

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

No to the nay-sayers!

'Here's One We Invaded Earlier' could have been an account of the Wehrmacht's conquest of Poland which Goebbels commissioned after the fall of France. In fact, it was a Channel Four reportage on Afghanistan 18 months after the defeat of the Taliban and screened six weeks after the fall of Baghdad. The snappy title suggested that Britain and America were involved in committing serial aggression against smaller countries simply to assuage their collective aggressive impulses.

The message of the documentary, however, belied its title. It was that all US-UK efforts to improve the situation in Afghanistan were undermined by incompetence and, more crucially, a reluctance to invest the astronomical sums needed to set the country on the path of recovery. Yet, only six weeks earlier, there was a huge clamour in the media when US troops entering Baghdad secured the Oil Ministry at the expense of the Museum of Antiquities. (This skewed sense of values was, incidentally, ascribed to the fact that the C-in-C of the US Army, George W Bush, belongs to a Texan oil dynasty.)

In fact, while saving oil wells at the expense of Sumerian artefacts may appear philistine, it can be argued that, with too few soldiers around, priority had to be given to the country's financial future over its cultural past. Iraq, whose oil wealth is second only to that of Saudi Arabia, should therefore, within a matter of years, be far better off than Afghanistan, which has no natural resources to speak of.

According to the vociferous critics of the coalition's war on Iraq, neither Saddam's weapons of mass destruction have been found, nor his involvement in international terrorism proven. This argument is specious on both counts: in the sphere of global terrorism, Saddam lavished largesse on the families of Palestinian suicide bombers operating as far afield as East Africa, and



Appeasement: Neville Chamberlain in 1938

weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were so integral to Iraq's military potential that the third-ranking member of the hierarchy was popularly known as 'Chemical Ali'.

Opponents of April's armed conflict, whose dire predictions about its cost - casualties on the scale of Vietnam, 500 bin Ladens, environmental catastrophe - have all been proved wrong, are now homing in on the WMD issue to vindicate their earlier stance.

Why, one is entitled to ask, should coalition forces succeed in tracking down weapons of mass destruction if they have been quite unable to spring Saddam and his monstrous brood from their hideouts? The search for WMDs is really on a par with the wild goose chase after Hitler's signature on a document authorising the Final Solution. Just as genocide was implicit in Hitler's entire mindset, so was a propensity to deploy poison gas etc. ever-present in Saddam's diseased psyche.

Actually, it is a sad measure of how relatively little Western opinion has

progressed beyond the inward-looking isolationism of the 1930s - expressed in Chamberlain's characterisation of Czechoslovakia as a 'far-away' country - that action against Saddam had to be 'sold' to the Anglo-American public on the premise that, above all, his weapons of mass destruction needed to be dismantled.

Surely a government that ranked below only Pol Pot's in its number of internal victims - from poison-gas-infected Alubja in Kurdistan to the drained marshlands around the Shat-el-Arab - deserved to be subjected to regime change. (The charge sheet is, of course, far longer, also comprising two full-scale wars - against Iran and Kuwait - Scud attacks on Israel, and the creation of four million exiles.)

Forcible regime change in Iraq has already had a positive, and entirely pacific, effect on other Middle Eastern trouble spots. Assad of Syria, whose father blithely sheltered the Nazi mass murderer Alois Brunner, has shied away from doing the same for Saddam's henchmen. Among the Palestinian leadership a realist like Mahmoud Abbas has - almost - replaced the appalling *intifada*-spouting Yasser Arafat as chief spokesman. Likewise, hamstrung Iranian reformers will take heart from the resolve of the Americans not to allow Shiite mullahs to fill the current Iraqi power vacuum.

Admittedly, all the above can be characterised as 'accentuating the positive'. However, that is better than being swayed by the nay-sayers baying for Prime Minister Blair's blood over the WMD issue.

The nay-sayers not only got it factually wrong about the war. They were also prepared to sit on their hands while terrible wrong was done by Saddam to the Kurds and Marsh Arabs, by the Taliban to Afghan women, and by Milosevic to Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo!

AJR OFFICE RELOCATION

From Monday 14 July 2003 the new address of the AJR head office will be Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore HA7 4RL
Telephone 020 8385 3070 Fax 020 8385 3080 Jubilee House is situated adjacent to Stanmore Underground Station.

Father of the House invites parricide

Richard Grunberger

Was der Jude tut ist einerlei/In der Rasse liegt die Schweinerei (What the Jew does is irrelevant/It's his race that makes him a swine). This dictum of Hitler's mentor Schönerer has been dragged out of the lumber room of history by the veteran Labour MP Tam Dalyell, who combines extreme pacifism - he has opposed every single British military action since the Falklands War - with extreme bellicosity.

He has now exposed three of Mr Blair's advisers - Jack Straw, Peter Mandelson and Lord Levy - as a Jewish cabal illicitly influencing Downing Street in the Israeli interest. As it happens, only the last-named is really Jewish: Jack Straw had one refugee grandparent, and Peter Mandelson lacks a Jewish mother.

But these factual details are the least of Tam Dalyell's falsifications. Far worse is the allegation that Jews implement a secretly agreed, monolithic party line in public life. Eighty years ago in Cabinet discussions on the Balfour Declaration the Jewish ministers, Herbert Samuel and Edwin Montague, were already on opposite sides of the fence - and today the Sharon government has no sterner critic in the Westminster Parliament than Gerald Kaufman MP.

Likewise, while it is fashionable to talk about a Jewish lobby unduly influencing America's Middle East policy, the home-grown opposition to 'Bushism' is led by Jewish intellectuals like Noam Chomsky and Arthur Miller - with Harold Pinter playing the equivalent role over here.

Tam Dalyell, incidentally, is also renowned for his espousal of Republicanism. I wonder if his desire to sweep away the monarchy was triggered by his discovery that the House of Windsor was *jüdisch versippt* (tainted by Jewish intermarriage). After all, Prince Philip, consort to the Queen, had an uncle, Earl Mountbatten, whose wife Edwina was the granddaughter of Sir Ernest Kassel, the German Jewish financier!

AJR keeping 'on the move' Historic AGM at Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre

Ronald Channing

Andrew Kaufman, AJR Chairman, opened the 62nd Annual General Meeting of the Association of Jewish Refugees, by commenting that the AJR was "on the move in more ways than one!"

The first AGM to be held outside of London, Beth Shalom had been a natural choice which also enabled a members' national get-together. There were 18 regional groups in which many had rediscovered lost friends and made new ones, with another ten or so planned for the coming year. "Approximately 25% of members lived outside of the London area; it is therefore only right and proper that just once in a while we venture beyond the confines of North West London." Andrew Kaufman announced that AJR's head office was to relocate from Hampstead Gate, to Jubilee House in Stanmore.

Head office was having its busiest year, especially the Social Work team which helped an increasing number of members living outside of London, and a part-time social worker had been appointed for the Greater Manchester area. The Homecare Assistance Scheme allowed a hundred members to stay in their own homes, entry into residential homes increasingly seen as a last resort. Self Aid, truly a lifeline for the frail, helped 200 members with grants and loans.

The AJR Day Centre, continuing to care in a very personal way, had a large increase in demand for meals-on-wheels, enabling members to enjoy Continental kosher food while remaining in their own homes. Without the AJR's loyal band of volunteers, much of this and other equally vital work would just not be possible. Two highly successful holidays were organised, one in Bournemouth and another in St Anne's, for northern members. The *AJR Journal* had

"demonstrated once again its high journalistic qualities." 'Refugee Voices', a major project begun earlier this year to record testimonies, funded by the AJR Charitable Trust, prioritises members at the Day Centre and in the regions.

The Chairman thanked the management trio of Carol Rossen, Gordon Greenfield and Ronald Channing, Marcia Goodman, Head of Social Services, Sylvia Matus and Susie Kaufman at the Day Centre, all other members of the AJR's staff and volunteers for their loyalty, and the Management Committee for their support. He answered questions put by members present.

David Rothenberg, AJR Vice Chairman, described the unique co-ordinating function of the Umbrella Group of charities concerned with refugee welfare, including Agudas Israel, Jewish Care, WJR, Slave Labour and the AJR. The Central Office for Holocaust Claims, run and funded under the group's aegis, which had probably acquired greater knowledge of compensation and restitution matters than any others in the UK, was to be retained for at least a further year.

The sunshine and warmth of Beth Shalom's hospitality permeated the day's atmosphere for the 130 AJR members who enjoyed the opportunity to talk to members from other parts of the country and staff members. Marcia Goodman met individually with members seeking welfare advice.

Ludwig Spiro, nonagenarian Life President of the AJR, unveiled a plaque recording Beth Shalom's appreciation for its three-year partnership with the AJR to produce a highly-regarded website for the education of schoolchildren on the history of the Holocaust and its moral implications.

AJR Journal

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Irish-Jewish affinities

Richard Grunberger

The phrase 'beyond the pale' - i.e. unacceptable, intolerable - derives from Anglo-Irish history. Medieval Ireland was physically divided by a palisade into an English-ruled enclave around Dublin and a much larger tribal area whose Gaelic-speaking inhabitants were considered uncivilised, 'beyond the pale'.

Pale has a related meaning in the Jewish context. When Russia incorporated a large part of Poland in the eighteenth century, the tsars confined their many newly acquired Jewish subjects within a narrow Pale of Settlement.

Irish-Jewish similarity does not end there. Although the overall population of Europe has been growing exponentially since 1800, there were fewer Irish by 1900 - and far fewer Jews by the millennium than there had been in 1900. The Irish famine of the 1840s not only killed one million, but drove thousands to emigrate. The impact of the Holocaust was, of course, even more devastating.

Both catastrophes had a 'linguistic dimension'. The potato blight almost depopulated the rural, overwhelmingly Gaelic-speaking, west of Ireland, and the Holocaust impacted totally on the Yiddish-speaking heartlands of European Jewry.

In the 'Emerald Isle', however, language came second to colour as the emblem of resistance ('She's the most distressful country that ever yet was seen/They're shooting men and women for the wearing of the green'). The Irish linguistic revival climaxed later - around 1900 - in the foundation of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. The search for Gaelic roots made playwright Sean O'Casey change his surname to O'Cathasaigh for a while. Parallel name changes happened within the Zionist-inspired Hebrew revival - so that Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes became SY Agnon.

One must beware of overstressing Irish-Jewish similarities, however. Whereas modern Hebrew is the daily language of a majority of Israelis, Irish - though a compulsory school subject - is currently only spoken in the remote west of Ireland.

On the other hand, both groups are acutely conscious of their tragic folk memory. Jews fast on the Ninth of Av, eat *hamantashen* at Purim and observe *Yom Hashoah*; the Irish still refer to the 'curse of Cromwell', and remember the deaths of Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet and the Easter 1916 rebels.

There is also an amazing correspondence of complexities within the respective national liberation struggles. In Ireland the Protestant CS Parnell championed the underprivileged Catholic majority - only to be politically destroyed by the Catholic bishops over an act of adultery. Among the Jews Herzl was likewise undermined by rabbis declaring that he was trying to pre-empt the divinely pre-ordained Messiah.

In both cases too, the wars of liberation were complicated by internecine civil wars. In the Irish 'Troubles' De Valera had Michael Collins killed because the latter was prepared to settle for a Free State that left Ulster British. In Israel's War of Independence Ben-Gurion ordered the Haganah to fire on the cargo ship *Altalena*, which ferried arms for Begin's men during a truce.

Since then Ireland has, of course, been rather more successful than Israel in liquidating the legacy of the war that accompanied its birth. But then Dublin only had to deal with the IRA and UDF - child's play by comparison with enemies like Nasser, Assad, Saddam and Arafat.

Finally, both Irish and Jews have looked to cultural achievements to compensate for past political weakness. Ireland glories in its pantheon of writers from Swift, Wilde, O'Casey and Beckett to the Noble Laureates Yates, Shaw and Seamus Heaney. The Jews have produced so many Nobel Prize winners, in all categories, that I lack the space to list them.

Let us hope, though, that Jewish-Irish affinities will ultimately extend into the most fraught sphere of all - and that Sharon's name will be mentioned in the same breath as those of the last few *Taoiseachs*.

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Saving survivors' sanity

Peter Phillips

Heidemarie Blazej, of the Austrian embassy in London, may not have saved the lives of any Holocaust victims, but she has certainly saved the sanity of some of the survivors, including mine. Recently, Austrian Holocaust survivors (or their heirs) had to complete a 32-page form to claim money from the Austrian General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism. The General Settlement Fund is meant to pay us in full and final settlement for any other claims we may still have against Austria. Without her help, this form might well have been beyond my comprehension: she helped me in an unnecessarily complicated task, just as she has helped almost 2,000 other survivors, including Kindertransportees. Altogether she has some 3,500 clients.

Heidemarie Blazej took over from Renate Markey Böschl, who was so moved by her clients' plight that she relocated to Israel. 'You must keep some

distance from your clients', Frau Blazej told me, 'or you couldn't cope.' She added: 'Nearly all my clients are polite and grateful, but some are still afraid to talk. The older ones are particularly wonderful, but, sadly, some of the second and third generations believe they must be seen to be aggressive on behalf of their parents or grandparents. Luckily, I seem able to charm and calm them.' She much appreciates the work of the AJR's Michael Newman, with whom she is in constant touch.

It was at the Austrian Consulate and Culture Institute in Cracow that she found out about Auschwitz and the local Jewish ghetto. She also learned about Judaism and Jewish custom and mentality: 'If you don't understand the past how can you cope with the future?' In the 1970s she lived on a kibbutz.

Her work will not now cease. For instance, she will help those who merit an Austrian pension and she organises *Pflegegeld* for those who require special



Heidemarie Blazej

care through illness.

Frau Blazej takes care of all Austrian hardship cases - of which there are many in Britain. To her obvious satisfaction, Austrian Ambassador Dr Christiani recently decided, together with the Austrian Club in London, to open a fund for Austrian citizens living in the UK on the poverty line, and she is in charge of this too.

She says she will miss us all when she returns to Vienna in two years. Why does she work so hard? 'I feel guilty for my country', she confided.

Relocating AJR's offices

The administrative offices of the AJR are to be relocated, outside of the traditional area of German-Jewish settlement in the years immediately prior to World War II, in response to the changing demography and the general movement of the community to the outer London suburbs.

Following thorough research and investigation, the Management Committee of the AJR has decided to relocate the AJR's offices to Jubilee House in Stanmore, which is conveniently situated immediately adjacent to the Jubilee Line station, with quick and ready access to the Day Centre in West Hampstead and to Central London.

Many members will recall that in 1941 the Association's history began at its premises on the

Finchley Road, transferring to Fairfax Mansions after the war, and eventually from there to Hannah Karminski House in Adamson Road, prior to moving to the present offices at Hampstead Gate just ten years ago in 1993.

The steeply rising cost of property and rental in the Swiss Cottage and Hampstead areas of London, the lack of sufficient car parking space, and the unavoidably less efficient use of the space the AJR currently occupies, led us to seek remedies for these deficiencies elsewhere.

If all goes according to plan, the Hampstead Gate offices are to close on Thursday 10 July and the new offices at Stanmore will be open and ready for business on Monday 14 July. Details of the address, telephone and fax numbers are to be found on

page 1 of this edition of the *AJR Journal*.

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre in West Hampstead is not affected by the office relocation in any way and will continue to provide its present range of services to AJR members at 15 Cleve Road, NW6. Members can also request meetings with AJR social workers and others to be held at the Day Centre if this is more convenient.

I am sure that all the staff will join with me in assuring AJR members that the high standards of service and support they have come to expect over the years will be maintained, if not enhanced, at our new location, where I can assure you of receiving a warm welcome.

Andrew Kaufman, Chairman

'One hundred years on'

Extracts from an address by Dr Stephen Smith to the Annual General Meeting of the AJR at Beth Shalom

In 2045, 100 years from the end of World War II, the Holocaust will truly be history - confined and condemned to the past and only accessed through reflection, analysis and representations. In 1945, here in Britain, we had just fought a most draining conflict and were now lumbered with joint policing and reconstruction duties on mainland Europe. Somehow we quickly lost touch with the Holocaust. It wasn't our problem; we had enough of our own.

Across several decades of confrontation there was initial shock, the process of so-called 'justice' through the Nuremberg process. Then there was silence, then slowly but surely a number of stories emerged that grabbed the headlines from the Eichmann trial to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Remembrance was the other half of amnesia, which was the predominant feature of our response to this difficult past. It was all one big damage-limitation exercise in which the past was admitted, but not confronted for what it was. We wanted to avoid the implications, both historical and moral, that came packaged with it. It was clearly easier to forget, with the semblance of remembrance, and that is precisely what we managed to craft.

But we have made progress. The facts of the Holocaust remain the same, but it is not what it was in 1945. *Then* we saw the victims as piles of corpses; *now* their humanity is recognised. *Then* they were victims; *now* you are seen as humans caught up in a dreadful struggle of life and death. So too, the Nazis have changed in our perceptions. *Then* they were the enemy; *now* they are the perpetrators of genocide and the enemies of humanity. *Then* they were demonised bestial killing machines; *now* we see their humanity too, and see a part of ourselves in their choices and their actions. *Then* the survivors were



AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro unveils a plaque recording Beth Shalom's appreciation for its three-year partnership with the AJR. (From left to right) AJR Vice-Chairman David Rothenberg, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman, Ludwig Spiro, Beth Shalom Director Stephen Smith

dishevelled outcasts and an underclass upon whom we lavished our sympathy, but not our understanding. *Then* they were images; *now* they are voices from the past who give us a glimpse into those tragic years.

So now we have a society that embraces the past more willingly, conducts its annual Holocaust Memorial Day, and includes aspects of the Holocaust in its national curriculum. So now people are listening, as organisations committed to this history and its consequences: what might the next 40 years bring?

Memory Many testimonies are now there: memoirs, films, books, photos and reflections... the legacy of survivors and refugees is without doubt one of the most documented by the victims of any atrocity at any time. They must be shown as people not as victims, as individuals not as numbers. And, most importantly, we need to give these stories longevity - to take the story beyond the life of the person and into future generations.

History Texts and documents of the Holocaust need to be preserved: diaries, letters and cryptic notes and pleas, the trials and texts of memory and fiction are all there for us to make sense of the past and orientate ourselves again. We must not turn the mass murder of the Jews into an academic exercise.

Historical sites Communities were destroyed on hundreds of sites across Europe, many of which have not even been found or marked. As individuals,

institutions and governments, we should join forces to ensure that these sites are identified, marked and maintained for perpetuity.

Museums continue to play an important role too: the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Imperial War Museum and Yad Vashem. We hope that Beth Shalom too, where we now teach 500 pupils a week, will continue to play a highly significant role. We plan to develop a learning centre for primary school children, in which we will tell the story of refugees and Kinder coming to this country, with a brand new permanent exhibition. When complete, we will be able to teach a further 500 pupils a week.

Education In a generation or so, children will be as aware of the Holocaust as an episode in the history of human civilisation as they are of the Industrial Revolution in economic history. That does not mean it will be demeaned; on the contrary, it may take its place in history as the important watershed it was. The danger is that it becomes only history and fails to impact upon their values and their actions.

As to what we teach, the Holocaust will increasingly be a demonstration of just how far, how depraved, how focused human beings can be in fulfilling their bent to kill. It will highlight the importance of human rights and dignity, the responsibility of nations and people towards one another, and the importance of being willing and able to act to avert disaster.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

ROLL OF HONOUR

Sir - How uplifting to hear that after all these years, heroes such as Sir Nicholas Winton have been recognised and honoured. There are so many more unpublicised and now largely forgotten benefactors who helped Jewish refugees escape, such as the Sainsburys, Rabbi Schonfeld and Robert Mayer. The last-named, subsequently knighted for his services to Children's Concerts, was instrumental in saving my family. A roll of honour comprising these saintly individuals should be publicised in places such as the Holocaust Museum and synagogues.

George Lazarus
London NW3

ONE-SIDED EDITOR

Sir - To answer your very one-sided May editorial: many of those opposing the war against Iraq marched because in their view the case in favour had not been made, and because there was no international agreement for it. That doesn't make them pacifists. Nor is there any reason why people should not support two disparate causes, i.e. opposition to the war in Iraq and support for the Palestinians.

Much of the anti-Americanism that you say is now gripping Europe is focused on the Bush government and its apparent conviction that the country with the most fire-power has a right to use it and to dictate to the rest of the world.

Prof Ursula Mittwoch
London NW3

I would exhort past marchers against the war on Iraq to look at photographs of the mass graves at al-Hillah (The Times, 14 May) and then to look again at the march leaders: Tony Benn (Saddam's sycophant), George Galloway (Saddam's acolyte), and Tam Dalyell (Jew detector).

As to America dictating to the rest of the world, would Professor Mittwoch be happier if Milosevic, Mullah Omar and Saddam were still in power? Finally, the Iraqi war and Freedom for Palestine - i.e. support for the intifada - are not disparate, but contradictory causes. Ed.

Sir - I am saddened by the vituperative attacks on Mr Grunberger, whose editorials are well researched, informative, clearly presented and written. Do the critics wish to have an anodyne journal?

The editor is naturally in a pre-eminent position to put forward his views. As long as sufficient space is provided for alternative views, there is a forum for a proper and reasoned debate. It does not behove us as Jews to try and impose censorship. Let the debate flourish!

Readers who resign from the AJR due to differences of opinion with Mr Grunberger also sadden me. Pages 4 and 5 of the May edition list all the AJR's current activities. The journal is but one area. If one supports the aims of the AJR, withdrawing financial support due to these differences impacts on all the other areas that the critics presumably do support.

R J Wolfe
London NW1

Sir - Mrs Brenman Wells (May issue) wants 'clear-headed and unbiased diaspora Jews' to make Israelis see reason. Let the good lady spend a week in Tel Aviv and be confronted by terrorist suicide bombers and see whether she still proffers that advice.

Another letter-writer has the breathtaking bad taste to use the term 'suicidal' with reference to the AJR Journal.

Fred Rosner
Chigwell, Essex

Sir - Martin Hasseck (May issue) attacks Richard Grunberger's comments on Tariq Ali by taking his statement out of context. If he finds nothing wrong with Tariq Ali's criticism of Tony Blair, then Mr Grunberger is surely entitled to criticise Tariq Ali.

Carla Wartenberg (May issue) is right to support justice for the Palestinians, but she should also support justice for the Israelis. Sharon was, indeed, found guilty of war crimes by the Israeli parliament, but his crimes do not stand comparison with those of Hussein. Note: Israel has vacated Lebanon, but the Syrians are still there.

We should really accept that a Jewish publication will give the greatest possible support to Jewish causes. Those who cease to be readers because of their disagreement with the editor merely display an inability to tolerate disagreement. The editor clearly is more democratic than they.

Eric Sanders
London W12

Sir - Please find enclosed a cheque for £25, which is intended to replace the subscription fee of one of the 'disgusted', who are so bigoted they would rather resign from a marvellous charitable organisation than allow the editor of its journal to express his views. I fear they are beyond redemption.

Ernest G Kolman
Greenford, Middx

Sir - Once again, compliments on yet another entertaining and informative issue.

However, my pleasure was spoilt by some of the vinegary remarks of contributors to your letters column. I find it all a little childish.

Talking of childhood, my Moravian grandmother would sometimes quote this ditty: *Wenn Dich die Lästerzunge sticht/Lass es zum Trost Dir sagen/Es sind die schlechtesten Äpfel nicht/anden denen die Wespen nagen!*

CP Carter
Richmond

Sir - I, too, have frequently considered cancelling my subscription as a reaction to the acerbic editorials which

offend my left-wing sentiments. I have, however, refrained from doing so after having adjusted to a lifelong tendency to discern a grain of truth in every side of an argument.

The greatest threat to the survival of mankind - let alone Jewry - is the ever-growing tendency to polarisation of opinion. Once we stop seeking to understand points of view that offend us, we create the preconditions for totalitarianism and its horrendous consequences. Can we not trust one another enough to tolerate our differences?

(Dr) David Gordon
Middlesbrough

Sir - 'The Longest Hatred' (May issue) was excellent, as usual, especially the last paragraph on anti-American feeling in Europe. We are now living in Canada, whose government was so self-righteous and moralistic in its condemnation of America's war against Iraq. On the other hand, it still gives refuge to Mr Zundel, the notorious Holocaust-denier. He is here now - even though in a detention centre - but surrounded by his followers, whilst the various departments wrangle with his lawyer to prevent him from being deported to Germany. What hypocrisy!!

We have renewed our subscription with pleasure. Of course, neither of us is a 'Professor emeritus' - we are just ordinary folk who enjoy your journal!

Kitty & Hans Schafer
Toronto

NATION STATES

Sir - It is quite common for nation states to be criminal organisations. For many centuries we Jews have lived without the protection that nationhood bestows - or should bestow. We were thus not tempted into criminality. This has cost us dearly throughout the ages. We have had to be the laughing-stock and whipping-boy for the *goyim* in many instances. After what happened in Germany and Austria, and in all occupied Europe in the twentieth century, we at last had a nation-state in Israel. At last we had a 'secure' home. And the nations around

Israel try to destroy this refuge. It is said that people have a choice between Good and Evil. This is a lie: we have no choice.

Hans Hammerschmidt
Oxford

PALESTINE MYTH

Sir - Constant use of the name 'Palestine' in a bogus Arab context, when in fact it is none other than Eretz Israel in a Roman guise, and acceptance of the 'Palestine' myth arising from this belated Arab self-identification, sanction the false belief that Palestine rightly belongs to these Palestinians, with dire consequences for Israel.

From this perverted perspective, every Israeli concession is seen as an admission of 'guilt', leading to yet more demands. Having failed to oppose it at source, Israel is now forced to accommodate a lie intended for its destruction.

S Goodman
Kingswinford, West Midlands

VIRTUAL REALITY

Sir - As the representative of the AJR East Midlands (yes, it's north of Watford!), may I point out that Gotham is in Nottinghamshire, not Northamptonshire, and that the 'Three Wise Men went to sea in a bowl'. As for 'Lost in Transit', it appears that after 60 years the Jewish Austrian is still a little hazy about English geography and classical children's literature. Despite that little dig, it's a fantastic journal. I eagerly await its monthly arrival.

Bob Norton
East Midlands

GEORGE ELIOT

Sir - I agree with Professor Brent when he rates George Eliot's *Middlemarch* as the greatest novel in English literature. After the recent televised version of *Daniel Deronda*, I re-read the book, and was astonished at George Eliot's profound interest in Jewish aspirations for a national homeland at a time when to most people in this country a Jew was personified by Fagin or Shylock.

Bronia Z Snow
Esher, Surrey

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

What do Paul Nash, Ben Nicholson, Walter Sickert, Barbara Hepworth and Edward Burra have in common with the Ben Uri Art Gallery (BU)? You've guessed: they're all at the BU's **Making Waves** exhibition and not one of them is Jewish. Not a hint of Auerbach, Lucian Freud, or Kossoff, although one Bomberg lurks towards the back. And this is London's major Jewish art house in its new Boundary Road premises, whose Jewish works remain largely in storage. Why are we served up twentieth-century masterpieces when many talented contemporary Jewish artists struggle to be shown? The answer is written on the BU's walls and implies rejection of the ghettoisation of Jewish artists in favour of their twentieth-century British contemporaries who breathed the same air and were influenced by the



Edward Burra, *Camouflage*, Watercolour on paper, 101 x 133 cm, 1938

same passions as they were. That is the sole link in the BU's attempt to 'stimulate wider debate'.

All 23 paintings came from one collector: 'The finest work you will see under one roof, first time seen *en bloc*', says BU director David Glasser. Hence the preoccupation with the elements, earth, sea and sky, with its political commentary in Paul Nash's wartime devastation of the European countryside. Barbara Hepworth's

fragile nude paintings, and Edward Burra's leery Boozer, whose face seems to have morphed into a pint of beer, all speak for bucolic Britain. Anything but the urban emotional landscape that seems to many to invoke Jewish art.

Would you describe Auerbach, Freud or Mark Gertler as ghetto artists, just because their roots inform their work? I hardly think so. But James Hyman, who curated this exhibition, feels it impossible to consider Jewish artists - whose historical context was the ghetto - in a vacuum. And someone at the private view wondered whether there was such a thing as Jewish art at all!

So are Jews to be banished to the shadowlands, ousted by mainstream artists, drummed out of their only authentic gallery? 'We are not trying to exclude Jewish artists', said a BU spokeswoman. 'We will still sponsor the Jewish Artists of the Year awards and the Picture Fair, in which artists are encouraged to donate their works.' The BU is clearly keen to open up the debate between Jewish art and British art. That is a welcome and courageous move. But please don't leave Jewish artists totally out of the picture!

One Jewish artist who has no problem at all with roots is Judy Bermant, whose first woman show for over five years was staged at the Garden Suburb Gallery. The widow of the author and journalist Chaim Bermant, she illustrated his book jackets and included a few watercolour portraits of him in this retrospective. Judy's gentle filigree etchings, prints and watercolours evoke most sensitively the places where she is most at home: Hampstead, Camden and Israel, where two of her children live. The works are a compelling testament to her immersion in a sense of place and local colour - the undulation of trees in the breeze, a deserted Arab village, the harbour at Acre, and an old man studying, whose expression she has caught with such lightness of touch.

RG's INTERFACE

Autobiography Frederic Raphael, who has aptly been described as 'an outsider on the inside' - he endured antisemitism as a pupil at Charterhouse public school - has published an autobiography entitled *A Spoilt Boy*. He achieved prominence among TV viewers with his 1970s Cambridge-based series *The Glittering Prizes*, which was unique in being both highly sophisticated and having a Jewish hero. Raphael for long felt equally drawn to academic and literary pursuits, but ultimately the latter won out.

Family biography *The Sassoons*, by Peter Stansky (Yale), describes the Sephardi counterpart to the Rothschilds. Unlike the latter, though, the Sassoons intermarried. Sybil, Marquise Cholmondley discovered a Holbein on her backstairs and refurbished Houghton Hall, Norfolk with the proceeds. Her bachelor brother Philip, owner of Trent Park and a pre-war junior minister, attacked the Nazis - in Chips Channon's weasel words - 'with the violence born of personal prejudice'.

Dementia = antisemitism When the story of the Nobel prize-winning mathematician John Forbes Nash was turned into the film *A Beautiful Mind*, it triggered protests because Nash had made antisemitic statements - but his defenders argued he had done so while the balance of his mind was disturbed. Interestingly, the Massachusetts institution to which Nash was confined had previously accommodated the eminent poet Robert Lowell, who was prone to make rambling speeches in praise of Hitler.

Multi-talented Magyars Hungarian Jewry, which once gave the world Ferenz Molnar and half of Hollywood's script-writers, spawns great literary talents even now, in its cruelly diminished state. Already in the early 1980s, when the Iron Curtain was still firmly in place, the novelist Gyorgy Konrad, recipient of the Charlemagne Prize, pioneered the concept of *Mittleuropa*. Nobel prize-winning author Imre Kertesz, who has been resident in Berlin for a considerable time, has upbraided his German hosts for their rampant anti-Americanism and reminded them of John Kennedy's historic dictum *Ich bin ein Berliner!*

FILM REVIEW

Fragment of all our
yesterdaysNOWHERE IN AFRICA
(NIRGENDWO IN AFRIKA)Directed by Caroline Link
On limited release

Of course every individual refugee story - and this one is highly individual in featuring occasional adultery - only presents a fragment of an entire kaleidoscope. It is fragmentary also in the sense that the central characters took up farming in their country of refuge. Not that agriculture was a totally unique vocation among 'our' people: it attracted thousands of immigrants to 1930s Palestine, and a few hundred to San Domingo.

The Redlichs are a young married couple of distinctly bourgeois background who find refuge in Kenya. He is a serious-minded lawyer, and she a flighty socialite, who, on the eve of emigration, buys an evening dress in preference to the refrigerator so badly needed in the tropics. Their transplanted life is beset by all sorts of difficulties (including marital disagreements) and the only really bright spot is the heart-warming manner in which their six-year-old daughter Regina bonds with the local Kikuyu children.

With the advent of war, things paradoxically improve. The family move from a drought-ridden farm where cattle die, to a more favourably situated one. The husband eventually gets on top of a job for which his legal training has in no way prepared him. The wife, by contrast, undergoes a total transformation. She, who on arrival had resisted adjustment at every turn and even told the Kikuyu cook to learn German, gradually becomes a fluent Swahili speaker as well as a hardworking, hands-on farm manager. All these positive changes, of course, take place against the distant background of the Holocaust, which inexorably wipes out the Redlichs' nearest and dearest in Europe.

This makes it all the more surprising when, at the end of the war, her husband applies for repatriation to

REVIEWS

Germany, where he intends to act as prosecuting counsel at Nazi war crimes trials. The wife, who has meanwhile sunk roots in African soil - even attending tribal ceremonies in young Regina's company - objects at first, but ultimately allows herself to be overborne. The end of the film leaves spectators - particularly if they are fellow refugees - intensely curious as to how the Redlichs get on in the Bundesrepublik.

Nowhere in Africa received the Oscar for best foreign-language film of 2003. I am inclined to concur with the judges' verdict. The film tells a gripping story, is beautifully photographed and is well acted. (But 'acted' nonetheless: neither of the leads - Juliane Köhler and Merab Niniaze - convinces as Jewish characters.)

Richard Grunberger

A tale of loss and rediscovery

THE SONG OF NAMES

Norman Lebrecht

Review, 2002, £12.99

A sudden, unexplained disappearance lies at the heart of Norman Lebrecht's prize-winning first novel. And when the figure who disappears is a budding virtuoso violinist, billed at what was to be a star-studded Albert Hall debut as a second Kreisler, the author's expertise as a music writer and his evident gifts as a novelist are displayed to full effect.

It is 1951. David Eli Rapoport, just 21, has been groomed for his moment of glory virtually from the day he arrived, some 12 years earlier as a young refugee from Poland, at the home of music impresario Mortimer Simmonds and his family in London's St John's Wood. Dovidl, as he is known, is due to be tutored by the celebrated virtuoso and teacher, Carl Flesch, and becomes the bosom companion and brother in spirit of young Martin Simmonds, who had previously been languishing in an existence of nerdish torpor.

The London of the Blitz and the seedily austere post-war years are vividly

brought to life through the meanderings of the two boys, while Lebrecht's depiction of the devastation of the Blitz is particularly striking. As well as making use of familiar place names, the texture of the novel is enriched by the introduction of many real figures. Flesch is one example. Another is Sir Henry Wood, one of several celebrity guests invited to the Simmonds home to hear the prodigy play.

The Simmonds find their *raison d'être* in the exhaustive preparations to launch this meteor in their midst. With his disappearance, the family falls apart. For Martin, the trappings of affluent bourgeois normality do little to heal his amputated inner being, somatically reflected as he reaches middle age in furred-up arteries and a dependence on a cocktail of drugs. It is the 61-year-old Martin who narrates this tale of loss and rediscovery, as he leaves London at the time of the first Gulf War for a mysteriously fictitious northern destination. In 'Tawside', where he is asked to chair the jury at a young musicians' competition, he is mesmerised by the *rubato* in an otherwise unremarkable performance of Bach's Violin Sonata in G minor.

Considerable suspense is generated by Martin's instinct that he is nearing the end of his 40-year quest. The revelations that ensue take the narrative to a spellbinding crescendo with a number of twists en route. The novel's intriguing title emerges in the course of these revelations. Lebrecht's 'song of names' is an endless *nigun* initiated by the rebbe of a Hasidic sect to memorialise the names of all those who perished in the Holocaust. On the afternoon of his Albert Hall debut, Dovidl finds himself in the presence of the rebbe's son and learns of his family's fate.

Although Martin is to lose Dovidl again, barely after finding him, he is released from his burden and feels regenerated, discarding his medication and relishing his marriage and business activities. The shifts in his inner life are echoed with great dexterity in the varied tempo of Lebrecht's remarkable novel.

Emma Klein

THEATRE REVIEW

Clichés across the pond

US AND THEM

By Tamsin Oglesby

Directed by Jennie Darnell

Hampstead Theatre

At this time of transatlantic tensions, it may seem opportune to compare cultural differences between Britain and America - even if cringe-making clichés necessarily have to be a part of it.

In the opening scene of this new comedy, two couples - one British, the other American - get together in the latters' Manhattan apartment. The New Yorkers have a message for the Brits. They've ever so reluctantly come to the conclusion, so to speak, that their British friends are no longer up to it: they can make the odd phone call if they wish, but continued friendship - that's definitely out.

This high-farce opening gives way to a long (in fact, overlong) series of flashbacks. We witness the couples' first chance encounter and how their friendly and business relations develop over a period of a year or so, on both sides of the Atlantic. The British couple are in serious need of a cash transplant - he (played by Hugh Bonneville) has a business idea, but no money to back it up. The control-freakish, affluent Manhattanite (Matthew Marsh) puts his cash and connections into the business but it fails and the Englishman falls apart at the seams, unconsoled by his alcoholic, vomiting wife (Siobhan Redmond).

Of all the crises leading up to the dénouement, the defining one is the Brits' deliberate encouraging the feckless, rootless American wife (Harriet Walter) in the belief that she has an English pedigree going back hundreds of years.

During all this time, the 20-something youngsters (Jonah Y Lotan and Jemima Rooper), both revolted by their parents if not all that sympathetic themselves, find solace in each other's company. This subtextual story, however

predictable, is - mercifully - far more about the failings of middle age and the forgotten idealism of youth than it is about the altogether more prosaic, and in this context trivial, issue of cultural differences.

At any rate, all builds up to a cracking, stormy conclusion of swapped mock-jingoistic insults, virtually dragging you off your seat.

The acting and direction are faultless throughout. But there are serious shortcomings. The quota of clichés about cultural differences, including over the Iraq issue (these could, of course, be amended to take in whatever political crisis is around at the time) is way over the top. Almost equally irritating are the far-too-many scene changes, pointlessly disturbing whatever continuity has built up. Having said all that, it's a good night out in the new Hampstead Theatre.

Howard Spier

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In defence of Anglo-Jewry

Anthony Grenville

As part of the programme associated with the exhibition 'Am I My Brother's Keeper? Rescue in the Holocaust', the Jewish Museum hosted an illuminating lecture by Pamela Shatzkes entitled 'Holocaust and Rescue'. The lecture, based on Dr Shatzkes's recent book *Impotence or Indifference? Anglo-Jewry 1938-1945*, aimed at correcting the misconceptions regarding Anglo-Jewry's role in efforts to bring Jews from the Reich to safety in Britain before World War II and, after the outbreak of war, to save as many as possible from the Holocaust.

Dr Shatzkes argued, with convincing reference to documentary evidence, that in recent decades historians have judged the role, motives and attitudes of Anglo-Jewry too critically. She emphasised the political inexperience of leading figures in the Board of Deputies like Professor Selig Brodetsky, who failed to grasp the strategic necessity of engaging in a realistic bargaining process with British government departments, instead making maximalist demands that were never likely to be accepted, let alone fulfilled. Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld, on the other hand, was more successful in seeking carefully limited numbers of visas for Jews, thereby also giving the British the means to deflect American indignation at the continued closure of Palestine to Jews from the Reich.

Dr Shatzkes dealt equally fair-mindedly with the role of the British Government, rejecting the ready resort to the argument that its policy was simply motivated by antisemitism. She pointed to the abiding mismatch between Britain's primary strategic wartime objective - to defeat a power that was threatening its very survival - and that of Anglo-Jewry - to rescue fellow-Jews - a mismatch that Anglo-Jewish leaders lacked the vision to surmount. Her comments betrayed a scholarly and intellectually sensitive reading of the documents relating to this controversial topic, as compared to the knee-jerk Brit-bashing that too often mars studies like Louise London's *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948*.

PROFILE

Howard Spier

A perfect English gentleman



Paul Samet

The softly-spoken, public-school-educated urbane English gentleman who greets me at the door of his home in the leafy north London suburb of Pinner is far from anyone's image of an Austrian refugee.

Over splendidly English tea and biscuits, we discuss Paul Samet's remarkably successful academic life. He was born into a firmly middle-class family in Vienna in 1930. Both parents were doctors, most of whose friends were Jewish. Paul has a distinct memory of being taken to synagogue by his grandfather at the age of six and has no recollection of his family ever experiencing any anti-Jewish prejudice, personal or professional.

On Hitler's accession to power, the Samets saw the writing on the wall. Yet, both before and following the Anschluss, the authorities left them entirely alone. To this day, Paul has no idea why the family remained unscathed by the antisemitic blitz of the time.

In August 1938 the Samets finally left and went to stay with relatives in Zagreb, in a bid to obtain visas for any country that would have them. That November Paul's father was informed he had been selected as one of 50 Austrian doctors permitted to practise medicine in Britain following a two-year study course. The Samets arrived in this country with the not-so-massive sum of 10 shillings in their possession. They were put up in the Hotel Elizabeth in Bayswater for two weeks, before moving on to rooms in Paddington. In December Paul's father began his studies at St Thomas's Hospital Medical School.

Paul has much to be grateful for to a British Jewish family, whom he never met, for so generously funding his education. He was sent to a 'very fancy' prep school in Hove, the first of a number of outstanding public schools he was to attend. Although the school knew he was Jewish, he was expected to attend chapel.

The family moved again, to a hostel in Priors Road, West Hampstead. Nine families - all refugee doctors and

dentists - lived in the house, which was run by the British Jewish community.

In the summer of 1939 Sigmund Freud was seriously ill. He insisted on seeing a Viennese doctor, in particular Paul's father, who had treated him before. Paul's father, not yet fully qualified, was given special permission by the Home Office to do so. Paul was taken along to meet the great man, but remembers nothing of their meeting. Sadly, Freud died some weeks later.

Paul has no problem remembering where he was when war broke out: in an Anglican church in Hove. Soon, Hove was no longer seen as safe: the school transferred to North Wales. St Thomas's having been evacuated to Guildford, the Samets moved there in 1941 and Paul entered a new school. Here, for a period of six weeks, his eyes were opened to the beauty of mathematics by an exceptionally gifted temporary teacher. Whatever else was to become of him, he knew his future lay in maths.

In early 1942 the family moved to Ruthin, a charming small town in North Wales, where his father took a post as

physician at Ruthin Castle, a private clinic. Here too, Paul had an outstanding maths teacher for five years.

Now began a distinguished, seemingly effortless, academic career in mathematics and computer science. It started with a first-class degree in pure maths at Manchester University in 1950. He was then offered a research grant in pure maths at Christ's College, Cambridge. Three years later, having gained his doctoral degree, he joined the scientific civil service for four years.

In September 1957 Paul took a job at Durham University Computing Laboratory, where he worked for three and a half years on the first computer in the north-east of England. In January 1961 he moved to Southampton University, for 'six happy years', as director of the Computation Laboratory.

In 1966 'University College London made me an offer I couldn't refuse', he says. He established the Computer Centre and was appointed Senior Lecturer, with the largest university computer in the UK at the time and the first of its kind in Europe. He was 'terribly thrilled' to be able to pick a 'most talented and motivated team' to work with him. In summer 1970 he was appointed Professor of Computer Science.

In 1958 Paul had joined the newly formed British Computer Society, and was elected its president for 1977-8. This led to trips to destinations such as Indonesia, Hong Kong, the West Indies, much of Europe and the UK.

Paul retired in 1995. In retirement, he has, among many other things, become a stalwart of the Pinner AJR group, on whose meetings he fires off precision-made, slightly barbed reports for publication in *AJR Journal*.

Paul is the first to admit he's been very lucky. Things have gone his way; the opportunities have been there. 'The two best things in my life', he reflects, are 'my study of maths and' - he is very careful to stress the chronology - 'my wife Joan'.

INSIDE the AJR

Leeds: 'I too came here'

Forty members of HSFA and AJR (most of us members of both organisations) enjoyed a buffet lunch in the Bentcliffe Court Community Centre. In a light-hearted talk, Brendan Naughton told us how he and his family, like most of us, began a new life in Leeds in the 1930s - except that he was born in Ireland! He described Jewish neighbours he met at the time and the dreadful housing situation which then existed in Leeds. However, by sheer determination and hard work, he managed to make something of his life, becoming a Hoover salesman and eventually a successful businessman.

Thea Skyte

Spring fete in Surrey

We welcomed both newcomers and visitors to our social gathering, once again enjoying Tony Freud's hospitality. The timing ensured that his house was gloriously covered with wisteria. Garden, sun, good food and drink all contributed to a very enjoyable afternoon.

Vernon Saunders

Next meeting: Wednesday 23 July. To be confirmed

Manchester: 'Hope in a dark world'

Dr Margaret Brearley, an outstanding academic and special advisor on Holocaust matters to the Archbishop of Canterbury, told us both of the Church's negative stance on Nazi antisemitism and - even to this day - of the many instances of persecution and genocide the world over. She saw a glimmer of better things to come, quoting from the Torah on the eradication of mutual hatred, and was full of praise for the care and concern

displayed within the Jewish community.

Werner Lachs

West Midlands (Birmingham) out and about

In April ten of us went to see a most enjoyable production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and a few days later another twelve of us went to an excellent concert at the huge, absolutely stunning Symphony Hall. At a meeting in my house over coffee and cake or tea and scones, we were joined by Myrna Glass from AJR head office and by my son David and his wife, who - bless them - did all the washing up and helped the guests to tea and coffee.

Henny Rednall

Next meeting: Sunday 20 July (not 29 June). Garden Party Lunch at home of Leon Jessel in Walsall

South London: refugees doing their utmost for Britain

Geoffrey Perry gave a most interesting talk based on his autobiography *When Life Becomes History* (reviewed in *AJR Journal*, January 2003). Born in Berlin in 1922 and arriving in England at the age of 13, Geoffrey has lived a variety of lives. As a British army officer, he captured the traitor Lord Haw-Haw in Hamburg after the war and subsequently founded a veritable publishing empire, specialising in house magazines. It is good for British people too to read that we refugees did our utmost for Britain.

Anne Poloway

Next meeting: Thursday 17 July. Walter Woyda on the Jewish musical *Milk and Honey*

Race relations in Brighton & Hove Sarid

Wearing one of his many hats, Aubrey Milstein, a founder of the Brighton & Hove Race Relations Forum, gave a most interesting talk on race relations in the area. To everyone's surprise, antisemitism accounted for a very

small proportion of the 1,400 or so cases dealt with annually. The 66 members of the forum represented most of the ethnic and religious minorities. The police came in for some criticism through what was seen as their bias in favour of the white population. A lively question-and-answer session followed.

Frank Goldberg

Next meeting: Monday, 21 July

Essex group 'real Southenders'

We recalled how we came to live in Essex. Each member had a different tale to tell, yet their stories were often similar. Fate, the army and the restless days of the war sent many of our members to faraway countries. Returning to England, each one had to find a job, a place to live, and to make new friends. Of course, there was always Southend, where you could enjoy yourself, having a swim and eating fish and chips. You could always find romance that would lead to the altar and to settling down by the sea. We weren't born in Essex but we all feel we are real Southenders and nothing will persuade us to move away!

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 8 July

Pinner: fascinating life of the Lady Mayoress of London

When Lucille Memeth married a Northwood Hills doctor, little did she realise that one day she would be the Lady Mayoress. She gave a spirited account of life on her 18th-floor Westminster office and spoke of the busy round of great occasions such as the election at the Old Town Hall, Remembrance Service at Buckingham Palace and at St James, and meeting the Queen and other Royals and visiting dignitaries. She went to all the synagogues, worked with charities, had her own engagements and proudly displayed her many photographs and the lovely brooch awarded to her as honorary Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thursday, 3 July, 2 pm.
'Tickets for All Parts of the World' - Joy Hooper on how in 1841 Mr Thomas Cook opened up opportunities for travel

North London update on Holocaust claims

David Brummer, very ably deputising for Michael Newman, gave us a brief update on Holocaust claims and explained the recent placing on websites of outstanding insurance policies with German and Austrian companies.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 31 July

Harrogate group a year old

It's just over a year since we gathered for the first time and we've now reached the stage where we can relate each other's experiences for the entertainment, enjoyment and enlightenment of all. Susanne Green and two members told us about their week's holiday in St Anne's, and those who did not go wished they had. Among other things, we heard some wonderful poems written by a 94-year-old AJR member.

Inge Little (née Steinweg)

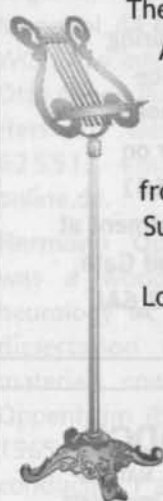
Next meeting: Wednesday 30 July, 2.30 pm at 1 Masham Close



PHOTO: STEPHEN GEE

Passing on the message: Yom Ha'Shoah at Pinner Synagogue was addressed by, among others, Harry Fox and Janina David and organised by Gaby Glassman. Pictured (from left to right) Nicole David, Harry Fox, Janina David, Sidney Seide

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Wed 9	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 10	Margaret Gibbs
Sun 13	CLOSED
Mon 14	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 15	Yacov Paul
Wed 16	Opdahl Trio
Thur 17	Jack Davidoff
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Birthday

Reiner. Best wishes to Hans Reiner on your significant birthday 29 June, Hedy, family and friends.

Deaths

Topping née Loewenthal. Camilla Topping born in Vienna died suddenly 30 May. Much loved and greatly missed.

Miscellaneous

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Search Notices

Margarete (Maja) Cohn or children **Eva Leonore** (born 1925) and **Hans Georg** (born 1927), widow and children of Dr Felix Benno Cohn, Leipzig, known to have emigrated to Britain in 1939. Information sought by Frau Andrea Lorz, Stadtgeschichtliches Museum, Altes Rathaus, 04092 Leipzig, for project commemorating Jewish medical practitioners in Leipzig. Email Stadtmuseum.Leipzig@t-online.de.

Lilly Bial. A Kindertransportee to UK in 1939 at age of around 13, worked as nurse in Bexley Heath before 1960s. No trace of her since then. The Jüdisches Museum Wien still retains some possessions of hers and would like to return these to her or to her heirs. Any information, please contact Heidemarie Blazej, Social Attaché, Austrian Embassy, London tel 020 7235 3731; email embassy@austria.org.uk.

Max Berl, who died in 1999, left Prague around March 1939, on the last day it was possible to leave the country. He was seen off by my grandmother, who gave him a violin at the last minute. In her desperation, she also entrusted him to the care of a boy, who travelled with him all the way through Germany. I believe they both ended up in the Hook of Holland. I would like to contact that boy. Information please to Mrs R. E. Berl, Zootkeetsgracht 22, 1013 LC Amsterdam, Holland.

Clausen, Hilda (Becker). She lived in the house of Cicely Marshall in London from June 1939 and during the war, helping with domestic and other work. Historian working on exiles and refugees in wartime London seeks any information available about her. Please email GiovannaFV@btinternet.com.

Peter Georg Kaufmann, born 27.6.1926 in Vienna. In 1938 he and his father Theodor Kaufmann arrived in Rotterdam. The mother Istvanka (Stephanie), born Marton, left Vienna in the same year but emigrated to England. Theodor was deported from Holland. A second child, a handicapped girl, lived in Augsburg, Germany and was deported from there. Any information on Peter Georg, please contact Gernot Roemer, Karlsbader Str. 12, D 86356 Neusaess, tel/fax 0821

469579; email roemerg@aol.com.

Kurt Boas, born Kufsteiner Str. 10, Berlin-Schoeneberg, came in 1939 to England, where he stayed at Hotel Monopol, 44 Tavistock Square, London WC1. Any information, please contact Otto Abbes, Buchenweg 28, 36251 Bad Hersfeld, Germany, tel/fax 06621 62551; email o.abbes.hef@t-online.de.

Hermann Oppenheim (1858-1919) was a world-famous professor of neurology in Berlin. I am writing a dissertation on him and seeking materials concerning his son Hans Oppenheim (born 1892 Berlin - died 1965 Edinburgh), a well-known British conductor. I am looking for a death certificate (or copy), a photograph of his grave, and any other materials. Please contact Anja Pech, Viktoria-Luise-Platz 10, 10777 Berlin, Germany.

Ronald Martin Oppenheimer, born London 1943. My parents were Walter Oppenheimer (born Frankfurt 1909 - died London 1996) and Rosa Oppenheimer (Hoffman) (born 1913 Leipzig - died London 1979). I am keen to find out anything about my family. Information, please email zen@mercuryin.es.

Arts and Events Diary July

Sun 6 to Thur 10 Klezfest on the South Bank. Royal Festival Hall, 020 7960 4242

Mon 7 'Gemuetliches Beisammensein' with music and refreshments. Club 43 Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig tel 01442 254360

Tue 15 'Viva La Diva: Jewish Superstars of Song'. Video-clips include Barbra Streisand's 1965 Emmy-award winning special 'My Name Is Barbra' and arias by the leading Jewish ladies of American opera. London Jewish Cultural Centre, King's College, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 tel 020 7431 0345. 7.30 pm

The Bridge The Wiener Library will be holding a fortnightly, early evening study session over an 8-week period in the autumn, looking at post-Holocaust Judaism and faith. Contact Katherine Klinger on 020 7636 7247 or email kklinger@wienerlibrary.co.uk

Central Office for Holocaust Claims Michael Newman

German pension payments

Recipients of pensions from Germany are receiving letters outlining changes to the way their monthly payments are to be remitted. From 1 July 2003 pensions will be paid using the new *International Bank Account Number* (IBAN).

To avoid increased bank charges, anyone who receives such a communication is advised to contact their bank and ask for their IBAN and BIC (also known as a Swift Code). This information should then be sent back to Germany using the form enclosed with the letter.

Austrian claim extension

Holocaust survivors and refugees who have not yet received an award in respect of loss of tenancy rights and confiscation of household properties now have until **31 December 2003** to file such claims. Claims for the € 7,630 or approx. £4,500 award originally expired on 22 February 2002 with applicants requested to complete a purple coloured form.

Applications can be submitted by heirs only in respect of those Austrian survivors who passed away after **24 October 2000**.

Before contacting this office with requests for application forms, which would have been sent direct from the National Fund in Vienna, kindly check whether you have received this money already.

Swiss banks update

As of the end of March this year, only 40 UK based claimants to the Claims Resolution Tribunal in respect of dormant Swiss bank accounts have received confirmation that they are entitled to a compensation award. The total value of these awards is CHF 5.2m or £2.45m. A total of \$800m has been set aside to settle all Swiss bank claims by the end of 2004.

Further help

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

Martha's Motors

Martha Blend

In my childhood in Vienna nobody had a car. You got about, if not by shank's pony, then on trams or river-steamers or, more rarely, trains. My first ride other than on public transport was in the taxicab that brought me part of the way from London's Liverpool Street Station to my foster mother's house in Bow. Our journey had started off on the underground, but had to be curtailed because I was violently sick. A taxi seemed a speedier way to achieve our aim. When I arrived, it turned out that my foster father was a cab-driver. He owned one of those tall black London taxis designed to accommodate men in top hats. His cab was for 'fares', so I seldom rode in it at the time.

My first experience of a personal car was when I was evacuated to Devon at the beginning of the war with my foster mother. Her cousins were wealthy opticians and every weekend their vehicles would disgorge a bevy of husbands left behind in London during the week to earn their living. On the outside of the car was a grooved running-board - in films, gunmen or policemen would jump onto these. We children would get on to them to wave a welcome to the passengers as they arrived. After the war there were trips to the seaside in the cab - now a senior citizen and heir to all the ills of ancient machines. Invariably it would break down on the way to Southend or Brighton and we would reach our destination late, if at all.

Later still, my boyfriend, an assistant in a medical practice, was allowed the use of an ancient Morris Minor by his employer. His wife had a habit of naming cars - this one was called Christabelle. It required a special technique to drive it. You had to start it by inserting a crank handle

in a spot on the front of the bonnet and, after a few turns, with any luck the engine would splutter into action. A bit of neat footwork would get you into the driver's seat before this died down and off you went. Once in motion, changing gear was not a simple matter: you had to double declutch, which meant dipping the clutch twice and revving in neutral in order to slow down. Another hazard was the tram-lines at Highbury Corner, where Christabelle's wheels would get stuck and had to be prised out. Altogether we were not sorry when she was taken on her last journey to the scrapyard and we were occasionally allowed to use her more modern successor by the illustrious name of Klytemnestra - Clytie for short.

My first own car was a second-hand Mini bought from a colleague at the school where I was teaching. It lasted a few years and took me and the children to Weston-Super-Mare and other places. My next was a larger Austin with an automatic gearbox. My family scoffed at this outlandish contraption but gradually vied with each other to drive it. We went all over Western Europe in it. I had a heater fitted to the rear window so I didn't have to get up and wipe it when it misted up - a great luxury.

Now, I have a car with automatic gears, power-assisted steering, central locking, electrically-operated windows and lights which warn me of a dozen hazards from insufficient oil to an unfastened seatbelt. Driving it is child's play, but somehow the pleasure has gone out of it. Maybe it is something to do with those men in white cars who scream at you 'Come on! Learn to drive!' if you don't shoot round corners, knocking down bollards, as they do.

Newsround

Record Jewish immigration to Germany from former Soviet Union

In 2003, for the first time since the State of Israel was established, more Jews immigrated to Germany than to Israel. Germany registered 19,262 Jewish immigrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States, while less than 19,000 immigrated to Israel from the same area. Three reasons are given for this development: the economic benefits Germany offers; the fear of the *intifada* in Israel; and the restrictions on immigration to the USA, still the most popular destination.

Vienna street renamed

A street in Vienna's 22nd district - just yards from Raoul Wallenberg Street - has been renamed Gilberto Bosques Promenade in tribute to the Mexican diplomat who rescued Jews and other persecuted people from Nazism.

Austrian Jewish community cutbacks

Austrian Jewish leaders say they will be forced to lay off 35 members of staff and take further drastic cost-cutting measures for lack of funds and government support. Community president Ariel Muzicant said that unless the government reacted by the end of June, 'for the first time since 1938 Jewish religious services will be curtailed, religion classes halted ... and Jewish cultural and social life reduced.'

Series of anti-Jewish attacks in Berlin

German police are investigating an incident in which a man wearing a star of David was assaulted on a Berlin bus by a group of youths. Police said the 56-year-old victim was not Jewish. The incident is the latest in a series of high-profile assaults against Jews in Germany. Two months ago, an American Jew was attacked by a group of four youths on a busy Berlin street in front of dozens of onlookers.

Gypsy lawsuit dismissed by Swiss court

A court in Geneva has dismissed a lawsuit by Gypsy campaigners who alleged IBM expertise helped the Nazis to commit mass murder. The court ruled that it lacked the jurisdiction to deal with the case. The Gypsies' lawyer said he planned to appeal against the ruling within 30 days.