

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The General Settlement Fund: waiting for an end to litigation

More than four years since the General Settlement Fund was created following the signing of the Washington Agreement - a bilateral accord between the US and Austria - not a single payment has been made from the indemnification programme established to pay compensation for a comprehensive range of Jewish-owned asset expropriation and Nazi persecution following the Anschluss of March 1938.

In negotiating the Washington Agreement, Austria insisted on including a clause that the distribution of payments from the \$210m fund could proceed *only when any outstanding lawsuits being pursued in the US were either dismissed or withdrawn*. One long-running lawsuit in a US court brought by Austrian survivors claims real estate and other possessions seized while the Nazi Reich controlled Austria between 1938 and 1945.

The Washington Agreement also enshrines the system of processing claims by the General Settlement Fund that was agreed by the US Government and a number of Holocaust victims' organisations. As distinct from other Holocaust-era compensation measures worldwide, the General Settlement Fund is unique both in the number of categories that are compensated for and in the individual calculation of the losses.

By the claims submission deadline of 28 May 2003, the General Settlement Fund had received 19,400 applications, with the average applicant claiming for losses and damages sustained by three or four victims of the Nazis. On average, each of these victims had sustained between two and five single losses, totalling an estimated 120,000 to 240,000 claims that are currently being researched and individually calculated.

At the time of going to press, more than 7,000 applications containing some 85,000 individual claims have been researched. Of the approximate 25,000 claims for individual losses, decisions on around 2,000 applications have been prepared. Where claimants were unable to provide detailed information on their families' lost assets, the

evidence to substantiate claims has been sought in Austrian archives.

Since General Settlement Fund awards are calculated on a pro rata basis, before payments can be made it is necessary to process *all* 19,400 applications and to establish the total amount being claimed. This process is in sharp contrast with other compensation measures, such as the Swiss bank account awards, which provide for a single category or a lump sum payment based on claimants' actual bank balances. To implement this complex system, the staff of the General Settlement Fund has been increased and the premises of their offices extended.

The Fund's decision-taking body, the independent Claims Committee, consists of one member appointed by the United States, Professor Vivian Curran, one member appointed by the Republic of Austria, Dr Kurt Hofmann, and, representing the UK, the Chairman, Sir Franklin Berman.

Payments from the General Settlement Fund are the final element in Austria's Holocaust compensation programme. Also provided for in the Washington Agreement were lump sum ex-gratia awards of \$7,000 (from a \$150m fund), which were distributed in 2002 and to which top-up awards of €1,000 are now being made. An extension of social security legislation forms the third pillar of the Agreement, allowing any Austrian Nazi victim born before 13 March 1938 to claim a pension together with improvements in the provision of care monies (*Pflegegeld*) to survivors with the greatest medical needs.

As the Claims Office knows very well from the enquiries it receives on this matter every day, it is of the greatest concern that a way be found as soon as possible of ending this logjam so that the process of making due payments to claimants can finally go ahead.

This article was written with the assistance of Ms Hannah Lessing, General Secretary of the National Fund for Victims of Nazism in Austria.

Michael Newman

Monument to Frank Foley unveiled



A monument to British agent Frank Foley is unveiled in his hometown of Highbridge, Somerset

The AJR, which generously supported the project to commemorate Frank Foley, 'the spy who saved 10,000 Jews', witnessed the unveiling of a monument to him in Highbridge, Somerset, where Foley was born and educated.

The date was 8 May, chosen well before the publicity machine for celebrating the 60th anniversary of VE Day went into action. It was selected by the Highbridge Frank Foley Committee as the anniversary of his death in 1958 at the age of 73.

The Portland stone white monument, set on the green outside the community hall in the small market town, shows a bespectacled Foley stamping a visa for a father whose little daughter stands next to him. Symbols abound, including a train, which signifies transport to the camps or away to freedom as well as the days when trains ran to Highbridge. A boat is linked to escape and Highbridge's maritime connections. A clock symbolises the urgency of the situation. A bridge refers to Highbridge and somewhere is an apple, the symbol of Somerset.

Sculptor Jonathan Sells of Corfe Castle, Dorset, explained that the stone bar linking the two men's heads showed the bond of sympathy. 'We don't want hatred

(Continued on page 2)

but one world,' he said.

Guests at the event included David Rothenberg, the AJR's Vice-Chairman, and John Curtis, an active supporter of the project since chancing upon it three years ago while on a visit to Somerset.

'My father could leave after Kristallnacht as he was the director of a British subsidiary of a German textile firm, but I have often wondered how he managed to get his elderly parents out. I suspect Foley helped,' Mr Curtis ruminated. 'He saved so many people. Many did not realise he was instrumental, while those who did know have mostly gone.'

Most beneficiaries finished up in Israel, as Foley issued visas for Palestine. After Foley's death they planted a grove for him. But his story was unknown in Britain until the publication of his biography by *Daily Telegraph* defence correspondent Michael Smith in 1999 - which also led to his being declared a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem.

Now Frank Foley's moral stand and 'tearing up of the rule book' is lauded by government ministers, as represented by Des Browne at the ceremony and by the plaque placed in the British embassy in Berlin last November. But at the time it was a different story - when he was considered a nuisance to British interests but too valuable a spy (officially a passport control officer) to be ditched.

In addition to Highbridge committee members and clerics - Foley was a devout Catholic - the ceremony was addressed by Baroness Rabbi Dr Julia Neuberger, Jonathan Lewis from the Board of Deputies, and Malcolm Weisman, representing the Chief Rabbi.

A choir of pupils from Clifton College's Jewish house, Polack's House, came from Bristol to give a flavour of Jewish song, adding to the intercultural atmosphere with *Adon Olam* sung to the tune of *The Yellow Submarine*.

Ruth Rotherberg

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Yom Hashoah commemorated



Martin Lewis recites Kaddish at the AJR Day Centre's Yom Hashoah ceremony

Logan Hall

Leaders of the Jewish community addressed more than 500 guests at the Yom Hashoah event hosted by the UK's Yad Vashem committee at Logan Hall. The event also commemorated the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and VE Day, marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Among the speakers were the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, and Rabbi Steven Katz of the Hendon Reform Synagogue. Both spoke of the need to be vigilant with regard to rising antisemitism in Britain.

The audience also heard from Ben Helfgott, Chairman of the Yad Vashem committee and survivor of several Nazi concentration camps, on his experiences in Poland in the first days of the Second World War, as well as from His Excellency the Ambassador of Israel, Zvi Heifetz.

Sir Martin Gilbert CBE described movingly the impact made by Holocaust survivors and refugees who came to Britain before and after the Second World War. The Chairman of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, Ronald Shelley, spoke of the courage of the 50,000 British Jewish members of the British forces as his members, bearing AJEX flags, marched into the auditorium.

The event was chaired by Henry Grunwald, President of the Board of Deputies

Michael Newman

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PHOTO: STEPHEN GEE

Pictured in front of the Zachor Holocaust Memorial sculpture at Pinner Synagogue: (clockwise) Charles Salt, a liberator who entered Bergen-Belsen on day 3, Alice Svarin, Nicole David, Bobbie Feiler, Helen Bamber, Leon Greenman

Pinner Synagogue

Leon Greenman OBE and Helen Bamber OBE spoke movingly of their contrasting experiences of Nazi tyranny as part of this year's Yom Hashoah event, which is commemorated annually at Pinner Synagogue.

Speaking in front of the Lady Mayor of Harrow, their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Hungary and representatives of the Polish and Russian embassies, Leon Greenman, a survivor of several concentration camps who was deported from Holland to Auschwitz in 1943, described his ordeal at the hands of the Nazis.

Helen Bamber, who established the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture in 1985, recalled her memories of entering Bergen-Belsen shortly after its liberation to help rehabilitate former inmates and spoke of her promise to one dying man: 'I will be your witness.'

In his opening address, His Excellency The Ambassador of the Netherlands, Count Jan de Marchant et d'Ansembourg, referred to the efforts his country made to come to terms with its history on the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Holland.

Members of the Third Generation performed the play *The Story of Max and Shmielek Farber* and participated in a moving candle-lighting ceremony along with survivors and liberators of concentration camps.

The evening, which was attended by a record audience of almost 500, was organised by Gaby Glassman, a member of the AJR's Management Committee.

Michael Newman

My country

Peter Prager

When I left Germany I was full of hate for the country. I was furious when people described me as 'German' and would explain: 'I am a Jewish refugee from Germany.' When I appeared before a tribunal in 1939 to establish my status, the magistrate asked me: 'Do you want to be repatriated after the war?' I replied: 'Definitely not.' So my alien's registration book contained the footnote 'Does not wish to be repatriated.' When in 1947 I applied for naturalisation I put 'stateless' as my nationality. The Home Office wrote to me: 'According to our records, you are German. Why did you write stateless?' I replied: 'I am a Jew and therefore cannot be German.' The Home Office accepted this and I became British.

I did not teach my children German - for which they later criticised me. When in 1954 I applied for a job teaching history the headmaster asked if I would teach German instead. I accepted because I wanted so much to teach in a selective school. Soon I realised that if one teaches a language one must have empathy for the country whose language it is and this I did not have. So I read about recent history and concluded that one must differentiate between Nazis, non-Nazis and anti-Nazis. This satisfied me for the time being.

About ten years ago the German government offered a pension to former German Jews provided they re-applied for their German nationality. Some of my friends preferred to go without their pension rather than become German nationals. A friend asked: 'Do you believe in Hitler's racial theories?' 'Of course not, that is a stupid question.' 'Who took your German nationality away?' 'Hitler of course.' 'Don't you see that refusing to become German again means you agree with the Nuremberg Laws, which stated that Jews cannot be Germans?' Conceding that he was right, I became a German citizen again. It took me some time to realise that my letter to

the Home Office showed that I had embraced Nazi racial laws.

Israel was my country of the mind. The brother of my maternal grandfather went to Palestine in 1933 and opened the first psychiatric hospital in Haifa. A cousin became chief of staff of the Israeli navy and my aunt was a founder of Youth Aliya. But my real passion for Israel was the kibbutzim - to me as a socialist the ideal society. During the 1967 war I supported Israel in a debate at East Ham College of Technology, where I was teaching.

Then came the settlements. At first, I accepted the government's explanation that they were for defensive purposes only. But when I visited Israel with the Leo Baeck College and we walked through Hebron's market street, I noticed the hateful looks from the Palestinians. Though enthused by Oslo, I was perturbed that even under Rabin settlement building continued. Then came the second *intifada*. The Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem reported that in 2003, 82 Palestinians died at checkpoints because they could not get medical assistance in time; 52 women gave birth at checkpoints, resulting in the deaths of 17 children. Israel my country of the mind? Never.

I am of course a cosmopolitan, but England always had a special attraction for me. My father spent several years as an apprentice in Bond Street and always spoke highly of English tolerance. When I came to England I not only fled persecution but came to a country for which I had the greatest regard. I have lived most of my life in England, my wife and children are English, and the English way of life is my way of life.

In 1940 I was at an Old Vic production of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. When John of Gaunt recited the famous lines 'this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England', the audience burst into applause. I joined in. I have no doubt that my country is England.

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A visit to the doctor

Martha Blend

I came to my foster parents as a mystery parcel, propelled out of Austria by desperate parents who weren't allowed to come with me. All that was known about me was my age - nine years - and my name. My foster mother soon set about examining the parcel. Advancing on my hair, she squeezed on it with a sticky substance called soft soap and began a vigorous scrubbing. Next, a toothcomb was used to scarify my scalp with an action like a plough harrowing a furrow. Bowels were of particular importance to her, and I soon learned it was politic to answer her daily question 'Did you have your bowels open?' in the affirmative. Otherwise, a battery of remedies ranging from the mild to the explosive would be applied along with the obligatory cod liver oil and malt.

While I was immersed in my foster mother's tin bath, she scrutinised me closely to see if I had the right number of whatever was needed. Though satisfied on the whole, she thought she detected a bone in my foot which was not pointing in the right direction and a gland in my neck bigger than it ought to be. So off we went to the doctor.

Dr Rose had a surgery on the main road in a converted shop. A skimpy curtain almost covered what had once been the shop window and a brass plate on the wall proclaimed the doctor's

name and qualifications. As you stepped through the door you entered a short corridor. To the right of this was a small room devoid of all ornament where a huddle of patients of all ages sat on hard benches. Between this waiting room and the consulting room was a wooden partition. There were gaps in the planks which allowed not only light but voices to escape. 'When did you last?' or 'It's her chest playing up, doctor' could be clearly heard through the gap but no one seemed to mind this breach of privacy.

When it was our turn to see the doctor we entered a room no bigger than a ship's cabin. Most of the space was taken up by a large mahogany desk behind which sat Dr Rose, bald and bespectacled. As my foster mother explained the reason for our visit, he listened while from the corner of his mouth dangled a cigarette with so long a trail of ash it seemed to defy gravity. You hoped that when it did land, it wouldn't drop on you. Putting it down into a tray that was already well filled, the doctor examined my foot, banged my knee with a hammer and felt my neck. He then pronounced foot and neck to be within the range of the normal and my foster mother left, reassured, after pressing some coins into his palm. I was thankful that the prodding and tapping were over.

News by email

From time to time the AJR will be sending out by email information about our activities as well as details of forthcoming events and news of particular interest to the refugee community. If you would like to receive information about these developments, which will also be included in the following month's Journal, please send an email to news@ajr.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES

Sunday 19 June 2005
at 3.00 pm

at

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Guest speaker Ned Temko
'Looking Back, Looking Forward:
15 Years at the JC'

For further details please telephone
020 8385 3070

Arts and Events Diary JUNE 2005

Until 21 August 2005 'Closing the Door? Immigrants to Britain 1905-2005'. Special exhibition marking the centenary of the 1905 Aliens Act. Jewish Museum, Camden Town

Until 2 Oct 2005 'The Last Goodbye: The Rescue of Children from Nazi Europe'. Exhibition on the Kindertransport. Jewish Museum, Finchley

Until 2008 'The Children's War'. Exhibition on children in the Second World War, incorporating the Kindertransport story. Imperial War Museum. Tel 020 7416 5000

Thur 2 Prof Simon Sibelman, 'Happy as God in France: The French, the Jews and Antisemitism', London Jewish Cultural Centre, King's College, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3, 7.30 pm. Tel 020 7431 0345,

Mon 6 Hans Seelig MA, 'The Composer Arthur Honegger (d. 1955)'. Club 43

Wed 8 Dr Nicholas Wachsmann (Birkbeck College), 'Prisons and Camps: Terror and Confinement in Nazi Germany'. Lecture series by Wiener Library, Centre for German-Jewish Studies and Leo Baeck Institute. Venue: Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7580 3493

Mon 13 Club 43. Annual general meeting

Mon 20 Dr Nicholas Worrall (Middlesex University), 'Nose to Nose. Gogol's Short Story and Shostakovich's Opera: A Nasal Encounter'. Club 43

Thur 23 The Media and Immigration. Panel discussion, Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 7.00 pm

Mon 27 Ernst Fleisch MA, 'A Trip through Bangladesh and Northern India (with Slides)'. Club 43

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club 43 Belsize Square Synagogue. Meetings 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig tel 01442 254360

Jewish Museum, Camden Town tel 020 7284 1997

Jewish Museum, Finchley tel 020 7284 1997

Wiener Library tel 020 7636 7247

Return to 'a land of refugees'

Eve R. Kugler

In 1940 and 1941, when I was 10, I lived in France in Château Montintin, run by the OSE (Organisation de Secours aux Enfants). Late last year I returned to the area for a colloquium on 'Jewish Children in Limousin from 1940 to 1960'. Attending were various academics and those of us who had been Jewish children in OSE homes or hidden by the Resistance and the OSE. The academics had researched the history. We were invited to give first-hand testimony at the two-day event. There were also programmes and tours of interest to us, the subjects of the colloquium.

There was a great deal of press and TV coverage of the returnees. During the colloquium major points made were that the OSE sheltered children coming from Paris and from camps in the Vichy-controlled area of France in 11 castles and houses throughout Limousin. Among those who helped place and save Jewish children in addition to the OSE and the Resistance were the French Jewish Scout Organisation, priests and ordinary gentiles. Limoges became 'a land of refugees'.

Policemen sometimes warned families when *raffles* (general arrests) were imminent. In one small village with 82 Jews only one was deported. About 30 per cent of French people were willing to help Jewish children. Most of the children who did not survive were non-French.

At a 'round table' for the returnees, the most notable point made by several speakers was that children were sometimes misused, abused, and even raped by farmers and others who provided shelter. Even gentile children were maltreated.

An exhibit about the 90-year history of the OSE showed that by August 1942 the OSE and the Resistance had managed to hide 1,600 Jewish children. Through OSE's efforts 4,000 children were saved from deportation, including arguably the most famous resident of an OSE home, Marcel Marceau.

The tours took us through wartime Limoges and the surrounding areas. We visited Oradour sur Glane, where in June



Eve Kugler, with Norbert Rosenblum, on the steps at La Chevrette - the same steps on which her parents were photographed 63 years earlier

1944 the Waffen-SS burned 643 inhabitants of the small village to death.

I was taken to Le Couret château, an OSE home deep in the Limousin countryside, where my mother became the cook in autumn 1941, after my sister and I left for America as part of the Quaker children's transport. Le Couret is surrounded by mountains, where my parents hid in 1942. Could I have done what they did when Resistance workers told them it was their only option after Vichy issued an arrest warrant for them? Standing there on a cold, wet October day, I was in awe about what they had done and endured.

On our last day we went back to Montintin. We already knew that we would not be able to go inside the château, but could view it only through a high-security fence installed by the current owner. We did, however, go to La Chevrette, the OSE home for Orthodox children up the hill from Montintin, where my mother was the cook before Le Couret. I have a photo of my parents standing on a small porch on top of a flight of stone stairs leading into the house. I stared at the spot, oblivious to the pouring rain, then slowly made my way up the steps to where they had stood. Norbert Rosenblum, who had lived at La Chevrette, was standing next to me. We passed our cameras to his wife to take a photo of us there. What my parents had lived through became truly real for me. It was an overwhelming, deeply moving experience.

Annual conference of child survivors

The World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust is an umbrella organisation of groups of Child Survivors. As children, we experienced Nazi persecution in Europe in one form or another. The World Federation comprises more than 50 Child Survivors' groups worldwide. Each group is an independent self-help group offering mutual support.

Since 1988 the World Federation has sponsored annual conferences of Child Survivors including Kindertransportees and Hidden Children. Those meetings, held so far in North America, Europe and Israel, have attracted upwards of 300 attendees from around the world. The conferences have been addressed by important speakers on issues which concern us, and feature workshops targeting not only survivors but also spouses and the Second Generation.

Until relatively recently many Child Survivors were reluctant to discuss their experiences. However, over the last 10 to 20 years that has changed. Being together with other Child Survivors in a relaxed social atmosphere enables us to discuss our experiences should we wish to do so. For many of us, being together is sufficient.

The 17th Annual Conference, entitled 'Still Going Strong 1945-2005', will take place in Amsterdam on 19-22 August. There are several ways of obtaining further information. Go to the website, where you can also register for the Congress (but note the Dutch spelling of *congres*!) at www.congres2005.nl, send an e-mail to maxal@congres2005.nl, send a fax to 003120-4421809, or write to J.C.S. Congres 2005, Postbus 74761, NL-1070 BT Amsterdam, Holland.

Henri Obstfeld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN'

Sir - With reference to the letter from F. Lustig in your May issue, Mr Grunberger was 'The jewel in the crown'.

Edith Fulton
London NW4

Sir - One yearns for the days of that brilliant editor Werner Rosenstock and *AJR Information* at tiny Fairfax Mansions, when articles were unbiased and always of the highest calibre. A successor to Richard Grunberger must be found from among professional writers outside the Association who will not monopolise the magazine with their own views.

Philip Lang
London NW11

JEWS IN THE GERMAN ARMY

Sir - I refer to the three letters in your February issue regarding Jews in the German army before and during the First World War. My grandfather, Karl Reichmann of Beuthen Oberschlesien, served with the German army from 1914 to 1918 and rose to the rank of *Feldwebel* (sergeant). He was in charge of a *Gulaschkanone* (field kitchen) and was told that he was due for promotion to officer's rank when the war suddenly ended and he was demobbed. He served on the eastern front, though I cannot remember in which regiment. I rely on the memory of an eight-year-old boy, but remember seeing at least one medal that my grandfather won. Until the Nazis came to power, he was always proud of his military service.

Frank Reichmann
North Leigh, Oxon

Sir - I do not share the optimistic view of your contributors on the matter of

First World War service by Jews in the German army being in any way recognised during the Nazi period (letter, February 2005). My uncle Fritz was a *Matrose* (sailor) in the *Kriegsmarine* (German Navy) in 1914-18 and was decorated with the Iron Cross. He was deported on 6 March 1943 on the 35th transport from Grunewald Station, the departure point for over 53,000 Berlin Jews, many with war service, to Auschwitz and murdered there. Under an order dated 1 September 1941 Jews were not permitted to wear medals, decorations or other insignia.

May I at the same time clarify the position of Jews returning to Czechoslovakia from KZs (letter, February 2005) by quoting from Gottfried Bloch's biography *Unfree Associations*:

The struggle with the new Czech bureaucracy made me again feel like a refugee asking for favours, which touched my open wounds. Confirming my citizenship in the new Republic was not easy.

Germans had to leave the country and we Jews, who had lived among them and who spoke German or had been educated in German schools, had to go through great efforts to prove our identities. I had to stand in long lines to get forms for all kinds of applications just to be acknowledged as a regular person returning home. After almost a year's delay I was finally allowed to apply to the Czech University [from which the Germans had expelled him] to complete my medical studies. For my degree I had to take final examinations in all subjects, this time in Czech, and finally graduated from medical school on 31 January 1947.

Being 14 years younger, I had no such problem. I had been born in Berlin, was fluent in Czech, and my father, when applying for Czech citizenship in Vladivostok in 1919 - he had been an Austrian POW - had

chosen 'Jewish' as his nationality. I must add, however, that in the very first shop I entered in Prague, with my haircut giving me away as a KZnik, I was greeted with 'Too many of you lot have come back!' when, in fact, there were rather few of us.

Frank Bright
Ipswich

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

On the subject of internment, my mother's family settled in this country in the late 1880s. My father arrived here at the turn of the century, where he met and married my mother. As a consequence of the outbreak of the First World War, my father - as an Austrian and therefore enemy alien - was interned on the Isle of Man until 1918. Meanwhile, my mother and my siblings were repatriated to Austria by the Red Cross. My father followed after his release. We were lucky to be able to leave Austria in 1939. I recall the situation when in June 1940 some policemen arrived early one morning and mentioned our family name, explaining that they had orders to take me to the police station. I was only 16 at the time. My father protested, claiming that there must be some mistake as he had been interned before - to no avail, of course. In the event, I was sent to Huyton, near Liverpool. Not for long though. Due to my brother being English-born and serving in the Forces, they managed to arrange my release.

Robert Acker Holt
London NW3

'LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER'

Recent commemorations of the Holocaust have conjured up the derogatory image of the Jews as mere victims, who went 'like lambs to the slaughter'. When will this slanderous *canard* be laid to rest? Consider the realities. At first, the Nazis successfully disguised their genocidal intent and it takes little imagination to perceive that, while there seemed some hope of survival, Jews would hesitate to take action that might endanger their families.

However, once these constraints no longer operated, the Jews of occupied Europe, acting under the most debilitating circumstances, fought as nobly as those Jews serving in the Allied forces including, despite British restrictions, the Yishuv's epic contribution.

As in the First World War, some 1.5 million Jews fought in the Second World War, thereby exceeding in absolute and relative terms the share of many who were lauded as major allies. They furnished a disproportionate number of officers, including some 250 generals (188 of these were promoted in the Red Army through sheer merit on the battle field), gained an above average number of awards and lost as many in battle - some 250,000, not counting large resistance losses - as the United Kingdom. All this against prejudice even from their compatriots. Unfortunately, much of this record remains unheralded because nations have little interest in disclosing the part played by Jewish citizens.

In camps housing many nationalities only the Jews, apart from Soviet prisoners, eventually rose in hopeless revolt, emulating the desperate heroism of the Warsaw Ghetto fighters. Those who managed to escape 'liquidation' played an exceptionally prominent role in the resistance throughout Europe, despite hostile environments in which they found themselves ostracised, harassed, betrayed and ultimately even murdered, especially by the Polish NSZ faction.

The Jews were neither passive nor accidental victims of Nazism. They were targeted as its first and foremost victims. The reverse side of the coin that inaccurately portrays the Jews as unresisting martyrs shows a people in the vanguard of the fight against Nazism on all fronts. Its heroes do not deserve to be neglected for there has been no break in the Jewish tradition of resistance to tyranny since the ancient Hebrews.

S. Goodman
Kingswinford, West Midlands

FORGET, FORGIVE, REMEMBER

Sir - Only the last of these should apply to *our* generation and it will probably take another 100 years before the terrors of the Holocaust are only *remembered*. We have had examples in the massacres of the Armenians by the Turks and the Tutsis by the Hutus yet we visit Spain without reflecting on the Inquisition. Yes, we cannot hold the present younger generation in Germany culpable for the sins of their grandfathers. It is a fact that many German youngsters spend their gap year working in Jewish Care homes fulfilling every kind of task.

Anthony Goldsmith
Wembley, Middx

'THE FIRST FINAL SOLUTION'

Sir - Regarding the possible entry of Turkey into the EU (February issue), it would be a welcome gesture if Turkey would at least acknowledge, and apologise for, the First 'Final Solution' - namely the deportation and massacre of 1,500,000 Armenian men, women and children in 1915 in the most dreadful and barbaric circumstances. Adolf Hitler said in August 1939: 'Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?' The Holocaust was the Second 'Final Solution'. Lest we all forget!

J J Beagle
London NW2

REFUGEES IN SHANGHAI

Sir - I was very interested in the reference to Jewish refugees in Shanghai and the fact that the Japanese invasion of China did not lead to their extermination (Inside the AJR: Liverpool, April issue). Last year in New Jersey we visited someone who was born in Vienna and educated in Shanghai. On his bookshelves together with two or three memoirs of people with similar experiences, was an account of a Japanese attempt to set aside an area as a Jewish refuge. Of course, this came to an end with Japan's entry into the war on Germany's side.

George Schlesinger
Durham

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The mean streets of Germany are featured in Susan Hiller's highly original video installation **The J-Street Project** at the Timothy Taylor Gallery. During the last three years Hiller covered the entire map of Germany, from Flensburg in the north to Munich in the south, from Düsseldorf in the west to Dresden in the east. The result is over 300 photographs and 67 minutes of voiceless film which show how Jewish street names have been preserved in a country which eradicated all Jewish life.



Susan Hiller *Bamberg Judenstrasse*
Timothy Taylor Gallery

It is a haunting dedication. The names symbolise life's seasons. The eerie peace of a snowscape gives way to birdsong in a springtime leafy suburb. Even where the street names have disappeared, Hiller offers a subjective vision of the places which once knew them: Judenbergr, Judenstrasse, Judenbach, Judenweg - even Juifenstrasse in a French adaptation - or Judenerstrasse. One post-war street is even named after Anne Frank.

Hiller's photography implies emptiness: either the shots are devoid of people or they show the elderly, who would have remembered their Jewish neighbours. A postman dips into his red bag as though seeking long-gone names in a Jewish street. An old woman walks along with a stick by a lovely lake in Judengasse. The leafy lanes with their birds and quacking ducks are as pastoral as Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, with joggers flowing by in luminous colours.

In summer or winter Hiller has captured a sense of darkness, of narrow roads or paths through which a single truck or street cleaner emerges. You would not believe, perhaps, that a silent film - silent in the sense that no one speaks and consisting purely of deafening street sounds - could be this evocative. In one expressive track, you can hear a Yiddish lament almost drowned out by the violence of traffic noise.

What makes the installation effective is the fact that it demands the use of all your senses. In watching it, you allow the rural or urban world to pass you by with all its sounds of life - birdsong or car horn - and the only symbol that stands as an eternal fixture is the Jewish street name. Where Jews once hung out their washing you can now see Turks engaged in the same domestic chores.

What is Hiller telling us? That Hitler's *Schadenfreude* succeeded in preserving Jewishness as a museum icon? That Jewry's vanished six million are a testimony to man's forgotten inhumanity to man? That the Jewish essence remains and can never be eradicated?

Other mean streets are evoked in the latest art trend which solemnifies graffiti. **Outside Institute**, a new gallery off London's Edgware Road, is the first to place urban art on gallery walls. Protest art of the type splashed onto the New York subway is introduced by artists with names like **D*Face**, the inspiration behind the gallery. Street slogans generate irreverent splashes of primary colour. Business is brisk, report the curators, with up to 250 visitors a day. But the question is whether this art form is best expressed underground. I would say graffiti loses its heart when it goes mainstream.

REVIEWS

THEATRE

Not quite Wiener schnitzel

PROFESSOR BERNHARDI

by Arthur Schnitzler

Arcola Theatre, Dalston, London

One can hardly imagine a greater contrast between two locations of this play than a recent Vienna production at the palatial Theater in der Josefstadt and the current London production at the Arcola Theatre, a converted warehouse a stone's throw from this one-time stomping-ground of Mosley's spiritual successors, the neo-Nazis, with the neighbouring Stoke Newington orthodox Jewish community as their target. How ironic that this venue was chosen for staging an adaptation of the great Austro-Jewish playwright's 'serious comedy', whose principal theme is antisemitism.

Rewriting the play rather than using a literal translation proved a great success, since the aptly chosen English phraseology conveys the intended meaning vividly. All credit to Samuel Adamson for doing an excellent job. Equally, bearing in mind the limited resources of the Oxford Stage Company and the Dumbfounded Theatre, the director, Mark Rosenblatt, must be congratulated for this imaginative production. All the same, Rosenblatt fails to find the essential Viennese ambience and his *Bernhardi* is about as *echt Wien* as Wiener schnitzel cooked in tomato sauce. While Schnitzler confines heel-clicking to the academically retarded scoundrel Hochroitzpointner when he meets his former superior officer, Regimental Doctor Schreimann, the prototype of an early twentieth-century Austro-Jewish antisemite, Rosenblatt indulges throughout in an epidemic of Prussian heel-clicking, enough to make Schnitzler turn in his grave.

Having got this Beckmesserism off my chest, I hasten to add that no praise is too high for the magnificent direction and casting of a team of outstanding actors. First and foremost, Christopher Godwin's *tour de force*, Professor

Bernhardi, a performance of truly international calibre. When discovering that two - in some cases, even three - parts are played brilliantly by the same actors, one's admiration holds no bounds, with one exception: John Stahl, magnificent as Bernhardi's aggressive 'aryan' supporter Dr Pflugfelder, makes a disappointing appearance as Dr Flint, Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Schnitzler conceived Flint as a typical Austrian politician, modelling him on Metternich, who, as a forerunner to Waldheim, tells such outrageous lies that even the opposite of his statements tends to be totally mendacious; he is suave, diplomatic, garnished with Viennese *Schmäh*, making his points by being particularly *sotto voce*. Much as I regret to say it, the blustering, shouting John Stahl is no Flint. Nevertheless, all in all, a superb performance.

Fred Rosner

Casualties, compromises and happy endings

INTERRUPTED JOURNEYS: YOUNG REFUGEES FROM HITLER'S REICH
by Alan Gill

Simon & Schuster, 2004, £10.99

As his first book, *Orphans of the Empire*, demonstrated, Alan Gill has an immense interest in children and what happens to them when they are wrenched from their families and homes and their journey into adulthood is disrupted. Hence the title of his latest book, which focuses on children from a variety of backgrounds, Jewish and non-Jewish, particularly those of the Kindertransport, the ORT schools, the Dunera voyage and the Vienna Mozart Boy's Choir stranded in Australia when World War II began. The recent release of archival material in Australia enabled Gill to find fresh sources. Sadly, even with the new legislation on making documents public, Britain still has a 100-years secrecy order on the Dunera documents.

This book is no less compelling reading than *Orphans of the Empire*. Although it is packed with factual data, Gill's prose flows effortlessly and the

stories are gripping. His discussion of the material is frank and honest, presenting the casualties and compromises as well as the 'happy endings'. The reader is treated to a multitude of anecdotes, including some of Gill's own from his interviews with the children as adults 'looking back' over their journeys. The children's experiences come alive through Gill's ability to present his interviewees' material in such a way as to bring out the psychological state of mind behind the details. All the children experienced to some extent rejection and identity confusion, their names anglicised if not completely changed and labels thrust upon them such as 'reffo'. Many parents made heart-rending sacrifices to send their children to safety but the children still felt abandoned. Many became 'more British than the Brits' yet still felt 'different' and only 'second class'. Some were treated cruelly. The sadism of the Christian Brothers, who played a major role in the story of the *Orphans of the Empire*, figures again in Gill's account of the children who escaped the Nazi terror by going to Australia. Some suffered lasting psychological damage while others made a brilliant success of their lives.

A sobering fact, with which Gill begins the first chapter, is that less than 1 per cent of Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Europe survived. He makes it clear that many more might have been rescued, but the obstacles were legion. Apart from the time factor - Jewish families laboured under the delusion that Nazi persecution would 'blow over' - deep-rooted antisemitism or indifference towards Jews made rescue operations difficult even when there was good intent. Humanitarian concern was at a premium. Both the Australian and British governments and their potential host communities panicked at the thought of 'being invaded by hordes of Jews'. The Jewish communities in both countries were concerned that an influx of refugees would exacerbate antisemitism. Australia imposed quotas on Jewish immigrants and enforced them callously, as did the British in Palestine. Similar panic reactions are rampant today in response to asylum seekers and gypsy travellers.

Ruth Barnett

FILM

Doom-laden bacchanale

DOWNFALL (DER UNTERGANG)

directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel

At selected cinemas

Taken simply as a work of cinema, *Downfall* succeeds triumphantly in evoking the frenetic claustrophobia of the final days of the Third Reich in Hitler's bunker, permeated by a schizophrenic tension between hysteria and the cult of death. Bruno Ganz's fulminating Führer is entirely convincing, the physical likeness chillingly real and even the voice almost a replica, according to Hitler's biographer Ian Kershaw. Surrounded by a band of fanatical devotees, with Ulrich Matthes's Goebbels standing out as strikingly sinister, the doom-laden bacchanale inside the bunker presents a defiant contrast to the din of artillery from the advancing Russian army.

Very much in this vein is the impromptu party thrown by a manic Eva Braun, skilfully played by Juliane Kohler, which becomes a virtual dance of death. Eva's counterpart is the rabidly earnest Magda Goebbels (Corinne Harfouch), unremitting in her refusal to countenance any future beyond National Socialism.

In contrast to these demonic personalities, a few figures stand out, principally Traudl Junge, Hitler's secretary, played by the charming Alexandra Maria Lara, who comes across as a fresh-faced innocent, and Ernst Gunther Schenck, an SS doctor who appears genuinely concerned to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population. Also a touch removed from the generally inebriated rabble surrounding the Führer are Albert Speer, Hitler's architect, clearly more sophisticated, and SS General Fegelein, Himmler's liaison officer, who is married to Eva Braun's sister. Fegelein's very human anxiety about his pregnant wife and his desire to live, and to save his sister-in-law from the infernal trap in which she has chosen to be caught, are, of course, grounds for his execution.

The presence in the film of these seemingly more congenial characters is an artistically effective foil but is historically problematic. It cannot be coincidental that the film draws greatly

on Traudl Junge's memoir and on books by Speer and Schenck. Schenck's service in the Waffen-SS in the USSR is not mentioned in the film, nor are his medical experiments on inmates at Mauthausen. While Traudl is addressed as 'Frau Junge', there is no sign of any husband. Moreover, while the real elderly Traudl Junge 'confesses' at the end of the film that her youth and ignorance were no justification for condoning the regime's atrocities, she could be seen as disingenuous: while she did not formally join the Nazi Party until 1944, her Nazi pedigree was immaculate and she was deemed worthy of marrying Hitler's orderly, Hans Junge, who was killed in action in Normandy in 1944.

While concern has been expressed at the film's depiction of certain human traits in the Führer himself - his affection for children and his dog, and his avuncular demeanour towards Traudl, for example - these traits appear to be historically accurate. Had Hitler been no more than a monster, could he have inspired such devotion? More problematic is the intimation that the German people themselves were the ultimate victims of Hitler's demented gang.

Emma Klein

'All the leaves have lost their trees'

PRAGUE WINTER
by Gerda Mayer

Hearing Eye (Box 1, 99 Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2RX), 2005, 53pp., £8.95

There is far more to this tiny, immaculately produced book than meets the eye. Flitting between prose and poetry, between past and present, between Karlsbad, where she was born, and London, where she lives now, between what she was and what became of her, Gerda Mayer has written a deeply painful memoir.

The events portrayed in the book cover Hitler's annexation of the Sudeten in September 1938 and the short time that elapses before the author's departure on the Kindertransport. Depicting the mental and physical upheaval caused to her family by the unprecedented situation in which they find themselves,

Gerda Mayer chronicles their disintegration as they realise that the assimilation process they have taken for granted is over and begin the fruitless 'emigration game'. Mercilessly critical of relatives and friends alike, she is no less averse to scrupulous self-analysis, wryly giving voice to her childhood dreams and ambitions, her petty jealousies, her guilt and awakening sexual feelings. There is more than a touch of Anne Frank. And never far behind is the humour of the spiteful schoolgirl: 'I turn around to land a punch on the little boy sitting behind me; not in order to inflict GBH but merely to relieve the tedium.'

The diary her father had been keeping, which 'began in ardour has ended in disillusion', Gerda Mayer muses 60 years later. Consumed with the bitterness of what might have been, she concludes:

All the leaves have lost their trees.

Child, what tumbled words are these?

Yet I grieve for my lost tree;

Far away the wind bore me.

Howard Spier

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

My father's cousin Hilde was 97 years old when I visited her several weeks ago. Like him, she grew up in Hamburg in the 1920s, but left her home to settle in what was then Palestine in 1932, before Hitler came to power. Widowed at the age of 80, she remained fiercely independent, and insisted on living on her own to the end, accepting only minimal help.

As a young woman she joined a Zionist youth group and trained as a dental technician. The Hamburg Jewish community wisely housed all its youth movements under one roof, enabling the different ideological views to mingle. When he was granted a certificate to go to the Land of Israel, they decided to get married and go together.

Hilde was already old and bent when I first visited her about ten years ago, though I could see from her photographs that she had once been a handsome young woman. She and her husband had both worked hard, she in her profession and he in his, though once their children were born she stopped working as a dental technician and worked alongside her husband, who was one of the first in Israel to grow flowers commercially.

Hamburg always remained close to Hilde's heart. Even at her advanced age she could remember the Friday night family gatherings in her grandparents' home, the subjects of conversation and the cakes and delicacies her grandmother baked. She even sang me the song her uncle (my grandfather) had written in honour of his parents' golden wedding, her eyes twinkling and her voice still clear.

To have total recall at the age of 97 is a mixed blessing, as many of Hilde's memories were painful. Although I had fully expected to join her in celebrating her centenary, the end came, suddenly and without warning, just a few days ago. For me, it is as if the last link with the past I have endeavoured to get to know has gone.

A friendly greeting met me as I stepped into the surprisingly small corner office occupied by the avuncular figure of Lord Weidenfeld, seated behind an oak desk piled high with manuscripts. Its location in St Martins Lane is close by the English National Opera and the National Portrait Gallery, on whose boards he has served. He continues to enjoy his place as co-founder and *eminence grise* of one of the world's leading literary publishing houses, but few have also achieved such international recognition and gained such a degree of influence on many world statesmen. For most of his 85 years he has been where history was made, while preserving his Jewish identity and love for the reborn state of the Jewish people.

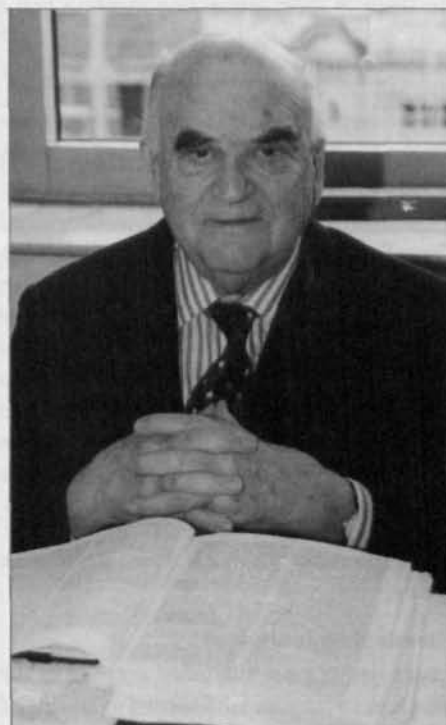
Arthur George Weidenfeld was born in Vienna in 1919 amidst the poverty and misery of the defeat of Austria and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The city's Jewish population approached 300,000, swollen by refugees from the Empire's outlying provinces. His father, whose family were mainly doctors, lawyers and businessmen, was an academic-cum-insurance executive, a romantic and a teacher; his mother was the daughter of one of European Jewry's great rabbinical dynasties. They lived frugally and, as an only child, he was somewhat withdrawn. At the Piaristengymnasium for the sons of professional people and civil servants, his favourite subjects were history, German literature and, especially, Latin. Science and technology remain to this day something of a closed world to him. He has never learned to drive.

He vividly recalls witnessing in 1931 from the apartment window a huge disciplined column of Brownshirts chorusing 'Germany awake, Judah perish!' and 'Heil Hitler!'. In 1934 he attended a Zionist meeting in the Jewish second district to hear the legendary Vladimir Jabotinsky, whose call 'to be tough and to fight for a Jewish state' inspired him to join Brit Trumpeldor, a militant organisation pledged to secure a sovereign homeland for the Jews in Palestine. While on a family Mediterranean cruise, he joined thousands at the funeral in Tel Aviv of

PROFILE

Ronald Channing

George Weidenfeld History's man



Chief Rabbi Kook, for the first time marching with Jews in their own land, which 'gave me a thrilling sense of solidarity'. Back home, he took the oath of the Jewish student fraternity Giskala, addressed Zionist meetings, made blue-and-white box house collections, and even learned sabre fencing!

In 1938 he registered as a law student at the University of Vienna and at the Konsularakademie, the country's prestigious diplomatic college, a cosmopolitan world of young men and women confident of their places among the future governing classes. After the Anschluss a certain Kurt Waldheim rendered aid to George's newly restricted studies at substantial personal risk. Within a week of the annexation it was no longer safe to walk in public places. With his father in prison, George was advised by the college principal to leave the country and he obtained a three-month visa for England.

In August 1938 George made his way to Woburn House, the headquarters of the British Refugee Relief Organisation, and to what he generously describes as 'a monument to the kindheartedness and solidarity of British Jews towards their expatriate Jewish kinsfolk in Central Europe'. Several indefatigable ladies 'took my life in hand': the 'formidable' Mrs Schwab, grandmother of today's Baroness Julia Neuberger, moved him to Highgate, and Mrs de Rothschild sent him to the Zionist headquarters at 77 Great Russell Street, where he was taken on as a volunteer translator. It was the perfect *entrée* into the world of the great Zionist leaders, including Chaim Weizmann. In June 1939 he was overjoyed to welcome both parents at London's Victoria Station.

Following Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia, George replied to a newspaper advert for foreign linguists to man a BBC monitoring service. It was the beginning of a seven-year love affair as a journalist, scriptwriter, presenter of German-language news programmes, commentator and, from the tender age of 22, 'our European Correspondent', broadcasting in English for the BBC's North American, African and Pacific services: 'My output was prodigious. I churned out something like 20 programmes a week.' It also opened the door to his making unrivalled contacts.

On his first post-war return to Vienna, George was overcome with its utter desolation and the realisation that none of his family or friends was to be found. He ran into Graham Greene, sent by Sir Alexander Korda and Carol Reed to research the script for what became the all-time film classic, *The Third Man*.

After the war, he established with Nigel Nicolson the successful magazine *Contact*. When in 1948 Israel Sieff, who ran Marks & Spencer with Simon Marks, invited them to publish children's books for the company, he and Nigel established Weidenfeld & Nicolson as book publishers. Marks & Spencer was making a major contribution to the creation of the State of Israel. Introduced to them by Flora Solomon, George was 'taken up' by the

(Continued on page 16)

INSIDE the AJR

Harrogate Continentals and HMD

Two of our group had been to London for the Holocaust memorial events. John told us about his visit to St James's Palace and both he and Susanne gave accounts of the service in Westminster Hall. Susanne also told us about her moving experiences on recent visits to Cracow and Auschwitz. We enjoyed the usual refreshments and look forward to our next meeting.

Inge Little (née Steinweg)

Next meeting: Wed 15 June

Standing ovation in West Midlands (Birmingham)

What a great pleasure Alf Keiles's presentation 'The Jewish Contribution to Jazz' was! He certainly deserved the standing ovation afforded him and his charming wife.

Werner Abraham

Next meeting: Tues 31 May, 2.30 pm. Social get-together at home of Ernst and Eileen Aris

Good friends in Surrey

Edith Vanstone welcomed us on a beautiful day to enjoy - once again - a meeting of members who have become good friends. We enjoyed Edith's generous hospitality, our own chats, and Myrna's update of AJR activities. We were saddened by the news that Richard Grunberger had passed away. Most of us had got to know him through one of his erudite talks to our group a few years back.

Vernon Saunders

New group for Bristol-Bath area

The inaugural meeting took place at the home in Bristol of Kitty Balint-Kurti, who provided delicious refreshments. Nine prospective members attended; others phoned to say they couldn't make this date. Myrna Glass gave a thumb-nail sketch of the AJR's history and activities and explained how groups already established functioned. Possible dates for the next meeting were discussed.

David Hackel

Ilford Mid East peace optimism

Tanya Stern from the Israeli embassy gave a resume of the current situation in Israel. It was a delight to hear such an articulate speaker spelling out how Israel is overcoming its many problems. Her words left us with an overall feeling of optimism

for Israel and hope for a peaceful resolution in the not too distant future. *Meta Rose Neil*

Next meeting: Wed 1 June, 10.30 am. Shlomit Naor, 'From Ra'anana to Redbridge'

Brighton and Hove Sarid 'memorabilia' meeting

Members brought with them, or discussed, items of jewellery, photos, letters, etc which had particular memories or stories attached to them. A most interesting meeting and a very good way to learn more about each other.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: Mon 20 June, 10.45 am. Brian Rubin, 'Do Miracles Really Happen? A Victory against Cancer'

'Israel's Red Cross' discussed in Cambridge

Meeting at Homerton College, 21 members heard an excellent talk by Eli Benson of Magen David Adom, the Israeli equivalent of the Red Cross. It was most interesting to hear about the scope of this privately funded ambulance service, which has been equipped with the most up-to-date computer service.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: Thur 23 June. Bettine Le Beau

Essex's 'New Jerusalem'

Lewis Herlitz gave a detailed account of the few Jewish families who settled in Southend during the nineteenth century, many of their descendants still living here today. From 1911 onwards many Jewish families arrived here as refugees. Soon Southend had so many Jewish citizens that it was given the nickname 'New Jerusalem'.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tues 7 June, 11.00 am. Details tba

Pinner members' afternoon

Our meeting was devoted to 'memorabilia', telling us why particular items were of personal significance. Items included scrap books, an 'Atlantic Star' medal, the Mont Blanc pen that was instrumental in getting permission to stay in the UK, and, most poignantly of all, two postcards written by a member's father - from the trenches in the First World War and from Dachau.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thur 2 June. Photographer Michael Freedman, 'Famous Faces'

South West Midlands wedding

As representatives of our group and as personal friends, Allan and I attended the wedding of Wendy and Richard Neubauer at Birmingham's Progressive Synagogue. Wendy has recently converted to Judaism

and it was wonderful to see her enter into the faith so wholeheartedly. A beautiful ceremony was followed by a splendid reception.

Ruth Jackson

'Justice and Jews' in Liverpool

Judge Inge Bernstein spoke about a conference of judges she had attended in Germany on the theme 'Justice and Jews'. Originally, she said, Jews were treated like everyone else but their lives became increasingly isolated from the general population. This situation was mirrored legally. From the nineteenth century onwards Jews were allowed to enter the legal profession. With the coming of National Socialism, Jews were forbidden to take part in the administration, teaching or practice of the law.

G. Jayson

North London tour of Cabinet War Rooms

Our guided tour around the Cabinet War Rooms was revelatory. The conditions under which the war was conducted and in which Churchill and his staff lived seem to us now as primitive in the extreme. Later we visited the main exhibition, which is filled with visual displays of facts and memorabilia enough to keep any dedicated historian occupied for days. A satisfying, if slightly exhausting, day out.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thur 30 June, 10.30 am. Michael Anvener, 'Wills: Leaving to Your Family Rather than to the Tax Man'

Leeds HSFA: plight of asylum-seekers

Following our annual lunch, Pamela A. Bye, director of KRAFT in Huddersfield, gave a poignant account of her work with Kurdish refugees and fugitives from the fighting in Kosovo. She detailed some of the appalling experiences undergone by such asylum-seekers as well as some of the difficulties they faced on arrival in a foreign country.

Martin Kapel

Next meeting: Sun 19 June. Prof Derek Fraser, 'Welfare State Past and Present'

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Oxford Tues 21 June. Social get-together

Wessex Tues 28 June. Lunch with speaker

East Midlands (Nottingham) Wed 29 June. Get-together

Regional Get-together Tue 5 July in Cambridge. Members in Cambridgeshire, East Anglia, Bedfordshire, Herts etc should have received invitations. Others who wish to come along, please call Head Office.



Prospective members at first meeting of Bristol-Bath group

DIARY DATES

- 12 June Beth Shalom trip
 19 June AGM (at Cleve Road, London)
 26 June-3 July Eastbourne holiday
 29 June Scotland and Newcastle Northern Get-together, Edinburgh
 5 July Southern Groups Get-together, Cambridge
 10-17 July Northern Groups holiday, St Annes
 13 July Day out, St Annes
 16 August Northern Groups Get-together, Manchester
 18 September Annual Tea, Watford
 23-30 October Bournemouth holiday
 9 November Kristallnacht

Please make a note in your diary - this year's annual tea will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Watford on Sunday 18 September. Further information and ticket application forms will appear in future issues of the *AJR Journal*.

For further information about any of the above events, please call us on 020 8385 3070.

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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 Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edinburgh
 Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
 Larry Lisner 01702 300812

Glasgow
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Harrogate
 Inge Little 01423 886254

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 Meta Roseneil 020 8505 0063

Leeds HSFA
 Trude Silman 0113 2251628

Liverpool
 Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
 Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
 Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

OUTING TO BETH SHALOM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTRE LAXTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Sunday 12 June 2005

£21.50 per person including coach fare, entrance and vegetarian buffet lunch (£9 for those using own transport)

Coach will leave AJR offices in Merrion Avenue, Stanmore at 8.45 am (plenty of parking available in car park)

Booking is essential

Please call Joan Altman on
 020 8385 3085

BBC Wales

would like to get in touch with any Kindertransport survivors who may have stayed at Gwrych Castle in North Wales during the war. If you are one of the 200 or so former residents of the Castle and are willing to speak about your experiences, please contact:
 Guto Thomas, Room 1060, Broadcasting House, Llandaff, Cardiff, CF5 2YQ or telephone
 02920 323857

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
 15 Cleve Road, London, NW6
 Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 15 JUNE 2005

Michael Smith
'Frank Foley'

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Early reservations please!

Lunch now only £5

Please telephone Susie on 020 7328 0208

KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group MONTHLY MEETINGS AT CLEVE ROAD

Monday 6 JUNE 2005

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Michael Bennett
'Life in the Jewish East End
Seen through the Eyes of the Son of
Boris the Photographer'

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday - Thursday
 9.30 am - 3.30 pm,
 Sunday 2 pm - 5.30 pm

June Afternoon Entertainment

- | | | |
|------|----|-------------------------------|
| Wed | 1 | Lev Lewis |
| Thur | 2 | Sheila Games |
| Sun | 5 | CLOSED |
| Mon | 6 | KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub |
| Tue | 7 | CLOSED |
| Wed | 8 | Jenny Kossew |
| Thur | 9 | Yakov Paul |
| Sun | 12 | CLOSED |
| Mon | 13 | CLOSED |
| Tue | 14 | CLOSED |
| Wed | 15 | LUNCHEON CLUB |
| Thur | 16 | Joe Kay |
| Sun | 19 | AGM |
| Mon | 20 | Kards & Games Klub |
| Tue | 21 | CLOSED |
| Wed | 22 | Jack Davidoff |
| Thur | 23 | Ann Kenton-Barker |
| Sun | 26 | CLOSED |
| Mon | 27 | Kards & Games Klub |
| Tue | 28 | CLOSED |
| Wed | 29 | Michael Heaton & Lyn Radnedge |
| Thur | 30 | Lynda Styan |

'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

Editorials and articles published, and opinions expressed, in *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Golden Wedding

Congratulations to the Treitels of Dunstan Road from their children and grandchildren.

Deaths

Brainin. Norbert, born in Vienna, died in London 10 April 2005 aged 82. Deeply mourned by his wife Katinka, daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren, brother, sister and family, as well as by countless friends and admirers. A great and internationally loved musician.

Dux-Herman. Inge, caring wife of the late Gangolf Herman and Henry Dux, who passed away peacefully in Toronto, Canada on 5 April. She will be sadly missed by her son, Dr Peter Dux, Linda, his wife, and her beloved grandchildren Bradley and Mandy in Arizona, as well as by her additional family Kitty and Hans Schafer and Sue Mark, Steven and Debra Walsh in Toronto.

Smith. Elsbeth, born in Berlin 12.2.01, died London 25.3.05 aged 104.

Classified

Typist required for occasional work: audio-dictation and touch-typing, German and English. Please telephone 020 7435 0231

AJR DAY OUT

Join us for a trip to Westcliff & Southend Day Centre

Wednesday 27 July 2005

Coach leaving Cleve Road at 10.00 am

£18 per person to include transport lunch, tea and entertainment

Please contact Carol Rossen 020 8385 3085 or Joan Altman 020 8385 3072

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DIARY DATE - AJR TEA

Sunday 18 September 2005 at 3.00 pm

at the Hilton Hotel, Watford, Herts

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(Journey Round the Earth in 80 Minutes)

Waltzes, foxtrots and tangos from the

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Performed by

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Further information and ticket application forms
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Wiener Library Third Generation Project

Project Co-ordinator sought to develop a
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skills and the ability to work both
supervised and independently.

For a detailed job description see our
website on www.wienerlibrary.co.uk.
Please send a covering letter and up-to-
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Interviews on 16 June 2005 at the Wiener
Library. Please write to Katherine Klinger
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Obituaries

Norbert Brainin

Whimsical leader of the Amadeus Quartet



Norbert Brainin, an internationally loved musician

My dearly loved cousin Norbert Brainin has died aged 82. Many obituaries have been published about him: I can only offer affectionate snapshots.

I remember being taken to the Austrian Centre, when Norbert played sonatas. After deafening applause from the refugee audience, the evenings were rounded off with coffee, slices of cake, and much telling of jokes, one of my cousin's other talents.

One morning Norbert was taken away as an enemy alien. Internment proved a blessing, as it was there that he met two of the members of the future Amadeus Quartet - affectionately known in their youth as the Wolf Gang, an allusion to their predilection for pretty girls.

He was almost endearingly absent-minded. Once, sitting in the cinema, he became aware of the violin case at his feet, remembering just in time that he had an

engagement at the Wigmore Hall.

Norbert's lack of guile occasionally landed him in difficulties; indeed, it caused his first application for British naturalisation to be turned down, despite its having been sponsored by Lord Harewood.

Our family grew accustomed to the boy we had always called Bertschi being known by others as Norbert, and we too called him that. But to us he would always be the Bertschi who was an essential part of our family and of whom we had been so very proud.

Mary Brainin-Huttrer

Peter Masters

Commando, author, art director, designer

Peter Masters has died at the age of 83. He told the story of his early life in *Striking Back: A Jewish Commando's War Against the Nazis*. He was born in Vienna as Peter Arany, his childhood ending with the Anschluss. In August 1938 most of the family escaped to England.

In June 1940 he was interned on the Isle of Man. Subsequently he enlisted in the British army and, after serving in the Pioneer Corps, volunteered for an elite Commando troop comprising immigrants from countries overrun by Nazi forces. All spoke fluent German and most were Jewish. On D-Day his unit was part of the first wave attacking the Normandy coast. Carrying a folding bicycle on his back, he was the second soldier to jump off his boat and wade ashore.

After the war, Peter Masters received a bachelor's degree in art and design from London's Central School of Art and Design. He was among the first British students to win a Fulbright Scholarship, studying at the Parsons School of Design in New York and at Yale University.

Moving to Washington in 1949, he

became art director of a TV company and designed sets for *Face the Nation* and *The Jimmy Dean Show*. In the early 1960s he set up a TV sets graphic design business, contributing *inter alia* to the *Profiles of Poverty* exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Later he designed logos for US government programmes. He was president of the Washington Art Directors Club and was active in promoting community integration.

Retiring in 1984, Peter Masters spent the next 15 years writing his book about his childhood and war years.

Eric Mark

Wendi Wilson

Of a sweet and gentle disposition, she found her vocation in the AJR's Social Work team

All at AJR keenly feel the loss of Wendi Wilson, who has died after a long illness at the age of 57. A member of the Social Work team, Wendi had worked for the AJR since 1984. She began work in the Membership Department, moved to the Editorial Department but soon joined the Social Work team, where she felt she had found her true vocation. She quickly became a valued member of the team.

Wendi helped hundreds of members during her years at the AJR. She worked quietly and efficiently. Her sweet and gentle disposition and caring manner led her to form strong and warm relationships with many of the members whom she assisted.

Wendi, who was born in London, took great pleasure in her home and garden and possessed an innate artistic talent. She is survived by two children, Briony and Rupert. She was much loved by a wide circle of friends as well as by her family and colleagues and will be sorely missed.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Slave labour heir payments

The first tranche of compensation payments to heirs of former slave and forced labourers were made at the end of May by the Claims Conference on behalf of the German Foundation: Remembrance, Responsibility and Future.

Whereas each living former labourer received €7,500, eligible heirs will be entitled to around €6,500 (approximately £4,000).

Please note that it is no longer possible to apply to the German Foundation for slave or

forced labour compensation and eligible heirs had to have registered their claims by the end of last year. A second and larger tranche of payments will be made later this month.

Shoah damage valued

In an unprecedented report published earlier this year, the Israeli government estimates the material damage caused to the Jewish people during the Holocaust at between \$230 and \$320 billion (approximately £170 billion).

The report estimates the value of plundered Jewish property at \$125 billion (in today's money) and calculates the loss of income at between \$104 and \$155 billion. The unpaid wages of forced labourers are reckoned to be between \$11

and \$52 billion.

Although the report does not include reparations for the suffering of survivors, or for the murder of 6 million Jews, it is argued that no more than 20 per cent of the looted Jewish assets - both private and communal - were restored to their owners after the Holocaust.

Further help

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

(Cont. from page 11) family and became a friend of Marcus Sieff, Israel's son. He subsequently married Jane, the daughter of Israel Sieff's younger brother Edward, and joined the 'clan'. 'I never saw myself as a part of the British publishing establishment', he says. 'Some regarded me as an outsider. My own preoccupations were a restless searching for authors, books and wider contacts.'

After the establishment of the State of Israel the influential Flora Solomon recommended to Weizmann and Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett that George be considered as a possible aide. And so, with his publishing partner's generous agreement for leave of absence, in December 1949 he began a year as *chef de cabinet*, heading the President's office, entrusted with liaising between the President and the government, writing speeches and briefing Weizmann on Israel's foreign relations. Following the partition of Palestine in November 1947 George led the worldwide 'Operation Jerusalem' campaign, which helped secure Jerusalem for Israeli hegemony.

Back in London, he devoted himself to the development of Weidenfeld & Nicolson and in the 1960s-70s their list reflected his effort to convey the reality of the democratised Federal Republic of Germany and to reflect Germany's increasing importance to Israel. Richard Crossman asked George Weidenfeld to organise meetings for Harold Wilson with visitors from abroad after Wilson became prime minister in 1964, and invited him to head a committee encouraging Britain's entry into the EEC. Weidenfeld's involvement with the European information group led to his becoming part of Wilson's inner circle, 'entrusted with all manner of assignments particularly to do with Middle Eastern and Anglo-American relations'. He was granted a peerage in Wilson's retirement honours list (he had been knighted seven years earlier), attending the investiture in a morning coat made for him in

Jerusalem 20 years earlier!

Intent as ever on building bridges with former antagonists of the Jews, Lord Weidenfeld initiated a discussion group, supported by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, pursuing German-Jewish dialogue on which senior German government ministers have met, in their private capacities, with leading Jewish intellectuals. He also takes considerable pride in having initiated an Institute of European Studies, centred on Oxford University with Sir Claus Moser and Professor Peter Pulzer among those who joined him on its board. He first participated in seminars at the Pope's summer residence at Castel Gandolfo in 1989 - this and subsequent meetings may have helped to resolve the feud around the Carmelite Convent within Auschwitz - and in 1993 the Vatican entered into diplomatic relations with Israel, part of the thaw in relations between Christians and Jews.

Active Zionism has been central to his life and he sees himself communicating Israel's enormous achievements, as well as explaining its problems. He has published the memoirs of David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, Yigal Allon, Abba Eban, Moshe Dayan, Shimon Peres, Teddy Kollek, Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin. The election in 1965 of Teddy Kollek, a fellow Viennese and close friend, as mayor of Jerusalem, held great significance for George, especially when Kollek invited him to join his Jerusalem Foundation, whose scope widened after the reunification of the city in the wake of the Six-Day War.

'I regard the establishment of the Jewish State as one of the great miracles of the twentieth century', George Weidenfeld emphasises. A total of 1,200 days elapsed between the liberation of Auschwitz and the day on which Yigal Allon reached the Suez Canal in Israel's War of Independence: 'The passage from total humiliation and near-extinction to the triumphant re-assertion of strength and patriotism represents the vindication of a dream which I am proud to have witnessed.'

Newsround

German officer honoured by Yad Vashem

Major Karl Plagge has been posthumously honoured by Yad Vashem at a ceremony in Jerusalem. Major Plagge arranged to take 1,000 Jews from the Vilnius ghetto to the relative shelter of a nearby forced labour camp a week before the ghetto was destroyed in July 1943. Once in the camp, he did everything in his power to save lives.

Americans trail Europe in knowledge of Holocaust

Europeans know more about the Holocaust than Americans, according to a new study. Just 44 per cent of US respondents in an American Jewish Committee survey identified Auschwitz, Dachau and Treblinka as concentration or death camps. By contrast, 91 per cent of Swedish, 88 per cent of Austrian, 79 per cent of Polish, 78 per cent of French, 77 per cent of German and 53 per cent of British respondents labelled the camps correctly.

'Graves of honour' for Austrian Jews

Prominent Austrian Jews buried in Vienna's Central Cemetery are to be granted 'graves of honour' following a review of the criteria on which the honour was decided under the Nazi regime. According to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the review calls for the graves of 37 Jewish figures, including the author Arthur Schnitzler and the composer Gustav Pick, to be given the designation.

Self-portrait banned by Nazis sold at Sotheby's

A painting smuggled into Germany by Rudolf Freiherr von Simolin, an art collector, has been sold at Sotheby's for almost £9 million. 'Self-Portrait with Crystal Ball' was painted by Max Beckmann months before he fled from Germany after the Nazis condemned his work as 'degenerate'. The painting hung in Mr von Simolin's home in Berlin and was passed down to his descendants after his death.

Neo-Nazi leader jailed over Munich bomb plot

One of the most dangerous neo-Nazi leaders in Germany has been jailed for seven years. Martin Wiese, 29, was found guilty of leading Kameradschaft Süd, a focal point for neo-Nazi activity in Bavaria. Wiese was the ringleader of a plan to bomb a ceremony in Munich at which the foundation stone of a Jewish cultural centre was laid in 2003.