

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

1 April 1933: the first action against the Jews

On 1 April 1933, the newly installed Nazi regime, barely two months old, launched a one-day boycott of Jewish businesses and professions. The boycott was the first state-sponsored measure against the Jews, the first step on the long and dreadful road that led to the Nuremberg Laws, the Crystal Night pogrom, and eventually the 'Final Solution'. It initiated the process of official, state-inspired discrimination against the Jews and their separation from society as an inferior group no longer protected by law from the depredations and cruelty of the Nazis. The boycott began what the historian Lucy Dawidowicz called 'the war against the Jews'. It should not be allowed to drift into obscurity.

Hitler entrusted the organisation of the boycott to a Central Committee for Defence against Jewish Atrocity and Boycott Propaganda (Zentralkomitee zur Abwehr der jüdischen Greuel- und Boykotthetze), headed by the notorious antisemite Julius Streicher. Particular targets of the boycott were department stores and other multiples, which were often Jewish-owned; the Nazis knew that attacks on these would be popular with their antisemitic following and with the many shopkeepers and small businessmen whose pervasive fear of chain stores and economic modernisation was easily turned against the often imaginary threat of Jewish competition. The inefficiency with which this committee approached the boycott, originally planned for three days, led Hitler to call it off after one day, and it failed to shatter German Jewry economically.

That was not what struck Jewish observers at the time. For the first time, Jews were at the mercy of Nazi thugs and SA hooligans, while the police stood by and watched. SA men marched through the streets of German cities daubing Jewish-owned businesses with the Star of David and crude anti-Jewish graffiti, while



Brownshirts swaggered and postured outside Jewish shops to intimidate the owners and deter customers. Groups of thugs invaded universities, courts and hospitals to evict the Jews they expected to find there. In Kiel a Jewish lawyer was killed.

Above all, Boycott Day was a psychological hammer blow to the German Jews, for it struck at the very core of their identity - by 1933 often more German than Jewish - and at their sense of security as German citizens. On its 25th anniversary, Robert Weltsch, who in 1933 had been the editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau* and in 1958 was a prominent member of the AJR, wrote in *AJR Information*:

In this earthquake the edifice of concepts cherished by the German Jews collapsed. The ground was dragged away from under their feet. Most of them could not understand what was happening. They had been *bona fide* Germans, certainly law-abiding, patriotic citizens; Germany was their nation and country, they were brought up in the German language and culture, they were grateful and loyal to the fatherland and had taken part in fighting its battles. They did not know anything else, as far as political loyalty was concerned. Now suddenly they were confronted with a hostile world which taught them that they were Jews. Being a Jew had not had much meaning to them until that day. Now it was the only refuge that was left to them.

Far worse things were to befall the Jews in the subsequent 12 years. But the boycott marked a critical turning point at which Jews were marked out for special discriminatory treatment. The AJR, greatly to its credit, recognised that, and its journal regularly published articles on the five- and ten-year anniversaries for, to quote Weltsch again, 'it was April 1st' which for the first time aroused that mixture of indignation, surprise, terror and despair, which made the Jews understand that an epoch of their history had come to an end'. Though the German Jews had not suffered losses in the Holocaust on the scale of Polish or Hungarian Jewry, the refugees from Germany were concerned to stress that German Jewry had endured Nazi rule for the full 12 years of the Third Reich; they were also painfully aware that their own homeland had given birth to Nazism and had rejected them as outcasts.

But they also took pride in German Jewry's reaction to the indignities inflicted on it. The Jews of Germany drew together in a new spirit of communal solidarity, showing great courage in the face of overwhelming adversity. On 4 April 1933, Robert Weltsch published a celebrated article in the *Jüdische Rundschau* entitled 'Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck!', in which he urged his readers to wear the Yellow Star as a badge of pride that demonstrated their moral superiority to the mean-spirited barbarity of the Nazis; he could not know at that date that the Yellow Star would later be used to label those to be deported to their death. Twenty years later, at a meeting organised by the AJR at Woburn House, Rabbi Leo Baeck, who had survived Theresienstadt, was able to contrast the steadfastness of the Jews with the moral cowardice displayed by German society on that 'Tag der großen Feigheit', where justice itself fell victim to a boycott.

Anthony Grenville

The biter bitten

Anthony Grenville

Few readers of this journal will be able to resist a feeling of satisfaction at the jail sentence meted out by an Austrian court to the odious David Irving. Since his first book, *The Destruction of Dresden* (1963), which began his life's work of relativising and minimising Nazi crimes, he has written a series of books profoundly offensive to Jews on account of his attempts to whitewash Hitler and to airbrush the Holocaust out of history, most obviously in *Hitler's War* (1977).

Irving's jibes at Jewish sensitivities - comparing the Holocaust to the legend of the Turin shroud or saying that more people died in Senator Teddy Kennedy's car at Chappaquiddick (the 1969 accident in which Mary Jo Kopechne lost her life) than at Auschwitz - echo like primitive snarls of hatred that can only arouse revulsion. His subsequent recantations of his denials of the Holocaust carry no conviction whatsoever, as they were all too obviously made to save his skin: at his trial in Vienna he claimed that 'new' evidence had led him to revise his opinion since 1989, when he made the remarks for which he was being prosecuted. But surely all the evidence for the historical fact of the Holocaust was abundantly well known long before 1989 - at least to anyone prepared to look at the Nazi era with a half-open mind.

Irving claimed to reporters outside the court that he was not an expert on the Holocaust and that his speciality was only Hitler and 'the big Nazis'. But this flimsily implausible defence is plainly just another version of Holocaust denial: if Hitler and the Nazi leaders were not responsible for the Holocaust, then the murder of six million Jews becomes a kind of accident of war, an unplanned action by subordinate officers taken without the due approval and prior instructions of the German authorities and state at the highest level. It is, of course, pure rubbish.

Many will feel that sentencing Irving to three years in jail was excessive, indeed that invoking criminal sanctions against a historian for voicing his opinions, even opinions as twisted and malicious as Irving's, is incompatible with the principle of free speech. This was the verdict of Professor Deborah Lipstadt, who had the courage to accuse Irving of Holocaust denial, thus provoking him to sue for libel, in the celebrated trial that he lost. That trial, six years ago, destroyed Irving's credibility as a historian in the court of free speech and free expression of opinion, the highest court available to scholars and writers. He was shown up for what he is: a pseudo-historian who uses the techniques of the historian's craft to distort the evidence and systematically misrepresent historical events for his own ideological purposes. The jail sentence now passed on him is therefore arguably redundant.

For the demolition of Irving's credibility we have to thank not only Professor Lipstadt (who chose not to give evidence at the trial), but also Professor Richard Evans of Cambridge University, who acted as expert witness for Lipstadt and her publishers, Penguin. His masterly exposition of the ways in which Irving sought to manipulate and twist evidence from historical documents for ideological ends showed the difference between a first-class historian and an ... Irving. It was a mark of Irving's poor judgment that he should ever have contemplated taking on Professor Evans, a scholar whose abilities so obviously outclassed his own. Now that we no longer need to focus on Irving, I look forward to rereading Evans's history of the Hamburg cholera epidemic of 1892, *Death in Hamburg*, and enjoying the experience of an outstanding historian at work.

Happy Birthday!



AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman is celebrating his 60th birthday this month in the tenth year of his chairmanship. Andrew was born on 21 April 1946 - the same birthday as Her Majesty the Queen. Both of his parents were refugees: his mother, Gerda, came from Berlin, his father, Eric, from Düsseldorf. Andrew studied Law at St John's College, Oxford, and was made a partner in a law firm at the age of 27. In 1973 he married Susie and they have two children, Oliver, born 1976, and Nicole, born 1979. Andrew succeeded Max Kochmann as Chairman of the AJR in 1996.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES

TUESDAY 27 JUNE 2006

11.30 AM

at the

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Agenda

Annual Report 2005
Hon. Treasurer's Report
Discussion
Election of Committee of
Management*

*No person other than a committee member retiring by rotation shall be elected or re-elected a committee member at any general meeting unless:-

- (a) he or she is recommended by the Committee of Management, or
- (b) not less than twenty one clear days before the date appointed for the meeting, notice executed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting has been given to the Association of the intention to propose that person for election or re-election together with notice executed by that person of his or her willingness to be elected or re-elected.

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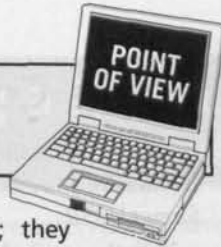
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Antisemites and anti-Zionists



Antisemitism is a word that should be used sparingly. It is tempting to say 'Everyone in the world hates us', but most of the world's 6,000 million inhabitants have not heard of, or are indifferent to, us. On the other hand, to claim negligible antisemitic activity in the UK, as does Tony Lerman, the director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, shows only that he has not been in a university environment recently and has not seen the recent Populus survey or noticed the Anglican Church's antics.

We should beware of accusing organisations of being antisemitic unless hostility to Jews is stated as one of their aims. The BBC cannot be accused of antisemitism or even anti-Zionism. It has 25,000 employees who scarcely share any views at all. Some of them, perhaps in positions to influence news broadcasts, may be biased against Jews or Israel, but in that case one should attack the individuals concerned, about whom something might possibly be done.

Jews have been hated for a variety of reasons. The Romans were angry that the Jews would not install their gods in the Holy of Holies. Jews have been accused of killing Jesus, of being racially inferior, of being capitalists or Bolsheviks or, most recently, racists and oppressors of the Palestinian Arabs. The current mantra is 'We are not antisemites, we are anti-Zionists.' How far is such a distinction valid? We have no way of knowing the contents of people's minds; hence we need clear definitions. In a joint letter to *The Times*, Archbishop Rowan Williams, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor and the Chief Rabbi wrote: 'Criticism of government policy in Israel, as elsewhere, is a legitimate part of democratic debate. However, such criticism should never be inspired by antisemitic attitudes, extend to a denial of Israel's right to exist, or serve as justification for attacks against Jewish people around the world.' That's good enough for me.

I suggest that antisemitic critics of Israel advocate the policies (e.g. boycott and divestment) that are designed not to help the Palestinians but to harm the Jews. At the extreme, one has the overt antisemites, who quote *The Protocols of*

the Elders of Zion; they believe the Jews are in league with the Freemasons to dominate the world and use gentile blood at the *seder*. This approach can be dressed up: when Clare Short says that American support for Israel is the biggest single factor in global violence, she is unknowingly echoing the *Protocols*. When the authors of the Anglican Peace and Justice Network accuse Israel of 'polluting the waterways', this is merely an update of the medieval accusation that Jews were poisoning the wells. These accusations are instant indicators of antisemitism. More ambivalent are the anti-Zionists who attack Israel by proposing policies that would lead to its destruction, such as the right of return of the descendants of all refugees.

Non-antisemitic critics of Israel would associate themselves with Israeli organisations that oppose the government, such as B'Tselem or Meretz. They would send humanitarian aid to the West Bank or Gaza. They would criticise the halachically indefensible chopping down of olive trees by extremist settlers. They would applaud the opportunities offered by Israeli universities to Arab students and the appointment of Majid al-Haj as dean of research at Haifa University. They would demand to know why Israeli politicians never say a kind word about Israeli Arabs, who have remained remarkably loyal during the *intifada* (and if they haven't, it is even more important to reassure them of their place in Israeli society).

A guide to whether critics are genuinely anti-Zionist rather than antisemitic is the specificity of their attacks. If people mention Iran or Burma or the Darfur massacres or Angola or Algeria or China or Ruanda or Zimbabwe, then one might claim that their charges against Israel are misguided (but not in all cases - Israel isn't perfect either). It would be foolish to describe Robert Fisk - who apparently hates everybody! - as antisemitic. It is the pretence that all the world's problems stem from Israel that betrays antisemites, and this, together with antisemitic language, forms a diagnostic test for the disease.

Bryan Reuben

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The Jewish Refugees Committee - end of an era

The Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC) - founded by Otto Schiff in 1933 as part of the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief (CBF) - has closed down.

In the 1930s some 75,000 refugees came to this country. The government allowed almost 10,000 'Kinder' to immigrate to Britain.

After the war it was possible to bring to Britain children who had survived the concentration camps. They became known as 'The Boys' (although there were some girls too). For these youngsters accommodation had to be found and English lessons arranged.

Following the birth of the state of Israel, the JRC dealt with refugees from Arab lands.

Next came the Russians. The JRC sent parcels of Western products to the 'refusenik' community. The goods were sold so that Jews dismissed from their jobs when applying to

emigrate had some means of survival. Eventually, Jews began arriving from the former USSR.

With the onset of war in Bosnia, the JRC arranged coaches to help people to leave. Arrangements had to be made for accommodation, documentation, pocket money and English lessons.

Then came the first Iraq war. I personally was involved with HIAS, arranging a plane to rescue elderly Iraqi Jews who mostly had family in the UK.

We all hope there will be no more refugees but World Jewish Relief (WJR) will be there should the need arise. Through the Umbrella Group of Charities, all Holocaust charities work closely together.

The JRC's archive, owned by WJR, is now

housed at the AJR's offices in Stanmore, though WJR still has an extensive photographic archive. Today it is managed by Lieselotte Montague and Lilian Levy. Through their work, paintings and property have been returned to rightful heirs. The archive, an important part of Jewish history, is made up of files from which it is possible to trace the areas from which Jewish refugees came. The files cannot be opened to the general public as the details are still subject to data protection laws.

The AJR also cares for many of these former refugees and the original clients of CBF/JRC now have the benefit of AJR's social workers.

Janet Cohen
Former Chair, Jewish Refugees
Committee

Jewish refugees in Shanghai: an international seminar

This event, which took place at the end of last year, was sponsored by a number of Chinese organisations, including the Centre of Jewish Studies of Shanghai (CJSS).

Shanghai was a refuge of last resort for European Jews during the Second World War. Dr Ho Feng Shan, the Consul General of China, who served in Vienna in 1938-39, issued thousands of visas to Jews to enable them to flee Austria for Shanghai. The number of Jewish refugees who found sanctuary in Shanghai is estimated at 20,000-30,000.

Keynote speaker W. Michael Blumenthal, a former Shanghai refugee who became President Carter's Treasury Secretary, contrasted the present-day city with the situation in 1939, when lawlessness

predominated. Most refugees survived only with the help of Shanghai's established Jewish community and Jewish organisations overseas.

Rene Willdorff, Chairman of the Rickshaw Reunion of former Shanghai Jews, remembered buying hot water from a kettle at the end of the street for 10 cents.

According to Hu Dexuan, many Chinese remembered their former Jewish neighbours as 'honest, hardworking and smart with a keen business talent'.

Geng Kekui, author of a play on the interaction of Jews and Chinese which is now a series on Chinese television, said the refugees' indomitable spirit had built 'Little Vienna', a prosperous community

in Hongkou, the area in which most Jews had settled.

Professor Bernard Wasserstein, University of Chicago, discussed the roles of both Chinese and Japanese governments, pressures from the German authorities, and the role of the antisemitic White Russians, who were strongly represented in the Shanghai police force.

I ended my presentation on 'The Influence of Chinese Culture on My Life' by toasting the people of Shanghai for the sanctuary they had provided us in the words of the great Chinese poet Li-Tai-Po:

Now take the wine./ Now it is time,
companions.

Drain your golden goblets to the dregs./
Dark is Life, Dark is Death.

Karl A. Bettelheim

Pinner Synagogue 17th Yom Hashoah evening

This year's theme is: How can each of us make a difference? Our keynote speakers are Mirjam Finkelstein and Daniel Finkelstein OBE, her son. We invited them to show how each of the three generations of the Wiener/Finkelstein family made, and makes, a real difference.

Alfred Wiener devoted himself to documenting the dangers of Nazism. Having fled from Berlin to Amsterdam in 1933, he and Professor David Cohen set up the Jewish Central Information Office. In 1939 Dr Wiener and the collection transferred to London, where he made what was to become the Wiener Library available to British government intelligence departments.

In 1943 Mirjam Finkelstein, her mother and two sisters were deported to Bergen-Belsen. In January 1945 they were transported to neutral Switzerland. Mrs Wiener died on the day of her liberation. The three sisters eventually arrived in New York. Last year Mirjam Finkelstein returned to Berlin to meet the daughter of Albert Speer who had stayed with the same family in New York as the sisters had. This encounter was broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

Daniel took a degree in economics at the LSE, followed by a master's degree in business studies and computing at City University. He worked in the Conservative Central Office, becoming known as John

Major's speech writer. Currently, he is an Associate Editor of *The Times* and he writes for the *Jewish Chronicle*. Both Daniel and his brother Anthony are members of the Executive Board of the Wiener Library.

This year's event will take place on **Monday 24 April from 8.00 to 10.00 pm**. A candle-lighting ceremony will be followed by a memorial service, readings of poems by the Pinner Synagogue youth, Kaddish, the recitation of psalms, formal addresses, and a panel discussion. All are welcome.

Gaby Glassman
Chair, Yom Hashoah Committee
Pinner Synagogue

Berlin Jewish Museum: appeal for information

The Jewish Museum of Berlin, in co-operation with the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn, is currently preparing an exhibition entitled *Home and Exile: Jewish Emigration from Germany since 1933*. The exhibition will open at the end of September 2006 at the Museum and will subsequently move to Bonn and Leipzig.

In October 2004, the Museum published an appeal in the *AJR Journal* and received many responses, for which we are very grateful. As preparations for the exhibition are now nearing completion, we ask readers once again for information and assistance in locating individual items.

Who, for example, can give us information about the Hampstead Garden Care Committee for Refugee Children? The Committee helped children to leave Nazi Germany and come to Britain in 1938-39. Who came to England with the assistance of this Committee? Any documentation - original or copied - and any information provided will ultimately be deposited with the Wiener Library in London, our partner in this project, for permanent preservation.

Many refugees came to Britain and worked as domestics for some time after their arrival. We would like to address this matter in the exhibition and are very eager to exhibit an original uniform, apron, head covering or similar piece of clothing worn by an emigrant in this capacity. We are also looking for copies of the refugee domestic circular *Our Paper* and of the leaflet *Mistress and Maid*, which was produced by Bloomsbury House.

Any assistance would be most gratefully appreciated. Please contact Leonore Maier, Jewish Museum of Berlin, Lindenstr. 9-14, D-10969 Berlin, tel 0049 30 25993 455, fax 2 5 9 9 3 - 4 0 9 , e m a i l l.maier@jmberlin.de.

Leonore Maier
Curator, Social and Family History
Jewish Museum of Berlin

Making a New Life: Women's work Amanda Bergen

The women we have interviewed have expressed a wide variety of attitudes towards work: some viewed it as merely a stopgap prior to marriage and children; others were more ambitious, claiming vocations held from an early date. However, many of the factors which played an important role in determining their careers, both in Continental Europe and in the UK, were shaped or influenced by their gender.

Some of our older female interviewees entered the UK under the terms of a domestic visa. The situation of these women was often unenviable, although some were fortunate enough to be treated as family members rather than as a source of cheap labour. Generally women were eager to leave this form of employment as soon as they were able to do so. The Yorkshire textile trade offered many employment opportunities, as did the retail sector, and the range of options available increased as male workers entered the armed forces.

Some of our interviewees had commenced or completed their training in nursing or teaching while still living in Continental Europe. While some women were able to resume their work in these fields, others found it necessary to adapt their skills: one lady with some nursing training first became a warden at a boarding school and then a social worker. Other skills, such as needlework or cookery, became a vital means of earning a living, or of contributing to the upkeep of a family. Helena Kennedy, a high-class dress-maker in her native Hungary, was able to re-establish a successful business in Leeds.

In some professions it was not considered appropriate for women to retain their posts following marriage. While many restrictions on female employment were swept away during the war, women again found they were at a disadvantage following the return of males to civilian life. Many women spent years in the home bringing up children and this inevitably had an impact on the careers they were able to follow. Once their children were grown, some of our interviewees were able to engage in part time employment and a number expressed their delight in the self-esteem and independence their jobs had given them.



Elisabeth Bernheim, originally from Riedlingen, Bavaria, began her nursing training at St James's Hospital in Leeds and qualified as a midwife. She helped to deliver over 1,000 babies during her career. She is pictured here in her Leeds garden in 1972.

The development of occupations such as market research and of franchise or agency work provided many attractive employment opportunities for women. Access to a motor car, with the freedom which that conferred, was a particular boon. Other women found that charitable or voluntary work provided them with an outlet for their talents while at the same time enabling them to make a contribution to their communities. A number of women learned Braille and helped to transcribe texts. In Leeds the successful Edith Eder WIZO group was founded and run by Continental ladies.

Work also provided women with company, in some cases helping to forge lifelong friendships. Many women either learned or improved their English through conversing with workmates. Others were able to build up the experience necessary to enable them to establish their own businesses. The project team would particularly like to hear from women who set up their own businesses or were engaged in unusual occupations.

This is the fifth article in the series (see AJR Journal, January 2006). The author can be contacted at Making a New Life Project, AHRC Centre CATH, Old Mining Building 2.08, University of Leeds LS2 9JT, email: b.l.harrison@leeds.ac.uk.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

POLES, JEWS AND MIRACLES

Sir - Mr Landau (February) accuses me of naivety. Does that perhaps suggest that he is not entirely convinced by the validity of his views? He seems to be determined to live in the past and to close his eyes to what is happening *now*. To dismiss the events in Koszalin described in my article as hypocrisy or window-dressing (my words) seems quite unreasonable to me.

Of course the Poles have a history of rampant antisemitism. Yet, historically, it is also true that they have lived cheek by jowl with Jews for centuries, often very harmoniously. (See, for example, the historical introduction to Eva Hoffman's excellent book *Shtetl*. It is also a fact that, in the past, Jews moved from Russia to Poland because they felt more secure there!)

But the point of my article was that there are Poles in the new Poland who are going out of their way to redress past wrongs, and those in Koszalin are by no means the only ones: many other Jewish cemeteries have been rehabilitated and there are Jewish communities, freely practising their religion, in a good many towns, Gdansk for example. One should encourage rather than belittle these efforts to make up for a murky past. And I am happy to say that the chain of events that began with my visit to Koszalin in July is continuing - for example, a torchlight procession to commemorate Kristallnacht, and candles lit and prayers recited in the Jewish cemetery on Holocaust memorial day. An exhibition on the Kindertransports and the unveiling of a memorial to another Jewish cemetery, built over by the Technical University, are being planned for later this year.

While I am not in the least suggesting that antisemitism has been eradicated from Poland (which country is free of it?), things are moving in the right direction and those leading this uphill fight need our support and encouragement.

I gave my article the title 'How I came to believe in miracles' after careful thought. Does Mr Landau not think it astonishing

that Poles, who were not at all responsible for the fate of the Jews of Koszalin, should take it upon themselves to make some form of moral restitution and to reconnect with a past that was not their own? I do.

Professor Leslie Baruch Brent
London N19

Sir - Manfred Landau writes about the villainies of Polish antisemites. I am not disputing his facts but he is stereotyping an entire nation. We Jews, who have suffered from stereotyping for centuries, should know better.

My acquaintance with today's Poland is confined largely to the small town of Krotoszyn Wielkopolska (once Krotoschin, Provinz Posen). In 2002 the commune erected a plaque to commemorate the nineteenth-century printer/publisher of Jewish books of devotion B. L. Monasch (my great-great-grandfather). Subsequently the local historical society published his memoirs in a tri-lingual edition - his original German text, an existing English translation, and a new Polish translation by Dr Rafal Witkowski, the Vice-Principal of the Institute of History of Poznan University. The mayor of Krotoszyn had copies of the book distributed to every school in the area.

The ancient Jewish cemetery was destroyed during the Nazi occupation. Gravestones were smashed and built into a wall surrounding a historic wooden church. These stones have now been raised and it is planned to build a memorial wall on the site of the cemetery incorporating fragments of these gravestones.

The Krotoszyn municipality has agreed to pay half the costs and descendants of the Jewish community are contributing towards the rest.

Now Dr Witkowski informs me that the historical journal *Kronika Miasta Poznan* has decided to publish an entire issue about the Jews of Poznan/Posen. They are appealing for, *inter alia*, family memoirs of historical interest.

It would, of course, be an error to generalise from this about the attitude of an entire nation. That would be falling into an error resembling Mr Landau's. But there are certainly Poles overcoming the past.

Peter Fraenkel
London EC2

'LACK OF FEELING'

Sir - As a regular reader of the *Journal*, I was horrified to see the front-page photo of your March edition. Do we former refugees who have lost our parents and many relatives in the Holocaust have to suffer the shock of Nazi photos in our paper? What on earth causes intelligent writers like Mr Grenville to exhibit such lack of feeling?

Leo Eisenfeld
London NW3

GEORGE WHO?

Sir - Thank you for Anthony Grenville's excellent article 'George Who?'. Having lived and studied in Manchester from 1948 to the mid-60s, and as a Manchester United fan, I can assure you that George Best was *not* venerated as a superstar during that period. In fact, the superstar by a long way was Bobby Charlton, who was an excellent role model for the younger generation. Best did not feature on the international stage, unlike Charlton, who scored a record 49 goals in 106 appearances for England. In fact, Best's 'Wonder Goals' were scored against second-rate opposition - except perhaps against Benfica in the European Cup Final.

Please let us have more light-hearted articles in your excellent *AJR Journal* - you do not have to concentrate exclusively on Hitler and Germany/Austria circa the 1930s - that can become depressing.

M. Ladenheim
Surbiton, Surrey

AS GEMÜTLICH AS GERMANY

Sir - In your March issue, Robert Miller exhorts those who miss the ambience to be found in Germany to contemplate returning there. I can think of plenty of worse things than that. However, there is no need to do so, for we now have two German supermarket chains in this country where you can buy Stollen at Christmas and Osterhasen this time of year - as well as Glühwein, SandKuchen and Brathering - to mention but a few of the products available here.

Take all this home with you and, with some German beer and a good Schnapps to hand, spread some German smoked cheese on black Vollkornbrot, put your feet up, and light a Sumatra cigar (oh dear!). I guarantee you will be as *gemütlich* as if you were in Germany.

Ernest G. Kolman
Greenford, Middx

THE MOST EXCELLENT ACCENT

Sir - In response to Dorothy Graff's appeal for readers to submit stories of refugee experiences, humour and everyday life (February), telling jokes played an important part in the life of the refugees. Almost required reading among our Continental friends at the time was George Mikes's book *How To Be An Alien*. This contained tongue-in-cheek advice as well as tales of foreign Jews striving to be as Jewish as possible - and often failing miserably. Mikes himself, after eight years in this country, was asked by a kind English lady: 'But why do you complain? You speak the most excellent accent without the slightest English!'

Mary Brainin-Huttrer
London N2

LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH VIENNA

Sir - Like Peter Phillips (March), I left Vienna as a small child with my parents. Obviously I don't have many bad memories, except one of Kristallnacht. My parents remembered the cafés, parks and happy Jewish life in Vienna 2. However, they would never have contemplated revisiting a city where my father had been beaten, my venerable grandfather made to scrub the streets, my aged aunt put to death, and from which they had been hounded almost penniless. *Why should they?*

Thea Valman
London NW11

TRAGIC DEATH

Sir - In his most interesting article in the February issue of the *AJR Journal*, Howard Spier tells the story of 3 Troop and their Commanding Officer Bryan Hilton-Jones.

In 1960 I was in the Export Department of ICI Fibres in Harrogate and was asked to take up a secondment to ICI Switzerland in Zürich. The General Manager of ICI Switzerland at that time was Bryan Hilton-Jones. He was married with four children, a keen mountaineer and skier, and a very good manager. He died in very tragic circumstances in the mid-1960s. He and his family were either driving to or coming from a holiday in Spain (I don't remember

the exact details), he was in one car with two children and his wife in another with the other two, when his car collided with another vehicle. He and his two children were killed.

Some of your readers may well have been members of 3 Troop and unaware of their former CO's tragic death.

Ernest Simon
Pinner, Middx

'OTHER SIDE' OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Sir - Raph Freeman, writing from Jerusalem (March), refers to my 'vitriolic ... letters on the Israeli-Palestinian Arab Islamic conflict'. If he can find any vitriol in any of my letters or my November article, I challenge him to prove it. I would also like to suggest to him to see things from the Palestinians' point of view: what it must feel like to live under occupation for nearly half-a-century, to have your home bulldozed, and to suffer countless human rights abuses - not to mention the 'security fence'. With greater understanding of the 'other side', peace may have a chance.

Inge Trott
Cheam, Surrey

IRVING ET AL

Sir - David Irving misused his position as a published, supposed historian to spread pseudo-historical poison in contradiction to established facts. His Austrian prison sentence is highly satisfactory - only a rabid antisemite could regard it as 'martyrdom'.

The Danish cartoons, to judge from reports, were crude and repellent, designed to insult and humiliate *all* Muslims, not just extremists. Those Danes - and others - who defended them are not 'fearless for the truth', but stupid and shallow.

The move to suspend Ken Livingstone (however it will end) was completely unjustified. The context of his outburst against the reporter is clear: after the 'concentration-camp guard' remark, he referred to the *Standard/Mail* bosses as 'a load of scumbags and reactionary bigots'. (The *Mail* group had been persistently hounding him - and had, of course, supported Hitler in the 30s.) I am not aware that discourtesy to *Mail* group reporters is a crime against humanity.

George Schlesinger
Durham

PS I've just looked at your March issue. Wow! What other periodical has this range of interesting ideas, information, experience and views concentrated into 16 pages?

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Mary Stevenson Cassatt (1844-1926) *Mother and Child*, about 1889 Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, Kansas The Roland P. Murdock Collection. © Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, Kansas

'This is Paris. And I'm an American who lives here.' Thus Gene Kelly, as struggling artist Jerry Mulligan, opens the Gershwin musical *An American in Paris*. Though the 1950s film may have little to do with the Rothschild-sponsored National Gallery's new exhibition, *Americans in Paris 1860-1900*, it does evoke the passion and romance which Paris suggests to New World artists who had only a puritan, rural tradition derived from the Pilgrim Fathers.

So it is easy to see why leading American nineteenth-century artists like James McNeill Whistler and John Singer Sargent (who briefly flirted with the Pre-Raphaelites) flocked to the French capital. Paris attracted not only painters: Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein held court there too. For though Paris was a place of new ideas, it also had a formalism which resonated with the Americans, happy to exchange the forks and shovels of New Settler zeal for the upholstered indulgence of old European society.

Few artists, though, brought America

to France; the one exception is American Realist Winslow Homer's painting of the American Civil War, a subject of which he was the leading exponent. The subjects are very French: women at the salon, formal child poses in large drawing rooms, and luminous portraiture by Thomas Hovenden, Charles Pearce and Robert Vannah, whose penetrating study of John Severinus reflects French mannerism and the influence of Velasquez.

There are some intense mother-and-child paintings by Mary Cassatt, Mary Fairchild and Elizabeth Nourse. In Cecilia Beaux's *Les Derniers Jours d'Enfance*, a child is seated on her mother's lap and gazes out into the future while her mother, all in black, seems to mourn the past. Thomas Eakin's concentrated study of a cellist brings his Realism to the fore.

The tremulous beauty of Whistler's *White Lady* contrasts with the emphasis on male sartorial elegance favoured by several artists. Rejected by the Paris cognoscenti, it nonetheless became one of the most talked-about paintings in the salons of the day.

Crucifixion scenes became popular once more in the wake of the Franco-Prussian war, but again Eakin's highly realistic version was sniffily rejected by the Paris salons. Many Americans shared Eakin's reluctance to embrace Impressionism. The only American Impressionist was Mary Cassatt, to whose prints an entire room has been devoted. Influenced by Degas, Cassatt's prints equally betray a Japanese line.

But the star of the show is undoubtedly Singer Sargent's stunning full-length portrait of Mme X in a daring black dress. The porcelain effect of her white skin is achieved with lavender powder; with her insouciant profile she is the apogee of Paris society. Beside her, and looking the other way, is a portrait by the same artist of Mme Poitreau in white - the two rival *grandes dames* of their day. But what did the Americans take home from Paris? An appreciation of the sun-bathed New England landscape, whose lambent atmosphere in their later work far transcends the cold European light. The exhibition runs until 21 May before moving to Boston and New York.

REVIEWS

A fascinating story

JEWES IN NORTH DEVON DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by Helen P. Fry

Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2005, 183pp., £19.99

This volume shines a light on one corner of the story of the Jewish people in Britain during an especially critical period, that of the Second World War. It deals with the author's home territory, North Devon, which had the particularity of being the area where No. 3 Training Centre of the Alien Companies of the Pioneer Corps was situated from September 1940 to February 1942, and hence where several thousand Jewish refugees spent time during the war. In the area too were Bydown House and its offshoot, which were run under the auspices of Youth Aliyah, Hechalutz and Hachoharath Noar, to train some 90 young Jewish refugees for emigration to Palestine and this, like the Pioneer Corps, is covered in some detail. Evacuees - including some schools - and other local refugees as well as resident local Jews are also presented, though less fully.

Training Centre 3 in Ilfracombe comprised refugees fresh from post-Kristallnacht Germany and Austria and, later, men who had volunteered to join the Corps on their release from internment. The first category mostly knew little, if any, English, while the second was composed of men and boys who had lived in Britain for some time and were thus somewhat conversant with its culture and language. Those newly arrived from the Continent had first been brought to Kitchener Camp in Kent, financed and rebuilt by the Council for British Jewry, which was intended as a transit camp pending the refugees' onward emigration. Kitchener opened in January 1939. It was there that Training Centre 3 came into existence and where Alien Pioneer Company No.69, the first of five such companies

to be raised there, was trained in January 1940. The Centre was moved to the West Country that same summer when Kent was deemed too great a security risk.

The Pioneers were 'the Jack-of-all-Trades of the British Army' according to one testimony and, indeed, they performed a wide range of jobs from guarding aerodromes to clearing bomb damage and building coastal defences and roads, railways and water supplies. Some worked on the PLUTO project, originally built and tested across the Bristol Channel. Many recall this period with affection - some for the ready-made friends it provided for lonely exiles, others as a 'centre of Central European ferment', but others, such as Koestler, newly arrived from internment in France, strike a sourer note: 'It was a unit of the rather under-privileged in physique, or intellect. So we were freaks...!'

The men were a mix, in age, experience and social background. Some were notables, such as Coco the Clown (the Russian Nikolai Poliakov); some would become so (for instance Robert Maxwell, or Ken Adam, later a brilliant film set designer). *AJR Information's* co-founder, Herbert Freedon, was one of their number. They enjoyed a lively cultural life.

Everyone wore the British uniform and several, in their testimonies, underline the irony of this, which gave rise to some amusing situations. Attitudes of the local population are only occasionally mentioned: for example, when the uniforms were first worn, the Pioneers were 'confined to camp for 7 days to give the local people a chance to get used to the idea of foreigners with German accents running around in British uniform'. From 1942 onwards enemy aliens were permitted to enter fighting units and the testimonies give a good idea of the scope of their work. Many were engaged in intelligence work.

Spiritual matters were catered for by Jewish chaplains: Isaac Levy and Benjamin Wykansky are two mentioned by name. Ilfracombe had

no synagogue so services were held in hired rooms and halls. A telling occasion was a meeting for 'civilian and military Jews' in October 1941 addressed by Professor Norman Bentwich, at which those present undertook a 'declaration of faith ... in a British and allied victory and to further the interests of the Jewish National Fund'.

The author has researched this little-known period of North Devon history with diligence, as the copious footnotes and the bibliography demonstrate. She also includes useful appendices, especially the one based on the War Diaries of the Alien Companies. The contribution of the Pioneers and those at Bydown to the British war effort is underlined and given due recognition at several points, as is the support of the civilian population, both Jewish and gentile. This is a fascinating story which rightly brings to the fore the testimonies of so many of those who lived through it. Had it been possible to weave together the narrative and the testimonies instead of separating them, and include more analysis, it might have been even more powerful. The volume is richly illustrated with contemporary photographs and documents and is well produced. It is therefore a pity that a considerable number of misspellings and typographical errors have slipped in.

Marian Malet

Refugees in fiction

RANDOM DESTINATIONS: ESCAPING THE HOLOCAUST AND STARTING LIFE ANEW by Lilian R. Furst

*Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, 240 pp.,
£14.99*

This well-written and highly thought-provoking volume is a first for Holocaust studies - a book that examines the role of refugees in fiction. The author is a member of the AJR and a distinguished professor of comparative literature.

The introduction is a brief historical review of the mass exodus from

Germany and Austria as a result of Nazi persecution. For AJR readers this is familiar material, even if not in all its details, but for general readers it provides a useful background of the obstacles that many countries put in the way of the refugees.

In the 12 texts Professor Furst has picked out for detailed analysis of how these fictional refugees deal with the perceived problems of having survived the Holocaust, she studies the way various authors have approached the subject. The texts are set in many locations: various parts of the UK, USA and India. In publication the stories range from 1954 to 1998; the periods in which they are set vary from war-time to the 1980s. The characters show a great sense of loss in various ways, inability to communicate because they have not mastered the language (mostly English, but also Indian). For the grown-ups there is loss of belongings, status and the accustomed lifestyle; for the young - especially the 'Kinder' - separation from parents whose fate is unknown. As well as analysing the stories, the author carefully examines the techniques authors use to achieve effects, like describing a picture for what it contains and how the artist painted it.

The trouble with fiction is that, to be interesting, it has to be about people with problems - it is never about people who are successful, and rarely about people who are happy. A story also needs a proper ending, and a few of these displayed here are somewhat contrived. For me, the most successful story is one by Ruth Praver Jhabwala, herself a refugee, about a birthday tea party in Swiss Cottage - these are people I can recognise as my parents' generation, enjoying a party with Continental cakes and reminiscences. Yes, they have had problems but they are looking ahead. The story *The Emigrants* by W. G. Sebald is a curiosity, about a refugee German painter: one would not expect a young German born in 1944 - himself an expatriate by choice - to choose this topic (although he also does so elsewhere).

With many of the other books studied here I have a difficulty. The lifestyles and troubles are not those with which I am familiar. That may well be my fault (or good luck?) - perhaps I have led too sheltered a life.

It depends on age, on how and under what circumstances one came to this country. I know life was very difficult for people with established careers. Youngsters, in general, had an easier time; for them integration into a new life was much simpler. Those who came as schoolchildren are now older than most of the refugees who arrived in the 1930s. Adaptation to life here does not mean that the past is forgotten: membership of the AJR is proof of that.

The test of a book like this one is whether we are encouraged to follow up the lines of study put before us. To this extent, *Random Destinations* is highly successful. I am certainly aiming to read some of the books that have been studied. If my review encourages you to read this book, then I too have succeeded.

Paul Samet

FILM

Art and bad art

MUNICH

directed by Steven Spielberg
starring Eric Bana, Daniel Craig
and Geoffrey Rush
on general release

Munich has caused bitter controversy among Jews. Right-wing Zionists have called it anti-Israeli because it shows Palestinians as ordinary people with wives and children who pursue a course to liberate their homeland: they should, according to this view, be called murderers, without any human attributes. Right-wingers particularly resent the ending in which Avner, the Israeli leader of the avengers, emigrates to America because he cannot live in a country which appears to have abandoned

the Jewish ethical code.

Left-wing Israelis condemn the film for different reasons. Uri Avnery, the leader of Gush Shalom, has called the film 'disgusting': it contains, he says, gratuitous sex, unconnected with the rest of the film. He finds it is more like a bloodthirsty Hollywood western totally devoid of the truth.

The film omits to mention that it was not the Palestinians' intention to kill the Israelis but to take them to an Arab country so that they could be exchanged for political prisoners. Golda Meir refused this bargain, so the under-trained German police tried to free them in a shoot-out and it was they, not the Palestinians, who killed nine of the eleven athletes by mistake.

My own view of the film is different. It makes no claim for factual accuracy. A film is a work of art - even if bad art - and must be judged as such. Its accuracy is irrelevant. The film shows the devastating effect of revenge killings. In order to kill one Palestinian the avengers always kill many innocents. In one scene they blow up a hotel to kill just one Palestinian. The message of the film is that revenge is always wrong and it rejects the Hebrew bible's maxim of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Peter Prager

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Letter from Israel

In the good old days, there was a British consulate in Jerusalem. It was located in a quaint old building near the railway station, and going there to deal with passport renewals or other official business was generally a pleasant, even chummy, experience.

Times have changed, and now Israel's only British consulate is in Tel Aviv.

This means that anyone who is not a resident of the metropolis is obliged to make the trip to the coast. Tel Aviv is something of a *terra incognita* for provincials such as myself, who are reluctant to venture into the smog-filled, steamy, traffic-clogged den of iniquity which Tel Aviv represents.

So it was with some trepidation that I set out early one morning to face my destiny. The consulate's website kindly provides a map of its location, so that I was able to find my way there without undue difficulty (in itself no mean feat).

But I didn't have the requisite passport photograph with white background. The guard kindly directed me to the establishment across the road where I could have my photograph taken.

Stepping into the photographer's shop was like stepping into a time tunnel. The elderly lady who took my photo (assisted by a young Filipino woman) told me that she and her late husband had been in business for 66 years. Enlarged photographs of a young Yitzhak Rabin, a youthful Shimon Peres, a middle-aged Golda Meir and many other well-known faces adorned the walls.

The photographic equipment was antique and, while we waited for the photograph to be developed (no new-fangled computers here), the proprietress regaled me with the tale of how her husband was the only photographer permitted to attend the proclamation of the state in 1948. Their prize photo? The one he took on emerging from the ceremony, showing the hundreds of photographers waiting outside.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Martha Fleischer A woman for all seasons



Martha Fleischer generously volunteered to pick me up at Cheam station. This time I was taking no chances. My two previous sorties out of north-west London into the darkest recesses south of the river had been deeply depressing. On the first occasion, someone had inconsiderately backed into me as I waited at traffic lights; the second time, I lost patience with the interminable traffic - it would surely have been quicker to fly! Martha would be wearing an orange jacket; I would be in a light-coloured coat and carrying a black briefcase. Would I need to wear a carnation in my button hole, I wondered.

In the event, we were virtually the only ones at the station and would have been hard-pressed to miss each other. Martha drove me back to her bungalow in a quiet suburb. As her affectionate dog Gemma did what she could to grab my attention, I listened intently as Martha began to speak about her life. I marvelled at the striking figure this blonde 93-year-old lady made.

She was born Martha Löffler into a middle-class, non-observant Jewish family in Vienna. Her father was the representative of a Romanian petrol company. At the age of 13 she joined the famed Hakoah Jewish swimming team, gaining a place in their 4 x 100 metres relay team. But after a happy few years there was a traumatic parting of the ways. Martha isn't sure to this day what caused the split and is still upset about it. In the circumstances in which she was obliged to leave the team, she says, she almost converted to Catholicism. A recent Hakoah newsletter put out in Florida speculates that Martha was sadly neglected by the coaches as well as chroniclers of Hakoah because, in her naivety, she fell victim to intrigue between other team members and the coach.

Whatever the causes of the split, from then on, resisting her desire to convert to Christianity, Martha had 'a bloody great time', as she puts it. She threw herself into other Hakoah sports and bought a 250cc motorbike (her father

owned a Harley-Davidson - see below).

Having decided to study the piano, Martha enrolled at the Vienna Conservatoire, but her studies came to an abrupt end with the advent of Nazism. When I asked what standard she had reached, she said: 'Would you like to hear me play?' I nodded enthusiastically and Gemma and I trotted off into the adjoining piano room, where we sat ourselves down comfortably. I had the impression Gemma was a regular listener. Martha played the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. Her playing wasn't flawless, but it was at the very least a trillion light years ahead of mine. 'Beethoven talks to me!', Martha exclaimed, while Wagner - yes, Wagner, she repeated to my astonishment - 'takes me out of myself!'

Fleeing from Vienna in 1938, Martha and her sister Charlotte came over to the UK, where she soon found a position as a cook with a non-Jewish family. But at the outbreak of the war, both girls were put in Holloway prison for four months. Even now she can give no clear

reason why: she can only imagine they were seen as Austrian spies. On leaving prison, Martha took a job as a sewing machinist specialising in uniforms in London's West End, where she remained for the duration of the war. In 1942 she married Cyril Eldridge, an accountant. They rented an apartment in the salubrious area of Maida Vale in north-west London.

Martha and her sister now began a sewing business, working out of a room near Marble Arch. Soon they moved to Kilburn, specialising in car-seat covers. Having learned at evening classes how to make curtains, Martha set up a business in high-class curtain-making. The business became well known, eventually employing half-a-dozen people. She carried on working full-time up to just a few years ago. She showed me the splendid workshop in her garage where she works part-time as well as a catalogue of the curtains she used to make.

In 1966, following Cyril's death, Martha married Karl Fleischer. She moved to join him in Cheam, where he lived and where she has continued to live since he died.

Expressing little confidence in Jewish organisations, Martha is currently engaged in a letter-writing campaign to the Vienna authorities, determinedly seeking compensation for the Harley-Davidson motor cycle her father owned. They refuse to pay compensation on the basis that the bike wasn't part of the household. 'Can you see the Harley-Davidson on the third floor of our apartment block?', Martha asked me ironically.

Over the years Martha has revisited Vienna many times. She is planning her next visit this May. Of particular concern to her are the graves of her grandparents in that city, to which she is keen to add the names of her parents. As Martha drove me back to the station, I asked her if she felt at home in Cheam. 'No!', came her reply, almost before I'd asked my question. Where then did she feel at home? Equally without thinking, Martha replied: 'In Vienna.'

INSIDE the AJR

Edinburgh symphonietta

Meeting in the home of Irene and Phillip Mason, all Continental Friends waded in with vigour. Whatever the topic - Holocaust Memorial Day, German Hardship Grant, AJR trips - the 'anglicised' views reflected the flavour of original backgrounds, making for a symphonietta of good humour, common sense and Jewish wisdom.

Jonathan Kish

Next meeting: Wed 5 April. The Scotland and Newcastle Northern Groups get-together will be in Edinburgh on 14 June

Weald of Kent: history of the bagel

A well-attended meeting heard a talk on 'The Origins of the Bagel from Mecca to Vienna' by Frank Miller, one of our members. In fact, the bagel stems from the prize of solid-gold stirrups given to a Polish king for saving the Christians of Vienna from defeat by the Muslims in 1683 - nothing Jewish about it.

Inge Ball

Essex friends and family

We celebrated our fourth birthday with a lovely tea in our newly decorated synagogue hall. Having warmly welcomed a new member, we sang all the old wartime songs enthusiastically, if not always tunefully, to the accompaniment of a mandolin.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tues 4 April. Social get-together at home of Fay Sober

Wiener Library director in Cambridge

Ben Barkow, director of the Wiener Library, spoke about its past, present and future. We learned that the library is not a library in the traditional sense, but the result of the collection by Alfred Wiener of all sorts of data on Nazism.

Myrna Glass

Ilford talk on immunology

Prof Leslie Baruch Brent spoke to us on 'Transplantation and Immunology' - a subject that affects all of us. He told us of the many famous people who had been his work colleagues. A very unusual morning for all of us, but we felt we had learned something new.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wed 5 April. Raymond Rudie on wills

Liverpool and Cameo Corner

Group member Fred Elter gave a talk on Moshe Oved, a Yiddish writer, artist,

sculptor and gem expert who in 1908 established Cameo Corner, a shop near the British Museum. Cameo Corner had many distinguished customers - including Queen Mary - who sympathised with the plight of the Jews in the 1930s.

Fred Elter

Next meeting: Thur 6 April. 21 June: annual lunch

Harrogate Continental Friends' heart-warming experience

John Chillagh reviewed Holocaust Memorial Day, we heard that the opening of the Memorial at the Leeds Community Centre will take place on 26 March, and Susanne Green informed us of further forthcoming events. Suzanne Rippton shared a heart-warming experience with us: she was recently reunited with the daughter of the family who saved her life in France 60 years ago.

Inge Little

Next meeting: Wed 10 May

Norfolk chance to shmooze

Reinforced by the two usual suspects from Suffolk, we met for lunch once again. We wish the absentees a speedy recovery and, just to remind them what it's all about, Eva's baked potatoes, Myrna's herrings and all the other goodies are worth every effort, quite apart from the chance to shmooze. Tony showed us photos of Breslau taken on a recent visit to his birthplace.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: Wed 10 May at usual venue

Hull volunteer award

We had an animated discussion on Yad Vashem testimonies and current grant applications. Among many other things, Dina, whose voluntary service contribution has been singled out as first in her category for the Year of the Volunteer awards, described her attendance at prestigious ceremonies in Beverley and London.

Bob Rosner

Next meeting: Sun 30 April

KT discussion at Sheffield AJR Continental Friends

At our recent meeting we were moved by *The Power of Good*, the film which tells the story of Sir Nicholas Winton. It was through the Abbeyfield Movement, for which both Nicholas Winton and our member, Rudy Wessely, were working that the story originally came to light. It was especially touching for our group to hear this story from Rudy Wessely and Sue Pearson, another of our members, both of whom were Kindertransport children.

Dorothy Fleming

Next meeting: Sun 25 June

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Much to think about in Oxford

Our last meeting, well attended and with new members present, was addressed by Myrna Glass on the AJR's diverse membership, each of us then giving a brief personal history. A discussion on 'Can We Believe?', ably led by the Rev John Fieldsend, left us with much to think about.

Oliver Lawton

Next meeting: Tues 2 May

Excellent lunch in Solihull (West Midlands/Birmingham)

Meeting at the home of Ernst and Eileen Aris, we enjoyed the social get-together and especially the excellent lunch, prepared and cooked by our hosts. Our best wishes to Leon Jessel and Charlotte Robinson, who are in hospital at the time of writing.

Ruth Taylor

Warm hospitality in Sutton Coldfield (West Midlands/Birmingham)

We enjoyed a lunchtime get-together, kindly hosted by Corinne and Paul Oppenheimer. A delicious lunch was enjoyed in good company. The warm hospitality of our hosts was greatly appreciated.

Philip Lesser

North London knockabout

Finding ourselves unexpectedly without a speaker, a vigorous discussion arose, initially at the request of an 11-year-old girl for recollections of Holocaust survivors. We touched on, *inter alia*, free speech and postwar efforts of Germany and Austria to make amends. A highly stimulating occasion.

Frieda Stone

Next meeting: Thur 27 April. PC Alan Brown, 'Taking Care in the Community'

Pinner - are there Jews beyond Watford?

Rabbi Malcolm Weisman told us about the many thriving congregations he visits regularly. He urged us to see, among other things, the recently restored synagogue in Exeter and the Regency synagogue in Cheltenham. The 300-family Newport membership has shrunk to 20 and most of the Colchester community travel more than 40 miles to meet.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thur 6 April, 2.00 pm.
Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, 'Lady Montefiore: The First Jewish Tourist'

Surrey: Happy Birthday, Edmee!
Happy Birthday - not to our branch, but to Edmee Barta, who has done so much to weld us together into a social unit. We celebrated - at Edmee's once again! - and thanked her for all her efforts. Myrna managed to bring us back to the latest news and information from HQ, with a reminder to provide details of relatives who perished in the Holocaust for recognition at Yad Vashem. *Vernon Saunders*

Brighton & Hove Sarid: something to think about

Local solicitor Susan Conway gave an overview on Inheritance Tax, Wills and Power of Attorney, highlighting the pitfalls of common practice and lack of knowledge. We all went home with plenty to think about.

Fausta Shelton

Next meeting: Mon 10 April. Prof Scarlett Epstein

Growth of regional groups

We are delighted to announce the appointment of a third co-ordinator to work on our outreach programme. Hazel Beiny, who is a befriender of an AJR member, joins us on a part-time basis and will work alongside Myrna Glass to develop our regional groups in Wales and the South of England.

Myrna, Hazel and Susanne Green, our northern groups' co-ordinator, are supported by Susan Lewis, who has been the groups' administrator since last year. These recruits will help us capitalise on the success of our regional groups' programme and provide even more group activities in the months ahead.

Michael Newman



Reunion in Hull: Freddy Barschak, who came as a Kind to a family in Hull, and Rose Abramson get together at an AJR meeting for the first time in over 50 years

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South West Midlands (Worcester area)
Ruth Jackson 01386 552264

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Weald of Kent
Max and Jane Dickson
01892 541026

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Ernest Aris 0121 353 1437

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

**Susanne Green, AJR Northern Groups
Co-ordinator**
0151 291 5734

Susan Lewis, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

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

**AJR LUNCHEON CLUB
JOINT LUNCH WITH
KT-AJR** Kindertransport
special interest group

Monday 3 April 2006
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

**Hermann Hirschberger
will lead a discussion**

Reservations required
Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

April Afternoon entertainment

Mon 3	Joint KT Lunch & Luncheon Club
Tue 4	CLOSED
Wed 5	Ann Kenton-Barker
Thur 6	Katinka Seiner
Mon 10	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 11	CLOSED
Wed 12	CLOSED - PESACH
Thur 13	CLOSED - 1st DAY OF PESACH
Mon 17	CLOSED - BANK HOLIDAY
Tue 18	CLOSED
Wed 19	CLOSED - 7th DAY OF PESACH
Thur 20	CLOSED - 8th DAY OF PESACH
Mon 24	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 25	CLOSED
Wed 26	Michael Heaton
Thur 27	Jack Davidoff

DIARY DATES

25 April	Yom Hashoah Service (at Day Centre)
7-10 May	Berlin visit
11-18 June	Eastbourne holiday
27 June	AGM
9-16 July	Lytham St Annes holiday
29 Oct-5 Nov	Bournemouth holiday

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

'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 the *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

The Trustees, Management and Staff of the AJR wish Marcia Goodman and family mazeltov on the birth of twin grandchildren.

Deaths

Bauman, Hans. Has died at age of 97. Survived by his wife of 66 years, Esther, daughters Marian and Cherise, cousins in London and numerous friends. He and Esther left Germany for sanctuary of Shanghai, which he described as the greatest adventure of his life. Arrived in Seattle in 1948. A totally devoted husband and father.

Kenneth, Eric (formerly Erich Hugo Kernek), son of Emil and Elizabeth Kernek (née Adelberg) of Linz, Austria, died on 10 February 2006 in Grimsby, Lincolnshire, aged 92. He was a veteran of the SS *Dunera* and internment in Australia. He returned to join the army in Britain and ended the war as a translator with BAOR's de-Nazification units, after which he taught maths and German in Grimsby. He is missed by his sister, Greta, and his two nephews, Peter and David.

Sharon, Ruth (née Seligmann). Born Frankfurt a/M 1921. Long-time member of the AJR. Died London 23.2.06. Sadly missed by family and friends.

In Memoriam

In Memoriam of the 293 Dresden Jews deported from Hellerberg camp to Auschwitz on the night of 2-3 March 1943, including my parents Martin and Lotte Reichenbach. All but a few were murdered on arrival.

Day Centre

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes Sale, separates etc. **Wednesday 3 May 9.30-11.45 am.**

Classified

Looking for a new home 50 records - operetta, German folk songs and popular songs of German stars of the period. Old films featuring names such as Zarah Leander, Heinz Ruhman and Emil Jannings. Can be catalogued if helpful. Call 020 7329 3066.

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Yom Hashoah Service

We are holding a Yom Hashoah service at the Day Centre, Cleve Road, on Tuesday 25 April at 12:15. Following a buffet lunch, memorial prayers will be recited.

We will also be screening *The Mascot* (kindly loaned by the UK Jewish Film Festival), which tells the true story of a Jewish boy adopted by a group of Nazis as their good luck charm.

Places are strictly on a first-come-first-served basis and are guaranteed on receipt of payment of £5 per person. Please call the Day Centre on 020 7328 0208 to reserve a place.

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Obituary

Ernest Martin Natt

Ernst Martin Natt has died at the age of 92. After leaving school in Frankfurt, he worked for a company which made fabrics for clothing. When the company was dissolved, he became an apprentice in a dental laboratory, before joining a course at Krupp on the use of alloys for making substructures for dentures.

With his training as a dental mechanic and his diploma from Krupp, he was allowed to settle in England, where he found employment in London's Park Lane. In 1948 Ernst and Susi married.

Ernst built up his own dental laboratory and was at the forefront of technology to construct ceramic bonded crowns, which are now widely used in cosmetic dentistry. He introduced the concept of chrome cobalt dentures, which were far less bulky than conventional plastic dentures and a new method for the manufacture of artificial plastic teeth. He continued working until his early 70s and even then continued to show an interest in dental technology.

Susi pre-deceased him in 2001. Ernst moved to Clara Nehab House, where the staff looked after him very well. He leaves his younger brother Bernard, who lives in Israel, his sons Peter and Antony, and his grandchildren Christopher and Michael.

Peter, Antony and Bernard Natt



Search Notices

Franklin-Kohn, Jeannette - was instrumental in bringing out child refugees from 1936. Info on hostels she set up in Bournemouth, or any other info, pls to charlotte@gringras.com

Girl child camp survivors - to participate in research project in conjunction with Wiener Library. Please contact Joanna Millan on 020 7586 5509

Gruenwald, Herbert - b. 1910 in Vienna, went to UK 1939. Was stage photographer. Probably changed name to Howard Grunwald and married Dorothy Robins in 1941 in Barnstaple. Info pls to traude.tribel@inode.at

Jeckle, Feiga (Fanny) and Philipp, Richard - married at Kitchener Camp around 1945. Richard was with British army as translator, Feiga from concentration camp. They moved to Buenos Aires but finally settled in England. Info on either pls to Chantelle Josephs on + 44 20 7267 1953 or at chantellejosephs@hotmail.co.uk

Lambert, Daniel and Frances - who adopted Kindertransport children lived in Lickey Woods, Birmingham area. One child, Alice, married Solomon Gould. Info pls to Doreen Medcraft at doreen.medcraft@btinternet.com

Mangold, mother and daughter - possibly from Gutersloh, Westphalia, left Germany just before the war. In 1941-42 were in Moelfre, Anglesey, running a private school from Craig y Mor house. In 1951-52 were still at Craig y Mor, owned by Ann Halstead. Info pls to Elaine and Charles Nunn at chasnunn@onetel.com

Musch, Hanne - came here after Kristallnacht. Graced the stage in Ilfracombe, North Devon with her talent and entertained Pioneer Corps refugees in uniform. Any info pls contact Helen Fry, 38 Temple Gardens, London NW11 0LL

Nove, Myrtle - was children's librarian in Enfield 1950, married 1952. Married name possibly Davis. Previously lived with mother in Watford Way. Info please to fay@fdavies97.freemove.co.uk or tel 0208 449 8756

Peschel, Ruth - my mother travelled from Breslau to Amsterdam, arrived in Harwich on 21 June 1939 and went on to Whittinghame farm school in East Lothian on 16 July 1939. Info pls to Ron Ibbitson at b.ibbitson@btinternet.com

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Ghetto pension

Changes to German social security legislation now enable Holocaust survivors who apply for a pension in respect of work done in Nazi-occupied ghettos during the Second World War to be backdated to 1997, provided applications are submitted **before 30 June 2006**.

The ZRGB (German acronym for ghetto pension law) is paid to inmates of ghettos who worked for some form of remuneration whether in the form of ghetto money, food rations, clothing or shelter.

To follow up applications already submitted or to submit new claims, write to Deutsche Rentenversicherung Nord Standort Hamburg, Friedrich-Ebert-Damm 245, 22159 Hamburg, Germany. Application forms are available from this office.

Article II Fund

Following negotiations with the German government, the Claims Conference has announced new eligibility criteria for the Article II Fund, a compensation programme provided for in the German Unification Treaty of October 1990.

The Fund provides monthly payments of €270 (approx. £185) for survivors of Nazism who meet the strict eligibility criteria, which include having been interned for a minimum of six months in a concentration camp or having been imprisoned for at least 18 months in a ghetto as defined by the German government.

Also entitled are survivors who were in hiding for at least 18 months or those who lived illegally under a false identity or with false papers for a minimum of 18 months.

Application forms are available from this office and further details concerning the Article II Fund can be found at www.claimscon.org.

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 mnewman@ajr.org.uk.

Arts & Events Diary - April

Mon 3 Hans Seelig MA, 'We Too Must Look at Aspects of Mozart This Year' Club 43

Thur 6 Ben Barkow, Dr Klaus Leist, 'Terezin: Endurance and Overcoming: The Writings of Philipp Manes' Venue: Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel Leo Baeck Institute on 020 7580 3493

Mon 10 Ernst Flesch MA, 'A Trip to Tanzania (with slides)' Club 43

Mon 17 No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43

Mon 24 Pinner Synagogue Hashoah Evening, 8-10 pm (see page 4)

Mon 24 Jens Brüning (Berlin), 'Light-houses in History, Cinema and Literature (including extracts from *Thunderrock, 1942* by Roy Boulting)' Club 43

Mon 1 May No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Hans Seelig on 01442 254360.

Remarkable Israel

It is always a special pleasure to celebrate a *simcha* in Israel, especially among my Israeli wife Sima's close family, where the warmth, vitality and Jewish milieu come guaranteed - not to mention fine weather and unimaginably large banquets. Last year, it was the wedding of our elder daughter Joanna to Dan in Eilat. This year, it was the nuptials of Dana, daughter of her youngest brother Yitzhaac and his wife Batsheva. At the wedding garden near Kibbutz Naan, little more than a stone's throw from Moshav Yashresh, where the whole family were nurtured and our own wedding reception was held nearly 34 years ago, a large outdoor reception area was entirely surrounded by stalls with an amazing variety of *Vorspeizers*, more than enough to keep all the guests replete.

With the arrival of the beautiful bride and her beau, Shahar, together they ascended the steps to a floodlit *chupah*. Though the decorum is not quite St Johns Wood, and the inevitable photographers blocked our lines of sight, the traditional vows were recited and the groom proclaimed 'Be thou my wife according to the laws of Moses and Israel' and pledged to be a good Jewish husband - only in our ancient-modern tongue, *Ivrit*. His traditional stamping on a glass, which of course alludes to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, was greeted with enthusiastic cries of *mazaltov*. Nothing now prevented us from entering the banquetting suite seating 500 guests for a long evening of celebration with music and dancing, eating and drinking, and hope for the newlyweds and the family with which, in time, it was anticipated they would be blessed.

Will they and their children be left in peace to prosper in this remarkable and incredibly successful country, little more than half a century old and utterly unique in the history of the world, with Jews originating from more than 70 countries? Not 60 years after the European Holocaust, will threats to Israel's very

existence cease from non-rational atavistic leaders who substitute glorification of death for the progress to which their own youth are entitled?

Our time in Israel followed immediately upon the general election at which the incumbent prime minister was a comatose non-participant and the party he had recently formed, *Kadimah* (Forward), with which to fight the election on policies to withdraw from most of the West Bank, secured a qualified mandate. For the first time, a pensioners' party is to be represented in the government and, in another first step, neither the incoming prime minister nor his defence minister will have been serving generals.

Yom Hashoah commemorations

With the introduction of Holocaust Memorial Day as an annual national event, some confusion was perhaps inevitable. For the Jews, however, there is no doubt that *Yom Hashoah* is the day on which we commemorate the Nazi genocide against our coreligionists, all too many of whom were the close relatives of AJR members.

Having been honoured to lead prayers for the six million victims at the service held at the AJR Paul Balint Centre in West Hampstead, I called upon the generous participation of Herman Hirschberger, chairman of our Kindertransport planning group, who gave a moving address and recited the *Kaddish*. Similar *Yom Hashoah* commemorations have increasingly become a part of the programmes of synagogues throughout the country. I attended my local service at Radlett US, where Mala Tribich's account of her immense hardships and losses could not fail to move. At Pinner Synagogue, Gaby Glassman presented Daniel Finkelstein, Associate Editor of *The Times*, and his mother Mirjam, a survivor of Bergen-Belsen and daughter of the late Dr Alfred Wiener, the founder of the Wiener Library.

Newsround

Austrian President admits popular support for Anschluss

Austria's President, Heinz Fischer, has become the country's first head of state to admit that a large number of its citizens welcomed Adolf Hitler with open arms when he annexed the country. President Fischer said he also regretted that Austria had not reached out at the end of the war to Jews who had fled because of the Anschluss.

Rise in convictions of Nazi war criminals

Convictions of Nazi war criminals rose more than threefold in the past year, challenging conventional wisdom that suspects are now too old to be prosecuted, the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) says. The Center stated that most fresh investigations and convictions occurred in Italy, Poland, Germany and the USA. Austria was singled out for 'consistent failure' to prosecute Milivoj Asner, a police chief under Croatia's pro-Nazi Ustase regime who, the Center said, had been living in Klagenfurt.

Racism in Russia

According to a report into violent racism by Amnesty International, racist killings in Russia are 'out of control'. In 2005, the report shows, at least 28 people were killed and 366 were assaulted. An Amnesty International spokesperson said that the Russian government should adopt a comprehensive 'plan of action' to combat racism and antisemitism.

NatWest swastikas to remain

Following a complaint from a customer, the NatWest Bank has refused to get rid of two swastikas from a branch floor mosaic. The swastikas can be seen in the tiled floor of the foyer of the branch in Bolton, near Manchester. NatWest said the symbols were an original feature of the branch and predated Hitler's rise to power.

Umlaut victorious

Moben, the kitchen furniture company, has won a five-year battle for the right to use an umlaut in its name. The Advertising Standards Authority has concluded that use of the spelling Möben does not imply that the company's kitchens were made in Germany.