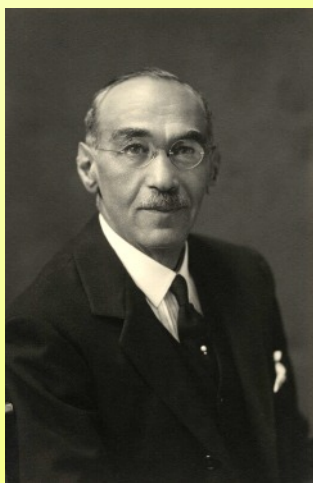


Was Churchill's Gold Bug Jewish?



Arthur R. Butz

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By
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IN VOLUME 5 OF HIS BIOGRAPHY WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, published in 1976, historian Martin Gilbert relates the working relationship that existed during the 1930's between Churchill and the South African economist and gold mining executive Sir Henry Strakosch. Most of the figures on German armaments that Churchill brought to the House of Commons and publicized elsewhere were supplied by Strakosch, who wished anonymity in the affair.

Strakosch eventually had to pay heavily for such services. Gilbert relates that Strakosch saved Churchill from financial ruin in 1938 when, due to declines in the New York markets, Churchill's brokerage account went into debt in the amount of £18,000 (\$90,000), which Churchill could only begin to cover by selling his house Chartwell. Strakosch picked up the tab for this fancy sum, at a time when a decent American salary was perhaps \$2,000 per year. In addition, Strakosch bequeathed Churchill £20,000 when he died five years later. See note: 1

In the first volume of his Churchill's War (1987), David Irving repeats this story but adds that "Strakosch was a Jew born in Moravia, Czechoslovakia." The purpose of this note is to express my skepticism that Strakosch was a Jew, and to expose the specific political cause that his involvement served.

Evidence Strakosch Wasn't Jewish

Strakosch died near London on Saturday, October 30, 1943, and The Times (London) published a long obituary on November 1, eulogies on the second, and on the fourth a report of a memorial service for Strakosch. It was clearly a Christian service, held at St. Michael's, Chester Square.

Thus Strakosch died a nominal Christian. That does not exclude the possibility that he was partially of Jewish descent or converted from

Judaism, but neither David Irving nor anybody else has been able to provide hard evidence in that respect.

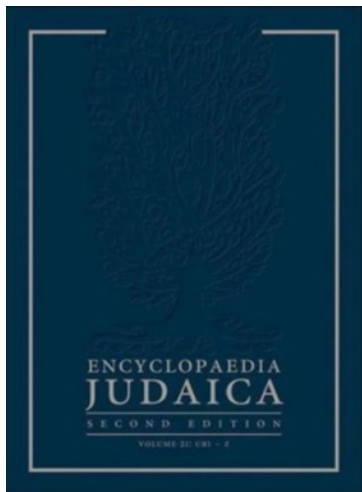
From several sources we learn the following about Strakosch. See note: 2 He was born May 9, 1871, in Hohenau, Austria, son of Edward Strakosch and Mathilde Winterburg. Hohenau is on the Austria-Moravia border, and Edward Strakosch was a pioneer in the Austrian beet sugar industry. Henry was educated at the Wasa Gymnasium in Vienna and then privately in England. He joined the Anglo-Austrian bank in London in 1891, rising quickly to become foreign exchange manager. He then became interested in gold mining and finance and emigrated to South Africa in 1895. He joined the gold mining enterprise Goerz and Co. in 1896 as assistant managing director, rising to chairman in 1924, a position he held until his death (the company had become Union Corp. in 1918). He was known as "keen on polo, an inveterate motorist, and a bachelor."

Strakosch was adviser to the government in the drafting of the South African Currency and Banking Act of 1920, which led to the establishment of the South African Reserve Bank. From 1925 on, India retained him for similar purposes. He was knighted in 1921, and became a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1924, and Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire in 1927.

He got married late in life, in 1941, to the widow Mrs. Mabel Elizabeth Vincent Temperley, in a Christian ceremony at St. Andrew's in Kingswood, Gloucester.

None of the sources on which the above summary is based gives any indication of a Jewish connection for Strakosch.

Two books that ought to have had much about a man of Strakosch's importance, if he had been Jewish, do not list him in their indexes. They are Jewish Roots in the South African Economy, by Mendel Kaplan (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1986), and The Jews in South Africa: A History, editors Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955).



The Encyclopaedia Judaica (1971) mentions two Jewish Strakosches, but not Sir Henry (it also mentions one Jewish Irving, but not David). If a Jew, or someone of partial Jewish descent, or a Jewish convert to Christianity had played such an important part in the background to the Second World War then it would seem that the Encyclopaedia would have at least mentioned it.

The death and obituary notices in the four issues of the London weekly (Fridays) Jewish Chronicle for November 1943 contain no mention of Strakosch.

The simple explanation for all of this is that Strakosch was not a Jew.

Who Says That He Was?

The Jüdisches Biographisches Archiv (1994), a massive database available on microfiche, cites two sources that indicate he was a Jew. The first is a book or pamphlet entitled The Jews' Who's Who: Israelite Finance: Its Sinister Influence (London: Judaic Publishing Co., 1920). A copy of this publication could not be consulted but the Jüdisches Biographisches Archiv quotes from it as follows:

Strakosch, Henry. Director of A. Goerz & Co. £1,500,000. This company which is a South African "control" house, has now extended its tentacles to West Africa, Nigeria, and Mexico. In addition to its very considerable direct mineral holdings, this House has interests in a huge number of companies, mostly mining, with property all over the world. It is in consequence a close Jewish preserve, and not a single Anglo-Saxon was on its Board in 1914. It is technically a purely British Co., but it has been

suggested that its cosmopolitan and Asiatic flavour entitles it to be called "Britisch."

The text goes on to list other directors of the company. The names given are not obviously Jewish names but one gets the impression that the reader is supposed to consider any non-British, especially German, name a Jewish name. [See note: 3](#) It lists some other companies that Strakosch was allegedly a director of, and there are indeed Jewish connections there, but that was unavoidable. The most important example is the Geduld company, controlled by Samuel Marks and Isaac Lewis, both Jews from Lithuania. [See note: 4](#)

In defense of the author of the pamphlet it should be noted that the leading German-speaking entrepreneurs who migrated to South Africa in the nineteenth century were predominantly Jewish. The assumption German-Jew was an understandable fallacy, but a fallacy nevertheless.

The main defect of the pamphlet is that it seems ignorant of the history of Goerz and Co. at the time of publication (1920). In fact there was no company of that name in 1920; it became the Union Corporation in 1918. Its founder, Adolf Goerz (1857-1900), was an immigrant from Germany and not a Jew. [See note: 5](#)



Although the company had maintained close relations with Germany and in particular the Deutsche Bank in Berlin, (left) Goerz had incorporated it in England. On the outbreak of war in 1914 five of the eight directors were German subjects.

The British forced them off the board and by 1918 both the name of the company and the character of the board had changed. [See note: 6](#) The British would not have distinguished in this purge between Germans and German Jews, and Austrians would have been considered Germans. Strakosch survived, no doubt on account of his strong British connections. The basic objection to this pamphlet, therefore, is its apparent ignorance of the status of the matter treated at the time of its publication. The Goerz board of 1914 was irrelevant in 1920. It also sounds like the sort of publication that is recklessly eager to seize any stick to beat a Jew, of which we have seen many.

The second source mentioned by the Jüdisches Biographisches Archiv is more credible. In a 1949 article Albert M. Hyamson listed about 2500 prominent "Anglo-Jewish" people, each getting one or two lines in his sixty-nine pages. One of them was: Strakosch, Sir Henry (1871-1943). Economist & banker; The Times, 1.11.43; Ann. Reg.; "Randlords." [See note: 7](#)

The first two references are to Strakosch's obituaries, already cited here, which do not say he was a Jew. The third is to the book *Randlords*, by Paul H. Emden. Emden merely gives some biographical information about Strakosch and mentions his relation to Adolf Goerz thus:

One of the earliest collaborators of Adolf Goerz (from 1896 on) was the present Sir Henry Strakosch, whose influence and importance extend far beyond the limits of gold production. He is recognized the world over as an authority on monetary matters and exchanges; his influence on the development of currency and the organization of Banking in South Africa was so great that the objection was expressed that "the Commission seems to have been clay in the hands of Sir Henry Strakosch." [See note: 8](#)

Emden does not say that Strakosch was a Jew, and there appears to be no basis for Hyamson classifying him as such. One notes that Emden was listed in Hyamson's acknowledgements as having made "valuable criticisms and suggestions." Perhaps Emden told him privately that Strakosch was a Jew.

According to the Encyclopaedia Judaica Hyamson was a Zionist Jew who became anti-Zionist after serving as Britain's Chief Immigration Officer in Palestine, 1921-1934. He published several books about Jews and also a general (not specifically about Jews) reference work, Dictionary of Universal Biography, issued in 1915, 1950 and (in the U.S.A.) 1951. His entry for Strakosch in the last is: **Strakosch, Sir Hy.; Hung.-Eng. econ. and financ., 1871-1943. S**

The "S" signifies that his obituary is to be found in the Annual Register. In accord with his general objectives in this work, Hyamson does not declare Strakosch to be Jewish, but he does declare him to be Hungarian-English. None of the other sources indicates he was Hungarian. Strakosch came from a town in Austria distant from Hungary, but as an Austrian he no doubt had some dealings with Hungarians. His father's beet sugar business probably reached into Hungary. Another connection to Hungary is via Adolf Goerz, who managed gold mines and other interests in Hungary before emigrating to Africa around 1890. [See note: 9](#) None of that makes Strakosch Hungarian.

Another basis for dissatisfaction with Hyamson's classification is that I can't trust any source which, after his death, classifies Strakosch as a Jew without at least mentioning that he died a nominal Christian. I consider Hyamson to be not well informed about Strakosch, whose name was just one of thousands he listed in his various works. I think the weight of the biographical information is against Hyamson's classification of Strakosch as a Jew.

The idea that Strakosch was a Jew has become part of folklore; just search the Internet for "Strakosch"! In his 1994 biography Churchill, Clive Ponting also says that Strakosch was a Jew, in a phrase that smells very much as though carried over from Irving. I suspect that the spread of the belief is largely due to Irving's remark.



Then What Was He Up To, and Why?

The question of Strakosch's ethnicity is only important in relation to the question of what political forces were acting, during the thirties, to destroy Hitler. If Strakosch was a Jew, then political motivations that would explain his conduct would be obvious. If he was not a Jew, then the question of motivation arises. Why was he out to get Hitler? An answer is given in a booklet he published in 1935, in which the gold miner argued for the restoration of an international gold standard for currency. [See note: 10](#)

Strakosch considered that the cooperation of Britain and other "Sterling countries" was attainable, but it was not possible to attain a full measure of recovery unless America and Germany are also brought into the fold ... Substantial progress in this direction has already been achieved in America ... The German situation, on the other hand, remains hopelessly confused, not so much because her problems are fundamentally so very different and so much more difficult, but because of the manner in which they are being faced. There is hardly a single one of the many and varied measures she has taken which can be said to be of real value for her restoration -- indeed, most of them tend to impede it ... [See note: 11](#)

It is well known that this judgment of the efficacy of Hitler's economic policies was wrong. The Nazi economic policies were notoriously successful, and have been called "The Nazi Miracle," which Hitler performed knowing at the outset that "The international financial world would stand on its head and attack our currency with all the means at its command." [See note: 12](#)

The important point is that we see the motivations that Strakosch brought to the campaign against Germany. Hitler was on the way to proving him wrong. Thus to describe Strakosch as a "Jew" in this context is to do more than make a mistake about ethnicity. Strakosch should, rather, have been described as "a South African gold miner campaigning for restoration of the international gold standard." If he had been a Jew, I still would not have described him as Irving did. I would have written "a Jewish South

African gold miner campaigning for restoration of the international gold standard."

Ironically, one conclusion to draw is that it doesn't really matter much whether or not Strakosch was Jewish, as long as it is understood what interests he represented. Irving's treatment of Strakosch, however, has the unintended effect of camouflaging a very important dimension of the background to the Second World War.

This investigation resulted from a discussion Dr. Butz had with Mr. Safet Sarich of Chicago, who passed away as this issue was going to press. Only he and his wife Ingeborg knew that his days were numbered, as he maintained his keen interest in the future of his family, nation, and civilization to the end. We mourn the loss of this good friend and supporter of IHR.

Notes

1. The Times, Feb. 7, 1944.
2. Annual Register (London, 1943); The Times, August 15, 1941; John F. Riddick, Who Was Who in British India (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1998); Eric Rosenthal, Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa, 6th edition (London and New York: Frederick Warne, 1973); C.J. Beyers, Dictionary of South African Biography (Cape Town: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1977); Walter H. Wills and R.J. Barrett, The Anglo-African Who's Who and Biographical Sketch-Book (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1905).
3. It should be noted that at the time many Britons associated Jewish intrigues with Germany. See Nesta H. Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, 1924, especially pp. 365ff.
4. Robin McGregor, McGregor's Who Made South Africa, vol. 1 (Saxonwold, S.A.: Purdey, 2000), pp. 26-30. McGregor presents a chart indicating who was and was not Jewish.
5. Ibid, pp. 138-141. As the preface explains this is vol. 1 of a projected series on "the positive contributions made by each of South Africa's twenty-five-odd cultural groups to its development ... the Jewish

contribution ... comprises the first part of this volume. As a significant number of Jews are of German origin, it seemed appropriate to relate the contribution made by the Germans as the second part."

6. Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randalords* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985), pp. 118, 244.

7. Albert M. Hyamson, "Plan of a dictionary of Anglo-Jewish biography," in *Anglo-Jewish Notabilities: Their Arms and Testamentary Dispositions* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1949). Hyamson was president of this society.

8. Paul H. Emden, *Randalords* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), pp. 217, 342. Remarks in this article on what books say about Strakosch are based on the pages indicated in the indexes to those books. In the writer's opinion, the burden of more exhaustive research in search of credible evidence that Strakosch was a Jew is that of those who make the claim.

9. McGregor's *Who's Who*, p. 140.

10. Sir Henry Strakosch, *The Road to Recovery: With Special Reference to the Problem of Exchange Stability and the Restoration of the International Gold Standard* (New York: Economic Forum, and London: The Economist, 1935). Seventy pages, of which 27-36 were missing from the copy consulted.

11. *Ibid*, p. 51.

12. Alan Milard, in the *London Review of Books*, January 23, 1986, p. 21. Milard reviews several books on the subject.



About The Author



ARTHUR R. BUTZ WAS BORN AND RAISED IN NEW YORK CITY. IN 1965 he received his doctorate in Control Sciences from the University of Minnesota. In 1966 he joined the faculty of Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois), where he is now Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

In addition to numerous technical papers, Dr. Butz is the author of *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, first published in 1976.



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