

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Unquiet on the Westminster front

Reflections on the interaction of politicians, press and public

Last November Americans cast their ballots. In February Israelis went to the polls. Within weeks we are likely to be doing the same in this country. The US election result looked seriously flawed. The Israeli election was called precipitately to overcome a security crisis compounded by parliamentary gridlock. By contrast, the UK general election looks set to be a routine affair, with nobody challenging the outcome. But before we crow too loudly about Britain's greater stability and maturity, let us remember that a bare six months ago a Poujadist fuel protest half-paralysed the country, threatened the elected government, and reduced the police to passive bystanders in the face of intimidation. This was a spasm of the British body politic - a lurch into lawlessness triggered by a group of aggrieved individuals set on reversing decisions of the democratically chosen executive. Something similar had happened in the miners' strike of the early 1980s - with the vital difference that in those days the Prime Minister enjoyed media support.

Which brings us to the role in politics of media moguls, like Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black. It is axiomatic that such men are happier with right-of-centre than left-of-centre governments - but it doesn't necessarily follow that they can actually 'deliver' the electorate's votes. (After all, till January 2001 all leading Western countries had left-of-centre administrations). What the media is capable of, however, is blurring the



Harold and Mary Wilson leaving the polling station in Great Smith Street

outlines of the political process by emitting a smoke screen of cynicism. The resulting miasma allows certain swamp flowers to flourish - such as the Judeophobic Taki, the Ezra Pound fan AN Wilson, and the late Auberon Waugh, who once penned a humorous piece about Auschwitz as a tourist attraction. Waugh's worst defects - defects which vitiated everything he wrote - however, were his snobbery and an ingrained view of all politics as corrupt, and of all politicians as self-seeking megalomaniacs. This entertainingly gloomy view of public affairs may have chimed in well with the image he cultivated of himself as a world-weary Catholic country squire - but it is of no possible use to society, which needs

politicians as much as it needs teachers and doctors if it is to function properly.

Waugh's cynicism also infected journalists who didn't necessarily share his dyspeptic disposition - *pace* the endless column inches of unwarranted obloquy heaped upon the Dome, which, as far as it was a disaster, was a media-manufactured one. And, as if cynical journos weren't enough, the 'licensed' Jewish jester Jackie Mason has recently been invited by BBC2 to make inane comments about the US elections. (Not to be outdone, the *Jewish Chronicle* gave him an opportunity to further envenom the Arab-Israeli conflict). If some sections of the media generate cynicism - and therefore apathy - others do the opposite, but with equally malign intent. They run populist scare campaigns designed to stir local grassroots action against easily identifiable targets such as paedophiles and asylum seekers. However, notwithstanding all these defects, British democracy continues to evolve. It is no exaggeration to say that in certain important respects it has evolved further than similar systems elsewhere. Hugely contentious issues, like capital punishment or the right to abortion, which still disturb the internal peace of the USA, were laid to rest over here decades ago. Nor are immigrants into this country (as we know from personal experience) subjected to the same discrimination as they are in present-day democratic Germany. So let us be thankful for Westminster - and come polling day, go out and vote!

AJR contributes to success of UK's first Holocaust Memorial Day

by Ronald Channing

As its contribution to the first Holocaust Memorial Day in the United Kingdom, the AJR initiated and sponsored events on the campuses of the University of Sussex and Imperial College London, altogether reaching some 2,000 students.

'Remembrance Through Film'

Lecturers and teachers joined students from Sussex and Brighton Universities, and a number of Holocaust refugees and survivors from the city, to participate freely in a full day of sessions on *Holocaust Remembrance Through Film*. The opening session was chaired by Professor Edward Timms, Head of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies which developed and organised the day's programme. University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, said that one could not be neutral between good and evil and stressed the virtues of tolerance on a campus of cultural and ethnic diversity. He thanked the AJR for their support and anticipated that a rewarding day would carry a wider message. AJR's Head of Community Relations, Ronald Channing, invited Prof Smith to feature the event permanently in the university's annual calendar.

Following a showing of *The Children Who Cheated Hitler*, a film on the Kindertransport, witness Bea Green and the film's producer Sue Read responded to lively questioning. Holocaust course convenor John Jacobs led a session on *Victims and Survivors*, showing film of ghettos and camps which included



Prof Edward Timms, with students, participating in the day-long Holocaust Remembrance Through Film.

harrowing footage of Bergen - Belsen taken by Sydney Bernstein - film evidence that had remained censored until 1997! Janina Fischler-Martinho moved the audience deeply with her account of survival in the Lodz Ghetto against seemingly impossible odds. Other minorities victimised by the Nazis were remembered in a session led by Jack Gilbert with film-makers Luke Holland and Judy Ironside and local broadcaster Simon Fanshawe. Gaby Glassman conducted a workshop on the Holocaust's psychological legacy, well attended by students and survivors, one of whose accounts left an indelible impression.

Campus's musical commemoration

Imperial College, and its director of music Richard Dickins, in co-operation with the AJR, presented a concert featuring Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, played with immense musicality and passion. Messiaen composed this for the players and instruments - violin, cello, clarinet and piano - available to him whilst a prisoner in Stalag VII where it was first performed in 1941. As in Sussex, a full concert hall validated this as the university's contribution to Holocaust Memorial Day.

Other Holocaust Memorial Day events in which AJR members or representatives played a role included former *Kinder* David Jedwab and Bea Green returning to Liverpool Street Station where they first arrived in Britain 62 years ago; a ceremony in Camden Council Chamber led by the Mayor at which Cllr. Roger Robinson recalled the long fight against fascism, and the vivid testimony of two survivors was given; at the University of York where Dr Erika Harris, whose parents suffered persecution in Slovakia, related the Holocaust to modern genocide; in the West Midlands, Belsen survivor Paul Oppenheimer spoke at universities and schools; and AJR historian Dr Anthony Grenville was interviewed on BBC radio.

National ceremony

The AJR was well represented at the ceremony of commemoration held in the Central Hall, Westminster, and broadcast



Prince Charles and Ben Helfgott after lighting memorial candles at Central Hall, Westminster.

on national television, at which Prince Charles, Prime Minister Tony Blair and Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks were joined by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, as well as the leaders of the opposition, together with Holocaust survivors and victims of more recent genocides who presented powerful testimony.

It is anticipated that the AJR's experience and support in marking Holocaust Memorial Day in the universities will also be called upon for next year's commemoration by other campuses.

Berlin child survivor gathering

Coinciding with the German Holocaust Memorial Day, the tenth gathering of child survivors took place at the European Academy in Berlin. The purpose of the gathering was to enable participants to discuss, without inhibition, problems connected with their past. Participants came from all over Germany and spoke about their experiences of racial persecution as children of 16 or younger and the impact this had had on their lives subsequently. Having been uprooted, many lived in other countries before returning to Germany in an attempt to reconnect with their roots.

To mark Holocaust Memorial Day, participants walked to Grunewald Station and recited *kaddish* on platform 17 - from where Berlin Jews were deported. A plaque specified that *Züge* (trains) had deported them, thus avoiding mention of personal responsibility.

Gaby Glassman

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Band of brothers

Richard Grunberger

The US Declaration of Independence states: "We hold this truth to be self-evident that all men are created equal." In the same vein Kipling wrote: 'The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin.' Unfortunately neither is the case, as IQ tests and DNA samples prove. People are simply born unequal (and by this I am not referring to their economic circumstances which is a totally different topic). Sometimes this basic inequality is highlighted by the same family producing not just one, but two, or even more, outstanding talents. In painting we had the Caraccis and the Bellinis, in music assorted Bachs and Strausses, and in literature the Mann brothers, as well as Joshua and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Anglo-Jewish literati include the playwriting twins Peter (*Amadeus*) and Anthony (*Sleuth*) Shaffer and the brothers Emmanuel and Barnett Litvinoff. Politics has thrown up such diverse types as Otto and Gregor Strasser, John and Robert Kennedy - fraternally united by assassins' bullets even in death - and Austen and Neville Chamberlain. Among Anglo-Jewish politicians one could mention the ministerial Silkins and the less elevated Silvermans - as well as Leon Brittan and his financial journalist brother. Their Soviet Russian counterparts were the Kaganovitches whom one would rather not mention, whose sister Bella was rumoured to have been romantically linked to Stalin. On the distaff side there are the Bronte sisters, Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell, and AS Byatt and Margaret Drabble, to name but a few.

Even our relatively small refugee community has thrown up three pairs of famous brothers: the Freuds, the Ehrenstein-Eltons, and the Hamburger-Hamlyns.

Lucien and Clement Freud, of course, bear one of the most famous names of the twentieth century - but owe their prominence entirely to their own talents. Lucien, thought to be the finest figurative painter at work in the UK today, had an additional gift for attracting aristocratic sitters and patrons. Clement, the gastronomic guru,

sometime MP and dog food salesman, was a similarly gifted networker. (In contrast to his *bohemien* brother he belongs to the Anglican Church - as he was at pains to point out when erroneously listed among Jewish Members of Parliament). The Freud charisma is still at work in the fourth generation, as exemplified by the (subsequently filmed) novel *Hideous Kinky*, describing the hippy existence Lucien's daughter led in 1970s Morocco.

If the star of the Freud siblings rose under the penumbra of their illustrious ancestor, the fame of the Elton brothers is quite overshadowed by that of *Wunderkind* Ben, respectively their son and nephew. Scions of an academic dynasty, Sir Geoffrey Elton was Regius Professor of History at Oxford, while Lewis had a chair at the University of Surrey. What rather set them apart was that Geoffrey admired, and Lewis loathed, Mrs Thatcher. Ben has obviously inherited Lewis' radicalism, though, given the puritanical tradition of the Left, one wonders if the father is comfortable with the son's reliance on smut for comic effect.

The Hamburgers, like the Ehrensteins and the Freuds, were solidly middle class in Germany, and continued their lifestyle as best they could in this country. Michael went to Oxford and became a respected poet and critic. The list of his translations reads like a roll call of 20th century German literature: Rilke, Hofmannsthal, Trakl, Hans Magnus Enzensberger - as well as Paul Celan. Today he lives in Suffolk, diligently cultivating his garden in the literal sense of the word. His brother Paul changed his name to Hamlyn, went into publishing and amassed a veritable fortune. He has been a munificent supporter of good causes, notably in the cultural sphere. He has given deprived children access to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and his recent gift of £17m to the Royal Festival Hall should go a long way towards transforming the South Bank. Oh brother, indeed!

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Land locked

Home Secretary Jack Straw is corralling fellow European Union members into adopting co-ordinated policies and fair-share quotas against what is seen as the threat of untrammelled illegal immigration. Migrants elude national border controls and fall into the hands of traffickers.

As an open economy espousing the free movement of capital and labour in the EU, whilst retaining a permanent bond with its old Empire, the UK's legal immigration is at an all-time high. Of 150,000 non-European newcomers expected this year, by far the largest number will be returning expatriates, the vast majority white, as are the 250,000 students given permission to stay temporarily after completing their courses. Neither presence receives attention from the more strident elements of the press, nor should they.

Where the intending immigrant is of a different culture and skin colour, unless he can play football the reaction is quite different. Yet the evidence shows that newcomers either undertake low-grade jobs that the host community's members shun, or arrive with professional skills and qualifications much in demand. Our health service, for example, could not function without its foreign-born doctors, nurses and ancillary workers.

In 1999, 75,000 people claimed asylum in the UK (35,000 in 1997) while 66,000 applications are still being processed. Statistically, 80% of these applications are refused, yet just 8,000 people were actually deported so the rest must have stayed! Having arrived at some dirty and disagreeable reception centre well away from sources of cultural and linguistic support, they have to complete an incomprehensible twenty - page asylum application form in English within 14 days, and a seven - day appeal form, also in English. One questions the automatic refusal which follows hard on so-called non-compliance!

Arriving asylum seekers surely deserve secure and decent accommodation, contact with co-nationals, food and clothing, schools and welfare services for their families and the immediate right to seek work.

Culturally challenged nation

Ronald Channing

The fundamental assertion that immigrants contribute to the societies they join and may bring about changes within them, was made by Prof Stanley Waterman of Haifa University when discussing the influences of immigrant cultures on Israel, at a lecture organised by Jewish Policy Research.

Israel was almost entirely an immigrant society "members of whose population have recently arrived from elsewhere", as he put it, and newcomers had to adopt the local language and learn local skills. The traditional Ashkenazi dominance of Israeli political and cultural life meant that they set about replacing others' identities with new ones. In the arts, for example, the high status European-derived cultures of the theatre, orchestras and museums retained their long-term government support at the expense of the new, Yemeni dancing being perhaps a rare exception! Those deemed to possess at best only a heritage, were expected to adopt the dominant culture at the expense of their own.

But "not everybody wants Shakespeare," said Prof Waterman.



Prof Stanley Waterman

Israel's various Sephardi nationalities were seeking far more multiculturalism. An amorphous 'oriental' style of popular music was already universal and Klezmer from Eastern Europe had undergone a renaissance. American cultural influences largely centred on the need for commercial gain.

The large proportion of Israel's population today, which is and remains Russian-speaking, means that their children continue to study Russian and to maintain their contact with Russian culture, just as the *Yekkes* did some 60 years ago.

Giving testimony

The life stories of one hundred and ten Holocaust survivors and refugees have been recorded on audiotape providing a valuable contribution to a 'history from below', an important part of ensuring that the history of the Holocaust and its far-reaching consequences are available for posterity as well as for the families of those affected.

A small group of trained and supervised volunteers at Shalvata (Jewish Care) have been taking testimonies for the past seven years, the majority from the Holocaust Survivors Centre. Their aim is to create a testimony that reflects all aspects of the life of the interviewee from early

memories of kindergarten to a possible understanding of the effects of the Holocaust on his/her life. The interview usually takes place at the interviewee's home.

Whilst it is primarily intended for the interviewee and their family, a copy can be kept at The Sound Archives at the British Library. With the interviewee's consent, the life story is transferred and coded into the computer system enabling it to be accessed by anyone interested or who is researching the Holocaust.

If you are considering relating your life story and would like to discuss this further, you are invited to contact The Holocaust Survivors Centre 020 8202 9844.

Messenger from Poland

Ronald Channing



Polish diplomat and soldier, Jan Karski, who died last year, was in 1942 the first unassailable witness to inform leaders of the western Allies, including President Roosevelt, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter and Britain's Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, that the German occupiers of Poland were systematically committing a barbaric genocide against the country's three and a half million Jews.

In a retrospective statement filmed by Martin Smith, first shown in 1986 and recently presented at the Imperial War Museum in association with the Polish Cultural Institute, Karski relates in precise English and chilling imagery the events to which he bore witness and the incredulity with which he was met.

Polish resistance

Born a Catholic in the city of Lodz, Jan Kozielski (Karski was a *nom de guerre*) was not unfamiliar with the city's large Jewish community who were active in its manufacturing industry. Prior to the outbreak of war he served as a diplomat in Bucharest, Berlin, Geneva and London before joining the army as a junior officer. Captured by the invading Russians, he escaped the Katyn massacre of Polish officers by feigning to be a private and on his release joined the Polish resistance.

His fluency in languages and the possession of an exceptional memory for the spoken word marked him as a courier, but on returning from his second mission to Paris in 1940 he was arrested by the Gestapo. Following severe torture he attempted suicide, but was sent back to hospital in Poland and escaped after implying he was dying and in need of confession.

Warsaw Ghetto

In October 1942 Karski was smuggled into the Warsaw Ghetto, whose population of some 50,000 had already

been reduced by starvation, brutality and deportation from its peak of 450,000. The "indescribable misery" he witnessed, with corpses lining the streets, was reinforced by a further mission, disguised as a Ukrainian guard, into what he took to be Belzec death camp, but was probably the satellite extermination camp of Izbica Lubelska.

After escaping to London in November, he contacted the government in London and Foreign Secretary Eden to relate that "the Jews in Poland are helpless" and that their only hope of survival was in the hands of the Allies, to which Eden's reported response was that "nothing can be done". Even an influential American Jew, Justice Frankfurter, in 1943 found himself "unable to believe what you told me".

Moral outrage

A panel discussion followed between Martin Smith, Professor David Cesarani and Jacek Nowakowski of Washington's Holocaust Museum, chaired by Suzanne Bardgett, Director of the IWM's Holocaust Exhibition. It was suggested that, with his Jesuit education, Karski had held a deep moral sense of outrage and anger.

As an eyewitness of absolute credibility, it was he who placed the fate of the Jews at the top of the agenda, but the Jews were not regarded as being a big enough issue either in London or Washington and his isolation even extended to the Polish Government in exile. It is argued that there were few preventive actions that the Allies could have taken in the autumn and winter of 1942; although Nazi atrocities were condemned after Karski's mission, 700,000 Jews had already perished in the gas chambers.

After the war Karski married a Jewess and in 1994 was proud to be made an honorary citizen of the State of Israel.

Whither Jewish history?

Marion Koebner

Addressing the joint forces of the Institute of Jewish Studies and the Jewish Historical Society as its new President, Professor Bernard Wasserstein, holder of the Chair of Modern History at Glasgow University, gave a learned and not uncontroversial lecture on the theme of the 'disappearance' of the Jews in modern times through a combination of demographics, intermarriage and redefinition.

Quoting Isaiah Berlin's statement that the Jews are steeped in history more than any other surviving people - and acknowledging that Jews are the most historically conscious of all peoples - Prof Wasserstein briefly reviewed some nineteenth century Christian historians of the Jews and found that their pessimism as to the likelihood of survival of the Jews was matched by that of Jewish historians writing in the wake of the Emancipation. No twentieth century historian had emulated the great Jewish historians of the nineteenth century - Heinrich Graetz in Germany and Simon Dubnov in Russia; the American Jewish historian Salo Baron stopped at the point where he was to write about contemporary Jewish history; David Vital's most recent work could be described as 'a last gasp' or a 'last flowering' of the genre.

In the early twentieth century, Jewish history was to be reborn with the Land of Israel. But Israel today was probably only three-quarters Jewish so could she continue to regard herself as a Jewish state? These were uncharted waters. In a topical allusion, Prof Wasserstein referred to the "profound sense of lost bearings and shifting ground" since the events which led to what some have seen as a second *intifada*. In terms of the world's Jewish population, a reading of the US statistics showed a declining birth rate, increasing intermarriage and decreasing immigration. Secularisation also accounted for a diminishing Jewish population. The American iceberg took longer to melt than the European one but was equally affected by global warming! Did not the acceptance by both sides of the emancipatory contract spell the end of Jewish history?

In a brief but concentrated 'feedback' session at the conclusion of his lecture, Prof Wasserstein fielded a number of thought-provoking questions from the floor and began his presidential term in style.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEFENCE MATTERS

Sir - Your reference to John Foster Dulles' part in "depriving Israel of all the territory gained during the 1956 Suez Campaign" requires correction in the interests of historical accuracy. The plot hatched by Pineau and Eden aimed at re-occupying the Suez Canal Zone. Israel's participation was justified on the grounds that Palestinian guerrillas used Gaza as a springboard for attacks on Israeli settlements, and Egypt was still officially at war with Israel.

When the UN condemned the action, it was Eisenhower, and not Dulles, who intervened and forced Britain and France to withdraw. Dulles was a very sick man at the time and, in any case, really sided with Eden. Israel refused to withdraw from Gaza and the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba unless the UN guaranteed that 1) the Gulf which had been blocked to Israeli ships for six years was open to all shipping, and 2) the Gaza Strip could no longer be used by Palestinian *fedayeen* for attacking Israel. When these guarantees, which included stationing a UN force (UNEF) on the relevant borders, were received, Israel's armies withdrew from Gaza and Aqaba in March 1957.

*Eric Sanders
London W12*

Sir - Thank you for your reasoned and fair comments. Sadly, the 'in thing' just now is Jew/Israeli bashing and surely we should close ranks. Yes, Israel has done some brutal and foolish things but the suffering and hurt isn't just on one side. In 1948 my brother and 28 others were ambushed and killed by Palestinians; a settlement was bulldozed. Neither of these was reported. Ships of 'broken' refugees were turned away as Palestine had its "quota of Jews." If I returned to Austria to ask for even a small token of my family's home or shop, I would be refused. The media have been patchy in reporting both sides.

So let us speak out for justice and mercy. But if there is no Israel, where does the next batch of Jewish refugees go?

*R Willis
Loughborough, Leics.*

REPREHENSIBLE

Sir - Criticising an entire ethnic group is reprehensible: "... the notion of compromise is quite alien to the Arab mindset." (*January issue*). This certainly does not apply to Yasser Arafat who made an historic compromise in signing the 1993 Oslo Accord. He agreed to the 1967 border of Israel which constituted 78% of the former UN Mandate of Palestine and left 22% to the Palestinians. Barak was willing to return 90%-95% of the 22% to a Palestinian state, but this territory was split up into three parts crossed by roads under Israeli sovereignty. The Palestinians were asked to compromise on their compromise.

*Peter Prager
Ilford, Essex*

PASSING ON EXPERIENCE

Sir - I would like to assure all who helped to rescue so many of us, that they or their parents have earned our thanks. Families hosting refugees did their best without any counselling on how to treat us. My brother's love for his foster family was certainly essential for his rehabilitation. After the death of her husband, 'Aunt Dorothy', as he called his foster mother, visited him in Australia after the birth of each of her 'grandchildren' there and either invited, or visited, me to report on their life. I was part of her family too! I hope that all former refugees are able to put their experiences to good use in helping other refugees. I only had the opportunity once, with the arrival of refugees from Hungary in 1956. It would be good to read in your pages about any work done by AJR members to help to integrate present-day refugees as well as working towards resolving conflicts, the cause of so many people needing to seek asylum!

*Bettina Cohn
Bristol*

THE NEW LOOK

Sir - Say not the struggle naught availeth! The parcel containing the new version of the AJR Journal presented a real challenge. I had to take a serrated knife to the very tough envelope. With no indication as to the contents, it would

have gone into my dustbin had I not been so nose-y as to the treasures awaiting me.

*Frank Bright
Ipswich, Suffolk*

Sir - What would I do without your monthly input? So carry on, even if the new blue printing ink looks "cheap"! But thanks!

*Edith Fischl-Lee
Woollahara, Australia*

Sir - How much does the blue colour add to the cost of the latest edition, I wonder? Being used to eternal thrift, I feel sad to see print becoming unnecessarily luxurious and expensive when it is the contents we are really after!

*Dr Ruth Biswas
Berlin*

Sir - My compliments to all concerned in producing the superb layout and new journal.

*Gaby Low
Otto Schiff House*

Sir - As to the contents of the *AJR Journal* I must tell you that it contains things I disagree with and things I very much agree with so the mixture must be very fair and very good. Congratulations.

*F Kingsley
Bexleyheath*

Sir - May I congratulate you on the new layout, which is much easier to read, and the modern look which is more in keeping with the 21st century.

*David Lightburn, (Manager)
Clara Nehab House, London NW11*

PUBLISHER SOUGHT!

Sir - Your readers may be interested to know that the first edition of my book on the history of Germans and Austrians serving in HM Forces during the war, *X steht für unbekannt*, sold out, thus warranting a second edition, this time in paperback (ISBN 3-8305-0138-2 - DM 49 + postage from Berlin Verlag, Auslieferung Nomos Verlag, Waldseestr. 3 5, 76530 Baden-Baden). I have an English language version ready for publication but have yet to find a publisher.

*Peter Leighton-Langer
Neumarkt 3, D-64635 Bensheim
Germany*

Central Office For Holocaust Claims

This column informs and advises victims of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust and their heirs on procedures for claiming compensation for persecution and for the restitution of assets stolen or looted during the Second World War.

Holocaust era insurance policies

Details of more than 20,000 insurance policies taken out by Holocaust victims who originated from Eastern Europe are now available on the website of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims. For further information about the claim procedure call free on 0800 169 8318 and to search the lists visit www.icheic.org

Belgian compensation claims

Claims for compensation for looted and stolen property in Belgium should be sent to Mr Rudi Van Doorslaer, Scientific Director, Research & Management Division, Commission pour l'Etude des Biens Juifs, 114 Boulevard Bishoffhein, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: 0032 2214 0910. Fax: 0032 2214 0911.

Trading with the Enemy

Applications for assets seized by the British Government under Trading with the Enemy legislation can be filed at the DTI in London. Further information and a database of 30,000 names are posted at www.enemyproperty.gov.uk Written applications should be addressed to Enemy Property, Department of Trade and Industry, 10 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET. The telephone number is 020 7215 3485.

Slave Labour

Holocaust victims used as slave and forced labourers are filing claims for compensation through the Foundation: Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future, established jointly by the German Government and German industry. Those who have not received prior information about the claim's procedure and wish to submit a claim are invited to obtain an application form from this office.

Further help

Assistance with the completion of application forms is available (by appointment only) from the Central Office for Holocaust Claims at the offices of the AJR in Hampstead. Written enquiries should be sent to Michael Newman, Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Froggnal, London NW3 6AL.

Arts and Events Diary March

3 - 11 Jewish Book Week. Royal National Hotel, Bloomsbury, London WC1. Box office: 020 8201 8206.

Mon 5 Ernst Fleisch: A journey through India. Club 43, Belsize Sq Synagogue, 7.45pm

Tues 6 Book launch: *Backing Hitler Consent & Coercion in Nazi Germany.* Prof Robert Gellately, Clark University, Massachusetts. Wiener Library 6.30pm. Admission free.

Tues 6 Vera Grodzinski: Paul Cassirer & artistic patronage in Imperial Berlin. Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Sussex University. 5.15pm. Contact Andrea Hammel 01273 877178.

Wed 7 Prof Saul Friedlander: The Wehrmacht, German Society & the knowledge about the exterminations during the early phase of the 'Final Solution'. Lecture Theatre 2, Cruciform Bldg, Gower St, WC1. 6.30 pm. Admission free. Institute of Jewish Studies.

Wed 7 Suitcases & Sanctuary Susie Symes (Spitalfields Centre) talks about London's Museum of Immigration. Wiener Library 6.30pm. Admission £2.

Mon 12 Prof John Klier and others: Distinguishing British Jewry: Men & Women who mattered 1830-1930. 6.30 pm Gustave Tuck Theatre, Gower Street, WC1. Admission free. Institute of Jewish Studies.

Mon 12 Hans Seelig: Guiseppe Verdi. Club 43, Belsize Sq Synagogue, 7.45 pm.

Tues 13 Hitler's Spies: Talk about the contribution they made to the Allied war effort. £5.50 inc. wine. 7 pm. Imperial War Museum.

Tues 13 Providing for Difference. Panel discussion with representatives of Jewish Care and Board of Deputies. 8 pm. £5 + concs. LJCC.

Thurs 15 Chansons Judeo-Espagnoles: Noa Lachman (sop) & William Hancox (pno). Exploring the Sephardi repertoire. LJCC. 12.45 1.30 pm

Sun 18 Klaus Hinrichsen talks about Erich Kahn. 5 pm. LJCC. £5.

Mon 19 Dr Richard Dove (University of Greenwich): "Journey of no return" German-speaking literary exiles in London. Club 43, Belsize Sq Synagogue, 7.45 pm.

Tues 20 The spirit of Spitalfields Huguenots, Jews & Bangladeshis: Jewish Museum, Finchley.

Sun 25 Berthold Goldschmidt concert in collaboration with Jewish Music Institute. LJCC 7.30 pm. £10, concs £8.

Mon 26 Monica Lowenberg: Education as a factor in the contribution of German-Jewish refugees to British society. Club 43, Belsize Sq Synagogue, 7.45 pm.

Until 25 March I am a Camera. Mixed show of artists. Photographs become paintings and paintings become photographs. The Saatchi Gallery NW8. Thurs - Sun 12 pm - 6 pm. Admission £5, concs £3. Details 020 7624 8299

Thurs 29 Hyam Maccoby's *The Disputation.* New End Theatre, 7.30 pm. £17.50 from LJCC.

Mon 2 April Howard Isenberg: Arturo Toscanini. Club 43. Belsize Sq Synagogue, 7.45pm.

Organisation Contacts

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

Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Rd., London SE1 6HZ. 020 7416 5320

Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT. Tel 020 7679 3520. Email: uclhvtm@ucl.ac.uk

London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC), The Old House, c/o Kings College, Kidderpore Ave., London NW3 7SZ. 020 7431 0345.

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

Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street. London W1. Tel. 020 7636 7247

ARTS & REVIEWS

Art Notes

Gloria Tessler

The Ben Uri is on the move again and with it comes media speculation over the need for a Jewish art gallery - a specious argument because the Ben Uri Art Gallery exists and is simply looking for a new home. The deeper question is whether a *Jewish art* actually exists and should do so in a separate space. Epstein, Auerbach, Modigliani, Bomberg, Chagall are all great artists extending beyond the orbit of their Jewishness. It is arguable that the way Lucien Freud painted a tree or a face green and pink tinged with his characteristic mark of human frailty is in itself a Jewish gesture. But if artists transcend a narrow place, do they not also belong in the wider world?

In an international loan exhibition, **Phillips the Auctioneers** showed 80 works by 50 artists which tell the Ben Uri story: **From Art Society to Museum. The Influence of Anglo - Jewish Artists on the Modern British Movement.** In company with Epstein's prophetic *Rock Drill*, in which man and machine blend in an uncompromising tower of invincibility, there's **Rothenstein's** intense painting of *Rabbis Reading the Book of Esther*. In **Jacob Kramer's** familiar *Day of Atonement*, the recumbent figures in their prayer shawls suggest one-ness - the essence of Yom Kippur. Kramer's *tallitot* could be a metaphor for shrouds and in 1919 this seems a frightening prediction. **Alfred Walmark's** atmospheric *Shabbat Afternoon* has an equally clear message. But there's also **Emmanuel Levy's** *Nude in the Artist's Studio* so geometrically dispelling the gloom with her pugnacious redhead and **Yolanda Sonnabend's** delicate impressionistic *Portrait of a Lady*, dark hair falling from a widow's peak. Are they as intrinsically Jewish? And perhaps more important, does it matter?

The launch of the Gallery offers an explanation: "Why should the Jewish people be ignorant of its own art treasures?" asked Judah Beach in the 1930 Ben Uri catalogue. The timing of the opening of its first gallery in 1944 at 14 Portman Street is portentous. It may celebrate Jewish survival, but despite a phalanx of paintings by Chagall, Modigliani, Soutine, Pissaro, Epstein and Lieberman, time and again the Ben Uri's shaky financial foundations led to an itinerant life. Dwindling finances continue to block the path to a permanent home: The Ben Uri's considerable collection is in store, frustrating the dreams of those dedicated to the future of Jewish art from its inception until the present day.



Bernard Meninsky: *Mother & child.*
Watercolour, 1918.

In a six-point objective for the Gallery's future, it is the last which is the most resonant: "To support and play an active role in the creation of one large, all-embracing centre of artistic excellence." That, surely, is the main *raison d'être* of a Jewish art gallery. To provide a communal space where art is not merely hung, but discussed, alongside other artistic or creative endeavours, whether it is visual, literary or musical. An arts centre involving the community. This is what Jewish London is crying out for. If the London Jewish Cultural Centre, based at Kidderpore Avenue in Hampstead can think this big, surely there is room for the Ben Uri to expand its vision too.

RG's INTERFACE

Movie classics. The B(ritish) F(ilm) I(nstitute) Millennium Poll voted Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949) Best British Film Ever. The cast of this cinematic classic had a sizable refugee component: Ernst Deutsch, Siegfried Breuer and Erich Ponto, with Fritz Schrecker, Lily Kann, Hannah Norbert and Karel Stepanek appearing in smaller parts. In addition script writer Graham Greene relied on refugee journalist Peter Smolka for background material. Michael Curtiz' top-rated American movie *Casablanca* (1942) featured an even more prominent refugee cast. They were either 'politicals' (Conrad Veidt and the mediocre Paul Henreid) or Jewish: Peter Lorre, Curt Bois, Söke Szakall, Ludwig Stössl, Marcel Dalio and Leonid Kinskey.

Theatrical legend. Totally forgotten today, the Albanian Jew Alexander Moissi was a star of the German stage in the 1920s. Max Reinhardt cast him as the first ever *Jedermann* at the Salzburg Festival; his celebrity was such that Ernst Lubitsch quipped: 'Herr Moissi, allow me to embrace you, so people can see that I am somebody.' A Moissi biography by Rüdiger Schaper has just appeared in the German Argon Verlag.

Multiculturalism. The Schauspielhaus, Graz, is staging Nestroy's *Einen Jux will er sich machen*. This play, adapted from John Oxenford's English farce *A Day Well Spent*, later returned to its country of origin as the Czech-born dramatist Tom Stoppard's *On the Razzle*. In the interim it had crossed the Atlantic as Thornton Wilder's *Merchant of Yonkers* (which in turn spawned the musical *Hello Dolly*).

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Music Review

Erik Levi

Since its launch in the mid 1980s, the Compact Disc has provided classical music lovers with an almost unparalleled choice of repertory, from a seemingly endless stream of alternative versions of standard works to material that is clearly aimed at the specialist. For those who avidly collected 78s and Long-Playing records, the CD has also proved a boon in offering listeners the chance to hear great performances of the past refurbished in wonderfully vivid sound. All too often, however, too many record companies have signally failed to provide a co-ordinated or logically structured programme of re-issues, but this should change with the recent launch of Universal Classics' budget-price Eloquence series which retails at under £5.

The label draws on a rich treasure chest of recordings of mainly familiar material from the vaults of Deutsche Grammophon, Philips and Decca. While some may be put off by the lack of any liner notes on the music, many of the performances can be regarded as definitive. Highlights from the initial releases include Artur Grumiaux's noble interpretation of the Beethoven Violin Concerto (4681142), Sir Colin Davis' electrifying Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique* with the LSO (4681272) and Rafael Kubelik's highly expressive Mahler 4, generously coupled with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's unforgettable singing of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (4696372).

For those who love Rachmaninov, the inclusion of Vladimir Ashkenazy's 1960s performances of the Four Piano Concertos (4674192 & 4674532) is especially gratifying. It's also heartening that chamber music is given considerable prominence with the Amadeus Quartet's fine Beethoven disc combining the first Razumovsky Quartet with the Harp (4696882), and a Mozart and Haydn programme from the marvellous Quartetto Italiano (4681152). Finally, for more adventurous fare, the coupling of Alban Berg's Violin Concerto and the Schoenberg Violin and Piano Concertos (4681272) is strongly recommended.

Reviews

For the record

JÜDISCHE OLYMPIASIEGER. SPORT EIN SPRUNGBRETT FÜR MINORITÄTEN, Paul Yogi Mayer, AGON Sportverlag, Kassel, 2000, £10.

Unlike accountancy, law and medicine, serious sport is not one of the occupations proverbially favoured by Jewish mothers for their exceptionally gifted sons. It may therefore come as something of a surprise that from 1896 to 1996, no fewer than 402 Olympic medals have been won by competitors who were Jews and Jewesses, as well as heroic representatives of the countries under whose flag they had entered the Games. A further seven can be added to this total for Sydney 2000.

Dr Paul Yogi Mayer MBE, 88, sportsman, writer, teacher and youth worker, traces the history of the Olympic Games in the context of Jewish participation and contribution - 'Jewish' not only in the relatively narrow sense of religious persuasion, but also in the wider sense of ethnicity, minority status and, since 1948, nationhood.

Beginning with the 1896 revival of the Olympics in Athens (where Jews accounted for 14 medals), he offers a fascinating insight into each of the subsequent Games, both from a general, as well as a personal, point of view. Assessing the first six events held until the First World War interrupted the sequence, he concludes that, significantly, for Jews, success in "modern sport represented a means of individual and social advancement." On the other hand, political prejudice and social discrimination survived the war years in sport as well as other spheres, as illustrated by the story-line of the Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*.

A detailed discussion of the Berlin Games of 1936 constitutes one of the highlights of Mayer's study. As an authoritative eyewitness, he represents a well-documented account of the historical background as well as the events before, during and after the Games. He interprets the significance of the happenings at the time - and in the light of the subsequent course of history - with clarity and precision. Perhaps the most poignant part of this chapter is the story of Helene Mayer, the 'non-Aryan' silver medallist who is pictured standing to attention giving the Nazi salute.

According to Dr Mayer, the London Games of 1948 were characterised by the fact that Jewish participation had, not

surprisingly, sunk to a very low level. This downward trend was, however, reversed by 'a new beginning' in the United States and the new State of Israel, as well as "in other countries to which German Jews had emigrated." Unfortunately confidence in the future was shaken to the core by the events in 1972. As the author points out, the Munich Games of that year were "of particular importance for Germany as well as for Jewish competitors." They also became the scene of "the most horrific incident in the history of the Olympic games" when 11 Israeli athletes were brutally murdered by Arab terrorists. The Games went on and many Jews won medals, including the American swimmer Mark Spitz, whose career, in the course of which he broke several world records, began as a 15-year-old in one of Israel's Maccabiah Games. Spitz's name appears, together with the names of all the other Jewish medallists - from the German swimmer Alfred Flatow, Athens 1896, to the French canoeist Miryam Fox-Jerushalmi, Atlanta 1996 - in the skilfully presented table of relevant data appended to the text.

An English version of the book, now in preparation, will deservedly widen its appeal.

David Maier

Fighters and visionaries

THE AVENGERS

Rich Cohen, Jonathan Cape, 2000

Rich Cohen's new book pays tribute to the Jewish resistance fighters whose contribution to the defeat of the Nazis has been insufficiently recognised. In the Rudnicki forest near Vilna where Jewish partisans had their base, he remarks: "A plaque identifies these dugouts as the home of Communists who fought the fascists. The Jews have been written out of history." Behind his account of exploits of a courage born equally of vision and desperation is a determination to make an imprint on posterity.

Cohen's acquaintance with 'The Avengers', or at least the three main protagonists, Abba Kovner, Vitka Kempner and Ruzka Korczak, the latter a cousin of his father's, gives the book a personal edge. He first met them as a boy of ten in 1977 and over the years heard sketches of deeds and happenings he felt compelled to bring to life. His extensively researched narrative is rich in action and moral purpose.

The three young Jews from Poland and their associates formed a branch of the Zionist 'Young Guard' in the Vilna ghetto. The tall, slender Vitka led the group of underground fighters who blew up a

German train, the first act of sabotage in occupied Europe. Her counterpart, the petite, dark-haired Ruzka became invaluable as an emissary and was sent to mandated Palestine to inform the Jews living there of the catastrophe in Europe. In the background was the frontman, Abba, a visionary and strategist consumed with a mission to resist and avenge.

More fascinating, perhaps, than Cohen's ably reconstructed landscape of struggle, breathtaking escapes, devastation and survival are conflicting moral perspectives that emanate from the attitudes and actions of various personalities. Ghetto leader Jacob Gens perceived the ghetto as a microcosm of the Jewish people; to preserve it any compromise with the German authorities seemed preferable to armed insurgence and certain death. David Ben Gurion, seemingly indifferent to the fate of the Jews in Europe, was single-minded in his objective of establishing a Jewish state.

Abba's plan to revenge the life of countless Jews by striking at random into the heart of Germany raises not only moral questions but calls into consideration the purpose of life itself. It is Meir Ya'ari, leader of The Young Guard in Palestine, who tells him: "You will never give up the war... Please allow us to teach you how to live a life we can give to our children." The moment of transformation when, in an Egyptian prison, Abba can focus for the first time on the future rather than the past, is particularly moving.

Emma Klein

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Distorting screen

THE MAN WHO CRIED.

Sally Potter, At selected cinemas.

An eagerly awaited film by the brilliant maker of *Orlando* and yet an almost complete disappointment. A potpourri of clichés and historical incongruities, *The Man who Cried* tells the story of a young Russian-Jewish girl, Feigele (Christina Ricci), who is separated from her cantor father and ends up with a family in England, where she becomes Susan.

Susan goes to Paris in the hope of fulfilling her musical talents, and shares a room with a Russian, non-Jewish, antisemitic, good-hearted dancer of loose morals. While still in Paris, she falls in love with Cesar, a gypsy horse-trainer (Johnny Depp, glamorous but uninspired). When Paris becomes unsafe for her, Susan travels to America, where she is reunited with her dying father, an ailing Hollywood tycoon.

This synopsis reflects an overloaded, inconsistent narrative that starts with an improbable pogrom in Russia in 1927(!). Later, deportation devastates the gypsy family in Paris, where another improbable character, a Jewish concierge, is likewise being deported. Although Sally Potter values historical accuracy and was extremely well advised in this area, she has unfortunately failed to override her artistic instincts, which go against the grain of these all too familiar historical events.

Nevertheless, the film offers some redeeming features. Feigele and her father speak and sing in correct and beautiful Yiddish - which leads us to Sally Potter's forte: her excellence in conveying music and dance, be it opera, *Folies Bergères*, moving lyrics in Yiddish, thoroughly researched gypsy folksong, chamber music, or delightful piano playing. Scattered here and there are moments of daring, convincing imagination and sensitive, precise camera work.

Whilst claiming that "the lessons of the Second World War don't seem to have been learnt", the director has failed in her declared mission because of loose structuring and historical negligence

Eva Urbach

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PROFILE

by Ruth Rothenberg

Richard Fry



Even in these days of longevity, a man like Richard Fry, who celebrated his 100th birthday last September, is a rarity. Now living in Balint House, he looks back on a tumultuous century in which he played his part as a distinguished journalist. And he can still give sharp advice and opinion on major contemporary issues.

He was Richard Freund when he was born in Berlin of Bohemian parents. Old enough to be called up for the Kaiser's army just as the First World War reached its end, he studied at Heidelberg and Berlin Universities. Interested in current affairs, he worked as a foreign political correspondent for a German publishing group in Rome in the early 1920s. Mussolini had just come to power and Richard saw the tyrannical violence of his Fascist regime at first hand, a foretaste of what was yet to come in Nazi Germany.

A few years later he moved to London, where he married a beautiful Hungarian artist's model, Katherine Maritz, who later worked in stage design with Oliver Messel. They married two weeks before the Wall Street financial crash of 1929 - a watershed which Richard confesses to remembering only hazily. Meanwhile he observed the rise of Hitler and was sacked by his publishing employer on the day Hitler came to power in 1933. As a liberal Jewish journalist, he was persona non grata on every count. But, although penniless, he at least had a safe base - "a tiny flat in Baker Street and a wife who knew how to be very economical."

The 1930s, years of recession and unemployment, produced a strange interlude when he was recommended to an Indian maharajah who was looking for PR assistance with his forthcoming golden jubilee celebrations. Despite the overwhelming experience of India at its most crowded, vibrant and brilliant at the celebration in Bikaner, Richard managed to meet modern-minded young politicians - including Nehru - and hear their aspirations for independence from the British Empire. He was later

able to respond to their wishes from a position of responsibility.

Back in London, he wrote two prophetic books on the deepening European crisis, *Zero Hour* in 1936 and *Watch Czechoslovakia* in 1937. He admired Czech President Dr Benes, whom he interviewed for his book, but the logic of the situation was inexorable.

With a growing journalistic reputation, he was invited to be a leader writer on *The Times*. But he responded to an offer from an old friend from his Rome days, Cecil Sprigge, who worked on the financial pages of the *Manchester Guardian*. The paper suited his liberal inclinations and he wrote occasional leaders advocating, among other things, Indian independence. Although initially deputy financial editor, he was soon appointed editor, as his colleagues were called up for active service. It was an interesting but abnormal period for financial activity and reporting.

Through his friendship with such figures as the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Richard learned about the secret transfer of gold reserves across the Atlantic to Canada. He met refugees who were to become future governors of

their countries' national banks. His discretion and judgment could always be counted on.

With war's end, his advice was sought in 1946 on the re-establishment of the Banque de France. He also visited the USA in 1947, talking to its financial and industrial leaders, and was deeply impressed by the country's economic boom. He was particularly interested to meet Germany's Nazi Reichsbank Governor, Dr Hjalmar Schacht, on a visit to London in 1955. He had followed Dr Schacht's operations and distrusted but respected him.

Britain meanwhile was suffering from exhaustion and austerity, as well as the Labour Government's financial inexperience. With the difficulty of evaluating renascent economic life, Richard Fry thought up the idea of regular national industrial surveys carried out by regional reporters. The *Manchester Guardian* Industrial Survey started in the early 1950s. Although fairly short-lived, it was the forerunner of many later surveys for up-to-date information on multiple areas of business activity. Richard Fry also got a journalistic scoop on European currency convertibility at the end of 1958 through his earlier Continental contacts.

When he retired in 1965 and was appointed CBE, London had already started on the path of financial regeneration. Fry continued to follow events closely and comment on them. From 1965 - 1975 he wrote for the specialist journal, *The Banker*. In 1970 he published *A Banker's World: The Revival of the City 1957-70* and in 1976 *Bankers in West Africa*. At the age of 89 he wrote a three-page assessment of world financial journalism for *The Economist* under the title *When Money Makes News and News Makes Money*.

Visitors still find him spry, knowledgeable, and with a shrewd judgment of today's financial world. As one regular visitor remarked: "Talking to him is like having a weekly history lesson."

INSIDE the AJR

West Midlands

A full meeting came to hear Ronald Channing, AJR's Head of Community Relations, talk about the future of the AJR and to discuss the UK's first Holocaust Memorial Day. When members were invited to express their opinions the consensus was that the day's title should also reflect remembrance, intended for all victims of genocide. AJR member and Belsen survivor Paul Oppenheimer delivered a dozen talks and interviews during the week in support of Holocaust Memorial Day in schools, universities, on the media and at a Birmingham civic ceremony.

Henny Rednall

Next meeting: 22 April - informal coffee and cake do.



Left to right, Corinne Oppenheimer, Helen Freedland, Ann Shearer, guest speaker Ronald Channing, chairman Henny Rednall, and Charlotte Robinson

Pinner

Richard Tauber was brought back to life by AJR member Hanna Graber as she recalled in fascinating detail his struggles and successes as singer and conductor. Her talk was interspersed with selections of the fabulous Tauber voice with extracts from his legendary repertoire, courtesy of Alf Keiles' selected recordings in German and English. Memorable music included 'Vilja' (from *The Merry Widow*), 'Love brings the dawn' and 'The Blue Danube.' As Paul Samet observed in his vote of thanks, there was keen audience participation in these 'Desert Island Discs'.

Walter Weg

Next meetings: 1 March - Susannah Alexander (Jewish Museum) on 'The History of Anglo-Jewry'. 5 April: Jack Davidoff (violin) & Jules Rubin (piano).

Leeds

In a talk spanning two and a half centuries, ranging from Mozart's 1778 Paris Symphony to Ravel's *Pavane*, David Fligg - lecturer at Leeds College of Music - gave a fascinating historical tour of Paris surprising even the cognoscenti of the streets of Paris and musicologists among us with new knowledge about the great city and its musical connections. 'Righteous gentiles' equivalents appear to have existed even during the French Revolution.

John Chillag

Next meeting: 29 April - Ronald Channing on 'The AJR - 60 years on.'

South London

Percy Gourgey MBE, a member of the Board of Deputies, spoke about the history of the Board, its present role and its international concerns. Founded in 1760 to present a loyal address to the newly crowned King George III on behalf of the Jews in the UK, it had to deal with a revival of ritual murder accusations in 1840 and to plead, in 1906, for an understanding of increased immigration of Jews escaping from the Russian pogroms. When, in 1917, its President opposed the Balfour Declaration, the Board forced his resignation and continued to support *Aliyah*. Mr Gourgey went on to trace the civilising Jewish influence in the Near East from Babylonian captivity to the Roman and Muslim conquests. He appealed for a historically and legally correct interpretation of events since 1947 to counteract current Arab propaganda.

ML Meyer

Next meeting: 15 March - Alf Keiles on the Jewish contribution to jazz.

Brighton

Members from all over Sussex met together informally at Ralli Hall and thoroughly enjoyed each other's company.

Fausta Shelton

Next meeting: 19 March - Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith on the Leitz family and how they helped Jews during the Nazi period.

KINDERTRANSPORT NEWS David Jedwab

Kinder return to Liverpool Street Station

A number of Kinder attended a gathering at London's Liverpool Street Station to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Organised by the Jewish Council for Racial Equality under the heading 'Unaccompanied Refugee Children: have the lessons been learned?' the event drew attention to over 3,000 unaccompanied children who reach the UK every year. Is the Kinder experience comparable to happenings today? As Bea Green pointed out in her moving speech recalling her arrival 62 years ago: "If you are white, you can escape into the crowd. If not, it must be awful."

What happened after their arrival does not constitute the happiest chapter. Some Kinder went to relatives, some to hostels run by adults, but others, particularly the younger ones from 4 years upwards, were picked out at the station as if at a cattle auction and taken to far away homes where they were adopted and converted to live in a totally strange social and religious environment. Even today the KT-AJR office receives requests from people for assistance in finding their true identity, to rediscover their original names and places of birth. The then Jewish community bears a heavy responsibility for failing to meet the spiritual and physical needs of their young co-religionists.

We would wish to encourage the compatriots of today's refugee arrivals, already living in Britain - some of whom have prospered - to mobilise financial, cultural and educational help so that their own nationals, the 'Kinder' of today, are not lost to their culture or their nation. Having granted asylum, the government should organise hostels run by responsible adults, including those of the newcomer's nationality, to speed up the integration of the asylum seekers.

New Year Honour

Hans Eilenberg has been appointed MBE for 'service to the ex-service community'. Born in Würzburg in 1918, he came to Britain in the late 1930s where he graduated with a BSc in civil engineering. He saw service in the British Army and served on War Pensions Committees and on BLESMA's executive council and is still involved in welfare work.

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Mon	5	KARD & GAMES KLUB
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Wed	7	Leslie Townsend, violin accompanied by piano
Thur	8	PURIM with Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Eston
Sun	11	DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon	12	KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue	13	Elizabeth Winton accompanied by David Gosling, piano
Wed	14	OPERA POPS - Accompanied by Margaret Gibbs, piano
Thur	15	CURTAIN UP - Accompanied by Michael Heaton, piano
Sun	18	DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon	19	KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue	20	Rebecca Ivey, soprano, accompanied by Andrew Mathews-Owen, piano
Wed	21	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	22	Guyatherie Peiris, soprano, accompanied by William Patrick, piano
Sun	25	DAY CENTRE OPEN - NO ENTERTAINMENT
Mon	26	KARD & GAMES KLUB
Tue	27	THE EDDY SIMMONS DUO
Wed	28	Elaine Gee, guitar
Thur	29	Francoise Geller & Gordon Griffin accompanied by Margaret Eaves, piano

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Announcements

Birthday

100th Birthday - **Elsbeth Smith** (née Dunkel), born Berlin 12.2.1901. Tel: 020 8904 1511 (London).

Deaths

Reiner. Isabella Reiner born Vienna 26 June 1909, died peacefully London 11 January 2001. Sadly missed by family and friends.

Seglow. Dorothy Seglow (née Dörte Koch) beloved mother and grandmother, died at home 21 November, aged 84. Sadly missed by family, friends, colleagues, patients.

Wittelson. Paula Wittelson passed away peacefully on 27 December. Mourned by Marion and all other friends.

In memoriam

Martin and Lotte Reichenbach and the 281 Jews of Dresden, who were deported from Hellenberg camp and murdered in Auschwitz that very night 3rd/4th March 1943.

Classified

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

Day Centre

Shirley Lever at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. New Clothes for sale, dresses, underwear, cardigans, etc. **Wednesday 14 March 9.45-11.45am.**

Amanda Goldring at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre will be selling small gifts and a selection of outerwear etc. **Thursday 29 March 9.45-11.45am.**

AJR AGM
Sunday 24 June
2001

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Science Notebook Prof Michael Spiro

Uranium and World Events

Once again uranium, the heaviest metal found on Earth, has come into the news. Shells coated with depleted uranium had been used by NATO in the Gulf and Balkan conflicts in order to penetrate enemy armour. However, the impacts produced toxic and mildly radioactive dust and concerns were raised in the media about the health effects on those who had inhaled or swallowed such dust. Uranium has figured prominently, in peace and war, throughout the 20th century. It was discovered in the mineral pitchblende by Klapproth in 1789 and named after the recently discovered planet Uranus.

Over a century later, in 1896, Henri Becquerel found that uranium gave off radiation which affected a photographic plate. Soon afterwards, Marie and Pierre Curie isolated from pitchblende the even more radioactive metal radium (later shown to be formed as part of the slow radioactive decay of the uranium). It was to extract the small amounts of radium (once used in cancer treatment) that uranium ores were initially mined. The uranium was a useless by-product, although some was employed as a colouring agent for ceramics and glass.

All this changed after 1939. Hahn and Strassmann in Berlin discovered that bombarding uranium with neutrons unexpectedly produced the lighter metal barium. Puzzled, Hahn wrote to Lise Meitner, his bright Jewish co-worker who had fled to Sweden. She and her fellow refugee Otto Frisch then realised that the uranium nucleus must have split apart (fission). It was soon shown that for every neutron absorbed by the uranium, more than two others were

released during fission. A self-sustaining chain reaction would therefore be possible inside a big enough lump of uranium, releasing huge amounts of energy. Aware that this could lead to an atomic bomb, refugee scientists spearheaded a drive to develop one before Nazi Germany did. Initial developments were carried out in Britain but after America entered the war in 1941, the project was transferred to USA with its greater resources (see *Hitler's Gift*, reviewed in December).

A major problem which was eventually overcome was the separation of the two forms (called isotopes) of natural uranium. The metal exists mainly (99.27%) in the isotopic form U-238 while only 0.72% is present as the isotope U-235. (U is the chemical symbol for uranium; 238 and 235 refer to the relative weights of the two nuclei.) Only U-235 is directly fissionable, and to concentrate enough of this minor constituent required a special chemical engineering plant. Uranium is called depleted when most of the more radioactive U-235 has been removed from it.

On 6 August 1945 the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, with well known consequences. The first atomic powered submarine was built in 1955 and the first nuclear powered electricity generator in 1957. Over 20% of Britain's electricity is now supplied by nuclear power, and a much higher percentage in France, Switzerland, Japan, and other countries. The fission of 1 gram of uranium liberates as much energy as burning three tons of coal and, whatever the drawbacks of nuclear power, it produces no greenhouse gases.

Search Notices

Samuel Katz, known as Freddie. Born 21 January 1923, brother of Grete (born 1 October 1920). Son of Marcus and Malvine Katz from Vienna. Grete left Vienna to come to England in 1939. Married Josef Teitelbaum, changed name to Teba. Please contact Grete's daughter urgently if you are related or know his whereabouts. Sue Kushner, 79 Brook Ave., Edgware, Mddx. HA8 9UZ. Tel 020 8958 6793. Email: susiekush@hotmail.com

Flusser. Liesel (Lieselotte) and Susie (Suzanne), twins, born 1928 in Prague. Came to England in 1939 and lived in Bankton House, Crawley Don, Sussex in 1940. Known to have lived in Edinburgh in 1995 according to Anita Grosz's list. Sought by Jan Rocek (formerly Kurt Robitschek), their mother's cousin. Please write to 2636 Laurel Lane, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2202, USA. Tel: 847 251 1592. Email: rocek@uic.edu

Nathan Lichtmann-Holler, born Cologne ca. 1920, pupil at the Jawne Gymnasium. Left Germany ca. 1938 for Brussels. May have escaped to Britain in the early war years. **Ruth Oppenheimer**, born Cologne, pupil at the Jawne Gymnasium. Left Germany ca. 1938 for London. Anyone who has known or knows anything about either person, please contact Baruch Alon (formerly Schleien), 21 Rosenstreet, Ramat-Gan 52224, Israel. Tel: 00972 3631 3080. Fax: 00972 3631 9091. Email: reali99@yahoo.com

German-Jewish ex-serviceman who was involved with Bomber Command during WW2, or Kindertransportee who fought in any branch of the armed forces, or anyone knowing a like character, sought by script writer who would love to hear your story! Please contact Jim Richardson, 21 Mayeswood Road, Grove Park, London SE12 9RR. Tel: 07930-184522. Email: jimrich@tinyworld.co.uk

Stefan Bukowitz, a valued long-term contributor to *AJR Information*, has died a few days short of his 90th birthday. He was born into a middle-class family in Vienna, attended a *Gymnasium* and went on to learn the skin trade, first in Leipzig and then Vienna. Widowed prematurely, his father emigrated to London where Stefan joined him after the Anschluss.

Stefan Bukowitz

Interned in 1940 Stefan was shipped out to Australia and, on his release, joined the Pioneer Corps. He served for four years and after demob resumed working with his father in the skin trade. Peace permitted him to indulge his interests, including a love of music and the theatre.

In 1948 he married Hilde who was a

professional singer at that time. Later they became aware of the openings provided by the growing tourist trade, and both qualified as a 'Blue Badge Tour Guides'. After 1975 Stefan took up tour guiding full-time. A year earlier he had started to write *SB's Column* for our journal a task he discharged meticulously for over a quarter of a century. He will be missed.

The exclusivity of death

Richard Grunberger

The televised Holocaust Day ceremony was so moving and dignified that it ought to have silenced those who criticised the very concept of an annual commemoration. Its success ought not, however, blind us to the fact that the precise nature of the event at Central Hall, Westminster, left several issues unresolved. The most fundamental of them is whether the *Shoah* was unique or fitted into a broader pattern of mega-atrocities. Here, alas, considerations of what is true, and what is palatable to public opinion, are in conflict. The public would presumably view any insistence on the uniqueness of the *Shoah* as a form of Jewish exclusivity, re-affirming the much-resented claim to 'chosen people' status.

The organisers of the ceremony at Central Hall resisted the Armenian claim to have been victims of Turkish genocide. This has been criticised as the UK's supine response to pressure from a NATO ally - but it needs to be borne in mind that the Turkish massacres of Armenians in 1915 were different from the Nazi 'Final Solution'. For one, since the Turks were religious, but not racist, fanatics some Armenian women and children were handed over as chattels to Ottoman officials; for another the US ambassador and the French Navy organised effective humanitarian intervention. That is not to deny that what happened in Syria was a horrendous crime - for which no punishment was ever exacted. Twenty-odd years later Hitler cynically remarked 'Who now remembers the Armenians?' One person whom a visit to the area prompted to jog the memory of the world was Franz Werfel. He viewed what the Turks had done to the Armenians as foreshadowing what the Germans were about to do to the Jews - and penned *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* as, simultaneously, a chronicle of a half-forgotten atrocity and a warning of one yet to come.

Strictly speaking, genocide means the killing of a *genus*, or race, of people.

Therefore Pol Pot's murder of a million Cambodian 'capitalists' and intellectuals cannot be so classified since killers and killed belonged to the same nationality. Nor does the savage Nazi persecution of homosexuals fit into the category of genocide. Gays do not constitute a genetic entity; they appear in every racial group and 'recur' in every generation. Consequently they can never be exterminated, as the Jews of Europe nearly were. It is equally debatable whether the dead in recent Balkans conflicts 'qualify' as victims of genocide. In the 1940s Croats committed atrocities against Serbs - and fifty years later the Serbs behaved similarly towards Bosnian Muslims. In neither case did the governments responsible intend to liquidate the entire 'enemy' population. Which only leaves the Tutsis of Rwanda and the Gypsies as victims of genocide in the true sense of the word. But even those two cases are not quite comparable to that of European Jewry. One doesn't want to quibble about statistics - but the fact remains that present-day visitors to the Czech Republic, Slovakia or Romania will find far more evidence of a continuing Gypsy, than Jewish, presence in those countries.

As regards the Tutsis, Hutu atrocities were truly genocidal, but they still had their roots in the long-established pattern of inter-tribal conflict that earned the Congo region the soubriquet 'the Heart of Darkness'. Though it may be ethnocentric - as well as undiplomatic - to say so, I am left with the impression that the *Shoah* was unique. And what made it unique was the 'philosophical' intention behind it. Hitler, the Catholic-educated arch-pagan, intended to create a world from which the kernel of all religions, i.e. morality, was totally expunged. One of his most revealing *obiter dicta* was 'conscience is a Jewish invention'. Seeing the Jews as what he would term 'germ carriers' of the morality enshrined in Mosaic Law, he wanted them wiped off the surface of the globe.

Newsround

New Ukrainian inquiry

Lord Janner is asking the Home Secretary to open a new investigation into the existence in Britain of over 1,000 Ukrainians, members of the 14th SS Division Galizien during WW2, some of whom are alleged to have committed war crimes. His request follows the Yorkshire TV documentary *SS in Britain*, which disclosed new research on massacres in Poland.

Lithuanian extradition application

Anton Gecas, an 83-year-old Lithuanian living in Scotland since 1947, could be extradited to Lithuania eight years after a Scottish civil court was satisfied that he committed war crimes. The Lithuanian government is to present new evidence to be used in the proposed prosecution. In the light of the case, the Home Office is reviewing procedures intended to hasten the extradition of suspected war criminals.

Hungarian accord

An agreement between the Hungarian Government and Hungary's Jewish communities records the Government's support for Holocaust education in schools, commemoration of Holocaust victims and assistance with the preservation of Jewish memorial sites, including cemeteries. The Government has also given an assurance that it will fund a public Holocaust memorial.

Wallenberg deal was rejected

A Swedish newspaper has suggested that Raoul Wallenberg could have been saved if the Swedish Government had accepted a Russian proposal that he be exchanged for Soviet immigrants in Sweden. The then Foreign Minister is said to have refused, disapproving of "trading in human beings."

Too old for prison

Maurice Papon, convicted for his part in deporting Jews from France during WW2, is applying to the European Court of Human Rights to be released from prison on the grounds of old age.

South African Jewish Museum opens

Nelson Mandela opened South Africa's Jewish Museum and paid tribute to the role of Jewish lawyers during the more recent apartheid era, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*. The Museum traces the history of, and contribution made by, the country's Jewish community.