

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

A sense of déjà vu

It seems only a little while ago that we celebrated the onset of a new century (and millennium) and already the sensation of *déjà vu* is overwhelming. On recent Mondays and Tuesdays the deserted station concourse at Waterloo has evoked the Winter of Discontent, and the sight of yellow-armletted RMT pickets on TV stirred memories of Scargill. The other Friday night the BBC Symphony Orchestra performed John Adam's *The Death of Klinghoffer*, an opera about PLO terrorists' hijack of the cruise liner *Achille Lauro* in 1985. This work, in the words of the *New Statesman*, 'refuses to dehumanise the hijackers who present themselves as idealists and not vandals'.

In point of fact, Palestinian terrorists have as little humanity as the *Vehme* murderers of interwar Germany. Suicide bombers who targeted a teenage hop on Tel Aviv seafront and a *batmitzvah* party at Hadera rank no higher on the moral scale than Rudolf Hoess or Martin Bormann. When Jeanette Winterson, injecting the odour of sanctity into BBC's *Question Time*, condemns the US detention of al-Qa'eda fighters at Guantanamo Bay as revenge and counsels mercy and Christian forgiveness, she has as little purchase on reality as did her confrère Aldous Huxley in 1937. At that time, Germany had been re-arming for years, and had already bombed Guernica, yet the eminent novelist called on his 70,000-strong audience in Trafalgar Square to pledge themselves never to take up arms.

In 1967 Charles de Gaulle visited Montreal and urged the Québécois to break away from Anglophone, US-influenced Canada. It was his way of getting even with the Anglo-Americans for having put him in their debt by liberating France from the Nazis in 1944. In a similar manner, the unholy Pilger-

Pinter-Self trinity demonises America as *the* global terrorist after the US has interdicted the terrorist machinations of Gaddafi, Saddam Hussain, Milosevic and bin Laden.

The perverted logic summed up in Franz Werfel's title *Not the Murderer, but the Victim is Guilty* takes one back to 1930s Austria. At the time, Chancellor Schuschnigg was corralling Nazi terrorist



Charles de Gaulle

suspects at the Wöllersdorf detention centre. The kidglove treatment meted out to the detainees gave rise to the spoof news item 'The Wöllersdorf inmates have at last stopped beating up their guards.'

At Mazar-i-Sharif Taliban prisoners had, after surrendering, gone on to kill some of their captors, while at Kandahar Hospital a ward was, until very recently, still controlled by wounded, but heavily armed, al-Qa'eda fighters. It was to prevent further incidents of this sort that the US transferred potential mega-murderers to its facility off Cuba. The widespread expressions of concern about their welfare put one in mind of the character in FN Simpson's absurdist play *A Resounding Tinkle* who knits anti-glare goggles for swooping birds of prey.

But the supreme *déjà vu* is the way in which Islam, which has existed for about 1,300 years, replicates thirteenth-century Christianity's virulent animosity towards Judaism - the progenitor of both faiths. The thirteenth Christian century saw the introduction of the yellow badge, the rise of the ritual murder myth, Crusader pogroms in the Rhineland, and the expulsion from England.

Currently, the Muslim world demonises not only Israel, but Jews as such. The very same Muslim Society of Great Britain which complains about Islamophobia in the UK charges the Jewish State, in which a million Arabs live and hundreds attend university, with genocide. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir cites George Soros as proof that the Jews manipulate the world's money markets to their benefit and to the detriment of developing countries. Hamas, the clergy-led Palestinian terror group, has incorporated the tsarist forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* into its charter.

One day after the atrocity of 11 September the Saudi Ministry of Information dubbed it a Mossad operation and compounded this Goebbels-style perversion of the truth by alleging that not a single Jew had been in the twin towers when the hijacked planes struck them. Saudi Arabia is the guardian of the Muslim holy places and protector of the purity of the faith enforced by a religious police. It was also the spiritual and financial source of the Islamic fanaticism which took root in Afghanistan in the form of the Taliban. In other words, it is to Islam what Rome was to medieval Christendom - seat of the Popes, headquarters of the Inquisition, initiator of the Crusades. What makes the sensation of *déjà vu* absolutely complete is that the Royal House of Saudi is no whit less corrupt than the medieval Papacy!

Leftwing antisemitism - an idea whose time has come

Richard Grunberger

Pierre Joseph Proudhon was a nineteenth-century French socialist (with anarchist leanings) best remembered for coining the slogan 'Property is theft!' In reality, he did not want *all* property abolished, drawing the line at peasants' small holdings and artisans' workrooms. The property owners he had in his sights were the entrepreneurs who set up factories staffed by ill-paid proletarians.

The advent of no-holds-barred capitalism was an upheaval behind which Proudhon discerned Jews as the main driving force and beneficiaries. (In a similar vein, the Jewish-descended Karl Marx alleged that Judaism embodied the spirit of capitalism.) Another ideologue of that persuasion was the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, who fought alongside Richard Wagner in the Dresden 'Revolution' of 1849.

But just as the Slavophile Bakunin could not long collaborate with the Teutomaniac Wagner, so socialism and antisemitism were incompatible. Over a century ago the leader of German social democracy, August Bebel, pithily dubbed antisemitism 'the socialism of idiots'.

However, today one is tempted to rephrase that as 'anti-Zionism is the antisemitism of media hacks'. On 10 January the *New Statesman* revealed the behind-the-scenes manipulations of wealthy Zionists like the arms trader Shlomo Zabłudowicz and Lord Weidenfeld - manipulators whom the journal, truthfully, adjudged rather ineffectual. But the weekly - over which the pro-Zionist Richard Crossman once presided - also launched the concept of 'Big Jewry', thus conjuring up the image of a closely knit group of moneybags influencing Western policy in favour of Israel. What, one asks, is talk of 'Big Jewry' other than a leftwing rehash of the tsarist-inspired *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*?

'Resistance and Rescue' theme for University's Holocaust Memorial Day

Ronald Channing

For the second year in succession, the support of the AJR enabled the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex and its director, Professor Edward Timms, to promote a specially devised programme of survivor testimony, lectures and film with which to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. This year's theme was 'Resistance and Rescue, then and now'. Students and members of staff participated from Sussex and the neighbouring campus of the University of Brighton, as well as sixth-formers and teachers from the city.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Professor Alasdair Smith, Vice Chancellor of Sussex University, and Sir David Watson, Director of Brighton University. Chana Moshenska, Director of Educational Programmes at the Centre, introduced the eight-hour programme which she had devised with her colleague John Jacobs. A particularly warm welcome was extended by Prof Timms to Mrs Hilde Kochmann, widow of Max Kochmann, who, in his capacity as chairman of fundraising for the Centre, did so much to secure its foundation and enhance its reputation.

In a session devoted to survivor testimony, Trude Levi, one of very few Hungarians who survived Auschwitz-Birkenau, gave a graphic description of the dehumanising brutality and extermination inflicted on her family and the eventual sheer luck of her own emancipation when, on a death march, even her exceptional strength to continue living had finally deserted her. Freddie Knoller, who quit annexed Austria for Belgium and France, was the main speaker in the session on political resistance. His own improbable survival, heaving heavy sacks in a rubber factory at



Trude Levi

Auschwitz-Monowitz, resulted from his compassion to an older fellow Jewish prisoner.

Discussion group topics covered spiritual resistance, photography, anti-racist and Holocaust education, and present-day resistance and rescue. *The Power of Humanity*, a new film on the impromptu rescue of 689 mainly Jewish Czech children on Kindertransport, was shown. Nicholas Winton, with limited but dedicated support from Eleanor Rathbone and others, managed to bring these children to Britain, but the outbreak of war brought the immediate cessation of further Kindertransports and the consequent loss of children's lives.

A lunchtime concert was held on the campus of Imperial College, London for students and staff, in association with the AJR, to mark Holocaust Memorial Day for the second year. The concert was preceded by a short exposition of the day's significance and the role of the AJR by Theo Marx, a former AJR chairman and an alumnus of the college.



Mayor of Camden Cllr Roger Robinson recites the *Kaddish* memorial prayer, by the Holocaust Memorial in Camden Town Hall, to the memory of the victims who include Dutch members of his own family, during the Council ceremony marking Holocaust Memorial Day. Kindertransport President Bertha Leverton delivered a short address on the arrival of the Kinder in Britain in 1938 and 1939.

PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

AJR Journal

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Eros in exile

Richard Grunberger

We live in an age where anyone wanting to publicise something new - whether it be a mobile phone, a cookery book or an arts event - is well advised to envelop it in a sexual ambience. Bikini-clad lovelies draped over shiny new cars at the Motor Show are one example of this; another was the publicity for the launch of Amanda Foreman's biography of *Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire*. Posters showed the apparently naked young author standing behind a chest-high pillar formed by stacked-up copies of her book.

When we consider means of drawing attention to the forthcoming AJR 60th anniversary exhibition 'Continental Britons', such eye-catching gimmicks are obviously out. But although considerations of good taste preclude the visual presentation of erotically tinged material, we need not eschew the literary approach. Why should we be inhibited about stating in print that, just as some refugees were great scientists - or art historians, or publishers - other were great lovers.

A few even aspired to the status of sex symbols. Foreign-accented screen heroes like Anton Walbrook (*Dangerous Moonlight*) and Paul Henreid (*Casablanca*) stirred female romantic yearnings, while the sight of Lily Palmer in *The Rake's Progress* triggered surges of testosterone.

But to return to the above-mentioned literary approach: I wonder how many people know that three recently famous British women writers - of admittedly varying degrees of fame - had refugee husbands or lovers. Outstanding among them was, of course, Iris Murdoch. Her consecutive emotional involvement with two refugee intellectuals early on in her career surely accounts for the fact that Jewish gurus figure prominently in

her *oeuvre*. The first of them was the ailing Prague-born ethnographer Franz Bärmann Steiner, whose premature death affected her deeply. Steiner was succeeded in her affections by the writer (and subsequent Nobel Prize winner) Elias Canetti, to whom she dedicated her second novel, *The Flight from the Enchanter*. The married Canetti was something of a 'daemon lover', whom Iris Murdoch's husband, and eventually biographer, John Bailey so disliked that he dubbed him the 'Hampstead monster'. (Another refugee with monstrous tendencies was Arthur Koestler - but the less said about him the better.)

Jan Struther was a typical Establishment figure. Daughter of a Scots Liberal MP, a bohemian blue-stocking with husband, children and a rose-strewn country cottage, she wrote a chronicle of English middle class existence in peace and war, which, adapted for the screen as *Mrs Miniver*, helped to hasten America's entry into the Second World War. In those troubled times she met and fell in love with the refugee architect Adolf Placzek, who post-war became second husband to 'Mrs Miniver', legendary symbol of English womanhood.

Another English - actually Anglo-Irish - woman writer-cum-journalist who chose a refugee husband was Lady Caroline Blackwood. Being the daughter of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, she was socially even a notch above Jan Struther. But then she married none other than Lucian Freud, scion of Jewry's leading dynasty founded by his eminent grandfather. And with Sigmund Freud - aka *der Lustlümml* (lascivious lout) *von der Berggasse* - who placed Eros at the centre of human existence, we are back at the starting point of this piece.

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Combating the 'big silence': Hitler and the man-in-the-street

'How was it possible for Hitler and the Nazi movement to win the "hearts" of millions of ordinary Germans?' This fundamental question remains unanswered despite the enormous volume of research on the Nazi era, Stephan Marks told a well attended international conference on genocide organised by the Wiener Library on Holocaust Memorial Day.

Dr Marks is the director and founder in 1998 of the Freiburg-based research project *History and Memory*. Among questions the project is seeking to answer are: to what extent do members of the 'first generation' remain influenced by the experience of the Nazi years, and how do they express this experience in

communication with 'second-generation' members? In an attempt to answer these questions, members of the research project are presently interviewing individuals who committed themselves to the cause of National Socialism as members of the NSDAP, the SS or other Nazi organisations.

The research project emanates from the current increase in neo-Nazi activities in Germany and the seeming ineffectiveness of prohibiting far-right organisations. Furthermore, educating people about the Holocaust appears to have reached its limits: many young people have little knowledge about Hitler's persecution of the Jews, even though this topic is widely taught in

German schools. The project's findings will be applied in both schools and in work with senior citizens. The aim is to improve communication between the generations so as to overcome what has been described as the 'big silence' of German society regarding its Nazi past.

While research on the *History and Memory* project remains ongoing, Dr Marks singled out a major element in ordinary Germans' acceptance of Hitler: the shame many citizens felt at Germany's perceived humiliation in the wake of the First World War. Hitler, Dr Marks said, offered them 'redemption' - relief from their shame through the possibility of inflicting humiliation on others.

HS

A sister's will to power

'Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth would have been better advised to stay in Paraguay rather than return to Germany to promote her brother's reputation', Carol Diethe told Club 43 in its current lecture series.

Dr Diethe, who has published a number of books on the German philosopher, was highly critical of the manipulative manner in which Elisabeth promoted the 'Nietzsche industry'. Having returned to Germany from Paraguay in the 1890s following the death of her husband, an avowed antisemite, Elisabeth devoted herself uncompromisingly to advancing her brother's reputation. In 1901, a year after Friedrich's death, she published his so-called master work *The Will to Power*, a compilation she had made of his writings.

Elisabeth Foerster-Nietzsche outlived her brother by 35 years. An exceptionally strong-willed woman, she surrounded herself by acolytes. At the same time, she allowed herself to be used by Hitler regime propagandists. She thus effectively alienated many potential followers in both Germany and the English-speaking world.

The balance sheet was firmly against Elisabeth, Dr Diethe concluded. Her single-minded devotion to the cause of her brother's writings ultimately proved counter-productive: there was little doubt

that Nietzsche's works would in any case have reached the attention of the public. 'She ought to have stayed in Paraguay', Dr Diethe concluded wryly.

HS

Basic care shortfall for the elderly

Failure to obtain basic care and support at home and a shortage of residential care places are endangering the welfare and longevity of a million elderly people in Britain. A report on social policy and ageing from Help the Aged revealed that only the most desperate sought help from local authority social services, but underfunding and lack of availability often left many of them without any support at all.

Of the million people who were receiving some form of social care, most were over 80 and many were physically or mentally disabled, though half were still in their own homes and half in residential homes. A shortage of suitable care homes for elderly people posed a problem for those about to be discharged from hospital as they could no longer be expected to cope in their own homes. It also meant the continued blocking of 700,000 beds in NHS hospitals urgently needed for other patients. Additional government funding has yet to bring about any significant improvement.

RDC

Pension for Holocaust-related health damage

The AJR now has the services of one of URO'S (United Restitution Organisation) lawyers in Germany who will represent clients on a modest 'success only' fee basis.

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For further information, please contact Hilde Ambrose at the AJR on tel no. 020 7431 6161.

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A child refugee in England

Martha Blend



kitchen was small and poorly equipped by modern standards and all it housed was a sink with a cold tap, a table and chairs, a large 'easiwork' cupboard and a cooker islanded behind the door with never a work surface near. In a passage outside the kitchen was a safe where perishable foods were kept, and for most of the year the temperature in that spot would have given points to a refrigerator. In summer a tiled well in the cellar provided some additional coolness. There was also a living room, but this was a misnomer. Its solid mahogany table and hide three-piece suite were only pressed into service when we had visitors. The kitchen was the place where we lived and had our being.

I associate coming home from school on Friday with steamy windows and the smell of chicken soup, its flavour mingling with the carrot and onion and a leafy vegetable called 'soup greens'. My job was to sew up the neck of the chicken, which had been stuffed with flour, pepper and fat to give a gritty texture. At other times there would be blood-red borsht with a few potatoes to take the edge off a sharp appetite.

Another familiar sight was a basin covered with a cloth which would be removed reverently from time to time and the contents inspected. Inside the basin was the dough for one of auntie's renowned yeast cakes, left to double its bulk in a warm corner. There were also things preserved and pickled such as cucumbers, sour and garlicky, an excellent foil to fresh rye bread and a good spread of butter (we hadn't heard of cholesterol then), elderberry wine and cherry brandy. Outside, the world was tearing itself apart, but in auntie's kitchen were sweet and savoury foods to tempt the palate and lift the spirits.

Many who came to England on the Kindertransport have horror stories to tell of winters spent in cold chalets or of being treated as servants by the host family. Theirs are not emotions 'recollected in tranquillity' but are of a bitterness which seems to include all British Jews who fostered children. I don't doubt the reality of their stories, but I feel it's only fair to explain that my experiences were rather different.

Of course, like most of the others, I suffered the traumas of separation (at nine years old) from my parents, whom I never saw again, having to learn a new language fast, and adapting to the total strangers who had come into my life, as well as the impact of a long war. But what I did have was the comforting presence of the childless Jewish couple who had agreed to foster me. They were not ideal parents. Though a poorly educated couple with a restricted knowledge of the world, they had a shrewd eye for the basics and a kindness which enabled them to see me through school and university without any financial reward other than the share of my scholarship grant which I gave them for my board and lodging.

My strongest memories of my foster mother - I called her 'auntie' - are connected with her cooking. Her

European heritage visits?

Ronald Channing



Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Berlin

The AJR is considering the organisation of occasional group visits to European cities of special historical and personal interest, to take place over an extended weekend, beginning in the autumn.

The project is aimed primarily at the children of refugee and survivor members, although more active senior members may also wish to participate if they can manage the necessary walking and are accompanied by sons or daughters who will accept responsibility for their travel and welfare.

Among the destinations that have already been suggested are Berlin - with its recently opened Jewish Museum - Vienna, Prague, Warsaw, Crakow and Budapest. All tours would leave and return to London by air. It is intended that a coach would be available throughout at the destination, accommodation would be in city-centre superior quality hotels, and tour guides would be included in the itinerary chosen specifically to satisfy the particular interests of the AJR. Charges for each visit would be based on the prevailing costs and would be published on the opening of booking.

If you or your children would favour joining a like-minded group returning to places of our former European heritage, and can meet the conditions applied, please write a note to Ronald Channing at head office, or email him on ronald.channing@ajr.org.uk expressing your interest and suggesting the venues you would wish to visit. (At this early stage, your communication will be regarded as purely advisory, giving an indication of the possible level of support.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

RIGA MEMORIAL

Sir - On 29 November three Kinder travelled to Riga. We did not know one another except via telephone. We met at Gatwick; an hour after meeting, we felt as if we had known one another all our lives. This turned out to be one of the very few blessings on a dreadful four days.

A thousand people stood on solid ice watching representatives from all the different towns whence men, women and children had been sent to Riga to die. Looking about me, I could not see one person weeping; the pain was too great for tears. I had hoped after 62 years to bury my family and put an end to the pain of mourning alone. This did not happen. We walked on mass graves never knowing if this was the grave that held our loved ones. I have never experienced such pain; after more than a month, I still cannot cry. I have this block of ice inside me that will not melt. Despite the pain and agony of the event, there is no way I could or would have missed this, a belated burial.

To all the people who elected me as their representative to obtain some information, I apologise. I have done my best and will write to each one as soon as I am able. With many thanks to Erich Herzl, without whose hard work this memorial would never have been erected. A journey never to be forgotten and never to be repeated!

Ellen K Davis
West Glamorgan

PURIFICATION BY FIRE

Sir - In the 1930s Britain caved in to Arab demands and restricted immigration to a trickle at a time when the need was greatest. Those who were denied access perished. As history later proved, there would have been room for hundreds of thousands of German and Austrian Jews. Thus, the Palestinians are responsible for their deaths.

The war changed nothing, presumably because oil flowed in Arab veins. Postwar, survivors had to stew in displaced persons' camps for up to five years. For longer if the Jews hadn't taken their future into their own hands, fought all comers and given them a bloody nose.

Frank Bright
Ipswich, Suffolk

Sir - I see the anti-Afghan war lobby as expressing diffuse and, often, exaggerated apprehensions but, if the Taliban really are defeated, the war is now a purely American construct, motivated by the desire for revenge and apparently regardless of the cost on the ground and of any other opinions, including those of the interim government and its sponsors.

Is there any hope that, at the end of it all, with or without 'Daisy-cutters', the USA will not, once again, turn away from the long-term problem of reconstruction? Will it, as present talk threatens, treat the war as a practical exercise for similar action elsewhere? Above all, will the USA really care whether or not democracy is established in Kabul? History suggests that, unless and until its 'interests' (George W Bush's template) are seen to be threatened, it will not give a damn.

Alan S Kaye
Chalfont St Giles

Sir - One admires the journalistic proficiency of the editors of the *AJR Journal*, which merits a much wider audience than just the immigrant community. Professor Baruch Brent seems unable to comprehend the concept of Zionism, and thinks one has to live there in order to voice an opinion. Surely he realises that the Government of Israel could not have done more for the 'peace process' than agreeing to all Arafat's whims, only to

be rewarded with the *intifada*. Jews too have a right to defend themselves. Self-hating Jews will always find a reason to hate themselves.

Shmuel Gelle
Hendon

Sir - I had hoped that my letter (January issue) would provoke some rational discussion of the complex issues underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Alas, I fear that nothing much has been added to the sum of human wisdom and knowledge, except to confirm my fears that some fellow Jews are so deeply committed to Israel that they can no longer see the wood for the trees.

I am writing this on Holocaust Memorial Day, having lit a candle in memory of my family. I wonder what my parents, had they survived, would have made of the present debate. I would like to think that their innate humanity would have made them share my feelings of revulsion at what is being done by the Sharon government.

I am deeply concerned about HE Reiner's comments. Whilst he doesn't accuse me of antisemitism he does accuse me of something that is rather worse - propagating "the elimination of the Jews living in Israel as an answer to the world's problems". Did I really write that? Such gross misrepresentation is probably actionable, but in writing such arrant nonsense he is providing substance for my case.

L B Brent
London N19

Sir - The February issue gave me the unfortunate impression that the journal had turned into an official and obedient tool of the Israeli government, and was now being edited in Tel Aviv! I take great exception to this one-sidedness, which is the barrier to peace.

P.S. Since you write such a lot in the journal these days, I should have thought that it would gain in richness and variety if you allowed your contributors to retain their own writing style.

Peter Zander
London W1

Sir - Thank you for your articles in the *AJR Journal* clarifying the situation in Israel and identifying our enemies, including our own co-religionists. God protect us from our friends. From our enemies we can protect ourselves.

*Ella and Alfons Silverman
Stanmore*

ENGLISH-SPEAKING (DIS)UNION

Sir - You do yourself no favours by mixing a few reasonable arguments with a large dose of personal abuse (Will Self, Ken Clark, Diane Abbott, Peter Hain, Ben Bradshaw) and by referring to suicide bombing as 'the lowest level of bestiality'.

I have always recognised your merit in making the *AJR Journal* come alive and I was pleased to witness the recognition of this when Lord (Claus) Moser made a well-deserved presentation to you on the occasion of this journal's 60th anniversary. But please, Sir, may we have fewer expressions of personal bias and especially of the kind of bile as expressed in the above article. You are entitled to such views in your private life, but in print they would be more suited to the tabloid press than to our (and your) journal, which caters so well for a broad spectrum of mostly rational and reasonably informed readers.

*Ken Ambrose
London SE3*

OUTRAGEOUS FORMULATION

Sir - Given the 'Kindertransport' which brought thousands of Jewish children and teenagers to this country, and given the 'Kitchener camp' for Jewish men from German-occupied territory, many of them artisans with no knowledge of English, I find it irresponsible of *AJR Journal* to print Louise London's outrageous formulation ("one more chapter in official British inhumanity and callousness towards asylum seekers"), as quoted in Anthony Grenville's article 'Were the refugees to be

repatriated in 1945?' (December 2001, p.5).

*K Ostberg
Barnet*

HITLER'S LOSS

Sir - There can never be a conclusive answer to the question whether continental refugees have done better in Britain than they would have done in their countries of origin. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most of us 'fell upstairs'. Why? Because escape was itself a grisly form of natural selection; because emigration sharpens one's competitive edge (just think of having to master a second language and a non-decimal system); and because we were competing in an uncompetitive environment. English non-Jews tended to ignore us; English Jews were, for the most part, not up to much. This allowed some of us to become effective contributors over here who might have found it harder to hack it in Berlin, Vienna and places east.

*Victor Ross
Ashford*

ON WINGS OF SONG

Sir - I greatly enjoyed the medley 'Songs my mother taught me' at the Day Centre. Mr Ernest Kaye is a superb pianist and, as I expected, I knew every melody and, strangely enough, remembered all the German words that went with them.

After 63 years in England, when most of the time I cannot remember what day it is, or what I had to eat for lunch, how is it that I remember not only the songs but also the words? It was a wonderful experience and well worth the trip from Birmingham and back again. Two of us at my table sang or hummed everything he played and I do hope that I did not annoy any of the other members by putting my heart and soul into singing along. I do hope you invite Mr Kaye again.

*Henny Rednall
Birmingham*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Hans Jackson's exhibition at the **Jewish Museum** which marked National Holocaust Memorial Day is a moving testimony to talent, courage and memory. Jackson's eye is astute, delivering without sentimentality a graphic account of the horrors leading up to the Holocaust, from the burning of the books to the daily tortures and humiliations Jews experienced under the Nazi jackboot. It is all based on personal memoirs and experience, both in Berlin and as a refugee to Britain in 1939.

These most eloquent and compulsive paintings were commissioned by the Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre and published in 1999 in the book *Our Lonely Journey*. Particularly moving is Jackson's odyssey of kindertransport arrivals and departures. A child clasping a doll has a plaque around her neck bearing her name. There are piles of suitcases as children are shown leaving Berlin en route for England in November 1938. One man is shown choking back tears, and a small boy saying goodbye to his mother seems to turn into an old man as we watch, his face suffused with years. Most interesting is Jackson's use of light. All the figures are in black; the only colour is the incandescent light from the waiting train which catches the guards and hints not at purity but evil.

The paintings evoke the Constructionist style of the period and convey a social history in a flash: 1933, the year of Hitler's accession to power, when Nazi paramilitary and Nazi Youth members embarked on the wilful destruction of Jewish homes and businesses, is indelibly engraved in Jackson's memory. Jackson illustrates the ferocity of these thuggish attacks by depicting the fleeting quality of the fixed evil moment. When he paints the Nazis burning books, it is the menacing backs of the SS which we remember - the

solidity and impassiveness of their stance, illuminated by the flames and debris of the flying books. Yet he captures the flames differently in the burning synagogues, where the vivid red light delivers a most potent spiritual warning.



Boycott 30th April

Perhaps it was Jackson's successful printing business in Glasgow that helped him imprint on our minds these indelible scenes: the angry teacher outside a school bearing the SS insignia, menacing a small Jewish boy; Hitler Youth hooligans threatening a couple with their young daughter. Some paintings recall his own life as a refugee in the Kitchener Camp in Kent. In others you can feel the intensity with which he and other refugees monitored German radio stations for the British government. With snapshot precision we feel the cold outside the Nissan hut, even the way people, red-nosed, walk more slowly against a wintry wind. The exhibition continues until 12 May 2002.

London artist **Nicholas Archer** won the £12,000 First Prize in the Hunting Art Prizes 2002 for his self-explanatory painting **Flying Dumbo**. The blue elephant flying through a cloudless blue sky is precisely executed but seems an infantile and pointless winner. More impressive is Young Artist of the Year Tomoyo Matsuzaki's haunting **Under Sedation**, in which a blurry corner building seems almost to float between earth and sky.

RG's INTERFACE

Centenary. Berlin-born Marlene Dietrich would have been 100 years old in December 2001. Subjected to neo-Nazi abuse on an infrequent visit to her home town, she has now been posthumously rehabilitated. President Johannes Rau laid a wreath at her grave and hailed her as 'an extraordinary artist who worked actively for democracy and freedom'.

Echoes of the past. A new edition of 11 CDs resurrects music recorded by artists of the Jüdische Kulturbund in 1933-38. The overall title, *Vorbei*, derives from the waltz tune sung by Dora Gerson, a hugely versatile actress, cabaret artist and *chanteuse*. She made that recording in 1935, shortly before her divorce from Veit Harlan - the subsequent director of *Jud Süß* - and died in Auschwitz.

Birthday. Georg Stefan Troller, the Vienna-born, Paris-resident director of German TV films and documentaries, is 80. Over ten years ago Troller turned his own youthful experiences as a refugee and GI into the film trilogy *The Emigrants* (*An uns glaubt Gott nicht mehr*), *Santa Fe* and *Welcome to Vienna*, which was shown at the NFT. To honour the octogenarian, German TV has recently transmitted his more comprehensive, but also 'arty' autobiography on celluloid entitled *Selbstbeschreibung*.

Anna O. The patient Bertha Pappenheim, whom Freud disguised by that pseudonym and who triggered his interest in psychoanalysis, had a more potent claim to fame. Founder of the Jüdische Frauenbund and an early feminist, she was a lifelong campaigner against the White Slave Trade. Her biography by Marianne Brentzel (author of a study of Else Ury, alias *Nesthäkchen*) has appeared under the imprint of the Wallstein Verlag.

The ultimate conspiracy

THE VILLA, THE LAKE, THE MEETING: WANNSEE AND THE FINAL SOLUTION

Mark Roseman
Penguin, £9.99

This short volume tries to explain why the infamous Wannsee conference, on 20 January 1942, happened at all when hundreds of thousands of Jews were already being gassed at Chelmno or shot by death squads in Russia. Wannsee has always been seen as the meeting which put the seal on the 'Final Solution', the murder of all Europe's Jews. Yet, given that the slaughter was already happening, why on earth did this meeting, short and to the point as it was, need to take place?

Mark Roseman tells the story of the meeting in quiet, sober language, with the emotional horror kept well below the surface. The staff of the American prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials find the only surviving copy of the minutes of the Wannsee meeting and are filled with horror. It details a presentation by the notorious Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Nazi security service and chief of the German security police, surveying measures taken against the Jews up to the end of 1941, lists the numbers of Jews remaining in Axis, occupied, neutral and enemy Europe, and outlines a plan to 'evacuate' them to the east.

There is no doubt that this evacuation was a euphemism for genocide, but it is formulated, as Roseman describes it, "in sober, bureaucratic language, deliberated on in civilised surroundings in a once cosmopolitan suburb of Berlin." The minutes also show that there was a lengthy discussion about what to do with the half- and quarter-Jews, the war-decorated Jews, the Jews married to non-Jews.

It is impossible that the Wannsee conference decided upon the Nazi

REVIEWS

murder of the Jews. Hitler was not there and the men present were too junior. Roseman suggests that, in the haphazard and chaotic chain of command, the act of murder of the Jews begat the idea of genocide, rather than the other way around. Jews were being murdered. It could happen, therefore it should happen. Thus far those murders happened without an overall plan. Was Wannsee to fix the overall plan, to turn the murder of hundreds of thousands into that of millions?

Recent research suggests that various lower ranking officers had slipped mindlessly from brutality into killings, with murders well under way by the time of the Wannsee conference. Certainly too, the declaration by Hitler to evacuate German Jews to the east led to intolerable strains on the receiving territories. But there was no clear instruction of genocide, no overall plan. Hitler had created the climate of vicious antisemitism and he overruled the army's humanitarian concerns in the Polish campaign, suggesting that he was ready for the horrors.

Perhaps Wannsee was not about a plan for genocide, suggests Roseman. *De facto*, that already existed. It was to stamp Heydrich's own department's authority and responsibility over everything and to assert Heydrich's pre-eminence. It "cleared the way for genocide", but did not formally decide upon it. It did signal that genocide had become official policy.

Roseman's scholarly account leaves the reader understanding what Wannsee was really about. The policy was genocide, no longer news for the meeting's participants. All they had

to stomach was Heydrich's assertion of control.

Rabbi Julia Neuberger
Chief Executive, King's Fund

Ordeal transmuted by stagecraft

I WILL BEAR WITNESS

Karen Malpede (director)
New End Theatre, London

An elderly, careworn man in a dark overcoat stumbles into a room, hugging a briefcase close to his chest. As he puts the briefcase down, the audience sees, with a start, the yellow star sewn on his coat at chest height. Then, when he hangs up the coat, we glimpse another yellow star on his jacket - as if a branding iron had been thrust through every layer of his clothes down to the skin. He opens a briefcase from which he gingerly extracts a bottle of milk and a bread roll.

Though so far not a word has been spoken, all the elements of the drama are in place. The yellow badge worn on the inner as well as the outer garment indicates the relentless pressure bearing down on Viktor Klemperer. He, a rabbi's son who had converted to Protestantism, a Great War volunteer and husband of an 'Aryan' wife, tried, against all the odds, to cling to his German identity, which - he kept reiterating to himself - was culturally and not genetically derived. Though often close to despairing of his compatriots, he eagerly seized on spasmodic expressions of dissatisfaction with the regime as proof that there was another, better Germany. The briefcase, which sometimes doubled as a shopping bag for the collection of insufficient rations, was also used to convey the diary entries he made throughout the 12 Nazi years to safe-keeping. In writing the diary Klemperer knew that he was risking his life, but the

task of bearing witness for the enlightenment of future generations also provided him with the incentive to carry on, at no matter what psychic cost.

The time span covered by the play is three years - from January 1942, when the deportations of the *Fabrikjuden* started, to February 1945 and the Anglo-American air raid on Dresden. Although his mixed marriage exempted Klemperer from immediate deportation, the noose tightened inexorably around his neck as time went on. He was herded into a *Judenhaus*, made to shovel snow and perform forced labour, subjected to brutal house searches and insults in the street, barred from owning pets and using libraries and so forth.

And yet in the interstices of time between all the greater and lesser horrors there could occur a semblance of normality. On one occasion the Klemperers got together with some of their neighbours in the *Judenhaus* and, over coffee and cake, discussed not only the pros and cons of Zionism - which was of overriding significance to them - but also the merits of Hindemith as a composer.

Meanwhile the machinery of death ground on, and ever fewer neighbours remained. Finally, in February 1945 the last Jews of Dresden faced deportation. At that moment Bomber Harris intervened. Among the buildings the RAF and USAF reduced to cinders was the local Gestapo office. Viktor Klemperer tore off his yellow star and became a human being again.

He - and his wife - had shown superhuman endurance by not only surviving and remaining sane but also by counselling others against despair, and choosing suicide as the way out. It may sound overblown to use the same term - superhuman - about an actor but for close on two and a half hours George Bartenieff filled the stage to the brim with his

torrents of words, atmospheric silences and unfailingly appropriate body language.

RG

Large, but not perfectly formed

**BRUNO WALTER:
A WORLD ELSEWHERE**
Erik Ryding and
Rebecca Pechesky

Yale University Press, £25

For all that he was overshadowed by Wilhelm Furtwängler, Erich Kleiber, Otto Klemperer and Karl Böhm, Bruno Walter deserves better than to have a detailed biography in English only appear four decades after his death. This huge volume comprises 506 pages, yet contains no complete works' list and no discography.

Walter came from a middle-class Jewish background and soon attracted the attention of Gustav Mahler. He became one of Mahler's most passionate advocates, giving the first performances of *Das Lied von der Erde* and the Ninth Symphony. He also gave superb performances of Mahler's massive *Resurrection* Symphony. In addition, he fostered the music of Hans Pfitzner, and premiered his music drama *Palestrina* in Munich during the First World War. While in charge of the Munich opera house between 1913 and 1922, Walter presided over important premieres by Richard Strauss, Schrecker and Korngold. He also conducted the symphonies of Shostakovich and Weill, and, in America (where he went into permanent exile from Germany in 1933), the works of Samuel Barber.

The book hardly deals with Walter's own compositions, but goes into much detail about his career in America. It really needs another definitive biography to bring this great Austro-German conductor to life.

Gerald Holm

'Continental Britons' Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe



Cosmo Restaurant, Finchley Road

This exhibition opens at the Jewish Museum in Camden Town in May and relates the history and shared experiences of AJR members who arrived in Britain as refugees from Nazi-dominated countries.

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PROFILE

Howard Spier

Annette Saville



Annette Saville was born Annie Bankier in 1923 in Vienna's 'Matzot District' - a nickname occasioned by the area's high Jewish population. Her Polish father became a naturalised Austrian and, although the family ran a shoe shop, they had a struggle to make a living.

From an early age, Annette learned Russian, Polish and Yiddish music - her father had played the mandolin in Poland - and her mother sang Schubert songs and played the piano. When Annette was nine it was clear she possessed exceptional musical talent so her parents arranged piano lessons and in 1936 she duly attained diploma standard. Following the *Anschluss*, despite not being permitted to have dealings with Jews, Annette's piano teacher insisted on continuing her lessons, a courageous act which Annette has never forgotten.

The Bankiers were under no illusions about the need to leave Austria. Having decided to go her own way, Annette first prepared to emigrate to Palestine, but immediately after Kristallnacht she found a place on the Kindertransport, a decision she admits in retrospect to regretting. In December 1938, aged 15, she arrived at Dovercourt, near Harwich, bringing an excellent

knowledge of English and French. Her parents left for Japanese-occupied Shanghai.

The culture shock was severe. Her education - particularly her musical training - was cut short, and she experienced a certain hostility on the part of the English people with whom she came into contact. After she had been sent on a domestic training course in Tunbridge Wells, her first position lasted only three weeks, adding to feelings of rejection and loneliness. To make ends meet, Annette took on a number of jobs - secretarial, nursing, working for a firm of solicitors, among others. While cycling, she was struck by a car and seriously injured, which presaged a period of illnesses, and the first of two marriages ended unhappily.

Annette's musical progress continued, however. Aiming at being a piano teacher, rather than a concert pianist, in 1960 she was awarded the prestigious Royal College of Music's ARCM diploma, though she remains disappointed that British Jewry gave her no assistance with her musical career.

In retirement, Annette joined the Kindertransport movement where, for many years, her dependability ensured the regular dispatch of their newsletter, and for the Kinder's reunion concert in 1989 she played the piano. Annette also discovered the AJR and the Holocaust Survivor Centre in Hendon. Her warts-and-all autobiography *Only a Kindertransportee*, to be published later this year, is punctuated with hilarious insights.

Playing the piano and piano accordion remains at the centre of Annette's activities and she is still taking lessons. Every week she accompanies the Wizo Choir at practice, as well as at their performances. She also plays with the Sobel Choir, for Jewish Care day centres and for many other appreciative audiences, both Christian and Jewish. When the opportunity arises she plays the organ, for which exceptional musical abilities are required, all of which contributes to maintaining music as the mainstay of her life.

Central Office For Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Austrian General Settlement Fund

In addition to the individual awards of \$7,000 made to Holocaust victims who lived in Austria before the war, the General Settlement Fund (GSF) provides payments 'to acknowledge the moral responsibility for losses and damages inflicted ... and to settle comprehensively unanswered questions of restitution and compensation'.

As well as compensation for bank accounts, stocks, bonds and mortgages, the GSF has been endowed with \$210 million to recompense survivors as well as heirs for liquidated businesses, real property and unredeemed insurance policies. Compensation for personal valuables and household possessions was covered in the scheme introduced last year by the National Fund.

Under the rules of the GSF there will be two processes for claiming: claims-based and equity-based ones. A Claims Committee will investigate each application under relaxed standards of proof and an award will be made on a pro-rata basis once all applications have been submitted. In all cases, compensation will not exceed \$2 million per individual.

Equity-based payments will be made in circumstances where claims cannot be verified under the claims-based procedure. As well as the above categories, claims can be filed for occupational and educational losses.

Claims must be submitted before 27 May 2003.

Claims can also be filed in respect of land and buildings which on 17 January 2001 were owned by the Federal Government or the City of Vienna.

All applicants to the Austrian National Fund will automatically receive further information on how to proceed with making a claim. The GSF is administered by the National Fund, which can be contacted by writing to The Parliament, 1017 Vienna, Austria, by telephone on 0043 1 408 12 63/4, or by visiting the National Fund website at www.nationalfonds.org.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Froggnal, London NW3 6AL. For assistance with the completion of application forms please telephone 020 7431 6161 for an appointment.

INSIDE the AJR

Brighton and Hove Sarid: From Vienna to London

Professor T Scarlett Epstein gave a well-attended meeting a fascinating account of her life in the Social Democratic Republic of Austria in the late 1920s and her emigration to England. Her family had lived in a well-appointed flat in Vienna, in the first publicly owned housing in Europe. Following the *Anschluss*, she obtained tickets for her family for Yugoslavia but, when these expired, the only country that would take them was Albania. Through her elder brother, they managed to obtain visas for the UK. But when Air France refused to take them - they had no transit visa for France - they had to travel to Naples and then by KLM to London via Frankfurt and Cologne. Despite these unpleasant stops, they finally got to this country, where her mother worked as a domestic and she as a machinist in the rag trade.

F Goldberg

Next meeting: Monday 18 March 10.45 am. *Desert Island Discs* with members

From Greenland to Pinner

Our speaker was Bill Smith, a professional photographer who likes the cold. He had recently been to Greenland and treated us to a stunning selection of his photographs of the trip. We saw multi-coloured wooden houses, isolated communities that depend entirely on fishing in the short summer with the fish-processing taking up the entire winter. The modern world seemed far away, yet there were supermarkets and mobile phones - even TV. At the end of this fascinating talk, we felt we had learned just a little. Even so, I for one would not like to go there - Pinner in the ice is excitement enough!

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 7 March 2 pm. Update on current events in Middle East

North London: Music despite the gremlins

At our post-Chanukah event Walter Woyda presented a Musical Nostalgia Quiz which, despite the gremlins in the sound department, was enjoyed by all present. The doughnuts too were excellent. In all,

it was a relaxing occasion.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 21 March 10.30 am (NB not 28 March). Group members will speak on 'Members' Contributions to This Country'

Essex group plans new programme

Through the efforts of the enthusiastic Myrna Glass, some 20 members met for the first time for over a year to discuss the group's future. It was decided that the group would meet every month at the Orthodox Synagogue on Finchley Road, Westcliff-on-Sea. The programme would consist of talks and social gatherings; a number of volunteers agreed to act as a planning committee.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 12 March 11.00 am. Social get-together

Forthcoming meetings

Wessex

Wednesday 6 March. For details phone Mark Goldfinger on 01202 552434 between 6.30 and 8.30 pm.

South London

Thursday 14 March. Tony Hills, 'British Evacuee Children in World War II'

Volunteers' 'thank you' party



Befriender volunteers Meta Roseneil, Camilla Topping and Luise Harding taking tea at the volunteers' thank you party

Seventy-five AJR volunteers from all parts of Greater London accepted an invitation to enjoy the annual thank you brunch party, held this year in the easily accessible and stylish setting of the Hotel Russell in central London. A light sandwich lunch, with tea, coffee and cakes, was enjoyed to the accompaniment of the music of Anna-May Silver and Jerry Hunt.

In welcoming the guests and thanking them for their efforts in the past year, AJR

Vice Chairman David Rothenberg reminded everyone that the Association had been established in 1941 as a 'friendly' society and that it remained "a friend to hundreds". Volunteer Services Co-ordinator Amanda Shaw emphasised that the party was one way in which the AJR could show its appreciation to all those who gave their time and compassion to the members. Their commitment as befrienders, readers and drivers, as well as those working at the day centre and at head office, was quite invaluable. Guests expressed their thanks for the warm welcome, relaxed atmosphere, the brunch and the entertainment.

Leeds HSFA expands membership and activities

Trude Silman, Chairperson of Leeds Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association (HSFA), which has been in existence for five years and is affiliated to the AJR, reported expanding membership and activities at their AGM. Four main guests - Lilian Black, Ronald Channing, Bill Williams and Jon Silverman - were augmented by a summer luncheon with Dr Stephen Smith of Beth Shalom, with Michael Newman of the Central Office for Holocaust Claims bringing sound advice on restitution and compensation claims, while the group provided speakers and artefacts for an exhibition on the Kindertransport in Dewsbury Children's Museum.

Twenty-seven members have completed recording their stories for the group's Life Experiences Project, initiated two years ago. Recorded on disk, their testimonies have been placed in Leeds University's Brotherton Library as more information continues to be collected for the University's archives. Members also volunteer to address students in schools, colleges and universities on Holocaust Memorial Day and at other times.

Two of HSFA's younger members, Rachel Feldberg and Sam Paechter, wrote an opera, *The Landau Papers*, the story of a Jewish family in Berlin from 1933 to 1939, which was performed in Leeds to great acclaim. A 'Younger Generation' sub-committee was formed, under the leadership of Erika Harris, to whom information on the lives of refugees and survivors who came to live in Yorkshire can be passed.

RDC

Lord Moser - 'Utility British'



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Lord Moser, left, in conversation with Ken Ambrose, Chairman of South London AJR

Characterising Jewish refugees as 'Utility British', Lord Moser revealed his thoughts and attitudes to a large audience of fellow refugees at South London AJR with whose chairman, Ken Ambrose, he shared an RAF and LSE background. "I still feel in considerable measure a Jewish refugee", he confided, recalling the support he received from the AJR in the early years and mentioning that he was still an avid reader of *AJR Journal*.

Now aged 79, Lord Moser remembered his happy, early years in Berlin and concerts and music at home. In common with most other German Jews his family were "Germans, good Germans" but, after suffering daily humiliation at school, the family left for Britain in 1936. Although some 70,000 refugees had been admitted to Britain (of whom 50,000 were to stay), 600,000 had applied for entry; though others found refuge elsewhere, many failed to survive. Even internment in 1940 came as "a terrific blow". His parents particularly resented being called 'enemy aliens'.

Of the many high offices Claus Moser had held, he referred particularly to his ten years as Director of the Central Statistical Office, advising Prime Ministers Wilson, Heath and Callaghan. "I've had a wonderful life in this country", he said, but "I feel at least half a middle European Jew". It could not be denied that "being a refugee makes us different from what we would have been".

RDC

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Sun	10	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No Entertainment
Mon	11	Kard & Games Klub
Tue	12	Alf Kieles - Jewish Influence on Jazz
Wed	13	Jenny Kossew - Accordionist
Thur	14	Geoffrey Whitworth at the Piano
Sun	17	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No Entertainment
Mon	18	Kard & Games Klub
Tue	19	Amanda Palmer
Wed	20	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	21	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
Sun	24	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No Entertainment
Mon	25	Kard & Games Klub
Tue	26	Eddie Simmons with Bill Bradley at Piano
Wed	27	DAY CENTRE CLOSED - PESACH
Thur	28	DAY CENTRE CLOSED - PESACH

Announcements

Thank you

Katia Gould would like to express her warmest thanks to the many kind friends who have sent cards, flowers and offers of help during her recent hospital stay and continuing forced inactivity.

Deaths

Engel. George Engel. We mourn the passing of a brave volunteer for the Israeli War of Independence. His valuable military expertise compliments Ben-Gurion's declaration that "Machal was the single most important contribution to winning the war." May his soul rest in peace and may his dear Ilka be comforted.

Glaser. Edgar Glaser, born 18.5.1923, died suddenly 13.12.2001 aged 78 years. He came to this country in June 1939. We loved him dearly. How we shall miss him. Jean and Jessica.

Kahn. Ernest Kahn, born in Cologne, died 24.12.01 in London. Buried Sanhedria, Jerusalem, near his parents. A devoted caring husband, a modest kind gentleman loved by all who knew him. He will be deeply missed by his devoted wife Livia, brother and sister-in-law Walter and Grace Kahn, family and friends, as well as brothers and sisters of the BB Lodge.

Kent. Dora Kent. Beloved widow of Ernst, taken so suddenly on 11 December 2001 following her 86th birthday. A most loving, elegant and dignified lady, respected and greatly missed by all who knew her. We miss her so much and will love her forever. Lilian and George.

In Memoriam

3-4 March 1943, Martin and Lotte Reichenbach and the other 281 Dresden Jews deported from Hellerberg camp and murdered in Auschwitz that very night.

Miscellaneous Services

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Day Centre

Shirley Lever at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes sale, separates etc. **Thursday 21 March 9.30 am - 11.45 am.**

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes sale, separates etc. **Thursday 21 March 2002 9.30 am - 11.45 am.**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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A group is visiting Israel 14-24 April 2002

Machalnikim and all other interested parties
are welcome to join in commemorating fallen
veterans at a service to be held at the
Machal Memorial on the Burma Road at
Sha'ar Hagai on Yom Hazikaron.

For further details immediately contact Stanley
Medicks, Co-ordinator Tel: 020 8348 8695

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Obituary

Joe Finkelstone

One of the longest-serving Jewish journalists, Joe Finkelstone OBE, has died at the age of 77. He arrived in Britain in 1937 as a 13-year-old from Chelm, Poland, and his Chassidic rebbe father was wise enough to take up a job as *shomer* (religious inspector) at Bonn's *matzah* factory in the north of England.

Educated in the religious background of Gateshead, Joe was determined to be a writer. School essays on display at the town hall led to his being taken on as cub reporter by the *Carlisle Journal*, which sent him to cover the arrival of the first planeload of teenage survivors from the Nazi death camps on 14 August 1945. The scoop was a powerful emotional experience as he was barely older than 'the Boys' and spoke their language, Yiddish, keeping in touch and becoming an

honorary member of the 45 Aid Society.

A member of the *Jewish Chronicle* editorial staff from 1946 to 1989, Joe Finkelstone covered every position except that of editor. He made international headlines with his surprise interview of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat in 1979, which resulted in the book *Sadat: Visionary Who Dared*. His other book, *Dangers, Tests and Miracles*, was based on the tortuous relations of Romanian Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen with the communist regime and the secret exodus of Jews from Romania to Israel.

Always interested in the possibility of peace, Joe interviewed Christian and Muslim Arab leaders as well as the Pope. His Middle East reporting was honoured with the David Holden British Press Award in 1981. He was active in the Guild of Journalists and was a member of the Middle East Group of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House).

Ruth Rothenberg

Searching for friends and family on AJR's website

Since it was launched last year, AJR's website www.ajr.org.uk has seen a continual growth in the number of visits made, and more than 1,000 internet users are currently logging on to the website every month from some 40 countries.

The website's 'Search and Research' page offers help to those attempting to trace missing relatives or friends and to those seeking information about refugees and survivors who reached all parts of the world. In the short time this facility has been available, it has quickly become a global asset.

AJR Journal continues to publish a number of search notices each month,

which then appear on the AJR website, but restrictions of space can often lead to the buildup of a backlog. Overcoming any delay, by placing more urgent requests directly onto the AJR website, is now possible. Consequently, the AJR will be pleased to place your search notice on our website free to AJR members and subscribers to *AJR Journal*, with a small administrative charge being made to non-members and other organisations. Entries will remain on the website for a minimum of six months unless their withdrawal is requested.

Please email search@ajr.org.uk and we will do the rest.

Gordon Greenfield

YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATIONS

Central Commemoration

Logan Hall,
Institute of Education,
University of London
Sunday 14 April 11 am
(booking essential)

For further information,
please telephone the Board
of Deputies, Yad Vashem
Committee 020 7543 5400

Pinner Synagogue

1 Cecil Park, Pinner, Middlesex
(5 minutes from Pinner Station)
Monday 8 April 8-10 pm

Special guest Nicholas Winton
with Muriel Emanuel and
Vera Gissing,
co-authors of a book
on his role in the rescue
of 669 Czech children on the
Kindertransport (no charge)

Arts and Events Diary March

Until April 2002 Programme of lectures and events in Leeds in commemoration of one-time inmates, victims and survivors of concentration camps and their families, under the aegis of *Arbeitskreis der NS-Gedenkstätten* in Nordrhein-Westfalen. John Chillag 01937 844353 (evenings)

3 February to 31 March 2002 Special film season at Everyman Cinema, Hampstead: 'Refugees and Exiles'. Tel Spiro Ark 020 8958 6272

22 February to 30 March Heinrich von Kleist, 'The Prince of Homburg', RSC, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith

Mon 4 Prof Leon Yudkin (University College London), 'Literature in Response to History: Changing Modes in Changing Circumstances' (discussion of Prof Yudkin's new book). Club 43. 7.45 pm

Tues 5 Dr Michael Schulz (Berlin), 'German-Jewish Exiles in Britain and the Public Sphere', Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Sussex

Mon 11 Dr David Williamson (Oxford and London), 'The Paradox of Walter Rathenau'. Club 43. 7.45 pm

Tues 12 Franz Solms-Laubach (Sussex), 'The Nietzsche Reception of Georg Simmel and Rosa Mayreder', Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Sussex

Wed 13 Dr Ada Rapoport-Albert, 'Jacob Frank and the Female Messiah in Judaism, Christianity and Islam', School of Oriental and African Studies, 1.00 pm, Room G60

Mon 18 Dr F W Rosner, 'The Life and Work of Fritz Kortner: Actor and Producer'. Club 43. 7.45 pm

Mon 25 Charles Dreyfus MA, 'Her Majesty: Some Ancestors'. Club 43. 7.45 pm

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Centre for German-Jewish Studies,
University of Sussex Diana Franklin
020 8381 4721

Club 43 Belsize Square Synagogue.
Hans Seelig 01442 254360

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Centre for Jewish Studies, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG. Dalia Manor, 020 7898 4350

Pesach - a festival encrusted with history

Bernd Koschland



Celebrating the Pesach Seder service

The first observance of a basic Pesach took place in Egypt. Annually, throughout the ages since, we have recalled - and still do - this experience, which was the prelude to the Exodus, the escape from slavery to freedom and the beginning of Israel's becoming a people. Through the millennia, sad events in our history - and some happy ones - have come to surround it, making it the most 'historical' of all our major festivals.

Thus the *Seder* is the catalyst for past, present and future. We recall the events of the first Pesach with the *Matzot* and with some of the items on the *Seder* dish. The *Haggadah* relates the 'commemoration', events from Patriarchal times, the Exodus, the manner of celebration in the past (e.g. the shank-bone recalling the paschal lamb, the egg representing the festival sacrifice), events of later history and the hope for future redemption - the concept of Elijah at Pesach and the return to Jerusalem. Finally, in the *Haggadah* we give thanks and praise to the Almighty

for whatever disasters and happenings we have survived, then and now.

Yet, as we sit in freedom around the *Seder* table, the *Haggadah* brings to mind subsequent events which have made sombre this period of the year. This time of the year saw the decimation of communities in the Rhineland by the crusading mobs in 1096. Just days before Pesach in 1190, the tragedy of York unfolded. In April 1648 the insurrection against Polish magnates began, culminating in the deaths of some 100,000 Jews - the Chmielnicki massacres - which left East European Jewry devastated. The blood libel, which first raised its head in Norwich in 1144, has recurred frequently in the centuries that have followed, right up to our own days. The first day of Pesach in 1943 saw the outbreak of the Warsaw ghetto revolt.

From the second day of Pesach we count the *Omer* for seven weeks, also a sad period. It marks the deaths of the pupils of Rabbi Akiva. Many modern scholars have understood this to be a reference to the *Bar Cochba* Revolt against Rome (132-135 CE), during which many Jewish soldiers - the 'pupils' - lost their lives in defence of a homeland of their own, mirrored by the establishment of *Medinat* Israel during the *Omer*, shortly after Pesach.

As we celebrate once against the Festival of our Freedom, with the *Seder* dish before us and the recitation of the *Haggadah*, we recall the past from which we should derive some lesson. Hopefully, by opening the door to admit Elijah, we shall be opening the door to a future suffused with light, security and happiness for Jews everywhere, especially for peace in Israel, as well as for all humanity.

Newsround

Haider's apology to Jewish leader

Jorg Haider has apologised for remarks he made critical of Ariel Muzicant, the leader of Austria's Jewish community. In a speech last year, Haider alleged that Muzicant had used his political connections to further his business interests.

Oberammergau cleans up its act

The Oberammergau Passion play no longer condemns the Jews for crucifying Christ. The changes represent the fruits of a 30-year campaign by the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League to bring the play more into line with improvements in Catholic-Jewish relations since the 1960s.

Racism on the internet

German Jewish leader Paul Spiegel has warned that right-wing extremism on the internet is as much a threat to democracy as other forms of terrorism. He said that law-enforcement officials should crack down hard.

Budapest demonstration against antisemitism

A ceremony commemorating the liberation of the Budapest ghetto was transformed into a rally against antisemitism when some 10,000 Jews and non-Jews gathered in front of the parliament building carrying posters condemning the rise of antisemitism in Hungary.

US seeks deportation of alleged war criminal

The US is seeking to deport an Illinois man for allegedly participating in the persecution and murder of Jews in the Second World War. According to a complaint the Justice Department has filed, Peter John Bernes, alias Petras Bernotavicius, 79, helped remove condemned prisoners from jail so they could be taken to nearby killing sites.

Richard Fry 1900-2002

The Berlin-born *Manchester Guardian* financial editor for 26 years, Richard Fry CBE, has died at the age of 101. London correspondent for a German paper from 1926, in 1933 as a Jew he was sacked but stayed, using his impeccable English to continue influencing Britain's financial policy until the end of the century.

AJR AGM

**3 pm Sunday
16 June 2002**

15 Cleve Road, London NW6

*The AJR
wishes all its members
a Happy Pesach*