

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The 1960s: The refugees and student radicalism

The attitudes of the refugees from Central Europe towards the student radicalism of the 1960s was influenced by events in West Germany, where the student movement was far stronger and more purposeful than in Britain. After the Bundestag elections of 1965, the Federal Republic had been governed by a Grand Coalition of the two big parties, the CDU and the SPD, leaving little effective opposition in parliament. The radical left established the Außerparlamentarische Opposition (APO, 'Extra-parliamentary Opposition') to fill this gap, though in reality the APO's aim was to take on and, if possible, overthrow the West German state. After the shooting of a student, Benno Ohnesorg, by police at a demonstration against the visiting Shah of Iran in 1967, organised revolutionary groups emerged, principally the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF), better known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang.

For many refugees, the propensity of these German student radicals for extremism and violence, their doctrinaire fanaticism and their impatience with Western parliamentary democracy were uncomfortably similar to the wave of intolerant radicalism that had swept Germany in the early 1930s. In April 1968, *AJR Information* reported that Oskar Seidlin, a German Jew who had emigrated in 1933 and now held a chair at Ohio State University, had refused the offer of a professorship at Munich University: the disruption of university life, the shouting down of lecturers, and the denial of reasoned debate were too reminiscent of 1932/33.

Refugees were particularly shocked when student radicals disrupted events connected to the Holocaust. In May 1968, the *Journal* reported that a joint meeting of Christians and Jews taking place in West Berlin's Opera House as part of Brotherhood Week, an annual event held across West Germany to promote reconciliation and tolerance, had been the object of a left-wing demonstration against neo-Nazism, the rise of the far-right NPD and the 'hypocrisy' of Brotherhood Week itself. As the AJR supported Brotherhood Week, and as refugees like the



Daniel Cohn-Bendit, leader of the student protesters during the May 1968 riots in France

historian Eva Reichmann regularly spoke at meetings held under its auspices, readers of the journal would have been shocked to find it lumped together with resurgent neo-Nazism, as well as aggrieved by the suggestion that they had been taken in by an exercise in German hypocrisy.

Worse was to follow. Werner Rosenstock reported for *AJR Information* on the ceremony held on 15 September 1968 to mark the unveiling of the memorial at Dachau Concentration Camp, at which he had represented the AJR and the Council of Jews from Germany, alongside delegates from 15 countries. A small number of left-wing protesters, mainly students, carrying banners with anti-Vietnam war or anti-NATO slogans, had disrupted the proceedings and tried to shout down Klaus Schütz, the Mayor of West Berlin and President of the Bundesrat, the upper house of the West German parliament, when he delivered a message on behalf of the Federal Government. The insult to the memory of the many thousands who had died at Dachau was clear.

Rosenstock's dislike for what he saw as modish anti-establishment gestures came across clearly when he compared the protestors' juvenile antics with the experiences of delegates like Odette Hallows, who had been captured working with the Resistance in France and had survived torture by the Gestapo and incarceration in Ravensbrück concentration camp, and Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, distinguished both for winning the Victoria Cross as a pilot

with the Royal Air Force and for his charitable work thereafter. The instigators of the demonstration, Rosenstock wrote, 'not only showed disrespect to the memory of tens of thousands of heroes but were also oblivious of the fact that, but for the courage of those anti-Nazis, freedom of thought and speech would have vanished from the European continent'.

Expressions of support for student radicalism were unpopular with refugees, as C.C. Aronsfeld discovered when he wrote an ill-judged article in *AJR Information* of June 1968 on what he saw as the parlous state of West German politics. Beginning with the stark pronouncement 'Something is rotten in the State of Bonn', he described the opposition offered by democratic forces to the neo-Nazi NPD as feeble even by comparison with resistance to Hitler under the Weimar Republic.

Greatly exaggerating the crisis facing West German democracy and the threat posed by the NPD, Aronsfeld argued that, should a revolutionary situation arise, or should the ruling Grand Coalition break down, the extra-parliamentary opposition of the young should 'supplant, or at the very least supplement' parliamentary democracy. In effect, Aronsfeld was arguing that West Germany in 1968 faced a situation like that confronting the Weimar Republic in the early 1930s, where, with the democratic system weakened beyond repair, the only choice had been between the Communists on the extreme left and the Nazis on the extreme right; in the present case, a coalition around the APO would be the best alternative to replace the parliamentary system of Bonn.

The response to this dubious historical comparison – especially its negative attitude to parliamentary democracy in West Germany – was predictably hostile. A letter to the editor from R. Graupner took issue with Aronsfeld, defending the Grand Coalition as a stabilising factor in West German politics that had been absent in Weimar. Graupner dismissed as mere wordplay Aronsfeld's argument that the students' movement was

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THE 1960s: REFUGEES AND STUDENT RADICALISM *continued from page 1*

extra-parliamentary but not anti-parliamentary, citing their frequently stated hostility to parliamentary democracy and their eagerness for a revolution to overthrow it. He concluded by questioning whether Aronsfeld's indulgence towards revolutionary youth with its openly anti-democratic aims belonged in the journal at all. This was doubtless the view of the great majority of readers, for no more was heard of sympathy for the neo-Marxist left. Within a few years, the student protest movement had run its course, and political radicalism itself became yesterday's fashion.

Though the New Left in West Germany actively sought to expose the crimes committed under Hitler, thus siding demonstratively with the victims of Nazi persecution, it was often surprisingly heedless of the sensitivities of Holocaust survivors. This was in part due to the framework of theory by means of which it attempted to understand National Socialism. It used various theories of Fascism to explain Nazism, which it saw as just one of a group of extreme right-wing totalitarian movements operating in the interests of capitalism and the ruling classes and against those of the working class.

The blanket category of 'Fascism' included the movements led by Mussolini in Italy and Franco in Spain, where racialism and antisemitism played no part (unless imported at German insistence). The theories of Fascism stressed class war, the exploitation of the proletariat and the interests of the ruling elites as key factors behind the rise of Nazism. Consequently, they tended systematically to downplay the importance of racial ideology to Nazism and ultimately to question the centrality of the Holocaust itself. For the radical left, Jews were only secondary players in the history of National Socialism.

The radical left in West Germany also tended to sympathise with the Palestinian cause, to the extent that the Rote Armee Fraktion co-operated with Palestinian radicals in anti-Western and anti-Israeli actions, in some of which, like the hijacking of an Air France flight from Israel to Entebbe in June 1976, anti-Zionism shaded over into straightforward antisemitism. Of the four hijackers, two Arabs and two Germans, it was the latter who took it upon themselves to separate the Jewish passengers from the others, in a chilling replay of the 'selections' that Germans had carried out in the camps three decades earlier.

Amidst the campaign of radical action in 1977, the so-called 'deutscher Herbst' (German Autumn), Arab terrorists hijacked a Lufthansa airliner to Mogadishu in Somalia.

When a unit of the West German GSG9 (Grenzschutzgruppe 9) killed or captured the hijackers and freed the hostages, three leading figures of the RAF committed suicide in Stammheim prison, where they were being held. This gesture, which was followed by the murder of the West German employers' leader Hanns-Martin Schleyer, who had been kidnapped by the RAF, symbolised the interlinking of German left-wing radicalism with Palestinian extremism.

Though the radicals of the 1960s did a great deal to confront West German society with the crimes committed under National Socialism and to shake it out of its complacent forgetfulness about the past, they also tended to instrumentalise the Holocaust for their own purposes, as a weapon to use against their elders, whom, in a phrase often attributed to Gudrun Ensslin of the RAF, they termed 'the generation of Auschwitz'. Most of the radical left-wingers showed little interest in the refugees from Hitler and other Jews, especially when these did not fit into their ideological preconceptions. Widespread empathy with the experience of German Jews under Nazism had to wait until the following decade, when the television series *Holocaust* was screened in Germany.

The Jews from Germany and Austria, having experienced the Nazi dictatorship, were mostly unsympathetic towards the projects for a left-wing, 'proletarian' dictatorship espoused by the student radicals. Hardly surprisingly, the refugees preferred the liberty, democracy and prosperity of Britain to totalitarian regimes of whatever stripe.

Anthony Grenville

Act for Change: Encounters with school students

In July 2007 5 people with amazing personal stories met 40 14-year-old 'journalists'. Some of the 5 people were AJR members who had responded to our request for interviewees. One English lady had been part of the team who went to help survivors of Bergen-Belsen. The 'journalists' had taken part in an Act for Change workshop during the previous year.

Act for Change began on Holocaust Memorial Day 2002 in Northwood, when the two synagogues jointly invited local schools to listen to a survivor and participate in small workshops to consider their individual responses so that each could make a positive difference in their own communities. A charity was formed when schools unable to take part in Northwood asked that the event be brought to them.

The interviews were conducted and filmed by the students, with some help from Act for Change facilitators. Some of their questions were unexpected and the responses of the interviewees sometimes surprised even themselves.

I took home the raw materials – four hours of film – to make a short version for our supporters and trustees. My grandchildren helped – the 17-year-old with editing; the younger ones, aged 9 and 11, saw previews. They fell in love with the 'stars' on screen.

One of my grandchildren took a copy to her class teacher at her village primary school. Her teacher watched the film and asked if one of the 'stars' could visit the school. She amended the curriculum for the year: the children read about the Kindertransport in class, thought about local refugees, and discussed prejudice and stereotyping. A total of 27 9-year-olds interviewed their chosen star! One girl at the school wrote: 'If something like this happens again, I would like someone from a dangerous country to come to be part of my family.'

Our grateful thanks to Walter Weg, Hannah Lewis, Freddie Knoller, Ron Leaton and Alison Wood and all the schools. We'll be doing this again in March and later in the year, so please contact us if you are willing to be questioned and filmed by our young journalists.

Judith Kramer
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Berlin exhibition to mark 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht

In November 2008, on the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, an exhibition in Berlin is to document the pogrom on the Jews of Germany – their synagogues, institutions, homes.

The exhibition is being organised by the Murdered Jews of Europe Foundation, the Topography of Terror Foundation, and the New Synagogue Berlin – Centrum Judaicum Foundation. It will be held on the premises of the Centrum.

We ask readers of the *AJR Journal* for assistance. Do you have pictures of synagogues that were destroyed on Kristallnacht? Did you or members of your family take photographs of the pogrom – your own residence, stores or other buildings? Do you possess memorabilia related to the events of that night? Do you remember individual offenders, but possibly also the solidarity of non-Jewish neighbours, colleagues and employees?

If you do have relevant photographs or personal documentation, please contact:

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IN SEARCH OF THE PAST: NAMES, PLACES, BUILDINGS

In his review of a book on the history of Pankow Jewry (January), Professor Brent writes that the large building of the local orphanage is 'astonishingly' still known as 'the former Jewish orphanage'. Indeed, it is amazing how names stick to places and buildings.

My grandfather on my mother's side, Mudr Hugo Dasch, was a village doctor in Seestadt, or Ervenice, in north-west Bohemia. After my grandmother died, the family moved to Teplice, some years before the First World War. I visited the place in 1947. My approach was on foot and the road led me into a long square at the corner of which was a little shop. The lady behind the counter



Old-New Synagogue, Prague

interrupted me almost as soon as I started speaking. 'You want the doctor's house!', she told me. She went out into the street and pointed to the top of the square and a good-size building. It transpired that apparently the doctor's surgery (and flat and dispensary) remained identified with the building to its end. Yes, to its end: Ervenice was sitting on coal and just about then work had begun preparing for opencast mining to feed the electricity works.

Not far from that area there was a whole town which almost completely vanished to make way for opencast mining. The name of the town was Bruex, or Most. It was here that my father had spent eight years at grammar school. It was here too that an ancient church had been placed on rails and transferred to near the railway station. This side of the railway, all that is left of the original town are these two buildings. On the opposite side, the school to which my father went is still in use. And a new cluster of townhouses has gone up.

I have experienced the obverse side of this too – the disappearance of buildings meaningful to me. After the Second World War I came back to Prague aware that I would not find any

members of my family alive. I had one address, as it happened in the city centre. The lady had been alerted and, on an August night with poor street lighting, I set out towards Wenceslas Square and in the direction of where

we had lived. Not far from the top of the square, near the museum, my father had had his law practice. Now, the building had gone and the place was boarded up. A stray American bomber had mistaken Prague for Dresden! Another two bombs had flattened two buildings closer to the museum. I was shocked and walked on. There are different ways to reach the Royal Vineyards, the area in which we had lived. I chose the route past

the synagogue. Here, I experienced my second shock: the synagogue in which I'd had my barmitzvah was gone. Another bomb! I went on walking. At this time of night, it was clear I couldn't expect anyone to open the door for me. I reached the street and stood in front of the house from which I'd gone on the Kindertransport years earlier. Then I turned and retraced my steps.

Henry Schermer

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'Imagine, Remember, Reflect, React': Holocaust Memorial Day, 2008

THE RETURN

by Joan Walkers

Eyes that had seen all sorrow – borne all shame:
Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald – from a hut
without a name
Nameless, tottering, back they came.
Living corpses among the dead
Farewells unspoken – last words unsaid.
A father, brother, nephew, son
In prison clothes they all were one.
Denuded, stinking in a common grave
Who has decided – that one to die, this one to save?

The spring sun was warm, the paving stones grey
From the height they stepped down with nothing to say.
Corpses among the living still bearing a scar
A memory to haunt them wherever they are.
Victoria Station and the cool light of day
A few days before just a torn crust of bread
Now a taxi, running water, and sprung-mattress bed.

The hats tried to shield their deep staring eyes
The white skin stretched taut was once food for the flies.
Clothes hanging loose on a skeleton frame
Hands looked gigantic, still twisted in pain.
Nothing but bones where flesh once had been
My heart could not bear what their eyes had seen.
But new life was before them, to build and renew
To fan up the embers – and to see where they flew.

Joan Walkers wrote this poem in 1945 at the age of 16 on seeing concentration camp survivors arriving at Victoria Station.

Kindertransport refugee Vera Gissing, pictured here signing a copy of her book, *Pearls of Childhood*, was guest speaker at Sussex University's Centre for German-Jewish Studies on Holocaust Memorial Day. Participants were welcomed by Professor Joanne Wright, Pro-Vice Chancellor, and Professor Christian Wiese, Director of the Centre, with stimulating talks also given by Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg and Dr Mark Levene of Southampton University. Ronald Channing spoke on behalf of the AJR, which sponsors this annual event.

Ronald Channing



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING



Mrs Lilian Levy and Rev Rodney Mariner at Belsize Square Synagogue service

The following is extracted from an address given by AJR member Lilian Levy to some 200 people at this year's AJR HMD service at Belsize Square Synagogue:

Imagining for us, here, is a very painful procedure. We can imagine only too well in what circumstances our families perished. So it takes little imagination for us to conjure up in our minds the horrors of Rwanda, Darfur and other massacres around the world.

When we reflect on what happened to us, we realise how much was violently taken from us: our families, our homes, above all our childhoods. Those of you who arrived in Britain before 1939 spent early years worrying about things with which no child should ever have to be burdened. Those who, like me, arrived here post-war had experienced things no one should ever have to witness. And even after we all arrived here there was no opportunity to live the normal life of a youngster. We were serious beyond our years. There was then – and there is now – sadness in the depths of our souls.

Yet we have been able to rebuild outwardly useful lives. But some of those survivors who were older than we found it impossible to regain meaningful lives. Who remembers Dr Eisner? She obtained two PhDs in Germany in the 1920s but by the end of the 1940s she was wandering round north-west London 14 hours a day, carrying a dozen carrier bags

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Liverpool, this year's national HMD venue



As everyone now knows, Liverpool hosted this year's Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January. AJR member Kay Fine was one of the speakers. We were fully involved in the many activities taking place leading up to the event and some of us gave interviews to both BBC and ITV. On 20 January we were involved in 'Yiddish Culture and the Holocaust', featuring Yaacov Shapiro, who performed in a packed Princess Road Synagogue. Copies of our Holocaust Memorial Book were sold in substantial numbers. Guido Alis presented Liverpool City Council with a copy of the book on 24 January at an Arts and Literary Evening. The HMD Exhibition 2008 opened at the Town Hall on 21 January and featured portraits of our members together with 'RESPECTacles', a most moving display comprising some 100,000 spectacles. Many of our members attended the opening ceremony and some, pictured above, manned the AJR stand (from left: Margaret Strach, Eric Strach, Dr Sylvia Jason, Albert Hastings, Dr Italo Calma, Guido Alis, Eric Fahidi).

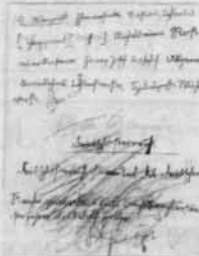
Guido Alis

Anschluss March 1938: History in an exercise book

As an eight-year-old in primary school in Vienna, I knew little about politics except that my parents were very worried about a man called Hitler, and that everyone seemed to want to prove how patriotic they were. At school, we were all given enamel badges with the red-white-red flag of Austria and on the first page of my new exercise book I had to draw the *Kruppenkreuz*, the pre-Anschluss symbol of Austria, flanked by flags and with a heading along the lines of 'God Protect My Austria' (I can't quite read my writing!). A few pages on, on 24 February, the following was dictated to us: 'Yesterday our Federal Chancellor, Dr Kurt von Schuschnigg, made a very important speech.

It was heard throughout the world. The sense of the speech was "German Peace and Austrian Independence".'

On Friday 11 March I was at school and a description of the Ninth District I wrote was marked 'G'. Little did I know how much was to change that day. The next paragraph dictated to us, written the following week, was: 'German Austria has become a part of the German Reich. Our Reichschancellor, our Führer, is



Adolf Hitler.' This paragraph is heavily and angrily crossed out, either by myself or my father, but no doubt at a later date.

Our next task was to learn how to draw the swastika. Several weeks after the Anschluss I, and all other Jewish children, was expelled from school and moved to a school reserved for Jews. There, our education included being stoned and yelled at by Hitler Youth thugs each day on leaving the school while the police stood by and laughed. This continued until one day a patrol of German soldiers appeared, chased away the thugs and the police, and reassured us that it wouldn't happen again. The school closed soon afterwards.

George Vulkan

Second World War internee records for the Isle of Man

by Alan Franklin

This is the second, and concluding, part of this article. The first part appeared in last month's issue of the Journal.

The police records

In 1922 Tynwald (the Manx parliament) passed an act to impose restrictions on Aliens which, although slightly amended in 1926 and 1930, was in force for the entire war period. This act required Aliens aged 16 or over to register on arrival in the Island and listed the particulars to be furnished on registration as:

1. Name in full and sex
2. Present nationality and how and when acquired and previous nationality (if any)
3. Date and country of birth
4. Profession or occupation
5. Date, place and mode of arrival in the UK and date, place and mode of arrival in the IOM
6. Address of residence in the IOM
7. Address of last residence outside the IOM
8. Photograph (which if not furnished by the Alien, may be taken by the registration officer)
9. Government services, name of country served, nature and duration of service, and rank of appointments held
10. Particulars of passport or other document establishing nationality or identity
11. Signature (which if required shall be in the characters of the language of the Alien's nationality) and finger prints if required (usually only if illiterate)
12. Any other matter of which particulars are required by the registration officer.

The cards produced under this act contain a wealth of information about internees, including, in most cases, a black-and-white photograph. The IOM police administered this system and the following are some of the main files from which details have been extracted:

Registration of Aliens; Registration of Female/Austrian internees; Internees and movement permits; Escapes from internment camps; Permits for Aliens to leave camp to attend tribunals; USA visa applications; Rushen Women's Internment camp administration records; Port Erin camp administration; Police occurrence books; Police charge books; Security files, Internees and special class internees such as IRA, Gestapo; Request for permission to visit IOM.

Details are entered in the lists in the following style:

From a female internee record card

Surname	Christian Names	IOM Card No.	Date Arrival in I.O.M.	Previous Address or Camp	National Registration Identity Card	Reg. Cert No./Identity Book	Nat
Kitzler	Jeanette Henriette (on R.C.) Janette (on list Acc No. 9378 (part)). (actual name Jeanette)	2471	30.5.40	43, Randolph Avenue, W9	DNHQ 40/6	676612 issued 8.10.38 at Hatfield, Herts	Ger/Aust

Miscellaneous

Rushen Camp c/o Ballaqueeney, Port St. Mary. - Jewish. - Date of Birth 22.9.1905 in Vienna. - Occupation Domestic. - Last address outside of the UK, 8, Nussdorferstrasse. - Divorced. - German Passport No. 23224 issued Vienna 12.9.38. - 25.9.38 Conditional landing at Dover, 12 months in U.K. - 11.8.39 Con. cancelled. - 13.10.39 Reigate Tri. Exempt internment until further order. - Refugee from Nazi oppression. - Police Permit for the purpose of proceeding to Douglas, to come before the Home Office Advisory Committee, at the Court House. Dated Friday 28th February 1941. 9.45 a.m. (Box IOMC Movement Permits) - 2.5.41 Leaving IoM for 4a, Palatine Road, Manchester.

Mrs Jeanette Kitzler née Schacter was the first of her family to come to England in September 1938. She worked as a parlour maid at the home of Lord and Lady Hoke(?) of Berkhamsted. Her sister, Frieda Schacter, followed and her niece, Erika Klausner, came on the Kindertransport.

Erika's parents, Kathe and Herman Klausner, followed and were also interned on the Isle of Man. After release, she went to Manchester, then returned to London where her sisters lived. In London she met her husband, Vaclav Kult, a Czech national who joined the British Army. Following the birth of her first child, Carmen Elvira, she and her husband returned to Manchester. Following the death of this child, she continued her profession in dentistry with the Co-operative Society. She worked there until the birth of her second child, Miranda, in 1949. She remained in Manchester until 1970, when she paid the first of many visits back to her native Vienna, where she was able to find people she had known during her formative years, both Jewish and non-Jewish. She died from a heart attack in Vienna in May 1994.

The above information was supplied by her daughter, Miranda Nathans, and is used with her permission.



Front of IOM Constabulary CID Aliens Branch Registration card for Jeanette Kitzler



Reverse of card for Jeanette Kitzler

From an entry reporting the death of an internee

Surname	Christian Names	IOM Card No.	Date Arrival in I.O.M.	Previous Address or Camp	Reg. Cert No./Identity Book	Nat
Schindler	Margarete (on list) Margarethe (on R.C.)	2934	18.7.40	31, Leopold Street, Loughborough	757396 issued 28.8.39 at Bow Street	Ger

Rushen Camp. - Date of Birth 25.5.1892 in Ratibor. - Occupation Domestic. - Address of last residence outside U.K. Berlin, Ludwigskirchplatz 12. - Single. - German passport No. 115171/39/Z 14.8.39 Berlin. - 26.8.39 Con. landing at Harwich. - 6.12.39 Metro. Tri. No. 27. Exempted internment & special restrictions. - Refugee from Nazi oppression. - 27.6.40 Reg. Adv. Com. No. 3. To be interned until further order. - Refugee from Nazi oppression. - 9.10.41 Deceased. - Letters attached to R.C. - First dated 10 October, 1941 from? Wilson Deputy Commandant to Chief Constable, Douglas. Ref. DJW/BM. "Dear Sir, I have to report that Margarete Schindler, born 25.5.92 at Ratibor, Silesia, died here on 9th October, 1941, and to request that you would kindly send her police registration book immediately to the Police at the last place of Registration." - Second dated 11th October, 1941 from Major Chief Constable (Douglas) to the Chief Inspector, Aliens Registration Office, Piccadilly Place, London, W1. Ref. WEC/ACU. "Dear Sir, Margarethe Schindler, R.C. 757396, Bow Street, 28.8.39. Enclosed please find Registration Certificate for the above named alien who died at the Women's Internment Camp, Port Erin, Isle of Man, on the 9th October, 1941." - Third a card No. 139. acknowledging the receipt of the letter dated 11th October From the Aliens Registration Office. No. 1214/10/41. Your Ref. WEC/ACU. - Buried in Jewish section of Douglas Cemetery. Headstone reads Margarete Schindler 9 October 1941.

It is only to be expected that there would be a number of deaths within the camps either from natural causes or, in some cases,

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

MY PRIVATE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

Sir – Memorials can take different forms. In my case, it is my clothes hanger. It has lived quietly in my wardrobe for many, many years, among all the wire and plastic hangers. This one – for me a very special one – is made of wood with a faded pink silk cover with black lettering saying: Richard Brill, Praha 1, Celetna ul. 18. Richard and his wife were my mother's uncle and aunt. As the hanger says, they had a ready-made ladies' dress shop in Celetna Street, near the Old Town Square in Prague. They worked hard in their little shop to make a living and to bring up their daughter Rose well.

When Rose grew up, she became a regular contributor to women's journals and wrote a novel or two. With the onset of Nazism in Germany, the Brill family, like most of us Czech Jews, said: 'This cannot happen here.' Rose married a gentile, a dashing Czech pilot. It all seemed so good. However, the unthinkable happened. When the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia, the dashing pilot got scared of losing his fine job, being married to a Jewish woman. She loved him and agreed to a divorce. He lost his job anyway, but his wife and her parents lost their lives. These were just a few ordinary people among the 6 million who perished in the Holocaust.

My clothes hanger is only a tiny object, but for me it has always been my private symbol and memorial.

Hana Nermut,
Harrow

'MUSINGS FROM THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE'

Sir – The following poem, by my mother, Eva Ehrenberg, was written in 1960 and reflects her experience as a refugee:

Andere kann ich trösten
Aber nicht mich.
Die die Welt erlösten,
Erlösten sie sich?

Others I can comfort
But not myself.
Do those who redeem the world
Redeem themselves?

This seems to me a direct contradiction of Victor Ross's 'No one of note has celebrated our terminal condition in poetry, the proper medium for swan songs' in your January issue.

Professor Lewis Elton, Guildford

THE YOUNGEST KINDERTRANSPORT REFUGEE?

Sir – The late Trevor Chadwick who, together with Sir Nicholas Winton, rescued the children from Czechoslovakia, describes the first of his transports in Karen Gershon's *We Came As Children* (Gollancz, 1966): 'I took my first air transport rather proudly, on a twenty-seater plane. They were all cheerfully sick, enticed by the little paper bags, except a baby of one who slept peacefully in my lap the whole time.'

Moreover, Trevor Chadwick's family personally rescued three of us, i.e. they became guarantors. Sadly, he died before the Kindertransports became public knowledge and he received none of the accolade now happily accorded to Sir Nicholas. I myself tried to have him recognised by Yad Vashem as a 'righteous Gentile' – one winces at the oddity of the phrase – but was unsuccessful.

Does it matter? Yes it does. It matters to his family, who are rightly proud of him. And it matters historically. He should not be overlooked.

Gerda Mayer, London E4

VOYAGE OF THE DUNERA

Sir – I have been reading with interest the various items by Ray Fromm in your January issue. I too was shipped on the *Dunera* to Australia. This was not a Royal Navy ship. Prior to the war it was a cruise ship. It was commandeered by the government to be used as a troop ship. It happened to be available at the time when internees were being shipped abroad. The ship's crew were merchant seamen. The internees had no contact with the crew except with the ship's doctor. The internees were guarded by army soldiers under the command of Colonel Scott. He was later court-martialled and demoted.

The military escort came from the British Pioneer Corps, which, in effect, consisted of ex-prisoners and the like. On embarkation, they confiscated valuable objects such as watches, fountain pens and gold rings. With their bayonets they slit open our luggage and took whatever they fancied. They threw passports, documents etc overboard. I feel it necessary to put the record straight. The Royal Navy was never involved in any of this.

Frank Berg (formerly Franz Juliusberg)
Wembley, Middx
UK Co-ordinator, Australian Dunera
Association

ISLE OF MAN INTERNMENT: ONE MORE FOOTNOTE

Sir – Regarding the footnotes in the Isle of Man article in your February issue: here is another reference – Professor Maxine Sellers, *We Built Up Our Lives* (University of Chicago, October 2001). It is the story of the internment of Jewish refugees. There is a copy at the Wiener Library.

Anthony Goldsmith
Wembley, Middx

'PEACE FOR OUR TIME'

Sir – Thank you for your article "'Peace for our time' rides again' (January). I am old enough to remember the events of the 1930s only too well.

Professor E. H. Sondheimer
London N6

THE EXCITEMENT OF THE SIXTIES

Sir – Dr Grenville manages in the February issue to capture some of the excitement and promises of change offered by the arts and politics of the 1960s. In addition, there was the parallel exhilaration triggered by the 1967 Six-Day War, which offered a fleeting glimpse of potential peace between Arab and Jew. The cafés of Jerusalem, Paris and West Hampstead were galvanised by the possibilities. Sadly, many of these opportunities never came to fruition.

Arthur Oppenheimer
Hove

WHAT IS A JEW?

Sir – Mr Phillips (February) must not put his own spin on what I wrote. I neither equated nor compared – I expressed a personal point of view. To be exact, I wrote (January): 'I am quite happy to accept the paternal line as equally valid for being Jewish – but then, I am also ready to accept 'Jews for Jesus' as being Jews.' In fact, I go further, I also accept anyone who claims to be a Jew to be such without delving into antecedents. Mr Phillips refers to a Mr Chapman who is unknown to me but who, I am sure, can speak for himself. Personally, I have no desire to take this futile exchange of letters any further.

Harold Saunders
Manchester

Sir – I don't wish to enter into any argument with Peter Phillips on whether Judaism is a race rather than a religion, although the Liberal and Reform movements are doing their very best to undermine both aspects of it. What I do wish to point out, however, is that what he states about a Muslim race and an Islamic religion shows a complete lack of knowledge of the subject. There is no such thing as a Muslim race, Islam being a proselyting religion whose adherents can be found in many parts of the world and among many races in, for example, Indonesia, Malaysia, Somalia, northern Nigeria, Bosnia, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan – not to speak of the Arab

world. Moreover, the words 'Islam' and 'Muslim' are both derived from the same root, meaning submission to G-d in Arabic.

(Mrs) Margarete Stern
London NW3

RONALD CHANNING, A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

Sir - I am sorry to see Ronald Channing retiring from his job. I always enjoyed reading his articles and interviews in the *Journal* and he was a great credit to the Kindertransport activities. It was always nice to see his friendly face and sometimes we also enjoyed his wonderful piano-playing. A man of many talents indeed, he was a good organiser and communicator. Thank you, Ronald, we will miss you at the Cleve Road Centre.

Josie Dutch
London NW2

COMING TO TERMS

Sir - Martha Blend asks in your December issue how the SS blended back into normal post-war society. I doubt that a wholly Nazi society suddenly became 'normal'. Little happened to them. Some had prison sentences which were not carried out, as they had already waited in prison. The Americans were obsessed with the Soviet 'menace' and lost interest in German criminals - they might be useful one day, e.g. Werner von Braun. Those who committed crimes against humanity in the occupied countries mainly got away. However, in Poland some of the worst were tried and executed by the Poles. In other places, e.g. France, they were tried *in absentia*, condemned to death or long imprisonment but, as they were not extradited from Germany, they lived out their lives successfully as lawyers and other professionals. Crime seems to pay.

Ruth L. David
Ames, Iowa, USA

KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION IN TORONTO

Sir - I thought it might interest and 'console' Otto Deutsch (December, Letters) that here in Toronto, even in our small synagogue, there is a 'Kristallnacht Commemoration' every year. Our synagogue, Habonim, Reformed - to be compared with a Liberal one in London - is only a small one, founded just before the Second World War by immigrants from Europe, but it does keep all the 'memorable' events that happened during the Nazi period. As a matter of fact, I was interviewed a few years ago by a TV crew about my experiences of Kristallnacht and was rather surprised when a few days afterwards people in shops came up to me to tell me they had seen the programme and did not realise I was a Holocaust survivor.

Kitty Schafer
Toronto

PS: Love your publication, which I always

read from end to end, and thoroughly enjoy it.

PALESTINE AND PALESTINIANS

Sir - Please allow me, through your columns, to congratulate Mendel Storz on his excellent article in the February issue.

For years I have asked anyone wishing to listen this question, but I have never been able to back it up anywhere nearly as well as Mr Storz has done. I admire his research and the details of historical developments that he outlines. The interesting thing would be for anyone reading this to challenge his viewpoints with equal back-up of history.

I hope Mr Storz will send his article to the national press to see what debate he can start. What a wonderful thing it would be to have a public debate on this topic with Mr Storz proposing a motion on the basis of his clear knowledge of this matter. Perhaps the Oxford Union or a similar body would take up the challenge.

Harry Bibring, Bushey Heath

HATS OFF TO THE PALESTINE POLICE



Sir - Further to Dr Anthony Grenville's article 'The British and the Mandate' in the December issue, your readers may be interested to see the above photo of my husband Charles when he was in the Palestine Police.

Charlotte Stenham, London N12

THREE LITTLE PIGS

Sir - I heard with great sadness the news that a re-issue of the story of the three little pigs - who tried various construction methods to build themselves affordable housing and of the big bad wolf who huffed and puffed to blow them down - failed to be nominated for a prize for some very spurious reasons which, one suspects, have to do with the dreadful PC. Such considerations diminish the language, free expression and even heritage - another buzz word.

This could have serious repercussions. For instance, is it still 'on' for grandparents to talk about 'This little pig went to market, this little pig stayed at home, this little pig ate all the roast beef, etc' without being apprehended by the thought police? Will pigs still be able to fly? Will it cease to be possible to 'make a pig's ear of it'? And what will be the alternative to silk purses? Our beloved English is the poorer for such follies.

Frank Bright, Ipswich

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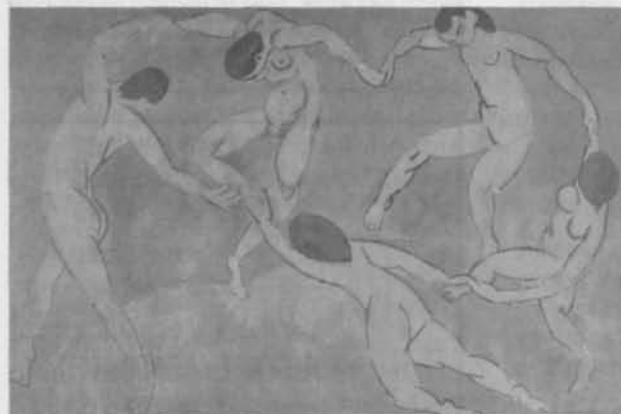
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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Despite a major attack by the *Evening Standard's* Brian Sewell, **From Russia at the Royal Academy** (to 18 April) has survived controversy with flying colours. In order to appease the Russians, who feared putative claims on art expropriated by the Russian Revolution, former Culture Secretary James Purnell scrambled an Act of Parliament to bring to the UK 120 French and Russian paintings from Russia's four major art collections and ensure their immunity from seizure. Sewell himself sees parallels between such potential claims and those of Holocaust heirs. Whatever the



Henri Matisse, *The Dance*, 1910. Oil on canvas, 260 x 391 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Photo Archives Matisse, Paris. © Succession H. Matisse/DACS 2008

provenance of the works on show, they cast a long shadow over this much vaunted exhibition, following its unfettered success in Düsseldorf.

So what can be said about the show itself? It has a vast remit: an examination of the interchange between French and Russian art during a revolutionary phase. It all turns on the foresight of two avant-garde Russian collectors, Ivan Morosov and Sergei Shchukin, who brought French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism to Russia. **Picasso's** haunting Cubist work *Dryad* has a breathtaking earthiness and power, resonant of Jacob Epstein's *Genesis*. However, the reflection of these artistic genres on Russian art is, apart from the work of **Kandinsky** and **Chagall** – who

fuses French Cubism with Russian-Jewish folklore – largely disappointing.

I was impressed by the work of the early-nineteenth century Russian Realists known as The Wanderers who focused on social issues and their personal culture. Most captivating is *The Blessing* by **Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret**, showing a kneeling bride whose white veil is a metaphor for romantic purity amid peasant poverty and simplicity. Opposite is **James Tissot's** *Ruins*, a poignant painting of beggars amidst broken slates and tiles with strong Christian imagery.

Many Russian artists have a taste for dramatic pose – perhaps **Matisse's** famous *La Danse* offers a metaphor – but, for example, **Ilya Repin's** *Leo Tolstoy Barefoot* shows him animated as though on the brink of an idea. *Commedia dell'arte*, a joint self-portrait by **Shukhayev** and **Yakovlev** dressed as Pierrot and Harlequin and others, notably of Diaghilev, all strikingly deliver this typically Russian theatrical, narrative style.

The acerbic wit of the late writer and pundit **Chaim Bermant** is captured in a series of spirited, poignant portraits by his widow **Judy Bermant** in her tribute solo **Portraits of a Licensed Heretic** at the **Ben Uri**. The drawings, mainly charcoal or aquatint, catch the writer's fleeting irony. Perhaps it takes a wife to penetrate one of the finest and funniest Jewish minds of the twentieth century. We shall not see his like again, but Judy has done a great service to his memory.

More disturbing memories pepper the mind of artist-sculptor **Roman Halter**. In an exhibition of paintings and watercolours at the **Redfern Gallery**, which once exhibited the art of Jewish internee artists of the Second World War, Halter's powerful, fractured work delivers faces he remembers from the transports to the death camps. It is spiced with landscape miniatures broken up by tiny, marching brown figures which reflect his dreams – the rolling Dorset landscape into which the death march constantly transposes itself.

REVIEWS

Austria's loss, Britain's gain

'IMMORTAL AUSTRIA': AUSTRIANS IN EXILE IN BRITAIN

edited by Charmian Brinson, Richard Dove, Jennifer Taylor

Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi BV, 2007, 228 pp. paperback (*Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, Vol. 8, 2006)

The ironic title of this book refers to a revue produced by Austrian refugees in wartime London, representing their memories of a country of historical grandeur, mountain scenery and musical refinement – whereas the reality at the time was very different. The book itself is a compendium of academic papers presented at a conference on 'Austria in Exile' held by the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies in London in 2005.

The introductory paper, by Anthony Grenville, provides a very useful survey of Austrian immigration into Britain and points out the differences between the German and Austrian experiences. While the former saw a gradual deterioration in Jewish life from 1933 onwards, and were able to plan their emigration with some choice of destination, the latter had just over a year to attempt to leave Austria after many countries had already closed their borders to refugees. Dr Grenville also notes that the refugees in London were not a typical cross-section of Viennese Jewry, as the more orthodox and generally poorer Viennese Jews, mainly living in the Second District, found it more difficult to escape and were therefore underrepresented compared to the more assimilated and middle-class Jews.

A major result of the pre-war persecution of the Jews in Germany and Austria was a great loss of talent in many fields in the Nazi-dominated countries, and a corresponding gain in the countries hosting the new refugees. *'Immortal Austria'?* brings this out very clearly, with particular reference to the Austrian refugees in Great Britain. Many of the papers discuss the contributions made by prominent individuals in fields such as literature, music, art, medicine and psychology. Separate papers deal, for example, with the lives of Sigmund Freud, Stefan Zweig, Elias Canetti and Richard Tauber as well as topics such as the film industry, women writers and

the problems of the medical profession. The work of refugees in anti-Nazi propaganda broadcasts is also discussed.

Although it is estimated that 85-90 per cent of the 33,000 Austrian refugees were Jewish, there was also an important anti-Nazi and generally left-wing element among them. A paper by Charmian Brinson covering the work of the journalist Eva Priester describes the importance of the Austrian Centre and Free Austrian Movement, whose policies were more concerned with the future of a post-war Austria than with the problems of resettlement and integration in Britain which concerned most Jews.

A final section of the book deals with the post-war problems of either integrating into British life or attempting to return to Austria and continuing life there. For most Jews there was little incentive to return to a country where their families had been destroyed and which immediately after the war had shown little inclination to acknowledge its guilt. For the political refugees, and for some of the academics, the new Austria was not what they had hoped for and their return did not receive the warm welcome they may have expected.

Although this is a seriously academic book (partly in German!), it is very readable and demonstrates the important influence of the Austrian Jews on British culture, as well as the effect of the British way of life on the immigrants.

George Vulkan

Weimar by the Sea

GERMAN WRITERS IN FRENCH EXILE
1930-1940

by Martin Mauthner

London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007,
280pp. paperback

For those of us who were children in the 1930s this book is both enlightening and tantalising. It shows that, contrary to popular belief, the triumph of Nazism was not a done deal. In fact, the party had many opponents – after all, 56 per cent of the German public had voted against Hitler. Had the other political parties not been divided among themselves, we might still be in the country of our birth.

Mauthner takes us through the early days of the Nazi regime, when many observers thought it could not last long: 'Some Germans expected that the

responsibility of being in power would exhaust the regime or at least moderate its fanaticism.' They were wrong. The oppressive nature of the new government soon made life intolerable for a long procession of writers and artists, many of them Jews, who were forced into exile. They chose to settle in Sanary in the South of France because it seemed hospitable to refugees and was near enough to Germany should a return be possible in the future. Sanary became known as Weimar by the Sea and gave shelter to famous names such as Franz Werfel, Arnold Zweig, Lion Feuchtwanger and Heinrich Mann. Their numbers were swelled by visits from British authors like Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh and Cyril Connolly. When there was no sign of the Nazi regime imploding, the authors settled down to write and seek a new public for their work.

Meanwhile, many German Jews had little sense of the terrors to come. In a common joke, two Jews meet on the Kurfürstendamm. One asks: 'Well?' The other replies: 'I give the Nazis another three months!'

Mauthner focuses on the position of Thomas Mann, the renowned non-Jewish author who had a Jewish wife. While strongly opposed to the Nazi ideology, Mann hesitated to condemn the regime openly for fear of having to give up his right to live in Germany, his reading public and his property. His son and daughter were bolder and had to flee the country in consequence.

In 1933 Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda ordered students to 'cleanse' libraries and bookshops by burning books of a Jewish, pacifist or pan-European or urban culture. A list was drawn up of about 200 titles by 131 authors, thus fulfilling Heine's prophesy 'Where one burns books, one will ultimately burn people.'

The episode provoked protests from British left-wingers such as Harold Laski, Naomi Mitchison and J. B. Haldane. PEN, the world writers' association, was in a dilemma, not wishing to alienate German writers who supported the Nazi regime. In the event, H. G. Wells, its chairman, produced a fudged resolution which had little effect.

During this time, the Fischer Verlag, a major Jewish publisher, continued to walk a tightrope of appeasement of the Nazis. For a time their tactics seemed to pay off, but even their privileged status was not allowed to last for long. Thomas Mann, one of the authors the Verlag published, came off the fence, condemning the Nazis and going into

exile.

In 1935 a writers' conference designed to defend European culture against Nazi barbarism met in Paris and attracted many celebrated authors, including E. M. Forster, Bertolt Brecht and Boris Pasternak. However, the conference was riven by disputes between the Communists, who were the sponsors of the conference, and those opposed to far-left ideologies.

Ultimately, the words of intellectuals counted for little against the Nazi juggernaut. At most, they may have prepared the thinking public for the necessity of fighting Nazi tyranny. As for Sanary, after the fall of France it was no longer a safe haven for the authors who had sheltered there and many tried to escape to neutral Switzerland or the United States.

Martha Blend

FILM

Villainy and revenge in Victorian London

SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON
BARBER OF FLEET STREET
directed by Tim Burton
starring Johnny Depp and
Helena Bonham Carter

I have to confess to being a Sweeney Todd virgin. So, although I had learned about the plot of Tim Burton's new film from glancing at the odd review, I was not familiar with any previous version of Stephen Sondheim's musical about the legendary demon barber and had nothing to pit my impressions against.

These impressions, inevitably, revolve around the theme, or themes, of the story as much as any critical perspective of the actors, the songs, the set design and the production. From my point of view, the fact that the film is a musical is a minor factor. While hardly any song sticks in the memory, there is not the irritating immobilisation of the action that occurs in musicals when a song is being performed. Here the characters seem merely to be 'speaking in tune', often repeating certain phrases but carrying on acting at the same time. So I have no special praise or criticism for the singing.

The themes, of course, are more than compelling. While revenge is the prime aim of the barber, now naming himself Sweeney Todd, who was unjustly banished for 15 years by a judge who

Reviews continued on page 10

REVIEWS continued from page 9

coveted his wife, the means of preparing for and carrying out this revenge present a new level of barbarity. Yet the perpetrator, played with considerable skill and conviction by Johnny Depp, remains a human being in whose fate the spectator continues to take an interest. One explanation, perhaps, lies in his fidelity to his lost wife, whom he now believes to be dead, evident in the pained indifference he is forced to overcome when approached by his amorous neighbour and accomplice, Mrs Lovett. Helena Bonham Carter excels in this role, combining the hardness of the manufacturer of the new 'meat pies' with lustful longing and even a quasi-maternal tenderness.

Alan Rickman is suitably villainous as Todd's nemesis Judge Turpin, with Timothy Spall as his ludicrous sidekick Beadle Bamford. Another amusing – or not so amusing – cameo is Sacha Baron-Cohen's phoney Italian barber Pirelli.

A fascinating contrast to the themes of villainy and revenge is the depiction of innocence, evident in Jamie Campbell Bower's portrayal of Anthony Hope, the sailor who helps Todd return to England, and found in other characters, primarily the lovely Johanna, Todd's daughter who is now the ward of the evil judge, and Toby, the young boy Pirelli has rescued from the workhouse and who becomes Mrs Lovett's devoted 'foster child'.

The gloomy vision of Victorian London, which predominates throughout, provides a fitting backdrop to the action, while the dramatic finale brings to mind two further memorable themes: Oscar Wilde's immortal 'Each man kills the thing he loves' and Edith Piaf's haunting 'Dieu réunit ceux qui s'aiment.'

Emma Klein

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY continued from page 4

containing screwed-up newspapers. If one spoke to her she would look vacant but reply charmingly – with words that made no sense.

How should we react? Should we tell the next generation our experiences as a warning to be ever-vigilant? Yes, but for some of us it is too difficult to speak of these memories. What of the reactions of others? For instance, what about the reactions when we first arrived in this country? I work on the archive of the Jewish Refugees Committee. Reading the files, I am often shocked by the ignorance of what had befallen us. The few social workers at Bloomsbury House were good-natured but overwhelmed by their caseloads. And the concept of 'trauma counselling' was unheard-of then.

Today, some of the young generation are trying to react positively. I'm thinking, for instance, of those young Germans, Austrians and Poles who refuse to do military service but join *Aktion Sühnezeichen/ Friedensdienste*. You will find them at the Wiener Library and elsewhere. My husband Herbert, for many years Principal Guide with the Anne Frank travelling exhibition, worked closely with several young Germans and Austrians and we made many young friends this way. Almost without exception they react with a collective guilt to the crimes of their grandparents (or great-grandparents). Many have told us that their otherwise talkative elders became strangely silent when asked about wartime experiences.

And how did Britons react *after* the war? For the most part, they didn't react at all. The subject was virtually taboo. And we ourselves did not talk about it to the outside world. We worked hard to rebuild our lives. Some 20 years ago, a new generation began to ask those questions and there was a rush to obtain testimony from those who had experienced the Holocaust, before our generation died out.

That I survived the war can be attributed only to luck and to the fact that I probably have a strong constitution. I was the only member of my family to come out of a concentration camp and, after the war, I was adopted by a Jewish family who had come to London from Berlin in 1933. They had a daughter of their own so I now had a ready-made sister, 20 years older than myself. I also had new aunts, uncles and cousins. I came into the family in 1946 and no mention of my past history was ever made to me. It was not until 1995 that one of the family broached the subject with me. When I asked 'Why have you never asked me before today?', the reply was: 'I didn't want to remind you of things that would upset you.' But we can never forget what was done to us all and of what we were so cruelly robbed.

Our only duty is to remember, and to remember especially our families – our parents, grandparents, siblings. Does a day pass when we do not grieve for them? And because we remember, their breath of life lives on through us, and – through our descendants – in perpetuity.

Even So

by Rose Scooler

There were fifty of us sleeping on one floor during the hardest time I'd ever known. For many of those long nights I stayed awake from hunger. And being chilled to the bone. I had lessons in the way that cruelty may consist of being left to rot. Even so. Would I prefer never to have seen inside Theresienstadt? I would not.

I was an attendant, running about in heat and frost, every kind of weather, up and down the different flights of steps. Often I felt my feet could go no further. They had me splitting mica next:

sheet after sheet till I almost dropped. Even so. Would I prefer never to have seen inside Theresienstadt? I would not.

Here I've met a host of men and women who, living through a season of emergency, lost what made them more than animal – their basic human decency. Yet I found others who'd persevere in acts of saving grace. No matter what. So, while you might prefer never to have seen inside Theresienstadt, I would not.

This poem was translated from the German by Rose Scooler's niece, Ann Lewis, and the latter's daughter, Sibyl Ruth. A manuscript containing more than 40 poems by Rose Scooler, who died in 1985, came to light only recently.

ISLE OF MAN continued from page 5

suicide. A number of graves of former internees have been removed to the German cemetery at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire.

How you can help us complete the lists

MNH Library wishes to receive details about any individual who was an internee on the Isle of Man in either world war (there was also a Jewish section of the Douglas camp in the First World War), especially correspondence and photographs, which we are happy to copy and return if you wish to retain originals. We have acquired fascinating memoirs in this way in recent years. Principal camps for German/Austrian refugees were the Onchan, Hutchinson Square, Central, Rushen and Ramsey ones.

Basic details sought are: nationality; date and place of birth;

occupation; approximate date of arrival in UK; how long was the period of internment (some were only a few months, other several years)?

Summary of what happened to the internee on release – for example, did a male join the Pioneer Corps?

Any other internees known to you who were here at the same time. In some instances we have a note of wives and children, but not of the husbands as the men's records have largely been lost.

Alan Franklin, Librarian
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A TALE OF TWO GRAVEYARDS

Professor Brent wrote in these columns (January, Letters) about his ancestor's cemetery in Koszalin and an event commemorating Kristallnacht there, and remarked that 'Such acts of remembrance do occur all over Poland'. Professor Brent cited these acts as examples of how Poland is undergoing a profound change – a change which some are unwilling to recognise. One could obtain the impression from his letter that Kristallnacht is generally commemorated in Poland. However, what takes place there is a result of his effort and it was in Germany that Kristallnacht took place. Indeed, the Poles are not responsible for Kristallnacht, but to say that they cannot be blamed for the aftermath is not entirely correct – not as far as Polish Jews are concerned. Had they behaved differently and at least looked the other way, countless more Jews would be around today. During the war, on the 'Aryan side', it wasn't so much the Germans I was trying to avoid – it was my compatriots I was running from.

There is no mention of misdeeds committed by Poles, except at Jedwabne, where the scale of the crime would not allow it to remain hidden. There, 1,600 men, women and children were burnt alive by their Polish neighbours in June 1941. There was no monument there either: the plaque that was there told a lie – it put the blame on the Nazis. It is significant that this atrocity took place seven months before the decision for the 'Final Solution' was taken. As I write, news is coming through that the Polish-born, American professor Jan T. Gross may have to face charges for slandering the Polish nation – they always did have a puffed-up sense of 'Polish honour'. The charge carries a three-year jail term. It was Jan Gross who brought to light the massacre at Jedwabne. More recently, he has written a book on *Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*. It is estimated that between 1,200 and 3,000 Jews were murdered in Poland after the war.

I have a different story to tell about my



ancestors' resting place. The town of Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski had a Jewish population of 10,000. The first photograph shows some headstones bunched together with a heap of shattered fragments, tucked away in a corner of what had been a large Jewish cemetery. A sign reads that the Jewish graveyard was inaugurated in the year 1657. Not a mention anywhere in a town of 75,000 people that there was once a sizable Jewish presence there going back to the seventeenth century. The rest was uprooted and ploughed under, with only the ancient trees remaining – silent witnesses to an extinct community.

The second picture is of another cemetery outside town. When I enquired about the



ancient *matzevot* that were still there after the Germans departed, one woman said the graveyard was bombed by the Luftwaffe! Another blamed the Communists. Until one genuine young man directed me to a place where no visitors go. I was appalled to find there that the headstones had been smashed into fragments and used in the construction of the perimeter wall to the 'New' Catholic

cemetery. The pieces were laid facing inwards to conceal them, but here and there fragments were reversed, revealing Hebrew lettering. An American friend tells me that the graveyard in his *shtetl* of Grodzisk had been turned into a junkyard. Sadly, this is the situation throughout the country, at least in the provinces.

I encountered mainly hostility there. When I enquired at the municipality about pre-war plans, I was told that all records had been destroyed in the war. There was a time when I would have been murdered for less – the country has indeed undergone a profound change. I later obtained the plans I wanted through a Polish intermediary.

In another instance, I took my family to a brick factory where I had once hidden. The gatekeeper said she would have to ask for permission to enter. I could hear only her side of it: 'No, sir, he has no beard. No, sir, he dresses normally – like a Pole!' To satisfy his curiosity to set eyes on a Jew, he came out saying he wanted to meet an 'original townsman', as there were now so many newcomers. When we said goodbye, he complimented me on my 'good accent' and on the fact that I didn't look Jewish! My parting words to him were: had he not allowed me in, I would have still found a way, as I did during the war, without anyone knowing. He was clearly an educated man, about 45 years old, who had probably never met a Jew in his life and had only a stereotypical idea of one.

On account of the European Union and public opinion abroad, it's not difficult to see why the Polish authorities seek reconciliation – but there is no question of admitting collusion in the Holocaust and no property compensation either! The cornerstone has been laid for a Jewish museum in Warsaw. I was asked to sign the petition supporting it, but I would hazard a guess that the museum can never be entirely objective and that the Poles will have to come up smelling of roses.

Rubin Katz

INSIDE the AJR

Radlett visit by Ludwig Spiro

AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro, speaking for over an hour without hesitation – and without notes – described the origins of the AJR. His talk was highly illuminating. Hopefully, he'll come to us again.

Harry Lorber

Next meeting: 19 March. Wiener Library archivist Howard Falksohn

Surrey session

We were entertained by Edmée Barta, assisted by Edith Vanstone, to our 'morning coffee', which tends to expand beyond it. As always, we enjoyed meeting friends and the occasional newcomer. Amazing how Myrna and her colleagues keep finding more of these 'new' members, who are of our own time and origin! Thanks again, Myrna.

Vernon Saunders

Next meeting: 26 March, details to be sent out

Essex showing of *Paperclips*

Barbara Newman spoke to us about a showing in the synagogue of *Paperclips* (all donations to British Yad Vashem) on Holocaust Memorial Day as well as on Yom Hashoah.

Larry Lisner

Next meeting: 11 March. Clare Ungerson, 'Kitchener Camp'

Ilford entertainment by George Layton

Our entertainment was supplied by actor-author George Layton, who read us one of his short stories. George also gave us an impressive thumbnail sketch of how he got into acting and the many stage and TV series he has been in. A great start to the new year.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 5 March. Jane King, 'Coram's Children'

Pinner: 'Propaganda Photography'

We had an interesting talk by Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith on 'Propaganda Photography', dealing mostly with pictures produced by the Nazis. The principal aim was to damage Jews by portraying them and their activities in the worst of bad lights. Some pictures were clearly faked, some posed. There were also interesting photographs of life in the Warsaw Ghetto, taken by Mendel Grossman. This led to a lively discussion on the sources of antisemitism.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 6 March. Tony Bernstein, 'The Educational Work of the Technion, Haifa'

South London update on Mid East
The Israeli Embassy's Robin Hamilton-Taylor gave us a power-point presentation on current events in the Middle East. Whether or not President Bush's recent visit to the area would influence the peace talks remained to be seen.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: 13 March. Susannah Alexander, 'Disraeli Onwards'

Weald of Kent talk on Wiener Library

Wiener Library archivist Howard Falksohn gave us a very interesting talk about the history and ongoing worth of that institution. Our thanks to Myrna for working so hard on our behalf and to the Dicksons for the very welcome refreshments.

Inge Ball

Edgware: The BoD and media bias towards Israel

Jerry Lewis spoke to us about the Board of Deputies, singling out among its duties dealing with the regrettable bias of the media regarding Israel.

Eve Glicksman

Next meeting: 18 March. Clive Lawton

Brighton and Hove Sarid: 'Heroes and Heroines'

A lively, well-attended talk in which Abigail Slavin entertained us with the wonderful story of Nancy Wake, code-named the 'White Mouse' by the Gestapo. We look forward to part 2.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 17 March. Aubrey Milstein, 'The Moral State We Are In'

Welwyn Garden City: Safety in the Community

Two community support officers spoke to us. One was a Crime Prevention Officer, the other dealt with Hate Crime. There was much interaction with the audience, both lady officers being extremely friendly. Much advice was given, but we were also made to feel that we do live in one of the safer parts of the country.

Ruth Tuch

Next meeting: 25 March. Bertha Leverton on the Kindertransport

Wembley full agenda

Anthony Goldsmith reported on the exhibition at Brent Cross entitled '6 Million +', the brainchild of artist Antonia Stowe, each button symbolising a murdered human being. Holocaust Day versus Genocide Day was discussed – there appeared to be a predilection for the former. Myrna also introduced Darren

Aaron from the AJR's Social Services Dept
Anthony Goldsmith

Next meeting: 12 March. Social

'White Mouse' story at Hendon

Abigail Slavin told us the amazing story of Nancy Wake, the 'White Mouse' – one of the most decorated women of the Second World War.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 31 March. Alan Bilgora, 'Great Jewish Opera Singers'

Cleve Road: The amazing story of Ruth Bourne

Our speaker, Ruth Bourne, who had joined the WRNS at the age of 18, was selected for Special Duties X, which meant she was part of the large group engaged in breaking Nazi codes. After training at Bletchley Park, Ruth operated the decoding machine known as the Bombe at the Eastcote and Stanmore outstations. She is now a tour guide at Bletchley Park. An amazing story!

David Lang

Next meeting: 25 March. Otto Deutsch, 'Viennese Coffee Houses'

Amazing rescue mission



Sir Nicholas Winton and Bertha Leverton at Hampstead Theatre showing of *Winton's Children*

In January the AJR showed the film *Winton's Children* at the Hampstead Theatre. My father, Max Fischler, 88, wanted to see the film because he had been a refugee in Prague in 1938-39. Doreen Warriner was his saviour. As the Prague representative of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, Doreen worked closely with Nicholas Winton. Sir Nicholas's responsibility was to find funding and foster families for children up to 17 years old, while Miss Warriner's office dealt with anyone over this age, including my father, who was 19 at the time. So it was a very emotional meeting for Max to have the opportunity to speak with Sir Nicholas, the only person he had ever met who knew and worked with Doreen Warriner, in an amazing rescue mission! Later, Esther Rantzen told us how she had come to make the film *Winton's Children*.

Rhona Myers

HGS: The Royal Free Hospital

A well attended meeting was enlightened and entertained by Dr Eva Blumenthal's talk on the history of the Royal Free Hospital. 'Royal' because Queen Victoria gave it the Royal Charter in 1837 and 'Free' because free access by all was what motivated the remarkable Yorkshireman William Marsden, who founded the original dispensary and hospital at Hatton Garden in 1828. It was at the Royal Free, then at the Gray's Inn Road site, that the first Medical School for women was opened in 1877. The present building has been at Belsize Park since 1975 and, not least due to its location, it has always had a strong Jewish connection, doctors and patients alike.

Laszlo Roman

North London: 'Queen Elizabeth I's Jewish doctor'

Close on 30 members braved the elements and attended a talk on 'Queen Elizabeth I's Jewish Doctor' by Phillipa Bernard, who excelled in both presentation and content. Given the number of questions, a good and interesting time was had by all present.

Herbert Haberberg

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS

Norwich 18 March – tbc

Temple Fortune 20 March – tbc

West Midlands (Birmingham)

11 March Social Get-together and Tea

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
Inge Little 01423 886254

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

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sunday 20 July 2008 –

Sunday 27 July 2008

AT THE FERNLEA HOTEL

11/17 South Promenade, St Annes

Tel 01253 726 726

The cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, is £495 per person. The hotel charges a supplement per room for sea view or deluxe room.

Programme includes

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OUTINGS**

MEET OLD AND NEW FRIENDS

Travel to St Annes by RAIL,
NATIONAL COACH or CAR

Please contact Ruth Finestone on
020 8385 3070

DIARY DATES

Monday 26 May – Sunday 1 June
Bournemouth Holiday (Cliffside Hotel)

Tuesday 24 June
Day trip to Brighton and Hove
Jewish Day Centre

Sunday 20 July – Sunday 27 July
St Annes Holiday (Fernlea Hotel)

Sunday 21 Sept
AJR Tea at Hilton Watford

Sunday 26 October – Sunday 2 Nov
Eastbourne Holiday (Lansdowne Hotel)

For further information, 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

Radlett
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Sheffield
Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London
Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Temple Fortune
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

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 March 2008

Alfons Silverman

**'Dual Identity: To what degree
do we cause our own problems?'**

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 March 2008

Blanche Benedick

**'My Escape from
Denmark to Sweden'**

**KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH
WILL BE SERVED AT
1.00 PM ON MONDAYS**

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**

March Afternoon Entertainment

Mon 3	KT LUNCH – Kards & Games Klub
Tue 4	CLOSED
Wed 5	Katinka Seiner
Thur 6	Douglas Poster
Mon 10	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 11	CLOSED
Wed 12	Michael Heaton
Thur 13	Sheila Games
Mon 17	Kards 7 Games Klub
Tue 18	CLOSED
Wed 19	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 20	Jack Davidoff
Mon 24	CLOSED – EASTER MONDAY
Tue 25	CLOSED
Wed 26	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 27	Paul Colemand

'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

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marriage

Congratulations to **Helena and Stephen Reid** on the occasion of the marriage of their daughter Alison to Barry.

Deaths

It is with great sadness that the AJR marks the death of **Carl Flesch** (see forthcoming obituary).

Rosenduft Ilse. We are devastated by the loss of our dearest friend for 68 years, never to be forgotten by Martha and Ludwig Levy. Much love to Esther, Peter and children.

Memoriam

In Memory of **Martin and Lotte Reichenbach** and the other 291 Jewish inmates of the *Judenlager Hellerberg* in Dresden, transported to Auschwitz 2-3 March 1943 and mostly murdered there.

Stone Setting

The Stone Setting in memory of **Leo Horn** will take place at 11.30 am on Sunday 30 March at Bushey.

Classified

New buggy and wheel chair available free of charge. Contact Susie at AJR Centre, tel 020 7328 0208.

Bridge Looking for three partners to form a regular weekly afternoon game. Please telephone 020 8958 5080.

Day Centre

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Centre Clothes sale, separates etc. Wednesday 26 March, 9.30-11.45 am.

BRIDGE DAY

**AJR CENTRE
MONDAY 28 APRIL 2008**

10.00 am for coffee and biscuits
A 3-course lunch at 1.00 pm
Continue playing till 3 pm
Make up your own four or
come along and meet new people

Entrance £5
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**Thursday
17 April 2008**

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Led by Rabbi Katz

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payable in advance

First-come-first-served basis
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ARE YOU ON A LOW INCOME AND IN NEED OF HOMECARE HELP?

AJR might be able to offer you financial assistance for cleaning, gardening and caring.

Members who might not otherwise be able to afford homecare please contact:

**Estelle Brookner, Secretary
AJR Social Services Dept
Tel: 020 8385 3070**

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AJR HOLIDAY IN BOURNEMOUTH

Monday 26 May to Sunday 1 June (6 days)

We are going back to Bournemouth this summer and will be staying at the Cliffside Hotel

£400 + £25 single room supplement
Price includes dinner, bed & breakfast, transport from and back to Cleve Road NW6, lunch on the journey to Bournemouth, outings and entertainment in the hotel

As always, places are limited so book early
Please call Carol or Lorna on 020 8385 3070 for a booking form

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ANANURSING



ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY – MARCH

To 29 March 3 *Sisters on Hope Street*, a new play by Diane Samuels (author of *Kindertransport*). Hampstead Theatre, tel 020 7722 9301

To 26 March 'Lifelong Impressions: Paintings, Prints and Drawings by Milein Cosman', Austrian Cultural Forum, 28 Rutland Gate, London SW7. Tel Dina Wosner on 020 8371 7371

Mon 3 Mike Faulkner, 'Paul Robeson: His Turbulent Life, Music and Politics' Club 43

Wed 5 Prof Jose Arroyo, 'Jewish Identity in *Body and Soul*' In *FilmTalk* series organised by Leo Baeck Institute and Wiener Library. Venue: Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7580 3493

Mon 10 Dr Dorothea McEwan, 'Facing the Anschluss (the Annexation of Austria by Germany in March 1938)' Club 43

Wed 12 Book launch: *Kindertransport, Before and After: Sixty Poems 1980-*

2007 by Lotte Kramer, published by the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex. Venue: Gustave Tuck Theatre, Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL, 4-5.30 pm

Wed 12 Prof Christian Wiese (Sussex), 'Hans Jonas: Philosophy and Ethics in a Post-Holocaust World' Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Univ of Sussex. Venue: Gustave Tuck Theatre, Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL, 6.15 pm for 6.45 pm

Mon 17 Ken Baldry, 'The Faust Legend in Music' Club 43

Mon 24 Club 43 No lecture (Easter Monday)

Mon 31 Ms Merilyn Moos, 'The Life of Margaret Charlotte (Lotte) Moos: Resistance to Nazism and Personal Repression' Club 43

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

SEARCH NOTICES

I am writing a thesis on Austrian women who married British soldiers during the occupation of Austria and moved with them to the UK. I am also looking for info on British soldiers based in Austria at that time who married Austrian women but remained in Austria. Pls reply to Judith Moeslinger, 23 Pauling Road, Headington, Oxford OX 38 PU, tel 078264 79309 Judith.Moeslinger@sbg.ac.at

Dinger sisters Steffi, Trude and Elsa arrived in London from Vienna in 1938 and lived in north London. They joined Finsbury Park branch of Austrian Society. Each married: Steffi became Frocht, Trude became Spitz (later Spencer), Elsa became Mowbray. Any info on them or Steffi's husband Uszer/Edi Frucht/Frocht pls to Gaby Weiner (née Frocht) at gaby.weiner@btinternet.com or tel 01786 462 915

Gottschalk, Walter, b. 1920 (?) in Danzig, came by KT to England. His father, Siegfried Gottschalk, died 1930 of scarlet fever. Grandparents: Helene and Adolf Gottschalk; aunt: Martha Gerechter; cousin: Leo Gerechter. Any info pls contact Amelie Doege aua.doege@t-online.de

Did you spend part of your childhood in the Jewish Children's home at Fehrbelliner Strasse 92, Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin? I have published a book about those children who emigrated to the US and Israel and would like to add the stories of those who settled in the UK. Pls contact me at Inge.Franken@klar-a.de

Lichtblau, Alice, b. 23 May 1900 in Burggasse, 7th district of Vienna, to Johanna née Thorsch and Jacob Moses Lichtblau of Vienna. In 1938 Alice worked as a sales assistant and was living at Stuckgasse 13 in the 7th district. She told the authorities she was going to England. Alice was my father's first cousin. Any info

pls to Daniela Torsh, 15 William Street, Balmain, NSW, 2041, Australia, tel 0438 889 032 (mob), 61 2 9810 5572 (home), danielat1@bigpond.com

I am writing a dissertation on musical activities in British internment camps in the WW2 era. I am interested in musical activity of any kind. Any info pls to Suzanne Snizek-Libson at suzanne.snizek@gmail.com

In WW2 some refugees to the UK were initially sent for screening to the Royal Victoria Patriotic School (also known as the London Reception Centre) on Wandsworth Common. Anyone with info on any individuals or other organisations whose members might have spent time at this building on arrival in the UK, pls tel Simon McNeill-Ritchie on 07958-657522, simonmcnr@aol.com

Simon-Wilf, Gisela, born 16.02.20 in Hamburg, arrived UK 24.03.39. Lived in Leeds and Gloucestershire, last known address (August 1946): 6 Andover Street, Cheltenham. Any info pls contact Karin Ohlsen, Eppendorfer Weg 154, 20253 Hamburg, tel 040 420 1874, karin.ohlsen@t-online.de

My cousin Weldon, Hugh Robert/Weinberg, Hans Robert, born 1921 in Borgholzhausen, Westphalia, went by Kindertransport to England and worked as gardener there in Loughborough. Interned as an enemy alien, he was deported in July 1940 on the *Dunera* to Sydney, Australia. In September 1941 he enlisted in the Pioneer Corps of the British Army, embarking for Liverpool. In 1943 he joined the Royal Armoured Corps. Any info on him please to Dr Robert A. Weinberg, MIT Ludwig Center for Molecular Oncology, 9 Cambridge Center, Cambridge MA 02142, tel 001 617 258 5159, fax 001 617 258 5213, weinberg@wi.mit.edu

AJR REPORT

Michael Newman

New chairman for KT Group

Following five years' sterling work, Hermann Hirschberger has stood down as chairman of the Kindertransport Planning Committee. Although Hermann will continue to play a key role in organising the KT Reunion later this year and overseeing the Kinder Survey project, Erich Reich has taken over as chairman. Erich will be supported in his new role by Rev Bernd Koschland.

All of us at the AJR wish to express our gratitude to Hermann for expertly leading and inspiring the Kinder in the wake of David Jedwab's untimely death.

AJR membership success

Despite a membership with an average age of 82, the AJR was delighted to enrol 197 new members in 2007. Although this success did not quite match the previous year's achievement of 221 new members, we were delighted to welcome many members of the Second Generation and the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain, as well as survivors from ghettos and concentration camps. The AJR's total membership now stands at 3,202.

In contrast with the rest of the AJR membership, just over half of the new members live in the London area – as against 70 per cent who live in London and the South-East. Reflecting our national presence, we have new members in Hull, Gateshead, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Kent, Cambridge, Surrey, Stirling and the Isle of White.

Guest speaker Baroness Neuberger

Following the successful visit to London of AJR members from the North of England and Scotland last November, Baroness Neuberger will be the guest speaker at a dinner on 5 March – part of a three-day visit to London for members living in the South of England and Wales.

We are also delighted to report that last year witnessed a significant increase – 11 per cent – in the number of attendances at regional group meetings. These increases are due in part to events such as the above-mentioned visit to London, but also to the formation of new groups in Radlett, Temple Fortune and South London – and, of course, the excellent choice of entertainment, guest speakers and outings.

Enquiries seeking advice and clarification on Holocaust restitution and compensation matters should continue to be sent to Michael Newman at 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



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Visit to a rubbish dump

Among other things, I belong to the Giving Circle, a group of ladies of a certain age (most of us recent retirees) who put a sum of money into the kitty at each monthly meeting and at the end of the year reach a democratic decision as to which charity, or charities, we will give the money.

At our last meeting, due to the good offices of one of the members, we were taken on a guided tour of the Hiriya Project. Mention the word Hiriya to any Israeli and they will wrinkle their noses in disgust. Hiriya used to be the site not far from Tel Aviv where the rubbish of the region had been dumped for decades. Over the years the pile rose ever higher and higher, eventually reaching mammoth proportions and stinking to high heaven. More specifically, the smell penetrated the entire surrounding area, which included two main traffic arteries, to the extent that as any vehicle approached the area vehicle windows would be closed and noses would be held.

As a result of the activity of Dr Martin Weyl, former director of the Israel Museum, and several 'green' organisations, the site is now in the process of being converted into a gigantic park which will serve the entire Tel Aviv conurbation. This is an ongoing project that was set in motion several years ago. The initial stage involved ensuring that rubbish was no longer dumped on the top of the mountain, which dominates the flat landscape of the Coastal Plain, instead digging a huge pit into which it was dumped before being loaded onto larger trucks and taken to a landfill site in the south of the country.

The hill was covered with earth, so that the stench ceased to pervade the surrounding countryside. Plans for the future include covering the entire site with

plastic sheeting and a further, deeper layer of earth, thereby enabling plants and trees to grow. Pipes have been thrust into the rubbish mountain, so that the methane gas it produces can be utilised for productive purposes, such as producing electricity for the various recycling plants which operate at the site, the recently established visitors' centre, and other useful aims.

The projected park, which is to be called after Arik Sharon, in honour of his support for the undertaking, will extend over an area which will exceed Hyde Park in size. An international competition was held for planning the park, and the proposal submitted by the renowned German landscape architect Professor Peter Latz was accepted. Work on the implementation of the plan is being executed by a team of professionals in the field from Israel and elsewhere, and the park, together with its attendant recycling projects, is gradually beginning to take shape.

This is a long-term undertaking, as the process of obtaining planning permission, gaining the co-operation of the various municipalities and agencies involved, and, above all, implementing this ambitious planning and building project, takes time – not to mention money. But the project is gradually beginning to take shape, and will eventually alter the entire character and concept of the surrounding landscape.

Drivers no longer have to close their windows and hold their noses when they pass Hiriya, and it is hoped that in three or four years families will be able to boat on the artificial lake, picnic on the lawns, and stroll in the shade of the myriads of trees and shrubs that will be planted there. A cycle path has already been created, and it is merely a matter of time before this visionary project comes into being.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Newsround

German cabinet to visit Israel

Chancellor Angela Merkel, along with the members of the German cabinet, are to visit Israel this month to mark 60 years since the founding of the Jewish state. The two cabinets are to hold a joint session as an indication of Germany's close relations with Israel.

German citizens honoured for preserving Jewish history

Johanna Rau, a Protestant pastor who restored a dilapidated synagogue in the central German village of Heubach, a man who set up a Jewish museum and another who started a Jewish genealogical database are among six Germans honoured for their efforts to preserve Jewish history. The annual awards are funded by Arthur Obermayer, a philanthropist from Boston.

Spanish Jews call for new law punishing Holocaust denial

Spain's Jewish leader Jacobo Israel Garzon has called on the country's parliament to punish the denial of the Holocaust with imprisonment. Spanish law had mandated a sentence of up to two years in prison for Holocaust denial, but in November Spain's Constitutional Court ruled that it fell within 'freedom of speech' and would no longer be punishable with jail.

Chinese companies eyeing US kosher market

Chinese exporters, facing a US backlash over tainted food products, are turning to rabbis to help clean up their act. According to the New York-based Orthodox Union, kosher certifications by rabbis have doubled to over 300 in China in the past two years. According to a *Bloomberg* report by Mark Drajem (brought to our attention by Frank Bright), Chinese exporters are eager to gain access to the \$11.5 billion US kosher market.

Israel says sorry for Beatles ban

Israel has apologised for banning the Beatles from the country in the 1960s as a supposed threat to the morals of the nation's youth. Visiting the Beatles museum in Liverpool, Israel's Ambassador to Britain, Ron Prosor, handed a letter of apology to Julia Baird, sister of the late John Lennon, expressing regret over the 1963 snub.