

AJR journal

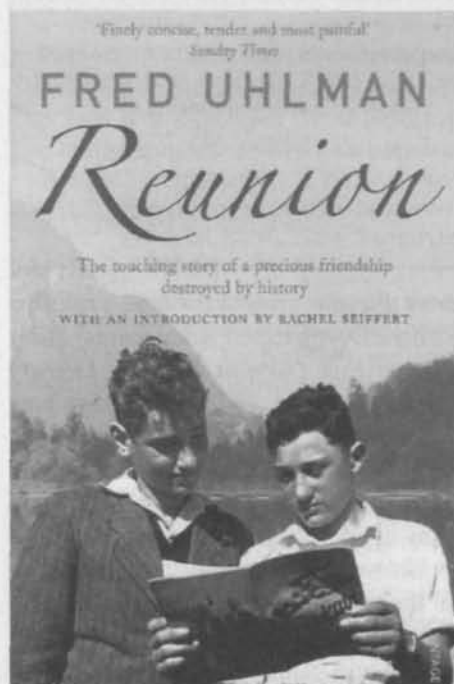
Association of Jewish Refugees

Fred Uhlman: Lawyer, artist, writer

Fred Uhlman was a noted personality among the Jewish refugees from Hitler in Britain, and the publication of a book containing two accounts of his internment on the Isle of Man in 1940 (see review in last month's issue of the Journal) is consequentially very welcome. There is, of course, no such thing as an 'ordinary' refugee from Hitler, but Uhlman's story stands out as unusual because of the success he achieved in his very different careers and because of his marriage to the daughter of a right-wing pillar of the British establishment.

Fred (Manfred) Uhlman was born in Stuttgart in 1901, the son of a well-to-do merchant. He studied law and practised as a lawyer. But, as an active member of the Social Democrat Party, he had to flee from Germany in March 1933. He first went to France, where he embarked on a fresh career as an artist, although he had no training in that field. Uhlman was to become a successful artist, developing a distinctive naïve style that remained unaffected by modern experimental trends but was capable of expressing emotion powerfully, sometimes in a romantic vein, sometimes (as in his internment works) in a darker, more pessimistic tone.

In Paris, Uhlman struggled to earn a living, though he attracted interest in artistic circles. In 1936 he left for what was then the small fishing village of Tossa de Mar in Spain, where he could continue to paint while living cheaply. There he met a young Englishwoman, Diana Croft, the daughter of Sir Henry Page Croft (from 1940 Lord Croft), a fiercely nationalistic right-wing politician who was to occupy a junior ministerial post in Churchill's wartime government. Uhlman and Diana Croft fell in love and, when the Spanish Civil War caused him to leave Spain shortly afterwards, he came to England, where they married. Sir Henry, a passionate supporter of the British Empire who had conceived a hatred of all things German during the First World War, was



less than pleased at acquiring a penniless German Jew as a son-in-law.

Uhlman was now in a very privileged position when compared to most of his fellow refugees. He and Diana set up house in one of Hampstead's most picturesque streets, Downshire Hill, where they resided at number 47, a white Regency house previously owned by the artist Richard Carline. The area attracted artists and *bohémians*: among the Uhlman's neighbours were the artist Richard Penrose and his wife, the photographer Lee Miller. The Uhlmans' home became a haven for refugee artists, particularly those of left-wing views, among them John Heartfield (Helmut Herzfeld), the pioneer of photomontage, who lived there for five years.

It was at this stage that Uhlman played an important role in the creation of the Free German League of Culture (Freie Deutsche Kulturbund, FDKB). The meeting at which the FDKB was founded in fact took place at his house in late 1938. When the FDKB was formally constituted in March 1939, Uhlman became its chairman and also sat on the eight-man

executive committee that ran it on a day-to-day basis. However, he did not remain chairman for long, presumably because of the dominating influence exercised on the FDKB from behind the scenes by a group of Communists. This did not prevent the Uhlmans from being active supporters of left-wing and progressive initiatives designed to assist the refugees from Hitler; for example the Artists' Refugee Committee, founded to rescue refugee artists in Czechoslovakia now threatened by Hitler's advance into that country, held its initial meetings at 47 Downshire Hill.

The FDKB was the most important organisation of the exiles from Germany in Britain between 1939 and 1946, the year of its dissolution, at least until the AJR established itself towards the end of that period. Unlike the AJR, which catered specifically for the Jewish refugees, the FDKB was a strongly political organisation, with a markedly left-wing bias that manifested itself particularly in its pro-Soviet line: it extolled the friendship between the British and Soviet peoples and supported the Allied war effort – at least after June 1941, when Hitler's Operation Barbarossa terminated the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

The FDKB was a typical Communist front organisation, attempting to appeal to a broader constituency of liberals, left-wingers and progressives on the basis of an anti-Fascist consensus built around culture, freedom and democracy. Its achievements in the cultural field were indeed considerable. It had five separate sections, devoted to such subject areas as music, the visual arts and literature, and it organised an impressive programme of lectures, exhibitions, concerts, cabaret revues and even theatrical productions; it had its own small stage, the *Kleine Bühne*, in the premises it occupied at 36 Upper Park Road in Belsize Park.

The FDKB also played a valuable role in providing assistance to refugees in dis-

continued overleaf

Call for Holocaust Survivors to Register

While its primary mission remains the commemoration of each individual Holocaust victim, since 1998 Yad Vashem has embarked on a parallel undertaking to encourage Holocaust survivors to complete a Survivor's Registration Form. The goal of the forms, some 30,000 of which have been collected over the past decade, is twofold: to provide historical documentation of the lives of Jews during the war; and to help make the cataloguing of Holocaust victims more accurate.

A Holocaust survivor is considered to be any Jew who lived under German occupation during the war, and who was still alive at the beginning of 1946. In conjunction with the Survivor's Registration Forms, Yad

Vashem is checking other sources available in its archives – including lists obtained from European countries, oral and written testimonies, and submissions of Pages of Testimony – in order to create a comprehensive Survivors' Database in the coming years. At the same time, Yad Vashem continues to call on all Holocaust survivors to check the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names and, if necessary, to submit new Pages of Testimony for family members or acquaintances not yet memorialised.

The Survivor's Registration Form is currently available in 10 languages and may be accessed via the Remembrance section on the Yad Vashem website (www.yadvashem.org) or by calling the Hall of Names, +972 2 644 3581.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES MONDAY 22 JUNE 2008 11.00 AM

at The Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road London NW6

Neil Taylor, Director of Care and Community Services at Jewish Care, will make a short presentation about the new project in Golders Green Road and will answer any questions.

For further details,
please telephone 020 8385 3070

The three members retiring by rotation and being proposed for re-election are Mrs D. Franklin, Mrs J. Millan and Mr A. Spiro

FRED UHLMAN continued from page 1

tress, especially during the internment period of 1940/41, and as a social centre where refugees could meet. It published its own newsletter, *Freie Deutsche Kultur*, and had a youth branch, *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, and a higher education organisation, the *Freie Deutsche Hochschule*. But the leading spirits of the FDKB were mostly political refugees; once the war ended, they returned to Germany, mostly to the Soviet Zone of Occupation, and the organisation was wound up.

Uhlman himself achieved considerable success as an artist. His first exhibition took place in 1935, at the Galerie Le Niveau in Paris, and he had another at the Zwemmer Gallery in London in 1938. His work was seen regularly in one-man shows and mixed exhibitions and he had a full-scale retrospective at Leighton House Museum in London in 1968. But interest in his work waned and he dropped out of public view. Though he felt this acutely, Uhlman found some compensation in his success in yet another field, that of literature.

In 1960 Uhlman published his autobiography, *The Making of an Englishman*, whose engagingly ironical title points to his struggle, as a Jewish intellectual from Germany, to adapt himself to the elusive nuances of a British identity and lifestyle. The book contains a vivid account of his internment experiences, though the full depths of the depression and frustration he suffered, fuelled by a sense of outrage at the sheer injustice of his treatment, are toned down by comparison with the intern-

ment diary he wrote at the time. Professor Richard Dove's expert study *Journey of No Return: Five German-Speaking Literary Exiles in Britain, 1933-1945* shows how anger and distress similarly come across far more strongly in Robert Neumann's internment diary than they do in his later book of memoirs, *Ein leichtes Leben* (1963).

Uhlman is now principally remembered for the novella *Reunion*, published in 1977. He wrote this in English, in a beautifully simple and clear style that is perfectly crafted to convey the deeply felt but never fully expressed emotions suffusing the book. (At around 100 pages, and with its concentration on the short-lived encounter between two teenage schoolboys, it cannot properly be called a novel.) The novella revolves around loss: the loss of a friendship, the loss of one's native country, the loss of one's family, and the loss of the innocence associated with a secure and happy childhood.

Hans Schwarz, the 16-year-old son of a prominent Jewish doctor in Stuttgart, forms a deep schoolboy friendship with Konradin von Hohenlohe, a fellow pupil at the town's most prestigious Gymnasium

and a scion of the high Swabian aristocracy. But the year is 1932 and the advent of National Socialism leads inevitably to the destruction of the friendship and to Hans's departure for America. Rather than leave Germany, his parents later commit suicide. The shadow of future horrors hangs over the Schwarz family, as it hangs over the pleasant, civilised city of Stuttgart and the serenely beautiful Swabian countryside, a joyous world that is about to be desecrated by Nazi barbarism. Not unlike Hans's favourite poem, Hölderlin's *Hälfte des Lebens*, the novella falls into two parts, the first describing a scene of beauty, harmony and fertile abundance, the second one of jarring alienation, bereft of warmth and companionship and echoing only to its own empty and senseless din.

The novella is narrated some 30 years later by Hans, outwardly a successful New York lawyer with a family of his own, but inwardly a deeply disillusioned and traumatised man who has never recovered from his brutal amputation from his Swabian roots at the hands of the Nazis. In the early 1960s he receives a brochure from his old school asking him to contribute to the erecting of a memorial to those former pupils who had been killed in the war. Scanning the list of the names of the dead, he discovers that his friend von Hohenlohe had been implicated in the bomb plot against Hitler and executed. With this hammer blow, the novella ends. It is, as Arthur Koestler says in his foreword, a minor masterpiece, conveying unforgettably the pain and loss suffered by German Jews who were forced to sever their ties with all that they held dear in Germany.

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Pre-emigration recollections

by Klaus Heymann

A Wittkower souvenir or family fragments

I first met Great-Uncle Louis Wittkower in Berlin a short time before our emigration from Germany. A wiry little man, his features were enhanced by a goatee beard. His parents-to-be, Isidor and Caecilia, having married in 1856, moved to the UK from Germany in 1857; Isidor wished to gain experience in Britain's latest industrial processes. They didn't return to Berlin for 20 years.

Was Isidor a slow learner or did he just like it here? We shall never know. Four of their children were born here, Louis in Edinburgh in 1860. All four were entitled to British citizenship, a fact of some importance given the way history was going to unfold. Louis grew up to manage his father's manufacturing business in Berlin. A widower by the time I got to know him, he let it be known that he would be willing to remarry if a suitable Jewish lady could be found. I was given to understand there was no shortage of applicants – ladies who also welcomed the undoubted protection of a British passport. A wedding did, in fact, take place in 1937. Sadly, when Louis died of natural causes (so it was said) in 1942, the Nazi authorities ruled that her British nationality had no further validity. She was arrested and not heard of again.

An anecdote relating to Louis's physical strength and character deserves recording. It happened in pre-war Berlin. Walking down a street, Louis became aware of a uniformed SA man, a so-called storm-trooper, who was molesting an elderly woman. Louis didn't hesitate. Tapping the Nazi on the shoulder, he told him to stop what he was doing – or else! This produced just a laughing response. The next thing to happen was that the storm-trooper found himself on the ground, having been flogged by Louis. A crowd gathered. The police were summoned. An arrest was made. Yet it wasn't the misbehaving storm-trooper but Uncle Louis himself who was carted off to the police station. Things might have gone very badly for him. However, at the right moment he dipped into a pocket and extracted his British passport. Suddenly, all was sweetness and light. There were apologies for the 'misunderstanding' and Louis walked out a free man.

I never learned why Louis failed to emigrate. It could hardly have been just a case of 'bravado' and his British passport. His brother Henry, a Berlin stockbroker, had left early with his wife Gertrud (Trude) for these more friendly shores. His son Rudolf (Rudi – art historian) was, I believe, the first of the family to emigrate. It was said of his father Henry that he had been so well integrated into the pre-Hitler German scene that the only hallmark of his British birth was taking milk in his tea.

One of Louis's three children survived the Holocaust. It was Erich, who came to hold a professorship in psychiatry at McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

A summer's day class outing, 1934

A walk to one of Elbing's beauty spots in the countryside had been organised by the school. The highlight was to be a swim in a natural freshwater pool. Having reached our destination, my classmates stripped off with much enthusiasm, a feeling I for one didn't share. The pool looked neglected and the water murky. In short, I was not tempted to follow the herd. But how to bow out gracefully? There was scant time to work out a strategy. But then, my eyes lit upon a sign. It was perched on top of a post and read 'Juden ist der Zutritt verboten' (Access forbidden to Jews). This was just what I needed – making anti-Semitism work on my behalf! Somewhat diffidently I approached the teacher. 'Excuse me, Herr Lehrer', said I respectfully, 'I must not go in there!' I pointed to the notice: 'It's not allowed.'

The teacher didn't even turn his head. Clearly he had studied the sign before. Looking down on me from his not inconsiderable height, he announced: 'I am the one who decides what is allowed. Into the pool you go – and right away!' My disappointment should have been palpable. Robbie Burns could have tempered my feelings with his thoughts on disturbing a mouse in a field: 'The best laid schemes o' mice an' men.' Little me, in the depths of East Prussia, could hardly have met these comforting lines. In fact, I had not. So ended ingloriously my feeble attempt to beat the Nazi system.

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Jewish kindergarten in Vienna, 1931

Alice Hubbers (née Engel), seen in this fascinating 1931 photograph in white dress, second from right at back, arrived in England via Kindertransport in December 1938. Now 84, Alice lives in north-west London. For story about the kindergarten at Herklotzgasse 21, see Eric Sanders, 'Das Dreieck meiner Kindheit' in February 2009 issue of AJR Journal.

Upstairs,

A breath of fresh air

I had two aunts who came to this country in 1938 to work as domestics. Both were appalled by the treatment meted out to household staff and each, in her own way, decided to rewrite the rule books and make their employers feel pretentious and decadent in the most charming manner. Upper middle-class wives were easy to manipulate: they felt insular compared to my aunts, who were used to moving in Viennese high society and frequently travelled abroad.

My father's sister was married to a lawyer and was entitled, in accordance with Austria's unwritten law, to call herself 'Frau Doktor'. She expected instant service – and got it. She was an excellent cook and anyone invited to her magnificent flat considered themselves very fortunate. She had two daughters who went to Vienna's finest lyceum. Alas, the Anschluss forced changes in her household.

Through her ongoing connections she was appointed a cook in one of Britain's finest ladies' boarding schools. She made it a condition of her employment that her daughters received a free education in the establishment. On her arrival, she immediately announced to management and staff that she was 'Frau Doktor' and wished to be addressed by her full title. The school considered itself honoured by her presence and was sad to lose her at the end of the war when she returned to Vienna.

My mother's youngest sister was an astute businesswoman; men were visually stimulated by her and easily manipulated. She held soirées in her flat in the Innere Stadt and politicians and businesspeople vied for an invitation. She received an early warning from friends that Austria's days were numbered and was advised to cut and run. But she was a patriotic citizen and her husband was an officer in the reserve. However, the Anschluss changed everything and a few weeks later she obtained a visa and found a position in an upper-class English household as a cook. I don't think she had any idea what the job entailed and she certainly couldn't cook. Her husband, a spit image of the Hungarian-Jewish comedy actor 'Cuddles', Szöke Szakáll, was installed as the butler.

In late 1938 I was invited to spend Christmas with her family and new friends. She forgot to state her address on the invitation but, checking the cancellation on the envelope, I discovered it was posted in Gerrards Cross. She included a postal order to cover my Green

Line Coach fare, adding that I could spend the night with friends in Chalfont St Peter – or Chalfont St Giles! – who'd be waiting for me at the bus stop.

That December England was covered in snow and travelling was hazardous. The coach stopped in Finchley Road and that's where the fun began. The conductor asked for my destination and I said Chalfont St Peter – or, maybe, Chalfont St Giles. I explained in my best Viennese dialect that my invitation didn't say which. I produced my letter and he was mystified by the mishmash of English and German. He called for assistance from other passengers and the letter was passed from hand to hand. I was looked upon as an alien object, my elegant Austrian ensemble causing much mirth. The letter was passed on to the driver, who looked as bewildered as the passengers.

This incident became the talking point in the upper echelon of local society and crossed the Atlantic, there to be immortalised in the Hollywood production of Mrs Miniver.

Eventually we stopped at the first Chalfont, but no one seemed to be waiting for me. When we got to the next stop, with no one in sight, I bravely got off the coach – profusely thanking everybody for their assistance.

I trudged around the village, glancing through windows into rooms decorated with mistletoe and cards hanging from the ceiling – so different from a Viennese Christmas Eve. I was cold, hungry and lost. Before long, I spotted my old friend the bus driver on his return to London. The conductor beckoned me to get on and they dropped me off at the local bobby's house-cum-police station. I questioned the constable whether there were any foreigners in the area, but he couldn't say and suggested I return to London. He telephoned his superior and arranged transport for me, and in no time

I was back in Lancaster Grove. Welcoming me were more police – my aunt had reported me missing. I was whisked back to Gerrards Cross. When we got there, the ever-resourceful constable popped in at the local nick and established there was only one foreign couple in the village – it had to be my aunt and uncle. They delivered me to the house safely.

My aunt, whom I hadn't seen for months, welcomed me with the inspiring words 'I'm glad you've finally arrived but I have a problem. I'm making a strudel and I need 1 kg of Topfen. Be a good boy and run down the road and speak to Herr Sainsbury. He has a grocer's shop in the village.' I found the shop but couldn't find the mysterious Herr Sainsbury. The staff searched the shop for Topfen. Everybody was consulted, customers included. The net was widened and neighbouring shopkeepers were questioned. But what on earth was Topfen? Fruit, vegetable, washing-up powder? Or more foreign muck!

I insisted that my aunt had said 'Everybody knows Topfen', but it was no use. It was a rare comedy: a foreigner dressed in funny clothes, speaking a guttural language, and demanding something no respectable English shop would sell! It confirmed the English attitude that all foreigners were mad.

Crestfallen, I returned to my aunt, only to be chided 'You are totally useless!' I'd got back just in time for tea and joined family and friends in the lounge. Everyone was given a saucer and a cup of hot water, but there was no teapot. Tea without a pot – whatever next?

The lady of the house announced pompously that since the Viennese cook – 'a much-travelled, health-conscious woman' – had arrived, the family had been made aware that tea brewed in a teapot was unhealthy, insular and ... unfashionable! We were seated balancing our cups of boiling water on our laps as my aunt went from one to another dipping a Continental 'tea egg' on a chain in the water and mumbling 'Very good for you!'

My uncle the butler, who could just about tell the difference between red and white wine, served refreshments. He wouldn't disclose the contents of the glasses – it was a traditional healthy Austrian drink. I noticed he abstained from tasting the liquid he served. He was a model of patience, forbearance and loyalty, but occasionally he bravely refreshed himself with a glass of French brandy which he kept for medicinal purposes!

downstairs

Christmas Day was the big day in the house. An enormous turkey was prepared, mounted on a large serving plate, and wheeled into the dining room by the butler. The assembled guests eyed the bird hungrily.

The cook was congratulated on presentation. The master of the house sharpened his carving knives ever so professionally and carved up the bird to great applause. He forced his fork into the wobbly carcass and began slicing but, to everybody's horror, the bird disintegrated. Tears rolled down the hostess's face. Silence prevailed during the entire meal. My aunt, unaware she had spiked an old tradition, cheerily informed everybody who cared to listen that in a civilised society people shouldn't be expected to chew meat from a bone in the company of others. Instead of bemoaning her ill-fortune, the lady of the house heartily agreed with my aunt that meat and poultry should always be carved in the kitchen and that the old tradition would be laid to rest. This incident became the talking point in the upper echelon of local society and crossed the Atlantic, there to be immortalised in the Hollywood production of *Mrs Miniver*.

Aunt and uncle left service during the war and set up home in the area. They were universally liked and obsessively dedicated to taking the stuffiness out of the old English society. Near the end of the war they bought a small house in Berkshire. After the war they were invited by Viennese friends to return home but informed their friends that if they wished to see them they would be welcome in England at any time. They would never ever cross the Austrian border again. Their friends regularly came to England to visit them. My aunt and uncle loved the English and the local countryside passionately. Both are buried in Berkshire. In their own way they punctured the pretensions of middle-class England – a breath of fresh air in a stuffy society.

Henry Werth

Discovered – another talent

What did you do when they put you in that cell?', Hannah asked. 'I did my nails. They let me keep my manicure wallet', Eva replied. 'How could you stay so cool?' 'What else could I do? I didn't know where he'd gone, did I?'

Eva's boss (some said he was more than that) had done a bunk. The Gestapo had hauled her in for questioning at their Berlin HQ. They put her in a cell to give her time to 'think'. But she knew nothing.

It was bitterly cold as 1938 passed into 1939. The wind blew down the Kurfürstendamm. Eva knew nothing. Overnight he had packed up and disappeared, leaving her to clear up the office. Not that there was much left to clear up. Released by the Gestapo but still under surveillance, Eva consulted her sister. She had applied for a work permit to go to England.

Hannah advised: 'You must pursue this. Soon the boys and I will be in England, God willing, and mother can go to Ruth in Amsterdam.'

A short while later, Eva's papers arrived and she was off. She considered herself lucky. She had a talent – a talent apart from her piano-playing. She was an excellent cook and was to be employed with the title Cook General in the home of a dentist in Hemel Hempstead.

'Where is Hemel Hempstead?' 'North-west London, I think, near Swiss Cottage ... where Lucie's living.'

Eva arrived with her two suitcases at Liverpool Street Station on a cold grey afternoon and was met by her employers in an old Rover car. Her command of English was less than minimal. Formalities over, baggage in the 'boot' – there was a new word! – and off to her new home. 'Bitte, please, how long to Hampstead?', she asked. 'No more than an hour,' they answered. 'My friend Lutsie she lives in Swiss "Kottidge" – that is by Hempstead, no?' 'No, dear, not Hemel Hempstead.' And so a first confusion was unravelled. Hemel Hempstead was outside London, to the north. Lucie had written to Berlin that where she lodged there was a piano which Eva might practise on. But now that was too far away.

They arrived at her employers' home as it grew dark and Mr Carrington helped her with a suitcase to her room at the top of a substantial Georgian villa set in ample grounds. She had an attic with a small dormer window, a washbasin, an iron bedstead, a cupboard and a chair. A jug and a small bowl sat on a dresser and a lonely light bulb beckoned from the ceiling. A long way from the comfortable flat in Berlin she'd shared with her mother – but also a long way from that cell in Gestapo headquarters with its lonely light bulb.

Eva settled down. A marvellous cook, she soon learned what Shepherd's Pie was and how to make Spotted Dick! Sometimes she was allowed to produce her

delicious Continental specialities – potato soup, goulash, stuffed cabbage leaves and so on. War and rationing came. She had news that her mother was in Holland. Her sister and the two boys had reached Newcastle. And the dentist had removed all her teeth, deducting his fee from her meagre wages.

Cook General was her title, but who was there to command? Only a part-time cleaning lady. She was expected to stay in her room, her cold little attic, on her time off. It was a lonely time. Gradually she went out a bit and made a few friends. London and Swiss Cottage were a world away.

One day, when her employers were out, Eva sneaked upstairs to the Music Room – she'd glimpsed a baby grand there. Tentatively she raised the lid. Yes, it was a Bechstein. She adjusted the stool, flexed her fingers and released them on to the keys. Old friends reunited, the fingers and keys produced music. Strauss, Bach, Chopin, Liszt – it all came back. Tears ran down her cheeks. She lost her sense of time. She played on and on, the pent-up tension of the past months flowing out of her.

It must have been an hour later when she stopped, sensing she was no longer alone. Her employers were standing in the doorway. She jumped up. 'So sorry, I am so sorry!', she said wiping a tear from her eyes. But the Carringtons clapped their hands. 'Very good, Eva, where did you learn to play so beautifully?', Madame asked. 'At the Academy in Berlin.' 'Of course – the Academy', the dentist said. 'And what have you prepared for our dinner?'

If only they'd said she could play from time to time. Back in her kitchen, Eva wondered if they might let her. The weekend after she had prepared a delicious meal for her employers and their friends, Mrs Carrington asked: 'Eva, when you have cleaned up and washed the dishes, would you play for us a little? You know, she's quite good!'

Eva wanted to refuse but the Bechstein beckoned. And so the Cook General in Hemel Hempstead, miles away from Swiss Cottage, assumed a secondary role: tame pianist on nights when important guests were entertained. 'What treasure – cabbage soup and Bach!', a tall skinny lady guest said. 'Can you get me that recipe for the apple desert, Dorothy? Delicious!'

Eva copied out the recipe before the guests left – omitting a vital ingredient.

Jo Maier

This article is dedicated to 'Tante Else', my mother's sister – J.M.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

'LUCKY TO BE ALIVE'

Sir – I may be a bit late with my comment about Anthony Grenville's article "'Underpaid, underfed and overworked": Refugees in domestic service'.

England saved my life and I am very grateful to the country I entered on 8 August 1939. My reason for writing to you is that I would love to know whether there is anybody else here in England who came as a refugee and stayed in the same village.

I too was in domestic service from August 1939. I married my dear late husband in Sheffield in October 1942. Like me, he was a refugee from Germany. I was not used to domestic work nor had my husband ever worked on a farm before, but we counted ourselves lucky to be alive. Although we had tickets for America, we decided to stay in England.

Having worked separately in Yorkshire, we moved after we were married to a village in Nottinghamshire, where (now 92 years of age) I still live. Sadly my husband died in 1980.

We immersed ourselves in village life. I became president of our local Women's Institute and my husband formed a small dance band, in which he played piano.

After many years on the farm, my husband was employed in an agricultural shop in the nearby market town.

From the very beginning, we made many good friends in the village who appreciated our contribution to local life and admired our positive attitude in spite of our very sad past. We never lost our Jewish identity.

Margret Grundmann (née Goldschmidt)
Elston, Newark, Notts

LITTLE BLUE BOOK

Sir – How well I remember that horrible little blue book we were handed at Dovercourt when we arrived in England!

I was so disgusted with it that I tore it up and threw it away. My sentiments were the same as Ernest Kolman's (May issue). Now I have found out that this book was not issued by the British government of the time but by the English Jews. They must have been frightened that we would cause fresh anti-Semitism by our behaviour, as they caused hostility when they came here in 1850-1914. How wrong they were! We were much more educated and cultured than they.

By the way, I don't know of any English Jews who looked for brainy/talented youngsters to help them fulfil their potential. The Gentiles sent me back to grammar

school and saw that I had piano lessons again. All Lady Reading was prepared to do for me was to want to make me a kitchen maid in her house! Fortunately, the hostel warden came to my rescue.

(Mrs) A. Saville ARCM, London NW4

'GOD ON TRIAL'

Sir – The response to my letter in your April issue was predictable and it made me happy.

As for Jack Lynes's reaction, I must have touched a raw nerve. He rails at me for writing that there are 'Progressive "rabbis" who don't believe in anything, not even in G-d', stating that he has never come across any. But that is precisely what Peter Phillips wrote about in his article 'God on Trial' in your February issue, in which he says that neither he nor some Progressive rabbi believes in stories in the 'Old Testament', as he calls it.

I quote Mr Phillips: 'So, very puzzled, I asked him why he was a rabbi. His answer made everything clear to me. "I believe that I must teach the *idea* [italics in original] of God.' He continues: 'So this means that my rabbinical friend does not believe as the Orthodox do, that the Torah was written by God. To him, it was man-made because, like the Ten Commandments, the Torah was necessary for its time.'

So there you have it straight from the horse's mouth, all very wishy-washy! He denies the fundamentals of Judaism.

Incidentally, is Peter Phillips not aware that the Ten Commandments are an integral part of the Torah and not something apart from it – which has, in his opinion, like all the rest, become obsolete?

So, as I have said before, what, if anything, is left of Judaism if we do not accept it, believing it to have outlived its relevance?

There is no Judaism without the Torah, which has been preserved throughout the ages by its true adherents, who, despite all hardships and persecutions, have clung to it tenaciously in all four corners of the Earth, passing it on to their children, thus guaranteeing its continuity. They are the ones who've kept it going!

The greatest chutzpah is to call yourself a rabbi only to mislead others and to call the religion you're practising the Jewish religion, which it clearly is not. Call it what you like – only don't call it Judaism.

Some of you – certainly not all – may still be considered Jews by reason of your race, but that too will, in the not too distant future, cease to be the case.

In your May issue, Peter Phillips, addressing himself to me, ends his letter: 'I am sorry to belong – in theory, if not in practice – to the same religion as you.'

Calm down, Mr Phillips, rest assured that, although we may belong to the same race, we certainly do not belong to the same religion. Why do you seek recognition?
Margarete Stern, London NW3

UK GOVERNMENT 'PRO-JEWISH'

Sir – I feel both saddened and surprised at the very biased letter by Mrs E. Holden published in the May issue of the *AJR Journal*. Our government has consistently expressed its commitment to the security and welfare of Israel and, for example, led the walkout at the recent Durban II conference during the disgraceful speech by Iran's president. Strong trade links between the UK and Israel continue to flourish, in spite of the boycott attempts by misguided and ill-informed organisations. Like many individual friends and supporters of Israel, some government ministers have expressed criticism of certain actions by the Israeli government, and surely it is the right and duty of friends to do so if they feel these actions are wrong.

Regarding anti-Semitism, does Mrs Holden know that Holocaust education is now a compulsory part of the curriculum in all state secondary schools and that two students from each school are enabled to visit Auschwitz each year? Is Mrs Holden aware of the continuing activities of the Parliamentary Committee Against Anti-Semitism and of the recent London Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism called by the British Government and attended by MPs from 40 countries? It also seems unlikely that a government unconcerned about anti-Semitism would put so much effort into promoting the widely supported commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day each January.

George Vulkan, Harrow, Middx

FAN MAIL

Sir – I continue to enjoy Anthony Grenville's essays in the *AJR Journal*. His combination of reprising historical episodes that have been eclipsed, along with his insightful analyses, is really amazing, and I find virtually every issue worth reading. I feel that about few other publications!

Tom Freudenheim, New York, NY

OUR 70TH ON FILM

Sir – Before entering into the above subject, I must refer to the ending of my letter in the April issue of the *Journal* under the heading 'Anti-Semitism at the National': 'It is better to get *Burnt by the Sun* than in a gas oven. We must act before it is too late!' I didn't think it necessary to spell out that there is only one country in the world that would welcome us and that whatever other hardships we might endure, anti-Semitism wouldn't be one of them. We had to move once before – just to sojourn here.

Ah the film! Did we ever in our lives

expect that we would live to take part in the 70th anniversary of our Kindertransport? Well, we did and we even had a film made as a record of it. Loading it into my recorder, anticipating an hour or so of reliving that joyful event, I first thought there was something wrong with my equipment. There was a loud snap, crackle and pop accompanying images of, undoubtedly, speakers from the platform, wildly oscillating across the screen, addressing about 650 Kinder with some of their offspring. I checked my TV, the disc for scratches – no it wasn't that – the Chief Rabbi just couldn't keep still, moving from left to right and back again until he went out of view altogether, but still talking. He wasn't the only speaker performing these antics. They all did, to the accompaniment of loud bangs interspersing their worthy speeches. I was thinking of having to replace all my equipment. Oy veh!

Surely, I thought, it couldn't be the filmmaker! The committee didn't choose an amateur to film such a unique, unrepeatable event – or could they have? But, no, we had Viennese music accompanying the entry of Prince Charles to the tea party. As much as I liked the music, it never stopped – not even when His Majesty conversed with Kinder at the tables. It was a rehash of the silent films! There I was, for just two seconds, talking with the Prince, the camera taking in the back of my head. Some memory! I just hope he and his mum weren't sent free copies, shaming the AJR!

Only when HRH took his place to address us did the waltzing stop. After that, it was sheer mayhem, the camera seeking out the photographer's favourite faces at random for a couple of seconds a time, showing off hundreds of fade-ins and fade-outs in the process to a medley of Tyrolean-type music. It was 5 in the morning when I switched off in bewilderment, having watched a horror film for more than five hours, not even having seen the end. And I paid nine pounds for that?

The doorbell rang – it was 7 o'clock. Totally dazed though I was, a welcome smile from the AJR driver with two parcels of meals-on-wheels brought me back into the real world. Then I realised it had all been a terrible nightmare.

Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx

BACK FROM THE BRINK

Sir – We live in times of unscrupulous profiteers and chasms of moral decay. We have our champions of justice and people of compassion. Looking back to the plight of the Jews caught in the grip of Hitler's wrath, we find too many villains. But also unsung heroes.

A modest grant from the Austrian Zukunftfund has enabled us to start work on a documentary film: *Back from the Brink*. In it, the viewer relives, through intimate interviews, the harrowing experiences of four European Jews hanging on to their lives by a thread, two steps from death at the hands of the Nazis.

All four are saved, brought back from the brink, not by chance or luck, but through the selfless compassion and moral courage of non-Jews. The four tell their stories as if they happened yesterday, still amazed that others would risk their lives for them. To our knowledge, such a film has not been made before.

Yes, we know of the Holocaust. Let us also give praise to those who saved Jewish lives at the risk of theirs and be inspired through the film's examples of compassion to ensure future generations will do the same when called upon.

Our goal in making the film *Back from the Brink* is to have it shown to an international television audience, especially as part of the annual Holocaust features, thereby helping to ensure a more humane world society. Through the initial grant from Austria we are fairly assured of European distribution. But we have a wider vision: to instil courage and conviction. The Shoah Foundation has promised to help us with the worldwide distribution of our film. For further information, please contact me at the address below.

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'REMEMBER, NEVER FORGET'

Sir – Recently on holiday in the Surrey area, we visited the Haslemere Educational Museum. We discovered there was an exhibition entitled 'Remember, Never Forget, Remember Never Again' by Year 8 (13-year-old) pupils building a memorial to commemorate the Holocaust. The pupils are from the local Woolmer Hill School.

This remarkable exhibition, which was opened by local dignitaries, took place from 31 March to 24 April. I can do no better than recommend readers to visit the website – www.haslemere-museum.co.uk – or telephone 01428 642112. There is a video showing the exhibition with live comments by adults and participating children.

Siggy Reichenstein, London N2

BUDAPEST JUDENRAT AND WARSAW GHETTO REVOLT

Sir – Rubin Katz's article in the May issue made interesting reading. He holds that 'the Ghetto revolt was the first general uprising in Europe.' That appears too general a statement: there are some adjectives for 'uprising' missing.

The Dutch version of the *Wikipedia* states (my translation): 'Since the winter of 1940 members of the National Socialist Defence Section of the NSB (National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands) had started to trouble Jews living in the Amsterdam Jewish quarter. They humiliated Jewish inhabitants and stole their possessions. The inhabitants of the Jewish

quarter – a mainly poor neighbourhood – fought the NSB gangs and formed resistance squads.'

Witness reports describing these actions are found in part 1 of Louis de Jong's book *De bezetting na 50 jaar* (The Occupation 50 Years On) (The Hague: SDU, 1990). These developments led to a strike on 25 February 1941. At first the Amsterdam tram drivers left the trams in their sheds, followed the same day by a general strike which spread to other towns and regions. Because the Dutch resistance was only just starting to get organised, the German occupier was able to use draconian measures to subdue the population.

The strike is commemorated every year on 25 February. This observation is not meant to diminish the Warsaw Ghetto revolt in any way, but the resistance squads' actions and the strike in Holland took place earlier. Hence I wonder: was it the first?

Henri Obstfeld, Stanmore, Middx

DER HUND MIT DER WURST

Sir – Mrs Goldwater's memories of her father singing alternative words to the Anvil Chorus (April) brought back happy memories for me. My father sang those words too! He had other rhymes as well. For instance, Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* would begin 'Der Dollar faellt, doch er wird wieder steigen' and *Aida* would begin 'Celeste Aida, wann kommst De [he was a Berliner] wieder?'

Dorothy Graff, Victoria, Australia

Sir – May I add to the letters in the past two issues of the Journal offering alternative lyrics to the Anvil Chorus. My father's version:

Hab' ich dir nicht gleich gesagt
die Wurst die schmeckt nach Seife
(pronounced *Seefe*)
Hab' ich dir nicht gleich gesagt
die Wurst, die Wurst ist Trefe.

Irene Stanton, Wembley, Middx

Sir – I recently asked your readers for words to accompany the *Radetzky March* and would like to thank those who helped. One thing is clear – every family seems to have its own version! Looking at the internet doesn't really help either as there doesn't seem to be a definitive version. One AJR member reminded me of another song, concerning the antics of a dog: 'Ein Hund kam in die Küche.' That one comes to a sad end as the cook kills it.

Paul Samet, Pinner, Middx

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Pablo Picasso, the father of Cubism, is the undisputed master of the jigsaw – the subtle (and not so subtle) joke in art. And if great art asks you not just to view but to complete the picture, then go and see **Picasso: Challenging the Past** (National Gallery until 7 June) for its riot of ideas, energy and sensuality.

Picasso quotes from Velazquez, Rembrandt, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Cézanne, prising open their great works like a pearl from an oyster and repainting



Self-Portrait with a Wig (1897). Pic @ Museu Picasso de Barcelona, Succession Picasso/DACS 2009

them in his own image. Sometimes his own face appears beguilingly within the face of his model, often reduced to a squiggle. But even as he pares down his vocabulary, he is always a sensualist, suggesting a dialogue with the nude figure. He will often present himself as the Spanish alpha male, exploring archetypal swashbuckling swordsmen.

But this artist could not bear his ageing, and so he painted himself as an idea, even a minotaur in the memory of the beautiful women he depicted. These voluptuous nude paintings perfectly complement his Cubism and are a celebration of life, love and art. Picasso's self-portrait of an eighteenth-century grandee, *Self-Portrait with a Wig*, shows

him staring out of an impressionistic swirl of white, almost as though he had lost patience with the formalism of this style. But in fact he was just demonstrating how a swirl of oblongs and curves can shock you out of the comfort zone with which you tend to regard Old Masters.

The seventeenth-century ruler who made Persia the pinnacle of an open society, expanding the silk route with Europe and encouraging religious diversity, may seem astonishingly modern, but he was not above a few Machiavellian tricks of his own. Shah Abbas usurped the throne from his father and ordered the assassination of his guardian and later his son. But he was also generous and promoted political and diplomatic renewal, exchanging Iranian silk for gold and silver and introducing a golden age for the arts. **Shah Abbas: The Remaking of Iran** (British Museum until 14 June) offers an array of stunning calligraphy, beautiful silks and gold-ground carpets as well as the blue Chinese porcelain which reflect his diplomatic courtship of China as an ally against his Ottoman enemies. Abbas also exchanged ambassadors with Mughal India, smoothing the flow of commerce between their countries, as some of the opaque watercolour paintings with gold indicate.

Imagine having your hands manacled together for 50 days because, as an artist, you offended the strict laws of nineteenth-century Japan! Japanese print artist **Utagawa Kuniyoshi** (Royal Academy until 7 June) managed to out-wit the stringent laws of his time with dazzling satire and

sheer chutzpah. In Kuniyoshi's narrative prints of warrior culture and gorgeous geishas, you can detect the emergent animated cartoon. Beneath it all lurks the darkness and fear characterising Eastern military exploits, typified in the Chinese adventure tale *The Water Margin*. Kuniyoshi was a leading figure of the 'floating world' school of Japanese art, dramatising the great Eastern myths of the past.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

A combination of fortitude and fortune

SUNDAY'S CHILD? A MEMOIR
by Leslie Baruch Brent

New Romney, Kent: Bank House Books, 2009, paper 352 pp.

Despite its title, Professor Leslie Baruch Brent's book is not strictly a memoir or an autobiography, but a collection of essays which not only reflect on the events which shaped his life, but also pay tribute to the individuals and institutions that have played such an important role in his personal development and professional career.

Dubbed 'Sunday's Child' by his father, he was indeed luckier than many others, including his family, for he survived the Holocaust. The painful decision his parents made in 1936 – to send their eleven-year-old son to a Jewish orphanage in Berlin – was fateful: it was from here that Leslie Brent became one of the first of some 10,000 Kindertransport children to reach the safety of Great Britain.

Many readers will identify with the recollections of his flight from home, family and friends into the unknown and of the enduring impact of loss. There are poignant backward glances throughout the book, but Leslie Brent's recollections of the events which have been pivotal in shaping his life, and of the crucial choices he made, demonstrate how a combination of fortitude and fortune can overcome adversity. He recalls, for example, how his life-long love of music was initiated in the Berlin orphanage and how his education in England, and the friendships he made there, owed much to Anna Essinger and her school at Bunce Court. Moving seamlessly from wartime Birmingham as a refugee to life as a British army officer and then on to university and the decision not to follow a career in teaching, Professor Brent describes how his professional future as an immunologist was profoundly influenced by Professor Peter Medawar. In the chapter 'From Intolerance (Racial) to Tolerance (Immunological)', Leslie Brent opens a window on the life-saving discoveries made in the laboratories in which he, as a team member, worked. Other chapters deal with more personal matters, and he writes candidly of his marriages and his children, and of his involvement in, and affiliation with, politics.

Professor Brent's essays have afforded him the opportunity of expressing his very particular views on a number of subjects, including Judaism, Zionism and anti-Semitism. He also reflects on his own feelings about the Holocaust, not just from the perspective of his own personal loss, but on his efforts to try and make sense of these events in the light of present knowledge. For

instance, he debates the failure of the Allies to intervene and is highly critical of both the Vatican and the International Red Cross for failing to live up to the high moral standards which he – and many others – expected of them.

In a touching epitaph, Leslie Brent recounts the reunion he attended at the Pankow orphanage in Berlin in 2001 and the gathering of old Bunce Courtians arranged by Hans and Susanne Meyer in 2002. But most poignant is the final tribute he pays to his parents for the love they bestowed upon him for the first eleven years of his life and, having laid the foundations of his life, letting him go when it mattered. Leslie Brent's achievements as an immunologist and his contributions to medical science are a testimony to their ultimate sacrifice.

Susan Cohen

A valuable piece of Berlin-Jewish history

VERSTÖRTE KINDHEITEN: DAS JÜDISCHE WAISENHAUS IN PANKOW ALS ORT DER ZUFLUCHT, GEBORGENHEIT UND VERTREIBUNG (Disturbed Childhoods: The Jewish Orphanage in Pankow as a Place of Refuge, Security and Displacement) edited by Peter-Alexis Albrecht, Leslie Baruch Brent and Inge Lammel *Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2008*
tel: 030/841770-0
email: bwv@bwv-verlag.de
240 pp. 29.00 Euros

In the early nineteenth century, the present-day Berlin district of Pankow was a village on the outskirts of the city where Jews first settled in around 1830, having previously been forbidden to inhabit villages, purchase land or engage in agriculture. Within 100 years, however, a vigorous Jewish community had emerged in Pankow with two synagogues, several schools, an old-age home, a nursery, a home for apprentices, and the orphanage which is the subject of this book.

Published by the Association of Supporters and Friends of the Jewish Orphanage in Berlin-Pankow, a grouping of some surviving pupils of the orphanage and of local supporters, the book deals in considerable detail with the post-war renovation of the orphanage building and the reunions which brought together former pupils from all over the world. For anyone wishing to augment their knowledge of Jewish Berlin, this is an invaluable additional source, shedding light on a largely neglected part of Jewish welfare provision in Berlin in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The orphanage itself went through several stages of development. Having been privately founded as an educational facility for orphaned Jewish children in 1882, it

was acquired by the Berlin Jewish community and substantially enlarged after a fire had caused major damage in 1911. The restoration was the work of Alexander Beer, a well-known Jewish architect who also designed numerous other, and significant, buildings in Berlin in the early twentieth century. After the Nazis attacked and damaged the orphanage in 1938, and closed it by 1941, the property was acquired by the SS and used to house a section of the State Security Service. After the war the premises were used for some years as the Cuban embassy and deteriorated severely. In later years the extensively damaged buildings were returned to Jewish ownership and purchased by the Cajewitz Foundation under its director Professor Peter-Alexis Albrecht. The foundation fully restored the buildings, especially the magnificent ceiling of the former prayer room. Since the restoration four reunions of former pupils have taken place, while the premises themselves are being used as a library and primary school.

The fate of the buildings echoes the fate of the former pupils, some of whom escaped but 44 of whom were, as far as is known, murdered by the Nazis. Those who survived, saved by the Kindertransports or other forms of emigration, tell their stories of a childhood disrupted by violence and eventual escape, of recovery and achievement in foreign lands and, at times, of eminence in their professions. Their conversations are carefully recorded and the book is witness to the creation, survival and restoration of a valuable piece of Berlin Jewish history.

Eric Bourne

TELEVISION

A matter of hypersensitivity?

CHURCHILL'S GERMAN ARMY
National Geographic Channel,
26 April 2009

The media have at last woken up to the fact that the British public ought to know about 10,000 ex-German and Austrian refugees (who would in current terms probably be described as 'asylum seekers') actually having helped to win the last war, rather than 'being a nuisance' and a 'drain on the resources' of their adopted country, which had saved them from almost certain death.

This documentary let six men tell their stories – from originally enlisting in the Pioneer Corps, to transferring to fighting regiments of the army, and, in two cases, to the RAF and Navy respectively. And interesting and moving stories they are. Their narrations are expertly intercut with clips from archive film material, which clearly shows the conditions described by these veterans. Some even volunteered for near-suicide missions, being dropped

behind enemy lines and taking part in commando raids and other activities organised by the SOE. They were indeed heroes and it is high time that a wider public is made aware of their wartime careers – which the film did very successfully.

But why are refugee women not mentioned at all? Even if no ex-member of the ATS, WRENS or WAAF could be included, at least the commentary might have related that about 1,000 women also volunteered for the services. I think their total absence amounts to sex discrimination.

Another important point of disagreement with the programme is the title, which, in my view, is at least insensitive, if not actually insulting. Obviously whoever thought of the somewhat provocative wording did not appreciate that by the time the war broke out, we no longer felt German – we desperately wanted to be integrated into the society of what had become our new home country and couldn't wait to become naturalised British citizens. My wife (an ex-ATS-girl) and I had been invited to take part in the programme, which we did with enthusiasm. It wasn't until after we had been interviewed and filmed that we were told of the title, and my wife felt so strongly about it that we suggested at least to put the word German into inverted commas. But even this minimal concession was refused, and we were unceremoniously edited out. I wonder whether other readers sympathise with my wife's view of the title (which was actually rammed home by being mentioned several times in the commentary), or whether she was perhaps hypersensitive.

Fritz Lustig

EXHIBITION

Draw what you see! A record of Terezín

THE WORKS OF HELGA WEISSOVÁ HOSKOVÁ
Newcastle: University of Northumbria

Helga Weissová Hosková will be 80 this year. Born in the same year as Anne Frank, she too made a record of her treatment as a Jewish girl in Nazi-dominated Europe. She was deported in 1941 to Terezín/Theresienstadt, where she kept a diary but also used her considerable artistic skills to draw and paint a secret record – hidden and later recovered – of life in the camp. In 1944 she was deported to Auschwitz and later moved to Freiberg and Mauthausen, where she and her mother were liberated. They returned to Prague and were eventually able to move back into the

continued overleaf

REVIEWS *cont. from page 9*

family apartment, where Helga still lives. After the war she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague and has made a career as an artist, developing the talents so apparent in her Terezín pictures.

Earlier this year, the University of Northumbria Holocaust Interest Group invited Helga to exhibit her drawings and paintings at an exhibition mounted in the university and she agreed to come to Newcastle to speak with children and students about her pictures and her experiences. I joined her because we have a family connection – her mother was the sister of my mother's brother's wife – a distant connection but precious as all the family my mother left behind in Czechoslovakia perished. It was moving for me to be with her as she explained what she had experienced and answered questions like 'What was your worst moment?' – which was standing in the selection line at Auschwitz and not knowing whether she would be separated from her mother or whether either of them would survive.

Helga's drawings and paintings of life in Terezín are collected in Helga Weissová, *Zeichne, was Du siehst* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1998), the title taken from her father's message to her when she sent him a child's escapist drawing of two children playing with a snowman. Her pictures record all she saw: people arriving, the cramped dormitories, scavenging in the garbage, trying to capture some privacy in the toilet, searching for fleas and lice, the night-time delivery of a notice of transportation to Auschwitz – all drawn or painted with great skill to provide a clear and unique personal record.

Irene Walters

CINEMA

'When good men do nothing'

GOOD

directed by Vicente Amorim
starring Viggo Mortensen, Jason Isaacs, Jodie Whittaker
at selected cinemas

What makes a 'good' man stray from the path of moral rectitude? Flattery? The opportunity to advance his career? The attention of a beautiful woman? All these factors combine in the life of the film's protagonist, John Halder, a dissident professor of literature in the early years of Nazi Germany. Beset with a neurotic, obsessive wife, two demanding children and a mother ridden with dementia, this mild-mannered intellectual, whose career prospects are restricted by his failure to



Helga Weissová Hosková, right, and Irene Walters in front of drawing *Arrival of the International Red Cross Commission*

join 'the party', is burdened with a disproportionate share of domestic chores. His main refuge is the company of his best friend and one-time psychiatrist Maurice, who is Jewish.

Halder is also the author of a novel which focuses on mercy killing, a subject which preoccupies him because of his mother's condition. It is when this novel comes to the attention of high-ranking members of 'the party' that his fortunes change. In return for writing a paper and wearing the party member's badge, Halder finds himself head of department and the object of deference in Nazi circles. At the same time, he is pursued by a beautiful student. Having initially resisted her advances, he leaves his family for her and is able to present a ravishing Aryan mother-to-be at party functions.

While the theme of barely perceptible corruption through rationalisation is common to the film and the original play by C. P. Taylor, from which the script is adapted, there appear to be subtle differences in the development of the plot. Naturally, a central focus is the tension between Halder and Maurice, brought about both by the change in Halder's circumstances and the hardening of Nazi laws. The well-worn platitudes are voiced – Halder's attempt to reassure his friend 'that it will all soon blow over' and Maurice's indignant response to a suggestion that he go away for a year or two: 'I'm as German as you. I fought for this ...ing country!' It is the senseless destruction of Kristallnacht which crystallises Halder's thinking. His overwhelming priority now is to save his friend and, when he realises he has failed to do this, to discover his fate.

At this stage, Halder, effectively played by Viggo Mortensen with an almost permanent expression of dazed innocence, seems to have preserved a certain incorruptibility, a quality absent in the original play. This is reinforced by the film's abrupt ending, another innovation. Mortensen is well supported by Jason Isaacs as Maurice and Jodie Whittaker as the beautiful Anne, who represent the conflicting polarities of Halder's existence.

What both play and film bring to life is

the all too common failure of 'good' individuals to seek to rectify a situation they find unsatisfactory – an unfortunate reality which is no less prevalent today.

Emma Klein

MUSIC

The story of the Holocaust in 'telegram' form

ENOSH

composed by Rudi Leavor;
performed by Alyth Choral Society
at Alyth North Western Reform
Synagogue, London NW11

After many years in gestation, *Enosh* (Man), an original composition reflecting the Holocaust, was performed by the Alyth Choral Society last month. There were two previous performances: at the Holocaust Memorial Day event in Bradford in January 2008 and at the equivalent event in Leeds in February 2009.

Far from railing against the evils of Nazism, composer Rudi Leavor, a member of the AJR, has used some of the most beautiful and familiar music in Jewish liturgy to develop a contemplative piece modified with key shifts and counterpoint. By adding a prelude, interludes and sung recitatives for a soprano, he outlines the story of the Holocaust in staccato, 'telegram' form.

Leavor was so impressed with the ineffable beauty of Jewish liturgical music that he wanted to bring it to a wider audience in a concert-hall setting. In his programme notes, he refers to the composers Bloch and Milhaud, who set their Sacred Service oratorios for the baritone voice, making their work suitable for the synagogue. By opting for the soprano voice, Leavor decided he could expand the range of his audience.

To deepen the poignancy of his theme, Leavor includes a mediaeval dirge to martyrs (*El Molei Rachamim*) in the Ashkenazi tradition and a prayer from the *Machzor Vitry* compiled by Rashi's disciple, Rabbi Simcha of Vitry. The Jewish community of Vitry was martyred in 1317 on a charge of well-poisoning.

The work meanders through many moods and harmonies, from somnolent and reflective to deliberately jarring. It was sung with impressive pace and energy by the redoubtable Alyth Choir, conducted by Vivienne Bellos. Lyric soprano Lynette Sunderland delivered the recitatives.

Gloria Tessler

An unusual educational experiment: Wilton Park Training Centre

In the spring of 1946 I was recalled from the highlands of Burma to report to an Intelligence Corps depot, somewhere in the north of England. On the way, I was temporarily posted to No. 300 Prisoner of War Camp, outside Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire, where a new Interpreter Officer was needed. Eventually, this posting was made permanent.

No. 300 PoW Camp was also known as Wilton Park Training Centre. It was a hybrid between a military establishment and a Foreign Office facility which endeavoured to inculcate some aspects and understanding of democratic processes to selected German prisoners-of-war. It was reputedly the brainchild of Winston Churchill as a contribution to establishing a successful democracy in postwar Germany.

The PoW camp itself was under the command of Lt. Col. St. Clare Grondona, a superannuated but agreeable officer who maintained a traditional officers' mess given to much drinking of whisky, playing billiards and frequent toasts to the King Emperor. Whereas the British personnel occupied a mansion known as the White House, prisoners were housed in the usual array of Nissen huts, though security was virtually non-existent so as to emphasise the impression of an educational establishment rather than a place of containment.

At the time, the demobilisation of British armed forces was in full swing; consequently the number of available British service personnel was limited. This required the use of prisoners in the running of the camp so that, for instance, my own office was administered with Prussian punctiliousness and severity by a Herr Biehle and prisoners were even required to scan the never-ending reports by CROWCASS (Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects) to reveal any miscreants who might have slipped through the vetting procedures.

The interesting part of Wilton Park was, of course, the Training Centre under the direction of Dr Heinz Koeppler, himself a German-Jewish refugee, staffed by a group of German-speaking university dons and regularly visited and addressed by leading British politicians, academics and intellectuals. All PoWs had been graded black, grey or white and the only prisoners considered suitable for training were those in the white category, including many who eventually rose to prominence in the Federal Republic. The curriculum placed considerable emphasis on the study of Germany's development since Bismarck as seen from a non-German point of view. It also contained detailed consideration of British institutions such as the electoral process, the jury system, the accountability of the

police and the many other features which had been so conspicuously absent in Nazi Germany. The entire 'enlightenment' process lasted six weeks and concluded with an examination to assess the extent to which prisoners might have absorbed the lessons in which they had participated. As success in this exam usually ensured a speedy release back to Germany, the failure rate was virtually non-existent.

What was perhaps most notable was the cultural flowering which accompanied and, perhaps, even dominated the entire six-week process. Plays were produced and written, drawing and painting were popular pursuits, there was a puppet theatre, music, both orchestral and choral, flourished, a printing machine churned out tracts and cartoons, recitations and poetry readings proliferated, and poetry itself was written by many prisoners recording, often with German sentimentality, their hopes and aspirations for a new Germany. For many prisoners the escape from military restraint seemed to release a pent-up creativity or, perhaps, just a return to near-normality.

Understandably, it was not all plain sailing. I spent a good deal of time talking with prisoners in their huts in the evenings, this being the first occasion during my military service on which I had been able to use my knowledge of German. What seemed surprising was the number of Communists who suddenly emerged among the inmates – until one realised that those with homes in East Germany, and about to return there, needed to prepare their alibis in preparation for life in a new totalitarian environment.

It is, of course, difficult to assess the effects of this kind of regime on German PoWs. As a means of reconciliation, with already carefully selected Germans, it undoubtedly achieved some success. It brought prisoners face-to-face with what was, at the time, best in British life, politics and culture, it tried to show how a democratic state could function and what it could achieve, and it demonstrated that free expression and debate, and the liberty of the individual, were essential to the maintenance of a free society.

For me personally, as a German refugee in a British officer's uniform, it was an unexpected, revealing and memorable experience. It certainly gave me a clearer insight into the mentality of Germans who had followed Hitler so blindly. It has largely determined my attitude towards a new generation of Germans who today try to practise the principles which Wilton Park sought to uphold, and it made me conscious of having played a small part in a worthwhile, if unusual, educational experiment.

Eric Bourne

It is March 1938. Hitler has marched into Vienna to a triumphant reception, but the 180,000 Jews living in the city fear the future. Katharine Simmons, an undercover SIS agent working at the British Passport Office, is distraught when her husband, also an undercover agent, is taken from their home and disappears without trace. Can the love of a mystery man save her? Who is the betrayer?



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Yom Hashoah remembrance: 'A remarkable evening'

Some 450 people, including representatives from European embassies, were present at Pinner Synagogue's traditional Yom Hashoah remembrance evening - this was its 20th year - to hear guest speakers Dr Eva Schloss (step-sister of Anne Frank), Rabbi David Soetendorp, and Dr Stephen Smith MBE.

The focus of the evening was the 80th anniversary of the birth of Anne Frank. Six members of Pinner youth lit candles in memory of the victims of the Shoah. Gabi Gershuny perfectly captured the mood of



Gabi Gershuny reads an extract from Anne Frank's diary

the evening: 'Having inspirational speakers who have experienced unimaginable suffering, including Eva Schloss, step-sister of Anne Frank, giving a personal insight fuelled my determination to teach others so we can ensure that such evil will never recur.'

Dr Stephen Smith, Chairman of the UK Holocaust Memorial Trust and founder of Beth Shalom, strongly urged us all to remember those who resisted, those who died, and those who survived - and, above all, to remember not to ignore words of hatred still being circulated around the world. Truly a remarkable evening.

Brian Eisenberg
Yom Hashoah Committee
Pinner Synagogue

INSIDE the AJR

Ealing inaugural meeting

Michael Newman gave us a comprehensive talk on the AJR and its functions and services. We then exchanged views on various subjects, including the situation in Israel. An interesting and informative meeting.

Pauline Chernilovskaya

Cambridge talk by Professor Richard Evans

An excellent attendance was privileged to hear a fascinating account of a Hamburg teacher's diaries given by Richard Evans, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. Involved in a mixed marriage, Luise Solnitz evolved from an enthusiastic supporter of the Nazi regime to a disillusioned opponent when she suffered the same treatment as her Jewish husband and their daughter.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: 11 June. Alan Bilgora, 'Jewish Opera Singers'

Leeds HSFA: A journey to Romania and former Yugoslavia

Ruth Baumberg gave us a most interesting account of a journey to Romania and the former Yugoslavia. She illustrated her talk with beautiful photographs showing a wide variety of subjects including rural scenes and splendid architecture as well as subjects of Jewish interest. We were highly impressed both by Mrs Baumberg's talk and her exceptional skill as a photographer.

Martin Kapel



Liverpool meeting in front of Liverpool Memorial Book display: pictured are Sonia Strong, Sabine Barton, Ruth Eisikovits, Kay Fyne and Tom Reti

HGS: Jewish opera singers

Alan Bilgora entertained us with anecdotes and vintage recordings of famous Jewish opera singers. A delightful morning.

Harriet Hodes

Next meeting: 8 June. Update by Israel Embassy representative

Weald of Kent: Safety in the Community

Janet Weston kindly stepped in at the last minute when our invited local police officer was unable to attend. Janet, currently in charge of a neighbourhood watch initiative, gave us some extremely useful tips.

Esther Rinkoff

Brighton and Hove Sarid: The Yorkshire Ripper

Sidney Levine, who was involved as a lawyer in the case of the Yorkshire Ripper, told us

that while working as a grave digger, Sutcliffe, a schizophrenic, heard voices from God and went on to kill many women, mainly prostitutes. It's unlikely he will ever be released.

Alfred Huberman

Next meeting: 15 June. Professor Scarlett Epstein, 'Globalisation'

Edgware unable to solve world's problems

Ronald Channing kindly stepped in in place of BBC journalist Stewart Macintosh, who was unable to attend. Under Ronald's expert guidance, we had wide-ranging and interesting discussions on various subjects but sadly could not solve all the world's problems.

Edgar H. Ring

Next meeting: 16 June. Shirley Bilgora, 'The Story of a Search'

Cafe Imperial

A group of Veterans meets on a Tuesday each month at the Cafe Imperial in Golders Green Road, London NW11. The AJR's Esther Rinkoff and Frank Berg, representing the Australian Dunera Association, also attend, as does occasionally Dr Helen Fry, author of *The King's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens*. For further information, please contact Esther Rinkoff at Head Office.

Frank Berg

Temple Fortune: The Jews in England

Susannah Alexander gave us a very interesting and informative talk on the history of the Jews of England, beginning with the Norman conquest in 1066. She will return at a later date to tell us about the Jews of England from 1881 onwards, when everything changed.

David Lang

Next meeting: 18 June. Radio presenter Nicky Horne

Ealing: Pears soap

We had a fine turnout at our second meeting, enhanced by Andrea Cameron's talk on the history of Pears soap, founded by Soho barber Andrew Pears in the 18th century. This quintessentially English soap, we heard, is now manufactured in India!

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 2 June. Susannah Alexander, 'The Jews of England'

Welwyn Garden City: 'The Credit Crunch'

The Bank of England's Tim Pike explained to



Rolf Weinberg cuts the cake at a 90th birthday celebration at Belsize Square Synagogue. Also pictured are Rolf's friend Ruth Young, a cousin from Israel, a grandson from Spain, great-grandchildren, and Rabbi and Mrs Mariner (in the background). Guests were entertained by Cantor Norman

us the meaning of such terms as hedge funds, leverage, sub-prime mortgages and quantitative easing. We learned a lot.

Renate Selo

Next meeting: 30 June. Social get-together

South London outing to Wiener Library

A dozen of us visited the Wiener Library, one of the most extensive archives on the Holocaust and the Nazi era. Perhaps the most poignant moment was looking at an obscenely racist children's storybook – one of our members remembered being upset seeing it as a six-year-old in Berlin.

Edith Jayne

North London: 'The Credit Crunch'

Thirty of us – almost a full house – were privileged to hear the Bank of England's Tim Pike on the credit crunch. It was most illuminating to have an expert's view on such an intricate subject given the consequences worldwide.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: To be announced

Cleve Road: Return to Israel

The AJR's Esther Rinkoff gave us an

Holocaust book will honour perished



Agnes Isaacs, left, with Philip and Irene Mason, who helped produce a Holocaust memorial book for the Scottish Association of Jewish Refugees

The Scottish Association of Jewish Refugees has published a memorial book to honour the memory of loved ones who perished in the Holocaust. The book, which had its first public viewing at the recent Yom Hashoah event in Giffnock Synagogue, contains entries provided by survivors and their families commemorating family members who died in the Holocaust. It took months of hard work and painstaking research to complete. Contributions were obtained from individuals living in Scotland or with Scottish connections.

Records of the names of several hundred men, women and children, together with short stories and pictures, were collected by volunteers Irene and Philip Mason from Edinburgh and Agnes Isaacs from Glasgow. Similar books have been produced in other parts of the UK.

Copies of these memorial books are held in several libraries and museums including Yad Vashem, the Washington Holocaust Museum and the Imperial War Museum. The AJR memorial books are considered important historical records and invaluable sources for education.

The AJR has regular meetings in Glasgow and Edinburgh for Holocaust survivors and second generation relatives. Anyone wishing to know about the AJR or to purchase a copy of the book should contact agnes@ajr.org.uk

imaginative talk about her return visit to Israel after an absence of 35 years. Esther has had a love of Israel since she was given the book *Picture Stories from the Bible* as a little girl. She and her husband Ray, who hadn't been to Israel before, visited many of the Biblical sites pictured in the book, which really brought them to life.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 30 June. 'The Pears Family Foundation'

Radlett: 'Women of the Bible'

Alan Cohen told us that the aesthetic and emotional impact of looking at pictures could be enhanced by simultaneously listening to suitable music. He demonstrated this expertly, showing pictures based on 'Women of the Bible', while playing appropriate music.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 17 June. Eva Fernandes, 'The Last Jews of Kerala'

Ilford feast for eyes and ears

Alan Cohen gave us a feast for eyes and ears with his presentation on Biblical heroines, coupled with a wonderful choice of music. The paintings were well chosen and it was a lesson on our Biblical heritage too.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 3 June. Suzanne Lewis of Ben Uri Gallery

Pinner: Anne Frank Trust

A well-attended meeting enjoyed a talk by Gillian Waine on the Anne Frank Trust, whose work is largely to help young people cope with problems of prejudice and racial hatred.

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
Agnes Isaacs 0755 1968 593

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

They hold exhibitions, some of them in prisons, when they employ Holocaust survivors who speak about their own survival in prison conditions.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 4 June. Photographer Les Spitz

Hendon: 'Nice Nazis' et al

David Lawson's unusually entitled talk 'Nice Nazis, Three Ambassadors, a Degenerate Artist, a Brass Chanukiah and a Magic Doll' gave us extremely well researched insight into life in Ostrava. Through David's research, helped by many AJR members born in Ostrava, there is an exhibition in the Prague Jewish Museum.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 29 June. Bernice Krantz, 'Holocaust Testimonials'

ALSO MEETING IN JUNE

Radlett, Temple Fortune, Welwyn Groups 4 June. Outing to Hatfield House

Nottingham/East Midlands 16 June. Lunch and musical recital at home of Schwiening

Wessex 16 June. Outing to Rhinefield House, New Forest, with Cream Tea

Wembley 17 June. Social get together

Southern Region 23 June. Tea at home of Edwina Curry. Details to be sent out

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

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

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 17 June 2009

Clive Roslin

from the BBC will talk about
'Misadventures of a Broadcaster'

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 1 June 2009

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June Afternoon Entertainment

Mon 1	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 2	CLOSED
Wed 3	Lawrence Estry - Classical Piano
Thur 4	William Smith - Singer
Mon 8	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 9	CLOSED
Wed 10	Francoise Geller
Thur 11	BINGO
Mon 15	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 16	CLOSED
Wed 17	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 18	Paul Coleman
Mon 22	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 23	CLOSED
Wed 24	Mark Rosen
Thur 25	Jane Rosenberg
Mon 29	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 30	CLOSED

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

**Agnes Isaacs, Scotland and Newcastle
Co-ordinator**
0755 1968 593

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

Deaths

Guy Bishop, born Gunter Brueg in Gera, Germany on 9 April 1926, died in Danbury CT on 21 April 2009. He arrived in England by Kindertransport in July 1939. A decorated WWII British Intelligence Major, he participated in the capture of Heinrich Himmler. Having emigrated to the United States in 1952, he graduated from the Columbia School of Journalism. His first job was with Modern Plastics Magazine. He went on to become VP at General Foam/Tenneco, where he remained until opening his own business. Gifted artist, writer and photographer. Survived by his beloved wife of 49 years Lo Bishop, his adoring and adored niece, nephew and great-nephew. Predeceased by his sister Hannelore Silberberg and his brother Keith Bishop. No one who met him will ever forget his charm and wit. Living well was his best revenge and his greatest pleasure.

Margot Brauer/Cohen/Allan. Died 26.4.09. Sadly missed by her husband Joe, daughters, son-in-law, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, family and friends.

Hanna Bud (née Loeb), born Bamberg 27 October 1926, died London 25 April 2009. Beloved wife, mother and grandmother, sister and friend.

Martin Thau, died 1 March 2009. Deeply mourned by his loving daughter Deborah, his family and his friends.

PAUL BALINT AJR CENTRE

Chiropodist Trevor Goldman at the Paul Balint AJR Centre Wednesday 10 June, 10-11.30 am

Pamela Bloch Clothes sale, separates etc. Thursday 11 June, 9.30-11.45 am

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OBITUARY

Eric Kaufman, 1913-2009

My father was born in Hampstead on 24 March 1913, his parents having moved to London six years earlier. At the outbreak of the First World War, his father, Leo, was interned on the Isle of Man. In late 1917, the Quakers arranged an exchange with British civilian PoWs in Germany and my father and grandparents returned to Germany. My father was brought up in Düsseldorf.

He lived through turbulent times: the Weimar Republic and the ensuing rise of Nazism. At the age of 17, he was apprenticed in an accounts department in the grain business, later obtaining a transfer to a Netherlands branch, where his boss became an ardent Nazi.



In 1933-34, displaying considerable foresight, the family returned to London. Listening to German radio in the 1930s in England, my father even heard his name mentioned as a traitor to Germany.

In 1937 he met Gerda Philipp at the refugee club in Seymour Place, the 33 Club. They married five years later.

Before the war, he worked in his father's pulse business in the City. During the war, he became a fireman. In the Blitz, his unit failed to save his office in the City. He became a full-time fire service administrator in Golders Green and later in Pinner.

After the war he carried on in the family pulse business. When his father died in 1962, he and his brother Jack took over until, having suffered a heart attack, he retired in 1987.

In retirement, he gradually became a carer for my mother, particularly for the last ten years of her life until she passed away in 2003.

Family was of the greatest importance to my father, who took great pride in my wife Susie and his grandchildren Oliver and Nicole, whose careers he followed extremely closely, not to forget his little great-granddaughter Ella.

He had numerous interests. Every Thursday he went to town, touring Mayfair galleries and attending all the exhibitions; he was consulted by Sotheby's on German art. He was a voracious reader, regularly consuming 600-page tomes, mainly on the Holocaust and German history. He was also a regular visitor to the theatre. Stamp-collecting and genealogy too were among his interests.

He was the last of the letter-writers. Family and friends were in regular receipt of closely typed letters from his ancient typewriter.

Having decided to research the history of his mother's family, the Flechtheims, he believed he could trace them back to 1648. An exhibition in Düsseldorf marking the 50th anniversary of the death of his mother's cousin, Alfred Flechtheim, a leading art dealer, added to his interest.

He led a full life for the last six years, looked after by carer, friend and confidant Peter. At the age of 94, he took over his local neighbourhood watch. He loved community, local and national alike. In his forties, he had been asked to be the Liberal candidate in Pinner, but had declined: he distrusted politicians.

He died from a heart attack, typically on his way to the theatre in the West End.

My father was highly intelligent, tireless, funny and loyal. He will be sorely missed by all. He was a remarkable man.

Andrew Kaufman

Andrew Kaufman is the Chairman of the AJR

AJR REPORT

Claims Conference Goodwill Fund

The Claims Conference has announced changes to the Goodwill Fund that could allow certain claimants the right to receive reparations for properties they or their families owned in the former East Germany.

The Goodwill Fund was established by the Claims Conference in 1994 to make payments to entitled owners, and their heirs, of properties in the former East Germany. It was set up following the expiry of the German National Restitution Law in 1992, enacted after German unification in 1990.

The changes mean that if an application is made after 31 March 2004 (the previous deadline), which otherwise would have been eligible under the Guidelines, it can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for inclusion in the Goodwill Fund provided it meets either of the following conditions:

a) The claim was submitted by an original owner of the property or spouse of the original owner, or

b) The claim was submitted by a child, grandchild or great-grandchild of the original owner who can prove, through medical documentation, that they were unable for medical reasons to file an application in the period immediately before the deadline of 31 March 2004.

Following German unification in 1990, the German government introduced a national restitution law. The law entitled the former owners, and their heirs, of homes and businesses and other properties in the former Communist country to claim restitution.

At the expiry of the restitution law in 1992, the Claims Conference was appointed the legal owner of all unclaimed properties formerly owned by Jewish victims of the Holocaust in the former East Germany. Acting in the guise of the Successor Organisation, the Claims Conference then welcomed claims and arranged for individuals to recover properties.

At the end of 1998, the Claims Conference changed the rules of the Goodwill Fund. While continuing to assist claimants via the Successor Organisation, the Goodwill Fund entitled the Claims Conference to retain 20 per cent of an award to successful claimants as an assessment for services. This portion of the compensation was used by the Claims Conference to provide social and welfare programmes that support Holocaust survivors and refugees worldwide.

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merriem Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to mnewman@ajr.org.uk

Michael Newman

Yom Hashoah 2009

March of the Living

I was invited, as an ex-Austrian survivor, to join 500 Austrian students commemorating Yom Hashoah. Since the first March of the Living, in 1988, over 100,000 Jewish and Christian youths from around the world have marched the 3 km route from Auschwitz to Birkenau on this day. I understand that half of the expenses of the Austrian group were paid by the Austrian government, with the various participating schools contributing the remainder.

On our first night in Cracow, we heard the story of a Polish woman, a Righteous Gentile, who had saved many Jews by hiding them on her farm.

On our second day in Cracow, we visited the remains of the Mordechai Tygner Synagogue and Oskar Schindler's enamel factory. That evening, I told my story to the 150 Austrian students staying in our hotel. They asked so many questions about my terrible experience at Auschwitz.

The third day, at Auschwitz, I was one of 10,000 participants, who were carrying the flags of many nations. I joined the Austrian group. As we entered Birkenau, the names of the 1.5 million children who perished in the Shoah were read out and six torches were lit in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Following the impressive ceremony, the Austrian group gathered in the open and I told my story to the 500 participants.

Freddie Knoller

In gratitude to US soldiers

On Yom Hashoah I was contacted through the AJR by the American base in Huntingdon and asked to speak about my experiences in the Holocaust to 200 soldiers. This I readily did. It was highly appreciated by the enraptured American soldiers, who presented me with a cheque for £75 for the AJR Charitable Trust and a gift for my wife Hettie.

I later wrote to the soldiers expressing my deep affection for the American forces, who, besides miraculously liberating me from hell, had cared for me after the Holocaust in Germany until I had the opportunity to come to England. Without their love and care, I would have starved. I added that I was still in constant contact with Sgt Julius Abrams, one of those who had liberated me and was now 94 years old.

Alec Ward



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Unique treasure

If one is lucky enough to live in a town which is blessed with a unique botanical garden, one really ought to visit it at least four times a year – once each season – and more than that, if possible. I must confess to having been very remiss in that respect, although recently I was able to remedy the situation to some extent. My visit with a group of friends to the University Botanical Garden in Jerusalem was both an aesthetic and an intellectual experience, and our eyes were opened by the erudite explanations we were privileged to receive from one of the garden's founders, Dr Michael Avishai.

Although Israel is roughly the size of Wales it has no less than eight sets of horticultural belts – different climatic regions, each with its own typical plants and trees. Jerusalem is situated in the Mediterranean region but, because of its location over 500 meters above sea level, its climate sustains more than 1,000 varieties of plants.

The Botanical Garden, which was founded in 1962, extends over 30 acres and now hosts more than 6,000 plants, including those indigenous to Asia, Australia, Europe and the tropics. In the tropical conservatory, which is somewhat reminiscent of the one at Kew Gardens, albeit on a smaller scale, one can encounter several different kinds of orchids as well as insect-eating plants growing amidst the lush greenery of the tropical forest. In another corner is a Roman-era columbarium (dove-cote). The Romans used these birds as sacrifices to their gods, as messengers, and as a delicacy on their tables. The columbarium, which was built into the limestone rock, was discovered when the conservatory was being constructed and duly incorporated within it. In another part of the Botanical Garden there are natural caves which were once used for burial but

had been emptied by grave-robbers long before the garden was planted. No other botanical garden can claim unique features such as these.

The garden is divided into several sections by continent, each with its own unique flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs. But for me the most stunning sight was the winding entrance path, its borders containing a multi-coloured array of spring flowers. What a delightful way to greet visitors as they make their way into the garden! This area, we were told, had been planted and cared for by a dedicated group of volunteers from Great Britain who come to Israel for several weeks each year as well as raising funds for the garden at other times.

In addition to the areas devoted to different regions of the world, the garden contains a Bible Path, where the plants mentioned in the Bible are to be found. Another part of the garden is devoted to medicinal plants and also serves as a focus for research into their healing properties. Since the garden is associated with the Hebrew University and is adjacent to its Givat Ram campus, it provides a convenient laboratory for horticultural research.

The garden also contains several lakes, a stream and even a waterfall, though of course all the water is recycled. These enable the plant life that is unique to wet areas to thrive, widening the garden's plant repertoire still further, not to mention the wide range of birds, both indigenous and migratory, that come to visit.

The purpose of the Botanical Garden is summed up in its motto 'Science, recreation, conservation'. In endeavouring to fulfil those functions it also seeks to educate Israelis, whether adults or children, to appreciate the manifold beauties of nature, to tend the plants, and to value yet another of Jerusalem's unique treasures.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY JUNE 2009

Mon 1 No lecture (hall not available) Club 43

Thur 4 Professor Niall Ferguson (Harvard University), 'Siegfried Warburg: An Anglo-German-Jewish Life' At Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7580 3493 (Centre for German-Jewish Studies Lecture Series)

Mon 8 Irene Lawford-Hinrichsen BA, FRSA, 'Travels with my Ancestors: Fifteen Generations over 500 Years across a Continent in Turmoil (Hinrichsen Family, Music Publishers, Owners of Peters Edition)' Club 43

Tues 9 Prof Christopher R. Browning (Univ of North Carolina), 'Memories of Survival: The Starachowitz Factory Slave Labour Camps' At Lecture Theatre 34, Birkbeck, Malet Street, London WC1, 7.00 pm (Wiener Library/Birkbeck Lecture Series)

Tues 9 June to 19 July 'A Personal Journey' Retrospective exhibition of Holocaust art by Lucienne Pszenica Morrison At Etz Chayim Gallery, Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue. Tel 01923 822 592

Mon 15 Robin Hanau BSc, 'A Scots-German-Jewish Family: Some Reflections' Club 43

Thur 18 'War, Refugees and Testimony' Special seminar to mark 70th anniversary of Wiener Library's arrival in London. Speakers include Prof Tony Kushner, Dr Anthony Grenville, Dr Bea Lewkowicz. Seminar will be followed by official launch of AJR's audio-visual project *Refugee Voices*. At Wiener Library, 2.30-6 pm and 7-8.30 pm

Thur 18 B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge. Irene Lawson, 'Travels with my Ancestors: Fifteen Generations over 500 Years across a Continent in Turmoil'. Kenton Synagogue Hall, 8.15 pm

Mon 22 AGM Club 43

Tues 23 Dr Arnold Paucker, 'Robert Weltsch, the Enigmatic Zionist: His Personality and Position in Jewish Politics' At Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Meeting Room B127, 4.30 pm (tea 4 pm). Tel 01273 678 771

Thur 25 Chief Rabbi Paul Eisenberg, 'New Life on the "Mazze Island"? Jewish Life in Austria Post-1945' At Lecture Theatre 34, Birkbeck, Malet Street, London WC1, 6.30 pm (Wiener Library and Austrian Embassy Lecture and Discussion Series)

Mon 29 Dr Anthony Grenville (Consulting Editor, *AJR Journal*), 'Herbert Sulzbach and the Re-education of German Prisoners of War' Club 43

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