

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

A good man in East Germany

Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's film *The Lives of Others* (*Das Leben der Anderen*), set mostly in East Germany in 1984, derives much of its emotional and intellectual power from its cogent exposition of an underlying theme, that of the human potential for goodness. How does a man or woman become good? To what extent is goodness, or evil, the expression of an individual's personality – a matter of human nature – and to what extent is it the product of the external conditions under which that individual has developed – a matter of social conditioning?

The good person in the film turns out to be Hauptmann Wiesler of the East German Ministry of State Security, the dreaded Stasi. The powerful minister Hempf has Wiesler conduct a surveillance operation targeting the playwright Dreyman, whose actress partner he wants for himself. But Wiesler, disgusted, chooses to protect Dreyman, regardless of the cost to himself. Wiesler's transformation from a desiccated technician of surveillance into an emotionally and morally conscious human being is mediated through his dawning awareness of art. A key turning-point occurs when, through the microphones he has planted in Dreyman's flat, he hears the writer playing a piece of music entitled *Die Sonate vom guten Menschen* (*The Sonata of the Good Person*); nobody, declares Dreyman, can listen to this music and not be good. The silent shot of the eavesdropping Wiesler shows him with his head framed by his headphones and tears rolling down his face.

The sonata's title has echoes of Bertolt Brecht's play *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (*The Good Person of Sezuan*), which deals with the impossibility of being good in an evil world. The film quotes from Brecht when Wiesler reads, in Dreyman's copy of Brecht's poetry, the poem *Erinnerung an die Marie A.* (*Memory of Marie A.*), with its



Ulrich Mühe (Hauptmann Wiesler), 20.6.1953-22.7.2007

exquisitely poignant evocation of the transience of youthful love. The film is studded with references to the question of goodness: Dreyman's partner, Christa-Maria, instinctively senses that Wiesler is 'ein guter Mensch', whereas the cynical Hempf maintains that human nature is irretrievably corrupt and can never change.

The soundtrack includes a musical setting of the poem *Stell dich mitten in den Regen* (*Stand Right Out in the Rain*) by Wolfgang Borchert, best known for the post-war drama *Draußen vor der Tür* (*The Man Outside*). Borchert, who died in 1947 aged 26 from hepatitis contracted as a dissident conscript on the Russian front, stands as an example of moral integrity. His poem consists of three stanzas, which urge the reader to confront rain, wind and fire, each concluding with the exhortation 'und versuche gut zu sein' ('and try to be good').

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 allows the film a happy ending, though a very mixed one. Christa-Maria, unable to cope with Stasi pressure, commits suicide in 1984; and although the 'Wende' liberates Wiesler, he ends up in a menial job in the newly reunited Germany. Dreyman, however, discovers in his Stasi files the role that Wiesler had played in protecting him from the East German authorities. As a token of gratitude, he dedicates his new book to 'HGW XX/7', the codename by

which he knows Wiesler from the files. The film ends with Wiesler buying a copy of 'his' book. Its title: *Die Sonate vom guten Menschen*.

The Lives of Others engages with an argument about changing society that was fought out on the German stage during the last century. When the Expressionists exploded into the German theatre around 1910, they adopted a revolutionary new approach to the drama. Central to this approach was their belief in the necessity of transforming what they saw as a corrupt, soulless, materialistic and inhuman society by means of transforming human beings; they called this 'die Erneuerung des Menschen', the regeneration of mankind. By appealing to people's hearts and minds, they sought to set in train a moral and spiritual transformation of individuals, which would then extend to society as a whole. Capitalist society, unjust and oppressive, would be replaced by a new community of love, freedom and justice.

The typical Expressionist drama follows the stages on its hero's road from conventional, bourgeois life to a radically transformed, spiritually regenerate condition. In Ernst Toller's *Die Wandlung* (*Transformation*) (1919), the hero, a young Jew, first hopes to overcome his isolation by identifying with the national cause in wartime, but then, appalled by war's horrors, he recognises his kinship with all humanity and embraces the ideals of peace, love and respect for human life. The triumph of peace and humanity over war and destruction also dominates Georg Kaiser's *Die Bürger von Calais* (*The Burghers of Calais*), which shares its subject with Rodin's famous sculpture depicting the six citizens of Calais who opted in 1347 to sacrifice their lives to save their city from destruction by the besieging English.

But the revolutionary upheavals in

continued overleaf

A GOOD MAN IN EAST GERMANY *continued from page 1*

Central and Eastern Europe after 1918 demonstrated the limitations of the Expressionists' brand of idealist socialism, with its utopian confidence in the power of moral appeals to create a better world. Already in Toller's *Masse Mensch* (*Masses and Man*) (1921), the values of idealist socialism came into conflict with those of revolutionary Marxism, whose basic tenet was class war. But how, asked Toller, could one create a better, more humane society by fighting and killing other human beings? The noble end of bringing about a world of peace and brotherhood could never be achieved by employing violence and war. Yet unless they employed such means, the Expressionist idealists were doomed to political impotence; they could never hope to overthrow capitalism and institute a new and better social order by purely peaceful means. The heroine of *Masse Mensch* can find no solution to this tragic dilemma. When her antagonist, the nameless representative of the revolutionary masses, convinces her of the necessity of defending the revolution by force, the result is a bloodstained disaster.

The Marxist playwrights after 1918 took a diametrically opposed view. Whereas the Expressionists believed that the key to change lay in the hearts of individuals, the Marxists believed that only a radical shift in economic and political power structures could bring about lasting social change. Whereas the Marxists fought for the triumph of the working class over its enemies, the Expressionists deplored class conflict and hoped to reconcile the warring interests. One group, idealist socialists, believed that change for the better started with the individual and spread outwards, the other, Marxist materialists, that a just and equal social order must first provide the conditions under which individuals would become good.

Thus when Brecht confronted in *Die Maßnahme* (*The Measure Taken*) (1930) the same moral dilemma as that confronting Toller in *Masse Mensch*, he came to precisely the opposite conclusion, affirming the moral necessity of killing a comrade if the revolutionary cause demanded it. The moral scruples of idealist socialists, which caused them to balk at violence, made them deeply suspect to the Marxists, who saw them as liable to betray the proletarian cause from a misconceived notion of 'bourgeois'

morality. This is the case with the heroine of Brecht's *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe* (*Saint Joan of the Stockyards*) (1930), who sabotages a potentially revolutionary upsurge by refusing to compromise her non-violent convictions.

This debate resurfaced in the 1960s, at the time of the 'student revolution'. The campus radicals of the New Left, enamoured of the charms of Marxist materialism, again condemned idealist and utopian socialists as traitors to the proletarian cause who rejected the entire revolutionary strategy on false moral grounds. The idealists were ranked alongside the despised reformist socialists (the SPD in West Germany), who supposedly supported the capitalist system by opposing the strategy of overthrowing it outright. Tankred Dorst's *Toller* (1968), for example, casts its playwright-cum-political-idealist hero in a distinctly unflattering light.

An interesting variation on this dramatic theme was Peter Weiss's sensationally successful *Marat/Sade* (1964), where the French revolutionary Marat advocates the liberation of the proletariat by violence, while the Marquis de Sade espouses the cause of individual liberation, through the fulfilment of repressed desires. Charlotte Corday, who stabbed Marat in his bath, is cast as the naïve idealist who loathes revolutionary radicalism, and comes across as a misguided dupe.

Günter Grass, an SPD stalwart, adopted a more critical perspective on the Marxist project in his play *Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand* (*The Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising*) (1966), set against the 1953 workers' uprising in East Berlin. A Brecht-like theatre director is seeking to adapt *Coriolanus*, that most anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic of Shakespeare's plays, when the insurgent workers erupt into his theatre. As the uprising collapses in face of Soviet tanks, the director is forced to recognise that, just as his plans to make *Coriolanus* a different figure have failed on stage, so the old power structures have reasserted themselves in 'proletarian' East Germany. Perhaps the most one can hope for is the part-happy ending of *The Lives of Others*, where the removal of tyranny offers some prospect of an improvement in human relations.

Anthony Grenville

'Insight into a German-Jewish fate'

Kindertransport Chairman Hermann Hirschberger spoke to around 100 postgraduate students at the Institut für Fremdsprachenberufe in Kempton, Bavaria. One of the overwhelmingly positive responses his talk evoked was the remark by one of the students, Birgitt Böck, that 'Although Mr Hirschberger's experiences were sad, we didn't get that depressing bad-conscience feeling that lectures about the Holocaust often entail.'



Students listen thoughtfully to talk by KT Chairman Hermann Hirschberger

*The Chairman,
Management Committee
and Staff wish all
AJR members a
Happy, Healthy and
Peaceful New Year*

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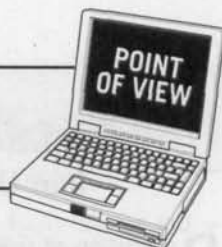
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Jewish in some respects

by Henry Schermer



In which ways am I Jewish and in which ways am I not? In some respects, I have a choice; in other respects I do not. Having been born into a family that belonged to the Jewish community was an event beyond my choice. Having grandparents and parents who were largely estranged from Jewish practices led to my remaining non-circumcised until adulthood – again, no responsibility on my part.

I am an atheist. I take responsibility for this. I sought answers to questions to do with faith and I found answers which were provisional and open-ended, but unconvincing. I read Darwin and some secondary literature at several stages of my life, starting with J. B. S. Haldane during the war. I 'tried my hand' in one area – writing up a paper on possibility and actuality, to do with what I – much later – discovered had been thought of by Kant and others since, under the concept of 'modality'. For me, the conviction that humans are the authors of their own beliefs and that there are questions to which there will never be answers – along with the provisional nature of some of our convictions – has withstood the test of time.

However, Jewishness is not only about religion. It is, more broadly, about culture. Here, I am part-responsible. I could have disregarded features in my environment unfavourable to seeking

and accepting elements of the Jewish tradition. I became, and remained, largely estranged from Judaism, with one exception – as the clouds gathered over the political sky in Europe, I became, for a time, attracted to Zionism. But this did not last. Jewish national identity did not, to my mind, aged 17 to 19, provide a universal solution, an answer to the question: must there always be war?

I think it was my mother who, in some oblique way communicating the terror of war, planted an idea in my mind: pacifism. I encountered Quakers and their advocacy of 'leaflets instead of bombs' (over Germany) and rejected this. I also rejected Jewish nationalism for myself as particularistic, not answering the issue of peace – for all mankind. I accepted, and still accept, that the effort to create a homeland for Jews in Palestine was just and saved some from Auschwitz – and this is so as regards the DPs not wanted anywhere as well. It was my choice that I didn't end up in Israel, perhaps founding a continuing line of my family tradition within a Jewish community. So, in my mind, I am Jewish in some respects and not in others. I have been, and will remain, on the margin of the several cultures I have lived in. The idea of having a part in the creation of a new human being filled me with misgivings and hesitation.

What is a Jew?

by Martha Blend

Only after I had been to the 1999 Kindertransport reunion did I realise the variety of experiences that met us bewildered, unaccompanied child refugees after we got off the train at Liverpool Street station. Some of us went to hostels run by the Jewish community, others to Christian families. I was one of the few to be fostered by a Polish-Jewish couple. They brought me up in total ignorance of my fellow German and Austrian refugees, who lived in 'British West Hampstead' and congregated at the Cosmo.

My foster-parents had emigrated to this country before the First World War. They brought with them the mores of the small-town community they came from. They spoke good English, but preferred Yiddish or Polish. My foster-mother had a nice line in Yiddish proverbs and putdowns, some of them unprintable. Apart from the time when we were evacuated, it would not have occurred to her to live anywhere but in a Jewish community with a Jewish butcher and baker, so I was brought up

continued on page 10

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Austrian Fund doubled

In recognition of our achievement in disbursing emergency funds to Austrian Holocaust survivors, the AJR has learned that we will shortly receive \$1.2m (£600,000) for distribution to Austrian Nazi victims until July 2008.

Under the terms of the Austrian Holocaust Survivor Emergency Assistance Programme (AHSEAP), the AJR, together with other Jewish charities working with Holocaust survivors, has distributed \$600,000 (£300,000) each year for the past three years.

The programme was established by the Austrian government in 2003 following negotiations with the Claims Conference. The funding, initially \$10 million (£5 million) over three years, is for social and emergency purposes and short-term assistance for Austrian survivors around the world.

By doubling the UK allocation we are also committed to reaching out to Austrian survivors and refugees who have not previously received assistance from the programme. The funding is available to those who left Austria on or after 11 July 1936 and were victims of Nazi persecution. They, or their parents, must have been Austrian citizens or had ten years' residence in Austria prior to their date of emigration.

Individual allocations from the programme can be used to pay for a number of services and appliances that help to maintain people in their own homes for as long as possible. AHSEAP can also be used to help purchase an Austrian state pension.

The AHSEAP is separate from the Austrian General Settlement Fund (GSF), which was established to pay compensation for a range of assets owned by Austrian Jews before the Anschluss. The National Fund, which is responsible for administering the GSF, has received some 200,000 individual claims from 20,000 claimants, including around 3,000 in this country.

Because the Fund is capped at \$210m, claimants will receive only a pro rata share of the actual value of lost possessions. Depending on the type of claim entered, successful applicants will typically receive around 15 per cent of the value stated in their decision letter. Applicants can find out how their claim is progressing by calling the National Fund on 0043 1 408 1263.

DANIELLA LEWIS and
MICHAEL NEWMAN

Auktion 392: Reclaiming Galerie Stern, Düsseldorf

Ben Uri Gallery, 16 September-25 November

Restitution of cultural property looted in Germany by the Nazi regime is a legal entitlement in most countries. Since the Washington Conference Principles in 1998, real progress has been achieved within the international art gallery and museum arena.

The Ben Uri Gallery has been awarded until 2015 the distribution rights to host and tour worldwide *Auktion 392: Reclaiming Galerie Stern, Düsseldorf*, launching on 16 September through 25 November this year. The exhibition traces the life of Dr Max Stern after he closed his gallery and sold his works before escaping to London. His gallery works were mostly far from masterpieces, but AJR members may remember the Düsseldorf gallery and may have acquired art works from him.

His estate has initiated the restitution of over 400 works as a matter of principle.

The museum is planning a programme telling the story across the UK and abroad of the Nazi policy of 'cultural' ethnic cleansing. Ben Uri is committed to creating public platforms to discuss associated issues, including the plight of the heirs of artworks that are just as valued if not as valuable to have their predicament debated.

If you wish to learn more about the exhibition, please call 020 7604 3991 or write in confidence to me or Suzanne Lewis, Head of Operations at the Ben Uri, 108a Boundary Rd, NW8 ORH. Please also visit www.benuri.org.uk

David Glasser
Chairman, Ben Uri Art Gallery

Lotte's Journey

The New End Theatre in Hampstead is presenting, from 24 October to 25 November, *Lotte's Journey*, a play based on the life of the German-Jewish artist Charlotte Salomon, who perished in 1943 at the age of 26. While in hiding in the South of France, Charlotte painted an autobiography of over 1,000 paintings.

A major exhibition of



Charlotte Salomon's paintings is currently on at Amsterdam's Jewish Museum and another exhibition has opened in the Berlin Jewish Museum.

Lotte's Journey, performed by a cast of seven leading actors, is written by Candida Cave and directed by Ninon Jerome. The telephone number of the New End Theatre box office is 0870 033 2733. HS

Internment no prison for me!

by Eva Clifton

I totally disagree with Anthony Grenville's pessimistic and negative outlook about the internment camps (July issue).

I was born in Vienna in 1919 and obtained a diploma as a medical dietician. In late 1939-early 1940 I received via the Board of Deputies a request to join Neville Laski as an assistant and companion to his wife, who suffered from a liver ailment. Mr Laski managed to arrange my entry into England and a working permit within a week. I worked for Mrs Laski for several months, until I was asked by the British government to leave, with many other alien refugees, for Port Erin in the Isle of Man.

On our arrival there we were put up in a small hotel. Contrary to what Dr Grenville writes, this was *not* a prison. It was a holiday resort, with full-board accommodation as normally provided to paying guests. We were able to move freely in the Port Erin area. We were given duties of cleaning, laundry and cooking, supervised by the hotel's proprietor.

At the age of 15, I had been taught

acting and dancing by a reputable teacher in the school holidays. My parents had agreed on condition that I never use these skills professionally. Here in Port Erin was the opportunity I had been looking for! I organised a small entertainment group and produced and acted in a Tea House Pavilion. I invited people from Port Erin and the male internees from Douglas to pay a small entrance fee to cover expenses and refreshments.

The show was so successful that we were asked to do a different show each month. It was hard work for us all, but rewarding for me – not only for the success we'd had but also for getting hundreds of people interested in art.

Since that time, using the experience I gained in internment, I have tried to raise money for worthy causes. I was Co-Chairman of the Jewish Blind Society for many years after the Second World War and, since 2003, I have been Chairman of Friends of ILAN, the UK branch of the organisation which supports children and adults in Israel with neuro-muscular disorders.

(Some) English spoken here

Anybody who speaks English is playing the Stradivarius among languages. We refugees are fortunate to have access to this precious instrument, but of course we don't all play it equally well.

Basic English is dead easy: you may ignore gender, conjugation is minimal, syntax stretches like a rubber band. No wonder English has become the language in which Greek pilots speak to Nigerian air-traffic controllers; I suspect the German Pope addresses God in English when Latin lacks the *mot juste*.

But the Stradivarius factor also means that there are subtle overtones, rich harmonics, grace notes and trills – not to mention the opportunity of double-stopping with blunt Anglo-Saxon and crafty Norman.

English is really two languages. You can say 'I go home' and it carries the German surtitles 'Ich geh' heim', or you can say 'I return to my residence' and most Frenchmen will understand 'je retourne à ma résidence.'

By mixing and matching, one can convey so much more than in a mono-rail tongue. English is, in fact, an elaborate code, designed to confuse interlopers and enable small groups of natives to identify and despise one another.

So how are we, the original incomers, doing? The strongest correlation is the obvious one, between

age on arrival and how we sound – unless you are Hungarian, in which case all bets are off.

It is useful to distinguish five levels of accomplishment:

Level One, Basic English, enabling one to scrape by, is within reach of everyone.

At **Level Two** we are in football managers' territory. We know what we want to say, we think we are saying it; the trouble is the other person may not get it. That's why Sir Alex Ferguson uses his Spanish assistant to communicate in English.

Level Three is where most of us are at: fluent, confident, and ready occasionally to dip into idiom, jargon, or slang. Waiting to ambush us are a myriad booby traps and the solecisms of the over-eager. Some of the best refugee malapropisms are based on literal translation, such as the wife telling the conductor that 'The Lord above will pay' when she means that her husband on the upper deck will take care of her bus fare. He, longing for a son and heir, gets ever more desperate: 'She is inconceivable', he cries. 'Unbearable, utterly impregnable.'

Level Four provides the great illusion. We've cracked it, we believe. We certainly speak better English than most of the people you hear on television or in the supermarket. Oh yeah? 'Where do you come from?' is the first question asked by the plumber who's come to replace a

washer and can barely string two sentences together. 'Been in this country long?' If you are tempted to say 'Yes, mate, some 60-odd years', you expose the tragedy at the heart of our very existence. You may speak the language like a scholar, but you sound as if you've just come off the boat. Listen to yourself on a tape recorder and you will hear the awful truth: the gap between a command of the language and a proper English accent. Think of poor Arthur Koestler: a master of English, but when he opened his mouth all the bats he brought with him from Budapest flew out.

Level Five, producing the perfect sound on the perfect instrument, is attained by very few, and perhaps this is just as well since those few tend to become linguistic zealots, grammarians, punctuationists, relentless in their contempt for those who cannot tell their who's from their whom's.

In fact, with the spoken language changing by the day, the unsolicited guardians of the Queen's English will be a dwindling handful of refugees who want to hold on to what they have so laboriously acquired and keep it in the deep-freeze. As for the rest of us, as we grow old, our hold on English gets less secure, while our native tongues no longer provide a safe fall-back. I can see myself having to bark, bark against the dying of the light.

Victor Ross

Between you and I

by Edith Argy

If the odd Continental Briton says 'I am in England for 70 years' or 'the aunt from my second cousin', it's entirely forgivable. After all, English is not our mother tongue, and tenses and prepositions are notoriously difficult to master in any language. Especially prepositions. But imagine my consternation when Jeremy Paxman said on *Newsnight* recently – not once but twice – 'different to'.

Let me confess here that, until very

recently, I was something of a grammar freak. I would split an infinitive only under extreme duress, and 'between you and I' would make me squirm. I also took apostrophes very seriously. 'The butchers' wife' or 'who's book is this?' would fail to amuse me. My sense of humour completely deserted me when it came to grammar. When the presenter of a BBC TV programme asked someone 'by who?', I, who had always

regarded the BBC as the guardian of the English language, was horrified. Nor did I look kindly on the use of 'media' and 'phenomena' as singular nouns. Not that I always get it right but I do – I mean did – try very hard.

Jeremy Paxman, the anchor of *Newsnight* and the daunting interrogator of *University Challenge*, was the indirect cause of my conversion from grammarian to libertarian. Different

continued on page 15

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

EXPERIENCES OF INTERNMENT

Sir – Your well-researched article on the internment saga reminded me of the experiences of my late father, Martin Sulzbacher.

In February 1940 he was hauled before a tribunal on trumped-up charges, placed in Category A, and sent to a camp in Seton, Devon in that cold winter. In June he was sent to Liverpool on the *Arandora Star* bound for Canada. As you stated, this ship was sunk off the Irish coast with the loss of many lives. Fortunately, my father was a strong swimmer and he found a raft from which he was eventually rescued by a Canadian destroyer. All this is fully described in two books: *Collar the Lot* and *A Bespattered Page* (by the late Ronald Stent). The destroyer landed them in Greenock, Scotland, but a week later he was sent on the *Dunera* bound for Australia. There he was put into a camp in Tatura.

To quote from Ronald Stent's book: 'On erev Yom Kippur he received a telegram that his house in North London had been bombed: his aged parents, his sister, his brother and sister-in-law had all been killed.' Fortunately, my mother and my siblings had all been saved as they were interned on the Isle of Man.

In November 1941 my father was allowed to return to England, but was sent to the Isle of Man before being released. His humorous remark was 'Für eine Nachkur'.

After these experiences he did not take up British nationality and it was left to me and my siblings to become naturalised individually when we came of age.

Max Sulzbacher, London NW11

Sir – I have an amusing story regarding internment on the Isle of Man as told to me by my late husband Mendel. The family had escaped on 10 May 1940 on the *SS Bodegraven* and were sent to the Isle of Man on arrival. The observant Jewish Internees' Committee met with the camp governor to request facilities for keeping *kashrut*, obtaining *matzot*, a room set aside for prayer, and the like. Just as they were ready to leave, the governor stood up and said: 'Don't worry, gentlemen, the God who brought you out of Egypt will get you out of here too!'

Daisy Roessler-Rubin, Ra'anana, Israel

Sir – I confess I find myself puzzled. My mother and I escaped from Vienna in March 1939 on her (non-Jewish) passport. My Jewish father had to acquire a forged passport in order to join us in England just before the war started.

At the time, I was eight years old and I remember very clearly how Father was taken away to the Isle of Man soon after his arrival. The next time I saw him he was dressed in the uniform of the British army – the Pioneer Corps actually. He served in Britain and France until the end of the war.

Father never complained about internment but told us amusing stories about how the multinational internees chatted in 'Emigranto', a mixture of English, Yiddish and German. He was taught English and appreciated his intelligent, well-educated company.

However, Father missed his family, so when he was told that he had two choices – to stay on the Isle of Man for the rest of the war or to join up – he quickly chose the latter. This fact never seems to have been mentioned anywhere in your pages. Surely he was not the only internee who later found himself in the British army.

Father's choice meant that Mother was given a work permit. So at last she was able to earn 10 pence an hour, cleaning for some comfortably-off ladies living in our area of Yorkshire.

Now I learn that had Father been a little patient he would have been returned to us much sooner. How many internees were tricked like this? Well, I never heard father complain about his army service. He was very grateful to Britain for giving us shelter and saving our lives. So he was proud to serve and luckily came back to us without a scratch, living to a grand old age.

*(Mrs) Maria Blackburn,
Newport Pagnell, Bucks*

Sir – On arriving at London Victoria Station from Germany on a wet day in February 1939, I was greeted by large placards saying 'England facing defeat' – a depressing welcome to someone who had just been thrown out of Germany. It was some time until I was told that this was a reference to an international game of cricket – some relief!

A few days later, I had to report at Bow Street Magistrates Court to receive my alien's registration book. During the interview the magistrate enquired as to my nationality. When I responded 'stateless', he was dumbfounded and said: 'We cannot have this. What is your father's nationality?' When I repeated 'stateless', he probed further. 'What was your grandfather's nationality?' He was greatly relieved when I said with only a little hesitation 'Russian' and entered Russian for my nationality. This did me a huge favour. I was not interned as an enemy alien and was accorded a War Services Permit, which enabled me to assist the war effort unhindered.

I thus worked at the Admiralty building in Whitehall, which had suffered war damage, at MD1 Whitechurch next to Chequers, at which the early British rocket experiments were conducted, at various Royal Ordnance factories, RAF stations, etc. There was some scepticism among my workmates concerning my Russian status, particularly when I was confronted by some real Russian carpenters. I don't recall how I got out of this corner but I did somehow.

David Kut, London NW11

Sir – I would like to counterbalance the article about internment by mentioning the way some of us Kindertransportees were naturalised at the end of the war. As far as I know, we were all made wards of court of one particular person and given British nationality together. Is there any way I could find out a bit more about this action? I had originally only been given leave to stay in England for two years, so I feel that this was a very generous act of the then government.

Eva Light, London SW18

Sir – Congratulations to Anthony Grenville on his fine article 'Internment: the Sequel'. It is good to see the competing historiographical positions set out so clearly.

*Professor Edward Timms
Centre for German-Jewish Studies
University of Sussex*

Sir – Anthony Grenville has set the record straight very clearly.

Anne Pisker, London SW15

IN SUPPORT OF TODAY'S REFUGEES

Sir – Following Peter Salomon's article (July) about today's refugees, it is worth mentioning that many have been tortured in their countries of origin before being given asylum in this country. The organisation Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture does a tremendous job in helping them to rebuild their lives. It is staffed by specially trained people working with individuals,

families and children who have sometimes arrived unaccompanied and, where necessary, acting as advocates for them. There are now centres in London, Manchester, Newcastle and Glasgow. It is the only national organisation that cares for people who have survived.

Eva Frea, Finchley

Sir – As one who also fled to England in 1938 from Nazi Germany, I have obvious sympathies with *genuine* asylum-seekers. However, no mention is made in Peter Saloman's article as to why there are 'failed asylum-seekers'. Is he suggesting that the officer(s) who failed to grant asylum was/were incorrect in their analysis? Or just heartless?

On the assumption that the British analysis was correct and fair, these people are not 'genuine' and, as such, have no real right to remain in this country, and certainly have no right to receive benefits from UK taxes. In 1938 and 1939 even *genuine* asylum-seekers were required to prove that they would be no drain on UK taxes and many suffered as a consequence. Therefore, why should we sympathise with *failed* asylum-seekers?

E. H. Ring, Edgware, Middx

Peter Saloman: *What Eva Frea says about the Medical Foundation is 100 per cent true. They deserve all the support they can get. Mr Ring is right that there are people falsely claiming asylum and they should be treated as any other potential immigrant. The problem is that our officials are unreasonably harsh in setting their criteria. They consider Zimbabwe, and have considered Iraq, safe to return to. Asylum-seekers 'fail' if they do not comply with the rules, but often they cannot know the rules, or have arrived without papers or have even travelled under a false identity. Fleeing persecution, one's priority is to escape – worrying about getting into a safe country comes later.*

TRYING TO BE FAIR TO THE AUSTRIANS

Sir – What on earth does Peter Chapman mean? With respect, 'not receiving the Settlement' is incomprehensible. Also, why should Hannah Lessing 'combat the CJA'? Although she is Jewish, her job is to represent Austria, not the Jewish Holocaust survivors. It was the CJA's duty to represent us and they have failed us badly. The reason we are only receiving \$210 million instead of \$480 million is because the Claims Conference agreed to this. Also, may I assure Mr Chapman that the Austrian General Settlement Fund is making payments to survivors, whether or not they are receiving pensions.

Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

Sir – Peter Chapman seems rather scathing about Austrian pensions

(August). However, I know of several cases where the Austrian authorities have bent over backwards to interpret their own pension laws in a most generous manner. *Gerda Mayer, London E4*

WHAT WE DID IN THE HOLIDAYS

Sir – Being an avid reader of your magazine (I always read it from beginning to end), I would like to tell you how much I enjoyed the article 'What We Did in the Holidays' (August). It brought back many happy memories as, in our case, we always went to Velden/Woerthersee for two months and it was like an exodus. I can still smell the 'aroma' of the moth balls which were put into our carpets and all the other preparations for our journey, which then took eight hours (of course, I also remember Attnang Puchheim!).

We also rented two rooms with a share of kitchen and bathroom. The house was a bit away from the lake, but we only got home at lunchtime and then it was back to the lake, where I learned how to swim at the age of three – still being on a rope which the instructor held and then being thrown into the deep end.

Velden, of course, was a paradise for youngsters: swimming, the 5 o'clock dance, hiking etc and one always had company.

We went to see Velden again on one of my 'sentimental journeys' with my husband, daughter and grandson and they all loved it – whilst for me it had, of course, changed, but it did bring back some happy memories of my youth.

Kitty Schafer, Toronto

CALLING ALL FRANKFURTERS

Sir – Calling all Frankfurters! As a member of the Ilford AJR group and a former resident of Frankfurt am Main, I have visited groups in other areas in the hope of meeting *Landsleut* from my home town. Sadly, so far I have met only one or two. There is an abundance of Berliners and, of course, many colleagues from Vienna – all very congenial. But from Frankfurt almost none. Are you disinclined to join an AJR group or too shy to come forward? Please assure me that there are indeed other Frankfurters around with whom I can exchange nostalgic memories.

*Meta Roseneil (née Gonzwa)
Buckhurst Hill, Essex*

THE ICING ON THE CAKE

Sir – I very much appreciate it that you printed my last little poem (June) on the occasion of my 100th birthday. It gives me the boost to carry on with my hobby as long as I can. It was like the icing on the cake on a wonderful day with family and friends. Many thanks also for your own good wishes.

Debora Kadisch, London NW2

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The seaside was not always the natural holiday destination of choice – it represented hard work, not leisure, to the nineteenth-century populations of the northern coast of France, and the gentry who first put an aristocratic toe in the water did so for their health and rarely relished the experience. The A-listers of yesteryear were often dragged in fully-clothed! But change was on its way. Artists,



especially French Impressionists, began to capture the gradual urbanisation of Normandy's rugged coastline into what became known as the 'summer boulevard of Paris'. **Impressionists by the Sea**, sponsored by Farrow and Ball, which runs to the end of this month at the **Royal Academy**, is a sentimental journey back to an era when the environment was respected for itself and its workforce. Among those who best captured these elemental forces is **Whistler**, whose threatening *Alone with the Tide* features a woman fully wrapped up against the weather, dwarfed by sand, rock, clouds and rising tide.

In **Breton's** version, local children carried baskets before buckets and spades, while **Boudin** portrays the Empress Eugénie plus entourage on the beach at Trouville in 1863, their skirts and parasols billowing in a composition which cleverly

reflects the filmy clouds above.

Monet's view of Pourville beach in 1882 shows sunlight rippling and dazzling on the cliffs, mirrored in the sea below.

But even as the beaches of Deauville and Trouville became holiday resorts, serious painters never forgot the supremacy of sea and coastline over the individual. Monet paints them as diminutive figures gazing out at the white sailboats in the far distance, and emphasises the aquamarine sea and violet, clouded sky. The Realist painter **Gustave Courbet** captures Normandy's distinctive light on the breaking waves and the local figures, fishing boats and women collecting seafood on the shore.

While the Impressionists preferred nature to style, the reverse is true for the **National Portrait Gallery's** current celebration of British press photography. **Daily Encounters: Photographs from Fleet Street** runs until October and the curators raided the newspaper archives to reveal the internal culture of the media industry and its awkward relationship with public figures.

Less art, more immediacy. Less environment, more celebrity. And perhaps less Fleet Street than social history. The forebears of today's paparazzi strut their stuff with artless wit or glee. A disingenuous bride poses between two brothers – they happen to be the Kray twins and she will barely live eight months after her wedding. Mandy Rice-Davies is caught in a forest of raised arms and lenses and Shy Di peers innocently at the news hounds who are her tragic destiny. What is interesting is to see footage of emigrants registering at Golders Green in 1937 – only 50,000 were actually admitted out of fear their arrival might stimulate antisemitism. But as its technology developed, the integrity of the industry was questioned. We've had secret lenses aimed at indiscreet celebs and now the recent furore over the Queen's controversial encounter with photographer Annie Liebowitz. A picture tells a thousand stories.

REVIEWS

A labour of love

ZUR ERINNERUNG UND ZUM GEDENKEN. DIE EINSTIGEN JÜDISCHEN GEMEINDEN POMMERNS

Researched, written, illustrated and published by Gerhard Salinger, New York, 2006. 4 volumes, 1,213pp. Enquiries to Dr Rita Scheller, Husarenstr. 26, 30163, Hanover, Germany

JOURNEYS IN HUNGARY: JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

Researched, written, illustrated and published by Gerhard Salinger, New York, 2006. 2 volumes, 776pp.

A JOURNEY THROUGH HUNGARY: TRACES OF THE JEWISH PAST

Researched, written, illustrated and published by Gerhard Salinger, New York, 2003. Supplement, 197pp.

These books, of which I have been the fortunate recipient because Gerhard Salinger hails, as I do, from Pomerania (Hinterpommern), are an extraordinary achievement. Scrupulously researched and presented in a straightforward yet scholarly fashion, they are a unique resource for anyone seeking information about a multitude of villages and towns. Indeed, in the volumes devoted to Pomerania (the eastern part of which is now part of Poland) one finds lists of people who lived in the Jewish communities before the war and, so far as the author was able to ascertain it, what their fate was.

The books are all the more extraordinary because Gerhard Salinger is a tax accountant and not a professional historian. He was born in 1922 in a town that used to be called Stolp, not far from my place of birth, Köslin (now Koszalin). There he witnessed the deportation in 1942 of the remaining Jews, including his parents, from his town to 'the East', the destination thought to have been Auschwitz, where he himself survived between 1943 and 1945. The impetus for the Pomeranian books, which are written in German, was commemorative and historical. They are indeed a labour of love.

Salinger has travelled widely to gather his information and to photograph any remaining synagogues and what is left of cemeteries, gravestones and various Jewish artefacts. His books, especially those devoted to Hungary, are generously

provided with photographs of each town or village, and they provide a poignant reminder of the widespread destruction of Jewish life by the Nazis.

The volumes about Pomerania are dedicated to 'all who were murdered during the terror years of 1940-1945'. Part 1 begins with a map dating back to 1932 and an 84-page introduction on the history of Jews in Pomerania, from the thirteenth century right up to the middle of the Second World War. I found this story, with all its ups and downs, absorbing. The rest of this and successive volumes describe individual communities in considerable detail, with numerous photographs, lists of names and dates of death. The four volumes are perhaps not always organised in the most logical way, but the reader should have no difficulty in extracting the information he/she seeks as all is revealed in the index.

Whilst the books on Pomerania were clearly prompted by the author's life there during his first 20 years, the Hungarian volumes have a less immediate personal provenance. Gerhard Salinger tells me that they came about not so much by choice as by opportunity. In the 1990s he had joined several groups touring European countries, and between Budapest and Bratislava the hotel-based driver stopped off at places that had once included sizeable Jewish communities. This was the beginning of a driver-researcher collaboration that took in not only Hungary but also Slovakia, Romania, Moravia and, this year, Carpatho-Ukraine. Hungary was the starting point and, no doubt, further books on some of the other countries may be expected. A book on West Prussia is now ready for publication.

The books about Hungary are written in English and a relatively brief introduction places the detailed accounts of the Jewish communities in their more general context. Whereas the mass deportations in Germany began in 1941-42, Hungarian Jews lived a relatively charmed life until 1944. A puppet government composed of the most rabidly anti-Jewish fascist leaders (the Pfeilkreuzler) was then installed and was only too ready to accept Eichmann's orders. Deportations were readily organised by the government and carried out by Hungarian gendarmes, who accompanied the trains to the Hungarian border on their way to Auschwitz (reminiscent of the way in which Vichy France anticipated the requirements of the Germans). The operation was conducted with such

efficiency that within three to four months all Jews had been removed from the country, with the exception of Budapest, where many managed to survive until liberation by the Russians.

The remainder of this and the second volume, as well as the supplement, give succinct accounts of numerous local Jewish communities and descriptions of what is left of them. Thus there is a plethora of photographs of restored synagogues, devastated cemeteries and surviving individual gravestones – an extraordinary and easily assimilated body of information and a valuable resource for laymen and professional researchers alike.

The number of copies of these books printed is small and, with the author's permission, I have donated my copies to the Wiener Library, where they will be available to anyone who wishes to consult them.

Leslie Baruch Brent

A member of the awkward squad

RABBI DR SOLOMON SCHONFELD AND ORTHODOX JEWISH RESPONSES IN BRITAIN TO THE NAZI PERSECUTION OF EUROPE'S JEWS 1942-1945

by Chanan Tomlin

Peter Lang, Bern, Switzerland, 250pp.

The agenda of so much historical analysis of the Holocaust has been set by secular Jewish academics. So it comes as a relief to see a very different approach taken in this book. Tomlin makes clear his ultra-orthodox beliefs at the outset and states that his purpose is to examine the religious response in Britain to events during the latter part of the war. In essence, he has written two books: one about Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld and his activities, the other about the general religious response.

Schonfeld seems incapable of easy categorisation. In the late 1930s, he saved hundreds virtually single-handedly from the impending catastrophe. As the leader of the Adas Yisroel synagogue, one might imagine a kindly, elderly gentleman. But, as this book shows, that is to misunderstand both him and the Adas Yisroel. Born in 1912, Schonfeld obtained rabbinic ordination and his PhD and was appointed head of the Adas Yisroel, all by the time he was 21. Accordingly, during the war he was in his late 20s-early 30s and had the energy of a young man. Yet he also had far greater familiarity with leadership than most of his

contemporaries in an age which valued experience and grey hair far more than ours. Tomlin paints Schonfeld as a fully paid-up member of the awkward squad – but to a purpose. Only his extreme dedication and disregard for the rules of the game allowed him to bring so many over. He lied about the number of guarantees he had for refugees and, in so doing, saved hundreds.

Schonfeld was up against a Jewish establishment in terms of the leadership of the Board of Deputies, which is portrayed in Tomlin's book as riven by infighting about issues such as the merits or otherwise of Zionism, over which they had little control during the war.

The Orthodox response to this inaction was a prayer vigil and fast, organised by Schonfeld's father-in-law, Chief Rabbi Dr Joseph H. Hertz. On the face of it, this appears a fatalistic non-response to catastrophe. Yet Tomlin argues that this action galvanised Jewish public opinion in Britain (which gave generously in terms of charitable donations), which the Jewish establishment had signally failed to do.

Tomlin provides an important new perspective on such an important period. It would though have been interesting to hear more about the immediate pre-war period, when Schonfeld was able to be at his most active. That said, this book will interest many.

Andrew Levy

A generation to remember THE GREAT ESCAPE: NINE JEWS WHO FLED HITLER AND CHANGED THE WORLD

by Kati Marton

Simon & Schuster, 2006, 288 pp. hardback

Of the Hungarian Jews referred to in the title of this book, four were scientists – John von Neuman, Leo Szilard, Edward Teller and Eugene Wigner; two were film directors – Michael Curtiz and Alexander Korda; two were photographers – André Kertész and Robert Capa; and one was a writer – Arthur Koestler.

Szilard and Wigner persuaded Einstein to warn President Roosevelt about the Nazis' development of an atom bomb and the Manhattan Project was born. Von Neuman co-operated on the Manhattan Project and subsequently invented the digital computer and game theory. Teller

Reviews continued on page 10

REVIEWS continued from page 9

worked on the hydrogen bomb and was the inspiration for the unforgettable Dr Strangelove caricature.

For a time Alexander Korda was the British film industry. He produced and directed many classics such as *The Thief of Bagdad* and *That Hamilton Woman*. His talent for living above his means and raising finance was legendary. On most of his films, his brothers and many Hungarian exiles collaborated with him. This made understandable the notice in his office: 'It is not enough to be Hungarian.' Michael Curtiz assured his fame by directing *Casablanca* with Bogart and by the dubious honour of discovering Doris Day.

Arthur Koestler was, according to some, the last Renaissance Man. His book *Darkness at Noon* was the first to expose the show trials of the Stalin era. Influenced by his experience of expected execution in a Franco jail, he fought against capital punishment. His interests and knowledge were exceptionally wide. Einstein said of him: 'God knows everything, but Arthur Koestler knows even better.' Despite a substantial inferiority complex, Koestler had success with women, including the wife of Bertrand Russell, in whose divorce case he was quoted as a correspondent.

Andre Kertesz is regarded as one of the most important photographers ever. His best-loved photos were taken in Paris, where he competed with his protégé and fellow Hungarian Brassai.

Robert Capa got into photography by accident and out of sheer desperation. His reckless nature was ideal for the career of a war photographer. Strikingly good-looking and with a cigarette permanently poised in the corner of his mouth, he was a great success with women. Ingrid Bergman wanted to marry him, but was turned down – he declared himself unsuitable as a husband. The love of his life, Gerda Taro, was killed by a runaway tank in the Spanish Civil War. It was in this war that he took his iconic photograph of a soldier hit in the chest by a bullet and falling backwards. Capa's death was caused by recklessness: in Vietnam he left his military convoy to take a picture and stepped on a mine.

Koestler's death was less dramatic. When his medical condition made life not worth living, he and his wife, 25 years his junior, jointly committed suicide.

The next generation of Hungarian Jews produced notable personalities too, for instance the financier George Soros, the philanthropist Andy Grove, founder of Intel, manufacturer of microchips, and Imre Kertesz, the Nobel Prize-winning author. If you don't stop me, I'll go on and on.

With its amusing anecdotes, this book is an easy read. For all that, the author brings passion and breadth to her subjects.

Janos Fisher

**Only in Israel . . .**

Dorel Golan. That's a name to remember. We first heard this talented young pianist at a music festival in Eilat in the winter, where she played Saint-Saëns's second piano concerto with an aplomb and virtuosity that belied her 25 years. While playing brilliantly, she also managed to inject a sense of fun into the event, causing the audience to quiver with enjoyment.

For an encore, she played a riveting version of Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca* in which the variations and harmonies were quite unlike anything Mozart had ever dreamed of, but which once again combined humour and musicality in a way that simply took one's breath away.

Recently, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra series brought Dorel to Jerusalem, where she played the same concerto and concluded with the same encore. The somewhat more seasoned audience was entranced, once again, by the amazing power and musicality of this wraith of a girl.

For an encore, she played a riveting version of Mozart's Rondo alla Turca in which the variations and harmonies were quite unlike anything Mozart ever dreamed of.

When we took our seats near the back of the hall we noticed two gentlemen deliberating in Russian over a camcorder on a tripod. The upshot of the conversation, which was conveyed to us in Hebrew, was that the owner of the camcorder had failed to charge the battery, and hence it would be impossible to record Dorel's performance for posterity. 'Never mind', the other gentleman said, 'she has it already. We recorded it at another performance.'

This aroused our curiosity, and in response to our enquiry it transpired that the gentleman in question was the pianist's father. He was, of course, delighted when we told him that we had heard his daughter play some months earlier and had been mightily impressed.

Is this perhaps another of those 'only in Israel' incidents?

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

WHAT IS A JEW? continued from page 3

mainly in Stamford Hill.

Religion was loosely worn in our home, yet our life was bounded by the festivals. Friday night meant candles and chicken soup and on the High Days and Holy Days there were trips to the synagogue. More severe observances were kept to a minimum. 'We're not fanatics', my foster-mother would say. For me, it meant Hebrew classes twice a week. I had a solid Jewish upbringing with all its benefits and its narrowness.

At school you entered an entirely different world, where you learned about Magna Carta and English poetry. Multiculturalism had not yet set in, so there was no interchange between the two worlds. We Jewish girls lived in two separate compartments with sly jokes that would have been incomprehensible to our teachers.

Now I come across a new term:

'secular Jews'. A Christian friend asked: 'If some of your people don't keep the religion, how can they be Jews?' I could reply: 'Some of you people respect Christian values, but don't go to church.'

What then does it mean to be a secular Jew? Some say it means respecting the Jewish contribution to culture and standing up for Jews if they are attacked. They find the dietary laws irrelevant in an age of refrigeration and synagogue services alien to the Western tradition they have been exposed to at school and in the media. So, what do you pass on to your children as the essence of Judaism? Can something so nebulous act as a framework to life, or are there other values and influences to add? Can Judaism itself adapt to change or will the last person in the synagogue turn out the light?

A Hungarian phrase book for the second generation

by David Wirth

The time is right to return to Hungary. Clutching my Hungarian phrase book, we touch down in the country I was born in but fled from during the 1956 Revolution.

Our hotel desk advertises 'Tours of Jewish Budapest' and visits to the Great Synagogue. 'Excuse me, sir, but did you not once try to eliminate all the Jews of Budapest? So why all the Jewish tourist sights now? Oh yes, I understand, it's a way of feeling less guilty about it. OK, sorry I asked.' But none of these phrases appears in my phrase book – so I keep silent.

I speak in English from the Jewish Agency offices in the narrow old streets of the former ghetto. The archive ledgers state the details of all *brit milahs*, barmitzvahs and Jewish weddings in pre-war Hungary. Look, my grandparents! And my father! It's as if they have suddenly been restored to life. Will they invite us back for tea? Do they come alive when they are remembered? But we leave.

Does no one in these government offices speak English or German or French or any language apart from Hungarian, that most impenetrable of languages? But I have come with a translation from my good friend Eva. What are they saying? Perhaps they think: 'Look, here comes another Jewish second-generation person from abroad searching for his roots – let's have fun with him, like we do with the others, and pretend we don't understand. Remember: no English now.'

Unfortunately my phrase book doesn't contain such phrases as 'I was born in this town. Do you have in your records anything which indicates where I used to live?' Perhaps there's an untapped market for a phrase book just for visiting second-generation people: 'Buy now – available in Polish, Hungarian, German, and frighteningly many other languages.' Forget the supermarket, café, hotel, train, and station phrases. Instead: 'I am Jewish, what did your parents/grandparents do in the war?' or 'Are you/your compatriots still antisemitic?' or 'Do your schools today teach what happened to your Jews?' When they become bored by their game of pretence, they inform me where I was born – it's just five minutes away. But they don't return to me the items left behind in that flat. That



armchair over there – strangely familiar.

Off to the Jewish cemetery. A one-hour, bumpy tram-ride to the end of nowhere. The tram slowly empties out, and we are left alone. It pulls up at the cemetery gates. It's massive. And it's like a wonderful park, but with graves and headstones. Thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands. Overgrown with ivy and shrubs. Yet all those who died in Auschwitz have no resting place here. How enormous the community once was. I give grandfather's name to the woman in the office. Not much for her to do here. Not much hope. Too many names. Perhaps it's not even the right cemetery. But surprise! She's printed off the reference number for his grave.

Off we go. Down that path. It must be somewhere here. But it's all overgrown. Maybe over there. Who can we ask? Why is that shabbily-dressed woman watching us? I give her the paper with the grave number, she looks at it, and immediately walks to the grave. I give her a tip. Perhaps she seeks out lost second-generation visitors and lives off their tips. It's overgrown. The writing is faint, but it's them. My grandfather, my grandmother, and my uncle. I thought they'd gone to the camps. Why are they here? Who can tell me? And those sentences at the back of the headstone, what do they mean? Where's that second-generation phrase book? I forgot, it hasn't been published yet. The lettering is faded and needs to be restored.

Opposite the gates is a stone-mason's. A lady in a ramshackle office with a phone and little else. Many stones outside. Speak English? Magyarul. OK, I might have guessed. Where's that second-generation phrase book? Oh yes, there isn't one. Here goes. Through mime I describe what I want,

and agree a fee. I pay. But I've a feeling as I leave that she'll do something completely different. Brilliant business idea: pretend you don't understand, then don't do the job (or do a different one) when the visitors are safely home – they'll never know.

Who else comes to these vast, deserted grounds? Just the next second-generation visitors, and then the same sequence of events – tram, gate, office, lost, woman, headstone, stonemason, tram.

Next day, the train to Miskolc. It's the town my mother lived in – until something happened in 1944, can't remember what. 'Don't worry, the Germans are losing the war. They can't last much longer. They won't enter Hungary now. We don't need to flee.' Whoops, got that one a tiny bit wrong.

Anna is waiting at the station. She's happy to see us. She's the daughter of my mother's best childhood friend. She takes us home. She introduces us to her husband Laszlo (no English) and adopted daughter Agnes (almost no English). Anna stayed with us in London in 1970, the last time I saw her. We talk, take photographs, say our good-byes and take the train back to Budapest.

But Anna has cancer. Back in England we make plans to return. But then the emails from Anna stop coming. She has died.

So we return to Hungary. But now Budapest is different. We are tourists. We visit the sights, we eat in good restaurants, we enjoy the views. The Great Synagogue still stands proudly in the centre. The memorial to Wallenberg still hides in its quiet side-street. We cross the Danube.

Continued on page 15

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INSIDE the AJR

Newcastle upon Tyne: The story of the wimple

Susan Olsburgh, one of our members, speaking on the subject 'The Wimple as Part of German-Jewish Culture', illustrated her talk with a beautiful wimple made for a member of her own family in 1758, as well as with pictorial representations of some of the few examples that survived Kristallnacht. If you have personal information about this fascinating custom of Jewish life in Germany, please write to susan.olsburgh@unn.ac.uk

Kurt Schapira

Next meeting: 14 Oct

Ilford: a slice of unknown history

Professor Claire Ungerson told us that Kitchener Camp, near Sandwich, Kent, was home for over 3,000 men fleeing Nazi Germany in 1939-40. Most joined the Pioneer Corps and helped the war effort. When the Germans reached Northern France, those not fit enough for the army or too young to serve were taken to Ilfracombe. This was a slice of history unknown to many of us and gave everyone a very interesting morning.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 5 Sept. Fred Rosner, 'The Origins of Jewish Humour'

Pinner: Escape to Sweden

Blanche Benedick recounted her escape from Nazi-occupied Denmark. The Danish King warned the Chief Rabbi of the impending targeting of the Jewish community. Blanche was hidden by friends and helped across to Sweden. The local hospital took in 200 Jews under fictitious diseases. Of 6,000 Jews on Danish soil, only 450 were sent to Theresienstadt - most survived.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: 6 Sept. Dr Clare Ungerson, 'The Kitchener Camp'

HGS: The world of the hard-of-hearing

Audiologist Robert Beiny vividly described the impact of hearing loss on the quality of life of people who have this problem, of whom there are several million in this country. He said there could sometimes be ads which were misleading and stressed the importance of contacting reputable people with the correct qualifications.

SR

Next meeting: 10 Sept. Rabbi Charles Emanuel

Hendon: A remarkable life story

Our speaker, Dr T. Scarlett Epstein, was born in Vienna and was there at the time of the Anschluss. Her father was in Yugoslavia at the time so the family joined him. Having escaped to Albania, they eventually came to England. Following her graduation, she went to India. Back in England, she married and she and her husband went to New Guinea. Scarlett's autobiography, *Swimming Upstream*, was recently published.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 3 Sept. Michael Anvoner, solicitor

Outing: 19 Sept. Bletchley Park. Details by post

Essex speaker on the Nuremberg Trials

AJEX standard-bearer Leslie Sutton, 83, spoke to us about the Nuremberg Trials, of which he was an eye-witness. During the Trials' 10 months, he told us, 50 million words were spoken. From a Jewish point of view, not one word was said about the Holocaust. On a separate matter, we were delighted that our chairman, Otto Deutsch, had celebrated his 79th birthday by laying tephillin for the first time and being given his new Hebrew name of Yisroael ben Avraham.

Larry Lisner

Next meeting: 11 Sept. Social Get-together

Wembley CF tea party

Twenty-three of us attended a pleasant tea party at the home of Fred Stern. Efficiently encouraged by Myrna Glass, members mingled and exchanged stories of experiences they had in common.

Irene Stanton

Next meeting: 17 Oct

South London talk by BoD representative

Jerry Lewis, former vice-president of the Board of Deputies, gave an account of the work of the organisation. As a frequent visitor to the House of Commons, he gains insight into the workings of Parliament and reports on Jewish-related issues. On the domestic scene, we were told that support for Jewish schools, *shechita*, and smaller declining communities were the Board's responsibility.

Inge Gredley

Next meeting: 6 Sept. Walter Woyda, 'The Grand Tour'

West Midlands (Birmingham) Garden Party

Leon Jessel, who threw his house and garden open to us, is unfortunately no more. However, his mantle has been generously donned by Eileen and Ernst Aris. Twenty-seven members enjoyed



Northern holiday in St Annes: the winning quiz team

not only a wonderful lunch but also each other's company in most comfortable surroundings. On behalf of all of us, thank you, Eileen and Ernst!

Brighton & Hove Sarid: The incredible life of ITL

Local historian Godfrey Gold spoke to us about Trebitch Lincoln, born Ignats Trebitsch into an orthodox Jewish family in Pacs, Hungary. He came to England, embraced Christianity and became a priest, but the Archbishop of Canterbury refused to ordain him. In WW1 he spied for both Britain and Austria, later offering his services to the Nazis. He changed his name many times, always using the initials ITL.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 24 Sept. Howard Falksohn, 'The Wiener Library'

North London: The Jews of Italy

Dr David Ebry summarised 2,000 years of Jewish life in Italy as having taken place mostly in conditions of safety, certainly as compared with the situation in other European countries. During the Mussolini period, a not insignificant number of Italian Jews were actually card-carrying members of the Fascisti.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 19 Sept. Outing to Bletchley Park. Details by post

Surrey Garden Party

Our Garden Party Luncheon was held at the home of Vernon and Jutta Saunders. Twenty-eight members enjoyed a delicious lunch in the colourful surroundings of the Saunders' garden and the weather was perfect. The waitresses were third-generation, i.e. the Saunders' grandchildren. This annual event was begun by the late Tony Freud.

Myrna Glass

Weald of Kent Garden Party

Over 60 of us enjoyed a delicious cream tea in the gardens of the Holy Redeemer Church in St Leonards on Sea. It was organised jointly by the Hastings and District Jewish Society and the Council of Christians and Jews. Everyone had a lovely time making new friends and meeting old friends.

Frank Miller

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS

Wessex 4 Sept. Outing to Exbury Gardens. Details sent out

Herts 18 Sept. Rabbi Simon Francis, 'The Jews of Greece'

Northern Groups' holiday at St Annes-on-Sea

The week contained something for everybody, including outings to a stately home and a wonderful gathering of more Northern groups with a very special lunch. My happiest experiences were to do with making connections and finding new and old friends. To discover, in my case, people who had the same, often quite silly but still very precious, memories of a Viennese childhood was very moving – and to find the lady who had been my foster-mother's hairdresser in Leeds 68 years ago was astonishing.

Dorothy Fleming

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Fausta Shelton 01273 734 648

Bristol/Bath
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

Cambridge
Anne Bender 01223 276 999

Cardiff
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077
Cleve Road, AJR Centre
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Dundee
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edgware
Ruth Urban 020 8931 2542

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

Glasgow
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

Harrogate
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Hendon
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Hertfordshire
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

HGS
Gerda Torrence 020 8883 9425

Hull
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Ilford
Meta Rosenell 020 8505 0063

Leeds HSFA
Trude Silman 0113 2251628

South-East Get-together:

A most enjoyable day

Over 100 members met for a day of reuniting old friends and making new ones. Following an opening address by Michael Newman, Professor Geoffrey Alderman spoke at length on British Jewry's scant response during the Hitler era. A delicious lunch followed with time to socialise. After lunch, we split into a number of discussion groups. The afternoon concluded on a sweet note with two cellists giving an impromptu concert. A most enjoyable day.
Meta Roseneil and Herbert Haberberg

Second Generation: Leeds/Manchester

The Northern Second Generation gathering met in Manchester in June for the first time this year, and will alternate between Manchester and Leeds in future. It may be possible to form two groups eventually. A small group is visiting Beth Shalom on 16 September.

The next whole-group meeting is on Sunday 4 November in Leeds, 10.30-4.30 pm. Please contact Barbara for information on 0161 368 5088 or at barbara@ajr.org.uk We will be discussing 'Feeling Different' and 'Does Talking Help?'

DIARY DATES

9 Sept Tea at Watford Hilton

For further information about this event, please call us on 020 8385 3070.

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

Norfolk (Norwich)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

North London
Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

Oxford
Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Sheffield
Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London
Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)
Ruth Jackson 01386 552264

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Weald of Kent
Max and Jane Dickson
01892 541026

Wembley
Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Ernest Aris 0121 353 1437

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

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 19 September 2007
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Ernest Kaye

will talk about his theatre props business in silver, china and other objects

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the AJR Journal, to phone the Centre on 020 7328 0208 to book your place.

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 3 September 2007
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Rev Malcolm Weisman

'MY LIFE'S WORK'

Reservations required

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Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

September Afternoon Entertainment

Mon	3	KT Lunch – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	4	CLOSED
Wed	5	Christian Fellner & Miriam Leskis – Voice & Piano
Thur	6	Toni Green – Jewish Mother Comedy Act
Mon	10	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	11	CLOSED
Wed	12	CLOSED – Rosh Hashana
Thur	13	CLOSED – Rosh Hashana
Mon	17	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	18	CLOSED
Wed	19	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	20	Ronnie Goldberg
Mon	24	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	25	CLOSED
Wed	26	Margaret Opdahl
Thur	27	CLOSED – Succoth

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merriem Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

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

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Sheppard, Katya, born Berlin 1926, KT, Stotley Rough, daughter of Dr Ernst (United Restitution Organisation) and Nora Schaefer. Died 27 July, missed by siblings Gina MacKenzie, Andrew Sheppard and six-nation family.

White, Herta, formerly Weiss, widow of Walter. Born Vienna 1921. Died peacefully on 7 June after a long illness. Mourned by the Ebner family and her other relatives and friends in the UK, Israel and the USA.

Paul Balint AJR Centre

Chiropodist Trevor Goldman, Wednesday 26 September, 10-11.30 am

Pamela Bloch Clothes sale, separates etc, Wednesday 26 September, 9.30-11.45 am

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AJR TEA

SUNDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2007

at 2.30 pm, HILTON HOTEL, ELTON WAY, WATFORD

A ticket application form is inserted into this issue of the Journal. Kindly complete the form and return it to us as soon as possible.

We look forward to seeing you at the AJR Tea.

Should you require further details, please phone 020 8385 3070.

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Obituary

Gerald Jayson

Gert Jacobowitz, who was to change his name to Gerry Jayson, arrived in the UK in 1939 at the age of 10 together with his 14-year-old sister Edith as Kindertransportees. Their parents were to be murdered in Auschwitz.

They soon found themselves en route to Millisle in Northern Ireland, where the Jewish community had set up a training farm for young people who might be attracted to an agricultural career in Palestine. With the onset of the Second World War the farm also became a home for other young refugees. Gert attended the local village school where, despite his knowing little English initially, it soon became clear that he possessed great intelligence. A perceptive adult called Jacobi, who was involved with the children's welfare on the farm, arranged his transfer to the Regent House Grammar School in nearby Newtownards, from where he moved to Queen's University in Belfast. In 1950 he gained a science degree, completing the course a year earlier than usual.

Gerry's first post was in London, in the food-testing laboratory of the caterers

J. Lyons & Co., followed by a spell with Unilever at Port Sunlight. Having obtained a research grant, he entered Durham University and was awarded his doctorate in 1952. During this time he met, and later married, Sylvia Goodman, a medical student from West Hartlepool. They raised a family of three after settling in Liverpool. For a short time in the mid-sixties Gerry was a Visiting Professor in Burma on behalf of the International Atomic Energy Authority. The high point of his professional life was his appointment to the Chair of Radiation Chemistry at the John Moores University, from which he retired some years ago. In addition to many research papers, he wrote three academic books and guided many students towards their PhDs.

A little-known aspect of Gerry's work for the wider community was with Civil Defence for Liverpool during the period of the Cold War.

For many years Gerry took an active part in his local Jewish community, at one stage as secretary and then as chairman of the Allerton synagogue. He was also a member of the social committee of the local AJR. He died at home on 5 July.

Between You and I cont from p5

to indeed! Similar to, different from. Everyone knew that.

Appalled, I consulted Fowler's *Modern English Usage*. Certain that Fowler would share my displeasure, I turned to 'different'. The very first sentence of a well-reasoned argument shocked me to the core: 'That d. can only be followed by *from* and not by *to* is a SUPERSTITION.' Yes, in caps. I silently asked Jeremy Paxman's forgiveness.

What about split infinitives then? Fowler divides the English-speaking world into five groups. I will only quote part of what he has to say about Group 1: 'Those who neither know nor care are the vast majority and are a happy folk ...' 'to really understand' comes readier to their lips and pens than 'really to understand' ... and they do say it, to the discomfort to some ... but not to their own.' He concludes that in some cases it is better to split an infinitive than to create ambiguity and artificiality by not splitting it.

He also gives quite a lot of space to *who* and *whom* but, while not condoning the misapplication of these pronouns, he is far more relaxed about it than I am – or was. He maintains that 'English speakers being very little conversant with case-forms, mistakes are sure to occur.'

Much humbled by H. W. Fowler (1858-1933), I examined my attitude. Since I was brought up speaking German and went on to learn Latin and classical Greek, it would be strange if I couldn't tell a nominative from an accusative, a subject from an object. But why should the English, whose language is blissfully free of declensions of nouns, adjectives and articles, possess this knowledge? And anyway, what gives me, a Pygmalion foreigner, the right to teach the English English?

I have decided the time has come for me to chill out. There, I've done it, and it didn't even hurt. But will I be able to keep my newly-acquired cool the next time I hear someone say 'between you and I'?

Edith Argy

Arts & Events – September

To 2 Sept *The Last Goodbye: The Rescue of Children from Nazi Europe* The story of the Kindertransport Jewish Museum Finchley, tel 020 8349 1143

Mon 10 Dr A. Rosner, 'The Contradictory Writings of the Sixth-Century Historian Procopius', Club 43

Mon 17 Hans Seelig, 'The Classical Style in Music: Mannheim and Vienna' Club 43

Wed 19 Susannah Alexander, 'British Jewry over the Past 100 Years' Leo Baeck (London) Lodge

Mon 24 Dr C. Ellwood, 'In a Multicultural Society, Whose History Do We Teach?' Club 43

Mon 1 October Dr Robert L. Goldman, 'George L. Fox: An Amusing Portrait of the 19th-Century American Burlesque Comedian and Pantomimist' Club 43

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

Leo Baeck (London) Lodge Meetings at 11 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3, 8.0 pm. Tel 020 8958 2516

A Hungarian Phrase Book cont. from page 11

Where Jewish bodies once floated. When the Hungarian Nazis outdid even the German Nazis with their killing. Where my passport states I was born. The past is hidden away. I photograph the outside of the flat I was born in, and we return home. Budapest is

now just another tourist city. Next year we'll go somewhere else. We won't need the phrase book any more.

A longer version of this article appeared in *Voices, the magazine for the Second Generation*, No. 25, January 2004.

Lessons from Auschwitz

This year the Holocaust Educational Trust's (HET) programmes for schoolchildren have been significantly expanded due to the receipt of a year's matching funds of £1.5 million made available by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown.* The funding has enabled the Trust to inaugurate an enhanced programme of visits to Auschwitz with the aim of two students participating from every secondary school and college of further education in the United Kingdom.

For the past eight years the HET has been taking students and teachers to Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of the Trust's *Lessons from Auschwitz* project. The course, run over three non-consecutive days, teaches participants about what became known in retrospect as the Holocaust – the policy of slave labour, sub-human torture and mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis, primarily against the Jews of Europe. The course's emphasis is on the lessons that can be learned today to foster equal respect to people of all cultures and religious beliefs.

As well as a full day's visit to Poland, participants attend both a pre- and a post-visit seminar to discuss their expectations and preconceptions before the visit, and reactions and feelings afterwards. Confronting the vastness of Auschwitz-Birkenau alone can be overwhelming and many participants describe the course as life-changing. For the thousands of students who have participated there is the added opportunity to become Holocaust Education Ambassadors in their local communities. On their return from Auschwitz-Birkenau the students produce follow-up work and provide reports of their activities.

To mark the eight successful years of the course, as well as looking ahead to the continued expanding programmes, an awards ceremony was held at Portcullis House at the Houses of Parliament, at which the hard work of promoting Holocaust education put in by Student Ambassadors

received due recognition. Teachers, students, MPs and others then spoke of their experiences and the impact this has had on their working and personal lives.

Paul Goggins MP spoke of 'celebrating the tremendous work of the students and teachers'. The government was continuing to expand the funding for the HET's work with the aim of reaching every sixth-former. It was also committed to expanding their work into Northern Ireland. Gillian Merron MP, who as a result of her visit to Auschwitz had discovered her own family links to Lithuania, found it difficult to leave the camp. Des Browne MP, Secretary of State for Defence, applauded the effect on young people. Lord Janner, Chairman of HET, also spoke.

Paul Salver, a senior teacher, described the impact of his pioneering work when introducing Holocaust studies into his school curriculum since 1999. Kirsty Young, a former student participant in the *Lessons from Auschwitz* project, said it had made a 'massive personal impact on her' and on the content of the dissertation for her degree, 'Children as the Neglected Victims of the Holocaust'. She especially appreciated the opportunity to study at Yad Vashem in Israel thanks to the support of the World Jewish Congress. This year's awards were presented by Ian Austin MP to pupils from Bosworth Community College, Leicestershire and Chesham Park Community College, Buckinghamshire, whose representatives each presented a summary of their experiences.

**The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, guest of honour at the HET Annual Appeal Dinner, had declared: 'We must never forget the lessons of the Holocaust: to do nothing is never enough. We must not stand by, we must never turn our eyes away, we must always have the courage to act. Antisemitism has no place in modern Britain and we will work with you to do what is necessary to stamp it out.'*

Newsround

Call for end to ban on *Mein Kampf*

A prominent historian has called for Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to be published again in Germany. Horst Möller, Director of the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, has said that the time has come to print a scholarly edition of the book to pre-empt and debunk neo-Nazi versions. The idea of reprinting *Mein Kampf* has been strongly condemned by Jewish groups.

Cracks found in Berlin Holocaust memorial

Cracks several meters long have been found in the Berlin Holocaust memorial, which opened to the public in May 2005. Fissures in almost 400 of the 2,711 concrete slabs that make up the memorial will need to be filled with resin before winter, the memorial's director, Uwe Neumaerker, said.

Polish prosecutors seek instigators of 'anti-Zionist' campaign

Prosecutors are investigating former communist officials who allegedly promoted antisemitism in Poland in the late 1960s, when thousands of Jews were driven out of the country. The Institute of National Remembrance is trying to contact Jews who left Poland at the time to act as potential witnesses.

Head of Jewish Welcome Service dies

Leon Zelman, founder and head of the Jewish Welcome Service in Austria, has died. Born in Poland in 1928, Leon Zelman survived the Auschwitz and Mauthausen camps. Immediately after the war he came to Vienna, where he co-founded the publication *Jüdisches Echo*. In 1980 he set up the Jewish Welcome Service, which organises short visits to Austria for Jews who were persecuted and expelled by the Nazis.

Former concentration camp reopens as museum

The former concentration camp of Flossenbürg in Bavaria has reopened as a museum. Several camp barracks have been restored and a research centre opened. An estimated 30,000 prisoners lost their lives there, many of them Jews from the Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland.

Anti-Israel boycott condemned

Over 10,000 academics have signed a petition denouncing attempts to mount a boycott against Israel. The petition was initiated by Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME). According to SPME, 32 Nobel Prize-winners and 53 university heads have so far signed.