

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Vienna, city of dreams

If Omar Sharif's camel ride into stardom in David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) is the cinema's longest arrival sequence, Alida Valli's slow walk past Joseph Cotten out of Vienna's *Zentralfriedhof* at the end of Carol Reed's 1949 masterpiece *The Third Man* is its longest and most memorable departure. Unlike the bombastic entry of Lean's Arab warrior prince, the exit of Anna Schmidt, Reed's gangster's moll, carries real moral weight, as she rejects the decent mediocrity offered by Holly Martins (Cotten) and returns to a profoundly corrupted city.

Valli's recent death brings back memories of Vienna in the post-war, post-Nazi years, before the city became prosperous and turned its historical legacy into a marzipan theme park of harmless Hapsburgs like soppy Sisi and love-struck Rudolph, hero of what has been trivialised into the interminable soap opera of *Mayerling*. No such escape from history into bowdlerised pastiche is possible when viewing *The Third Man*. Valli's character, Harry Lime's girlfriend Anna, exists in a moral vacuum where the only criterion is survival and the cost of one's material comfort is measured in the human misery of others, a price Lime (Orson Welles) and his like gladly pay.

They inhabit a city where the law of the jungle holds sway, after moral standards have successively been eroded by the citizens' complicity in the crimes of the Nazis, by the destruction wrought by the war on their city, and by the moral corrosion of the Allied occupation, which, however, allowed the Viennese to cast themselves as passive victims, conveniently veiling their Nazi past. The savagery to which near-starvation and destitution have reduced the city's inhabitants is captured in the graphic sequence of night-time scenes illuminated by the headlights of the car whose driver appears to have kidnapped Martins. (In fact, he is being driven to nothing more sinister than his lecture at a British cultural



Orson Welles stars as Harry Lime in Carol Reed's *The Third Man*

centre.) Among a series of visions from darkness, the face of a man scavenging for food amidst the city's refuse stands out, his features fixed in a bestial snarl, the ultimate image of the city's degradation.

The dream has long played a prominent part in Viennese culture. The Baroque image of life as a dream dominates *Der Traum, ein Leben* (*Life is a Dream*), a moral fable in dramatic form by Franz Grillparzer, greatest of Austrian nineteenth-century classical dramatists, as it does Hugo von Hofmannsthal's play *Der Turm* (*The Tower*, 1925). At the popular level, the song most closely associated with Vienna is the cloying but irresistible 'Wien, Wien, nur du allein/Wirst stets die Stadt meiner Träume sein' ('Vienna, Vienna, you alone will forever be the city of my dreams').

But by 1949 dream had descended into nightmare, as *The Third Man* vividly illustrates. Against a background of murder, black-market racketeering and power politics, in a shattered city divided into Russian and Western sectors, Harry Lime is revealed for what he is: a creature of the night who has made money by selling adulterated penicillin and has faked his own death to escape retribution for the lives he has ruined. He is first - and unforgettably - glimpsed by night, as a shaft of light from an opened window falls onto his face; he meets his end in the eternal gloom of Vienna's sewers.

Lime's famous attempt to justify his crimes to the bemused Martins - on the big wheel in the Prater amusement park - centres on the argument that great criminal

regimes have produced great culture, whereas Switzerland, that model of worthy, law-abiding democracy, has produced only the cuckoo clock. Vienna provides the appropriate backdrop for Lime's regressive, anti-democratic amorality. Reduced in 1918 from its status as a great imperial capital to that of an unstable, unloved rump state, it witnessed the undermining of parliamentary rule by

authoritarian forces contemptuous of popular democracy, and its abolition by Chancellor Dollfuss, who, with his successor, Schuschnigg, instituted an Austrian version of the Central European one-party state.

Once the protective barrier of democratic values had been subverted, the city fell easily to the Nazis. The ecstatic reception extended to Hitler on his triumphal return to Vienna in 1938 exploded into a veritable orgy of antisemitic violence that took a demonic delight in humiliating and tormenting defenceless Jews. Many Viennese supported the criminal Nazi regime at least passively, and they shared in the devastation - material and moral - of its defeat, emerging from the war into a world where the city's physical destruction matched its moral bankruptcy.

Defeated, occupied, starving, Vienna took refuge in the denial of its Nazi past, refusing to admit its guilt towards its former Jewish citizens. As late as 1987, a history of Vienna by Thomas Chorherr, editor-in-chief of *Die Presse*, no less, sought to minimise the dimensions of Viennese enthusiasm for Hitler by arguing that almost as many people had turned out when Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia visited Vienna in 1954 as had greeted the Führer in March 1938! But, as Harry Lime haunted the city from the subterranean labyrinth of the sewers, so the hidden secrets of the past continued to provide a dark undercurrent to the golden Viennese dream.

Anthony Grenville

Your full entitlement to state benefits: the facts

If you are over 60 you may be entitled to certain state benefits that you do not know about.

People on a low income - less than £114 per week for a single person and £174 for a couple - may be entitled to Pension Credit, which is designed to top up their income to these amounts.

They, and others on slightly higher incomes, may also be entitled to full or partial Housing Benefit, as well as to some Council Tax Benefit, if they are in rented accommodation.

Others, who live in their own homes and have a similarly low income, may qualify for full or partial Council Tax Benefit.

Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit are all 'means-tested'.

People over 80, who have never paid national insurance

contributions, could be entitled to a 'category D' pension of £50.50 a week. This is not means-tested.

Another non-means-tested benefit is Attendance Allowance. The lower rate is currently £41.65 per week and the higher rate £62.25 per week. This benefit is intended for those over 65 with an illness or disability that requires help with personal care. This is tax-free.

If you already receive Attendance Allowance and someone on a low income is looking after you for 35 hours or more a week, they may be able to receive Carer's Allowance of £46.95 a week.

For further information, please phone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070.

Linda Kasmir
Welfare Rights Adviser, AJR

Holocaust survivor honoured in home town

AJR member Eva Mendelsson has been honoured by a German Protestant community for her Holocaust educational work. Eva, 74, who lives in London, has since 1988 been addressing German schoolchildren about her Holocaust experience.

Eva's mother, Sylvia, and elder sister, Esther, died in Auschwitz. 'It is the right of every human being to have a mother and mine has been stolen', Eva says.

At a ceremony, attended by some 125 people, in her home town of Gengenbach, Eva was presented with the Hermann Maas Award, named after a Protestant clergyman whose memory is honoured by Yad Vashem. At the presentation, Eva read a poem by her mother. On the previous day, a stone commemorating Holocaust victims



Eva Mendelsson and Paul Niedermann, centre, are presented with the Hermann Maas Award by Jan Mathis of the Gengenbach Evangelical Church

in the area was unveiled.

According to Eva, 'there are good Germans who do not want to forget, but show that they are ashamed of their past and want to create a better future.'

HS

A night of remembrance



PHOTO: STEPHEN GEE

Mirjam Finkelstein and Daniel Finkelstein studying the Zachor Holocaust Memorial at Pinner Synagogue Yom Hashoah evening

As in previous years, Pinner Synagogue hall was filled for the annual commemoration of Yom Hashoah. This year saw the return of the Hungarian Ambassador as well as representatives of the Dutch and German embassies. The evening began with the lighting of the Memorial Candles by children of the Third Generation, following which Gaby Glassman welcomed all the guests and introduced the night's key speakers: Mirjam Finkelstein, the daughter of the founder of the Wiener Library, Dr Alfred Wiener, and Dr Wiener's grandson, Daniel Finkelstein, Associate Editor of the *Times*.

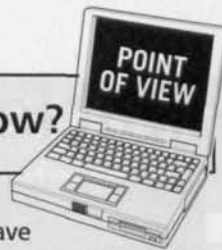
Mirjam Finkelstein, a survivor of Bergen-Belsen, recounted her early childhood in Holland and subsequent travails as her father attempted to use his documented evidence of antisemitic activities to show the 'outside world' what was actually happening. Father and six-year-old daughter were separated and were reunited only after a number of harrowing years.

Daniel Finkelstein spoke about the incredible repository of information which Dr Wiener assembled. Dr Wiener firmly believed that truth would prevail and would be an effective weapon against the Nazis as a catalyst in marshalling strong counter-opinions by influential German politicians. In later years his amassed information became a valuable asset for the Allied intelligence community.

Brian Eisenberg

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Israel and the Palestinians: where now?



Hamas's victory in the recent Palestinian elections has produced predictable reactions in public opinion. The extreme left and the extreme right have seen it as a useful step towards a second Holocaust, while denying that the first one happened. The weight of liberal opinion, however, has seen it as a reaction against the corruption of the Palestinian Authority. Anti-Israel sources explain that Hamas leaders do not mean what they say they mean and that really, when you meet them, they are kindly avuncular people interested only in their constituents' welfare.

An alternative possibility is that the Palestinian Arabs voted for Hamas because they agreed with its charter. This states: 'Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it ... There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through holy war. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours.' These objectives (unlike the similar ones of the pre-1993 PLO covenant) are enhanced by religious rhetoric.

It seems incredible to us in the developed world that people should vote for certain misery now, with doubtful benefits even if the planned conflict is successful, but such attitudes are common in the Arab world, and in much of the Third World. They are a characteristic of societies based on pride and shame. In such cultures the primary concern is what others believe about you. If others believe you are inferior, then you are humiliated, and you will hate those who perceive you in such a shameful way. This is especially important in sexual matters, where women are repressed and 'honour killings' are common. A recent example was last September near Ramallah, when a young Muslim woman from Deir Jarir was murdered for forming a romantic attachment with a Christian from the village of Taibeh. A Palestinian Authority investigation provoked the residents of Deir Jarir to burn Taibeh to the ground.

The essence of pride and shame is that compromise is impossible. It's us or

them. Either you have your foot on your enemy's neck or they have their foot on yours. Violence is the only mechanism for changing the ruling elite or preserving the honour of the family. Vendettas and revenge killings are the norm.

There are some Jews, especially among the ultra-orthodox, who share pride and shame feelings and see family 'honour' as all-important and, among the settlers, are prepared to rule over several million disenfranchised Arabs. The Israeli election has diminished their power, and the electorate has decided that Arab society is so dysfunctional that the only solution is to separate.

What should the new Israeli government do? Olmert's government is the first Israeli government since 1967 to have a policy that invites Arab co-operation but can be pursued without it. There is a window of opportunity to complete the separation wall/fence, already a year overdue, and to remove the unprotectable West Bank settlements. It should be explained that the wall is a temporary structure until a peace settlement is reached - but no one should hold their breath. Like all vendettas, this one could run and run. First, the Sunni and Shiite Muslims have been at each others' throats for over 1,000 years. Second, the Palestinians should be provided with humanitarian aid in kind - medical supplies not money. Third, Israel should not be drawn into counterproductive reprisals. Israel has no effective response to the rain of Qassam (and some Katiusha) rockets other than reoccupying Gaza, which is what Hamas wants. Shelling Gaza indiscriminately is worse than no response at all.

As not all Palestinian Arabs are pride/shame fanatics, Israel should continually be suggesting practical steps to strengthen Palestinian moderates. For example, she should be offering to allow goods through Rafah as well as a Palestinian seaport and Gaza-West Bank passage, in return for action to stop terror. Such initiatives are preferable to the policy paralysis of the last 40 years.

Bryan Reuben

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More miracles from Poland

Last year, the *AJR Journal* published my article 'How I came to believe in miracles', following a visit to the town in which I was born. It was called Koslin before the war and became totally Polish in 1945, when Pomerania and other parts of eastern Germany were handed to the Poles by way of compensating them for the eastern territories of which the Soviet Union had deprived them. My wife Carol and I had been invited by the mayor of Koszalin, as it is now called, as guests of honour of the city and in my article I described some extraordinary events they laid on. The most significant of these was the solemn rededication of the old Jewish cemetery, which was destroyed in 1938.

This May, Carol and I returned to Koszalin, on this occasion as guests of the Technical University. I had been asked to give a lecture to staff and students on immunological research. But the main reason for the invitation was the unveiling of a monument dedicated to the new Jewish cemetery, built over by the Technical University. It was yet another breathtaking event that forced me to pinch myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming.

The inspiration for this development came from two local activists who have taken a deep interest in the pre-1945 history of the city and especially its long-forgotten Jewish population - Zdzislaw (Zibi) Pacholski, a photographer and artist, and Henryk Romanik, a Catholic priest, local historian and poet. After discussion with the university authorities, their suggestion of a memorial on the site of the cemetery was accepted and the Rector and his staff carried it through swiftly. Thus it was that Carol and I joined the Rector and Vice-Rector (Professor Tomasz Heese, who was responsible for much of the organisation), Henryk and Zibi, Jewish representatives from Gdansk, Szczecin and Warsaw (the latter representing the Chief Rabbi), the Mayor, and the Bishop of Koszalin in a moving unveiling ceremony of remembrance. The sculpted monument, with its broken tree and Star of David and text in Hebrew and Polish, is very fine indeed.

This was followed by a talk by Henryk



The author placing flowers at the foot of the memorial following the unveiling, in the presence of the Rector of the University of Technology

Romanik about the Jewish cemeteries and German Jews of Koszalin, his book on this topic being published on the same day. A 20-minute video, created by Zibi and a cinematographic colleague of his when I visited the city last year, was shown for the first time. The afternoon concluded with a lavish reception in the university, where I spoke not only with some of the Jews from other cities but also with two messianic Jews from Koszalin.

Messianic Jews are ethnic Jews who observe the Sabbath and the festivals and read the Torah but recognise Christ as the Messiah. Yet, like conventional Jews, they still await the return of the Messiah, presumably personified by Christ. Most of the Koszalin Jews, who are Russian or Polish, evidently belong to this sect.

The unveiling of the memorial was for me almost unbearably moving: after all, three of my grandparents and other relatives were buried in the cemetery that was being remembered. The wheel had turned full circle. Who says miracles do not happen?

One other extraordinary event concerns my great-uncle David Baruch's (born in 1840) gravestone, which in 1938 had been thrown into the stream that flows alongside the old cemetery and which, after its identification with my family a few years ago, had been exhibited in the local museum as the only Jewish artefact in the city. It was quietly returned to the old cemetery by courtesy of the

mayor and the director of the museum and is now the only gravestone in it. A few of us placed stones on it and left red roses. I was deeply moved at my great-uncle's symbolic return.

Although the cemetery has large blocks of flats on one side, it has generally been respected by local youths. With the help of Henryk Romanik I chatted to some boys playing football nearby: as for their English counterparts, for them the Holocaust is a million light years away, but evidently they had learnt something from the plaque near the entrance of the cemetery, and the history of the Holocaust is taught in Polish schools.

All this has happened because of the dedication of two men, Zibi and Henryk, at a time when the government of Poland has been joined by a minister (for education!) coming from a highly antisemitic smaller party. Yet events like this are happening in other parts of Poland too, as evidenced, for example, by the experiences of Peter Fraenkel, who wrote about them in the April issue of the *Journal*. The Pope's recent visit to Auschwitz is, of course, another story.

Carol and I have already received an invitation to return in May 2008 for the opening of a major exhibition on the Jews of Pomerania and Koszalin, carefully researched by the devoted staff of the city's archives.

Leslie Baruch Brent

A journey into the past: AJR members visit Berlin

Eric Kaufman

This Spring, 21 keen AJR members paid a four-day visit to Berlin. On arrival at Berlin airport, we were met by our most helpful guide, Sue Arns-Blumenthal. At a subsequent meeting, Sue spoke to us about the historical background of Berlin Jewry, life in Berlin as a Jew at the present time, and relations between Jews and non-Jewish citizens.

On our second day, we took a coach trip to Villa Wannsee, in southwestern Berlin. The meeting held there in January 1942 - a high-level ministerial gathering of civilian government and SS officials - was convened by Reinhard Heidrich in order to bring together the leaders of the German organisations whose co-operation was necessary to implement the plan for the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question'. Though all records of the discussions were intended to be destroyed, after the war a protocol of the proceedings by Adolf Eichmann, providing a true picture of this fateful conference, came to light. A permanent exhibition there records the rising antisemitism of the Weimar period and the development of racist policies in 1933-39.

We continued our sad Jewish trail to Bahnhof Hamburg, the transportation point for Berlin's Jews. By the side of the rails we could read the details of the individual transports: 1064 to Theresienstadt, 1055 to Minsk, 1067 to Auschwitz and so on. As Rubin Katz recited Kaddish by a small stone memorial, we stood silently in the brilliant sunshine - a time when the heavens should have shed tears.

Our next painful destination was Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum. The Museum contains references to early Expressionism, with Weimar films such as *Das Kabinett des Dr Caligari* springing to mind. There is, for instance, a symbolic connection between Libeskind's zigzag architecture and Siegfried Kracauer's *Von Caligari zu Hitler*. The Holocaust Tower is surely the most emotionally overpowering part of the Museum. The room's towering angularity nourishes a fear of being lost, while a ladder high up the naked wall mocks you - there is no escape. There is also a spiritual connection between Libeskind's Museum and Eisenmann's Holocaust Memorial in the Garden of Exile - a small forest of *stellae*.



AJR members outside Berlin Town Hall

Our third day proved the climax of our Berlin adventure. The Mitte district once housed the poorer section of Berlin Jewry, but Rosenstrasse told quite a different story of the history of the Third Reich: the first successful resistance to Nazi racial actions. At the time of Stalingrad, when the mood of the population was at a low ebb, 'Aryan' wives of Jews demanded the release of their deported partners. As more and more people joined the clamour, the event presented a direct challenge to the Nazi authorities. But the situation was too risky to use brutal force. The wives won: the husbands were released and those already deported were permitted to return.

Cheered for once by an event appertaining to the Nazi past, our next meeting was with the President of the Bundesrat, Wolfgang Thierse, at the Holocaust Memorial. The President showed understanding of the mixed feelings visitors to this unique monument might have: why, for instance, a monument devoted exclusively to Jews rather than one for, among others, Gypsies, homosexuals and political prisoners? His answer was the enormity of the crime: the murder of six million Jews - men, women and children. Peter Eisenmann, the creator of over 2,700 *stellae* comprising the Memorial, provides no explanation of this huge constellation: it is for visitors to make up their minds. Walking between these weird concrete slabs does create a

feeling of menace - that of a powerful, impersonal mass. The Memorial is complemented by an impressive subterranean Information Centre enabling visitors to gain further insight into the history of the Holocaust.

A pleasant climax to our Berlin visit was a reception by Berlin's Deputy Mayor André Schmitz in the splendid nineteenth-century town hall. He gave us an overview of Berlin's lively past, following which we were given a tour of the town hall. A plaque commemorates city councillors and members of the magistrate murdered by the Nazis; Jewish names are well to the fore.

While throughout our visit we witnessed details of the heinous crimes of the Third Reich, it is only fair to say that this public revelation of Germany's shameful past has been fostered by the Federal Republic of Germany, the country's first real democracy. One must, of course, not overlook the background to it all: Berlin, a vigorous, attractive city; reconstruction still continuing after reunification; seemingly friendly people all round - long may they remain so. And what about our *echt* Berliners? They searched for, and may have rediscovered, their erstwhile *heimatlich* home - very much changed, no doubt. All was superbly organised by the AJR staff who accompanied us - Susie Kaufman and Carol Rossen.

Eric Kaufman

This is an abbreviated version of Eric Kaufman's article.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

BACK TO VIENNA

Sir - If four people attacked Peter Phillips's position on Vienna (Point of view, June), it would be my guess that at least forty - the silent majority who don't put pen to paper - supported it. Any of us who came to this country as refugees are surely mature enough to make our own judgments without the need to justify them.

*Edith Argy
London W9*

Sir - Revolted by Peter Phillips and his family, I am compelled to write to say that Thea Valman is not the 'odd one out', but Mr Phillips himself. I am not a refugee but my wife and brother-in-law are and they would never want to set foot in Germany or Austria again. These countries are the origins of Jewry's greatest-ever tragedy.

*Harry Needham
Kenton, Middx*

Sir - I support Peter Phillips's views entirely. Even though I was a teenager when I had to leave Vienna, I still have fond memories of my youth and, of course, was very lucky that so many non-Jewish people were so kind to me and helped me in every respect. Last year my husband and I took our daughter and grandson on a 'sentimental journey' to Vienna to show them where I was born and why I was still 'enchanted' by that city - though not forgetting and explaining what happened there. My 'younger generation' were also delighted with the visit and, like me, appreciate Schnitzel, Tafelspitz etc more than anything else. We also get quite sentimental when listening to the New Year's Day Concert.

Incidentally, one thing you did not mention - nor have I seen it mentioned anywhere else - is the great job done by Hannah Lessing of the Austrian National Fund on behalf of Holocaust survivors. Her tremendous efforts to

overcome problems with obtaining restitution have not been sufficiently acknowledged.

*Kitty Schafer
Toronto*

Sir - I must rush to the defence of Peter Phillips. I have just returned from Vienna, where I spent ten happy and eventful days. This was the third time I have been back recently. This year my daughter came to Vienna with me. We went to the flat where I had lived for the first 18 years of my life - until in 1938 a German officer came to our door to notify us that it had been allocated to him and his family. The building was being renovated and the front door was open. We went inside - the mosaic floor, the wooden seats, the staircase were all as I had remembered them. We rang the bell at number two. Nobody was in. The flat had been turned into a consultant's surgery. My daughter rang the bell at the neighbouring flat. A woman opened the door. When she heard I had lived next door she asked us both in. She was in her sixties and told us she had lived in the same flat all her life. We discovered two people we both remembered. There was no doubt: she knew the details of their lives as I remember them. She told us her mother had hidden a Jewish family before they were able to emigrate.

My daughter also made contact with a relative who is partly Jewish - owing to my Jewish aunt having married a non-Jew who, it turned out, protected her throughout the Hitler years. My aunt was confined to her house and garden for, had she gone outside, she would have had to wear a Star of David. Her children - as *Mischlinge* - were allowed to stay and work in Vienna.

I agree with Peter Phillips about the music of Richard Wagner as well as Wiener Schnitzel. I would go even further and include *all* the food!

Finally, not all Viennese were Nazis and antisemitic: the loyal patient who saved Peter Phillips's father from being sent to

Dachau, as well as the woman I mentioned whose parents hid a Jewish family, cannot have been the only ones who risked their lives helping Jews during the Nazi era. The present generation in Austria is no more or less antisemitic than anywhere else in the world.

*Inge Trott
Cheam, Surrey*

ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS

Sir - I have to reply once again to Inge Trott's letter. It is not helpful to adopt an attitude that blames only one side. I also contribute to an organisation - Windows for Peace - that integrates Israeli and Palestinian children. However, most of the initiatives come from the Israeli side. My family in Israel are constantly worried about allowing their teenagers to go on buses or to discotheques. You can understand that Israelis sometimes over-react as they never know when a terrorist is going to blow himself up for the 'glory' of killing innocent civilians.

It is also easy to talk about 'occupied territory' without going into the history of the case. I have talked to Germans about Poland's occupation of German land. Their reply: if we had not attacked there would be no occupied territory; we were the aggressors, so we must accept the consequences.

*Gisela Feldman
Manchester*

Sir - The Palestinians could have lived in their own state in relative comfort with a growing economy had they, with the Arab countries surrounding Israel, not decided to declare war on Israel from the day it was established. Again and again they tried to eliminate Israel, only to be defeated. Subsequently, for the first time in history, they were offered their own independent state at Oslo and in Camp David negotiations. However, they decided on the suicide bombing and murder of Israeli children at play near their homes and on killing people in buses and cars while other Israelis, walking peacefully in the street, sitting in cafes and restaurants and celebrating barmitzvahs and other festive activities, were torn to pieces with many left dead or seriously wounded. Rehabilitation centres had to be established to allow the survivors and their relations to eventually return to a normal life. This caused the Palestinians to continue living

in squalor and misery, while at the same time Israel will do all that is necessary to guarantee the safety and survival of our country and of Judeo-Christian civilisation.

*Ralph Freeman
Jerusalem*

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Sir - Bertha Leverton's criticism of your Letter from Israel slot reminds me of the late Alistair Cooke's Letter from America, which the BBC transmitted for decades. In these broadcasts Cooke described the minutiae of everyday life in the USA - all aspects of it - in simple but highly evocative language and imparted to the listener a very real, live feeling of getting to know that vast country. If your Israeli correspondent likes to write in a similar vein without necessarily politicising everything, that's fine by me.

*Marc Schatzberger
York*

POLES AND JEWS

Sir - Having read Rubin Katz's letter in your June issue, and intimately knowing Professor Brent's point of view, I merely wish to say what Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof* might have said: 'They are both right!'

*Ernest Weinberg
Yreka, California*

THANK-YOU BRITAIN FUND

Sir - I read with interest Anthony Grenville's review of *Who's Not Who and Other Matters* (June). This mentions the Thank-You Britain Fund and attributes the idea jointly to the AJR and Victor Ross. I was greatly surprised by the omission of the name of my late uncle Werner M. Behr, since his sterling efforts in this connection were recognised by the award of an OBE.

*Michael Feld
London N3*

Werner Behr was, in fact, Chairman of the AJR at the time and participated as such in the Thank-You Britain Fund, and I felt that no specific mention of the AJR officials involved was necessary. I am all in favour of having the achievements of past Chairmen recorded - Anthony Grenville.

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Sir - Marianne Parkes's conviction (Profile, June) that the little boy playing in the nearby garden in the village of Herrlingen was Field Marshal Rommel's son Manfred is not correct. I had occasion to talk to Dr Manfred Rommel, then a distinguished Oberbuergermeister of Stuttgart, a few years ago. I mentioned to him that as an ex-pupil of the Landschulheim Herrlingen I had lived in the Haus Breitenfels, one of the four houses of the Landschulheim which he and his family later inhabited.

I asked him whether as a child he was aware of the previous inhabitants of this house. He was evidently uncomfortable with the question but told me very clearly that the Rommels only moved to Herrlingen some time after the outbreak of war, i.e. long after Marianne Parkes had left for England. Dr Rommel delivered a speech on that occasion and, as someone remarked, his father may have invented the Blitzkrieg but his son certainly had not invented the Blitz speech.

*E. Fraenkel OBE
London NW8*

PRINTABLE HUMOUR

Sir - The letters from Dorothy Graff (February) and Mary Brainin-Huttrer (April) remind me of some of the lessons which, in the difficult years after 1945, made my parents and their friends and - subsequently - me chuckle. One of the less unprintable ones was about stations on the Northern Line. Golders Green, we were sternly advised, 'ist keine Farbe' 'und Archway', it was added, 'ist keine Krankheit'.

*Roger Juer
London NW3*

THANK YOU, AJR

Sir - I recently had a surprise telephone call from Australia. It took a few moments to realise the caller was my friend Elfie, whom I hadn't seen for so many years. She was one of the Kinder and we shared accommodation in London during the Second World War. Later we lost contact. Elfie, who now lives in Australia and is a regular reader of the *AJR Journal*, noticed my name in the Letters columns, contacted the AJR office, and that is how we met again. Thanks, AJR, for being there for us and helping us in all circumstances.

*A. Schlesinger
Wembley, Middx*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Francis Picabia, *Sotileza* 1928. Gouache on paper, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. Bequeathed by Gabrielle Keiller 1995

Those who consider themselves outsiders, who dream different dreams and stand on the very edge of society, are celebrated in a new London exhibition for their pivotal role in influencing contemporary art. The Whitechapel Art Gallery's *Inner Worlds Outside* exhibition demonstrates the way these so-called outsiders have influenced such twentieth-century Expressionists as Wassily Kandinsky, Emil Nolde and Paul Klee, who eschewed the sophisticated Western traditions in art for natural spontaneity. Nolde and Paul Klee were banned as degenerates by the Nazis and included in the Nazi exhibition *Entartete Kunst*. Today The Whitechapel claims to show us how both insider and outsider artists are two sides of the same Modernist coin.

You might be shocked to learn that outsider artists include psychiatric patients, criminals, self-taught visionaries and mediums. Their personal histories can be quite tragic. Some, like Karl Lange, Elsa Blankenhorn and Stefan Klojer, died in mental hospitals; others, like Henri Rousseau, who was charged with petty

larceny, were criminalised. Rousseau never left France and certainly never saw a jungle, although jungles feature in much of his best-known works. Recognised as a genius by Picasso, he was rejected by the art world for his lack of art school training. Other artists, like Austrian-born Egon Schiele, whose allegorical watercolours on life, death and sex are widely admired today, spent 24 days in prison on charges of seduction.

Both Raphael Lonne and Madge Gill believed their work was spiritually inspired. Repetitive, naive, bold, featuring scrawled writing and little girls in old-fashioned clothes and big hats, their narrative comes from a personal, often dangerous sexual symbolism. Gill worked on rolls of calico so she could never see her entire canvas at once, and her female subjects ascend in geometric swirls, giving the work the appearance of a frieze. Henry Darger's world is densely peopled with children playing games but, when you look closer, many are hermaphrodites, or have horns, and their world suggests war, concentration camps and a childish cynicism.

Augustin Lesage, a Calais miner, heard voices ordering him to paint when he was 35. His work contains religious symbolism inspired by various Middle Eastern and Oriental cultures. His work ended suddenly when he felt his spirit guide depart. Evidently it inspired his *L'Esprit de la Pyramide*. Bird shapes, phallic symbols all form a swirling textile tapestry. Kandinsky's reductionism also made painting seem a path to spirituality. Regarded as the father of abstractionism, he reduced familiar forms to calligraphic lines; his doodles and accidental designs in brilliant colours seem to be engendered by abstract music.

Occasionally the hidden revealed itself. As in psychedelic art, if you look hard enough a hand or a body will emerge and a good example of this is to be found in Robert Mallo's crayon and graphite swirling lines.

By the early nineteenth century artists regarded the human face itself as a mask, primitive, emblematic, as totemic as Aztec art. In this exhibition, birds, eyes, children fly, float and totter through a private universe, eternally outsiders.

REVIEWS

Part experience, part history

THE CHILDHOOD AND TEENS OF A JEWISH GIRL IN INTER-WAR AUSTRIA AND SUBSEQUENT ADVENTURES

by Edith Argy

Charleston SC: BookSurge, 2005, pp.197

SIX FROM LEIPZIG

by Gertrude Dubrovsky

London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004, 240pp.

THE TIGER IN THE ATTIC: MEMORIES OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT AND GROWING UP ENGLISH

by Edith Milton

Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005, 242pp.

Sixty years after the war, the story of the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria has reached the stage where it is part lived experience, part history. As a result, it has in recent years formed the subject of an increasing number of personal memoirs and autobiographies and also of works of academic history. The mixture of the immediacy of the former and the more distanced objectivity of the latter is a particular attraction for researchers in the field, especially when we can benefit from books like three recent publications that now grace my shelves.

Edith Argy, née Tintner, came to Britain in 1939 on a domestic service visa and, after a very difficult start, lived more or less happily to tell the tale. At the heart of her memoir is a riveting account of her schooldays in Vienna, and in particular of her extraordinarily intense relationship with one of her teachers, which, though never improper, is still deeply unsettling in the emotional extremes to which it subjected her. Written with an arresting honesty and intensity, this book reminded me of the many works dealing with the tragedies wrought by the secondary school system in the German-speaking countries among its pupils: Frank Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* or Friedrich Torberg's *Der*

Schüler Gerber - a universe away from the stolidly upbeat *Tom Brown's Schooldays* or *Stalkey & Co.* To place a refugee memoir in such company may seem extravagant, but few if any refugee memoirs depict schooldays comparably.

Gertrude Dubrovsky's *Six from Leipzig*, the admirable product of much painstaking historical research, tells the stories of six cousins from Leipzig who came to Britain on Kindertransports and found homes in the Cambridge area. Detailed local studies of the reception of Jewish refugees in towns and cities around Britain are still rare, and this book is correspondingly to be valued. The thoroughness with which the author has worked on the mass of historical material available to her and her gift for unearthing telling details to bring it to life place her book among the most important of its kind yet written.

Dubrovsky deals with her subject very largely from a Jewish perspective, since her principal source is the papers of Greta Burkill, the moving spirit behind the Cambridge Refugee Children's Committee. She does not shirk the contentious question of the attitude of the Orthodox authorities, represented by Chief Rabbi Hertz and Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, who seemed more concerned with securing a Jewish upbringing for the children than with their emotional, educational and physical well-being. Sadly, there is no mention of the AJR, the refugees' principal organisation, which was founded in 1941 and had a large and active branch in Cambridge; its leading figures included Dr Georg Schatzky and Hans Reichmann, a future AJR chairman, who came to Cambridge after his release from internment on the Isle of Man.

Edith Milton, née Cohn, came from Karlsruhe on a Kindertransport in 1939 aged seven, and spent seven surprisingly happy years in Britain before joining her mother in America. A writer by profession, Edith Milton invests her life story with the style and literary quality of an accomplished work of fiction. We experience vividly her adjustment to Britain, where she and her sister were taken in by a loving if eccentric upper-crust couple, her

development of an 'English' identity as she progressed through the school system, and her strong identification with Yorkshire life - vowels, puddings and all. Skilful juxtaposition of events from the German, British and American phases of her life allows the author to reflect to good effect on identity and on memory as it reconfigures our past.

Anthony Grenville

Evidence of Hitler's intentions

THE UNWRITTEN ORDER: HITLER'S ROLE IN THE FINAL SOLUTION

by Peter Longerich

Tempus, 2005 (paper), 254 pp., £12.99

The claim by Holocaust deniers that Hitler was not responsible for the Holocaust rests on the lack of actual commands containing his signature. This book is based on evidence given in the libel trial involving David Irving and Deborah Lipstadt, at which the author was an expert witness. The text demonstrates convincingly that Hitler was fully aware of all that was going on and that he was involved up to the hilt.

How could this happen? We have to go back to the end of the First World War for an explanation. In searching for reasons why they had lost the war there was a widespread feeling among Germans that the 'international conspiracy' of Jews was responsible. Hitler and his associates, in the fledgling Nazi party, articulated this attitude in speeches from 1919 onwards. These were published in newspapers and received wide publicity. Initially, the anti-Jewish policy was intended to force Jews to emigrate and leave Germany *judenfrei*. But Hitler was already using terms like *Vernichtung* in the 1920s. He was nothing if not consistent. As Peter Longerich explains, Hitler frequently encouraged his subordinates to foment violent demonstrations and would then step in - the apparent statesman - to stop these when there were international protests, Kristallnacht being one such occasion.

In the absence of written orders, how can we be sure that Hitler himself

gave such dreadful instructions? The answer is surprising: Goebbels, Himmler and others kept detailed diaries, which, amazingly, have survived. Here there are frequent references to policies that the Führer wanted carried out. Himmler, in a speech to senior party officials, told them that he had been *ordered* to carry out some mass annihilations - the only person to whom he was answerable was Hitler and no one else. Even in his last will and testament, written on 29 April 1945, with the Russian army already in Berlin, Hitler encourages the future leaders of Germany 'to the scrupulous observance of the racial laws and to implacable opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry'.

We are still left with the question of how it was that one man could dominate so many others so totally, and that Nazi policies could be executed in the way they were. And, given that the Nazis made no secret of their intentions, how was it that other countries took so long before they acted to stop them?

Paul Samet

Acts of supreme heroism

THE RIGHTEOUS OF AUSTRIA: HEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST

Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs: Minoritenplatz 8, 1014 Vienna; www.aussenministerium.at

On being asked to review this book I felt pleased. At last I was going to be able say something nice about some of the Austrians who lived and served under Hitler. The book is published by the Austrian Foreign Ministry and it commemorates the 60th year of the liberation of Austria's one concentration camp - Mauthausen. It is also there to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between Austria and Israel. And yet!

Of a population of 6,725,000 only 88 (or is it 86 - there seems some confusion about the exact number?) have been recognised as 'Righteous' by Yad Vashem. The book admits this is a 'tiny' number compared with other European countries. The introduction by Jacob Borut says it all. Austria was

violently antisemitic. The book, on the other hand, tells the stories of those who proved there was a different option. The 'Righteous' acted in the face of hostility and their deeds were acts of supreme heroism. It should be remembered that the number of Jews in Austria at the time of the Anschluss was nearly 200,000. When the war ended, only about 1,000 survived - just 219 in Vienna.

However, as Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, says, 'the stories of the rescuers are both fascinating and wonderful. When asked why they risked their lives for Austrian Jews they answered that "as human beings we simply did the right thing". Please read their stories. There may not have been many of them, but they were "Heroes of the Holocaust", and that's the least we owe them.'

Peter Phillips

Human tragedy with comic elements

THE PEOPLE ON THE STREET: A WRITER'S VIEW OF ISRAEL

by Linda Grant

Virago Press, 2006, 214pp., £9.99

Grant traces her early anti-Zionism to a reaction against her narrow-minded father and the attitude of the Manchester Jewish community in which she grew up - that outside the confines of the family and community there was nothing but persecution. 'I knew that their sentimental visions of Israel were mostly rubbish', she declares.

Grant is drawn to return to Israel many times, the last during the recent *intifada*. She refers to a letter by her father on his first visit to Israel marvelling at the sight of a Jewish soldier guarding the prime minister's home: 'my parents believed that Israeli soldiers were nice Jewish boys who had managed to shoehorn their minds into the narrow fit of the military mentality.'

Against this cosy unreality, she sets the image of an Arab boy shot in the arms of his father and a Palestinian exultantly raising his bloody hands

after killing two off-duty Israeli army reservists.

To the Israelis, the soldiers who appear on the TV news are *their neighbour's son*. And their neighbour is sitting next door, weeping as she watches her child facing a crowd of Palestinian kids armed with rocks.

Grant is told by a soldier named Udi: 'I don't know why the world is against us, like we're making a lot of war crimes. Part of the argument is probably true, but you can't ignore all the bastards killing civilians.'

A trip to a settlement in Gaza puts Grant in touch with settlers who are still expecting a miracle to save them from having to leave. She notes the dire effect of their presence in blocked approach roads and divided territories on the surrounding Arab population. She accompanies a woman volunteer who makes it her business to intercede for Palestinians at check points: the volunteer gets nothing but hostility in return.

Grant is fascinated by the vitality and variety of motivations and ideologies that make up Israel. Of Tel Aviv, she confesses that 'only in this city does life for me exist in each of its three dimensions, our human tragedy with all its comic elements'.

Martha Blend

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Letter from Israel

In the middle of the cold Jerusalem winter we like to spend some days in Eilat, enjoying the sun and the pool while the rest of the country is shivering. We take our children and grandchildren along for a full-board weekend so that no one can complain of being hungry.

But this time there were ominous signs as we checked in. Tour buses rolled up and parked outside the entrance, discharging hordes of people. There were couples with children and grandparents in tow, fathers wheeling suitcases, mothers *schlepping* packages and toddlers clutching toys. In a way they were quite like us. But there was one big difference. They were all talking Russian.

Then we noticed the sign in the lobby welcoming the employees of a large Israeli manufacturing plant. We sighed resignedly. One can't expect a hotel in Eilat to be half-empty at the weekend, even if it is not high season.

However, Israelis en masse can be rather noisy, and even rowdy, and we were worried that our weekend would be spoiled.

But our fears were soon allayed. The Russian language was spoken, not shouted. Most of the people we encountered - whether beside the pool, in the dining room or in the lobby - were polite and well-behaved. The children were not rowdier than ours, and one hardly felt that the work-force of a rather large factory, together with the management, had taken over the hotel.

The hotel staff rallied manfully to meet the challenge. They tried to keep smiling and were invariably helpful. Some of them even spoke Russian. It is an undisputable fact that the influx of Russian immigrants has contributed to Israel's cultural life and industrial success. Perhaps the Russian immigration may even serve to temper Israelis' loud voices. Maybe soon *Hebrew* will be spoken, not shouted.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

A Polish-born Holocaust survivor, an Anglo-Jewish communal leader and admirer of Britain, a businessman and educationalist, an international figure in Holocaust restitution, an active worker for reconciliation between Poles and Jews, a tough and strong-minded man, Ben Helfgott is also a former international sportsman and is a proud family man.

Ben was born in Piotrkow Trybunalski in 1929 and, as his father owned a large flour mill there, the family enjoyed a middle-class lifestyle. At school he spoke Polish, though a majority of the pupils were Jewish. Reading Polish fluently, he devoured books and surreptitiously perused newspapers at the local kiosk, becoming forewarned of dire political developments in Germany and Czechoslovakia. By 1935 the family were preparing to sell up and go to Palestine, but his grandmother persuaded them to stay!

Under Nazi occupation, his father 'arranged' for him to work at the nearby glass factory as a slave labourer, and his working on a night shift saved his life. He spent a second year in a woodwork factory before being deported to Buchenwald, where he was separated from his father, whom he never saw again. He moved on to a factory in Schlieben manufacturing anti-tank weapons, then to Theresienstadt, from where he was liberated.

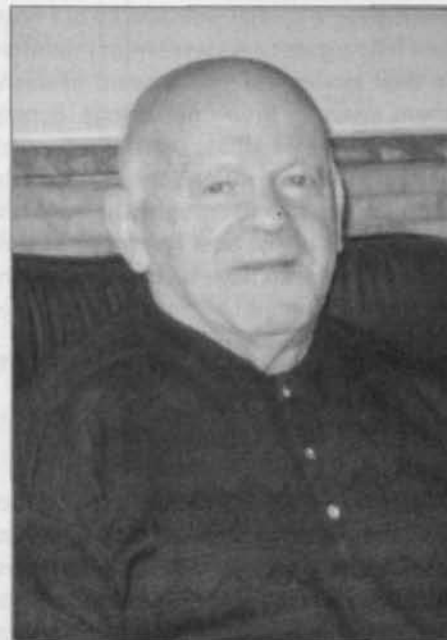
In 1997 I joined, and he accompanied, a group of British and Israeli university students visiting Holocaust sites in Poland. He was an invaluable witness on a tour which included his home town, where he led us through the streets of Poland's first ghetto, into which the town's Jewish residents and others were forced within two months of the German invasion in September 1939.

Standing ashen-faced in Piotrkow's former synagogue, Ben related how German bombers had attacked and slaughtered civilians without warning. With the town occupied, forced labour and killings began immediately and Jewish possessions were plundered. In October 1942, of the 24,000 Jews crammed into the ghetto, 22,000 were deported in one week to Treblinka death camp and murdered. Of those who hid during the deportation, many were

PROFILE

Ronald Channing

Ben Helfgott MBE Survivor, comrade, conciliator



rounded up and killed, among them his mother and younger sister, which left Ben, his father and sister Mala.

In Britain, Ben Helfgott is a leading member of Holocaust restitution and education organisations. These include the '45 Aid Society of Holocaust Survivors, the Yad Vashem Committee of the Board of Deputies, the Institute of Polish Jewish Studies, the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum, the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Wiener Library, the World Confederation of Holocaust Survivor Organisations, and the Trustees of National Holocaust Memorial Day. He also serves as Vice Chairman of the Claims Conference and is a member of their allocations, negotiating and executive committees, and of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research.

The Claims Conference attracts its share of controversy, Ben admits, but he is confident with regard to the way applications for funds are dealt with. He sees criticism as 'undermining its efficacy'. As survivors age, their increasing needs have rightly been

prioritised, 80 per cent of the overall funds being directed to their health and welfare, the remainder being allocated to remembrance, education and museums.

The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education was established in 1998 at the Stockholm Conference, with heads of state and government taking the lead. Now there are 24 participating countries developing Holocaust education programmes, drawing on the extensive knowledge and wide resources available internationally. Ben is particularly gratified by the expansion of its educational reach into Eastern Europe and Greece.

The '45 Aid Society represents the 732 'Boys' and girls, camp survivors under the age of 16, who in August 1945 were flown from Prague to England by RAF Stirling bombers. Ben flew into Crosby airport near Carlisle with a group of 337 children from Theresienstadt who were lodged in Ministry of Production housing in the Lake District. Founded in 1963, the '45 Aid Society became a surrogate family and remains at the heart of his activities. Apart from a four-year break, Ben has remained chairman of a society which maintains the Boys' unique camaraderie.

The Primrose Jewish Youth Club, established in London's Belsize Park in 1947, under its legendary leader Yogi Mayer, became the Boys' second home. Elected its first chairman, Ben became a winner in athletics and games, but it was as a British weightlifting champion that he represented his new country at the Olympic Games in Rome and Melbourne and the Commonwealth Games in Cardiff. Like most others, he also pursued the education that had long been denied him, building an extensive personal library.

Today Ben is confident that Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Church have abandoned their pre-war antisemitism and the teaching of deicide. 'Young people have open minds and Poland is no different from any other country in Europe', he believes. He and his wife live in northwest London and have three sons and seven grandchildren. In 2000 he was awarded the MBE for services to the community and the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by the Polish government.

INSIDE the AJR

Inaugural meeting in Edgware

Some 60 people attended an inaugural meeting at Edgware Masorti Synagogue. It was agreed that future meetings would take place on a monthly basis, wherever possible. Day outings too are to be arranged.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: Tues 1 August

Leeds HSFA talk on *Genizah*

Dr Avihai Shvitiel told us that the *Genizah* contains much material ranging from religious literature to private correspondence relating to medieval or earlier times. The latter, written mainly in Judeo-Arabic, throws considerable light on the conditions experienced by Middle Eastern Jews throughout the centuries, while the former includes such important documents as the first Hebrew version of *Ecclesiasticus*, previously known only in Greek.

Martin Kapel

Weald of Kent get-together

Some 20 of us had a most enjoyable get-together as the guests of Kathleen Bluh in St Leonards, partaking of a delicious lunch she and others had prepared. We hope Kathleen will invite us again next year!

Inge Ball

Next meeting: Tues 4 July. Regional get-together

Cambridge talk on 'Care in the community'

Rachel Carr of the Cambridgeshire Constabulary gave 14 members a most instructive talk on home security, personal safety and the need to avoid personal risks in diverse circumstances. We were introduced to the AJR's Hazel Beiny, who will co-ordinate certain future meetings.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: Thur 17 August

Harrogate Continental Friends - a pleasant afternoon

Eleven of us enjoyed a most pleasant afternoon. We were informed about events in June, July and August in various venues in the North and enjoyed the delicious refreshments supplied by the ladies. Thank you! A discussion about a

possible outing to 'anywhere' failed to reach a decision.

Inge Little

Next meeting: Wed 23 August

A sunny May morning in Surrey

Vernon and Jutta Saunders hosted a spring coffee morning in their beautiful garden at Oatlands, Weybridge, where group members enjoyed a feast of sandwiches and scrumptious cakes. Three first-timers were given a cordial welcome by our hosts and fellow guests; we were most interested in their stories and look forward to seeing them again at future gatherings. It need hardly be said that there was much animated conversation throughout the morning as friends caught up with the happenings of the past few months. How lucky we were to have such a warm sunny day for our meeting!

Harry Stadler

Next meeting: Wed 26 July. Garden party with Anthony and Janet

High-quality nosh in Norfolk

This hardy perennial of Norfolk devotees of memorable lunch-time meetings, nine of us, including the usual suspects from across the border in Suffolk, met in Norwich for the usual high-quality nosh and even managed a quiz chaired by the indefatigable Myrna.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: Thurs 17 August

Euphoric longing in North London

Peter Sinclair's talk 'Journey through Europe' evoked an almost euphoric longing within your correspondent. His summary and description of business travel to the Eastern-bloc countries in 1960-80 was so realistic - it's a pity no one thought of making a documentary at the time to preserve it for posterity. The audience of over 30 members was fascinated.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thur 27 July. To be announced

Iford special session

Over 40 of us turned up to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. Myrna had arranged a video and a superb lunch of Israeli delicacies much enjoyed by all. A number of people recalled outstanding visits to Israel in bygone years, especially one member who had experienced the siege of Jerusalem immediately prior to Israel's independence. A hearty rendering of *Hatikvah* concluded this special session.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wed 5 July. Jack De Metz, 'Fair Reporting'

Essex, the police and old-fashioned values

We had a return visit by PC Wyn Sharp, who told us, among much else, that there are 600 neighbourhood watch schemes in Southend; that most burglaries happen to single ladies aged over 80; and that there is a nationwide scheme in which locks, door chains and the like are fitted free - anyone over 60 with less than £25,000 of capital may apply (tel 01255 473 999). PC Sharp made us all feel the police are getting back to old-fashioned values.

Larry Lisner

Next meeting: Tues 11 July. To be announced

Brighton and Hove Sarid's marathon man

Before becoming an athlete, Sidney Levene was a part-time actor and full-time barrister and he ran his first marathon at the age of 61. Six months training was required and he told everyone how you have to pace yourself. Running the marathon at the age of 82 obviously keeps you looking young.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: Mon 17 July

HGS talk on Wiener Library

We celebrated our second birthday with a talk by Katharina Hübschmann, senior librarian of the Wiener Library. The collection, started in 1930, transferred to London in 1939. It is mostly used by academics and students, as well as the media for research and information purposes. A Third Generation project is now under way.

Eva Frea

Next meeting: Mon 10 July. Jeanette Rosenberg, 'Genealogy'

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Southern Region Tues 4 July. Get-together, details from Head Office

SW Midlands Sun 16 July. Lunchtime get-together and boat trip

South London Thur 20 July. To be announced

Welwyn Garden City Tues 25 July. Regional get-together

Oxford Tues 15 August. Details to follow

AJR TEA

**SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2006,
3.00 PM**

at

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A booking form is inserted into this issue of the Journal. On the back of the ticket application form there is a form for brochure space. If you would like to support the AJR even further, kindly complete the brochure form and return it to us.

We look forward to seeing you at the AJR Tea.

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**Monday 3 July 2006
11.45 am for 12.15 pm
Musical entertainment**

Reservations required

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**Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm**

July	Afternoon entertainment
Mon 3	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 4	CLOSED
Wed 5	Michael Heaton
Thur 6	Jen Gould
Mon 10	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 11	CLOSED
Wed 12	Mike Marandi
Thur 13	Sheila Games
Mon 17	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 18	CLOSED
Wed 19	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 20	Evelyn True
Mon 24	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 25	CLOSED
Wed 26	Ann Kenton-Barker
Thur 27	Paul Coleman
Mon 31	Kards & Games Klub

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KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

DIARY DATES

July 9-16 Lytham St Annes holiday

July 11 Day trip to Brighton

August 23 Lunch at AJR Centre,
afternoon trip to Tiptree
for Cream Tea

September 10 Annual Tea at the
Watford Hilton

Oct 29-Nov 5 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, Merriion 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**Congratulations**

The Trustees, Management and Staff of the AJR congratulate Anthony Grenville and Eva Urbach on the occasion of their marriage.

Deaths

Goodman, David, born Cologne 1921, died suddenly and peacefully in the arms of his wife Heidi, April 2006 in Chalfont St Peter. He will be sadly missed by Heidi, son Benni, and daughter Cornelia.

Mayer, Ilse has finally passed away after a long illness. Her final year was spent in a home for the elderly where she received the most sensitive care from dedicated staff. Thanks to the wonderful support of Monica, Carol and their families, plus other good friends, Ilse was never without visitors on a single day of her long stay. Ilse will be remembered by family and friends as a person of dignity, high principle and compassion. It will take us a long time to rebuild the family without her at the centre. Paul Mayer.

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Obituaries

Sophie Friedländer

Sophie Friedländer, who has died at the age of 101, was a teacher who kept the spirit of the Kindertransport alive for over 60 years. She was born in Hamburg, one of five children; when she was one year old, the family moved to Berlin. She did her teaching practice in the Karl Marx school in Neuköln, Berlin, a school well known for progressive education. She qualified as a teacher in 1933, beginning her teaching career at Landschulheim Caputh, which, founded as a children's holiday home, had developed into a school for Jewish and anti-Nazi children excluded from the state sector. I was fortunate enough to be one of her pupils.

In England, having offered her services to the Kindertransport, Sophie was made second in command at the reception camp at Dovercourt Bay. In 1942 she and her lifelong friend Hilde Jarecki ran a hostel for 14-18 refugee girls. From 1943 to 1955 the two friends continued this work in Reading in a hostel for 5-16-year-olds. When the hostel closed, Sophie and Hilde settled in North London, where Sophie taught English as a second language to adults before working at a girls' grammar school. In her retirement Sophie described her experiences as a teacher in *Erinnerungen einer jüdischen Leherin in Berlin und im Exil*. Her autobiography, *Sophie und Hilde: Ein Zwillingsbuch*, was published in Germany and later translated into English.

Elizabeth Rosenthal

Gerald Fleming

Gerald Fleming, who has died aged 84, devoted much of his academic life to showing that the Nazi leadership, and Hitler in particular, had instigated and directed the Holocaust. His work was intended as a rebuke to historians suggesting that the Holocaust was a by-product of the Nazi regime and the wars it waged.

Born Gerhard Flehinger in Baden-Baden, in 1936 he was sent to school in England. After the war he taught German and French literature in schools and then at the university of Surrey. His linguistic expertise was to underpin his challenge to so-called revisionist historians. His chief work in this field was *Hitler and the Final Solution*, published in German in 1982 and

in English two years later, a significant contribution to the debate about what or who had driven the Holocaust.

Paul Spiegel

Paul Spiegel, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, who has died at the age of 68, was born into a family of horse and cattle traders in Warendorf, near Münster. During his over six years as President of German Jewry, he had a good rapport with Gerhard Schröder, Chancellor for most of that time. Following the charismatic Ignaz Bubis, he brought to the post considerable personal modesty. In an often quarrelsome community, he acted as peacekeeper. He resolved issues between the Central Council and the growing Liberal Jewish movement. Another major challenge of his presidency was the integration of 100,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union in German society. He tackled these difficult problems with drive and commitment.

Inge Ader

Inge Ader, a Jewish refugee from Germany who made a successful career as a photographer, has died. Born Inge Nord in Schwerin in 1918, she learned her trade in Hamburg. She came to Britain in April 1939 on a domestic service permit and two months later married Max Ader; they had met before leaving Germany.

She and a refugee partner set up a successful studio, Banyard Ader, in Swiss Cottage. She was one of the refugee photographers who introduced modern techniques to Britain. Later, she worked alone, concentrating on portraits. She lived in the Hampstead area for the rest of her life. Her husband died in 1978. She had two children and five grandchildren.

Anthony Grenville

Arts & Events Diary - July

To mid-July Holocaust Memorial Photographic Exhibition 'Absence and Loss' at Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, Notts Tel Marion Davies on 01623 836627

Mon 3 Hans Seelig, 'Some Further Musical Anniversaries' Club 43

Mon 10 Informal end-of-season get-together Club 43

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

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

German life certificate notarisation

As announced in last month's Journal, the AJR is now recognised as an 'official British office' and will be able to notarise for AJR members life certificates issued by the German pension authority, the Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund (DRB).

In order to avoid complications and delays with payments, members wishing to have their life certificates notarised by the AJR must present themselves together with their passport (or some widely accepted form of identification) at AJR Head Office, our Day Centre in Cleve Road or at a regional group meeting. Home visits can also be arranged by contacting Head Office.

Members can continue to visit the German embassy to have their forms legalised, as well as at police stations, financial institutions, physicians, rabbinate and notaries public.

Hungarian compensation: a reminder

The deadline to apply for the recently extended Hungarian compensation programme is **31 July 2006**. The scheme, sponsored by the Hungarian government, makes lump sum awards of \$1,800 (HUF 400,000) to the living spouse, child or parent of a Holocaust victim who died due to the 'political despotism of the Hungarian authority or an official person, or if the injured person died during deportation or forced labour'.

In cases where there are no such living relatives a living sibling is entitled to half the compensation amount.

Application forms are available from this office and should be returned, once completed, to: The Central Compensation Office, 1116 Budapest, Hauszmann Alajos utca 1. The telephone number is 0036 1 371 8900, fax is 0036 1 371 89 12, and email information@karpotlas.hu

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

Yorkshire's Holocaust memorial: perpetuating relatives' lives

I had been invited to attend a dedication ceremony for a Holocaust memorial in Leeds as the representative of AJR's head office. This necessitated travelling up on the day prior to the event with my wife Sima, who had offered to keep me company. As well as renewing friendships, I was in particular very much anticipating the address of Professor Leslie Wagner, the son of a Jewish refugee and founding Vice Chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University, who had been entrusted with the task of unveiling the memorial.

The concept of a memorial dedicated primarily to the family members of survivors and refugees living in the Yorkshire region was first mooted more than two years ago. The idea emanated from within the pioneering Continental Friends group, conceived and established by AJR's dynamic Northern Co-ordinator Susanne Green, in co-operation with the Leeds-based Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association. The memorial would be permanently housed in the splendid new community centre then being built in memory of Marjorie and Arnold Ziff. With considerable interest in the Liverpool community's Holocaust memorial, as described by Susanne, after consideration of several alternative schemes it was decided to compile a memorial volume housed in a purpose-built display cabinet.

Fortunately, Pippa Landey, AJR's volunteer for Leeds and Bradford groups, took on the project as a labour of love. From the 100 letters mailed by the AJR to members in Yorkshire inviting them to inscribe their lost loved ones in the memorial volume, amazingly 70 replied positively with more than 400 names. Ultimately, more than 500 names of those who perished in the Holocaust were collated and Pippa used brief biographies, family recollections and precious photographs to add detail to their truncated lives. Her appeal for funding was answered first by the AJR, who met

the expenses for printing the memorial volume, and subsequently by a number of generous local benefactors, supplemented with two fundraising events.

At the hotel on the evening preceding the ceremony, a late phone call from Susanne revealed that Professor Wagner would be unable to attend the dedication ceremony due to a family bereavement. Would I step in for him? Though a little taken aback, and conscious of the responsibility and honour, I agreed, and set to work to draft an appropriate address, enjoying not too much sleep that night. I became increasingly aware of the importance attached to the project by the families of those who had perished and would form the bulk of the audience.

With its splendid amenities, Leeds Community Centre must be the envy of most other Jewish communities in Britain. More than 150 guests gathered in the main auditorium, where Pippa introduced the project and explained my substitution. In my address I recalled visiting Holocaust sites in Poland and specifically Ben Helfgott's account of the deportation of 22,000 Jews from his home town, Piotrkow, and the murder of his mother and sister. I emphasised the importance of memorialisation at a time of increasing Holocaust denial. Those who were murdered were not just statistics, but real people with identities and families. The Leeds memorial would be a perpetual and visible connection for future generations to appreciate the community's direct links with their lost relatives.

Heinz Skyte kindly gave a vote of thanks on behalf of Continental Friends. After Pippa and I had unveiled the well-designed memorial, a floor-to-ceiling cabinet containing both the volume and a memorial flame, Rabbi Jason Kleinman recited *El Moleh Rachamim*, followed by a spontaneous minute's silence. It was a very moving occasion.

Newsround

Film portraying *Dunera* voyage premiered

Friendly Enemy Alien, a film which has premiered in Berlin, shows the suffering of Jews and anti-Nazis despatched in appalling conditions to the Australian Outback by Britain on the *Dunera* during the war. John Burgan said he made the film to illustrate that, while refugees are often seen as a burden, they contribute a lot to the countries in which they settle.

Archive of Nazi records finally to be opened

Germany is to open a huge archive of Nazi records on concentration camp inmates and slave labourers, ending a long-running dispute. The files, locked in a former SS barracks in Bad Arolsen in central Germany, contain detailed information on over 17 million people who went through the concentration camp and slave labour system.

First ordination in Germany since Holocaust

Addressing the American Jewish Committee in Washington, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said: 'We are able to note with great joy that Jewish schools are thriving, synagogues are being built and, as of next fall, rabbis will be ordained.' She was referring to the ordination ceremony of three Reform rabbis, due to take place this September in Dresden's New Synagogue.

German town scraps Hitler honour

Authorities in Aschersleben, eastern Germany, said they were unaware that Hitler had received the status of 'freeman of the city' until it was brought to their notice recently. The status was scrapped 'in two seconds' during a council meeting, an official said.

Antisemitism monitor for US State Department

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has named Gregg Rickman, an investigator into the Swiss banks' role in the Holocaust, as the first special envoy for monitoring and combating antisemitism around the world.

Jews, Jewish studies and China

Israeli author A. B. Yehoshua has predicted that Diaspora Jews would move to China if it were to become a world power. There has been a continuous Jewish presence in China for the last 200 years and at least 3,000 Jews now live permanently in Beijing alone. At least eight of China's 300 universities now offer courses in Jewish studies.