

AJR journal

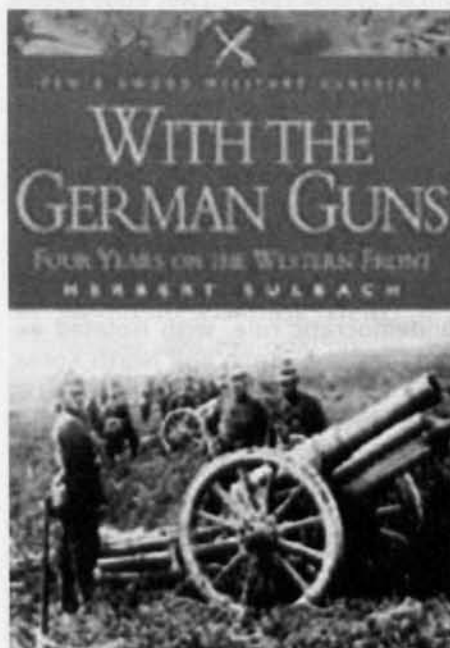
Association of Jewish Refugees

In memory of Herbert Sulzbach

One finds some surprising items in past issues of our journal, but a report from July 1960 takes some beating. Under the heading 'Association of P.O.W.s', it announced that at a gathering in Düsseldorf 25 ex-prisoners of war, former inmates of Featherstone Park Camp in Northumberland, had met their former Interpreter Officer, Captain Herbert Sulzbach, and had decided to form an association whose aim was to improve relations between the German and British peoples. Sulzbach, a German-Jewish refugee who had lived in London since 1937 and later worked in the cultural department of the West German embassy, was elected honorary president of the association, the 'Arbeitskreis (Working Group) Featherstone Park'.

For over 25 years, the Working Group met in Düsseldorf every October. In *AJR Information's* report of its first meeting, the cultural commentator PEM (Paul Erich Markus) recalled that when he had first met Sulzbach in a military hospital in 1942, the latter had been a private in the British army, whereas when he was invited to Sulzbach's home a few years later, he had become a captain, and among his guests were several high-ranking German officers. For Featherstone Park was the only camp in Britain for captured officers, Wehrmacht and SS, and Sulzbach had held the key post of Interpreter Officer there, from December 1945 until the camp closed in 1948.

Herbert Sulzbach was born into a distinguished Frankfurt banking family in 1894. He volunteered for the army in 1914, served right through the war and was awarded the Iron Cross. His patriotism shone through his memoirs, *Zwei lebende Mauern. 50 Monate Westfront* (published in English as *With the German Guns: Four Years on the Western Front*), but so did his humanity and hatred of war. Forced to emigrate by Hitler, he was interned on the Isle of Man in 1940, served in the Pioneer Corps and, once German prisoners began to arrive in Britain in large numbers after the Normandy landings, threw himself into the programme of re-education. Leading by example, he aimed to show the German officers in his charge that mutual



Herbert Sulzbach's First World War memoirs

respect and tolerance, democracy and humanity were superior to the discredited values of the defeated Third Reich.

Many of the several thousand officers who passed through Sulzbach's hands recorded moving tributes to his achievements in re-educating them towards democracy. In 1982 they laid a plaque at the camp's site, making special mention of 'Captain Herbert Sulzbach O.B.E. who dedicated himself to making this camp a seedbed of British-German reconciliation'.

Of course, some incorrigibles remained immune to re-education. But many prisoners responded positively, especially to the Jewish refugees among the Interpreter Officers, from whom they initially expected hatred and a desire for revenge. These men provided a remarkable example of humanity in action, and their devotion to the ideals of tolerance and respect for human dignity regardless of nationality or race added lustre to the British re-education programme.

A German prisoner left an account of the behaviour of one Jewish refugee officer, Charles Stambrook of Camp 180 near Cambridge, when an SS officer shouted 'Jew Lout' (presumably 'Judenbengel') at him as the prisoners were being counted: 'Let us

reflect for a moment what an SS captain would have done, if a prisoner of war had shouted "SS lout!" at him. This is what the British officer did. He turned round coolly, and said calmly to the man who had shouted, "The Jew part is correct, the lout part isn't." And carried on.'

The put-down would read even better in German – 'Der Jude stimmt, der Bengel nicht' – as the dignity of the Interpreter Officer's reaction to the racial slur exposed the Nazi and his crude, dehumanised ideology to public contempt.

Sulzbach himself claimed in a BBC talk in 1948 that 'the German PoWs going home to Germany now will be the best envoys for peace and understanding between our two countries'. Events broadly seem to have proved him right: many of his ex-prisoners subsequently occupied senior positions in the West German diplomatic service, in industry and in other branches of public life. The list of patrons of the Arbeitskreis Featherstone Park included Victor Gollancz, Norman Bentwich and Yehudi Menuhin, as well as Basil Liddell Hart, Ivone Kirkpatrick, Harold Nicolson and Benjamin Britten. One former prisoner, Landgerichtsrat Kurt Schwedersky, played a key role as judge in several trials of former concentration-camp guards, including the Treblinka trial in Düsseldorf, second in importance only to the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt.

This is neither to overlook the well-known failures in Germany's post-war attempts to come to terms with its citizens' responsibility in the Holocaust, nor is it to exaggerate the impact of British values and standards of behaviour on German PoWs during their captivity here. Some readers, too, may consider unacceptable any attempt by Jewish refugees to reach out the hand of friendship to Nazi officers. But men like Sulzbach had the courage to confront evil without hatred, rejecting with due severity those who remained wedded to Nazism while being willing to embrace the good in those who wished to change. Herbert Sulzbach died in 1985; he is buried with his wife in Hampstead Cemetery.

Anthony Grenville

Lightening the February gloom

Is it really true that we live in a world of unparalleled insecurity, threatened by wars, crises and political confrontations between nations, religions and races? For those of my generation in Britain and Western Europe, born at the end of the Second World War, the decades of our lifetimes have, on the contrary, been a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity. We are the first generation of the twentieth century whose menfolk have not been called up to fight in a major European war. Our grandfathers suffered and died in the trenches of 1914-18, our fathers fought in the war against Hitler or fell victim to murderous Nazi persecution, but I vividly recall my relief at learning in my early teens that conscription was to be abolished: my generation of young men would not more or less automatically become cannon fodder for the next European conflagration.

If one looks back to the supposedly optimistic and rainbow-hued era of the 1960s, one sees a world where two armed blocks were kept from conflict only by the roughly equal balance of their nuclear arms, sufficient to destroy the world many times over. The principal division – the Iron Curtain – ran right through the heart of Europe, while the enclave of West Berlin, surrounded by East German territory, twice brought the continent close to war, during the Anglo-American airlift that broke Stalin's blockade of the city in 1948-49 and during the erection of Ulbricht's Berlin Wall in 1961. During the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, only exceptionally adroit conflict management by the Kennedy administration led the Soviet Union to abandon its attempt to base nuclear missiles in Cuba without sparking armed conflict between the superpowers. The Vietnam War further disfigured the decade.

Now parliamentary democracy has spread across Europe. The collapse of Communism and the resulting reunification of Germany, far from setting in train a resurgence of the German *Drang* to dominate Europe, has instead resulted in the entry of the countries of Eastern Europe into the comity of European democracies, so diluting German preponderance that Germany now has less than a fifth of the population of the expanded EU. In 1960, by contrast, secure democracies were in short supply: Britain, America, a scattering of West European countries, Canada,

Australia and New Zealand. West Germany and Japan were still developing democratic systems, while Spain, Portugal and (from 1967) Greece lay under authoritarian or fascist rule.

Democracy is taking root beyond Europe and North America – and as democracies have a record of not making war on each other, so the risk of conflict is receding across the world. In Latin America, the death of General Pinochet reminds us that not a single right-wing dictator remains in power, and that there is only one left-wing dictator, Fidel Castro in Cuba. In South and South-East Asia, too, rapidly increasing prosperity has underpinned the development of democratic institutions or at least promoted the abandonment of the worst excesses of undemocratic rule, with isolated exceptions like Burma and North Korea. Who would have thought in 1966, at the outset of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution, that by 2006 China would have become one of the engines of world capitalism, more interested in exporting consumer goods than world revolution?

On the negative side of the balance, the perilous situation facing Israel and the entire Middle East alarms us all. Africa, too, stays stubbornly immune to all efforts to improve the lives of its population, though South Africa's transition from apartheid to multi-racial democracy in the 1990s was a triumph for peace that few would have predicted. The surge of Islamic fundamentalism is making itself felt in Western Europe, and the fear of terrorist outrages in our cities helps fuel a widespread sense of insecurity, as, more amorously, does global warming. But, looking back on my youth in the 1960s, I see a political situation much improved over the decades.

Anthony Grenville

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Refugee Archives: Theory and Practice, 11-13 April 2007

An international conference is to be held at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex on the above subject. Its organisers are Edward Timms, Andrea Hammel, Samira Teuteberg and Sharon Krummel.

Part of the conference will be the launch of the Online Database of British Archival Resources Relating to German-speaking Refugees, 1933-1950 (BARGE) on 11 April 2007 at the University of Sussex.

The compilation of the BARGE database is the objective of a project which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The database will record archival resources concerning German-speaking refugees who arrived in Britain in 1933-50. The papers of these refugees are scattered in public and private collections in Britain and this listing will function as a research tool that can be consulted online. The BARGE database will make information on the holdings of institutional archives and personal collections throughout the British Isles freely accessible on the internet.

Contributions to the conference will cover a range of topics from investigations of the British archival landscape to discussions on German-language collections in Europe and the US. There will be panels on the use of Life Histories and on audio-visual media in archives and research, as well as papers on refugee organisations and their archival holdings. The creation and use of thematically-structured archival databases will be another subject for further exploration and exchange at the conference.

The Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies will publish selected papers of the conference as Volume 9 of their Yearbook. The volume will be edited by Anthony Grenville and Andrea Hammel and will be published by Rodopi at the end of 2007.

For further information on the conference programme and the BARGE project, see www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/cgjs/barg or contact Sharon Krummel at s.a.krummel@sussex.ac.uk.

Mother's help

Somewhere I wrote that I had had dozens of domestic jobs, but that can't be right. With the best will in the world I can only count nine, but even that is quite impressive, given that my inglorious career as a resident domestic servant lasted only 16-17 months, from September 1938 to the beginning of 1940. By that time, the Home Office must have decided that I had fatigued for long enough their overworked police officers, who had to record my every move, and they allowed me to do office work.

But when hapless Sadie got hopeless me, the world was still at peace and I was still only 19 years old.

Sadie was a widow of 26 with a 4-year-old son called Geoffrey who had arrived from the East End – not quite yet in Golders Green or 'the Suburb', but Stamford Hill. She and her sister Freda shared a house and ran a small grocery store. They were out all day and it was my job to look after the child, keep the house clean, do the washing and ironing, prepare lunch for Geoffrey and myself, and help with dinner in the evening – all for 12 shillings a week. But they did treat me as one of the family.

How I managed to cope with the workload I don't know. But I do remember one day, when Geoffrey touched the hot iron while I was ironing and we both ended up in tears – he because he was in pain and I because I had no idea what to do about it.

Sadie must have kept a kosher home, but not obtrusively so. It was at the Mandelbaums', the girls' parents' home in Cable Street, where we spent every

Sabbath, that I encountered a truly orthodox household for the first time.

Of course, I always knew I was Jewish. For one thing, my school reports said so. Religion: Mosaic. Also, we used Yiddish expressions at home, like *meshugge*, *rachmones* and *nebbich*. And, looking back, I find that all my friends were Jews. It was always tacitly acknowledged that we lived in an antisemitic country, although my parents' generation, totally unfairly, largely blamed any antisemitism on the Polish Jews, the *Ostjuden*. It was also, again tacitly, understood that we shouldn't make ourselves conspicuous – keep a low profile! But that was as far as my Jewishness went. My stepmother was the only one in the family who observed the holiest days and fasted on Yom Kippur. I never went to synagogue except for weddings and, reluctantly, for the occasional semi-compulsory youth services conducted by my religious education teacher. To me, a religious Jew was one who went to synagogue on Saturday and didn't eat pork.

Our Friday nights at the Mandelbaums' amazed me. There must have been prayers, performed by Mr Mandelbaum, but I don't recall them. What I do remember is getting into trouble for using a blue tea towel for *fleishig*. What did I know about *milchig*, *fleishig*, red tea towels, blue tea towels? The food, invariably borscht and boiled chicken, had to be prepared before the Sabbath and kept hot on a burner – all news to me.

Mrs Mandelbaum spoke to me in what she took for German but was really Yiddish, and one of her verbal attempts to rouse me from deep sleep became a source of hilarity to my friend Renee (Mittler-Cohen, one of the Hakoah swimmers to whom the film *Watermarks* was dedicated), who was in London at the time. Decades later, in France, she would still chuckle over it.

This was actually one of my more congenial jobs but, after a while, I grew tired of helping mother and left in search of further adventures.

Edith Argy

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Kindertransport survey launched

'Making new lives in Britain'

A unique survey entitled 'Making New Lives in Britain' is to record the Continental background, journey to Britain, reception and subsequent experiences of the almost 10,000 predominantly Jewish children of the Kindertransport. The survey was conceived and its contents designed by leading members of the AJR's Kindertransport special interest group, with support and funding from the AJR Charitable Trust.

Former 'Kinder' who are AJR members, and as many as possible of those who are unaffiliated, are being sent a Questionnaire, the answers to which will form the basis of an archive of inestimable value to historians. A Supplementary Questionnaire, requesting basic details about Kinder who are deceased, is also part of the pack.

The dramatic rescue of children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia involved unimaginable parental sacrifice. It brought these unaccompanied children across Europe and the Channel by train and boat to security in Britain between December 1938 and the outbreak of war in September 1939.

As Bertha Leverton MBE, founder and organiser of the original Reunion of Kindertransport in 1988, pointed out,



'It is hard to credit that before 1988 hardly anyone had heard of, or was the least bit interested in, the Kindertransport. Yet today... we are researched, filmed, written about and recognised as part of British history.'

Although many memoirs have been published, no comprehensive historical study, archival record, or survey of the Kindertransport has previously been undertaken. A project which began early last year as an investigation by Rev Bernd Koschland into the hostels in which he and most of the other children were housed on their arrival in Britain was, at Bertha Leverton's suggestion, expanded into a comprehensive investigation based on her

initial draft questionnaire. Hermann Hirschberger, KT-AJR Chairman and a retired chartered engineer, Bertha Leverton, and Ronald Channing of the AJR, with a social science background, refined the contents over several months. The AJR funded the legal advice necessary to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Versions of the survey are being distributed to known Kinder in the USA and Israel and, through national publicity, it is hoped that many other Kinder who settled in these and other parts of the world, or their surviving family or friends, will contact the AJR and request a Questionnaire and/or a Supplementary Questionnaire. If you know of any other Kinder, we would be grateful if you would write to us with their contact details.

Please direct requests for Questionnaires, the provision of Kinder names and addresses and any other enquiries in the first instance to Andrea Goodmaker, Kindertransport Survey, AJR, Jubilee House, Merion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, England, tel 020 8385 3070, fax 020 8385 3080, email Andrea@ajr.org.uk.

Ronald Channing

Changing things – the task of the Gedenkdieners

For more than a decade now, young Austrian men have had the opportunity to work for institutions outside Austria which preserve the memory, and teach the lessons of, the Holocaust. This form of national service is called Gedenkdienst (commemorative service) and is an alternative to serving in the army. But becoming a Gedenkdieners is not an easy option: a sub-clause on the application form for those who refuse to fight and are required to do so-called civil service in a hospital, with the Red Cross, or in a retirement home mentions the possibility of serving abroad but provides no further details.

You need to be an idealist to have the endurance to pursue the long path towards becoming a Gedenkdieners. Military service takes 6 months; Gedenkdienst requires 12 months' residence abroad plus about a year of prior preparation. You have to organise your life abroad on your own. Responsible for the administration of this programme are associations which have been accepted by the Austrian home

secretary. The largest, the Verein Gedenkdienst, sent me to London. Together, we are 20 young men working for institutions around the world such as the US Holocaust Museum (Washington DC), the Leo Baeck Institute (New York), the Asociación Filantrópica Israelita-Hogar Adolfo Hirsch (Buenos Aires), Yad Vashem (Jerusalem), and the International Youth Meeting Centre (Auschwitz). I am working in the Holocaust and Anti-Racism Department of the London Jewish Cultural Centre. Organising testimonies of Holocaust survivors in English schools, helping to organise international conferences on Holocaust education in China, Belarus and Ukraine, and assisting in planning cultural events in co-operation with the Austrian Cultural Forum are part of my duties.

Although my job is sometimes very hard it is also very rewarding. Knowing I can help prevent antisemitism and racism means a lot to me. What is also important for me as a historian is that I can help my country to come to terms

with its past, a task which is greatly respected at the highest level. Austria's president made a point of expressing his support for our endeavours by inviting us to his office before we left.

Last but not least, I should mention that Gedenkdienst is also very active within Austria. We are using the assets we have gathered over the years of teaching the Holocaust and fighting racism and antisemitism around the world to do the same in Austria. We hold seminars and public discussions and co-operate with a number of other institutions which have the same objective.

Combating deeply-rooted antisemitism and racism may seem futile. Sadly, just a few weeks ago a Jewish school in Vienna was attacked. Right-wing politicians today still attempt to gain votes by using immigration and racism as a lever. My friends at Gedenkdienst and I see it as our responsibility to work against these forces. I am an optimist who believes that we can change things. At least a little.

Johann Kirchknopf

Speaking again: hidden children of the Holocaust

Eight-year-old Janek Weber was smuggled out of the Cracow ghetto in a suitcase. It was March 1943, when the ghetto was about to be liquidated. Many inmates tried to escape through the sewers, but most were caught. 'One of my last memories of my father was him holding me in his arms queuing to go down a manhole', Weber recalls. 'Then he changed his mind and we went back to our room and he told me I would be put in a suitcase. He made holes so I could breathe. I remained in the suitcase about two hours.'

Most of the remaining inmates were deported to Plaszow. Weber's father was killed, but his mother survived Plaszow and Auschwitz and was eventually liberated from Belsen. Reunited with her after the war, Weber learned that his parents had bribed a carriage driver 'with a kind face' and told him there was a child in the case who should be let out between the ghetto and Plaszow. Indeed, Janek jumped from the carriage, put his hands in his pockets and started whistling a Polish tune, realising that he should look 'like any Polish kid'. As instructed, he went back to the block of flats owned by his well-to-do parents, where the devoted Polish caretaker sheltered him. As she had only one room, Janek had to hide under the bed whenever anybody knocked.

After several days, Janek's parents made contact with another sympathetic Polish family and he was taken to a semi-secluded villa outside Cracow, where he was given the room of the grandmother who had recently died. The youngest child of the family was told that nobody was allowed in grandma's room and it was locked. Janek remained hidden there for nearly two years until the Russians liberated Cracow in January 1945.

The plight of children hidden during the Nazi era, like Weber, has not lacked attention and this powerful new volume by Yoram Mouchenik, chronicling encounters with children in hiding in wartime France, makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the subject. With an acknowledgement to his parents for having remained alive, Mouchenik, a psychotherapist born two years after the war, has focused his work on 16 children of deportees who, like his parents, were on a certain 'Convoy Y' from Loiret in 1942.

*Ce n'est qu'un nom sur une liste,
mais c'est mon cimetière:
Traumas, deuils et transmission
chez les enfants juifs cachés en
France pendant l'Occupation*

(It's Only a Name on a List,
But It's My Cemetery:
Trauma, Grieving and
Transmission among Jewish
Children Hidden in France
during the Occupation)

by Yoram Mouchenik

Grenoble: La Pensée Sauvage,
Editions, 2006, 173 pp., 20 euros

These 'hidden children' and many others have formed an association to preserve the memory of the relatives who never returned. The haunting title of the volume is taken from one of Mouchenik's interviewees, with the list in question compiled by Serge Klarsfeld, the researcher engaged in documentation of the Holocaust.

What is striking is Mouchenik's ability to penetrate the surface and explore the trauma suffered by many of these individuals, not only as a result of their

*Like animals desperate
to survive, he and
others like him had
been unaware of the
enormity of the tragedy*

experience during the war but of the fractured family life which often persisted even if a parent had survived. For some, to mourn their loved ones would be to make them die once again. Others have consciously felt their despair transmitted to their children. As a psychotherapist, Mouchenik's interviews have often proved healing. 'Eliane', for example, an elderly woman living in Israel, managed, as a teenager during the occupation – through a series of unpredictable 'miracles' – to save not only herself but her younger brother and sister and a small cousin, who, to this day, refers to her as 'maman'. Mouchenik was the only person to whom 'Eliane', who suffered a breakdown after the liberation, has been

able to speak fully of her travails. Unusually prescient, she had heard a BBC broadcast in June 1942 informing of crematoria built at Auschwitz and begged her mother to escape before the round-ups, only to be roundly slapped. One of the problems she brought up with Mouchenik is the anger she feels towards her mother.

The association has provided adherents with a new 'family'. After the war, children reunited with a surviving parent often found a broken creature needing care. This was the case with the fathers of 'Odile' and 'Sylvie', the latter erecting a *stella* in the house to his wife's memory. Other children suffered from the remarriage of the surviving parent to someone less than sympathetic. It would appear, too, that even the association, with all its benefits, has not been immune to the rivalries and politics afflicting most organisations, something from which Sylvie, a baby at the time of the deportation and an active founder member, has suffered. Nevertheless, Sylvie's work in interviewing a number of her fellow child survivors has, like Mouchenik's, proved a source of healing.

While Janek Weber initially had difficulty in speaking, as he hadn't spoken for two years, he claims not to have suffered post-war trauma and to have seen his experience as a kind of adventure. Like animals desperate to survive, he and others like him had been unaware of the enormity of the tragedy. He spent two years in the Belsen DP camp, where his mother remarried. He got on well with his stepfather, who also had a surviving son, and the couple had another son. In 1947 the family moved to Belgium. Weber has kept in touch with the Polish family who saved him. The parents (posthumously) and the caretaker have been honoured at Yad Vashem.

Unlike Weber, who considers himself extremely lucky, many of Mouchenik's hidden children had not fully recovered from the misery they experienced, which was exacerbated by their inability to unburden themselves. 'To speak ... [would be] to risk death once again', Boris Cyrulnik perceptively acknowledges in his preface, concluding that Mouchenik's book is a way of giving them their voice, at last.

Emma Klein

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

EVERY JEW'S DUTY

Sir – I have been shocked and saddened by the virulent anti-Israel feelings expressed in letters in the last two issues of your Journal. These seem to condemn the State of Israel unreservedly, totally ignoring the enormous contribution this tiny state has made in so many areas of human endeavour.

I refer in particular to the letter from Heinz Grünewald, who has no evidence for his assertion that 'a large proportion of your readers does not share your uncritical support of Israel', implying that they share his. Your readers will have good reason to remember what the Nazis did to our people and will find the comparison with the IDF odious. They will also be conscious of the fact that had the State of Israel existed then, our dearest relatives, whom many of us lost, would have been offered an unconditional haven, and the Holocaust might never have happened!

As for the letter from Peter Zander, of course he is entitled to voice his opinion about Israel whenever and wherever he wants to do so. However, he would not have been able to do so in (pre-war) Germany, whose nationality he apparently carries proudly. His perception of Israel based on his visit in around 1970 is unique. His advice to 'turn the other cheek' is one that has failed to be adopted by any country trying to deal with suicide bombers who hide among civilians and target women and children.

I strongly support the State of Israel – not in the sense of 'my country right or wrong', but as the only democracy in the Middle East and for its disproportionate (an adjective never used in this context by its enemies) contribution to the world in the many fields of human endeavour. This entitles me, and those who share my view, to be critical of some of its actions, but never to question its moral right to exist.

*Dr Kurt Schapira
Newcastle upon Tyne*

Sir – I refer to the letters from Messrs Zander and Steiner, who both appear to resent Israel's existence. Mr Zander's letter is full of spite against Israel. He refers to 'the most famous Jew... turning the other cheek'. I know of no example of his followers ever doing this: they have engaged in crusades and pogroms and waged endless wars.

As for Mr Steiner, apparently he is a genetics expert, declaring it as fact that the Jews of today have no genetic inheritance

from the ancient people of Israel. True, there has been intermarriage, but Jewish communities are almost certainly descended from the people of Israel. The only race I can belong to is the Jewish race, which takes its name from Judah, one of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Finally, Mr Steiner has another brainwave and becomes Hitler's apologist. The Holocaust was no fault of his – it was all due to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who was, of course, fully justified because he did not want the Jews to emigrate to Israel. So that's alright then – it was all the fault of the Jews!

M. Storz, London N16

Sir – Peter Zander's 'I take my integrity with me wherever I go' is the gem of the month. He deserves his halo. Peter Phillips is wrong in the narrow sense, but right in the wider one. Legally, no Jew who is not a citizen of Israel owes any duty to that state.

Personally, I wish that any Jew in the Diaspora could obtain Israeli nationality and identify with the country which is the ultimate guarantee for the existence of the Jewish people. Duties, I hasten to add, would mean obligations and confirm rights to dissent from the policies of the government, immoral or illegal acts, and, for example, discrimination against fellow Arab citizens – in short, oppositionist opinions held by half of the Israeli electorate to the stance of the government.

Fred Hirsch, Pinner, Middx

Sir – I was hurt by the critical letters re Peter Phillips's remarks on Israel. What did he actually say that was so offensive? Only that we Jews from all over the globe should be grateful to have at last a Jewish state and that it should be natural to support it. Is that such a terrible thing?

We were kicked out from country to country and now, thank G-d, we have Israel, which gives us a sense of belonging. Some of us prefer to live in our adopted country, but isn't it comforting to feel that our genetic country is always there to receive us with open arms?

Bettine Le Beau, London N3

Sir – Jews are a race. Sorry to disappoint so many of your readers. The Race Relations Act 1976 provides that a 'racial group' is defined by 'colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins' and recognises that anyone can belong to several racial groups simultaneously. Broadly, the criteria are visual and/or cultural. Even before the

act became law, government and opposition agreed that Jews and Sikhs were patent examples of racial groups. Legislation granting similar protection to faith groups has recently been enacted and we shall soon see what effect this legislation will have.

Francis Deutsch, Saffron Walden

Sir – I have been a Zionist since the age of ten, when we fled to Prague because there was nowhere else to go. After the Germans occupied the Czech lands, we knew we were doomed. A state of Israel would have saved us then. We said that, should we survive, a state of Israel would do so in the future. For most, there was no future.

Frank Bright, Ipswich

Sir – Why are so many of your correspondents anxious to distance themselves from Jewish religious practice or Zionism or both? It didn't do them any good in the 1930s and it wouldn't save them now.

*Professor Bryan Reuben
London N3*

Sir – Sad to read that Peter Zander is, as usual, having a problem with Israel. Also, we have Gerald Kaufman's hobby: every time he opens his mouth, he talks hatefully about Israel. These Jews are able to read historical facts – that we originally came from ancient Israel. Had the Romans not taken our state away, we would never have been scattered across the world.

Clare Parker, London NW3

Sir – On reading the letter of Peter Zander, it occurs to me that he should be excommunicated along with members of Neturei Karta who attended the notorious conference on the Holocaust in Tehran.

*Janos Fisher
Bushey Heath, Herts*

Sir – Does Peter Zander also deny the Holocaust?

*Victor Ross
Great Chart, Kent*

RETURNING TO GERMANY

Sir – I am strictly Orthodox and feel hurt by some of your articles. I cannot understand how anyone can go back to Germany and enjoy it. After all these years, I cannot forgive or forget.

Mrs B. Cohen, Salford, Lancs

ISRAEL AND THE HOLOCAUST

Sir – No army is perfect, no state is perfect – but to suggest that the Israel Defence Forces, who every day put their lives on the line for the protection of not only the inhabitants of Israel but of the Jewish people as a whole, perform actions similar to those of the SS and other Nazi troops can only come from a mind brainwashed by the ill-informed and biased media. Mr Grünewald and those of like mind, you would not have had to mourn relatives who perished in the Holocaust if there had been a state of Israel in existence in the 1930s.

Freddie Ingram, Newcastle

Sir – I am by no means a reader whose support for Israel is 'uncritical'. Nevertheless, the assertion by Heinz Grunewald is not only sickening but bewildering. Not even the vile propaganda of Ahmadinejad has reached this level.

Werner Maier
Newcastle upon Tyne

Sir – I wish people would stop bringing the Holocaust into every argument as a justification for everything Israel does. Perhaps if Israel couldn't rely on the unconditional support of America and Britain, it might be more willing to show some understanding for the Palestinians and things might improve.

Erika Millman, London W3

Sir – Heinz Grunewald's letter made welcome reading. I can imagine the brickbats ready to be hurled at him for daring to compare IDF activities with those of the Nazis. He will also be called a self-hating Jew, as I have been. One can be a Jew as well as being critical of what right-wing Israelis are doing in our name. As for Anthony Grenville's accusation of bias on the part of our BBC, I challenge him to quote examples of such bias.

Inge Trott
Cheam, Surrey

A GOOD EGG

Sir – Congratulations on Anthony Grenville's excellent article on Günter Grass (January) – a great writer and a decidedly good egg. I would go further and say that even his silence about his brief sojourn with the Waffen SS at the age of 17 can be excused. We are not obliged to reveal all our youthful errors to the world (or, for that matter, our later ones either).

Gerda Mayer, London E4

THE BOMBING OF DRESDEN

Sir – Karl Bettelheim (December) could not be more wrong! The prime cultural heritage of Dresden is recognised by everyone – although the many SS prisoners recorded as detained in Dresden and marched past its citizens and monuments to slave labour camps and death may have had other matters in mind.

Tutored by Guernica, Rotterdam and Coventry, our armed forces were obliged to prioritise war-winning action higher than cultural interests. Dresden was an important transport node for troops, equipment and supplies supporting the busy perpetrators of the Holocaust.

Our lives as Kindertransport survivors were undoubtedly saved by brave RAF bombers over Dresden in concert with many other British armed forces. We are glad that they won the war even as they returned the Luftwaffe's evil wind as an RAF whirlwind.

Dresden, quite close to Buchenwald and very close to Theresienstadt, could probably smell smoke drifting from the murderers' chimneys of distant industrial killings. We should never denigrate those who fought for us over Dresden – we thank the RAF.

Fred Barschak, London NW6

Bob Rosner, Hesse, Hull

Sir – No argument that Dresden was a cultural gem. If the Germans wanted it preserved, they should have declared it an 'open city'.

In February 1945 Dresden was the only major railway junction left serving both the eastern and western fronts, contributing substantially to Allied troop casualties. The port facilities along the Elbe were used for the same purpose. It was also pointed out to me some years later that within sight of the city was an aircraft maintenance plant, known as Heinkelwerft, which serviced the remainder of the Luftwaffe. Dotted around the perimeter and within the city were a number of industrial plants serving the German war effort. In every sense Dresden was a legitimate military target.

Perhaps Mr Bettelheim would agree that culture has a wider impact than the preservation of bricks and mortar.

Herbert Haberberg, Barnet

Sir – When I was growing up, there was an iconic belief that played on the mind of our parents. It was based on nostalgic reminiscences that the Austrian and German peoples were *Kulturmenschen* and nothing terrible would happen to us. That notion went up in flames during Kristallnacht.

Your reader, who so glibly writes about the shame of the destruction of Dresden, has a very short memory or had a very homely war. Had he been in the East End of London when it was ablaze and the unfortunate survivors were forced to sleep on the platforms of the underground stations for the rest of the war, he would have learned the meaning of total war.

When I visited Bergen-Belsen after the liberation some survivors questioned what took us so long. Every day the war was shortened by any means saved lives.

The 50,000 men of Bomber Command suffered horrendous losses, but their sacrifice helped to shorten the long war and ensured that so many of us survived the carnage. If the cost of our survival is weighed against the destruction of Dresden, which incidentally played a very important part in the German war effort, so be it!

H. P. Werth

Edgware, Middx

Sir – Mr Bettelheim hasn't the slightest idea of what was going on behind the scenes. The German army, in retreat, was passing Dresden and had established its own HQ, commanded by a high-ranking officer. We also knew of the factories converting brown coal to fuel. It was this that provoked the bombing of Dresden – not knowing the exact position of these factories, there was no alternative to carpet-bombing the city. To tell us that we destroyed a wonderful culture is ridiculous – by starting the Second World War, the Germans did it themselves!

Rolf Weinberg

Sidcup, Kent

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

'Less is more' is one of the revelatory statements of our era, and it's certainly true of grand-scale art shows like the badly publicised but massive **Great Art Fair** at **Alexandra Palace**. I lost count of how



Jacqueline Crofton, *KFC, Two Men of Different Ages*
1267mm x 1115mm

many artists and galleries exhibited inside the vaulted Palm Court monstrosity which overlooks north London, but just wandering through the designated corridors of mesmerising colour and vitality was like entering the combined worlds of *Narnia*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Hogwarts School*. To put it simply, it was a feast gone mad. From **Angela Newberry's** penguins and red landscapes printed on hand-made paper from India, Nepal and Japan, to **Jane Andrews's** Dali-esque, half-human horse, it was all too much in your face.

But that, of course, is the nature of large-scale exhibitions, whatever their subject. The problem is that the talent on show risks drowning in its own munificence, so that, far from being drawn in, you are impelled to move on to the next competing image. It was like a grand masked ball: glowing,

exuberant, mysterious but ultimately irrelevant, because you can't discern anyone's identity.

Having said that, of course there was some excellent work lurking in the corridors, if you had time and energy to discover it. And some prestigious galleries considered their presence was worthwhile too. The Royal Academician **Philip Sutton**, for instance, created some very pleasing woodcuts during the 1960s-70s which are less well-known than his paintings. Here we had a chance to admire these optimistic and

childlike colourful and black-and-white images which owe much to Impressionists like Matisse, and which feature nudes, landscapes and portraits.

The prolific and versatile artist **Jacqueline Crofton** showed work from her Hampstead Gallery, **Jiq Jaq**, which included a subtle collection of oil paintings from her figurative and newer semi-abstract paintings, as well as her recent experiments with Giclee printing, which produces superb textural detail, colour and tone, both in her abstracts and her Japanese figurative work. But it is in her *Urban Menu* collection (oil and mixed media), intended to form part of a food installation, where this artist excels herself.

Multiple portraits featuring people eating alone or with friends convey expressions that are most relaxed and vivid. Here, particularly in *KFC, Two Men of Different Ages*, you can see the intensity of the elderly newspaper reader, oblivious to the world.

Louise Balaam is a painter who loves to watch the clouds and sea on a dull day form and reform themselves into gentle whirls of subtle colour. She does not sit and paint what she sees. She watches, goes home to her canvas, and then paints the images she has absorbed into her imagination. Other artists are also captivated by clouds but I preferred her vividly imagined ones to the photogenically faithful white cloudscapes painted by **Alberto Bertoldi**. Very cleverly observed but, without the filter of his own personal vision, he might as well have used a good digital camera.

REVIEWS

Towards a victim mentality THE CHANGING FACE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

by **Walter Laqueur**

Oxford University Press, 2006, 228pp.,
£12.99 (Amazon)

The distinguished academic Walter Laqueur has in this book attempted to satisfy the disparate audiences of Jews and academics. He chronicles succinctly the history of antisemitism from the destruction of the Jewish temple in Elephantine in 410 BCE (but was this antisemitism in the modern sense?) to the present day, and delineates its numerous and contrasting causes. Jews killed Jesus, but Jesus and his disciples were all Jews. Jews were accused of being Bolsheviks, but were persecuted by other left-wing revolutionaries. Jews are accused of being neo-conservatives, but most Jews in the US vote Democrat and the truly right-wing neo-fascist parties reject them utterly. Jews are accused of being foreigners everywhere, yet they are loathed for establishing a state of their own. Jews are racially inferior, yet somehow they manage to assemble the talent to organise an international conspiracy to dominate the world.

As an academic account, this is well written and Laqueur emphasises the shift in antisemitism, which used to be a preoccupation of Christian right-wing groups and is now more frequently found among Muslims and the left. This change has perhaps been more gradual than Laqueur claims. Robert Wistrich wrote his book *The Left Against Zion* in 1978 and August Babel described antisemitism as 'the socialism of fools' in around 1892. In reality, antisemitism is a characteristic of *dirigiste* political or theological philosophies on both left and right and Jews have flourished only in bourgeois liberal societies.

It is facile to say that the new antisemitism is merely opposition to Israeli government policies. There are still many areas in the world where massacres are, or have recently been, perpetrated, for example Darfur, Rwanda, Bosnia, Angola, Indonesia, Algeria, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Iraq. None of these has drawn the

opprobrium that has been visited on Israel, which has killed in an order of magnitude far fewer people, and those mainly in self-defence.

Laqueur is still right to focus on the incongruous alliance between right-wing Islamo-fascists (subjugation of women, anti-democracy and so on) and left-wing neo-Stalinists. Muslim countries, which used to tolerate Jews as second-class citizens, were deeply humiliated by their defeats in 1948 and 1967. The principle of Dar-el-Islam means that those parts of the world once subject to Islamic rule need to be re-conquered before attention is turned to the other bits. Islamic theologians re-emphasise the anti-Jewish statements in the Koran without ever bothering to make the distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism so beloved of Western intellectuals. The president of Iran is only one Holocaust-denier among many.

As an academic account, Laqueur's book covers the ground as well as it could be covered in 228 pages. For Jews, who are the actors in the drama, however, the book has two deficiencies. First, the material is so compressed that Jewish life appears to have been one damned thing after another. In reality, there were periods of relative quiet, when Jews were able to get on with their lives and enjoy a modest happiness. Such episodes could scarcely be included in a book on antisemitism, yet their absence is likely to deepen paranoia among its Jewish readers.

Second, part of the duty of the historian is to deduce consistencies in world events. The only consistency in the history of antisemitism as expressed in Laqueur's book is that quite a lot of people (even including some Jews) hate Jews and are disposed to use violence against them. To believe this is to give way to a dangerous 'victim' mentality. Not everybody hates Jews – indeed, much of the world's population has never seen a Jew, and much of the remainder is indifferent or even philosemitic. It doesn't seem that way when the media publish faked photos of Lebanon (I think of it as the Photoshop War) and it can only be a matter of time before someone publishes a forged photo of Jews drinking gentile blood on Passover or Purim. Nevertheless, we have a Jewish

state and there is much that we, as Jews, can do to defend ourselves. I wish Laqueur's book had ended on a more positive note.

Bryan Reuben

'Introduction to the new science of mind'

IN SEARCH OF MEMORY

by Eric R. Kandel

Norton, 2006, 510 pp. £19.99

In the autumn of 2000, shortly after Eric Kandel shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology, Thomas Klestil, the then President of Austria, expressed a desire to honour the Viennese-born Laureate. In response, Kandel, who had long been critical of Austria's postwar conduct, suggested an international symposium on the consequences of Austria's embrace of Nazism on scientific and humanistic scholarship. That symposium was duly held in Vienna two years later with the participation also of Walter Kohn, who shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1998 and had also fled Vienna as a child. After the symposium Kandel and Kohn learned that the Kultusgemeinde was about to become insolvent, due to the cost of protecting Jewish schools and synagogues for which the government had not increased its subsidy. Together the two Nobel Laureates attempted to intercede with Wolfgang Schüssel, then the Federal Chancellor of Austria, but they were rebuffed. Fortunately while in Vienna, they had also made contact with Michael Häupl, the city's mayor. Häupl swung into action with financial aid below the federal level and so saved the Kultusgemeinde from insolvency. This is but one of many revelations in this engaging book.

Erich's father owned a small toy shop in the Kutscherkergasse. For his ninth birthday Erich received a battery-operated, cable-controlled model car. But his joy was short-lived: two days later came Kristallnacht. Erich's father was rounded up and the family forced out of its flat. These traumatic events became imprinted on young Erich's mind, just as similar events remained with most of us who lived through those days. But with this difference: later in life, Eric Kandel asked himself how memories are formed in the brain, and his researches have gone a long

way towards obtaining the answer to that question.

Kandel became a neuroscientist in a roundabout way. Soon after he and his elder brother arrived in the USA in advance of their parents, thanks to an uncle who supplied affidavits, he was enrolled in the renowned Yeshiva at Flatbush. There his intellect was sharpened by a classical Hebrew education. Subsequently, he won a scholarship to Harvard to read modern European history. The turning point came when a girl fellow student introduced him to a circle of Austrian émigré psychoanalysts of which her parents were part. The kinship Kandel felt with that Freudian group made him decide to abandon history and take up psychiatry.

By that time his parents had prospered sufficiently to support their son in medical school, a prerequisite to becoming a clinical psychiatrist. And it was through opting for an elective stint in a physiological laboratory that Kandel first experienced the thrill of listening in to nerve cells by recording their electrical activity. This book is intended 'as an introduction to the new science of mind for the general reader who has no background in science'. Kandel introduces the reader to the essentials of neuroscience by recapitulating his own learning process. Intertwined are colourful episodes from his life that enliven Kandel's scientific odyssey. For instance, we learn how he courted Denise, his wife-to-be, herself a Holocaust survivor, thanks to her being hidden in a French convent, and about their common love for music and art. Where possible, he sets his work in a broad cultural and historical context. All the same, scientific innocents may find the going hard at times. No matter: the general reader will always be able to pick up the thread and he will come away with a more understanding attitude to mental illness and with higher hopes for a cure of memory impairment and of depressive states.

Late autumn is the season for the announcement of Nobel Prizes. Eric Kandel heard he had been so honoured through a phone call from Stockholm that reached him in New York before dawn on Yom Kippur 2000. Before setting out on that day's round he called

Reviews continued on page 10

REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

in at his local synagogue to celebrate and atone. He had occasion to do both – he had had breakfast that day! However, he later redeemed himself. In October 2004, when he revisited Vienna for the launching of the book based on the symposium he had originated, he and his wife spent Yom Kippur in the Seitenstättengasse Stadttempel, where they were accorded seats of honour. At one point in the service, when he was asked to open the ark, he was so overcome with emotion that he couldn't move. So after all, Eric Kandel's heart is in the right place.

Otto Hutter

THEATRE

Flavour of the month

THE GLASS ROOM

by Ryan Craig

directed by Anthony Clark

Hampstead Theatre, London

Jews are news and Holocaust-denial news is the flavour of the month. A play dealing with this all-important topic should, by its very nature, be intriguing. Unfortunately in this instance it is not: the ability of a playwright to choose big subjects is not necessarily justified by the result.

One of the four characters is Elena, a female alter ego of David Irving, played by Sian Thomas. Elena is a historian under house arrest, accused of denying the existence of the Nazi gas chambers. She is defended by Myles, played by Daniel Weyman, acting the part of a human-rights lawyer and half-Jew in denial of his Jewish ancestry. The other two characters are Tara, Myles's landlady, acted by Emma Cunliffe, and Pete, Myles's Jewish father, played by Fred Ridgeway, who is unaware that his son is defending a Holocaust-denier.

The construction of the play is creaky – to say the very least – and the plot twists are from time to time virtually inconceivable. The acting of all four characters is *de trop* – to put it kindly – but, before blaming the actors, it is necessary to consider the faults of both Ryan Craig and Anthony Clark, for the cast are largely puppets in their hands. A typical example of this situation is the puerile escalation in the midst of the

play of the relationship between Myles and his landlady, the climax of which is bathetic. For sheer clumsiness, this is hard to beat.

To give an example of Ryan Craig's ill-considered plot, he presents Elena, the Holocaust-denier, awaiting her trial in a 'safe' house, being telephoned by Tara, who is not only the landlady in the play but also happens to be an agony aunt for the tabloid *Mirror*! As a result of their conversation the newspaper spreads Elena's views for its readers' delectation, all unbeknown to Myles until the story appears. The part of Pete, Myles's Jewish father, is the smallest role in the quartet, but his big chance comes in Act II, when he has the opportunity to relate at great length and emotion the story his father told him of Kristallnacht.

Mr Craig clearly has no compunction in dealing with the big issues of the sad world in which we live. Apparently he is part of a writing group known as the Monsterists, who believe in big plays to tackle big issues. But a feeling of guilt or moral scruple is insufficient for a play dealing with a subject of great magnitude. It requires convincing writing and a plausible production – but here we have a play which is largely ineffective.

Martin Hasseck

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Letter from Israel

The not-so-hidden agenda behind the 'Holocaust conference' recently organised by Iran's President Ahmadanejad is, naturally, to deny that the *Shoah* ever happened. How anyone can come up with such a preposterous idea, especially considering the numerous eye-witnesses and copious documentation bequeathed by the perpetrators, is difficult to grasp.

There is method in Ahmadanejad's madness, however. If Israel exists because of the Holocaust, one need only deny the latter in order to delegitimise the former. Ahmadanejad thinks that Israel should be wiped off the map. Hence, once the Holocaust is dismissed from history, Iran can finish the job undertaken by the Nazis.

Israel did not come into existence as a result of the Holocaust, though it undoubtedly helped. The fact is that numerous Jewish towns, villages, agricultural settlements and institutions existed before 1948, when Israel gained independence. Zionists had been settling the area for at least 60 years beforehand. Incidentally, the internationally renowned Israel Philharmonic Orchestra is currently celebrating its seventieth anniversary.

Israel gained its independence once the British Mandate ended. The UN resolution of 1947 called for the partition of the area between Arabs and Jews. At that time, the Jewish population of Israel was 650,000 and already then had all the trappings of an independent sovereign entity, including the Jewish Agency, the Federation of Labour, and a Provisional Council of State (later the Knesset).

I recently read a book containing the diaries written in Hebrew between 1919 and 1936 by Yemima Tchernovitz, a girl who later became a leading author of children's literature in Israel. The vivid accounts of the life of young people in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in those years and the sense of mission at being present at the creation of an independent entity long before the Holocaust occurred or the State of Israel was established, are truly inspiring. No one who reads the book can have any doubts about Israel's existence long before the 'Final Solution'.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Nelly Pesate was born in 1921 in the then Romanian city of Cernauti (now Ukrainian and known as Chernivtsi). The city's population of some 110,000 included a high proportion of German-speaking Jews. 'Czernowitz' occupies a special place in the history of the Yiddish language due to a landmark conference held there at the beginning of the century. Her birthplace was, for Nelly, a 'happy family of nationalities'.

Nelly's father owned a shoe shop. Of a charitable disposition, he ought really, Nelly insists, to have been an academic, but he wasn't fortunate enough to obtain the necessary education. Jewishness was important to the family and Nelly's mother kept a kosher home.

With the advent of the Second World War, Nelly and her friends welcomed the Soviet occupation of Romania, seeing the Soviets as pro-Jewish, in sharp contrast with Romania's antisemitic regime.

Suddenly, on 22 June 1941 – Nelly was nearing the end of her university exams in second-year English and preparing for a career as a language teacher – the city's airport was bombed by Nazi Germany, whose Operation 'Barbarossa' against the Soviet Union had begun on that day. A week or so later, she and fellow students were told to pack a few things and make their way to the main railway station, where they were to be evacuated to Russia. In the 19-day train journey that ensued, there was no food or water – the evacuees mostly drank water from the engine – and the train was repeatedly bombed. The journey was the beginning of a period of several years in which, at times close to starvation, Nelly was to encounter the primitive backbone of Soviet Russian society. 'Are you a spy?', Nelly was asked on one occasion by a friendly sailor on a boat in the Caspian Sea puzzled by her poor Russian. She refused to believe stories, even by eye-witnesses, about Nazi atrocities: how could the civilised Germans do things like that!

Soon after the war Nelly married Iancu (Jacob), a chemical engineer, and at the end of 1947, they emigrated to Venezuela, moving to Maracaibo, the centre of the country's petroleum industry. Iancu had obtained a job there as manager of a biscuit factory. Once, Iancu came close to arrest for



The urbane Nelly Pesate

'indecent appearance in public': he was told that the way he was dressed (he was in a vest and shorts) was fit only for the bathroom – as there was only a low brick fence around the garden, he was not to show himself in public.

Iancu, whose English was almost non-existent, asked Nelly to enquire at the local Shell office whether there was a job for him in the production laboratory they had just opened. He was so eager to get the job with Shell that that evening, when they filled out the form, he didn't even answer the question 'Salary asked for'. But the application was successful and Iancu was

*'Are you a spy?', Nelly
was asked on one
occasion by a friendly
sailor puzzled by her
poor Russian*

given a part-time job, which he did for a month alongside his work in the biscuit factory. At the end of that month, he began a full-time career with Shell that was to last 33 years. Nelly too found employment with Shell as a secretary, as teaching was very poorly paid.

Nelly found the English people in Venezuela 'stuck-up' – they never seemed to laugh. Some had lived there for many years but they could not and would not speak Spanish. She was also struck by the sharp contrast between the relatively luxurious living conditions of the contractual staff and those of the local staff. In all, the Pesates lived in Venezuela for 15 years, 11 of those years in the capital, Caracas. In 1963, in a highly unusual step, now with two daughters, they were transferred to London.

The Pesate family found much about life in England unfamiliar: the schooling system, the cost of food, the climate – all took some getting used to. For a long time, things were tough. After a few years, Nelly began to undertake translation and interpreting work and to teach German and Spanish to civil servants.

Since arriving in England, the Pesates have never moved away from the residential north-west London suburb in which they first found accommodation. Their daughters, Erica and Lydia, and grandchildren live close by.

A few years back, Nelly and Iancu paid a return visit to the city in which they were born and grew up. But little was familiar: the flat Nelly had lived in was in a dilapidated state while the house in which Iancu's family had lived had been turned into a factory; there was no one they knew; the streets were unpaved.

In recent years, the urbane, sociable Nelly has contributed her time and experience to a number of Jewish organisations, including the AJR. A major interest is chairing the Cultural Activities Committee of B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Lodge, in which capacity she searches for lecturers – sometimes a taxing activity. Nelly points out that the Pesates' lengthy sojourn in Venezuela and the fact that they moved to the UK as the result of a job transfer give them a somewhat unusual position among AJR members.

INSIDE the AJR

Musical medley at Liverpool party

We enjoyed a delightful musical medley at our Chanukah party, sung by Tamar, the daughter of member Kay Fyne. Kay is a Kindertransport icon of the Liverpool group who, together with Sabine Barton and Susanne Green, laid out the most splendid Chanukah fair. *Sylvia Jason*

Next meeting: Thur 15 Feb. Avril Lappin, 'India through Jewish Eyes'

Israel update for Wessex group

Robin Hamilton Taylor of the Israeli embassy in London spoke about the repercussions of the recent war between Israel and Hezbollah and answered questions about captured Israeli prisoners. Marcia Goodman, Head of AJR's Social Services, then gave us an overview of social work carried out by the AJR throughout the country.

G. M. Ettinger

Very successful Yorkshire Chanukah party

Over 60 of us were entertained by the Freylach Spielers, a very talented Klezmer group. Bradford member Rudi Leavor explored the origins of Chanukah and sang *Maoz Tzur* with everybody joining in; a candle was lit by a member from every town. A delicious tea, including the traditional doughnuts, was served.

Lilly Waxman

Ilford Chanukah concert

Naomi Hymanson and Jenny Gould gave us a superb Chanukah concert of operetta by mainly Jewish composers. This was followed by delicious festive refreshments, greatly enjoyed by all. *Meta Roseneil*

Next meeting: Wed 7 Feb. Tu B'Shevat Seder

Manchester Chanukah social enjoyed once again

Our Chanukah social was again greatly enjoyed by some 60 members and friends. Condolences were first expressed to AJR Groups Co-ordinator Susanne Green on the loss of her dear sister. Social worker Barbara Dorrity introduced her new colleague, Anthony Fagan. Entertainment was again provided by Sandra Freedman, this year assisted by two charming sixth-formers from King David High School. The repertoire consisted of a medley of Hebrew songs, numbers from musicals, and classical piano pieces. *Werner Lachs*

Mandolin recital at Essex party

Boris Chait, 86, played his mandolin for

our Chanukah celebration. His repertoire included *Those Were the Days* and *Sunrise Sunset*, songs which kept everyone smiling and toe-tapping. This provided a contrast with Miriam Stein's report on our visit to the Imperial War Museum – at the Holocaust Exhibition there she had seen a photo of her late husband Emil and his brother. *Larry Lisner*

Next meeting: Tues 13 Feb. 5th birthday celebration

Cambridge Chanukah event

We welcomed two new members, including Ilse Meyer, aged 100. Anne Bender gave a short account of the festival and made a prayer before lighting the candles. We then listened with fascination to talks by Francis Deutsch, who described his overland tours in India and the Tibet region, and by Hazel Beiny on her riding tour in India, each talk supplemented by photos. The excellent refreshments were organised by Danka and John Binks with help from many members. *Keith Lawson*

Next meeting: Thur 15 Feb. Rabbi Simon Francis, 'The Jewish Community of Greece'



Yorkshire candle-lighting ceremony. Members shown hail from Hull, Leeds, Elland, Sheffield, Batley and Bradford and, earlier, from (among other countries) Hungary, France, Greece, Lithuania, Germany, Austria and Belgium

Animated conversation in Pinner

Over 40 of us gathered to enjoy our Chanukah party. We had excellent musical entertainment, with Helen Stone, the daughter of one of our own members, Emmy Golding, singing in a variety of languages along with audience participation. The traditional latkas and doughnuts and the usual animated conversations rounded off a splendid afternoon. *Paul Samet*

Next meeting: Thur 1 Feb. Alf Keiles, 'An Afternoon at the Movies'

Belated Chanukah party in Newcastle

Some 30 of us met in the Marion Abrahams Hall. Entertainment was provided by the Newcastle Jewish Players, who performed routines from their recent successful show, *Razzle Dazzle*, as well as introducing new material. Following a vote of thanks by Dr Kurt Schapira for their performance, an excellent tea was

enjoyed. Later we were addressed by Mo Lovatt, Programme Co-ordinator for Holocaust Memorial Day 2007; Susanne Green gave an update on the progress of the Newcastle Holocaust Memorial Book; and there was a report on the Northern Groups' trip to London – Professor Paul Novak agreed to be the local link with the Wiener Library. *Kurt Schapira*

Next meeting: Sun 22 April

Celebration of Chanukah in Brighton & Hove Sarid

Myrna led a celebration of Chanukah with a general knowledge quiz. One member brought her daughter and granddaughter. A lively time was had by everyone. *Rudi Simmonds*

Next meeting: Mon 19 Feb. Aubrey Milsten, 'Where Do We Stand on Israel?'

Hendon and HGS party together

There was a gorgeous spread for our joint Chanukah party with the HGS group. Rabbi Stephen Katz spoke about Berlin and 'assimilation' and we welcomed Beth Steddon, a student of the Holocaust at Brighton University. Our thanks to the volunteers who prepared the feast so lovingly. *Annette Saville*

Next meeting: Mon 5 Feb. 'The Wiener Library, Past and Present'

Chanukah explained in Weald of Kent

Ours was a well-attended Chanukah party and quiz, with traditional food prepared by Renee and Jane. The chanukah, as opposed to the menorah, was explained to us and interesting examples of it were on display. As always, our thanks to Myrna for making it all possible. *Inge Ball*

Next meeting: Wed 14 Feb. Israel update

Leeds HSFA: behind the broadcasting scenes

Speaking about the making of the documentary film *Journey to Auschwitz*, Dee Marshall gave us insight into the way in which research into audience figures is conducted, described the process by which ideas for new programmes are considered, and enumerated the types of material that can be included only with permission or are subject to other limitations. We were thus introduced to an aspect of film production not usually familiar to those who watch informative or other programmes. *Martin Kapel*

Lighting candles in Edgware

Some 45 of us enjoyed the lighting of the Chanukah candles and welcomed visitors from Hertfordshire, who added their voices to the singing of *Maoz Tzur*. Rev

Koschland spoke interestingly about the events which led to the commemoration of Chanukah, mentioning the views of Hillel and Shammai as to the order in which the candles should be lit – from left to right or vice versa. There were plentiful refreshments and a big 'thanks' is due to the organisers.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: Tues 20 Feb. Elkan Levy, 'They Got Off the Boat Too Soon'

Taxing questions in North London

Our Chanukah party was a great success thanks to the unstinting efforts of our two catering ladies. Doughnuts and latkes were consumed without a calorie being counted and/or lost. Candles were lit by Rabbi Colin Elmer. Edith Schablin arranged the quiz, the answers of which would have taxed the 'Knowledge' of a London taxi driver. A good time was had by all.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thur 22 Feb. Jack de Metz, 'Fair Reporting on Israel'

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

West Midlands (Birmingham) Wed 14 Feb. Valentine Lunch. Details have been sent out

South West Midlands Sun 25 Feb. Lunchtime Get-together. Details being sent out

Cardiff Tues 27 Feb. Lunchtime Get-together, with individuals telling their own stories. Details being sent out

AJR SEDER NIGHT

Second Night Seder Service
Tuesday 3 April 2007

The Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Rev Larry Fine will be officiating

Please telephone 020 7328 0208
for reservations by 26 March

£25 per person – places booked after this date will be charged at £30 per person
Limited space available for wheelchairs
6 pm for 6.30 pm prompt start

DIARY DATES

22-26 April Vienna trip

24 June Bournemouth holiday

-1 July

8-15 July St Anne's holiday

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

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

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Susanne Green, Northern Groups
Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

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

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 21 February 2007
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Film-maker

David Samuelson
will be showing clips
from *Movietone*

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special
interest group

Monday 5 February 2007
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Dr Margaret Brearley
'Jewish Creativity'

Reservations required
Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE
IS CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

February Afternoon entertainment

Thur	1	Michael Heaton
Mon	5	Kards & Games Klub
Tues	6	CLOSED
Wed	7	Sheila Games
Thur	8	Katinka Seiner
Mon	12	Kards & Games Klub
Tues	13	CLOSED
Wed	14	Geoffrey Strum
Thur	15	Jen Gould
Mon	19	Kards & Games Klub
Tues	20	CLOSED
Wed	21	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	22	Mark Rosen
Mon	26	Kards & Games Klub
Tues	27	CLOSED
Wed	28	Madeleine Whiteson

'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

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Blitz Ilse Margot (née Sonneberg), born May 1923 in Frankfurt-am-Main, died December 2006 in London. Much loved mother of Susan and Robert; widow of Jack, who passed away April 2006.

Gross Erika, born Vienna 13 July 1916, died London 11 October 2006. Her great love for her family will never be forgotten. She will be greatly missed by her son Roger, grandchildren Claire and Paul, sister Olly, and many other family and friends.

Marcus (Leni) Susan, born Kassel, Germany 11.8.1922, died peacefully Tunbridge Wells 18.12.2006. The daughter of Eugen and Else Marcus, she came to England aged 15 and was joined by her parents before the outbreak of war. She served in the ATS and after the war worked as a catering manageress and as manageress of fashion departments in London and Hamburg. She retired to her beloved flat in the 'Millionaires' Row' of Tunbridge Wells. Remembered with affection by all her friends. Enquiries to Colin and Annette Ray c/o AJR.

Thank you

I would like to thank Marcia Goodman and members of the Pinner group for the help and support given to my brother, Ron Stevens, during the latter years of his life. Ron died on 12 November and his sons, their families, and my husband and I were very touched to see so many of his AJR friends at the funeral. Ron often talked to me about people visiting him and offering practical help wherever possible. Thank you all. Inge Little.

Classified

A scooter suitable for indoor use only is available to anyone who needs assistance in their home. Please contact Ruth Finestone at AJR Head Office, tel 020 8385 3070.

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AJR TRIP TO VIENNA

Following last year's successful trip to Berlin we are arranging a trip to Vienna from 22 to 26 APRIL. There will be a full agenda with sightseeing. Some walking will be involved. For further information, please call Carol Rossen on 020 8385 3085

HANDING THEM DOWN

Let Martin Gaba, a highly experienced journalist on disability issues and a medical doctor, sensitively help you record your memoirs in writing.

For a brochure/press cuttings, further information or to arrange a no-cost exploratory chat, please contact him at
odetteandmartin.gaba@ntlworld.com
or tel 020 8556 7268

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HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sunday 8 July 2007 -
Sunday 15 July 2007

AT THE FERNLEA HOTEL
11/17 South Promenade, St Annes
Tel 01253 726 726

The cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, is £420 per person. The hotel charges a supplement per room for sea view or deluxe room.

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DAVID LIGHTBURN
ON 020 8455 2286

SECOND GENERATION

The Leeds Second Generation is meeting on Sunday 4 March from 1 to 5 pm.

We will be discussing *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne.

All Second Generation members living in the area are welcome.

For further information, please contact Barbara on 0161 368 5088 or email barbara@ajr.org.uk.

Are you Second Generation, the son or daughter of a refugee or survivor?

If you live in Manchester and are interested in joining a Second Generation group, please contact Barbara on 0161 368 5088 or email barbara@ajr.org.uk

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Obituary

Edward Levy

Edward Levy, who was a Trustee of the AJR Charitable Trust for over ten years, has died after having successfully beaten cancer for more than two decades.

Born in Cologne in 1923, Hellmut Edward Levy left Germany on the Kindertransport for London, where he lived the rest of his life. His family also came to London and they lived in Wembley Park a very different life to the one he had known as a child. Edward went on to become an electrical engineer, rising fast to become a chief engineer and technical director and then Chief Executive of Brentford Electric, specialising in power engineering. He was particularly proud of the innovation achieved at Brentford, gaining the Queens Award for Technical Innovation, and playing an important role in nuclear physics research at CERN in Switzerland. As a respected engineer and business leader, Edward also sat on major trade bodies and Science Research Council committees.

A close friend of Peter Benenson from 1939, he played a part in the early days in the establishment of Amnesty International and maintained a passionate belief in political freedom of expression and non-violent ways of changing the world. He remained involved with Amnesty throughout his life. After



retirement, he became involved with the AJR, following on from work his mother had done over many years with Jewish charities. He also became the chairman of a local mental health charity.

Edward travelled extensively, for business and pleasure alike, fascinated to learn more about different cultures. He was chairman of an engineering company in Calcutta, which he visited regularly, and he lived a short period in Philadelphia, when he became chairman of a high-technology lighting company. Travel provided great opportunities for his love of photography, providing the images for him to work on in his darkroom.

Edward was well known for his open and caring approach to people, always prepared to hear another view but with clear ideas about what was right and what needed to be done. This applied in his business life, community life and family life too, but it was his family life that he valued most. For him, his greatest achievement was marrying Shelagh in 1951, a 55-year marriage that became not only the centre of their lives but provided strength for their two children, Lesley and Anthony. They, together with their extended family, have remained close and in the past 20 years Edward took particular delight in being a part of his grandchildren's lives. He is already deeply missed.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims Michael Newman

Generali insurance claim

Towards the end of last year a settlement was reached committing the Italian insurance giant Assicurazioni Generali to settle policies bought by people who became victims of the Holocaust.

Individuals or their ancestors who purchased Generali insurance between 1920 and 1945 and who owned a policy or were a beneficiary of a policy that was in force immediately prior to their persecution by the Nazis or their allies are eligible to apply. No payment will be made for policies previously settled by Generali.

Claim forms are available by calling the dedicated Generali claims telephone number, 0121 239 0205. Further details are at www.nazierainsurancesettlement.com

Claim forms must be submitted by **31 March 2007** to: Assicurazioni Generali S.p.A., Policy Information Centre, Piazza Duca Degli Abruzzi, 2, 34132 Trieste, Italy.

Slave labour compensation

Figures released at the end of 2006 show that Germany has paid almost \$6 billion (approx. £3 billion) from the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future to people forced to work for the Nazis during the Second World War. Awards of approximately \$10,000 (£5,000) have been made to almost 1.7 million people, living in more than 100 different countries, equating to over 99 per cent of those who qualified for the claims.

The Foundation's funds are drawn equally from the German government and companies proved to have profited from slave and forced labour across Europe during the war. The remaining funds will be used to help ageing victims of the Nazis to pay medical bills or to finance other humanitarian projects related to combating fascism.

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 and Events Diary – February

To 8 April 'Champion of the Child: Janusz Korczak' Exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Camden Town, tel 020 7284 1997

To 19 Feb 'Absence and Loss' A photographic Holocaust memorial exhibition Belsize Square Synagogue, London NW3, tel 020 7794 3949

Mon 5 Feb Dr Bea Lewkowicz: "Our Heart is in Belsize Square": Community, Belonging and Religion among German Jewish Refugees' Club 43

Mon 5 'Sir Anthony Sher in Conversation with Patrick Bade', London Jewish Cultural Society, 4 pm. Tel 020 8457 5000

Mon 12 Bill Tyler, "City in the Woods": The Remarkable Religious Camp Ground on Martha's Vineyard, the Island Retreat of America's East Side Wealthy (with illustrations)' Club 43

Mon 12 Prof Edward Timms, 'Writing after Hitler: The Work of Jakov Lind' Centre for German-Jewish Studies

seminar, University of Sussex, Arts D110 room, 4.30 pm. Tel 01273 678837

Thur 15 Prof Tzvetan Todorov, 'The Memory of Concentration Camps' Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

Thur 15 'Who Was Janusz Korczak?' The Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7284 1997

Mon 19 Dr Jennifer Taylor, 'The Propagandists' Propagandist: Bruno Adler's Kurt and Will's Dialogues as Expression of British Propaganda Directives' Club 43

Mon 26 Prof Irene Bruegel, 'Ethnicity and Social Solidarity: Making the Links' Club 43

Mon 26 Dr Christian Wiese, 'Exile in a Jewish Homeland: The Ambivalent Zionist Identities of Hans Kohn and Robert Weltsch' Centre for German-Jewish Studies seminar, University of Sussex, Arts D110 room, 4.30 pm. Tel 01273 678837

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

AROUND and ABOUT

with Ronald Channing

At last Ken Livingstone apologises – to me

Standing just two paces in front of London's controversial mayor, Ken Livingstone, with camera, notebook and pen in hand, I received



Mayor of London Ken Livingstone

his apology for any offence he considered he may have caused the Jewish community. Fortunately, we were not alone, but this declaration was witnessed by a gathering of Jewish communal representatives, London Assembly members, officials and press at the City Hall launch of the London Jewish Forum. This is an 18-strong liaison group, formed in the past year largely from younger communal activists, to represent the wide range of concerns of London's Jewish community to the GLA and the mayor and he, no doubt, will be using them as a conduit for making his views extremely clear in return.

Adrian Cohen, Chairman of the London Jewish Forum, believed the group represented a 'self-confident and diverse community with diverse needs across the religious spectrum'. Nevertheless, Jewish Londoners, many of whom he characterised as holding 'deep anxieties and feelings of vulnerability', could not sit in isolation, insisting that with good will on all sides their voices would be heard. The Forum will also work to oppose antisemitism and racism in London and actively promote the involvement of the Jewish community in the capital's civic life. Both the Board of

Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council played a key role in the Forum's formation over the last year.

Mayor Livingstone recalled the historic immigration of Jews into London and readily acknowledged the 'strength and vibrancy of the Jewish community' – although they could not always agree. He declared that 'If I have caused any offence to anybody in the past, I apologise for that. It was never my intention. It's never a calculated intention to cause offence.'

Eli Wiesel given honorary knighthood

Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Holocaust survivor and historian Professor Eli Wiesel joined a congratulatory lunch reception at the Board of Deputies immediately after he had received an honorary knighthood from Foreign Secretary Margaret Becket. The knighthood was awarded in recognition of his contribution to Holocaust studies in the UK.

I heard this tousle-haired icon, intellectual and much-praised author compliment the Board on its continuing programme of Holocaust education. That evening he returned to the Foreign Office for a dinner in his honour organised by Yad Vashem UK. The irony of the location was not lost on historian Sir Martin Gilbert, who referred to its being the very place where Ernest Bevin had once 'presided so cruelly over our people's fate' in the 1940s.

Elie Wiesel, born in the Romanian *shtetl* of Sighet in 1928, was deported in 1944 to Auschwitz, where his mother and younger sister perished, and was liberated aged 16 by the US Third Army in Buchenwald after his father had died. 'That I survived is a miracle', he said. 'It is something I still cannot understand.' After the war he went to live in a French orphanage, studied at the Sorbonne, and became a journalist for the French and Israeli press. Moving to New York in 1955, he wrote his first book about the camps and went on to write more than 40 further books on the subject.

Newsround

Hakoah-Vienna playing fields returned

The playing fields of the legendary Jewish sports club Hakoah-Vienna have been returned to the city's Jewish community, 60 years after the Second World War. The cornerstone has been laid for a huge community centre, set to include a nursing home, a school and a sports centre. The fields are located within Prater Park, near the area where most of Vienna's Jews lived before the war.

Anne Frank House draws record number of visitors

The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam drew almost 1 million visitors in 2006. The total of 982,000 visitors was 16,000 higher than in 2005. Most were young tourists, primarily from the US and Britain. The horse chestnut tree made famous in the diary has been chopped down.

Film breaks taboo over Hitler

Mein Führer: The Truly Truest Truth about Adolf Hitler, the first German comedy dealing with the Third Reich, has gone on release in Germany. Its Swiss Jewish director, Dani Levy, has reduced Hitler to an impotent bed-wetter who takes drugs and wears an unflattering brown tracksuit for personal coaching from a concentration camp inmate. 'I don't want to give this cynical, psychological wreck of a person the honour of a realistic portrayal', Levy said.

Missionaries set sights on Russian Jews in Germany

Christian missionaries in Germany are directing their efforts particularly at Russian Jewish immigrants, frequently exploiting their lack of Jewish education and their lack of security or loneliness as new arrivals. According to a report in the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, Germany's mainstream Catholic and Protestant organisations are seeking to stop the missionaries.

Number of Jewish parliamentarians at highest ever

The number of Jewish parliamentarians worldwide is at an all-time high, according to the International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians. In the recent US Congressional results, the number of Jews in the Senate rose from 11 to 13 and in the House of Representatives from 26 to 30. Britain, despite having a Jewish community 20 times smaller than that of the United States, has 59 Jewish members of parliament, including 18 in the House of Commons and 41 in the House of Lords. After Britain and the United States come France and Ukraine, with 18 Jewish legislators each.