

Stamp collecting for grown-ups

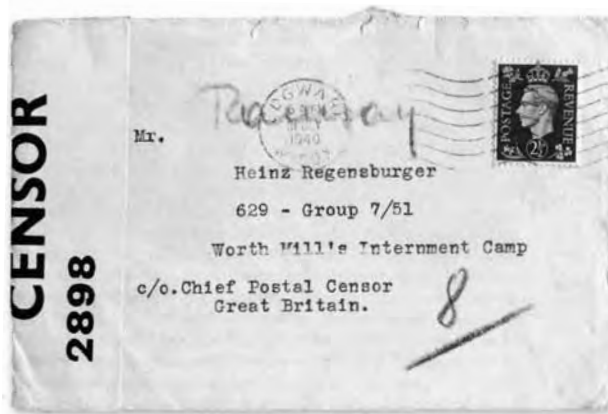
Postage stamps, it seems, have had a magical appeal to generations of schoolboys. While my father as a boy in Vienna had specialised in collecting the stamps of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, I concentrated on the stamps of what was then still called the British Empire, as befitted a boy in London in the 1950s. Disdaining the inflated flow of new issues flooding onto the market, I took no interest in any stamps issued after the death of King George VI in 1952. What magic was evoked by the simple, almost austere images on the stamps of bygone decades! The earliest, issued after the introduction of the modern postage stamp by the British Royal Mail in 1840, mostly featured only the portrait of the monarch of the issuing state, on the model of the profile of Queen Victoria that adorned the original Penny Black (and the much prized Two Penny Blue), or the coat of arms of that state.

Something of the same attraction emanates from *Fleeing from the Führer: A Postal History of Refugees from the Nazis*, written by Charmian Brinson and William Kaczynski and published by the History Press, Stroud, in 2011 (ISBN 978 0 7524 6195 3). The book is built around Kaczynski's remarkable collection of stamps, postcards, envelopes, visas, certificates and other such apparently ephemeral documents relating to the experience of the vast numbers of refugees and deportees whose lives were dislocated as they were forced to flee the Nazis or were otherwise uprooted.

The book captivates the reader at the first sight of its images of stamps from a multitude of countries, of envelopes that once contained communications from refugees to relatives in far-away lands and of the postmarks and censorship marks of various national authorities, including the ominous eagle and swastika of the Nazis. In conjunction with the linking narrative supplied by Charmian Brinson, the images

selected combine to give a very particular historical insight into the experience of the refugees from the Nazis.

Postage stamps have always had the capacity to educate the attentive collector. For the young, this can be a simple matter of information. I remember my puzzlement at seeing an Irish stamp celebrating the anniversary of the year 1916, which for a young British boy was subsumed into the war years of 1914-18,



Letter to Warth Mill Internment Camp, 31 July 1940

a national narrative in which the Easter Rising of 1916 in Dublin played little part. I remember my bafflement at seeing the unknown word 'bilingual' applied in the catalogues of the stamp dealers Stanley Gibbons to issues of South African stamps – until I realised that the wording on the stamps was in two languages, English and Afrikaans, and gained an inkling of the deep historical divide between Briton and Boer in that country. And I remember wondering why a Czech stamp of 1947 bearing the image of a veiled woman in mourning should carry the name 'Lidice', until I found out about the atrocity perpetrated by the Germans in that village in retribution for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in 1942.

Germany's stamps, too, constitute a visual record of its history. At first, the various independent German states that made up the German Confederation until 1867 issued their own stamps; only after Prussia's victory over Austria in

the war of 1866 were the stamps of the states of North Germany replaced by those of the Prussian-dominated North German Confederation. That signalled the disappearance of the Kingdom of Saxony with its rare classical issue of stamps of 1850, and of the Kingdom of Hanover with its issue featuring the image of the blind king George V, among others. In 1871, following Prussia's victorious war against France, the remaining South German states were also incorporated into the new German Empire, which issued its own stamps, including the series bearing the image of Germania.

Of the three South German states, only Bavaria was granted the right to continue to control its own postage after 1871. This reflected the skilful tactics of the German Chancellor, Bismarck, in making apparent concessions to Bavarian autonomous sentiment, while ensuring that in matters of real power control rested in Berlin,

not in Munich. (Bavaria had control of its own armed forces, for example, but only in peacetime, which is rather like giving a young man access to a contraceptive vending machine, but only while he remains celibate.)

The collapse of 1918 was reflected in Bavaria on the face of its postage stamps. The revolution of November 1918 in Munich brought to power a radical left-wing regime under Kurt Eisner, which promptly overprinted the image of King Ludwig III with the words 'Volksstaat Bayern', overtly designating Bavaria a socialist 'people's state'. But when the left-wing government was bloodily overthrown in May 1919 by the right-wing paramilitary forces that 'cleansed' Munich of 'Reds', the overprinting on Bavarian stamps changed to 'Freistaat Bayern', the conservative slogan of the new government of the right that was to preside over the launch of Adolf Hitler's

continued overleaf

Stamp collecting *cont. from p1*

political career.

The history of Austria is also told through its postage stamps. The stamps of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy initially bore the imperial coat of arms, the double-headed eagle of the Habsburgs, or the image of the Emperor Francis Joseph. As befitted a proud empire, in 1908 Austria-Hungary celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of Francis Joseph's accession to the throne with a series of stamps designed by the noted artist Koloman Moser and featuring images of the imperial palaces, the Hofburg and Schönbrunn. Austrian pretensions to power and influence in the eastern Mediterranean were underlined by the stamps issued for the Austrian post offices maintained in the Ottoman Empire (including one in Jerusalem) and exotically denominated in piasters, the local currency.

But with the collapse of 1918, as Austria was reduced to its German-speaking rump, the new republic issued stamps on which the image of Emperor Charles, last of the ruling Habsburgs, was overprinted with the word 'Deutschösterreich'. Under the post-war peace settlement, the union of 'German' Austria with neighbouring Germany was forbidden by the victorious Allies. Austria became a republic, whose fragility was at first belied by the optimism of the images on its stamps: the parliament building, symbol of the new democracy, or a kneeling man, symbolising the arising of the new republic, all crafted in the Art Nouveau style of the Vienna Secession, the avant-garde movement that stood in opposition to official Habsburg aesthetic pomposity.

Fleeing from the Führer, too, provides a visual accompaniment to the history of the refugees from Nazism. The book is arranged chronologically, charting the relentless intensification of the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis and the growing list of countries affected either by German occupation or by an influx of refugees. The first chapter depicts the impact of National Socialism on the Jews of Germany in the 1930s, illustrated by such items as a 1938 postcard from an inmate in Block 33 in Buchenwald, or the children's identity card ('Kinderausweis') issued to the three-year-old William Kaczynski and bearing the name 'Israel', imposed by the Nazi authorities on all male Jews.

Subsequent chapters cover the emigration of increasingly desperate Jews to countries across the globe

Compensation programmes improved

Following negotiations with the German government, the Claims Conference has announced a series of improvements in compensation programmes that they administer. These changes affect applicants to the Article II and the Hardship Funds. Also, there is now no deadline for applications to the Ghetto Fund, which makes a one-time payment of €2,000 (approximately £1,650) to people who worked in Nazi-controlled ghettos.

Article II Fund

With effect from 1 January 2012, the minimum time period for persecution (interned in a ghetto, in hiding or living under false identity) is reduced to 12 months. The Claims Conference is re-examining applications that were not eligible on the basis of the applicant not meeting the 18-month minimum criteria. The Fund makes monthly payments of €300 (approximately £250) and it is thought that this change will make an extra 8,000 survivors eligible for pensions.

Additionally, survivors aged 75 and over who were in a ghetto for less than 12 months but for a minimum of three months will be entitled to a special monthly pension of €240 (approximately £200). It is thought that this change will

benefit survivors of the Budapest ghetto as well as child survivors hidden in France, Belgium, Italy and Greece, and that an additional 3,500 survivors will become eligible as they reach the age of 75 over the coming years.

Hardship Fund

Also coming into force in 2012 is a widening of entitlement to the Hardship Fund, which now extends to Jewish victims of Nazism who live in Western Europe, provided they have never received any compensation for their suffering.

The Fund provides a one-time payment of €2,556 (approximately £2,100) to certain Jewish victims of Nazism, including many from former Soviet-Bloc countries who emigrated to the West after 1969, which was the application deadline for the West German Indemnification Laws (BEG).

Application forms and further guidance are available from AJR Head Office and from the Claims Conference website at <http://www.claimscon.org/index.asp?url=compensation>. Separately, the deadline to submit questionnaires to Project Heart at www.heartwebsite.org has been extended into 2012.

Michael Newman

and, following the outbreak of war, the internment of Jews in camps in the occupied countries of Western Europe. Particularly well recorded are the British internment camps: Huyton Camp near Liverpool, Warth Mill in Bury, and the various camps on the Isle of Man, where refugees were detained from summer 1940. William Kaczynski was himself interned with his mother and younger brother in the family camp in Rushen, Isle of Man, and it was a letter from his cousin Wolfgang Happ, who had been deported to Canada, that first interested him in refugee postal history.

For, as Charmian Brinson states, postal communication became a lifeline at a time when families were brutally torn apart and when letters, posted in the fragile hope

of reaching their intended recipients, were the only remaining link between them. The amazing odysseys of some of the letters in the book took them literally round the world, following their recipients as they were repeatedly displaced by the tides of war. Apart from the internment camps in Canada and Australia, *Fleeing from the Führer* recovers the memory of half-forgotten camps like Beau Bassin in Mauritius (for 'illegal' Jewish entrants to Palestine) and Somes Camp in New Zealand.

The book includes chapters on refugee life in China (Shanghai) and Japan (Kobe), on organisations that helped the refugees, especially the Red Cross with its system of postal messages, and on individuals who helped the defenceless Jews. One can admire the illustrations of transit visas issued by Chiune Sugihara, Japanese consul in Kaunas, Lithuania, or the famous 'Schutzpässe' (protective passes) issued to Jews in Budapest by the Swede Raoul Wallenberg. Especially fascinating is the chapter on undercover mail in wartime, which allowed communications from the ghettos in Poland to reach London via undercover addresses in neutral Lisbon. A chapter on the displaced persons of the post-war years rounds off a rewarding read.

Anthony Grenville

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'Speak Up, Speak Out' Holocaust Memorial Day, 2012

This year's AJR Holocaust Day Memorial Service, held as on previous occasions at Belsize Square Synagogue, was conducted by Jonathan Wittenberg, Rabbi of the New North London Synagogue and Senior Rabbi of the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues UK.

AJR Co-Director Michael Newman welcomed guests, among them the Mayor of Camden, Cllr Abdul Quadir, Thomas Schneider and Rosemarie and Hanno Hille from the German Embassy, and Martin Reichard

from the Austrian Embassy. He drew attention to the fact that this year's Holocaust Memorial Day coincided with the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference, at which the Nazis co-ordinated the 'Final Solution'.

Rabbi Wittenberg invited six AJR members to light memorial candles to remember the lives of the six million Jewish people murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Jeremy Burko, Cantor at the New North London Synagogue, recited prayers.

Further reports on AJR Holocaust Memorial Day events will appear in the next issue of the Journal (Ed.).



Rolf Penzias lights a candle with Lucie Bernheim and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg looking on.

PHOTO: MICHAEL J. EZRA

Taking up this year's Holocaust Memorial Day theme 'Speak Up, Speak Out', Rabbi Wittenberg stressed the importance of speaking up not only on account of the passage of time and to negate the influence of the anti-Semites and Holocaust deniers, but also to show honour and respect to the victims of the Holocaust. Referring to violence inflicted on whoever suffered genocide—whether Jews, Muslims, Blacks, Asians or any other group—Rabbi Wittenberg

said: 'We abhor racism and hatred. Our values compel us to speak out!' 'We must all try to prevent the next wave of violence,' he concluded.

Felicitas Weileder, a young volunteer from the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace, a German organisation set up to confront the legacy of the Nazi regime and with which the AJR works closely, brought her own perspective to the event, insisting that 'We must speak out against fear and hate— who else will?'

International conference on the Holocaust at the Imperial War Museum

In January this year, a three-day conference entitled 'Beyond Camps and Forced Labour: Current International Research on Survivors of Nazi Persecution' was held at the Imperial War Museum in London. Organised by Professor Johannes-Dieter Steinert (University of Wolverhampton), with Suzanne Bardgett (Imperial War Museum), Professor David Cesarani (Royal Holloway, University of London), and Dr Jessica Reinisch (Birkbeck College London), this was the fourth such triennial conference to be held at the IWM since 2003. Now known as one of the most important conferences on the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, this multi-disciplinary gathering attracted a large number of scholars from many countries who delivered well over 100 papers on a great variety of aspects of its subject.

The conference opened with a vivid account by Paul A. Shapiro (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

of the opening of the vast archives of the International Tracing Service at Bad Arolsen, Germany. The conference then divided into panels, grouping papers according to their subject areas. This meant that no one could hear more than a fraction of the papers given, but those I attended were all of high quality. I spoke on the settlement of the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain after 1945, and AJR member Ruth Barnett spoke on the legacy of Nazi persecution as it affected Roma (Gypsies) and Jews.

Outstanding among many thought-provoking speakers was Professor James Waller (Keene State College, USA), whose chilling title, 'Becoming Evil', prefaced a penetrating psychological analysis of how 'ordinary men'—the title of Christopher Browning's acclaimed study of the role of Reserve Police Battalion 101 as an *Einsatzkommando* behind the Eastern Front—became participants in genocide.

Anthony Grenville

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**CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE**

To England via Uganda

In my teens during the Nazi era, walking in our town of Heilbronn am Neckar near Stuttgart, I heard the voices of people being beaten. Then our synagogue was burned down and on Kristallnacht my father was arrested and taken to Dachau.

My Uncle David, a Swiss national who lived in Basle, came to our rescue. His son had an affair with the daughter of a German consular official. Making use of the affair, Uncle David bribed this official, getting us visas for East Africa, and my father was released from Dachau (he said that if you had bruises, the Nazis put ointment on them before you were released as they didn't want anyone to see them).

We left Germany in February 1939 with just three suitcases. My father gave a Heilbronn man valuable jewellery to forward our household goods, but that never happened: all our things disappeared. We stopped in Basle to see our relatives before proceeding to Genoa. There we boarded a boat for Mombasa, Kenya, from where we took a train to Nairobi. Ladies from the Kenya Council for Jewry took us to a Jewish boarding house.

To remain in Kenya, British regulations required a cash deposit. We didn't have enough for this so we travelled to British-governed Uganda, a two-day train trip, where the deposit was lower and our visa was also valid. In Kampala a Jewish family helped us rent a big house and Mutti took in boarders. My father got a job in the local bus station doing their accounts and I worked as a live-in child-minder.

When war broke out in September 1939, Jews and Germans alike were interned by the British. When we were released, my father found work keeping books on a large plantation owned by missionaries. Important people came to the tea plantation, including the Kabaka, the king of Buganda, a large, heavily populated area of Uganda.

I became the lady's maid to the wife of the governor of Uganda in Entebbe. Government House had a view of Lake Victoria and a wonderful garden. I earned the equivalent of five marks per month and had to wear a maid's uniform, had to curtsy to my employer and was allowed to speak only when spoken to. She belittled me as I was only a German-Jewish refugee. The governor, on the other hand, was

friendly to me. At parties I took coats; once the king and queen of Greece came. The governor's English *aide-de-camp* and a housekeeper were the only other white persons on the staff. I had almost no contact with the black employees: one just didn't befriend black people.

On my monthly day off, I went to Kampala, a 45-minute ride from Entebbe. A Jewish couple introduced me to Abe Dokelman, who became my husband. His parents were born in Russia and had immigrated to Palestine



Ilse Dokelman

before coming to Uganda. Abe was nine years older than I and was in mining up-country. We were married at the registry office with only my parents, their employers, my father-in-law and two of Abe's brothers present. I was 22. I would have liked a Jewish wedding but it was 1942 and it was Africa.

My husband rented two mines, a gold mine and one that produced iron ore, from the government land office in Entebbe. He had passed an exam qualifying him to manage mines. Government inspectors came regularly to see they were being run safely. Abe supervised 200 miners. Still, the gold miners stole a lot of the precious metal.

This is what living up-country in Uganda meant. Entebbe was 400-500 miles away. Umbrana, the nearest village, was 40 miles away. I learned to drive a van, which was hard as none of the roads was paved. Our house was on top of a hill. I had no gas, no electricity, no running water, no telephone. We did have a wind turbine to charge our

car batteries and our radio. We had our own milking cows and grew our own vegetables. Two servants spent all day carrying water from a stream uphill to our house in four-gallon tin cans. Another young servant chopped wood all day for my stove.

My first child, Charles, was born in 1943. Three more followed and the house was no longer big enough, so we chopped down trees to build an addition. By then, I had a prima stove, imported from England, to cook porridge for the children.

I had no contact with the miners, who lived in the valley. We had a watchman and I had a large Alsatian dog. The Africans didn't like this dog and I walked outside without fear. That was how it was in Africa in those days.

Once a fortnight we got together with another Jewish couple, who lived an hour or two away, and with Abe's brother-in-law, who also ran a mine. During the war Jewish soldiers would come to stay with us. I was always busy. Charles, our oldest, was a boarder at a mission school in Kabali. I home-taught our other three children with the help of correspondence courses. For vaccinations and medical check-ups I took them to Kampala. My parents came to visit once or twice a year.

In 1954 Abe gave up the mines so the children could have proper schooling. Members of our family built us a house outside Kampala. I still had no running water, but now there was electricity.

We opened a shop selling uniforms, children's clothes and blankets, a big item for Africans. We had four employees and an Indian tailor. My father kept the accounts. We imported goods from Israel, India, England and Germany. I drove a Bedford delivery van to pick up the merchandise from the railway depot. Because we paid cash we were able to sell more cheaply than our competitors. Ours was the only privately-run store in Kampala.

We moved twice more, to a house in Kampala, then to a beautiful house we built overlooking Lake Victoria. It had a patio and a badminton court. Our furniture was made of imported wood.

Kampala had a small Jewish community. I had Jewish friends from Poland, Egypt and England. We celebrated Rosh Hashanah and observed Yom Kippur in

continued opposite

Tunnels of the past Perceptions of second generation 'outsiders'

So many of us, the children of the refugees from Nazism, feel overwhelmed by our parents' experiences. Ask a member of the 'second generation' about themselves and they will tell you about their parents. 'But I want to know about you,' I insist, and the reply will come back: 'Oh, but it's my parents who are interesting.' So I decided to find out about the second generation in their own right.

Indeed, I discovered that the second generation had never been systematically studied in the UK. I interviewed 12 people whose parents had as adults fled Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Did the people born to refugee parents from Nazism have shared experiences?

What rapidly emerged from the interviews was the importance of the absence of grandparents, the refugees' parents, and sometimes the parents' other relatives. For almost everybody, the absence, and too often murder, of their grandparents, even though they never knew them, was of profound – even overriding – concern. Almost nobody's parents had told their children in any detail about their grandparents, a silence which intensified the second generation's sense of disjuncture and loss.

Another issue which emerged was the very different meanings and significance of Jewishness. Though the majority of the sample's parents had fled because of anti-Semitism, the meaning of

Jewishness varied profoundly. Only one person stated that their faith was the most important part of them; for others, being Jewish was one among other attributes; and for some what being Jewish meant was unclear.

Here is the reply of one person when asked whether his persistent and heart-breaking search for any record of his grandparents was to do with his search for Jewishness:

Yes, I think it was. It was about I have a right to this stuff At that time too, it felt quite ideological Very little of it was about finding out about Jewishness as a religion or a cultural tradition For me, it was a moral issue I could not swallow this idea that you suppress your Jewishness because it is too dangerous to be different

I suppose the Holocaust was something in which 6 million people died but in which there was hardly any concept of my own grandparents The fact that they [the grandparents] died in their 40s looms as the one large fact about their lives I don't think I could tell you one story about either of them

Unexpectedly, most (though not all) of the second generation's parents who had fled anti-Semitism were also political. But what was noticeable was that the second generation children of the committed 'politico' parents, who had chosen to oppose the Nazis rather than fleeing because they were being persecuted for an ascribed and insane 'eugenic' reason, did generally appear to be a bit surer of who they were.

There is no room in this article to go into the many other patterns which emerged. Mental health issues, on occasion explicitly connected to the families' traumatic past, cropped up in many of the interviews. Parents' country of origin was linked to whether anybody in their families had survived and therefore made a profound difference to the second generation's sense of dis/location and otherness. Many of the interviewees felt a deep attachment to the few belongings they had of their murdered families, though a few expressed the opposite sentiment: that mere objects would not bring the lost ones back to them. Almost none of the male interviewees had been circumcised. Almost nobody felt they were English/British. 'Outsider' is how many described themselves.

Sometimes it is almost unbearable for the children of refugees from Nazism to enter those tunnels of the past without feeling we will be crushed into oblivion. At least, our parents knew more than we did. We may find names and dates and places but we will never find our grandparents or hear their stories. Though our parents struggled hard in order that we should feel secure, even assimilated in the country of our birth, Nazism's long arm still bears down on our sense of who we are.

Merilyn Moos

The author's study of the second generation, 'Breaking the Silence', is currently being considered for publication.

To England via Uganda *continued*

various people's homes. Charles had his Bar Mitzvah in Nairobi. When Israel was friendly with Uganda, I entertained members of the trade commission and the Israeli ambassador at our home. We were doing well and my father thought one of his grandsons would take over our business.

But it was not to be. Once more we had to move. We had had burglaries throughout our time in Kampala. With Uganda's independence the problems became much worse. Only the Bugandans were honest and polite. Ugandans came into our shop refusing to pay but wanting to have everything. Uganda just wasn't safe any longer.

In 1964 we sold the house and the business, both at a loss. My father

returned to Heilbronn, but Abe and I came to England. We had become British citizens long before. Perhaps a dozen other Jewish refugees came to London as we did. Many other white people went to Kenya and Mombasa.

In England Abe became a salesman. I ran a canteen and worked in an office. The Jewish people I knew in Kampala are my friends to this day. We speak to each other often and we meet. I'm 91 and widowed now. I have six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Looking back on Africa, I'm not sure how I did it. I can only say it wasn't easy. Life was what it was and you got on with it.

Ilse Dokelman
(abridged by Eve R. Kugler)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

NO SMALL AMOUNT OF CONFUSION

Sir – In response to Edith Argy's letter in your February issue ('Has Austria really changed?'), the matter of the Pensionsversicherungsanstalt's new residence requirement has given rise to no small amount of confusion among recipients of Austrian pensions. To be sure, this is to be regretted. The Foreign Ministry in Vienna and the Pensionsversicherungsanstalt are fully aware of the matter and a solution is being sought with urgency. The problem has arisen due to Austrian tax regulations of a general nature, including data protection requirements. At the Austrian Embassy, we are working hard for a quick and clear solution for the benefit of the victims of Nazi persecution. They have already had to suffer too much in their long lives. When this matter reached my desk shortly before Christmas, an urgent cable was sent off to Vienna within an hour. I am confident that in the Austria of old, things would have taken longer!

Martin Reichard

*Counsellor (Press and Information),
Austrian Embassy, London*

See page 15, 'Recipients of an Austrian pension' (Ed.).

ONE-OFF PAYMENT

Sir – Following your recent notice in the *AJR Journal*, this is to tell you that the German Government Treasury has, at long last, paid £1,655 into my account.

On 7 June 2003, Paul Kling, with whom I shared accommodation in Theresienstadt 68 years ago, phoned me from Vancouver and asked whether I had heard of a Ghetto Pension. I had not heard of it and he gave me the name and address of the lawyer in Cologne who represented him. That was 8 years and 5 months, three thick folders of correspondence, rejections, appeals and copies of many forms ago. Inflation here has gone up and down – usually up – and now stands at 5.0 per cent. If I take an average of 4 per cent, then the local purchasing power of this one-off payment has been reduced by one-third between hearing about it and actually receiving it. When they were confiscating our accounts, savings, life policies, valuables, every kind of property and in the end emptied our flats of everything, they went about it more speedily and with less fuss.

Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk

POT LUCK

Sir – In her recent article "'Winter in Prague": The humanitarian mission of Doreen Warriner', Susan Cohen mentioned a Miss Rogers. It is thanks to Miss Rogers, of the British consulate in Prague, that my father was released from a Gestapo jail, days before the outbreak of war.

My father, from a known Communist family, was held at the Gestapo jail in Mlada Boleslav during 1939. While there, his mother visited the British consulate in Prague, where she met Miss Rogers in order to ask her to do whatever she could to assist my father to join the rest of his family in England. In June 1939 he was transferred from Mlada Boleslav to the jail at Reichenberg (now Liberec) as he was an ethnic German. While there, he succeeded in maintaining a low profile and, after several weeks, was released.

He was then sent to work at the German military field post office in Reichenberg. He managed to obtain a visa to travel to Mlada Boleslav on the pretext of collecting his belongings from the prison there. He did not go to Mlada Boleslav but bought a train ticket to Prague with the 28 Czech koruna which fortuitously had not been confiscated by the Nazis while he had been in jail.

On arrival at the British consulate on 31 August 1939, he asked for Miss Rogers, who recalled the conversation with his mother and told him to return the following day, also giving him 100 Czech koruna to buy a shirt and tie and smarten up. He did this and returned the next day, to be greeted by Miss Rogers with signed exit papers and instructions to go straight to the railway station, where a train was scheduled to depart for the Hook of Holland. He arrived just as the train was about to depart, the last person to board the last carriage. Unknown to him it was a Kindertransport, and also the very last Kindertransport. War was declared the day after his arrival in England.

My father and his family met Miss Rogers a year later at the Queen's Hotel in Manchester. He was puzzled about how she had been able to obtain a Gestapo signature for his exit papers. She explained that it had been pot luck and that she had succeeded in obtaining a signature because it was a Friday and a nice day and the officer had been keen to get home to his family. At other times, the officers were very rude to the British consulate staff and

would bark comments such as 'The old imperialists want something again!' But Miss Rogers had learned how to handle the officers and to ignore such comments and, when they were in good humour, it was possible to get them to sign exit papers without any trouble.

Nancy Mayo, London NW3

FROM MITTELEUROPA TO ENGLAND

Sir – The *Jewish Chronicle* recently had an intriguing book review entitled 'From Mitteleuropa to Finchley Strasse' with an accompanying photograph entitled 'Jewish refugees arrive at Harwich to take their first steps in Britain in 1938', showing women walking down a gangway. My understanding of how my grandparents, great-grandmother and great-aunt arrived from Germany on 31 July 1939 was completely transformed at the 73rd memorial of Kristallnacht at the New North London Synagogue. Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg spoke movingly about the role played by the British consul, Robert Smallbones, and his deputy, Mr Dowden, in Frankfurt-am-Main in facilitating his mother and grandparents, among other Jews, leaving Frankfurt. And his mother gave her chilling testimony about how they lived during this time, had to leave and how they flew to England.

We have now checked our grandparents' passports and discovered that they too flew – from Cologne airport to Manchester Ringway at the end of July 1939. We cannot easily find out how this happened and who organised and paid for them. Surely passenger flights were not easily available before the war and were costly? We do know that after the war, child refugees from Terezin and Auschwitz flew to the UK but they were in RAF bomber planes from Prague to Carlisle (see Sarah Moskovitz, *Love Despite Hate* (1983), pp. 4-5 and *Chasing Shadows*, the film about Rabbi Hugo Gryn). Is there any research or other evidence available about these different means of arrival of Jewish refugees from Mitteleuropa, as we had always assumed that the picture presented was how my father and most German Jews had arrived?

Miriam E. David

*Professor Emerita of Education,
University of London*

NO CONFLICT BETWEEN BEING JEWISH AND ENGLISH

Sir – It seems that I did not make myself as clear as I thought I had in responding to Peter Phillips's rant in an earlier edition of the *AJR Journal* and for this I must apologise. By the way, I'm not going to get into a discussion about the examples I used to illustrate our students' Englishness even though Mr Phillips has chosen to quote selectively. He has also, incidentally, chosen to remain silent on which school(s) he was basing his evidence. Truth to tell, having been successfully provoked by Mr

Phillips's prejudices, I think I was trying to say too much and threw in items which may not have been directly relevant and, although bringing some sadly lacking authority to the discussion, obscured what I wanted my main thrust to be.

So, let me simplify and clarify. My point is that the Jewish school in which I work neither teaches nor encourages its students to become isolated from their English environment. For our students, there is no conflict between being Jewish and being English. This is what they are taught and this is what they see in the role-modelling presented by their teachers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. They graduate from their school aware of, and confident in, their roles as Jews and as citizens of the United Kingdom; they are not defensive and they have no hang-ups. And, judged by his correspondence, they are considerably more comfortable with this than Mr Phillips is. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, eh, Mr P?

David Harris, Harrow, Middx

MOVING WITH THE TIMES

Sir – As usual, Henry Schragenheim is looking at life from a very Orthodox point of view – and from a very old-fashioned point of view too. I mentioned in my article that I believed that *shechita* may cause anti-Semitism. I believe it does because of the cruelty it shows to animals, by not stunning them before killing them. Christians and, indeed, many Jews find this obnoxious and I personally abhor it. Mr Schragenheim then compares my views, rather confusedly, to asking a Jew to wash his car on Shabbat rather than on a Sunday in case washing on a Sunday offends his Christian neighbour.

First, may I point out that most Christians do, in fact, wash their cars and mow their lawns on a Sunday. (I am surprised Mr Schragenheim does not know this – obviously he does not live anywhere near Christians.) Second, the Lord's Day Observance Society, which might have objected to car washing and lawn mowing, no longer exists. The Christian religion has moved with the times. Perhaps Mr Schragenheim should too.

Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

AN ABSURD NOTION

Sir – Anthony Grenville, whose erudition and style I greatly admire, writes in his 'Double Exposure' project in Vienna of 'former victims of Nazi persecution', as well as of 'former refugees' and of interviews with 'former Austrians'.

'Former Austrians' I can take: They are no doubt Austrians no longer. But 'former refugees' I personally find an absurd notion, as my experience of being a refugee is perhaps the most important psychological influence on me apart from birth itself: I'm a marked man. And 'former victims of Nazi persecution'? IMPOSSIBLE.

Peter Zander, London W1

'GODLESS' NAZI PARTY

Sir – In his letter in January's *AJR Journal*, Peter Landsborough refers to the Nazi Party as 'godless'. This is a common error. The leadership often referred to God and recruits to the Waffen SS had to recite the following in their induction ceremony:

Ich glaube an Gott, der mich gemacht hat,
Der uns Deutschland gegeben hat,
Und der uns Adolf Hitler geschickt hat.

(I believe in God, who has made me,
Who has given us Germany,
And who has sent us Adolf Hitler.)

It is an important point for those who, like me, are irreligious, but resent the implication that this in itself can be a cause for dereliction.

Peter Jordan, Manchester

REFUGEES ON THE ENGLISH STAGE

Sir – I refer to Anthony Grenville's article (December 2011) on Club 43 and the 150th anniversary of the death of Friedrich Schiller, celebrated in 1955, at which the actors Lilly Kann and Frederick Valk recited from Schiller's works. I happened to know both of them well.

It had been my mother, who, on a visit to Darmstadt, had persuaded the then teenage Fritz Valk's parents to let their son follow his ambition to become an actor, for which he remained eternally grateful to her. After leaving Nazi Germany, he first settled in Prague, where he found employment at the German theatre. Later, in England, before finding roles in the English theatre, he tried to earn a living by readings from German classics at his boarding house in Dartmouth Road, Willesden Green, which used to take place on Sunday afternoons before a small circle of refugees. I can still remember him shouting out dramatically 'Mehr Brot, mehr Brot!' (More bread, more bread). He later landed roles on the English stage, including *Thunder Rock*, after switching to the English language.

During the Blitz, he installed his elderly mother in a hotel facing Tring Station, which he had recommended to us and where we were to stay for three years. There one evening, Mrs Valk's nightie caught fire. She died ten days later in hospital aged 78, if I remember correctly. Fritz seemed to get over his mother's death remarkably quickly. He eventually married his non-Jewish English girlfriend, many years his junior.

Quite a number of actors seemed to find a haven at that hotel at the time, including the middle-aged Lilly Kann. She too found work on the English stage. She was an excellent actress. She had a daughter who was at boarding school and visited her in the holidays.

(Mrs) Margarete Stern, London NW3

A GRAVE ERROR

Sir – I always enjoy reading Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's 'Letter from Israel' in your journal. She does, however, make a grave

error when she describes Eid al-Adha, the Muslim Festival of the Sacrifice, as commemorating Abraham's non-sacrifice of Isaac. Surely not Isaac! Muslims do not recognise Isaac but their ancestor Ishmael, and they celebrate his non-sacrifice as mentioned in the Qur'an.

Dorothea asks why Jews don't commemorate it. We don't commemorate it but mention the *Akedah* (Binding of Isaac) in our Torah reading on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. Also in our liturgy of that day we recite 'Oh remember this day the binding of Isaac in mercy unto his seed.' We live among Muslims in Israel, as she goes on to mention in her letter. We ought to be familiar with their religion and, of course, ours as well.

Max Sulzbacher, Jerusalem

MISINFORMATION TECHNOLOGY?

Sir – Fred Stern ('Information – true or false?', January) sought, but failed, to prove that we are misinformed and that all the forecasts are incorrect. He states that 'you chose a political system which allows your money to be taken from you without your permission!' But how? Then he grumbles about inequalities in our system. But what system is he advocating? He does not believe in the official rate of inflation either ('It's all lies').

His economic knowledge is shaky too. He writes: 'When British and foreign bankers ... sank fortunes into American bogus ventures ... the worldwide disaster erupted.' Our banks did not, in fact, sink fortunes into American ventures and this was certainly not the cause of the 'disaster'.

And what to think about his doomsday prediction: 'The misinformation and the hidden truth on the disaster that is enveloping this nation will eventually sink in ... *The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon their sons* (emphasis in original).' And what about this statement? 'The country is now passing through a cloud in which much information is hidden from view.' Perhaps we should dissipate the clouds for Mr Stern and then he will see that no information is lurking behind them.

Nothing in his article seems to make any sense. The writer was apparently involved in information technology. Now he has got involved in misinformation technology.

Nicholas Marton, Bromley

Sir – Mr Fred Stern of Wembley, a man of little faith in this country, has forgotten the stand this country took during the dark days of the 1940s, when he says 'Britain, a political pariah on the Continent, is now all at sea and nobody will be there to rescue it.'

May I suggest he gets himself a good textbook on the history of the war years and post-war period, when the USA supplied this country through Lend-Lease

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

It was the tribute of a Bradford lad to the Yorkshire Wold of his childhood that made David Hockney revisit his memories in blocks of primary colours. He put the trees and landscapes on his iPad and turned everything into vibrant hues. It led to his being both praised and criticised for having used modern technology in his exhibition **David Hockney: A Bigger Picture** at the **Royal Academy** (to 9 April).

These huge, lush landscapes joined together in squares and rectangles evoke nothing of the so-called bleakness or depths of Yorkshire, but they fill the gallery with the light of lost years. Hockney is less like a seasoned, mature



David Hockney, *Woldgate Woods*, 21, 23 and 29 November 2006

painter here than a young artist on the brink of discovery. But what is he conveying? Is it magic realism? Super-realism? It's certainly not Expressionism and, if anything, it has the touch of the master designer rather than the rapture of memory. Hockney takes the landscape seriously and portrays it in all its seasons – but, colours apart, it is linear, static and uncompromising. In earlier works, he plays – like Hogarth and the Surrealist Escher before him – with ideas of perspective, offering a map, a jumbled view of signposts, an empty fallen tin can – the detritus of the road traveller.

Forget the Ipad. Vermeer too experimented with *camera obscura*. But Hockney's attempt to fuse childhood memory with adult realism is difficult

to reconcile. I preferred his view of the *Grand Canyon* – a bitter, brilliant vermilion broken with rigid, bright green cacti, and his earlier, more surreal touches, like two people resembling American Indians walking serenely through a landscape, or others where you can really feel the wind blowing through the wheat-fields.

Hockney sees winter as chopped down logs. The logs, however, are not deathly grey or brown but lie there in all the vitality of bright orange – perhaps a notion of timelessness, rather than demise. The question is: does Hockney really inhabit these landscapes? His layered memories are too robust to be nuanced by maturity. But they ring truer in his charcoal sketches of the trees – no colour, no design, just the movement again of wind through dense foliage. Here, like his portraits of loved ones, such as his mother, is where Hockney is really at his best.

Shrouded in mystery and sacrifice and once fraught with real danger,

Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam, at the **British Museum** (to 15 April), was never going to be an inclusive event. The Museum has treated the greatest spiritual journey a Muslim can make with sensitivity and imagination, showing maps of the journey and including individual Muslim voices extolling Mecca's spiritual power. You can see video footage of the experience and some interesting modern art on the magnetic pull of Mecca, using thousands of iron filings. Traditional work includes sacred textiles, richly ornamental covers for the Ka'ba, the black stone said to have been built by Abraham with Ishmael, who, Islam considers, was the son nearly sacrificed by his father. The Hajj attracts three million pilgrims to Mecca every year.

REVIEWS

'Homecoming to a foreign country'

RETURN TO VIENNA: A JOURNAL
by Hilde Spiel

translated by Christine Shuttleworth;
Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press 2011, 128pp.

Return to Vienna is a short book, but a notable one. In January 1946 the Austrian writer Hilde Spiel returned to Vienna after an absence of ten years. This was no ordinary return: she went back in British army uniform as an accredited correspondent for the *New Statesman*. She recorded her thoughts and impressions in a journal which she later revised and expanded for publication: *Rückkehr nach Wien* was published in Germany in 1968.

Spiel returned to Vienna with memories of her own past, but was quickly forced to acknowledge that the city she remembered no longer existed. The present was another country where they did things differently. Vienna was now an occupied city, divided into four sectors in which the wartime allies each pursued their own political aspirations. The fabric of the city was damaged, often beyond repair, but the damage was more than structural – it was also social and psychological.

Spiel visits an impoverished aristocratic couple, living in one room of a ruined house, but her sympathy for them is tempered by the reflection that 'this couple ... have lived shoulder to shoulder with barbarity, except that their own barbarians were softly spoken, quite capable of discussing Goethe or Mozart in well bred tones.'

Re-entering the sanctuary of the Café Herrenhof, once the foremost literary café in Vienna, she is recognised by the head waiter, who, moved by his own self-pity, rewrites her own bitter experience of exile: 'The Frau Doktor was right to leave. The air raids alone – three times they set the whole city ablaze.'

She also renews acquaintance with former friends, whose conversation reveals the deep compromises they have made to negotiate life under the Nazis. Visiting the journalist Stefan B., she learns the fate of mutual friends, who 'were not willing or able to spend the war abroad.' Stefan B., on the other hand, is a survivor: 'Here is a man who had come to terms with the powers who took control of his country in 1938. An opponent of their ideology, he nevertheless edited a daily newspaper.' Later she learns that, out of 'prudence' and 'to protect friends', Stefan B. had even joined the Nazi Party.

It is Spiel's first – but not last – experience of the gulf between those who had emigrated and those who had not – 'a chasm ... that would never close again' (*The Dark and the Bright*).

Not all is darkness. Spiel meets city councillor Viktor Matejka and takes part in one of his weekly 'get-togethers'. Later, she meets the editors of a new arts magazine, whose efforts to renew a connection with the rest of Europe are 'as touching as they are praiseworthy'.

Spiel's 'homecoming to a foreign country' references a particular historical moment, but it also prompts the question she never escaped: where did she belong? Years later, *Welche Welt ist meine Welt?* (Which World Is My World?) became the title of her (second) volume of memoirs. When Spiel returned permanently to Vienna in 1963, her daughter remained in London. Last year (Spiel's centenary year) Christine Shuttleworth prepared an English version of her mother's journal: the reader senses it was a labour of love.

Richard Dove

Richard Dove is Professor Emeritus, University of Greenwich.

A happy childhood in inter-war Vienna

ROSL'S DAUGHTER: CABARET AND CHILDHOOD IN 1920S VIENNA
by Liesl Müller-Johnson

Book Guild (tel 01273 720900), 2011, hardback 188 pp.

Although most AJR members will be too young to have been able to appreciate the cabaret scene in Vienna in the 1920s, this book may well trigger names of places and entertainers familiar to them.

Liesl Müller was born in 1922 and so was also only a teenager in the 1930s, but the first part of the book is more concerned with the glamorous life of her mother, Rosl Berndt, a singer and cabaret artiste known throughout Europe. She had been a child prodigy: 'Die Kleine Rosl', who even at the age of 11 had been invited to sing before the last Austrian emperor. Her career was helped by marrying the owner of the Cabaret Simpl and later by friendships with other wealthy admirers. The author is clearly proud of her mother's achievements and describes her adventures and travels in considerable detail. The main influence in her early life, however, was her Jewish grandmother Omi, who looked after her while her mother was away. Liesl's childhood was a strange contrast of life in modest surroundings in a Jewish part of Vienna, and being educated at expensive schools and tasting a life of luxury when travelling with her mother

in Vienna, Holland and Germany.

Through the influence of a Romanian admirer, whom she later married, Rosl and her daughter were able to spend the war years in luxury and comparative safety in Bucharest, although first having to convert to Orthodox Christianity. Liesl had her first real love affair with a Romanian officer, but there was always a fear that her Jewish background would be discovered as anti-Semitic influences intensified. There are detailed accounts of the functions attended by Liesl and her mother, including descriptions of the clothes worn, but readers will be disappointed if they wish to know more about the political background as the war progresses: the end of the war, the departure of the Germans and the establishment of Allied Control Commissions are described in just three sentences.

Even more surprising is that her introduction to an RAF officer stationed in Bucharest, her falling in love with him and their eventual marriage are covered in the last five pages of the book. Nevertheless, it was a happy marriage, which lasted until his death in 2006. Liesl's own career as a successful cabaret singer and recording artiste is summed up in the epilogue as 'But that's another story.'

There is a useful glossary after the epilogue describing all the main characters in the book.

Hopefully I didn't miss anything of importance in the review copy I received: pages 59-90 were missing – compensated for by having pages 91-122 twice!

George Vulkan

Why me?

A CHILDHOOD MEMOIR
by Melanie Lowy

Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse (www.authorhouse.com) 2011, paperback 284 pp.

This is an exceptionally honest book, an Anne Frank-style self-scrutiny the author of which, detailing her numerous growing-up pains, spares herself least of all. At the same time, it is an autobiography only too typical of that of other refugees to this country with its account of imposed loneliness, problems flowing from lack of fluent, if any, English, and the reconstituting of one's life in exceptionally harsh circumstances in a foreign environment.

Born into a large, well-to-do Munich family, Melanie Lowy enjoyed an idyllic early life. She was devoted to her parents, especially her father, a devotee of Yiddish poetry and culture, whom she idolised.

Having arrived in England on the Kindertransport, Melanie was followed

here by her parents and other family members. Her and her family's upward mobility via a succession of homes of varying quality, ending up in the prosperous north London suburb of Golders Green, is retraced with varying degrees of nostalgia.

Recurrent themes of this book are the author's love of animals and resultant vegetarianism, a passion for music, and what seems a near-obsession, inherited from her parents, with smells of all kinds – objects, food, animals and people (and certainly not excluding her own).

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the book is the author's uncompromising atheism, expressed on its very first pages and to which she returns again and again. Above all, she cannot make sense of her own survival: '[W]hy, why me?' 'Whatever term you may choose,' she writes in anguish, 'fate is one that springs to mind unless you bring in God which from where I stand would be an aberration and a gross insult to the millions God deserted – then really there are no words for the bizarre destiny of the blessed few who scarred or not, reeled anaesthetised from Germany or the ghettos or camps to blink once more into the sunlight alive.'

The author evidently has a literary gift and there are many passages here bordering on the poetic. Yet her book, as the above passage shows, betrays a poor copy-editing standard, allowing time and again bizarre instances of 'deutschlish' together with a host of incorrect spellings (the London district of 'White Chapel' for instance) which could, and should, have been avoided.

Howard Spier

A conspiracy of conspirators

THE PRAGUE CEMETERY
by Umberto Eco

translated by Richard Dixon; London: Harvill Secker, 2011, 435 pp.

Umberto Eco is Italy's top intellectual. His first novel, *The Name of the Rose*, was written in 1980 when he was 48 and, with the complicated philosophical discussions carefully omitted, was turned into a film starring Sean Connery. His second novel, *Foucault's Pendulum*, concerns three underemployed editors who amuse themselves by inventing a conspiracy theory about the takeover of the world by a group descended from the Knights Templar. Details of the imagined plot leak out and produce violent reactions from outsiders who believe in the conspiracy.

The Prague Cemetery develops Eco's interest in conspiracy theories in a

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REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

sort of history of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The *Protocols* is an anti-Semitic text describing plans for Jewish world domination. It was proved to be fraudulent in 1921, having been plagiarised from Maurice Joly, a French satirist and lawyer, who had written *Dialogue in Hell* (1864), a thinly-veiled attack on the political ambitions of Napoleon III. Joly, in turn, had copied from Eugène Sue, a French novelist. Sue did not mention Jews either but attributed an anti-Napoleonic conspiracy to the Jesuits. Sergei Nilus published the *Protocols* in Russia in 1905 and it has remained a bestseller ever since. Declining sales in Europe since 1945 have been more than compensated by sales in Arab and Muslim countries. It is endorsed in the Hamas Charter and anti-Israel activists such as John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt still write about Jewish (or Zionist) conspiracies.

Eco's protagonist is Simone Simonini, who has an *alter ego*, the Very Reverend Abbé Dalla Piccola, who may or not be the same person, and who sometimes takes over the narrative. He hates more or less everyone: French, Germans, Italians, Jesuits, Freemasons, women and ... weasels. And, of course, Jews. He

has never met a Jew but his grandfather (who actually existed) once did. His trade is forgery – initially he created documents such as title deeds or the wills that the deceased would surely have written had they thought about it in time. Subsequently his work expands to encompass much of late 19th-century European history.

Simonini is present at Garibaldi's capture of Sicily in 1860 and betrays the revolution. He goes into exile in Paris and lives in a shadowy world of forgery and espionage, murdering his enemies enthusiastically and his friends regretfully. He observes the 1870 Franco-Prussian War, the 1871 Paris Commune and the Dreyfus case of the 1890s. He forges the *bordereau* (memorandum) that leads to Dreyfus's conviction and further documents that incriminate Dreyfus's defender Picquart.

In the 1860s, Simonini feels the need for a substantial forgery that will make him financially secure. He is doubtful that documents against the Jesuits will be saleable and he has no point of contact with the Freemasons. Joly and Sue have saturated the republican anti-Napoleon market. That leaves the anti-Jewish market. The Jews could be presented not only as enemies of the church but also of ordinary people, whose blood

they allegedly sucked. Simonini decides to present his forgery as the minutes (protocols) of a meeting of the heads of the 'Jewish conspiracy' in the old Jewish cemetery in Prague.

He is briefed on matters Jewish by Jacob Brafmann, a Jew who had tactically converted to Orthodoxy but was, in fact, a spy for the police and the Russians. He later published several successful books alleging a Jewish conspiracy. At this point, I realised that almost all the characters in Eco's book had actually existed and done the things attributed to them. My gratification at realising this was punctured by Eco's declaring it outright in an appendix.

The theme of Eco's book is the idea of a 19th-century conspiracy of conspirators, linked by Simonini. All is explained by the machinations of the Freemasons, the Templars, the Jesuits and the Jews. Eco has been criticised for allowing his protagonist to spout anti-Semitic lies, but Simonini is never presented as anything other than loathsome and degraded. Similar libels, as Eco points out, are commonplace on the internet and are claimed as truth. Eco's book is a scintillating exhibition of historical scholarship. It is a complex read, but worth it.

Bryan Reuben

200th anniversary of birth of Ludwig Philippson celebrated in Magdeburg

My great-great-uncle Ludwig Philippson had his 200th birthday last December! Ludwig was an important figure in German Judaism: not only did he translate the Bible into German but he founded, and edited until his death in 1889, the first German newspaper for non-Orthodox Jews, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*. For almost 30 years, he was the rabbi of the Jewish community of the city of Magdeburg (preaching in German) and it was there that this important date was celebrated shortly before Christmas. I was invited to take part in the celebrations and to speak on the theme 'What it feels like to be a Philippson'.

The celebrations took place in the Old Town Hall. There were several speeches in addition to mine. The Oberbürgermeister (Lord Mayor), Dr Lutz Trümper, said that Ludwig Philippson 'contributed not only to the history of the city of Magdeburg but also to the history of German Jewry'. He outlined Ludwig's many interests and referred to his appointment as rabbi in Magdeburg at the age of only 22 and his election as a city councillor and president of the Saxon Teachers' Association, positions which, he said, showed how



popular a figure he was. Dr Trümper also drew attention to Ludwig's interest in politics and human rights as he took a prominent part in the revolutionary events of 1848.

The historian Dr Andreas Braemer spoke about 'Ludwig Philippson and Jewry's position in society'; a representative of the Magdeburg congregation spoke; and I, being a psychotherapist, mentioned in my contribution that Sigmund Freud had been given the 'Philippson Bible' by his father and had used some of its illustrations in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Besides taking part in the celebrations, I had been asked to speak to about 80 young people (aged about 18) and

found them all keen and well prepared to ask questions about such matters as, for instance, the Philippson family, my parents' experiences under the Nazis, and my thoughts about Judaism today.

All in all, I had a real sense that everybody was keen to bring Jews back into the history of Magdeburg. They considered Jews an important part of that history, which fitted well with Ludwig Philippson's concerns.

Interestingly, I discovered that Ludwig invited the bishop to attend his services, which the latter did until prevented from doing so by the king. Ludwig also contacted the tsar to plead the cause of Russian Jews.

On this visit to Magdeburg, as on two previous occasions, I was most impressed by the warmth and generosity shown to me by several non-Jewish people. Two of them head the committee which is trying to raise money from churches and the city for building a new synagogue and another is in charge of arranging for the laying of *Stolpersteine*, indicating where former Jewish citizens such as my grandparents and uncle, who perished in the Holocaust, used to live.

Peter Philippson

A very special lady

Susie Kaufman retires after 22 years' devoted service

Susie Kaufman, the Organiser of the AJR Paul Balint Centre, has retired after 22 years of devoted service to the AJR. Her retirement coincides with the relocation of the AJR Centre from Cleve Road, West Hampstead, to Belsize Square Synagogue (see last month's issue of the Journal).

Susie started off at Cleve Road in 1990 as a twice-a-week volunteer, serving lunches.

In 1998 she took over as Catering Manager and reinstated Meals-on-Wheels. In 2005 she succeeded Sylvia Matus, who retired as Centre Organiser.

Speaking at a surprise farewell



reception for Susie at the London Jewish Cultural Centre, her close friend Eleanor Angel, an AJR Trustee and member of the Management Committee, described her as 'a very special lady'. Susie, she said, was 'the kindest, most caring person I know'.

In response, Susie declared that it had been 'an absolute privilege' to work at the Centre: 'I've loved every single day of my life there.' She promised everyone she would still be around to help out from time to time.

Susie's retirement coincides with an especially happy event: the birth of a third grandchild, Sophia Amelie.

Exhibition on Jewish refugees in South Wales

An exhibition on Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe who came to live in South Wales before the Second World War was held in Swansea's Civic Centre from 10 January to 5 February this year and is due to run at Swansea's National Waterfront Museum from 21 April to 30 June 2012. The exhibition was organised by the West Glamorgan Archive Service as part of Swansea Council's commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day. A grant from the Welsh Government helped make it possible.



George Schoenmann, aged 5 months, with grandmother Clara Schoenmann, who was murdered in 1942, 1935

Part of the exhibition is dedicated to the Kindertransport. Another part describes the contribution of Jewish refugees to the economy of South Wales, telling the story of some of the Jewish entrepreneurs encouraged by the British Government to establish factories on the Treforest Industrial Estate near Pontypridd and how these firms created jobs in an area of mass unemployment.

The exhibition also celebrates the contribution of refugees who worked as doctors, dentists and nurses in South Wales. These refugees helped raise the standard of health care in Wales following the creation of the NHS in 1948.

The influence of émigré artists such as Josef Herman and Heinz Koppel on the artistic community of South Wales is also explored.



A sleeping refugee girl during the Kindertransport in December 1938 (by kind permission of the Wiener Library, London)



The Management Team of Aero Zip Fasteners Ltd. Mr Benjamin Glazer is on the far right (by kind permission of Anthony Glaser)



Joseph Herman In the Pit 1952/53, water-colour and ink (by kind permission of David Herman)



Portrait of Dr Kurt Guttman (Kenneth Goodwin), 1941 (by kind permission of Gerald Goodwin)

INSIDE the AJR

St Johns Wood

First AJR group meeting

At our first meeting at St John's Wood Synagogue, Evelyn Friedlander spoke about the 1564 Czech Memorial Scrolls, which by a miracle survived the war and were brought to England in 1964 before being given a second life in communities here and abroad.

David Lang

Next meeting: 14 March. Nick Scudamore, 'London in Cinema' (see box)

HGS A most stimulating discussion

We had a most stimulating discussion, led by Charles Emanuel, Emeritus Rabbi of Alyth Gardens Synagogue, about (*inter alia*) the significance of a Jewish group for people who have no faith or synagogue affiliation.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 12 March. Marilyn Green, 'The Jewish Art Collection at the V&A Museum'

Ealing Excellent presentation by AJR intern

Lilli Meinck, who is attached to the AJR for a year as an intern, gave us an excellent presentation about her organisation, the German-based Action Reconciliation Service for Peace, which sends volunteers to various countries to work with Jewish organisations.

Leslie Sommer

Next meeting: 6 March. Evelyn Friedlander, 'The Czech Memorial Scrolls'

Essex (Westcliff)

A matter of memorabilia

We each brought along an item of memorabilia and spoke about what it meant to us. One member brought a shawl she had worn at the age of ten months on arriving in this country. A most enjoyable meeting.

Linda Fisher

Next meeting: 13 March. Details to follow

Pinner Teasing out treasured details

Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen read extracts from his book *Genesis in Poetry*. His elegant oratory and humorous delivery enhanced an enjoyable afternoon as we listened intently to his teasing out treasured details left to our imagination in the original Bible stories.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: 8 March. Sheila Kennedy, 'High Times at Heathrow – Life at the Airport'

Brighton & Hove Sarid Something cherished

Leon passed around a silver spoon with his name engraved on it which was given to him in his childhood. Shirley brought photos and a letter of her sister-in-law mysteriously found. Scarlet brought a

St John's Wood Group

(formerly Cleve Road)

Wednesday 14 March 2012, 10.30 am
at St John's Wood Synagogue

Nick Scudamore 'London in Cinema'

Join us for a fascinating talk
including film clips



Nick Scudamore is a lecturer in the history and theory of cinema. In the 1980s he was a manager in a number of London cinema art houses, the Screen on the Green in Islington and the Paris Pullman in Chelsea to name but two. He evolved into a film teacher for Birkbeck College, University of London and is the former Director of Studies at Edinburgh University for their film courses held annually to coincide with the Edinburgh Film Festival.

For further details, please call Hazel Beiny on 020 8385 3077

diary with documents she kept through the war, while Ceska brought her mother's pearls. An interesting morning.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 19 March. David Barnett, 'Jewish Trades in Regency London'

Edgware A family which survived difficult times

Again we enjoyed a pleasant talk by David Lawson about a family which survived very difficult times in the war and are now settled in Israel, living a happy life and contributing their share to the wellbeing of the country.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: 20 March. Julia Samuel of the Anglo-Jewish Society

Radlett A heart-warming morning

Lilli Meinck, working with the AJR under the auspices of the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace, gave us an account of her work as a volunteer with great charm and in excellent English. An unusual and heart-warming morning.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 21 March. David Lawson, 'Escape Story – Eva Erben's Holocaust Autobiography'

Welwyn GC

A lovely morning chatter

A lovely morning chatter on numerous subjects, swimming in particular. The meeting could have run on all day – for so few we had so much to say. A delightful get-together once again at Monica's.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 15 March. Screening of *Watermarks*

Café Imperial A party of merry men

The collective age of the eight veterans present came to 906, not counting myself and Howard Livingstone's daughter Jackie from Connecticut, who joined our party of merry men. Our discussion centred on the condom allowance of men in active

service in France! Two a week – which my men told me was fine for those single chaps but not what the married men were used to!

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: Social get-together, date tba

ALSO MEETING IN MARCH

Ilford 7 March. Helen Fry on her book 'Music and Men: The Life and Loves of Harriet Cohen'

Bath and Bristol 8 March. Trevor Bedeman, 'Risk Assessor – Travels and Other Stories'

Birmingham 14 March. Mozart Concert

Norfolk 15 March. Social Get-together and Lunch

Cardiff 19 March. Mark Davies, 'Oxford University and the Welsh'

Wessex 20 March. David Barnett, 'London's First Hotels'

Oxford Alice in Wonderland?

Mark Davies of the Lewis Carroll Society considers that *Alice in Wonderland* should have been called *Alice in Waterland* as it describes the journey along the Thames near their home.

Anne Selinger

Next meeting: 13 March. Professor Prawer: His Life

Wembley Looking forward to an interesting few days

We gathered together at our comfortable venue to hear from Myrna about forthcoming events, in particular the annual London trip. This encouraged me to book and I look forward to reporting back to the group on what I am sure will be an interesting few days.

Ruth Pearson

Next meeting: 21 March. Social get-together

North London 80 years of the film industry

Howard Lanning told us about his and his family's involvement in the film industry over 80 years. A most absorbing morning: the family's activities stretched from the days of silent movies right up to some of the great hits of the recent past.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 22 March (NB: a week earlier). Val Alliez, 'Southwark and the Globe'

Glasgow Book Club

The Marriage Bureau for Rich People by Farahad Zama got the thumbs up from everyone. Arranged marriages in India were inevitably closely compared with those of our own matchmakers. While most of us preferred love marriages, many agreed that a wish list of tall, dark and handsome, or wealthy and educated, wasn't such a bad thing. A very enjoyable, light-hearted afternoon with a delicious spread hosted by Anthea Berg.

Agnes Isaacs

Hendon Fleeing from the Führer

William Kaczynski spoke about his new book *Fleeing from the Führer: A Postal History of Refugees from the Nazis*, which tells the tale of what befell Jewish refugees in many different places. Besides the Isle of Man, the British government maintained internment camps in distant parts of the Empire and they also ran a postal service for people in Displaced Persons' Camps during the war.

Shirley Rodwell

Next meeting: 26 March. Anne Holve, 'Cognitive Behavioural Hypnotherapy'

Glasgow CF Cinema Club

The Iron Lady, about the life of Margaret Thatcher, was enjoyed by all and brought back memories of that time. By popular demand, the Cinema Club will meet every month or two for trips to the cinema (and concerts, plays, etc).

Agnes Isaacs

Temple Fortune Fourth anniversary

We celebrated our fourth anniversary with a very interesting meeting. We had all brought along an object that meant much to us and told the story behind it. Our meeting ended with an informal chat over coffee and cake.

David Lang

Next meeting: 20 March (NB: a week earlier). Michael Newman, 'AJR Update'

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3070

Bristol/Bath
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Cambridge
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Cardiff
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Cleve Road, AJR Centre
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Agnes Isaacs 0755 1968 593

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Trude Silman 0113 237 1872

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Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

Norfolk (Norwich)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Reception at the Wiener Library's new home

As part of our three-day annual trip to London (see p.12), we will be holding a reception at the new premises of the Wiener Library on **Wednesday 28 March 2012**.

The evening will begin at 7pm and transport will be available.

Among highlights will be:

- An address from a prominent figure in the Jewish community
- An introduction to the Library and its new facilities
- A guided tour of the Library
- Reception with refreshments
- The opportunity to meet members from across the country

Places are limited for this very special evening. For further details, please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3078 or email susan@ajr.org.uk

Edinburgh CF**Getting a word in edgeways**

Members spent a most pleasant afternoon reminiscing about holidays taken around the world. As usual, the age gap between first- and second-generation members was no barrier and at times it was hard to get a word in edgeways. A wonderful tea was provided by our host, Tim Willis.

Agnes Isaacs

Next meeting: 7 March. A visit to the Rev Levy Exhibition

North London
Ruth Jacobs 020 8445 3366

Oxford
Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Radlett
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Sheffield
Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London
Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Temple Fortune
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Weald of Kent
Janet Weston 01959 564 520

Welwyn Garden City
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Wembley
Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Fred Austin 01384 252310

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

Myrna Glass, London South and Midlands Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

Meals-on-Wheels
To order Meals-on-Wheels please telephone 020 8385 3075. This number is manned on Wednesdays only.

The AJR
Paul Balint Centre at
Belsize Square Synagogue
51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX
Tel 020 7431 2744

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Thursday 15 March 2012

Howard Manning

'My Family in the Film Business'

PLEASE NOTE THAT SPEAKERS START AT 12 NOON

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the AJR Journal, to phone the Centre on 020 7431 2744 to book your place.

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Tuesday 6 March 2012

Martin Reichard

Counsellor, Press and Information,
Austrian Embassy, London
'Austria Today'

PLEASE NOTE THAT LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 PM

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7431 2744

MARCH ACTIVITIES

BOOK CLUB, with Ruth Sands, Thursday 1 March and Thursday 22 March

ART CLUB, with Lauren Rotenberg, Thursday 8 March

COMPUTER CLUB, with Lilli Meinck, every Tuesday morning

All activities begin at 10.30 am

MARCH ENTERTAINMENT

Thur 1	William Smith
Tue 6	KT LUNCH
Thur 8	Jen Gould
Tue 13	Michael Heaton
Thur 15	LUNCHEON CLUB
Tue 20	Douglas Poster
Thur 22	Margaret Opdahl
Tue 27	Nicki Brough
Thur 29	Ronnie Goldberg

Agnes Isaacs, Scotland and Newcastle Co-ordinator
0755 1968 593

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Death

Nathan, Regine Vienna 14 January 1915-London 12 January 2012. Beloved mother of daughters Frances and Jacky, grandmother of Deborah, Nicholas, Moishe and Nicola, and great-grandmother to nine great-grandsons. She was the heart and soul of our family and has left an enormous gap in all our lives.

In Memoriam

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

CLASSIFIED

AJR PAUL BALINT CENTRE

The Chiropodist will be at the Centre on 6 March. Please book an appointment on 020 7431 2744.

Operatic Afternoon and Cream Tea



Sunday 10 June 2012
2.45-5.15 pm
at The Grim's Dyke Hotel
Mansion House, Old Redding,
Harrow, Middx HA3 6SH

Private tour of hotel and gardens
 Home-made cream tea

A selection of songs from Gilbert & Sullivan's *Iolanthe*
 £29.50 per person

Transport will be available at an additional cost
 Tickets must be booked and paid for by beginning of April 2012

For further details, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk

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For further information please contact:
 The Manager, Clara Nehab House
 13-19 Leaside Crescent, London NW11 0DA
 Telephone: 020 8455 2286

MODEL SEDER LUNCH

Tuesday 3 April 2012
at the AJR Centre,
Belsize Square Synagogue
11.30 am for a prompt
12 noon start

Rabbi Stuart Altshuler will be leading the service.

We are kosher for Pesach
Please book early to avoid disappointment

Cost £7*
Tel 020 7431 2744

*An anonymous donor has kindly made a sum of money available to the AJR so that we can offer members outings and special events at a reduced price.

CUMBERLAND HOTEL BOURNEMOUTH

Sunday 20 May to Friday 25 May 2012

Come and join us for 5 days
 Make new friends and meet up with old friends

Price £400 plus £30 single room supplement. Sea View rooms an additional £10.00 per person per night

Price includes transport to and from Bournemouth from Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore Middx HA7 4RL; sandwich lunch on journey to Bournemouth; dinner, bed and breakfast; outing, cards and entertainment

We already have a lot of interest so please book early

For further details, please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070

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WANTED TO BUY

German and English Books

Bookdealer, AJR member, welcomes invitations to view and purchase valuable books.

Robert Hornung
 10 Mount View, Ealing,
 London W5 1PR
 Email: hornungbooks@aol.com
 Tel: 020 8998 0546



'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

OBITUARY

Hans Neumann, 5 August 1929-23 August 2011

Born in Berlin, my father Hans was the younger of two boys. His parents provided a happy family life for him and his brother Leo until in 1939 his mother passed away and they were sent to the country to live. Eventually they decided to come home to look for their father, but sadly in 1941 they were rounded up and sent to Theresienstadt.

On their arrival in Theresienstadt, Leo ensured that his younger brother stayed with him. They were put into work parties and remained in the camp until it was liberated by the Russians in May 1945, when all prisoners, including the brothers, fled in fear of continued torture. While



seeking to escape, Hans lost contact with his brother and, a day or two later, he and a friend decided to return to the camp. They were taken in by the American forces, who

passed them to UNRRA. Hans was taken to the Kloster Indersdorf International Children's Centre, where he was looked after by the sisters of mercy.

Once he was fit and healthy, Hans came to England, where he spent time in London before beginning work on the barges in Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. There he met the man who was to become his father-in-law. Hans and Joyce married in April 1951. They had two children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Hans will be very much missed by his family and the many friends he made on his long journeys.

Linda Fisher

Recipients of an Austrian pension

Last month we published a notice about a letter sent to some AJR members who receive an Austrian state pension. The letter required the recipient to complete a 'confirmation of residency' form in accordance with the Double Tax Convention between Great Britain and Austria and stated that an interim tax would be deducted from the January 2012 pension payment.

Following the intervention of the AJR and others, the Austrian pension authority (PVA) intends as a matter of priority to refund this tax to Holocaust survivors and refugees. The rebate should be included in the February or March pension payment. It is also now not necessary to complete the 'confirmation of residency' form.

One of our members reports having received a confirmation – with regrets – from Barbara Prammer, Speaker of the Austrian National Assembly, who confirms that the original letter was a mistake, which has now been corrected. Other members have also received letters of apology from the PVA and we do not expect any further letters to be sent to anyone else.

It appears that the letter was sent to certain pensioners in countries, such as the UK, with which Austria has double taxation agreements. In practice, the pension is exempt from income tax in the UK.

As the Austrian Embassy in London writes in this issue of the Journal (see page 6), all competent tax authorities are fully aware of the problem and are continuing to work for a clear solution. Ambassador Brix has let us know that he sincerely regrets the confusion caused.

Anyone who received the residency letter or would like further information should contact the AJR. Members who did not receive the letter can ignore this notice.

Michael Newman

Feo celebrates 102nd birthday



Max Rubinsohn, Hedy Orchudesch and Trudy Basto were among Wembley CF members who helped Feo Kahn (in armchair) celebrate her 102nd birthday

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY MARCH

Sun 4 Open Day at the new home of the Wiener Library, 1.00-4.00 pm. A chance to take a tour around the Library's first-ever exhibition about childhood under the Nazis and an opportunity to view the new Reading Room. Attendance is free but please tel 020 7636 7247 to reserve a space.

Fri 17 A pot luck dinner with Gershon Baskin Gershon Baskin, Israeli CEO and founder of the Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information, played a key role in the release of Gilad Shalit through his 'back-channel' direct conversations with Hamas. At Belsize Square Synagogue. Please contact Justyn Trenner at jtrenner@clientknowledge.com or Neil Nerva at neilnerva@gmail.com.

Tue-Wed 17-18 April 'Karen's Way: A Kindertransport Life' A new play by Vanessa Rosenthal. A dramatisation with live music of the story of Kindertransport survivor and poet Karen Gershon. At York Theatre Royal Studio (details to follow).

First Night Seder

**Friday 6 April at
Belsize Square Synagogue
after the service, which
commences at 6.45 pm**

Join Rabbi Stuart Altshuler to celebrate first-night Seder! There will be time for a traditional Pesach with discussion, good questions and plenty of singing. This year's Pesach will look at 'Freedom – to be Jewish: Be proud of our Jewish heritage'

Members £35.00
Non-members £40.00
Children under 13 £20.00

**To book places, please
telephone the Synagogue Office
on 020 7794 3949**

Booking will close on Friday 30 March



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



A strange juxtaposition

I finished reading Howard Jacobson's *The Finkler Question* and was still pondering its manifold messages in the evening as I attended a performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*. This was given in Jerusalem by an amateur troupe composed mainly of immigrants from English-speaking countries.

Friends had tried to deter me from reading the book, saying it was boring, difficult to get into, etc. I grant that the beginning is somewhat slow, and the idea of an 80-year-old man learning to play Schubert's Impromptu No.3 is utterly ludicrous. I say this as someone who has been struggling for years to master Impromptu No.1, so you can take my word for it!

But I found that as I persevered with the book, which is undeniably well-written, it became increasingly gripping. The characters came alive for me and I felt they were real people. What surprised me most, however, was the book's principal theme, which is essentially the question of Jewish identity in England today and what it means to be a Jew in the diaspora. In addition, the book tackles the thorny subject of the attitude of both Jews and

non-Jews to Israel and Zionism.

Jacobson ventures to poke fun at all those well-meaning and misguided Jews (I'm happy to see that he seems to agree with me on that point) who seek to distance themselves from the Israel of today. Jacobson uses not-so-gentle irony to put those individuals – many of them household names – firmly in their place, showing them up for the hypocrites they are. And he despatches the Holocaust-deniers and belittlers in short order, to boot.

But to get back to *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which targets jingoistic British nationalism as well as the class system and Victorian mores in general. The performance I went to was attended by H.E. the British Ambassador to Israel, which gave the atmosphere that evening an extra fillip. There we were, a theatre full to bursting with mainly expatriate Jews from the UK, America, South Africa, Australia and sundry outposts of the English-speaking world, all of whom had chosen to live elsewhere but apparently still harboured a yearning for the culture of our past.

In his book Jacobson seems to be seeking to underline that sense of

'otherness' that a Jew cannot avoid feeling, no matter where he or she happens to be living. By extension, this also appears to be the role that Israel is destined to play within the community of nations. Israel cannot, and perhaps never will, be accepted as a 'normal' country because it is judged by different standards, just as diaspora Jews, no matter how successful, can never feel that they are fully accepted by their adopted country, because of some innate 'otherness' that all Jews share – at least according to Jacobson.

The device of viewing the essence of being Jewish through the eyes of a Gentile who is a 'wannabe' Jew is elegant and entertaining and gives rise to some really funny passages in the book. The reader is almost convinced that such a situation could actually arise, and that someone who is not Jewish by birth would seek to enter that supposedly clannish, esoteric world in order to become part of what might be interpreted as an anthropologically exotic tribe.

Reality prevails finally, however, and at the close of the book the characters are dispatched to their various ends. And that, I suppose, is the ultimate message of the book. Meanwhile, here in Jerusalem, the Jewish audience at *Pinafore* – possibly even with the participation of the ambassador – joined enthusiastically in the encore, which was a rousing chorus of 'For he is an Englishman!'

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

and the Marshall Plan.

As far as Mr Stern's prediction that the Coalition is on the point of break-up is concerned, I fear he will have a long wait, for the Conservatives as well as the Liberals will continue to share power even if they hate each other's guts!

Ernest G. Kolman, Greenford, Middx

VICIOUS ANTI-SEMITIC VIEWS

Sir – Jobbik, the ultra-nationalist party of Hungary, which has many members in parliament and some members even in the European Parliament, is now openly voicing its vicious anti-Semitic views. I fear for the substantial Hungarian Jewish

community, which, it appears, had a false dawn after the fall of the Communist regime. The lies spread by Jobbik about Israel and Jews would make Goebbels proud. I am grateful not to live in Hungary any more.

Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath

'A MISREPRESENTATION OF EVIL'

Sir – Yes, I believe in God. Is God good? No, God is not good.

At the age of 82 years, I have a truly wonderful life behind me. And today, even as I write, life is very, very good.

As one goes through life, one comes into contact with thousands of different

men and women. One sees beautiful children growing up to become good men and women.

Somehow it's so arranged that the biggest industry in the world is the armaments industry. I have nothing to do with 'pacifism' but, as a quite ordinary person, I would not pay one penny for a nuclear bomb. People are not vermin.

After our experience at the hands of the National Socialists, it is of vital importance to point out to the nation-states of the world that the word 'defence' is a misrepresentation of pure evil.

*Hans Hammerschmidt,
Oxford*