Museum building are being interrupted until technical refurbishment is completed next spring, though the Garden of Exile and the Holocaust Tower will be accessible. A film (in German with English subtitles) exploring the whole the building, will be shown every 15 minutes and entrance is free.

By the end of June, 200,000 people had already visited the Museum which is preparing for half a million or more visitors a year when it re-opens. Its director, Michael Blumenthal, emphasises that "at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the largest Jewish Museum in Europe is being built in the heart of Germany."

The original Berlin Jewish Museum – in the Oranienburgerstrasse – was opened in 1933, shortly before the *Machtübernahme*. It was closed down by the Gestapo in 1938 and its collection was confiscated. During the 1970s and 1980s, the City of Berlin made various moves towards rebuilding a new Jewish Museum. In 1988, 50 years after the closure, the architect Daniel Libeskind won a competition and designed the present spectacular building. □ *MK*

SB is on holiday.

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AJR Reports

PLAYWRIGHT DIANE SAMUELS MEETS THE KINDER

Author of the highly acclaimed stage play *Kindertransport*, Diane Samuels, met members of the Kindertransport face to face during a KT-AJR group meeting and luncheon at the AJR Day Centre in West Hampstead.

Kindertransport was first performed at the Cockpit Theatre in 1993, in New York the following year, in the West End and Watford in 1996, as well as on Radio 4. The play has since gained success in Germany, Austria, South Africa, Japan, Australia and Israel.

Diane emphasised that though her Liverpool-Jewish family had no direct connection with the *Kindertransport*, they had many refugee friends. Having joined in the first ROK reunion in 1989, she was inspired by Bertha Leverton's book *They Came Alone* in the following year and set out to write a play explaining to the children's generation what had happened to their parents.

Most experiences go unrecorded and



Diane Samuels, author of 'Kindertransport', speaking to the Kinder at the AJR Day Centre.

would become lost, but the theatre could perform a special role in what she described as "crystallising experience." Fascinated with the experiences of ordinary people, Diane dealt with the consequences of the separation of parents and children. She took extra pride in having written a play which "works for people from the age of eight upwards".

□ RDC

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Brighton and Hove

Tapping feet could be heard as Alf Keiles regaled his audience on the theme of Jewish involvement in the world of jazz and popular music. He traced the music from its beginnings amongst the American Negro slaves in the late eighteenth century to the development of small itinerant groups of musicians in the industrial cities of what is now the USA. Then came the greats of jazz such as Scott Joplin and his contemporaries and the beginnings of the big band sound of the 1920s and 1930s when Jewish musicians such as Ted Lewis, Benny Goodman and Woody Herman had such a profound influence. Some of the old and almost forgotten melodies from tracks taken from the first cylinders, 78s, LPs and, finally, CDs illustrated the talk.

□ Frank Goldberg

The next meeting will be on Monday 18 September at 10.45 when Aubrey Milstein will speak on 'My life in the Haganah'.

South London

At an informal meeting and purely for pleasure, various members brought along

tapes and CDs of music which they had enjoyed and wanted to share. Laura Robinson led the way with a mixture of classical, Yiddish and light music. Another member delighted listeners with some extracts from Joyce Grenfell's recorded work.

□ Ruth Leggett

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14 September at 2pm when Dr Jo Reilly of Southampton University and the Wiener Library will talk on 'Non-Jewish responses to the 1930s refugee crisis.'

Bournemouth

Nearly thirty members gathered at the home of Mrs Sasha Abrahams to hear Cliff and Suzy Ellis talk very knowledgeably about astrology. Their presentation was both fascinating and, at times, very funny. Explanations of the signs of the zodiac generated considerable interest and amusement to all present who also enjoyed the tea and refreshments provided by the hostess.

□ Mark Goldfinger

Manchester

John Chillag, Secretary of Leeds HSFA, spoke to a fascinated audience on the origins of documents evidencing the Holocaust. Seeing the documents of the

Nazi era, poignant reminders of the horrors of the time, made one question how such materials had survived. John Chillag, himself a survivor of great trauma during the Nazi time, fielded numerous questions from the audience. He is to be congratulated on the publicity work in which he is now so active. □ Werner Lachs

Pinner

Despite the chosen day being the first really wet day for some time, the garden party – the second in a tradition started last year – still took place. Thanks to Vera Feldman, who opened her home for the



Pinner indoor garden party. Left to right: Alf Keiles, Susie Silbermann, John Silbermann, Esther Keiles.

occasion, an indoor tea party complete with scones with cream and jam, cakes and strawberries, was enjoyed by the many members who came to meet and talk with friends. Unconfirmed reports circulate that some people only had one piece of cake!

□ Paul Samet

At the next meeting on 7 September at 2pm, Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith will talk about how the Leitz family, of Leica camera fame, helped many Jews during the Nazi period.

Surrey

A social event at the home of Ernest and Louise Simon was also the first time that KT members attended a Group occasion. The conversation ranged over a variety of topics including events in Austria, reparations payments to refugees from East Germany and intermarriage. With many members being keen gardeners, a visit to the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens at Wisley was planned for the end of August. The group was pleased to welcome Myrna Glass from Head Office.

□ Ernest Simon

Leeds

The next meeting will be on Sunday 10 September when Erika Harris will talk about 'The Jews of Slovakia – from the War to the Present Day' □

Compensation for slave or forced labour

The Inland Revenue has confirmed that where former slave or forced labourers who are UK residents receive lump sums from the proposed German Foundation *Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future*, the payments will not be chargeable to UK capital gains tax, nor will any liability to income tax arise

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**CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
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... Viewpoint ...

Gypsies – a landless nation

Gypsies migrated to Europe from India in the Middle Ages. Possession of a language based on Sanskrit and the dogged maintenance of a lifestyle separate and distinct from their host communities, condemned them to a thousand years of marginalisation and vilification, culminating in mass murder by the Nazis.

Protected initially by Catholic monarchs, the stricter codes of conduct adopted in the wake of the Reformation left the Gypsies exposed as vagrants and petty thieves. Later their mainstay of horse and cart rural employment was overtaken by industrialisation, urbanisation and motor transportation. Their nomadic way of life and tradition of begging with babies even today continues to disturb the norms and consciences of Britain's authorities and right-wing tabloid newspapers whose reactions to a recent minimal refugee influx were little short of paranoiac.

According to a recent OSCE report, the security of European Gypsies has declined dramatically in recent years with racially motivated attacks, rising levels of unemployment, evictions and exclusions from towns and villages. The regions with large Gypsy populations are mainly in former Warsaw Pact countries: Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia,

the Czech Republic and Russia, which together with Spain, the former Yugoslavia, France and the UK (with an estimated population of 150,000 Gypsies) indicates a community of at least 7 million, up to a claimed 12 million.

Although some of the most extreme violence has been recorded in the Czech Republic, Prague was chosen as the venue for the fifth world congress of the *International Union Romani*, the first having been held in London in 1971 and advisory status having been obtained at the UN in 1993. Compensation for what are claimed to be half a million Gypsy victims of the Holocaust is to be sought and a university founded in their memory.

The congress's main resolution was to seek recognition for the Roma people as a non-territorial nation represented by a peripatetic parliament meeting quarterly with embassies in appropriate countries and an international Roma court. Does this mark the birth of a nation without its own land? As Europe's fastest-growing minority, will this challenge to accepted norms speed a radical reform from East European countries lining up to join the European Community, and will the British be prepared to see people of Gypsy origin pass freely over national borders in an enlarged EU? **Ronald Channing**

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2000

Afternoon entertainment programme –

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Mon 4 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 5 Mark Rosen accompanied by Sheila Games, piano
Wed 6 The Geoffrey Whitworth duo
Thur 7 Ben & Paul, piano duets
Sun 10 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 11 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 12 The Dulcet Tones
Wed 13 Ann Sheffield, cello & David Richmond, violin accompanied by Madeleine Whitelaw
Thur 14 Sara Meadows accompanied by John Field, piano
Sun 17 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 18 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 19 Katie Bingham-Best, mezzo accompanied by Mark Packwood, piano

Wed 20 LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 21 Julian Barber & David Battersby, piano duets
Sun 24 DAY CENTRE OPEN – NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon 25 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 26 Francoise Geller & Gordon Griffin accompanied by Margaret Eaves, piano
Wed 27 Vivienne Trenner, soprano accompanied by Daphne Lewis, piano
Thur 28 Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton, violin accompanied by Peter Gellhorn, piano
Sun 1 DAY CENTRE CLOSED – ROSH-HASHANA
Mon 2 KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue 3 Shelley Weldon entertains
Wed 4 Jack Davidoff entertains
Thur 5 Nicola Smedley accompanied by Jan Cunningham, piano

Distorted mirror image

The relationship between Communism and Fascism continues to be hotly debated. In Germany Ernst Nolte presents Nazism as a justifiable response to Communism. In Britain Lord Rees-Mogg denounces the EU's Austrian boycott (prompted by the Schüssel-Haider coalition) as one-sided, and points to Italian governments having Communist coalition partners. (In other words he sees no essential difference between the partisans who killed Mussolini and admirers of the Waffen-SS). Similarly the *Telegraph's* Peregrine Worsthorne, aghast at the large turnout for Red Jessica Mitford's memorial service, asked plaintively "How many of the Great and Good would attend the memorial service for her sister, Lady Mosley?"

At the opposite end of the spectrum are veteran Communists who dress up unthinking subservience to Stalin as anti-Fascism. One such was Ruth Werner who has just died, aged 93, in Berlin. Her brother Jürgen Kuczyński was creator of the Freie Deutsche Kulturbund in pre-war Hampstead and Rektor of the Humboldt University in postwar East Berlin. In the intervening years he acted as the link between atom spy Klaus Fuchs (then working at Birmingham University) and his sister Ruth, a Soviet-trained radio operator, living near Banbury.

Like Fuchs and her brother, Ruth had grown up in Weimar Germany and embraced the Communist cause as an antidote to incipient Fascism. After training in Moscow she had been a Soviet agent in China before coming to Britain. Here she stayed until Klaus Fuchs was caught and then returned to the DDR with which she identified so strongly that she called German unification 'Western annexation.'

Another of Ruth Werner's *obiter dicta* was "we didn't know of Stalin's crimes."

She trotted out this threadbare alibi in spite of having lived in Switzerland in the late Thirties, and in the UK throughout the Forties.

Let me conclude by reiterating my rejection of Rees-Mogg's facile and mentally lazy Nazism-Communism equation. For all that, I think that Holocaust denial needs a corollary: Gulag denial. While the David Irvings of this world require our eternal vigilance, we ought not to ignore the likes of Ruth Werner either. □ RG

London première for Holocaust play

The life of martyred Czech artist and librettist, Petr Kien, is at last being celebrated in a new play to be premièred in London early next year. *The Windmill*, which derives its name from one of Kien's poems, will be produced at the New End Theatre in Hampstead by Pluto Productions.

The play, by Gloria Tessler who is this paper's Arts Correspondent and occasional columnist, is a personal memoir of the artist, who was her mother's cousin and child-confidant. Kien and Regina Tessler, the author's mother, grew up next door to each other in the then Sudetenland. Yet the special family bond and affection for Kien has extended to the next generation. The play was premièred at the Gulbenkian Theatre in Canterbury, directed by Ms Tessler's daughter, Daliah Sherrington, then a fourth year drama student at Kent University.

Petr Kien, described by his cousin Regina as a child prodigy who studied art at the age of five, was interned at the Terezin transit camp in Czechoslovakia. It was there that he wrote the libretto for Viktor Ullmann's opera, *Emperor of Atlantis*, the only opera to emerge from the concentration camps. Hidden in Terezin, it was brought to light by the late Dr Adler and has had several productions, the latest at the Royal Festival Hall, directed by John Abulafia.

However, the courage of both Kien and Ullmann in creating the work was realised posthumously. Works of art were, of course, generally permitted in Terezin, but in this case the Nazis understood the opera's highly subversive nature at the eleventh hour before production. Its two creators were immediately sent to Auschwitz where they were killed. Kien, a poet and painter, whose work has appeared in travelling exhibitions and is based both at the Prague Jewish Museum and the Terezin Memorial, was only 25 years old. The Wiener Library in London has been building an archive of his work for some years now.

The New End Theatre has had a long involvement in Jewish-interest plays and in promoting theatre with an altruistic message. One of their declared aims is to increase understanding of the lives of those who suffered torture and death during the era of Nazi genocide. As all New End playwrights are expected to

find sponsorship for their works, however, a sum of £20,000 is needed purely to cover the costs of production. The author donates the play and receives no monies herself.

"I am looking forward to presenting this personal monograph of a gifted, and in many ways exceptional, human being," said Gloria Tessler. "I grew up with the essence of Petr Kien constantly evoked through my mother's memories. I mainly saw the 'child,' but I could perceive in him a strong character who was fun-loving, creative, whimsical and finally courageous. I hope his moving story will touch audiences everywhere" □

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Obituary

Jan Karski

Jan Karski, who has died aged eighty-six, was a righteous gentile as deserving of our humble gratitude as Raul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler – for all that his efforts saved far fewer Jewish lives.

Born into the industrial middle-class of Lodz, Karski was strongly influenced by his mother's (highly unusual) combination of Catholic piety and philosemitism. He embarked on a diplomatic career to which the war put an abrupt end. Captured during the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland, he escaped from a PoW camp, thereby avoiding the subsequent massacre of Polish officers at Katyn.

He joined the underground where his

indomitable courage and linguistic skills made him an invaluable courier. Determined to discover the fate of the Jews, he smuggled himself into the Warsaw ghetto and into a sub-camp of Belzec. The horrors he witnessed were such that he met with incredulity on subsequent visits to London (where he met Anthony Eden) and to Washington. President Roosevelt, Karski related, "did not show any feelings", simply declaring that the Allies would win the war and punish the criminals. Even Justice Felix Frankfurter, FDR's top Jewish adviser, doubted the veracity of the account Karski had risked his life to bring to the West.

Karski remained in the United States, where he became a successful author and academic, and only revisited Poland after the collapse of Communism. He took a Polish Jewish dancer as his second wife; she, alas, committed suicide in 1992.

□ Richard Grunberger

London's cultural diversity

Ken Livingstone, recently elected Mayor of London, addressed the subjects of racism, asylum and cultural diversity in the capital, at a meeting organised by the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, JCORE, and the 1990 Trust which represents Black and Asian residents.



Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, setting out his anti-racist programme.

"London is a more international city than any of its rivals," said Ken Livingstone, and the city's multi-ethnicity gave businesses advantages at all levels of society. Traditionally London had accepted and welcomed asylum seekers, but since the establishment of the Geneva Convention in 1951, and the immigration control legislation tabled by Harold MacMillan's Government in 1962, the nature of asylum seekers had changed immeasurably. In the last 20 years, 90% of refugees came from war zones, a large proportion of them being professionally qualified, said Ken Livingstone. He called the Roma people "the new refugees."

The meeting was jointly chaired by Dr Richard Stone of JCORE and Rita Patel of the 1990 Trust, both organisations working in cooperation on anti-racist education programmes.

□ RDC

there being no Jewish cemetery there.

The dedication ceremony is to take place in November. Nora will attend with her family to witness the long-delayed recognition of one of Germany's rural Jewish communities and she feels proud to have played a part in the process.

□ MK

Mission achieved

Nora Danzig's mother's family had lived in Hösbach (near Aschaffenburg) for generations; her father's family could trace their presence in Germany back to the early eighteenth century. Her grandfather had a small-holding with stock and her father ran a small textile business. Traditional Jews, the family attended synagogue in the next village, Goldbach. In 1938, whilst the small Jewish community had not experienced antisemitism from the villagers themselves, anti-Jewish sentiment in the surrounding area had reached such a pitch that Nora's family no longer felt it wise to remain in the village; the family moved to Frankfurt/Main. The move involved the familiar *Zwangsverkauf* of the family farm and business. The family – grandfather, father, mother and two daughters – moved into a flat above the *Philanthropieschule*, a fact which saved them on Kristallnacht as the Nazis intended it to be used as a *Sammelplatz* and thus ensured it was spared. Nora and her older sister left for Britain on the Kindertransport in January 1939 and did not see their parents and grandfather again.

Nora returned to Hösbach for the first time in the early 1950s. On the site of her family home she found a supermarket but she also found that she was known and recognised by the villagers who had known and loved her family. Since then she has kept in touch with a (non-Jewish)



Nora Danzig

schoolfriend who has been pivotal in the story which follows.

Two years ago, Nora received a letter from the Mayor of Markt Hösbach offering her DM360 for a small piece of land belonging to her family. It was required for the building of a drainage ditch. She responded that she would donate the land to the village in return for the placing of a plaque in memory of the Jews of Hösbach. The offer fell on stony ground.

Nora's schoolfriend went to see the Mayor and also spoke to a class of 15-year-olds in the local school who were outraged that the village authorities were refusing the opportunity to honour Hösbach's small pre-war Jewish community. The local newspaper became involved in the campaign. As a result, the village authorities have agreed to Nora's request and a memorial plaque will be placed in the (non-Jewish) cemetery,

50 YEARS AGO

EDITORIAL CHANGE

Dr Herbert Freeden, co-editor of *AJR Information* since its inception in 1945, will go to Israel this month to take up an appointment with the Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael as publicity officer for the English-speaking countries.

It is mainly due to his initiative that the *AJR* started the publication of a regular periodical, as soon as the removal of the paper restrictions made this possible. If, in the course of time, *AJR Information* has become an established institution within the Community, it can to a very high extent be attributed to his untiring labours.

□ *AJR Information* September 1950

Unfulfilled promises

The German Government has, since the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets in December 1998, repeatedly stressed its commitment to locate and return works of art taken or sold under duress, in particular items of Jewish ownership.

In my paper *Research Findings with respect to Holocaust Era Art in German and Czech Public Collections*, presented at the international scholars' conference 'Remembering for the Future 2000', it becomes obvious that the German Government and museums are rather ambiguous in their quest actively and speedily to locate and return looted works of art. There are some positive initiatives under way, such as the Federal Culture Minister's publication in April 2000 of an internet listing of the entire inventory (2,242 works of art) of objects remaining from Hitler's planned museum of World Art in Linz, Austria, and the willingness of German museums to return confiscated works of art to the heirs of the original owners. The return by the Bavarian State Collection of paintings of the triptych *The three stages of Life* by Count Leopold von Kalckreuth – recently exhibited in '1900: Art at the Crossroads' at the Royal Academy in London – to the heirs of Elizabeth Glanville is an example.

With the exception of Bavaria, the German Government has been reluctant to open files stored in local tax offices, listing in detail the expropriation and plunder of property, including works of art from German Jews and Jews from the occupied territories.

AJR Information has previously reported how a German social science professor gained access to 4,000 out of some 25,000 files stored in the Cologne tax office after years of frustrated efforts. Professor Dressen published his findings in a book entitled *Betrifft Aktion 3*. Besides lists of household items, there are lists of paintings that were auctioned.

It has to be assumed that some of the purchasers or their heirs could be traced given the information available. It would, however, be much more difficult to find the families of the rightful owners considering that these paintings belonged to Jews from the occupied territories (notably France, Belgium and Holland). Whereas property belonging to German Jews is accompanied by a description of the person's name and other personal de-

tails, property belonging to Jews from the occupied territories is merely marked as 'Vermögen von verschiedenen Juden'.

Because the existence of these files can no longer be kept secret, the German Government is considering limited access on condition that names are kept anonymous. German museums in general have also been rather slow, if not inactive, in researching their collections for Nazi-looted art. In Cologne only two museums have made staff available for this purpose, while others have explained their inactivity by claiming lack of sufficient funds. Considering that, presently, three new museums are under construction in Cologne, the museums' inactivity is more likely to reflect their spending priorities.

The failure of museums to take steps to publicise works of art that may have been confiscated so that claimants can come forward, puts a question mark over the museums' genuine will to locate the rightful owners. My suggestion that a listing of paintings with questionable provenance could be circulated on the internet was well received by the museums, but technical and financial reasons have been offered as to why this has not been done to date. Apparently, museums in Cologne are now considering whether to publish on the internet lists of objects acquired between 1933-1945. However, a reliable source in the Cologne museum community is very sceptical about the actual implementation of this project. Whether or not the museums' inactivity can be interpreted as a delaying action, if there was a genuine will to reunite Holocaust survivors with their works of art, both the Government and museums could do more and do it faster.

The extensive database of Holocaust art losses compiled by the Art Loss Register is one resource that could be utilised by the German museum community for disseminating information about works of unclear provenance on the internet or for checking provenance. Hundreds of missing artworks, forcibly sold or confiscated between 1933 and 1945 have been recorded *pro bono* and are systematically searched for on behalf of claimants worldwide. The Art Loss Register assists museums with provenance research and acts as a central information point on Nazi-looted cultural objects for the art trade.

□ Eva Kurz

The author is a consultant with the Art Loss Register. For further help and information, contact Sarah Jackson at The Art Loss Register, tel: 020 7235 3393 or e-mail: sarah.jackson@artloss.com

NEWSROUND

Final deal

The German authorities have agreed to establish a compensation fund of £3.2 billion for distribution to surviving slave and forced labourers who worked for the Third Reich. Discussions continue on payments to East and Central European claimants.

More slave labour revelations

The Berlin evangelical church will contribute £3.5m to the slave labour compensation fund following revelations that Christian churches in Nazi Germany profited from the labour of civilians rounded up by the Nazis. The German Catholic Church has also agreed to contribute.

Political first

Senator Joseph Lieberman, a practising Jew, has been chosen by Democrat Presidential contender Al Gore as his Vice Presidential running mate in this year's US elections. Lieberman gained a reputation as the Senate's moral conscience during the Monica Lewinsky affair.

French atonement

France has marked its first *National day in memory of racist and antisemitic crimes of the French State*. In the same week, the French Government agreed to compensate victims of Vichy state policies by offering payments to surviving orphans of French Jews sent to the death camps.

Denier's appeal

David Irving has declared his intention to appeal against the verdict in favour of Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books if granted leave to appeal. He has yet to make a payment towards the costs ordered in favour of Penguin Books.

Dreyfus lives on

A Paris square has been renamed *Place du Capitaine-Dreyfus* in honour of the Jewish army captain falsely accused of spying over a century ago.

Change at the Wiener

Prof David Cesarani is leaving the Wiener Library to lead a series of new research projects at Southampton University on themes of Jewish interest following a £845,000 grant to the University's Parkes Centre. The *Jewish Chronicle* reports that the projects will be carried out jointly with JPR and a number of universities both here and abroad.

□ MK