

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

New year, new challenges

In the December 2003 issue we featured a letter about Lady Diana Mosley from her nephew Patrick Guinness which shows the breadth of our readership. What it also demonstrates is the inability of liberal-minded Westerners to grasp the full extent of evil. The writer is a sensitive person capable of empathising with his refugee father-in-law's pain. However, his comment that his aunt did not personally kill anyone hardly chimes with Lord Moyne's (and others') testimony - as revealed in Public Record Office documents - that she outdid even her husband in blind fanaticism. Alas, 60 years on, evil - and its driving forces, blind dogma and lust for power - are still abroad in the world.

Nowadays the CDU deputy Martin Hohmann peddles antisemitic poison evoking Germany's bloodsoaked past. The Jews, he demands, should stop bleating about the Holocaust because 'they' instigated massacres during the Russian Revolution - which made them *Täter* (perpetrators) with the same degree of culpability as Second World War Germans.

Hohmann's argument is thoroughly mendacious. Of course, individual Jews (Trotsky, Zinoviev) cannot be absolved of guilt for post-revolutionary bloodshed, but they were not acting under the instructions of a Jewish government - because no such institution existed! In fact, in Bolshevik Russia the Communist Party's *Yevsektzia* (Jewish section) comprised Jewish zealots who closed down synagogues, seminaries and Hebrew printing presses with inquisitorial zeal. One would have to accept the veracity of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to conceive of a secret Jewish government issuing directives to its subjects throughout the world.

Sad to relate, an updated version of the *Protocols* recently appeared in the *New Statesman*: an early November 2003 issue fingered the United States as the power behind the Russian oligarchs on whom President Putin was currently cracking down. Richard Perle allegedly used the oligarchs as instruments for America - and Israel (!) - gaining power in Russia by proxy.



Menachem Begin



Leon Trotsky

The inclusion of Israel in this demonology shows the extent to which right-wing antisemitism and left-wing anti-Americanism currently overlap and interpenetrate one another. Truly, *les extrêmes se touchent!*

A similar perverse reciprocity operates in France, where the arsonists who destroyed a Jewish school near Paris could equally well have been Le Pen supporters or Muslim extremists (though the almost simultaneous outrages against Istanbul synagogues tilt the balance of probability in the Islamist direction). In France another paradox operates too. Although the Gaullist Chirac has taken a consistent stand against antisemitism, Gaullist foreign policy has for decades worked to the detriment of Israel. In the mid-1960s France stopped supplying Israel with arms in its hour of dire need; in the early 1980s she built the Ozirak nuclear reactor for Saddam (which the Israeli air force, on Begin's orders, destroyed), etc.

In the long run (or as the Romans put it, *sub specie aeternitatis*), fine distinctions between extreme Leftism, Neo-Nazism and Islamo-Fascism will blur - with all hate-imbued 'isms' being subsumed within the one all-embracing category of pure evil.

Just as the fictitious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* emanated from nineteenth-century Russia, so did the first literary depiction of evil incarnated in a political personage: 150 years ago the extreme anti-Tsarist revolutionary Sergei Nechayev murdered one of his own supporters for wanting to forswear violence - a grisly event which prompted Dostoevsky to write his great anti-revolutionary philippic *The Possessed* (or *The Demons*).

Since then, the spirit of Nechayev has taken demonic possession of countless individuals. Pol Pot murdered a million Cambodians he considered insufficiently radical. Algerian Islamists caused the deaths of thousands of Muslim fellow countrymen helplessly caught up in the struggle between themselves and the army. Similarly, last November's attacks on Istanbul synagogues killed more Muslims than Jews.

Western Liberals who cannot fathom the degree of evil motivating certain small sections of society should look around carefully. Close examination will reveal such latter-day Nechayevs as George Galloway, who called the collapse of the *Gulag*-sustained Soviet regime 'the saddest day of my life,' and the anti-Iraq War organiser Andy Murray, who habitually refers to North Korea (the closest approximation on earth to Orwell's 1984) as 'People's Korea'.

With peace-lovers like these around, Mars looks an attractive proposition.

Under Nelson's blind eye

Richard Grunberger

Wine-befuddled Viennese are wont to extol the city's land-mark in a song listing the varied sights 'St Stephen's Tower/has looked down on since its darkest hour.' A corresponding medley of scenes which Nelson's Column has witnessed would probably start in 1883 with the 'Bloody Sunday' riot of the unemployed. It would continue with the Peace Pledge Union (PPU) meeting of 1937, at which Aldous Huxley exhorted his 70,000-strong audience not to bear arms in any future war, and end with Colin Jordan's (sparsely attended) Jew-baiting rally of 1962.

November's massive 'Stop Bush' junket combined elements of all these three events. What linked it to 'Bloody Sunday' was the red dye injected into the fountains - though fewer Iraqi civilians died during the war than were killed annually by Saddam. The link with the 1937 PPU rally was the advocacy of inaction in the face of rampant evil. The echo of the Colin Jordan meeting was weaker in terms of overt antisemitism, but, as depicted here, Uncle Sam resembled the 'Eternal Jew' of Nazi propaganda.

This impression was strengthened by the burning of the Stars and Stripes, an act of blood-stirring paranoid hatred.

Though short-sighted in certain respects - world trade, ecology - the USA has been right on all life-or-death issues of the last century: two World Wars, the Cold War, Islamo-Fascism. It has, moreover, shown a capacity for radical self-transformation: co-founding US President Thomas Jefferson owned slaves - today slave-descended Colin Powell is a power in the land. The most eye-catching display of demented hatred enacted in the Square was the parody on the toppling of Saddam's statue in Baghdad. Destroying President Bush in effigy dragged into the mud the outstanding achievement of the Coalition, and obscured the one chink of light in the fog currently enveloping the Middle East. One wonders if the relatives of the 300,000 Iraqis done to death under Saddam were amused by this piece of emetic street theatre.

Der Stürmer-type attack

A vitriolic political cartoon, showing Ariel Sharon consuming a baby, which appeared in *The Independent* newspaper on the day before Israel's general elections in January 2003, has won the Political Cartoon of the Year award. Drawn by the paper's resident cartoonist, David Brown, it is modelled on a work by Goya.

Protests to the Press Complaints Authority by, among many others, Israel's embassy in London against the antisemitic message conveyed by the cartoon were rejected as not breaching its code of conduct. The award was made by the Political Cartoonists' Society at a ceremony sponsored by *The Economist* magazine.

European race report suppressed

A study on contemporary antisemitism in Europe, initiated by the European Union, has been shelved for reportedly showing that much of the increasing antisemitism is due predominantly to the activities of a minority of young Muslims, particularly those from the Middle East and North Africa.

The Antisemitism Research Institute at Berlin's Technical University, which was commissioned to carry out the study by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), claims it was put under pressure to change its conclusions so as not to offend Europe's

large Muslim communities.

The Secretary-General of the European Jewish Congress, Serge Cwajgenbaum, called for a Europe-wide meeting to deal with the increasing manifestations of antisemitism. While, he said, Jews had been the entirely unprovoked victims of gangs of Muslim youths in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Scandinavia, not one act of desecration or violence had been perpetrated by a Jew against Muslims or mosques. The director of the EUMC stated that the report's data was too flawed to publish.

Wiener Library's new chairman

Anthony Spiro, a member of AJR's Management Committee and a Trustee of the AJR Charitable Trust, has been appointed Chairman of the Wiener Library in succession to Ernst Fraenkel, who has stepped down after 13 years of distinguished service.

While interest in the Holocaust and the events leading up to it have grown significantly, commented Anthony Spiro, it has brought both new opportunities and additional demands for resources. The expiry of the lease on its present Devonshire Street premises

in 2009 has already encouraged the Library to review its strategy.

The Spiro family has been associated for many years with the Wiener Library and its governance, not least with AJR's Life President, Ludwig Spiro, who is Anthony's father. Pointing out that with his appointment the heritage the Library represents has passed to a younger generation, Anthony is certain that 'the Wiener Library's priceless collection will continue to provide a living reminder of the evil deeds of the past.'

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Pike to Wolf - the fauna of Jewish surnames

Richard Grunberger

In changing his name to Bernard Howard, the pre-war Romanian immigrant Bernat Hecht unconsciously imitated the Hungarian Communist leader Matyas Rakosi. The latter, born Matyas Schwarz, had adopted a *nom de guerre* which sounded both authentically Magyar and aristocratic (Prince Rakoczy, Hungary's most famous soldier, inspired Berlioz's famous *Rakoczy March*). And just as Schwarz could literally have been translated as Nagy, so Hecht could have been rendered as Pike. As for Howard, in addition to sounding impeccably Anglo-Saxon, it also conveyed a faintly aristocratic aura. Castle Howard is, after all, one of the most illustrious stately homes in the land - up there alongside Chatsworth and Blenheim Palace.

The name Hecht, by contrast, has high cachet in Hollywood, where Ben Hecht scripted the hugely successful *Front Page* and other box office hits, which leads us neatly to American-descended Oliver Letwin, Michael Howard's Shadow Chancellor. Letwin apparently means Latvian - though the 'official' Yiddish term for someone hailing from the Baltic is, of course, Litvak. (Movie buffs may remember Anatole Litvak, director of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.) I must say that I find Letwin's ancestral homeland more confidence-inspiring than Michael Howard's. After all, *pace* Lawson, Brittan and Rifkind, we have had plenty of experience of old Estonians - rather than Etonians - in Tory cabinet posts, whereas the only Romanian-descended Jewish politician strutting her stuff on the world stage before Michael Howard was the deplorable Anna Pauker.

One of the interesting features of the recent upheavals in the upper Tory echelons has been the open intervention of purse-proud backers threatening to withhold donations unless certain changes were made. In contemporary Russia the situation is different in the sense that those who wield financial power, i.e. the 'oligarchs', seem to be the only force capable of mounting an opposition - via privately-owned TV

stations and newspapers - to an increasingly autocratic President Putin. Consequently, the most prominent 'fat cats' find themselves either in exile or in jail. One oligarch who is not being fingered by the ex-KGB agents in Putin's entourage is Roman Abramovich, who prefers pouring his spare cash into English football clubs rather than Russian TV stations. I wonder how many Chelsea fans are aware of the fact that they owe the - limited - upswing in their club's fortunes to the whims of a maverick multi-millionaire whose surname literally means 'son of Abraham'.

Russians traditionally have tripartite names: a forename, a patronymic and a surname - with the patronymic derived from their father's forename (e.g. Osip Emilievich Mandelshtam). In the early 1990s nascent Russian democracy faced a threat from the right-wing demagogue Vladimir Zhirinovsky, whose impact was somewhat blunted by the curious fact - revealed via his patronymic Volfovitch - that his father had been a Jew.

The current US Deputy Secretary of Defence happens to be Paul Wolfowitz, a presumably Russian-descended Jew. His surname has given our US-baiting media a useful 'hook' for describing the Bush administration as a 'pack of wolves.' For some reason, Wolf is both a popular Jewish forename (e.g. Wolf Mankowitz) and a fairly wide-spread surname. Literary 'wolves' include - apart from the *jüdisch-versippte* Virginia Woolf - the satirical poet Humbert Wolfe and the playwright Friedrich Wolff of *Professor Mamlock* fame. Though the last-named work is today totally forgotten, Friedrich's Russian-born son Mischa Wolff left a more lasting imprint. As head of the Stasi, he was the most resourceful director of Soviet intelligence operations in Western Europe, and entered the annals of Cold War history by engineering the downfall of Chancellor Willy Brandt (which he subsequently bitterly regretted).

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Free French officer honoured by France



Rolf Weinberg receives the order of the *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* from the French Ambassador

AJR member Rolf Weinberg, a German-Jewish-born former Free French Army officer, received the order of the *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* from the French Ambassador at a ceremony

held in London in the presence of former Free French officers and other French and British dignitaries. The Ambassador recalled his 'outstanding services rendered to the Allied Forces during the Second World War.'

Born in Westphalia in 1919, Rolf Weinberg left for Uruguay in September 1938 and, after the fall of France, volunteered for service with Charles de Gaulle's London-based Free French Forces. He served in the Lebanon and with the 8th Army from El Alamein, reaching the rank of major and being decorated with the *Médaille Militaire*. He also transported captured arms to the *Haganah*, Israel's nascent army.

Newcastle testimony project

Walter Knoblauch

Some 30 members of the AJR Newcastle Group welcomed to their meeting John Given, who is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Northumbria University and has been working in the Elizabeth and Walter Sharman Archive. The archive focuses on the contribution made to the North East by former refugees from Nazi persecution. It has been compiled using the latest technology to record personal testimonies and will be accessible on the University website.

Recorded extracts from the Archive

were illustrated using both oral and visual accounts by individuals, some of whom were in the audience. Included were recollections of their former lives and impressions of life in the North East in those early days.

The Archive is still to be fully completed and additional input from those who were part of that history is being sought. It is important that this unique piece of history and the enduring impact the refugees made on the North East be fully recorded.

Polish music festival

Ronald Channing

This spring an unusual international music festival is taking place in the Polish town of Cieszyn (formerly Teschen) in Silesia in honour of the composer Victor Ullmann, born there in 1898.

British concert pianist Jacqueline Cole is organising the festival to coincide with Poland's Holocaust Memorial days from 28 April to 15 May, and to commemorate all those who were once part of the town's thriving Jewish community. Jacqueline is anxious to trace and make contact with any former residents of Cieszyn or their children (see her address below).

Jacqueline Cole's recent recital at the Wigmore Hall featured largely unknown works by Ullmann. The Ullmann family moved to Vienna in 1907 and, after military service in World War I, Victor

continued his musical education under Arnold Schoenberg. Ullmann wrote more than 40 unpublished compositions, including three operas. His two children were sent to Sweden by Kindertransport, but his conversion to Catholicism in 1940 did not prevent his deportation to Theresienstadt in September that year.

Paradoxically, there his talent for composition flourished in co-operation with several other outstanding musicians and artists. In October 1944 some of the greatest talents of the 20th century, including Victor Ullmann, were probably transported together to be murdered in the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Jacqueline Cole can be contacted at 7 Roma Road Close, 3 Bessborough Road, London SW15 4AZ UK tel 0208 785 4772.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

East Germany property list

Further to articles which have recently appeared in *AJR Journal*, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (JCC) has published a list of Jewish owners of properties in what became East Germany - including East Berlin - after the Second World War. Many of these properties had been confiscated in accordance with Nazi racial laws.

In the wake of German unification in 1990, the JCC filed a blanket claim for properties that were once owned by Jewish victims of the Holocaust. At the end of the national German restitution law in 1992 the JCC created the Goodwill Fund, through which properties are returned to their rightful owners with 20 per cent of the value being kept by the JCC.

The JCC has now issued a final deadline of **31 March 2004** to receive applications for all outstanding properties. Unclaimed properties will thereafter cede to the Claims Conference. The list of property owners is available on line at www.claimscon.org/goodwill/goodwill_main.asp

For further information and details of how to register an application, please contact The Successor Organisation, Sophienstrasse 26, 60487 Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The telephone number is 0049 69 97 07 08 0 and the fax is 0049 69 97 07 08 11.

German pension remittances

To avoid increased bank charges, recipients of pensions from Germany are advised to contact their bank and ask for their IBA number and BIC (also known as Swift Code). This information should then be sent to their pension provider in Germany.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to michael@ajr.org.uk. Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.

Freud's Last Testament

Dr Henry H Abraham

When the ugly heads of the Hydra, antisemitism, are once again emerging all over the world, it is appropriate that we reflect on what that great master of the human soul, Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, had to say on the subject. Freud was extremely cagey about revealing what he truly thought about his own Judaism or, indeed, the religion of the Jews in general.

Moses the Egyptian

Prof Robert Wistrich gave this year's Max Kochmann memorial lecture, entitled 'The Last Testament of Sigmund Freud', in the presence of Mrs Hilde Kochmann and under the chairmanship of Prof Peter Pulzer at the residence of the Austrian Ambassador in London. In his last book, *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud delivered the death blow to traditional Judaic doctrines, proclaiming that the great Law-giver, Moses, was not a Jew, but an Egyptian, since he was raised by an Egyptian princess and surrounded by Egyptians into late adolescence. Freud went even further and loudly proclaimed that not only was Moses not a Jew, but he was murdered by a band of cohorts. By stating this, Wistrich implies, Freud revealed his ambivalence towards his own Jewishness, and this, in turn, is a manifestation of his ambivalence towards his own father, Jacob, who was quite traditional and, to Freud, a representative of the strict religious laws of Judaism which all his life Freud was trying desperately to get away from.

After his father's death, Freud was for a long time profoundly depressed, despite the fact that he was also inordinately fond of his mother, who survived into very old age. Freud was, in fact, suffering from what he later called an oedipus complex - a strong

emotional and physical attraction to the mother and a concomitant dislike or even hatred of the father. He projected his ambivalent feelings towards his father onto the personality of none other than Moses, the Law-Giver, and in many ways the founder of the Jewish religion. Freud was from adolescence onwards an out-and-out atheist, a 'Godless Jew'.

Fear of antisemitism

In an earlier work, *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud had stated that all religions were founded on submissiveness to an almighty father, who is a substitute for one's own father, in the face of the perceived helplessness of the average human being. These views outraged the Jewish community from the late 1930s until today.

Freud, so Wistrich explained, suffered all his life from the fear of antisemitism. In all his writings he tried to be the correct German or Austrian scholar, underlining with numerous citations in Latin, Greek and French the sources of his views and findings. He had a dread of psychoanalysis being branded a 'Jewish science', which later in Germany and Austria, indeed it was. All his closest followers, with the exception of Ernest Jones and CG Jung, were Jews. When the break even with Jung, his designated successor, took place in 1912, Freud told his followers that 'we have to be very careful to get *goyim* as our adherents, or psychoanalysis as an international science will be doomed to oblivion. For science has to be international, and completely objective.'

A good Jew

Freud remained, to the end of his days, culturally and ethnically a good Jew. He had studied, until the age of seven, the Hebrew scriptures with his orthodox father, and could read Hebrew very well, although he always denied this. This was not 'politically correct' for a son of the enlightenment raised in

German/Austrian liberal culture. He was favourably disposed to Palestine and the Zionist movement and was on the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University. For many years he was a member of B'nai B'rith and once stated, at one of their meetings, that these, his brothers, were the only people in Vienna who did not condemn him for his views on childhood sexuality, and the only ones among whom he felt comfortable. Freud was 82 years old when he was able to flee to England and he spent the rest of his life almost exclusively with his family and Jewish friends.

So why did Freud deny or try to depose Moses? Because he was, above all, a great iconoclast: he wanted to found a new religion, psychoanalysis, which would liberate human beings from the shackles of an outmoded and obsolete superstition, embedded in traditional Judaism. To establish this new religion, he had to depose the founder of the old religion, Moses. Or did he unconsciously try to depose the remnants, the moral voice of his own father - did he try to obliterate his own super-ego? No one will ever know for certain; we can only speculate. But one thing is sure. Freud tried to fight the forces of antisemitism and, in this respect, he was very relevant to the world we face today.

The Max Kochmann memorial lecture was sponsored by the Wiener Library, the Leo Baeck Institute, the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex and the Association of Jewish Refugees.

Refugee dental researcher

Consultant dental surgeon researching German/Austrian refugee dentists who entered the UK or were turned away 1933-1939 would be grateful for information from remaining family members or from their patients.

Replies please to Box No. 1267.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

BOUQUET

Sir - In some respects, we have in Britain the greatest variety and the least expensive media in the Western world. But we are less than well served with regard to our Jewish reporting and commentary. Our weeklies are inclined to be somewhat insular and fail to provide the perspective to European and world issues. In a modest way, I find *AJR Journal* attempts to fill this gap. It is challenging and informative - a view shared by a number of the audience I recently addressed on a seminar defining communications in Britain.

Prof Eric Moonman OBE
London N7

PEACE INITIATIVE

Sir - Your November issue hardly mentioned Israel. Have we - the diaspora Jews - and the Israelis become used to permanent gridlock? However, some hopeful signs have been appearing. Quite recently Sharon was told by his army chief-of-staff that his iron-fist methods were strengthening the terrorists.

In the meantime, the Israeli opposition politicians Yossi Beilin and Avram Burg and the Palestinian ex-minister Yasser Abed Rabbo have worked out a peace agreement called the Geneva Accord. Copies of that document are being distributed to every home in Israel.

Inge Trott
Cheam, Surrey

BALANCE DISTURBED

Sir - I fear your staunch support for the American adventure in Iraq will tend to encourage that particular train of thought in the minds of quite a few politicians in Europe. You overstate the benefit to Israel of Hussein's removal. In fact, his political demise has disturbed the balance of power between the secularists in the Middle East and those

hell-bent on a 'crescentade' against the infidel. That is not helpful to the state of Israel.

Hussein was an evil, opportunistic tyrant, but a religious zealot he was not. His support for the Palestinians was aimed at garnering the support of Arab nationalism in the service of his own aggrandisement, not at increasing the power of Islam.

Dr SU Ruff
York

SUDETEN PROBLEM

Sir - Your November editorial carries two statements of breathtaking arrogance, and possibly ignorance. Czechoslovakia was a model of democracy in Central Europe. All citizens, of whatever ethnic origin, had equal rights under the constitution. None of them was constitutionally disadvantaged in any way. This included the Sudeten Germans.

Lt Col Arnost Polak
Cobham, Surrey

I regret having been misunderstood. Though Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points included the 'self-determination of nations', the Sudeten Germans could not secede from Czechoslovakia and join Germany (neither could Austria) - Ed.

Sir - Historical analogies are dangerous. The Occupied Territories are no Sudetenland. They are an occupied sovereign state. Israel's position as the US's favourite is insecure: pressure from the major oil-producers might outweigh the Jewish/Christian Right vote in a future president's eye. Israel's long-term interest, as I have previously tried to argue in your columns, lies in promoting the rules of international law. That means, for us, opposing aspects of Bush's policy and expecting civilised behaviour from Sharon: removing settlements outside Israel, causing the

wall to follow the Green Line, and either trying or releasing prisoners.

Francis Deutsch
Saffron Walden

FRANCE & ISRAEL

Sir - As Mr Rumney (November) points out, France provided Israel with essential weapons at a critical moment (1956). The purchases were largely financed by the USA and helped to launch France as a major international arms supplier. The French at that same time were engaged in a dirty colonial war in Algeria that makes the American occupation of Iraq look like the proverbial vicar's tea party. They were acting on the principle of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend.' The people of Israel were and still are grateful for that help. They were less grateful when France (then Israel's main arms supplier) slapped an embargo on them at another critical moment, just before the Six-Day War, in order to curry favour with the Arabs.

The inevitable conclusion has to be that like any other country, and perhaps more so, the French are unprincipled when it comes to their self-interest. They are, therefore, in no position to preach to the Americans, whose self-interest at least saved the world from the Nazi nightmare and Communist tyranny. It is the same self-interest that now provides the bulwark against forces that are trying to drag us back to the Dark Ages.

Jacob Brauner
London NW11

KINDERTRANSPORTEES

Sir - The Kindertransport which rescued predominantly Jewish children (90 per cent) also saved the life of the future publisher of the *Catholic Herald* and the *Irish Catholic*.

Francis Steiner
Deddington

Sir - I have received an invitation to a Barmitzvah ceremony for any Kinder who missed out on their ceremony. Clearly, it is for 'boys' only. But what about the Batmitzvah? What about the 'girls'? We profess to oppose prejudice, yet we have a self-imposed sexism. What about equal opportunities?

Liesl Silverstone
London NW11

Sir - I came to this country in 1939 on my own as a boy of 16 years. So I, along, I suppose, with others, do not belong to the Kinderstransports. But they are very prominent in the Journal - they are mentioned on at least 6 out of 16 pages of the November 2003 issue. I am not exactly 'jealous', but it would be rather good if one could incorporate these 'solitary immigrants' into some broader net with the AJR.

*Prof Peter Landsberg
Southampton*

BRUNDIBAR

Sir - One of the Newsround pieces (November issue) refers to *Brundibar*, the children's opera by Hans Krasa, which was performed 55 times in Terezin.

I thought it might be of interest that in March 2002 *Brundibar* was performed twice in German by the pupils of Class 7b of the Friedrich-Bayer-Oberschule in Steglitz, Berlin, following the group's four-day visit to Terezin. My family home until February 1939 had been near Steglitz, and since 1997 I have been assisting the school in their various research projects on the fate of the local Jewish community.

*Henry Kuttner
Edgware, Middx*

VIENNA TRIP

Sir - I was delighted to read (November issue) that the mayor had invited Austrian-born survivors of the Holocaust to Vienna. I am in that category and had often wondered why such an invitation had not been issued by Vienna, as many towns in Germany had done so. I immediately telephoned the Holocaust department of the London Jewish Cultural Society to inquire about the trip, only to be told that it had already taken place at the end of October.

Where was this publicised? Who were the people who attended and how were they chosen and why have there been no reports of the trip? Most of all, how is it that you had the wrong information?

*Thea Valman
London NW11*

AJR AGM

Sir - I must reply to HE Reiner, who wishes to lecture us about the procedures and purpose of an AGM. One can only assume that his horizon ends at Watford Gap. Does he not find it of any importance to

meet and mix with members from other parts of the UK?

*Eric Newman
Elstree*

(Tinsel Town 1/2 mile from Albert Square)

'POLITICALLY CORRECT'

Sir - I have been deeply troubled over the suspension of Professor Andrew Wilkie by Oxford University because of his refusal to consider the employment of an Israeli assistant, Mr Amit Duvshani, as he had done his mandatory three-years' national service and this was noted in his CV. He had not been a conscientious objector. If one regards Israel as an aggressor nation *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians, as I personally do, then Mr Duvshani can be regarded as having collaborated in that aggression, and his application can be seen as having powerful political overtones.

If in 1933-39 an ex-conscript of the Nazi army had applied for such a job, the then professor would surely have been within his rights to reject him. Similarly, Professor Wilkie's reluctance to employ him, which would have entailed having to work closely with him, does not appear to me to be racist, but moral. The Vice Chancellor of the University, Sir Colin Lucas, has been 'politically correct', but naive.

*Peter Zander
London W1*

HOLOCAUST INDUSTRY

Sir - It seems to me that there is increasing activity to encourage Austrian ex-refugees to make claims under two funds, the Austrian National Fund and the Austrian Reconciliation Fund. In one case, it is for a lump-sum compensation in respect of property which belonged to our parents, with whom we lived peacefully and securely some 60 years ago. In the other, payments will be made if we observed old Jewish men being forced to clean the pavements of Vienna, also over half a century ago.

To devise a scheme which makes it necessary for an applicant to recall these atrocities is, to my mind, a despicable penalty to inflict on old people in order for them to receive payments of blood money. Of course, it could well be that these conditions were designed to discourage claims.

*HE Reiner
London NW7*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Once the lid of political oppression is lifted, you expect to see previously forbidden creative talent, expressing itself in an outburst of ideas, colour and vitality. Thus, the music of Purcell in Restoration Britain, and the musical theatre revived by Charles II after Cromwell's Puritan grip was loosened. The **Avantgarde Gallery** in Boundary Road this month shows the post-*glasnost* young artists of St Petersburg, expressing their liberty in much more muted tones. This cautious show, well-named **Past and Present**, has some gifted artists like **Evgeny Kuznetsov** looking back with gentle, not mawkish, nostalgia, some of it of the industrial variety. *City*, painted last year, features a young man with windblown hair against a background of pylons. But there is no artistic backlash against the propaganda art which has always characterised repressive regimes, from the Nazis to the Stalinists. There are legions of monasteries painted by Kuznetsov, **Alexander Anisin** and **Andrey Cherepanov** among others - elegant interiors, romantic, winding rivers, boats, sun and seas, and still-lives. **Alexey Korobin's** *Academy of Fine Arts* is very fine, and a chiaroscuro portrayal of *Seven Wise Virgins* by **Igor Kozhevnikov** is clearly classical in style.

Kuznetsov's *Grandmother's Things* is bitterly nostalgic, with its tender and colourful juxtaposition of a blue tin kettle, bits of patchwork, and a tall jug of dried flowers, suggestive of death or age - all implying a cherished yet proscribed life under the past regime. **Oleg Markelov's** *Red Scarf* has a very Russian, almost peasant, feel, as does **Dmitry Ermolov's** portrait of a man.

Perhaps these artists, all students or graduates of the St Petersburg Academy of Arts, have been through enough political turmoil, and want to express a simple, reflective joy in life. Yet, under communism St Petersburg shared fewer



Grandmother's Things by Evgeny Kuznetsov

of the restrictions and political ambitions of Moscow, as Ekaterina Arsenieva, Curator and Senior Research Fellow at the Academy, points out. During the period of the Soviet empire, the intelligentsia remained in St Petersburg and preserved a more classical way of life and high standards of education. Ambitious people flocked to Moscow to join the party, she explains, but artists, writers and academics preferred St Petersburg. 'However, things are changing now,' she says, 'as people prefer to earn more rather than study more.' Artists who were not ideologically free in the past are now slowly developing their own culture. Arsenieva is anxious that these artists should not lose what they have and, in the rush for creative westernised freedom, indulge in kitsch, or degenerate, Disneyland art.

Just across the road, at the **Ben Uri Gallery**, two Hungarian Jewish artists, **Béla Kádár** and **Hugó Scheiber**, who worked in the 1920s and were considered pioneers of the European avant-garde, are untroubled by such concerns. Their work, promoted by Berlin's celebrated **Der Sturm Gallery**, is shown this month in collaboration with the Hungarian Cultural Centre for the Hungarian Year of Culture. If you like Marc Chagall, you will certainly fall for Kadar's beautiful compositions - stylised, conspicuous and colourful, despite his vampiric self-portrait. Hugo Scheiber's disturbing *Crowd*, painted in 1929, appears to foreshadow the fascist period, with its emblematic thrust of arms in a Nazi-like salute. But you may read into it what you will.

RG's INTERFACE

Studies in contrast Among the continuing flood of books on the Third Reich John Cornwell's *Hitler's Scientists* (Viking) stands out. It contrasts the physicist Walter Gerlach's sobs on hearing about Hiroshima - not because of the sufferings of the victims, but because he and his colleagues had failed to develop a German atomic bomb - with the action of Joseph Rotblat, the only scientist at Los Alamos who resigned when he found out that Germany didn't have atomic weapons.

In a lighter vein, Anthony Read's *The Devil's Disciples* (Cape) deals with the lives of the Nazi top brass. Read quotes the puzzling fact that a few years before her marriage to the arch-antisemite Goebbels, Magda Goebbels had had an affair with the Zionist leader, and emissary to Berlin, Chaim Arlosoroff.

Berlin's Fleet Street The area round the Hausvogteiplatz, the location of the *Jüdische Allgemeine* editorial office, has traditional connections with the publishing of books and newspapers. Book production was associated with the name of Ullstein, newspapers with that of Mosse. Rudolf Mosse's cousin Theodor Wolff, editor of the influential *Berliner Tageblatt* during the Weimar years, is commemorated in the name of a local park.

Egocentric thespian Galicia-born Alexander Granach, famous stage star of Berlin's 'golden' 1920s and subsequent Hollywood character actor - *Ninotchka*, *The Seventh Cross* - was the subject of reminiscences by his Israel-resident son Gad at a Berlin book launch. The 88-year-old Gad complained that his father had omitted him from his autobiography *Da geht ein Mensch*, and even stole the show at his barmitzvah by reciting from the Torah as if he were on stage.

Hungarian musical echoes (a) The 1930s hit *Gloomy Sunday*, banned from radio transmission for allegedly prompting a wave of suicides, provides the title and soundtrack for a new film. Starring Erika Marozsan, this schmaltzy concoction enacts an eternal triangle story against a Holocaust background. (b) The operetta composer Emmerich Kalman died in New York 50 years ago.

Anything but an easy read

DIE ENGLISCHEN JAHRE

by Norbert Gstrein

Suhrkamp Verlag, 2001

Norbert Gstrein's novel, now available in English translation as *The English Years*, centres on Gabriel Hirschfelder, a celebrated writer now dead, a Jewish refugee from Vienna who settled in Britain. Part of the narrative covers the early period of Hirschfelder's life in exile, especially the summer of 1940, when he was interned on the Isle of Man. Framing these events are sections narrated by a young Austrian woman, who has come to Britain in the 1990s to investigate Hirschfelder's life, as her research takes her from London to the Isle of Man and to Southend-on-Sea, where the writer had lived out his hermit-like existence.

Gradually the researcher becomes convinced that Hirschfelder is in reality a non-Jewish internee named Harrasser who had exchanged identities with the young Hirschfelder on the Isle of Man and allowed him to be deported to Canada in his place. The real Hirschfelder dies when the refugee transport ship *Arandora Star* is torpedoed in the Atlantic in July 1940.

Gstrein handles the interaction between the various time levels of his novel skillfully, as he does the interplay between the levels of reality and truth that are revealed by the researcher's quest in their varying and competing degrees of credibility. Those interested primarily in the refugee experience should be warned that the novel turns into a detective story-like investigation of identity stolen, re-invented and, ultimately, revealed, and that it is anything but an easy read. The descriptions of London in 1939-40, of post-Anschluss Vienna, and the faded charm of Southend are atmospheric, though the Isle of Man sections are probably the best.

However, as the grandson of a Jewish lawyer in Vienna who was forced to scrub the streets after the Anschluss, I bridled at the attack on assimilated Jews put into the mouth of a Jew from Poland. He asserts that they would have ordered themselves to scrub the pavements and queued to be rounded up for a beating, so eager were they to

REVIEWS

prove themselves good Austrians. Surely the dividing line here lies not between assimilated and Eastern Jews, but between Jews who were savagely beaten and Gstrein's fellow Austrians, who carried out or approved the beatings.

Even worse is Gstrein's description of the 'house fathers' in charge of individual houses in the Isle of Man camps as 'Kapos', a term which to Jews will always be associated with the Nazi-appointed overseers in the concentration camps, who imposed Nazi orders on their fellow inmates, often with the greatest brutality. Former Kapos risked lynching when recognised on the street in Israel, and not a few were sentenced for their crimes. This is grossly offensive to former 'house fathers' still alive and to their families, as well as patently unjust.

Anthony Grenville

Rediscovered masterpiece

THE HOTHOUSE

by Wolfgang Koeppen

Granta, hard back (2002) £14.99,

paperback (May 2004) £7.99

This rediscovered masterpiece seems amazingly contemporary. The almost surreal journey of Koeppen's protagonist, Keetenheuve, through post-war Germany's political labyrinth resonates with allusions that are no less vivid 50 years later.

Like Keetenheuve, Koeppen left Germany in 1933 and moved to Holland with Jewish friends. He wrote two early novels, *A Sad Affair* and *The Tottering Wall*, brought out by the Jewish publisher, Cassirer. While Keetenheuve remained abroad, Koeppen returned in 1939 to Germany, where he kept a low profile.

The novel opens with Keetenheuve on the verge of a breakdown. An idealist who had left his newspaper job because of the 'Austrian lunatic' and the 'monstrous upsurge,' he had witnessed a Hitler Youth procession in

Frankfurt on his way to Paris, the first stop of his exile, and had the uncanny vision of the square widening and the youngsters marching into a deep grave. The characteristics of idealism and vision, combined with his experiences during the war, left Keetenheuve disorientated on his return to the 'fatherland', where, as one of the 'good Germans,' opportunity awaited him.

This quintessential loner's efforts to repair his damaged nation led to his election to the Bundestag. Tragically, these qualities destroyed the other gift life offered him, the love of the orphaned 16-year-old daughter of a Nazi Gauleiter. Keetenheuve marries Elke but his neglect leads her to fall prey to lesbianism and drink, themes echoed hauntingly at the end of the novel.

With Elke dead and Keetenheuve in a haze, the blurring of boundaries between fantasy and reality is a key feature of Koeppen's narrative. Does Keetenheuve, for example, really exercise violent vengeance on Elke's lesbian predator?

Troubled by memories and manifestations of his country's Nazi past, Keetenheuve remains equally disillusioned by a future he feels incapable of confronting. With elections at hand, he is no master of the sound bite. In contrast, Koeppen offers arresting cameos of successfully rehabilitated Nazis - the diplomat reminiscing complacently from one Nuremberg to another, the 'whipless' MP 'stinking of old Nazism and aspiring toward a new Nazism (that wind was yet to rise).'

Plagued by the futility of his efforts to help the downtrodden, Keetenheuve is a loose cannon in a 'hothouse' resonant of the biblical 'vanity of vanities' peopled by officials, bureaucrats and delegates, a handful of whom are captured by Koeppen in their opportunism and self-importance. Koeppen also effectively catches Keetenheuve's disillusionment with democracy - 'an elective dictatorship' - although he knows of no better system.

Most powerful in this dance of death is Keetenheuve's obsession with mortality - his own and that of the

nation. With politicians on both sides striving for Germany to rearm, Keetenheuve is fixated by images of war. Did war represent freedom from the daily grind? Was the murderous partisanship of the football mobs, unlike the apathy of the parliamentary plenary, a substitute for war? This extraordinary novel was virtually blackballed when it came out in 1953.

Emma Klein

Good in parts

CHARLES THE SECOND

(BBC 1, transmitted on Sundays, 9 pm)

When I read the full title of this BBC TV series my heart sank. *Charles II - The Power and the Passion* signalled a surfeit of soft porn. The first instalment confirmed my fear that the series would wallow in murky depths where the phrase oral history connotes historical personages having oral sex. National newspaper critics have gleefully homed in on the raunchy aspects of the programme, with one deriding it as 'a series of bonks strung together by an implausible plot.'

I, *au contraire*, did not find the

plot implausible. It beautifully demonstrated the extreme mutability of power. One minute Charles was a cash-strapped fugitive in Holland, the next he transmuted into the royal font from which all preferments and blessings flowed.

In the Restoration year of 1660 England faced the immensely complicated problem of how to reconcile Royalists and Roundheads, Anglicans and Dissenters, who had fought each other for the two previous decades. In our own lifetime King Juan Carlos I earned the gratitude of the Spanish nation for binding up the wounds Falangists and Republicans had inflicted on each other during the 1930s Civil War and the subsequent years of Franco's iron rule. Three centuries earlier Charles II of England had acted in similar therapeutic fashion. He had assuaged the Cavaliers' vengefulness over the execution of his father, and at the same time humoured Parliament (which held the purse-strings) by not insisting overmuch on his royal prerogative. All his manoeuvres were, moreover, complicated by the pressure to which his French mother, Henrietta Maria, a

fanatical Papist, and his inflexibly Catholic brother, James, were subjecting him.

Nonetheless, Charles contrived to steer skilfully between Scylla and Charybdis throughout his quarter-of-a-century's reign. He also managed to die in the royal bed, his favourite place of recreation (as the programme did not tire of stressing). Yet although *Charles II* focused overmuch on the bedchamber at the expense of the debating chamber, production values were high - with great care taken over the look of the thing. Special mention must be made of the execution scene of Charles I, filmed through a slit in the scaffold, and the arrival of the extravagantly bewigged Catherine of Braganza and her black-accounted entourage at Whitehall Palace.

My verdict, therefore, echoes the vicar's on the egg he had been served in the famous *Punch* cartoon: 'good in parts.'

Richard Grunberger

Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Israel's founding fathers not only sought to establish a homeland for the dispersed Jewish people, they also wanted to create a society based on egalitarian principles. Their ideals underlay much of the success of Israel's early years. In time, however, many of these principles were discredited or found to be unworkable. After teetering on the economic brink for years, Israel seemed to be entering a new era of prosperity in the 1990s. There were even hopes of a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

But then things started to go wrong. It began with the assassination of Itzhak Rabin in November 1995. Rabin's successor, Ehud Barak, attempted to pursue a peace plan, but was stymied by Arafat's intransigence. Then the second *intifada* erupted. That pretty much cooked Israel's goose as far as

tourism was concerned, and thousands of people in allied industries found themselves out of work. Unfortunately, this coincided with the bursting of the global high-tech bubble. As the world went, so did Israel - only more so, since a large part of its resources and hopes were pinned on that industry.

Economic doom and gloom have been our lot ever since. With escalating unemployment and taxation, and downwardly spiralling income, the present government is seeking to stem the economic tide. Spearheaded by Finance Minister Netanyahu, laws annulling almost every facet of the welfare state Israel once was have been passed. It is a sorry testament to Israel's social legacy when the aspiration to establish a better society is nonchalantly swept aside in the name of increased efficiency and cost-cutting.

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When, calling at his home, I happened to mention how much I admired his chic Belsize Park street, Professor Michael Spiro pointed out that a number of showbiz stars, including Derek Jacobi, Bob Hoskins and Jude Law, were among his neighbours and that Noel Gallagher had recently moved away. I wasn't entirely sure whether or not Michael was a fan of the rather rowdy pop star Noel Gallagher until he informed me that he - Michael, that is - lived on the 'intellectual side' of the street.

Professor Michael Spiro provides yet a further example of refugees from the Nazi regime succeeding in life, even if they have had to flee to the ends of the earth to do so. Michael was born in Chemnitz in 1929, growing up in a comfortable, liberal-Jewish home. His grandfather in East Prussia ran a draper's and general store in the small town of Margonin. At an early age Michael's father was sent away to train as a textile designer and he eventually set up in Chemnitz a men's socks factory employing some 50 people which flourished even through the depression. Michael's mother, though born in Chemnitz, came from a large Jewish family in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, many of whom later perished in the Holocaust.

With the advent of the Hitler regime, Michael recalls schoolboys telling him 'Hitler says Jews are stupid!', to which he retorted 'Maybe it's *you* who are stupid!' Keenly aware of the potential danger this reply presented, his father was aghast.

In May 1938 Michael's father had to abandon the business he had so carefully nurtured and the family left for England. At Berlin airport they were subjected to body searches and, immediately the plane took off, the 9-year-old Michael was violently sick. Michael's father had been offered a job in Leicester but this was contingent on his obtaining a work permit, which was slow in coming. The family moved into the Belsize Park area of London - so popular with the German refugee population - where, curiously, Michael lives now. Virtually destitute and convinced war was inevitable,

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Michael Spiro

Scholarship boy



Michael's father decided not to hang around waiting for a work permit. In September 1938 the family left by boat for the southern hemisphere. In Christchurch, New Zealand Michael's father finally found a job with a large textile company.

Imbued, as he says, with the refugee's hard-work ethic, Michael won a scholarship to a fee-paying school and eventually a scholarship to Canterbury University College, then part of the University of New Zealand, to study chemistry, physics and mathematics.

Having gained his first degree, Michael took a master's degree in chemistry, specialising in physical chemistry, before beginning a sort of peregrination around the British Commonwealth. He started off by winning a particularly prestigious scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford in order to do a doctorate (D.Phil.). Two years later he won a post-doctoral scholarship to the University of Toronto, where he conducted research into electro-chemistry. In 1956 he was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Melbourne and, four years later, he transferred to a lectureship at Imperial College, London, where he was

to rise to the rank of professor. In those years, the practice of flying people over for interviews had not yet become the norm, so, by applying for jobs on different continents, Michael jokes, he was fortunate in never having to attend an interview.

One of Michael's perhaps more interesting experiences at Imperial College was supervising the doctoral research of the 'fragrant' Mary Archer. On one occasion the Archers invited him to dinner, though his overriding recollection of that engagement is their wonderment at the relationship he struck up with their hitherto introverted cat.

In the 1980s Michael conducted research into the extraction of solubles from tea and coffee, later studying the dark film that forms on the surface of tea in hard-water areas and stains the cup. This, it must be said, struck the media as a rather quirky exercise and he was invited to expand on it on TV, radio and the press, becoming in today's parlance a celeb, if only for a day.

Since retirement, Michael has retained his interest in food research. Some weeks ago he organised a conference on 'food adulteration' on behalf of the food groups of the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Society of Chemical Industry. He remains a Senior Research Fellow at Imperial College.

In 1976 Michael married Molly, a psychiatric social worker who was also a great-grandniece of the British scientist Michael Faraday. Sadly Molly passed away two years ago.

In the 1990s Michael joined the AJR and has published numerous pieces in *AJR Journal* on popular science, each item laden with humour, granite-like precision ... and belted out on an apparently medieval typewriter. Clearly, there is no room in Michael's *Weltanschauung* for the personal computer: he is strictly low-tech. Nonetheless, as the author of this profile can personally testify, woe betide the editor who dares even think about moving a punctuation mark in Professor Spiro's text.

INSIDE the AJR

Harrogate putting the world to rights

Every couple of months or so the Harrogate Group meets to put the world to rights. We don't seem very successful in our efforts, but we do enjoy each other's company. At our last meeting we heard from two members about their recent visits to their places of origin. One had been back to Vienna and had enjoyed a wonderful long weekend. Another had returned to Munich as a guest of the *Bürgermeister* - this visit had not been such an unqualified success. *Inge Little (née Steinweg, from Dortmund)*

Next meeting: Wednesday, 4 February, 2 pm, 1 Masham Close, Harrogate

Positive thinking in Essex

Actress and author Bettine Le Beau said positive thinking could turn our failings into assets. To prove her point, she told us a number of amusing tales. For instance, being unable to cook, she was feeding her husband salads only, pretending it was for the sake of his health, and that's how she got away with it! *Julie Franks*

Next meeting: Tuesday 13 January. Ludwig Spiro on internment

Leeds HSFA: combating prejudice

Forty people attended a talk by Peter Liddle, founder and keeper of the World War I Liddle Collection at the University of Leeds. He is currently concerned with preserving materials from the Second World War and has interviewed several of our members for the Centre's collection. Dr Liddle said that in a democratic society, 'bad' views could not be eradicated - we had to accept prejudice but needed always to be on the alert. *Trude Silman*

Weald of Kent planning for the summer

We are again indebted to Jane and Max Dickson for letting us meet in their home (I can certainly recommend Max's home-made rye bread) and to Myrna for all her hard work. We welcomed two new members. We are in the process of finding another meeting place and thinking about

speakers and outings for next summer.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: Wednesday 4 February (to be confirmed)

Cambridge members' early impressions of England

Karin Turner welcomed us to her lovely farmhouse near Saffron Walden. We heard a most moving account from Eva Clarke about her parents' experience in wartime Germany, culminating in her birth in a concentration camp just two days before it was liberated by the US army. Other members contributed early impressions of their arrival in England and discussed options for future meetings. *Keith Lawson*

Next meeting: Thursday 22 January, 11 am at Great Paxton near St Neots

South London: rights of the underprivileged

Professor Jo Wolff talked about the rights of the underprivileged. Where is help needed most? In housing the homeless, better education for many children, giving money to the poorest, healing the sick? He mentioned most of the difficulties these priorities entailed, for instance inflation eroding savings. Afterwards, we celebrated our 9th birthday with a large birthday cake. *Anne Poloway*

Next meeting: Thursday 15 January. Stewart Macintosh of the BBC

Ilford group are well-balanced UK citizens

The group is becoming well established with many people becoming regular visitors. It was a good turn-out and we had a heart-warming session, with members of the group recalling their memories of how and when they arrived in England. Despite all the hardships endured in their early years, they have all become well-balanced British citizens. *Meta Roseneil*

Next meeting: Wednesday 21 January. Frank Dabba-Smith

New feature for Sheffield group

Our latest gathering started with a new feature. We met for lunch at the Sheffield Jewish Community's Cafe Simcha and then gathered in the Lower Vestibule of the new synagogue to hear details of the Leeds meeting, the proposed St Anne's holiday and, primarily, Steve

Mendelsson's emigration, including his early years in Breslau and his discovery of Zionism. Our very varied experiences of political inputs and impacts emerged in discussion, as did the various attempts we experienced of our countries of birth trying to tempt us to return - or not! Lisa Vernon's description of Russian/Communist youth groups' orientation and indoctrination efforts sparked lively interest - a possible topic for future meetings? *Dorothy Fleming*

Next meeting: Sunday 28 March, 2.30 pm, Lower Vestibule, Kingfield Synagogue, Brincliffe Crescent, Sheffield 11. 'Poetry we have written and/or remembered' and Dorothy Fleming's story. Information: Steve Mendelsson tel 0114 2630666

In Norwich, a good time had by all

Converging on Norwich by bus, car and train from as far as Ipswich in the south to Great Yarmouth and Sheringham in the north, we East Prussians, Viennese and Berliners etc met at the Norwich Synagogue for lunch so as to be back home during daylight. With everybody contributing something, the result was a superb variety, including candles on a cake for Myrna Glass's birthday. Two newcomers were made most welcome. The conversation flowed freely and a good time was had by all. *Frank Bright*

Next meeting: Tuesday 23 March, 12 noon, same venue

Lively social gathering in Surrey

We were entertained by Edmee and Tom Barta in their home, which suddenly seemed to expand to receive 37 members - the highest number on record. We welcomed a number of new members, who rapidly joined in a very lively social gathering, enhanced by Edmee's buffet lunch of variety and great taste. We also toasted Myrna Glass on the fifth anniversary of her joining the AJR and thanked her for the great work she has done in bringing together so many 'provincial' members. *Vernon Saunders*

Next meeting: Tuesday 17 February. Details to follow

Edinburgh: attitudes towards visiting Germany

We sat in the comfortable sitting room of Irene and Philip Mason overlooking the magnificent Pentland Hills. The meeting

was one of reminiscences, followed by a lively discussion on revisiting a country where once one was less than welcome. David Goldberg said that 'you can't hold the present generation responsible for their grandparents' misdeeds.' Vivian Anderson, a second-generation member, recalled her visit to Dresden, finding that the people now working in the bank where her father was manager were 'all extremely nice.'
Judy Gilbert

North London showing of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

We were privileged to have the Shalvata Drama Group entertain us with their second showing of Bertold Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Condensed to under one hour by Andrew Herskovits, the adaptation contained all the salient points of the original but with the twist of making it relevant to the era of Nazi Germany and its treatment of the Jewish 'underclass'. A most interesting morning enjoyed by the over 30 members present.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 5 February (no January meeting owing to synagogue function). Otto Deutsch, 'Coffee houses'

Lively discussion in Dundee and Aberdeen

Meeting in the home of my daughter Sharon Cummings, we had a lively discussion. Guta Robertson talked about having spent four years in camps and factories in Germany and then marrying the British PoW with whom she had made 'eye contact' in one camp. Heni King related how in 1939 she was taken from Vienna by her parents to Portugal, escaping almost certain death. From Portugal her parents emigrated to Canada, where she grew up. Also among those present was my wife, Eci, who was deported from Hungary to Auschwitz.

John S Mackay

Pinner lecture on the Inquisition

Andrew Herskovits reminded us that since the time of the Roman Emperor Titus Jews had lived in the Iberian Peninsula in relative peace in districts rather than ghettos. It was not until the fourteenth-century pogroms that Jews began to convert. These 'new Christians' came to be hated for their apparent monopoly in financial, economic and political fields. At the time of the

Inquisition some 80,000 Jews converted and the remaining 40,000 Jews were expelled in 1492.
Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thursday 8 January, 2 pm. Joy Puritz, granddaughter of Elisabeth Schumann: 'Portrait of a beloved singer'

East Midlands (Nottingham) enjoy meeting and chatting

Another successful meeting took the usual form of a lunch at a member's house. Numbers increased to 16. Members enjoy just meeting and chatting. I keep in touch with members who can't attend and give help where I can if it is needed. I hope in between meetings to arrange a visit to a neighbouring group. I again stress that AJR will assist with transport costs to some of our scattered members in isolated communities in this region.

Bob Norton

Next meeting: early March. Details to be confirmed

A painful story in Brighton & Hove

We were entertained by readings of articles written by the writers' group section. The last story we heard - an account of an Italian wasp attacking a tourist in a most sensitive part of the anatomy - was read by Lilli Pollard, a founder of *Sarid* who is now moving away from the area. She was presented with a decorative picture frame as a token of our affection.

Next meeting: Monday 19 January. Joy Markham: 'The role of the Jewish Welfare Board in Brighton and Hove'

Manchester: an enchanting talk

Some 50 members attended the afternoon tea held at the Nicky Alliance Centre. This function is now a popular annual event. Our guest, Jack Honigman, gave a record recital entitled 'Music - a layman's view of composition and performance'. Despite this highbrow-sounding title, we were treated to an enchanting and humorous talk, illustrated by beautiful musical excerpts. Tasty refreshments added to the pleasure of the afternoon.
Werner Lachs

Next meetings

**Bradford: Wednesday 28 January
Liverpool: Thursday 22 January**

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Tue	6	Margaret Gruneberg
Wed	7	Margaret Opdahl
Thur	8	Lewis Lev
Sun	11	CLOSED
Mon	12	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	13	Yakov Paul
Wed	14	Nikki Van der Zyl
Thur	15	Mike Mirandi
Sun	18	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon	19	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	20	Sheila Games
Wed	21	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	22	Michael Heaton
Sun	25	CLOSED
Mon	26	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	27	Rita & Jack Davis
Wed	28	Katinka Seiner
Thur	29	Ronnie Goldberg

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

Gerda Wiener welcomes her great-grandson Alexander into the family. He is the son of Laura and Philip Godfrey, and the grandson of Marion and Antony Godfrey and Vicki and Ronald Rosenblatt.

Marriage

Congratulations to James Smith, co-Director of Beth Shalom, on his marriage to Béatha Uwazaninka and to his parents Marina and Eddie Smith.

Deaths

Neumann. Edith Neumann, née Brummer, born Koschmin 9 July 1910, died Bournemouth 1 November 2003. A remarkable lady who bore her illness with great courage to the end. Much loved and missed by family and friends. Susanne and Gerry Kenton and family.

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Obituary

Dr Herbert Freeden

Dr Herbert Freeden (born Friedenthal), writer and journalist, co-founder and first co-editor of *AJR Information*, has died in Oxford aged 94.

He was born in 1909 in Posen, which his family left in 1919 when it was occupied by Poland, settling in Kassel, Germany. There he joined the Blau-Weiss Jewish youth movement and witnessed the collapse of his father's business during the hyperinflation of the early 1920s. He studied in Leipzig, Munich and Göttingen before moving to Berlin, where he wrote for social democratic newspapers as well as becoming an assistant director and adapter for the theatre of the Jüdischer Kulturbund.

In 1939 Freeden sought refuge in Britain and was soon interned in the Isle of Man, where he forged many literary friendships, in particular with the writer Kurt Hiller. After his release in 1940 he enlisted in the British army. In 1942 he married Dr Marianne Hochdorf, a refugee from Vienna. Alongside his involvement with the AJR, Freeden was head of the publicity department of the

Jewish National Fund (JNF) in London. In 1950 he settled in Jerusalem and became the director of the JNF's foreign publications department. From the mid-1950s he was the Israel correspondent of the influential German daily the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, later adding the *Badische Zeitung*, *Kieler Nachrichten* and *Stuttgarter Zeitung* to his portfolio. For 40 years his was the voice of a moderate and self-critical Israel. In 1974 the West German government recognised his contribution to bridge-building between the two countries by bestowing upon him the Federal Service Cross First Class.

Herbert Freeden wrote a number of novels in German and English about Jewish life under the swastika, including *Grist to God's Mill* (1947). He published two scholarly studies: *Jewish Theatre in Nazi Germany* (1964) and *The Jewish Press in The Third Reich* (1987) (English edition, 1993). His autobiography *Living at the Wrong Time* was published in 1991. In 1993 he returned to England to live out his retirement. He leaves one son, Michael.

Search Notices

My mother **Marlies Fricke** (née Brohmer), born 1926, is looking for **Hans-Joachim (von) Reitzenstein**, born 13.2.1945 in Potsdam, or information about his uncle or grandmother. Hans-Joachim is the only son of her friend **Josephine Reitzenstein (Scharfenberg)**, who died in England in October 1948. Information please to Bianca Brohmer at b.brohmer@web.de or tel 0044 (0) 7800 630 957.

I am a historian seeking information on **Alice Bernstein**, a teacher from Berlin who worked as a domestic in Britain at the beginning of the war, and **Grete Unger-Jacoby**, whose sister **Berta** was imprisoned in Ravensbrueck and gassed at the Bernberg 'euthenasia' facility. Alice returned to her old teaching job in Berlin after the war, but I would like to know what she was doing during the war - e.g. was she interned? Regarding Grete, I hope to find someone from her family who could tell me more about Berta and what she did to fall foul of the Nazis. Information please to Peter Crane, 6545 27th Avenue NW, Seattle WA 98117, USA.

My father **Hermann Burg**, 83, came from Vienna to Brazil, having been got out of work camps by his sister and brother. He would like to contact **Edith Koenigsberg**, a friend of his youth who lived in Vienna TreuStrasse nr 11-20 district and who, he believes, went to England as a kindertransportee. Any information please to Michael Burg at nextcent@ig.com.br or michel.efroim@itefonica.com.br.

Ludwig Meinrath, born Cologne 16.7.1902, died Rio de Janeiro 1982, owned a textile factory which no longer exists. His wife, Hilde née Blumenfeld, 93, now lives in Rio. I am his oldest son and live in Sao Paolo. My only brother lives in New Haven CT. Any information on Ludwig Meinrath, please contact Pedro John Meinrath at telemake@terra.com.br.

Ilse Woolf went to Jewish school in Stettin with my grandmother Ruth Isaac. Ilse left on kindertransport to Holland, my grandmother and twin to London. What became of Ilse? Any information please to Debbie Samson at Devorahsam@aol.co.

Arts and Events Diary January

To 11 April 'Women and War'. Imperial War Museum tel 020 7416 5439

All month 'Faith in Education: The Story of the Jews' Free School'. Jewish Museum, Camden Town tel 020 7284 1997

All month 'Am I My Brother's Keeper? Rescue in the Holocaust'. Jewish Museum, Finchley tel 020 8349 1143

Mon 5 Hans Seelig MA, 'Some 2003 Musical Anniversaries We Missed'. Club 43. Contact Hans Seelig 01442 254360

Tues 13 Dr Ute Deichmann, 'From Pre-eminence to Decline in German Biomedical Research, 1900-1950: The Impact of Politics, Antisemitism and Isolation'. Wiener Library, 7 pm. tel 020 7636 7247

Until Sun 18 'A Storm in Europe: Béla Kádár, Hugó Scheiber and "Der Sturm" Gallery in Berlin'. Ben Uri Gallery tel 020 7482 1234

Mon 19 Ralph Blumenau MA, 'The Psychology and Psychopathology of Philosophers'. Club 43

From Tues 20 'Eugen Spiro (1874-1972): A Retrospective'. London Jewish Cultural Centre tel 020 7431 0345

From Tues 27 for 3 weeks 'The Windmill'. A play by *AJR Journal's* art correspondent Gloria Tessler based on the life of Peter Kien, a painter, poet and writer in the Terezin camp. Union Theatre, 204 Union Street, off The Cut, London SE1 tel 020 7261 9876

Mon 2 Feb Mary Shakeshaft MA, 'John Masefield, Forgotten Laureate'. Club 43

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL WEEKEND

Thur 22 'We Want the Light: The Jews and German Music'. Premiere screening at Princess Anne Theatre, BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London, 7.30 pm

Sat 24-Sun 25 Weekend of talks and films at the Imperial War Museum

Sun 25 to 14 March Jenny Stolzenberg: 'Forgive and do not Forget'. Exhibition of footwear left by victims of the Holocaust. Ben Uri Gallery

Sun 25 'The Long March: The True Story of Holocaust Survivor Leon Greenman'. Jewish Museum, Finchley. 5 pm

Mon 26 Dr Ian King, 'Carl von Ossietzky, Journalist and Martyr'. Club 43

Wed 28 'Genocides and Refugees: Lessons Still to be Learnt'. Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex

Fifty years' evolution at Yad Vashem

Dr David Silberklang

How does a people assimilate the most radical genocide in modern history into its collective memory? How can an event that defies imagination and language be analysed, recorded, taught and remembered? In the aftermath of the Holocaust the need was urgent, the shock and trauma enormous, fresh and raw. These questions challenged Jewish leaders around the world even during the terrible reality of the Holocaust. It became clear that such an institution would have to address the enormity of the event while preserving the individual humanity of its victims.

Since its inception in Jerusalem in 1953, Yad Vashem (literally 'The Hand of God') has evolved into the world's leading Holocaust memorial, research and educational institution. Even before it had a permanent site, Yad Vashem embarked on several major projects: collecting 'pages of testimony' to commemorate individuals killed in the Holocaust, acquiring Holocaust documentation and personal testimonies of survivors for the archives and library, and developing research and publications. By the time Yad Vashem moved to the Mount of Remembrance in 1957, it had already collected several hundred thousand names of victims, had published its first book, and was planning its first historical exhibition.

The opening of a Holocaust archive in the mid-1950s entailed the need to collect materials for research which would help to commemorate the atrocities suffered and possibly contribute to preventing such events from recurring. Yad Vashem was also the first to address the subject of rescue by non-Jews with the opening of the Avenue of the Righteous among the Nations in 1962.

The Eichmann trial of 1961 - to which Yad Vashem contributed much archival assistance - marked a watershed in Holocaust commemoration and research both in Israel and worldwide. So too did Israel's perceived vulnerability during the Six-Day and Yom Kippur wars, the

emergence of a post-Holocaust generation, and the rise in foreign tourism to Israel. These events culminated in Yad Vashem's pioneering approach to Holocaust remembrance based on the belief that people distanced from the events by time and place needed more basic explanations. Thus a historical museum, the first of its kind, opened in July 1973 telling the story of the Holocaust from beginning to end.

During this time, Yad Vashem's publications and scholarly conferences began addressing a wide range of Holocaust-related subjects. In 1968 the first Yad Vashem international conference (on Jewish resistance during the Holocaust) advanced scholarly research on the *Shoah*. Yad Vashem also opened its education department, which was among the first to teach Holocaust studies to secondary school pupils, university students, Israeli soldiers and the general public. In 1979 it held its first summer institute to train teachers and professors from abroad. These early initiatives grew into the International School for Holocaust Studies.

By the end of the 1980s the Children's Memorial had opened, preparation for the Valley of the Communities was well advanced, the Art Museum had become a visitors' mainstay, and a project was undertaken to update the Historical Museum, its most visited site. With the passage of time, and awareness that in a number of years there would no longer be survivors to share their personal stories, Yad Vashem embarked on a development project to provide what has become the largest Holocaust archive in the world and the leading library on the subject.

Jubilee Year sees the opening of the new visitors' centre and the new museum complex. Yad Vashem has devoted 50 years to Holocaust research, commemoration and education. It is much more than another memorial.

This article has been abridged from that published in Yad Vashem's 50th anniversary commemorative magazine.

Newsround

Turkish synagogues attacked

Car bombs outside Istanbul's Neve Shalom and Beth Israel synagogues during Shabbat services killed 25 people, six of them Jews, and injured more than 300 including many passers-by.

Social services directory

The AJR Social Services Department is among Jewish Welfare organisations featured in the new Directory of Jewish Social Services published by the Board of Deputies. At the launch of the new directory Chief Justice Lord Woolf spoke of its importance in defining the social welfare services at the Jewish community's disposal.

Balance at the Beeb?

The BBC's appointment of Malcolm Balen to monitor Middle Eastern coverage has led Israel's Foreign Ministry to rescind its ban on contacts with the BBC. Official spokesmen can be interviewed and press conferences opened to BBC reporters, but the Ministry prefers to judge the BBC's impartiality on the results.

CDU expulsion

German MP Martin Hohmann, who called Jews a 'nation of perpetrators' for Jewish participation in the Bolshevik Revolution, was voted out of the Christian Democratic Party by a large majority of CDU MPs. A senior serving military officer had already been dismissed for expressing agreement with Hohmann.

French school arson

A new wing of the Mercaz Hatorah school in Gagny, Paris was burned down in an arson attack. President Chirac's response - 'When a Jew is attacked in France, it is the whole of France which is attacked' - was welcomed by community representatives. A similar attempt at arson on a synagogue in Vitry was foiled.

Belated barmitzvah

Boys who came to Britain on the Kindertransport but, due to the circumstances of the time, were unable to have a barmitzvah, are being invited by KT-AJR to participate in a belated joint ceremony at Stanmore and Cannons Park Synagogue. The service will be followed by a luncheon reception. Details from Bertha Leverton tel 0208 952 4280.