

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Jews in double jeopardy

The Nazis reserved a particularly vicious brand of hatred for Germans who were both left-wing political activists and Jews. When such people fell into Nazi hands, they were habitually treated with exceptional and systematic brutality. One of the first was the writer and left-wing anarchist Erich Mühsam, a colourful figure on the Munich literary and political scene. He was arrested within a few hours of the Reichstag fire, on the night of 28 February 1933, and incarcerated in a concentration camp, where he was subjected to appalling treatment. The beatings and torture continued after he was transferred to Oranienburg concentration camp, and in July 1934 his battered body was 'found' hanging in a camp latrine; he had been murdered by his guards.

It must be remembered that in 1933/34 the level of violence directed by the Nazis against the Jews, though severe in individual cases, was not comparable with what was to come later. Only in 1938, with the Anschluss of Austria and the 'Crystal Night' pogroms, did the regime escalate its anti-Semitic measures, exposing the mass of the Jewish population in Germany and Austria to overt and brutal physical persecution. And the further escalation to genocide took place only in 1941, with the onset of the 'Final Solution'.

In 1933/34, the Nazis were still primarily concerned with destroying the organisations and resources of their political opponents, especially the Communists and Social Democrats. Their initiatives in the racial field were mainly limited in those early years to measures excluding Jews from certain fields of employment and activity and depriving them of their rights as citizens. But the bulk of the Jewish population was not yet at immediate risk of actual physical harm; indeed, many Jews continued to hope that they could live out the duration of Nazi rule in Germany. There were, of course, instances of severe violence against Jews, but these were not yet widespread on the scale of later years.

The regular use of violence and murder



Richard and Gisela Bernstein with their son Heinz and daughter Susanne

against Jewish left-wing political activists took root on the far right well before 1933. In January 1919, Rosa Luxemburg, leader of the infant German Communist Party and a Jew from Poland, was savagely beaten to death during the Spartacist Uprising in Berlin by men of the right-wing paramilitary *Freikorps*; her body was thrown into the Landwehr canal. Her partner, Leo Jogiches, was assassinated two months later. And in June 1922, Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau was assassinated by right-wing activists who considered it a slur on Germany's honour that a Jew should hold such high representative office.

Arguably, it was in Munich, the birthplace of National Socialism ('Hauptstadt der Bewegung'), that the practice of physically eliminating Jewish political opponents became common currency on the German far right. In Munich, with the collapse of the old regime in November 1918, power fell into the hands of a radical left-wing government led by Kurt Eisner, a Jew from Berlin, a pacifist and an intellectual. Eisner was the first to be targeted: he was assassinated in February 1919 by a right-wing aristocrat, Graf von Arco-Valley.

Eisner's murder triggered a sequence

of revolutionary events, as Munich descended into a spiral of political radicalisation. It was here that political assassination entered the bloodstream of the German extreme right; that included the Nazi Party, a previously insignificant sect that gained the potential to become a major political force in 1919, when Adolf Hitler became a member in the wake of the turbulent events in Munich. In early April 1919, the city lurched further to the left, as a group of radicalised left-wingers seized power and attempted to establish a *Räterepublik*, in which government was to be exercised through workers' and soldiers' councils ('Räte'), on the model of the Russian Soviets ('Soviet' is Russian for 'Council').

Jews were prominent among the leaders of this movement: the young writer and activist Ernst Toller was chairman of its Revolutionary Central Council; the philosopher Gustav Landauer, an anarchist pacifist, took charge of education; and Erich Mühsam was an active supporter. Incoherently idealistic, this group was displaced on 13 April 1919 by a more tough-minded regime, led by the Communist Eugen Leviné, another Jew. But in early May 1919 right-wing militias entered Munich, overthrew the left-wing regime and bloodily 'cleansed' the city. Landauer, an exemplary man of peace, was shot by a soldier, then stamped to death; Leviné was court-martialled and executed; and Toller, who narrowly escaped with his life, served five grim years for high treason in Niederschönenfeld prison, alongside Mühsam.

The anarchy and violence associated with the short-lived *Räterepublik* in Munich left an abiding impression on many middle-class Germans, though the worst of the violence had in reality been perpetrated by the right-wing forces while 'restoring order'. In the subsequent counter-revolutionary backlash, the fear of the perceived threat from the left to political stability, bourgeois normality and middle-class prosperity took on an

continued overleaf

JEWS IN DOUBLE JEOPARDY *continued from page 1*

obsessive quality, focusing largely on the figure of the left-wing Jewish intellectual, who became for fearful right-wingers the embodiment of an 'alien' menace to German society.

This blended with the image of the Jew propagated by the anti-Semites of the extreme right. For them, Jews were by reason of their race inherently incapable of becoming part of the German *Volk* and were thus condemned to remain outside German society, whose national characteristics, aspirations and destiny they did not share. Indeed, as members of an 'alien' race, Jews were deemed to be covertly united in a conspiracy to destroy 'healthy' German society, by contaminating its racial purity, corrupting its moral order and undermining its social and political stability. Jews, unlike 'healthy' Germans, were bloodless intellectuals, capable only of uncreative calculation but never of true genius, and cut off by an excess of cerebral rationality from the true wellsprings of life.

Here lay the origins of the Nazi concept of Judeo-Bolshevism, which paired the alleged racial threat from the Jews with that of Marxist political subversion. The campaign against Judeo-Bolshevism was to reach its full lethal frenzy after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. Before 1933, the image of the Jew as fomenter of Communist revolution was a useful tool in the Nazis' propaganda armoury – though when they needed to parade their pseudo-Socialist credentials, they wheeled out the stereotype of the Jewish plutocrat and capitalist instead, ignoring the evident contradiction between the two.

The Nazis came to see the left-wing Jewish intellectual as their mortal foe, the hidden antagonist behind all the opposition ranged against them. To this was added the fury of bull-necked Nazi thugs when they were lampooned by the sharp pens of Jewish humorists and political satirists; this confirmed the Nazis in their delusion that a secret intellectual mafia of Jews controlled publishing and the press and must be rooted out. Predictably, Jewish authors figured prominently among those whose books were burnt in 1933. The first German to be murdered on foreign soil by agents of the Nazis was the philosopher and writer Theodor Lessing, a Jew whose critical biography of President Hindenburg had marked him out in Nazi eyes as an enemy of the people. Lessing fled to Marienbad in Czechoslovakia, but the Nazi press campaign against him was maintained, and on 30 August 1933 he was shot and

The Kindertransport 1938/9 Seventy Years On

New Developments in Research

Thursday, 17 September 2009

At the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London
Room ST 273, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1

Co-Ordinators: **Andrea Hammel** (Sussex) and **Bea Lewkowicz** (London)

Programme

- 9.30 Registration
- 9.50 **Naomi Segal** (Director, IGRS) and **Christian Wiese** (Director, CGJS): Welcome
- 10.00 **Anthony Grenville** (AJR, London): Introduction
- 10.30 **Frances Williams** (Edinburgh): The NEW Kindertransport Database: Exploring Child Refugee Experiences with Use of Statistical Information
- 11.00 Discussion
- 11.30 Coffee
- 12.00 **Jana Buresova** (London): Nicholas Winton, Man and Myth: a Czech Perspective
- 12.30 **Bea Lewkowicz** (London): Kindertransport Testimonies and the AJR Refugee Voices Archive
- 13.00 Discussion
- 13.30 Lunch (own arrangements)
- 14.45 **Leslie Brent** (London): Writing the Past for the Future: Autobiographical Reflections
- 15.15 **Andrea Hammel** (Sussex): The Future of Kindertransport Research
- 15.45 Discussion
- 16.15 Tea
- 16.45 Screening of *Kindertransport Story*, introduced by Director **Lindsay Hill**
- 17.30 Closing Discussion

Registration (£15.00) required by Wednesday, 9 September 2009

The event is supported by the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex

For further details, please contact Jane Lewin on 0044 (0)20 7862 8966
or at Jane.Lewin@sas.ac.uk

fatally wounded.

One of the first captives of the Nazis to be 'shot while attempting to escape' was Felix Fechenbach, a Jew from Würzburg, who as a young man had been Eisner's secretary in Munich and had been imprisoned for high treason in 1922, after a notorious trial sometimes termed the 'German Dreyfus Affair'. After his release, Fechenbach worked as editor of a Social Democratic newspaper in Detmold, where his highly effective brand of campaigning anti-Nazi journalism made him a marked man. Fechenbach was arrested on 11 March 1933 and held in a local concentration camp. As a Jew, an intellectual and a prominent left-wing journalist, he was duly

singled out for the harshest treatment: on 7 August 1933, while being transferred to Dachau, he was shot in a wood near Detmold, apparently on the direct order of Reinhard Heydrich.

The Nazis continued to track Jews with left-wing political affiliations, even if they were little-known figures. An example was Richard Bernstein, a Jew from Vienna who worked as an editor on *Vorwärts*, the official newspaper of the Social Democratic Party. According to documents kindly supplied to me by Susanne Medas, Bernstein's daughter, the Nazis were able to keep tabs on Bernstein when he fled to Prague and then to Oslo – partly because as late as June 1938 he attempted to claim from his Prague address the compensation due to him for his dismissal from *Vorwärts* in 1933. His son and daughter reached safety in Britain, but Bernstein and his wife Gisela were deported to Auschwitz, where both died. By contrast, even high-profile non-Jewish intellectuals on the left were left untouched, provided that they avoided political activity. The writer Erich Kästner, whose books were burnt on 10 May 1933, managed to survive the Nazi years largely unscathed.

Anthony Grenville

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Views expressed in the *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

Confused as never before



My feelings are confused as never before. I have always been a fervent Zionist, like my father before me. For my barmitzvah he gave me the biography of Theodore Herzl by Alex Bein – translated from the German. The same year, came one of our happiest moments when the State of Israel was proclaimed. We closed our eyes to the terrorist acts of the Stern Gang and the Irgun Zvai Leumi. We hated Ernest Bevin, considering him an anti-Semite. We were shocked about what happened to the Exodus. We defended the killing of the two British sergeants, the blowing up of the King David Hotel, the assassination of Count Bernadotte. Our new heroes were David Ben-Gurion and the Haganah.

The Palestinians declared war on Israel the moment it was created. Of course, nearly all Diaspora Jews sided with our new homeland, including those who had fully integrated into their new countries. It was said that Israel would not have been created but for the Holocaust and Hitler. Perhaps – but did this matter? We Jews had a country we could call our own. The wars continued. The Six-Day War was a miracle in military planning, thanks to Moshe Dayan. Do you remember those stickers we proudly put up in our cars: 'Come to Israel and see the Pyramids'?

The Yom Kippur War was not a success but Israel had great leaders, particularly the highly regarded Golda Meir. Furthermore, Shimon Peres was still a young man, as was Yitzhak Rabin.

Then, to everyone's surprise, Menachem Begin, a fierce right-winger and former terrorist (or freedom fighter), became prime minister, made peace with Egypt and, together with Anwar Sadat, the Egyptian leader, even won the Nobel Peace Prize. The relationship with Jordan, thanks to behind-the-scenes activities between Peres and King Hussein, was good too. Above all, the US backed Israel, and the European countries were not openly averse.

So what went wrong? In peace negotiations, Israel could not agree – nor should it – to the right of return of the 1948 Palestinians. Also, Israel took land in the 1967 war to which it was not entitled. In 1979

the Sinai had been returned by Begin, and so was the wretched strip of land called Gaza, but that was all. Then, in 1982, Defence Minister Ariel Sharon turned a blind eye to the attacks by the Falangists on innocent civilians in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon. Anti-Israel feelings were growing fast. The West Bank was becoming a hotbed of Palestinian terrorist actions – as, of course, was Gaza.

Later, the Israelis built a very unpopular 'security wall', which was condemned worldwide.

More recently, Hezbollah, made up of Lebanese, Syrians and Iranians, attacked Israel from the north; Hamas, which had won the Palestinian elections, attacked Israel from Gaza. Israel lost the battle against Hezbollah (certainly in PR terms) and upset almost the entire world by what was seen as an over-reaction to the rockets fired by Hamas from Gaza. (I disagree with the world's reaction but perhaps I am biased.) Israel has

become almost a pariah state, accused of apartheid. Anti-Zionism has become rife; so, inevitably, has anti-Semitism. President Ahmadinejad of Iran declared that he would wipe Israel off the map. Of course, Israel could retaliate. Saudi Arabia reportedly said it would allow Israel to fly over its air space to bomb Iran. But the Israelis are already partly blamed for the Iraq wars. Do they want to be blamed for another war?

President George W. Bush, together with most of his predecessors (with the possible exception of Jimmy Carter) supported Israel. Now, however, we have a US president who may not be as staunch a supporter: Barack Obama. At about the same time, because of the daft PR electoral system that Israel follows, Israel chose a right-wing prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, who did not win the election and who is supported by Avigdor Lieberman, an ultra-right-winger who is generally disliked. Tzipi Livni, who did win the election, isn't even in the government.

It can be argued that it was a right-winger, Begin, who made some sort of peace with Egypt and that perhaps another right-winger, Netanyahu, might agree to peaceful co-existence with the

I feel no optimism about the situation in the Middle East. Sadly, I think that Netanyahu is on to a loser. Israel's public relations are already dreadful – they will get even worse when it is seen that Obama and Europe cannot bring their Road Map for peace to any fruition. I do not blame Netanyahu. He is afraid of the Jewish fundamentalists just as Arafat was afraid of the Palestinian ones.

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Kindertransport Survey completed

Going public

The ambitious project to create an archive and a database of the Kindertransportees' experience and the historic act of rescue of 1938/39 is now complete. Much effort has been exerted over recent months to improving details of the statistics in order to ensure the maximum integrity of the completed database, which is run on Microsoft Excel. We are now ready to go public.

The database can be viewed in the Kindertransport section of the AJR website alongside a full description of the project at www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport

In order to view the database, you must have the Microsoft programme Excel, or another spreadsheet programme allowing Excel to be opened on your computer. (It is simply too expensive to create and send printed versions of the database.)

We hope that those of you who do download the database will send us your comments, and any feedback on possible errors, by the end of November 2009, after which the database will be made available to historians, research students, libraries and seats of learning.

Preserving the Survey forms

The scanning to digital file of all the forms we received, both the Main forms as well as the Supplementary ones, has been completed in order to preserve this material and make it as widely available as possible.

The scanning covered all aspects of the Survey – every page, including all the anecdotal additions supplied by well over half the respondents.

This mammoth task, involving approximately 12,000 pages, was generously completed, totally free of charge, by the specialist document management company Rolace of Melton Mowbray, Bucks (see also acknowledgements below).

The original forms are now safely stored, and maintained for posterity, at the Wiener Library, whilst the scanned records will be kept by the AJR and KT/AJR, with every word preserved.

Future plans

Further work on the ancillary anecdotal information sent with the questionnaires is being carried out, with the objective of making this material searchable. This will take time and cost money, but will reveal much more of the story of those days, now many years ago, for the benefit of historical knowledge.

When funds or donor generosity permit, we hope to make available a version of the database that can be queried and analysed online.

Thanks and acknowledgements

First and foremost, our highest appreciation is due to one and all of the erstwhile Kinder – wherever in the world – who have kindly and diligently worked with us by completing and returning the questionnaires. This was a great effort – without your input, there would be no archive. Many thanks.

It was my privilege to lead the team who did the work, and I wish to acknowledge in particular the following:

Bertha Leverton, who drafted the first attempt of the successful questionnaire;

Ronald Channing, who gave unstinting support throughout the entire project;

Frances Williams, a PhD student at Edinburgh University, who was engaged in creating and completing the digitising of the database;

Kurt Taussig, who spent many, many hours editing the database;

Tom Heinersdorff for all his help and computer expertise, his unstinting efforts and many hours of devotion generously given;

The **AJR Trustees** for granting the

necessary funding;

All others who helped in supporting the successful outcome of the archive.

Rolace

The enormous task of scanning 12,000 pages of the original Survey forms and ancillary material we received was most generously donated by the specialist document management company Rolace of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. We would like to express our particular gratitude to Carole Lancaster, Managing Director of Rolace, and Karen Puryer, the Production Manager, for recognising the importance of the historic event of the Kindertransport – the saving of our lives – and preserving the record of the contribution we have made to our society. Rolace paid special attention to data protection issues and to document assembly, so that the digital versions protect the identity of Survey respondents and the originals were correctly re-assembled. We elected not to take advantage of Rolace's Secure Document Shredding service because of the historic relevance of the originals.

We hope you will find the database interesting. It is the first time, to our knowledge, that a statistical database containing so much detail of what is now an important part of UK history and Holocaust knowledge has been attempted.

Hermann Hirschberger

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

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

POINT OF VIEW *cont. from p3*

Palestinians. Sorry, but I doubt it! Already he has allowed the settlers (mostly ultra-religious Americans) to continue to build settlements on the West Bank. He dare not agree that Jerusalem should be an international city under Jewish, Muslim and Christian rule. He is frightened of Israel being divided into two states. (I personally also cannot see how this can be achieved with Palestinian Gaza so far in distance from the Palestinian West Bank.) Due to the PR electoral system, Netanyahu is under the control of the religious parties. They would never agree to any land being returned to the Arabs. They believe it is theirs. Remember, it was an extremist who

murdered Rabin, in order to sabotage the Oslo peace accords that Rabin, Arafat and Clinton had signed.

I feel no optimism about the situation in the Middle East. Sadly, I think that Netanyahu is on to a loser. Israel's public relations are already dreadful – they will get even worse when it is seen that Obama and Europe cannot bring their Road Map for peace to any fruition. I do not blame Netanyahu. He is afraid of the Jewish fundamentalists just as Arafat was afraid of the Palestinian ones.

Just one thing please. Would Jews in the Diaspora stop condemning Israel in public! We have enough enemies without fighting among ourselves!

Peter Phillips

WHITTINGEHAME FARM SCHOOL

17 September 2009, 7.30 pm

at The Town House, Haddington, East Lothian

There will be a talk on this subject illustrated by photographs taken by Mr Drew, a teacher at the school

If you would like to attend or have any information on life at Whittingehame House, please telephone 01508 498848 or email mike@hempnallhouse.co.uk

'Lingfielders' reunion, 2009

After months of e-mails, letters and telephone calls, the great day finally arrived: Sunday 21 June 2009. It was a sunny day when we 'Lingfielders' – children from Lingfield House – were reunited in the wonderful setting of The Holocaust Centre/Beth Shalom in Nottinghamshire.

It was a very moving occasion as we had not met like this for nearly 12 years. The 'children' came from as far afield as the USA, Israel, Portugal and Belgium – a truly international gathering. We were particularly honoured to be able to host, accompanied by her husband, Sarah Moskovitz, who wrote *Love Despite Hate*, a book about the lives of the Lingfielders after they grew up and made their own way in life.

Unfortunately, there were a number



Alice Goldberger, who cared for the Lingfield children until they were either adopted or could lead independent lives

of Lingfielders who were unable to make this reunion due to the distance and costs involved as well as health problems. A number now live in Australia and the USA and they were much missed.

The 'children', all of whom were among the youngest child survivors of the Holocaust, were brought over from Continental Europe in or shortly after 1945. Many of us came on 15 August 1945 from Prague and arrived in Windermere in the middle of the night

'A great day'



'Lingfielders' reunion at The Holocaust Centre/Beth Shalom, June 2009 Front row Marina Smith, Rachel Oppenheimer, Heidi Charles, Liliana Pertoldi, Joanna Millan, Sylvia Cohen, Stephen Smith Second row Wolf Blomfield, Hanka Garama, Fritz Friedman, Vic Cohnheim, Jerzy Herszberg, Zdenka Husserl, Ervin Bogner, Jackie Young Back centre Norbert Hall

on Alice Goldberger's birthday – she always said it was her biggest and best birthday present! Alice, who worked for Anna Freud at the Hampstead Nurseries, where children were being treated for traumas associated with the Blitz, was chosen to meet us and oversee our care until we were either adopted or could lead independent lives.

We were looked after by Alice and a dedicated number of helpers in such a way that we became one large 'family'. Sir Benjamin Drage offered the use of his home, Weir Courtney, in Lingfield, Surrey, on a temporary basis until a more permanent house could be found. This new house was in Isleworth – we all agreed to call it Lingfield House as a reminder of our time in Lingfield.

Alice encouraged us to take an interest in music, pets, handicrafts, dancing and cookery. She also made sure that we had bicycles and all the things English children had. We also had the opportunity to attend concerts, the

theatre, ballet and the cinema as we grew older. Before Lingfield House was closed, we were all given opportunities for training so that we could find suitable jobs.

Just after the war, West London Synagogue, realising that the children needed housing and care, donated all the funds intended for the redecoration and renovation of the synagogue to the upkeep of Weir Courtney and Lingfield House and organised an annual bazaar to help with the funding. A junior Lingfield Committee was set up by young members of the synagogue to befriend us and take us on outings.

On the great day in June 2009, we all gathered at Golders Green and took an early coach to the Holocaust Centre, where we were greeted by Marina Smith with her usual hug and enjoyed lunch in the Dome. After lunch we were addressed by Stephen Smith, who explained the work of the Centre for the benefit of those who had not previously visited. We had an opportunity to view the Main Exhibition and the new exhibition *The Journey*, which is designed for primary school children. We were also given an opportunity to gather round the rose bush planted in memory of Alice Goldberger.

Following a delicious tea, we headed back to London, arriving in time to enjoy dinner together before going our separate ways. We left feeling that we wanted to keep in touch more closely.

Zdenka Husserl

Joanna Millan

Rachel Oppenheimer



The Lingfield children

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

'MY VIENNA IS DEAD'

Sir – I was intrigued by the two articles in your July issue concerning the experiences of Viennese 'returnees'. I returned to Vienna three or four years ago on business connected with pension rights.

I left Vienna with my mother early in January 1939, arriving in England on 9 January. She came on a domestic permit to a titled English family in Surrey. I was nine years old (ten that summer) and interned with her on the Isle of Man by the autumn.

We had lived in Huetteldorf, my maternal grandmother had lived in Leopoldstadt, my paternal grandmother had had an apartment on Mariahilferstrasse. Even as an adult, I had vivid memories of my childhood home and always felt I would be able to find my way around in Vienna quite easily. I even recalled the tram ride home from Leopoldstadt and the hot chestnut seller on the corner by the tram stop.

When I was actually there, it was like being in a strange, foreign and unknown city. Although I tried to find the places I so vividly carried in my memory, I was like a lost soul. I couldn't connect with the local population although my German is fluent. The Jewish people I came across were nearly all immigrants from the East, wearing the traditional gabardines, *zizith*, black hats and *peyot*. Trying to find a synagogue in Patzmanitengasse my grandmother had attended, I found a kosher butcher shop and enquired. I was invited to a *stiebel* on Friday night. They didn't know of any temple in the area.

I came to the conclusion that 'my' Vienna was as dead as all my beloved family. I think it probably died with them in 1942. Unlike your writers, I never want to see the place again. I am British, I feel very English, I love 'my' English/British history, England is my home. I love it and belong to it – warts and all!

Mrs. E. Holden (née Eisler)
London N14

SAINSBURY'S AND THE KINDERTRANSPORT

Sir – I recently attended Sainsbury's AGM and, during 'Question Time', we were delighted to learn from a shareholder that her husband, coming to England on the Kindertransport, had been collected from Liverpool Street Station by Lord and Lady Sainsbury in a Rolls-Royce and cared for during the war. When they got married in 1959 they were given a wedding present by the Sainsbury's, so the association continued for a long time.

The chairman and everybody present

very much appreciated this story, which highlighted the caring attitude of Lord and Lady Sainsbury.

(Mrs) Meta Roseeneil
Buckhurst Hill, Essex

LITTLE BLUE BOOK

Sir – Yes, had it not been for the help of the Quakers, my family and I could easily have ended up in a concentration camp! However, S. Muller (August), please allow me to sympathise with the person who complained of her mother's treatment on arrival in the UK. I have no memory of the 'little blue book' but I still have some very bitter memories of those black days.

Confused and unhappy Austrian refugees, unable to speak a word of English, my mother and I were taken in by quite a wealthy family, where she became a domestic slave (I don't use that word lightly). In exchange for our bedroom and food, my mother did *all* the cleaning, cooking, washing, ironing and child-minding. When she didn't understand how to use some of the woman's domestic equipment, she was shouted at and physically pushed around. Imagine how I felt at seven years old, witnessing this cruelty. It was the first time I had seen my mother cowed and miserable. She had had to leave her husband, sister and mother in Vienna and was not able even to post them a letter as we were not allowed money for stamps. She couldn't get a work permit to allow her to earn anything for all her labours.

Things got better when father joined us in England and volunteered for the British army. At that point, my mother was given a work permit and wages. The very kind headmaster of my junior school finally dissuaded the other children from spitting at me and throwing stones. He also set about teaching me English, so I managed to win a grammar school place a few years later.

Believe me, my family has been eternally grateful to Britain for saving us in 1939 and we have done our best to repay our debts. But please, Mr Muller, don't think that everyone here greeted us with kindness and generosity!

Maria Blackburn (née Redisch)
Newport Pagnell

Sir – If S. Muller, whose letter appeared after mine in last month's issue, were to take the trouble to read my letter, which gave excerpts of the actual content of the booklet, I hope he would retract his unwarranted attack on Mrs Saville. Would it not be safer to acquaint oneself with *some* – if not all – the facts of an argument before passing

judgement?

Was Mr Muller a refugee and, if so, when did he arrive in this country? Does he exclude *himself* from those 'who otherwise would just as likely have ended up in the gas chamber'?

Betty Bloom, London NW3

Sir – My parents and I also received this 'blue book' on arrival in the UK. I am very grateful that my parents tried their best to abide by its contents and, although they never lost their 'foreign' accent, they acquired a very good working knowledge of the English language, because for a long time only English was to be spoken at home. Their adherence to the spirit of the book enabled me to lose all traces of a foreign accent and to blend into the British-Jewish community, which saved the lives of my parents and me. Sadly, several people were treated harshly but that was less than suffered by many in the British armed services, who saved us all from the Nazis.

Edgar H. Ring, Edgware, Middx

AN INNOCENT REMARK

Sir – Anthony Grenville's leading articles are always stimulating. His 'Duet for One' in the August edition reminded me of an incident many years ago when I needed extra cash and spent an evening in an English-Jewish home as waitress and dish-washer. When the gentleman took me back to our flat in his car, I said it was the first time I had met an English-Jewish family – assuming, of course, that he recognised by my German accent that I too was Jewish. To my embarrassment, he replied: 'Well, now you know we are quite normal like everybody else!'

I meant no offence by this innocent remark, but it taught me to be more careful with my 'observations' in future!

Susanne Medas, London W10

JEWS AND ARABS

Sir – It was reported in the Jewish press that Jews for Justice for Palestinians are intent on extending their pernicious boycott of Israel – despite a recent European Court ruling that this amounts to unlawful discrimination. Peter Prager (August) loses no opportunity to trumpet his membership of this deplorable organisation – he ought to hang his head in shame. Coming as it does from a Jewish group, it has a particularly adverse effect on Israel's legitimacy and it also fuels anti-Semitism.

To berate Israel for its failure to provide Israeli Arabs with air-raid shelters is the height of hypocrisy. Many of them welcome casualties, as it provides them with propaganda value. Furthermore, they are not the target and stand on rooftops cheering when rockets rain down on Israeli towns and when these stray and hit Arab houses – that too is Israel's fault! Israeli Arabs bear no allegiance to the Jewish state and consider themselves Palestinian, but would not want to live there and demand all the benefits that Israeli citizenship bestows.

Admittedly, Arab towns and villages have a problem with their infrastructures, accruing huge deficits because few of

them pay taxes and building shelters is hardly a priority for them. They have their own mayors who are appointed from within. The authorities are reluctant to intervene because of the international outcry this would provoke. The only thing the Israeli High Court can do is to appoint an Israeli professional as acting mayor to sort out the shambles, but all he can do is battle nepotism, which is rife in clannish societies, and try and convince people that paying local taxes is in their own interest. Driving through Arab areas, you see virtual palaces springing up that would put many Israeli homes to shame. However, they tend not to take pride in their surroundings beyond their own homes and you hardly ever see any trees or flowers and streets are strewn with trash. This has a lot to do with their culture. Should any reader brand me a racist simply for telling the truth, so be it!

Rubin Katz, London NW11

Sir – We have all become accustomed to being told by the media that Israel is to blame for all the difficulties that Arabs are facing. Thus it is a great relief to find that the 2009 *Arab Human Development Report*, which draws on contributions from more than 100 Arab scholars, puts the blame fairly and squarely on the way various Arab governments treat their own citizens.

The Report identifies the urgent need for Arab governments to provide 'guarantees on universal human rights and freedoms – especially those of women, better protection for the environment, tackling poverty and hunger and expanding access to affordable health services'. The UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) noted that the Report highlighted that in six Arab countries there was an 'outright ban on the formation of political parties, while restrictions on political activities and civic organizations in other countries often amount to *de facto* prohibition... National security measures such as the declaration of emergency law often serve as a pretext to suspend basic rights, exempt rulers from constitutional limitations, and afford security agencies sweeping powers...'. Pointing to the poverty and hunger despite the comparative affluence in the region, the Report said that one in five people live on less than \$2 per day, below the internationally recognized poverty line, but stated that a more accurate estimate would be that '20 per cent of Arabs live in poverty' (*UN News*, 21 July 2009).

Dr T. Scarlett Epstein OBE
Hove, Sussex

Sir – Peter Prager must feel proud he is a member of Jews for Justice to Palestinians as some sort of super-class of Jew. Good luck to him! But what puzzles me is why he should think anybody else is interested. My late parents – refugees from Vienna – quickly learnt the lesson that in the UK one does not discuss one's personal political opinions. Shame that Mr Prager never learned the same lesson.

Peter Simpson, Jerusalem

Sir – I take issue with Peter Prager and the Merkin sisters who are spending time and effort defending the Israeli Arabs. May I suggest that there is virtually no emigration to the rich – or indeed the not-so-rich – Arab states, as I guess it is realised that the welcome would be lukewarm or less – even if they *could* gain entry. In none of these Arab countries would they enjoy more freedom than they do in Israel.

I also have to take issue with A. K. Mikkelsen, who believes the AJR is in favour of Netanyahu and Likud. I wonder what his opinion is based on.

Another point I'd like to raise is the prevalence of articles and letters in the magazine concerned with Germany and Austria. It feels the letters written by Rubin Katz are a voice in the wilderness.

On a lighter note, I smiled when looking at the headline for this month's AJR concert in Watford: 'German and Austrian operetta'. Difficult to imagine that there will be no excerpts in the programme from *Die Csardasfuerstin* or *Graefin Mariza* by Imre Kalman or from the operettas of Pal Abraham or Viktor Jacoby. At the risk of provoking adverse comments, I would also like to mention *The Merry Widow* and *The Land of Smiles* by the Hungarian-born Ferenc Lehár. These operettas might be described as Viennese – but certainly not German, or indeed Austrian.

Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath, Herts

LETTER FROM JERUSALEM

Sir – I was interested to read (July) that Bertha Leverton is to emigrate to Israel. I made the same move recently to join my children, who made *aliya* during the 80s. I have, however, retained my subscription to your journal as there are always interesting articles in it concerning Israel, especially Jerusalem, where I now live.

For instance, last month there was a fascinating article on the beautiful Botanical Gardens by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson. I have since become a member of the Gardens.

Then, I am an inveterate reader of the numerous plaques here. On reading one regarding the abduction and murder of Alexander Rubowitz, I wondered where I could find out more about this horrible incident. Well, in the July issue there is a review of the book by David Cesarani about it. The only problem is where I would be able to buy this book.

Then there are frequent references to the *Arandora Star* and *Dunera* incidents, in which my late father, Martin Sulzbacher, was involved. In your obituary of Hannah Striesow, you state that her husband was a lucky survivor of the torpedoed *Arandora Star*. She was then able to claim she had given permission for him to be sent overseas. In our case, my poor mother was not even aware her husband had been on the *Arandora Star*. At the time, she was stuck in the Isle of Man with us poor children. Never mind 'giving permission'! He was sent to Australia on the *Dunera* as described in the article 'Dunera Boys'. Please continue to send me copies of your wonderful journal.

Max Sulzbacher, Jerusalem

GASTRONOMIC MEMORIES

Sir – Anthony Grenville's reference to Ackerman's chocolates (August) brings back nostalgic and gastronomic memories of the nearby, irreplaceable Cosmo Restaurant.

Gerald Holm, London NW3

'GOD ON TRIAL'

Sir – I hadn't wanted to enter into a slanging match with Peter Phillips. However, I cannot let the matter rest.

First, regarding the Jewish 'race' to which he so proudly belongs, this is a hotly disputed issue taking the Jewish people as a whole. No one who has been to Israel will have failed to notice that Jews of all shades and social characteristics abound there. There just is no such thing as a pure Jewish race, as there have been outsiders coming to join our group from the earliest days of our existence. But, if left to Reform and the Liberals, the Jewish 'race' would have got diluted even more as no one – not even Peter Phillips – can deny. Moreover, 'belonging' to a certain race is an accident of birth and nothing to be proud of.

I was once asked by a non-Jewish lady what I would do if a child of mine were to marry a black person and I replied that I wouldn't mind in the least, provided that person was an observant, practising Jew.

If left entirely in the hands of the Liberal or Reform Jews, the whole ideal of Zion and a Jewish home in the Land of Israel would long ago have sunk into oblivion. I have in my possession some Liberal prayer books from pre-war Germany which prove my point. These people were bending over backwards to make what they considered a favourable impression on the 'goyim'. Alas, they were to learn the hard way what being a Jew entails.

It was only after the establishment of the State of Israel that the Reform and Liberals tried desperately to jump on the bandwagon and gain a foothold and recognition there. They had suddenly turned into Zionists!

As for Peter Phillips's 'feeling of belonging', in my opinion it is nothing but worthless sentimentality if not accompanied by observance of the *mitzvot* such as, for example, *Kashrut*.

In order for Peter Phillips to extend his knowledge of Judaism, I suggest he try Project Seed, which should be very rewarding. Their phone number is 020 8958 0820.

(Mrs) Margarete Stern, London NW3

OUT OF SIGHT

Sir – Leafing through the February issue of your erudite journal, I noticed that the redoubtable Rubin Katz puts himself to the right of Ghengis Khan, but he doesn't say *how* far. I can easily trump that. I have always maintained that I am so far to the right of Ghengis as to be completely out of sight!

Frank Bright
Martlesham Heath, Suffolk

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

With remarkable vigour and dedication, two Russian-born women have brought new life to the work of gifted Czech painter, poet and librettist Peter Kien, who died in Auschwitz aged 25. A poignant exhibition celebrating his work continues this month in the grim setting of the Czech former ghetto and Nazi transit camp, Terezin, in honour of what would have been Kien's 90th birthday. The exhibition, **Franz Peter Kien – I Think, Love and Hate in Colours, in Forms!**, is curated by Elena Makarova. An extensive catalogue, detailing Kien's early life in the former Sudetenland town of Varnsdorf, was written by Ira Rabin to accompany the exhibition.



Peter Kien: drawing of Viktor Ullmann

Much of Peter Kien's extensive work, painted in Terezin's technical drawing office, where he was director, is in the Expressionist style. An energy flows through his work, as though he is grasping the life which for him will prove a fleeting moment. Using stolen paper, Kien drew and painted the people around him in the camp. A drawing of his wife Ilse betrays the fear and anxiety she inevitably felt. His drawings of camp life, including those of the theatrical entertainment permitted

in Terezin, are said to be invaluable testimony as to the true nature of Terezin – an inhuman concentration camp rather than the 'show-case' Jewish settlement which fooled the gullible Red Cross.

In 1943-44 Kien wrote the libretto to Viktor Ullmann's one-act chamber opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, a subversive work which led to the deaths of both in Auschwitz.

Whitechapel Gallery likes to attract artists local and international. The latest one to feature under the all-encompassing light of the refurbished gallery is American artist **Elizabeth Peyton**. Her often miniature mood paintings are quite derivative of David Hockney, but the reflective pose she favours suggests a melancholy mood, particularly in her images from French literature. The line drawings have more immediacy, though.

Walking in my Mind at the Hayward Gallery features the work of ten international artists. It explores their imagination through immersive large-scale installation art. Yoshimoto Nara's *My Drawing Room* is a life-size recreation of the artist's youth in the form of a cabin filled with the paraphernalia of his early memories. This includes battered toys, crayons and ripped-up drawings – a reflection of his days as a solitary student artist, rock music blaring from a stereo and Japanese anime art on the walls. This perfectly encapsulates a moment: you can almost see the artist as a child in that space.

Yayoi Kusama uses her experience of recurring hallucinations to generate a striking installation of wall-to-ceiling red and white polka dots comprising huge misshapen inflatables. We explore the 'dizzy, empty hypnotic feeling' of the artist's universe.

Thomas Hirschhorn's *Cave-manman* re-creates a cave out of cardboard and brown packaging tape.

Entering this cardboard labyrinth, you encounter foil-covered shop dummies, film posters and pages of political tracts, all connected to dynamite sticks, making you wonder if it will all explode!

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

The madness recorded

1938: HITLER'S GAMBLE

by Giles MacDonogh

Constable, 2009, 416 pp., £20 hardback

This is certainly a book that needed to be written. Although much of the information has appeared elsewhere, this is perhaps the first time, at least in English, that someone has chosen to draw together, on such a huge scale and under one cover, all the significant elements of 1938.

The real problem is that the author has, in fact, written two books. One, which I shall call 'Book I', is the traditional material – well set out and covering the political, military and diplomatic story of the Anschluss and Munich. The other, 'Book II', can be properly described only in the words of Lucy Davidowitz as 'The War Against the Jews', with special emphasis on the conduct of that war in Austria – the Anschluss, Kristallnacht and all the months in between. And, although the two books present themes that are intimately interwoven, the themes are separate.

The reason for the emphasis on Vienna is contained in a moving epilogue, detailing the family of the author's great-grandmother and her descendants, the Zimmers and the Zweibecks.

So what makes 1938 such a watershed? The cataclysmic changes of 1938 are concisely described in the four-page introduction. At the beginning of the year, the German army still had a degree of independence. With the exception of the Saar and the Rhineland (indisputably German territories), Hitler had not yet crossed an international frontier and the Jews of Nazi Germany, however much persecuted, were still largely in possession of their properties and businesses. By the end of the year, everything had changed dramatically. Hitler was the undisputed leader of the armed forces; the Anschluss and the 'diplomatic' seizure of the Sudetenland (with Western compliance) at Munich had hugely changed the balance of power. The defence lines of the rump of Czechoslovakia were untenable. And the Jews were largely pauperised by 'Aryanisation' and, in the case of the Austrian Jews, large-scale plunder, with Kristallnacht destroying much of their communal life.

With regard to 'Book I', the familiar story is told with close attention to detail. Most of the 'usual suspects' are here: the browbeating of Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden; Mussolini's reply, signalling his abandonment of Austria, on hearing of Schuschnigg's intention to defy Hitler by holding a plebiscite, 'C'e un errore'; and the British government's answer to Schuschnigg's desperate plea

for support – 'Her Majesty's Government cannot guarantee protection' (France, on the day, not unusually, didn't have a government).

The same depressingly familiar stories continue throughout the book – the abandonment of the Czechs told blow by blow and the wind taken out of the sails of the German opposition to Hitler (in the form of a *coup d'état* should he actually go to war) by Chamberlain's arrival at Bad Godesberg. The inability of the Western military chiefs to add – 60 French divisions ready on 30 September with a further 40 shortly afterwards, together with Britain, and a highly trained and motivated Czech army of some 32 divisions, plus, we now know, 8 Russian divisions, which had received last-minute permission to pass through Rumania into Czechoslovakia, against a total of 35 German divisions – is one of the most inexplicable miscalculations of this sorry tale.

The subtitle of this book is incorrect. Hitler took at least three gambles. First, in the case of Austria, he gambled on non-intervention, including, crucially, that of Italy. Second, he gambled on the inability of other sources of power – e.g. the army – to mount an effective opposition. And third, he gambled on the desperate attempts by England and France to avoid war. Benes alone, he knew, would not fight.

When we come to 'Book II', however, we realise that more than one frontier was crossed on 12 March 1938. What took place in Austria in those first few weeks was a paroxysm of barbarism, a spontaneous explosion (not, seemingly, ordered from above!) of brutal violence, the like of which had not been seen before even in Nazi Germany. Here, everything is meticulously recorded, not just the pavement scrubbing (you can read the *Telegraph's* famous correspondent Eric Gedye and his description of the 'heartless grinning crowds in the Graben' watching a well-known Jewish surgeon having acid poured over his hands), but also some 'refinements', such as forcing detainees to spit into each other's faces and the compulsory eating of excrement.

Some of the most vivid writing deals with the frantic attempts to leave during the first few days, including the brilliant account by the playwright Carl Zuckmayer of his own exit, which he accomplished by adopting the mannerisms of his famous creation, the 'Captain of Kopenik'.

There are small irritations. How many English-speaking readers, for instance, will automatically understand that RAM (Reichsaussenminister) refers to Ribbentrop? So why not say 'Foreign Minister'?

There are also omissions. The lack of a bibliography is unhelpful, though there

are copious notes with each chapter. In the account of those who were hugely involved in getting Jews out, especially the children, there is no mention of Rabbi Dr Schonfeld, who alone brought out about 1,000 children (and many adults). Nor of Mrs Waismuller, wife of a Dutch Catholic banker, who went down to Vienna armed with 600 visas to confront Eichmann, suffering considerable personal humiliation (a night in the cells of the Metropol plus a strip search). But she took out the first 600 children from Vienna on 10 December 1938.

There is also no reference to the best account of what it was like to be a prisoner of the SS during Kristallnacht: Hans Keller's *Music, Closed Societies and Football*. The BBC nearly lost its most prestigious music critic.

But there is much here that is well told and needs to be known. And it is sometimes difficult to heed the author's warning not to draw a direct line between 1938 and the final destruction: many more abandonments had to happen for that destruction to take place.

W. H. Auden wrote in his poem *September 1, 1939*:

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad ...

The accurate scholarship is here, the offences laid bare, and the madness recorded. I know one shouldn't, but it is very tempting on reading all this to write: '1938: Final Solution Straight On'.

Fred Barschak

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY SEPTEMBER 2009

Sun 6 'Klezmer in the Park 2009' For the first time ever, seven of Britain's most famous klezmer bands will perform on one stage. **From 1.00 to 6.00 pm at the bandstand in Regent's Park.** Free of charge. Introduced by comedian, actor and Yiddishist David Schneider

Thur 24 Dr Nikolaus Wachsmann, 'Before Auschwitz: The Birth of the Nazi Concentration Camps' Wiener Library, 6.30 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

CLUB 43

A NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Following the sad death of our Chairman, Hans Seelig, and in the absence of a successor to him, it is our intention to continue the Monday evening lectures for the time being.

We re-commence our lectures on 7 September, with further meetings on 14 and 21 September. Speakers for all these dates will be available although at this stage we are unable to provide the exact titles of the lectures.

We look forward to welcoming you back on 7 September.

Ernst Flesch, 020 7624 7740

Leni Ehrenbergh, 020 7286 9698

A moving historical document

LETTERS FROM EAST GERMANY,
1946-1951

by Albert Schaefer-Ast

Rochart, 2008, translated by

Amanda Price, edited and introduced

by John Buck, 80 pp. paper

Albert Schaefer-Ast was a popular artist known throughout Germany for watercolour paintings of flowers, animals and insects, book illustrations and humorous drawings. This slim volume of letters and artwork transports us to life in the Soviet-controlled zone of postwar Germany. An informative introduction and 'Who's who' help the reader to follow the content of the letters. They and the line drawings – in particular one of the artist sitting in bed wearing a very thick coat, hat and gloves – poignantly convey the difficulties of attempting to survive in sometimes freezing conditions (down to -31° Centigrade) with insufficient food.

Schaefer-Ast's second wife Steffie (née Nathan) was Jewish. They were compelled to divorce by the Nazi regime in the late 1930s, his anti-fascist stance having drawn negative attention along with his marriage to a Jew. Their daughter Susanne came to the UK by Kindertransport, organised by the Quakers, in May 1939. Her mother managed to obtain a domestic visa and left Germany for the UK in July 1939.

Keeping up a correspondence in those years required persistence – many obstacles prevented letters arriving – but it was clearly of great importance to the writer to feel in touch with Steffie and Susanne, hearing about aspects of their daily lives and sharing his own. He too, in an echo of Jewish prisoners – and of other prisoners of the Nazis – pleads for parcels of food and warm clothing.

Schaefer-Ast cherished the hope of his family being reunited in Germany after the war, his optimism despite everything indicated by his writing to his daughter in January 1951: '[T]he main thing is that you are happy and if your world collapses – a lark will always arise out of it, the cloud with the silver lining.' He did not, however, expect Steffie and Susanne to return while living conditions were so poor; they visited briefly in July 1951. Afterwards he wrote: '[N]othing can separate us ... the future will bring us together.' He also continued to hope that Peter, the son of his first marriage, had survived the war. Neither of these hopes was fulfilled as Schaefer-Ast died of a heart attack in September 1951 aged 61, never knowing that Peter – 'missing in the East' – had been killed in a battle against Soviet troops in June 1944.

Barbara Dresner-Dorritty

In July 2008 I received my Land Army medal.

I left Vienna on the Kindertransport on 1 August 1939, arriving at London's Liverpool Street Station two days later. Twenty-three boys and four girls, including myself, were taken from the train and put on a coach for Hale Nurseries in Fordingbridge, Hampshire. We worked in large greenhouses, debudding flowers and tomatoes and removing seeds from white lilies. Many of the flowers were sent off for export. We clocked in for work from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday. We were not paid. Our work was expected to subsidise the cost of others coming over as well as our own costs.

A medal at last!

After six months a Children's Welfare Officer arrived. He stopped our work on the basis that we were being used illegally. I had left behind my entire starving family and had hoped to send them money. The situation was hopeless. All I had were the clothes I stood up in. My missing suitcase turned up two months later, battered and lacking several items. Eva Levitsky and I, the two youngest, were handed one-way tickets to Swimbridge railway station in north Devon. We joined 100 Jewish refugee girls and boys at Bydown Farm. There, we worked on the land in various ways, including digging and harvesting the

potato crop. We worked mornings and listened to complicated English lectures in the afternoons. There was no pay. I had arrived at Bydown Farm in December 1939. Two years later I went to Barnstaple Art College for a year, working as an au pair without pay.

Altogether, I was a Land Girl for two years, 1939 to 1941. I thought I wouldn't get a medal, never having had a uniform. I discovered a year ago that uniforms were issued only after I had left.

I am pleased that I contributed to the war effort and delighted to be among those receiving the Women's Land Army medal.

Lili Pollard

WHERE WERE YOU ON D-DAY?

The 65th anniversary of the Normandy invasion brought back for me memories of 6 June 1944. At that time, I was an NCO in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, stationed in Rutland and billeted in the 'pork-pie town' of Melton Mowbray, from which we travelled daily to the nearby army engineering workshops in Old Dalby. I was lucky with that posting because the Rutland countryside enabled me to enjoy a lot of rambling, which has always been my favourite pastime, particularly in hilly terrain.

It used to be said that for every fighting man at the front you needed

ten men to support him. As a skilled welder, I was one of those many backroom boys employed, from about 1941 onwards, on, among other things, preparing military equipment such as tanks for wading duties, as eventually utilised during the invasion. We also had to deal with troop-carrying barges which needed minor modifications. Needless to say, we had no idea where or when this equipment would be needed.

Among our regular duties were overnight fire watch rotas and on the night of 6 June 1944 it was my turn to head up the team. That night turned out

to be a most exciting event, enhanced by a beautifully clear sky suddenly filled with droning masses of planes, each towing a glider. From my experience when stationed in south-east London during the Blitz with the 137 Company AMPC (the Pioneer Corps), I was apprehensive at so much going on above me – though I was greatly relieved when I saw the RAF emblem clearly displayed on the planes. Naturally, I very much wanted to know what their mission was.

It felt like an endless wait for the BBC Morning News about the Allied invasion – D-Day.

Ken Shindler

The 40th annual BBY picnic

Ayouth group meets once a year. On this occasion, it is in a beautiful garden belonging to a member. Champagne is being quaffed to celebrate an 80th birthday. Most people are in their seventies and eighties, but there is a sprinkling of children and grandchildren.

They are all ex-members of the Otto Hirsch chapter of B'nai B'rith Youth, whose parent lodge featured such pillars of the German-Jewish community as the late Dr Leo Baeck. It is one of the few Jewish groups which welcomed members from all strands of the community – Orthodox, Reform and Liberal – and even had members of Sephardi extraction.

The youth chapter had a number of defining activities. It met in premises provided free of charge by the West London Synagogue, but many of its activities were elsewhere: members went on walks, bicycle rides and did good works in the wider Jewish community. The group, whose ages ranged from post-teen into the late twenties, used the quasi-sibling relationship as a centre for their social life. Austrian, Czech, Polish, Dutch and French refugees augmented the original Germans.

After some years the chapter dissolved

as the original brothers and sisters concentrated on their own families to the exclusion of group activities, but the friendships formed were life-long and nostalgia prevailed. In due course, the offspring of some of the original members formed the nucleus of a new youth chapter, still active today.

So great was the sentimental attachment felt by many members that when one of them, Freddy Haas, decided to trace alumni with a view to organising a reunion, he found no difficulty in contacting a large proportion of them. The reunion was in the form of a picnic in a park in rural Buckinghamshire and was a resounding success. A picnic has been held every year for 40 years. Most have been located in the same venue, though the occasional one has accepted an invitation to private gardens belonging to a member. A feature of the earlier picnics was a post-prandial country walk, engaged in by the more sprightly of the crowd. There was no walk this year: the members are aging.

No doubt the aged youths of the BBY will continue to assemble for their annual picnic for many years yet!

Frank Beck

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Peter Hart at 95: A life

Peter Hart, who has just celebrated his 95th birthday, was born and educated in Berlin. In 1933 he left Germany as a teenager when the Nazis forced Orenstein & Koppel to terminate his apprenticeship after two and a half years with this Jewish firm.

Peter entered the hotel industry, working in France and Italy until 1938. Back in Paris, he was contacted by Baron Robert de Rothschild and asked to go to Martigny-les-Bains to open a retraining centre for 200 German and Austrian refugees.

At the outbreak of war, first interned as an 'enemy alien', then handed over to the Germans after the invasion, he eventually reached the 'free zone', only to be arrested again by the Vichy authorities and conscripted into the army as a 'travailleur étranger'.

Shortly before the Germans occupied the whole of France following the Allied landing in North Africa, he managed to go into hiding before crossing the Pyrenees into Spain. Arrested again, he



was interned, then worked for the American Joint Distribution Committee and the Quakers in Madrid on relief work after they had obtained his release from the Miranda internment camp.

All Peter wanted to do was to join the British army. His wish was fulfilled when the British embassy obtained his visa and sent him to Gibraltar and then by convoy to Britain, where he arrived in 1943.

Following a spell in the Pioneer Corps, he was transferred to the Intelligence Corps for secret war work and later attached to the Foreign Office, where he ended up re-educating German prisoners-of-war, after having been their prisoner in France.

Peter's wartime story *Journey into Freedom* has been well reviewed in this journal and elsewhere.

Demobbed in 1947, he worked at the Howard Hotel. Seeing people having difficulty in finding hotel rooms yet noticing empty rooms at the hotel where he was working, he opened the first-ever Hotel Reservation Service, Hotac,

BRIEF ENCOUNTER



While waiting for the Normandy D-Day remembrance service to begin, AJR member Ken Ward walked up to Prince Charles, introduced himself as a D-Day veteran, and thanked him for the support of the Royal Family. Prince Charles, Ken tells us, asked him which tank he had been on, thanked him for bravely fighting the Nazis 'for our liberty', and shook him warmly by the hand.

specialising in on-arrival bookings.

For 22 years, Peter and his wife Lili, to whom he has been happily married for 64 years, arranged monthly outings for the Leo Baeck Lodge and he is the Lodge Liaison person for the permanent Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum. Peter and Lili have one daughter, Monica.

Tea by the sea

Anthony Grenville's piece in the July issue, 'The Eye of the Storm', had me in tears. It connected me to the epilogue in my (unpublished) memoirs.

When the Allied invasion of Europe began, one of its aims was to knock out V1 and V2 launching pads on the northern coast of France, the shortest distance to England, their prime target. Once that had been achieved, England's home front was free from raids. As the battle to liberate Europe from the Nazi scourge continued, I began to read reports of the uneven progress into Germany. When the Rhine was crossed, in and around Ludwigshafen, my hometown before the war, I was there every step of the way, looking for familiar faces and places in newsreels and pictures in the papers – dispirited German civilians and defeated soldiers, their arms held high in defeat, when, only a short time earlier, their arms had been raised in praise of the man who had now brought them low.

When the war was long over, Brighton was awash with students learning English, Germans among them. Walking on the sea front, I heard them speaking German among themselves. Ever curious, I walked as near as I could to them so as to catch what they were saying and what kind of dialect they were speaking. But why, after so long, did I expect them to alleviate my anger with debates on how their parents

and their extended families had coped, how and when they knew they'd been duped, the very moment they had felt remorse? I longed to know, wishing I could talk about these things with them there and then.

One day I was having tea on Brighton sea front. A man of about 40 sat at the table next to me. He was bald on top, with what hair he had falling down to his shoulders. He was smoking a cigarette, exhaling towards the sea. A not-so-down-and-out asked him for a cigarette. 'Sure!', he said expansively, his body leaning forward, the packet of cigarettes open for the not-so-down-and-out to help himself. Then he clicked open his lighter, putting the flame to the cigarette between the other man's lips.

I had a suspicion that the bald man was German because the 'r' in 'sure' had that guttural sound a lot of Germans used to make when speaking English.

'What is your home town in Germany?', I asked.

'München Bayern,' he replied.

'How long have you been in England?'

'A year or so.'

'I am from Ludwigshafen on the Rhine,' I declared.

'Oh really, and how long have you been in England?'

'Decades and decades.' Then, more honestly, I added: 'Since 1939.'

He threw me a sharp look and continued: 'I haven't been home for years. Busy travelling the world earning my living on the way plumbing and on building sites. All sorts of casual work.'

'A lot of people do that these days,' I suggested.

'No, that wasn't my reason for leaving home.'

'What was then?', I asked.

'At the end of the war', he replied, 'I was eleven years old. One day, looking for a toy, I found a shoebox full of photographs. Sorting through them, I found one of my father standing on the edge of a pit full of corpses with a gun in his hand. Suddenly, I understood the silence between my parents – and my father's drunkenness! As I grew older, I knew what that picture was about. And I grew silent. When I was 16 and home from school one day, my father was sitting at the kitchen table, a half-full bottle of brandy in front of him. By supper time, it was empty. Slowly, my father slid under the table and died. After his funeral, I left home. I've never been back – not even for my mother's funeral!'

The bald man and I have something in common.

Rose Cannan

INSIDE the AJR

'Another wonderful holiday in St Annes'



Members from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle enjoyed, among many other activities, an amateur operatic production of *The Likes of Us* at the Lowther Theatre and an outing to the Lake District.

'I would like to thank Ruth, Susanne and the AJR for allowing me to enjoy another wonderful holiday in St Annes. I have been seven times on this AJR holiday and hope to be well enough for 2010' - *Susi Linton*

Ilford: Humorous anecdotes

Fred Rosner recalled humorous anecdotes told by mainly Jewish German and Viennese singers and conductors. Some of the jokes lost their impact when translated into English, he admitted. *Meta Roseneil*
Next meeting: 2 Sept. David Lawson, 'The Ostrava Jewish Community'



The incredible Beate Klug Beate Klug MBE, pictured at an Edgware meeting with AJR Southern Groups Co-ordinator Hazel Beiny, spoke about her trials and tribulations through ill health and blindness and how, despite these obstacles, she raised a family, set up one of the first homeopathic clinics, and became a founder member of the Anne Frank Education Trust.
Next meeting: 15 Sept: David Merron, 'The Future of Kibbutz Life';
22 Sept: Outing to Freud Museum

Pinner: The remarkable life of Arieh Handler

Aubrey Rose spoke about the book he was writing on the life of this unsung hero. Born in 1915, Arieh Handler grew up in Magdeburg, Germany and emigrated to Palestine in 1935. After Kristallnacht he became involved in rescue and survival

and founded the Zionist youth movement B'nai Akiva. *Walter Weg*

Next meeting: 3 Sept: Alan Bilgora, 'Jewish Opera Singers';
22 Sept: Outing to Freud Museum

Ealing: The history of Kitchener Camp

Prof Clare Ungerson gave a most interesting talk about her research into Kitchener Camp, set up at the beginning of the war to house refugee men in transit for the USA and elsewhere. *Marianne Black*

Next meeting: 1 Sept. Howard Falksohn, 'The Wiener Library'



Leeds CF Sunshine Garden Party

A large, jolly group basking in the sunshine in Pippa and Norman Landey's garden in the pretty village of Thorner, we heard about the St Anne's holiday and the Northern gathering in Leeds and tested our brains with a light-hearted quiz. A delightful afternoon tea followed. *Barbara Cammerman*

Wembley Social Get-together

We had a lively exchange on, *inter alia*, the sad state of affairs in the African continent, with its high levels of poverty and crime, and on today's youth, who complain a lot about boredom. Needless to say, Myrna's catering efforts were much appreciated. *Irene Stanton*

Next meeting: 9 Sept: Social Get-together;
22 Sept: Outing to Freud Museum

HGS: Visit of rabbis from Netherlands

Rabbi Harry Jacobi and his son Rabbi Richard Jacobi gave a most interesting talk on the history of Dutch Jewry. We were then shown on a screen a number of Rembrandt's paintings, all of them with a Jewish theme. *Harriet Hodes*

HGS: Crisis of the kibbutzim

Our speaker, David Merron, left his kibbutz on the Gaza border and returned to England when he felt the kibbutz movement was moving away from its original ideals. *Laszlo Roman*

Next meeting: 14 Sept. 'Peter Suchet - His Amazing Family'

Welwyn Regional Tea Some 60 of us heard with great pleasure Peter Suchet's talk about his family. Peter himself works in advertising and meets 'many interesting people'. We ended the afternoon with tea/coffee, delicious savoury rolls, cakes and, of course, once more chatting to 'new and old faces'. Thanks to all who organised this lovely afternoon. *Hanne Freedman*

Essex: The story of Leslie Kleinman

New member Leslie Kleinman, in Auschwitz towards the end of the war, gave us a very interesting talk about his experiences. Now living in Westcliffe, Leslie also tells his story to local schools. *Larry Lisner*

Next meeting: Esther Rinkoff, 'Israel Revisited'

ANY MEMBERS OR CONTACTS ON THE ISLE OF MAN?

Francis Masserick, a Second Generation AJR member living on the Isle of Man, would like to be in touch with any First, Second or Third Generation members or contacts there.

Please get in touch with Francis on 01624 890076 or at gommemasserick@manx.net

South London: A new vocabulary

Some two dozen of us gathered at Streatham's Liberal Synagogue for a delicious lunch and to hear the Bank of England's Tom Pike explain hedge funds, securitisation, leverage, derivatives, etc. A most informative session. *Edith Jayne*

Temple Fortune: The history of Pears soap

Andrea Cameron told us the fascinating history of Pears soap, which, curiously, is now made in India and exported to England. *Evelyn Frank*

Next meeting: 17 Sept. Rosette Wolf

Brighton & Hove Sarid: A musical tour de force

Alan Bilgora gave us a rare opportunity to hear a number of famous arias sung by world-renowned Jewish opera singers, most of whom began their careers singing in synagogues. Not only a musical thrill but also historically enlightening. *Scarlett Epstein*

Next meeting: 14 Sept. Social Get-together

North London: Impressive work by WJR

World Jewish Relief's Paul Stein gave us a presentation with slides on WJR's work. Difficult to believe there are Jewish communities in Ukraine suffering such poverty and depredation, which WJR aims to alleviate. Equally impressive is their work in Georgia and Darfur. *Herbert Haberberg*

Next meeting: 24 Sept. Joint outing with Hendon to West Lodge

Welwyn GC: In search of the 'Old Country'

Guests from Radlett shared with us Martin Calms's 'Memories of the Old Country'. Martin had travelled widely throughout Poland and neighbouring countries in search of what is left of the *shtetl*. Illustrating his talk with evocative pictures, he found synagogues tended to be best preserved when they served a public purpose where present congregations could not support renovation. *Fred Simms*

Next meeting: 10 Sept. Social Get-together at home of Monica Rosenbaum



Scotland Regional Get-together

Pictured: Sydney Mayer, Michael Sankie, George Taylor from Glasgow

Some 45 members from Scotland and the North of England met at the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Community Centre for their annual summer Get-together. Members discussed in groups 'Divided Loyalties', 'The Second Generation', or 'The Importance of Preserving Our Heritage'. After a superb lunch, we had musical entertainment by Gica Loening and a beautifully illustrated presentation by Edward Green on 'The Queen's Jewellery'. *Philip Mason*

West Midlands (Birmingham): Another delightful occasion

Over 20 of us enjoyed Eileen and Ernst Aris's warm hospitality for our Summer Luncheon. We discussed our future programme with Myrna and socialised for a very pleasant 2-3 hours. We thanked Eileen and Ernst for yet another delightful occasion. *Philip Lesser*

Hendon Two by Two

Walter Woyda played us a recording of the Richard Rodgers musical *Two by Two*. Danny Kaye had a prominent part in the

show, which was performed in 1970-71 only on Broadway.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 24 Sept. Outing with North London to West Lodge

OUTING TO HOUSE OF LORDS

Monday 5 October 2009, 11.30 am

A unique opportunity to visit the House of Lords with a tour conducted by Lord Janner of Braunstone

Starting at 11.30 am, followed by lunch in the River Restaurant, when Black Rod will be delighted to meet members

Please note: there is a lot of walking involved. Members will be expected to make their own way to and from the House of Lords and will be responsible for the cost of their lunch in the River Restaurant

To book your place, please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070. Places are on a first-come first-served basis



Our friends in the North Pictured: Suzanne Ripton, Arek Hersh, Ibi Ginsberg, Margaret Kagan. Over 80 of us gathered in Leeds for the annual Northern Get-together and Kinder Celebration. We dispersed into discussion groups, possibly the most popular of which was one led by Imran Manzoor, who founded a human rights and social justice project in Bradford, including taking groups of Muslim youth to visit Auschwitz. After lunch, Anita Parma spoke about the Holocaust Educational Trust. Thanks to everyone from the AJR, in particular Susanne, for such an enjoyable event. *Walter Knoblauch*

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)

Corinne Oppenheimer 0121 705 9529

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

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

KINDLY NOTE THAT FROM

16 SEPTEMBER 2009

WE WILL HAVE OUR SPEAKER AT 12 NOON AND LUNCH AT 12.45 PM

Wednesday 16 September 2009

Sara Hardy

BBC documentary 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 7 September 2009

Erich Reich

'Unusual Findings in Kindertransport History'

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

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am – 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

September Afternoon Entertainment

Tue	1	CLOSED
Wed	2	Jack Davidoff
Thur	3	Jen Gould
Mon	7	KT LUNCH – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	8	CLOSED
Wed	9	Margaret Opdahl
Thur	10	William Smith
Mon	14	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	15	CLOSED
Wed	16	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	17	Ronnie Goldberg
Mon	21	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue	22	CLOSED
Wed	23	Douglas Poster
Thur	24	Gayathrie Peiris & Bill Patrick
Mon	28	CLOSED – Yom Kippur
Tue	29	CLOSED
Wed	30	Stefan & Arjan

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

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

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

MONDAY MOVIE MATINEE AT DAY CENTRE

From September we will be having a film show after lunch one Monday in every month

For details, please call the Centre on 020 7328 0208

A message from Bertha Leverton

To my many good friends in the AJR, especially the many members of the Kindertransport special interest group which has flourished for several years as an active, constituent part of the AJR:

First, thank you for the beautiful picture frame!

Having decided that my future life, after so many years in Britain, will be best served by joining my family in Israel, I have gone on *aliya*, taking with me wonderful memories of our many meetings over the years as well as of the Kindertransport Reunions – not least the recent 70th – and of so many good friends. You will all remain in my heart for ever.

Do come and visit me in Israel! Call me on the telephone just as if I were still living in Canons Park! The AJR office has all the details.

My love to you all.

Bertha

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

Alweiss/Rosenkovitch on Monday 15 June in London to Lilian and Noam twins, Maya Lea and Zoë Nicole, sisters for Anna, Julia and Ben.

Deaths

Andrews, Serafina (Finnie) passed away on 5 June at the age of 103. Born in Vienna, she and her husband Alec were early members of the Middlesex New Synagogue and founder members of the B'nai B'rith Wembley Jerusalem Lodge.

Harmelin (née Lynfield/Lilienfeld), Hilde, widow of Dr Wilhelm Harmelin. Born Frankfurt 6 February 1914, died peacefully in London 3 May 2009. Deeply missed by her niece Rosemary Preiskel, her nephew-in-law Anthony, her great-nieces Caroline and Katie, and her great-nephew David.

Kadisch, Debora sadly passed away on Thursday 29 July, after much suffering, in her 103rd year. She was a very well-loved lady and will be greatly missed by her daughter Margaret, grandson David, daughter-in-law Pema, great-granddaughter Samantha, and her many good friends.

CLASSIFIED

M. ROGOSNITZKY, 35 years in the Hebrew book business, is looking to buy antiquarian and out-of-print Hebrew & Jewish books/libraries. Tel 0208 455 4112/7645.

Does anyone have back issues of the AJR Journal which they no longer require, or can anyone lend me back issues to copy? I will return them as soon as possible and in both cases pay the postage. Please contact June Smith on 01743 790088.

AJR ANNUAL TEA

AT HILTON HOTEL,
ELTON WAY, WATFORD
13 SEPTEMBER 2009

If you wish to attend, please complete and return to us the form enclosed with this issue of the AJR Journal

AJR TRIP TO ISRAEL

29 November to 8 December 2009

We are arranging a 10-day trip to Israel this November

This will be a fantastic opportunity to visit various places of interest including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Dead Sea and Masada

We are planning to stay at the 4-star Ramat Rachel Hotel in Jerusalem on a half-board basis

Please note that there will be some walking involved

If you wish to go on this trip, please fill in the form enclosed with this issue of the Journal

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OBITUARY

Peter Ross, 1920-2009

Peter Ross, who died in a retirement home in Bath on 30 June, was born Peter Rosenbaum, the son of a businessman in Giessen, near Frankfurt. His family moved to Milan soon after his birth. He had just finished school there when, in 1938, Mussolini, under pressure from Hitler, introduced anti-Jewish laws, and Pietro Rossi, as he then was, was sent by his parents to Britain to study chemistry at Imperial College. But the war interrupted that and Peter (now Ross) joined the Pioneer Corps, and was also involved in dealing with Italian PoWs. Towards the end of the war he worked for the Central Office of Information.



partly because he did not find it easy to delegate, but also because delegation was not really necessary with Peter at the helm. He ran the office computer, but even that was scarcely necessary for he had the most amazing memory: he carried in his head innumerable telephone numbers (even in retirement he still remembered the identity numbers of the soldiers to whom he had at one time distributed pay packets in the Pioneer Corps). He always had time for a chat and gossip and for retailing, at some length, some of the immense stock of anecdotes and jokes he had accumulated in a lifetime.

Following his retirement from U3A, he did voluntary work at the Wiener Library from 2001 until 2006, when his deteriorating eyesight forced him to give that up.

He was very well-read and an assiduous theatre-goer. And he was a genial host and a very good cook.

Peter married Nina Zeitlin, a graphic artist, in 1949. She died in 1977. His second wife, Miriam Layton, a psychotherapist, died in 1984. He leaves a son, a daughter, three grandchildren, three step-children, and seven step-grandchildren.

Ralph Blumenau

After demobilisation, he returned to London to complete his degree, and he then worked for ICI in Manchester for some 15 years, moving on from there to the London branch of the import-export agency Loewenstein & Hecht.

On his retirement in the early 1980s, Peter joined the University of the Third Age (U3A) in London. He described his time there as the most fulfilling period of his life. He taught Italian language and literature, and was for 12 years, until 2000, the U3A Office Manager. The efficient running of the U3A during those years depended almost entirely on him,

SEARCH NOTICES

Aron, Renate was my best friend. We attended Berlin Prinzregentenstrasse synagogue till 1938, then lost contact. Was red-haired like her mother. Her father, an undertaker, was Jewish. Any info pls to Irene Zuckerbraun at aua.doege@t-online.de

Deutsch, Dr Friedrich left Vienna for Australia late 30s. Last known address 22 Roslyn Gdns, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney. Was cousin of my late mother Hilda Zigman, who lived at Heinselmangasse, Vienna 20. After Hilda's escape to England in 1939, her parents were moved to ghetto at Wien 2, Grosse Spiergasse 31 with parents of their daughter-in-law Klara (née Gold). Any info pls to sue1rutherford@btinternet.com

Diamant, Kitty and Hermann Diamant MD, my parents, left Vienna in 1938-39. He was interned at Kitchener Camp; she worked as a domestic in Sandwich. They sailed on *MV Georgic* to New York from Liverpool 30 January 1940. This story corroborated by my father's medical school colleague Joseph Haber and his wife Gisela Jufy Haber, who were married at Kitchener (the first wedding there). Gisela may have worked in a London hospital. Any info pls to Michael Diamant at mdmd@hawaiiian.net

Franzos, Siegfried (Fritz), born 11.11.1890 in Vienna, stockbroker, arrived London 1939. Wife Ilse (née Friedlaender, born 1905, Berlin), lived till 60s at 37 Fairhazel Gardens, London NW6. Any info pls to Gerhard Mandl on ++43 664 48 16 033 or at GMandl@gmx.at

Kuttner/Cutner, Alfred AJEX are campaigning to have Cross on his Normandy war grave corrected to

Star of David. Was paratrooper and German-Jewish refugee, killed 1944. Any info pls to Martin Sugarman on 0208 986 4868 (evenings after 7 pm) or at Martin. Sugarman@westking.ac.uk

Marson, Dr Sylvia Mignon. Born 16.11.1925 Leipzig. In 50s lived Caroline House, Bayswater, London W2. Father Felix Berthold Nathan Rosenfelder (1892-1939). Mother Rosika Colin. Any info pls to jomaier@tiscali.co.uk

Rauchwerger, Eva left Nitra, Czechoslovakia with Kindertransport in 1938 or 1939. Lived with her family in Ecuador till after the war. Later, may have lived in Israel or New Jersey. Any info pls to Alice Hodan Herz at alicehodan@sympatico.ca

Sigman, Adele, Paul Last known address Isabella Vea 11, Budapest. Cousin of Hilda and Serina Zigman, Heinselmangasse, Vienna 20. Any info pls to sue1rutherford@btinternet.com

Siman, Henry Last known address Budapest V, Maria Valeria. Uncle of Hans, Hilda and Serina Zigman, Heinselmangasse, Vienna 20. Any info pls to sue1rutherford@btinternet.com

Tietz, Stefan. I was at school with him in Berlin. I went to England on Kindertransport and now live in California. My maiden name was Salomon. Any info pls to Ilse Eden at ilseeden@hotmail.com

Waldman, Marcus (daughter Lotte/Loti). Was cantor at Olmutz synagogue, Czechoslovakia. Brother of Laura Zigman and Regina Gratz, cousins of Hans, Hilda and Serina Zigman, Heinselmangasse, Vienna 20. Any info pls to sue1rutherford@btinternet.com

AJR REPORT

Michael Newman

Closing payments from the General Settlement Fund

In July, the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism (GSF) began the disbursement of the closing payments from the Fund along the lines of the final quotas agreed by the Fund's Board of Trustees. The GSF was established as part of the Washington Agreement signed in January 2001.

As the GSF was capped at \$210 million, awards were made on a pro-rata basis and the final shares will be 10.56 per cent of the determined losses in the claims-based process, 17.16 per cent in the equity-based process, and 20.74 per cent for insurance policies.

To date, the independent Claims Committee has decided 20,537 of the total of 20,700 applications, containing approximately 120,000 individual claims, and recognised property losses of over \$1.5 billion.

Since 2005, the General Settlement Fund has paid \$139 million to around 14,000 applicants and 4,000 heirs in the form of initial disbursements – so-called advance payments. Approximately 30 per cent of all claims concerned occupational and educational losses, 20 per cent liquidated businesses. The remaining 50 per cent are related to the other categories of property – bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mortgages, moveable property, insurance policies, real estate, insofar as no *in rem* restitution has been granted pursuant to the GSF law, and other losses and damages.

In settling these claims, the in-house research team of the GSF obtained around 70,000 documents from various Austrian archives.

Along with the compensation of so-called slave and forced labourers by the Reconciliation Fund, for whom a total of \$436 million was made available, the Washington Agreement also constituted a package of restitution and compensation measures: the GSF provides, on the one hand, for monetary compensation of property losses and, on the other hand, for *in rem* restitution of seized properties which are publicly owned today. Additionally, \$150 million was set aside for the compensation of seized tenancy rights and disbursed by the National Fund, and further social measures for victims of National Socialism were implemented.

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



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Chortkov remembered

One Friday morning I joined my husband on a trip to Haifa to meet others like him whose parents were originally from a place called Chortkov. Unlike myself and many others, my better half has never paid much attention to his family history, and it was more because of my insistence than his own interest that he agreed to attend the meeting.

Chortkov, which before the Second World War was by turns Polish, Ukrainian and Russian, was once home to a thriving Jewish community of about 7,000. Relations with the local population were good and the Jews prospered, working as traders, merchants, cattle-dealers, etc.

The history of the Jews of the area, also known as Galicia, is mundane in its wretchedness. The Germans invaded and the Jews were herded into ghettos and eventually murdered, either on the spot or after having been deported to one of the nearby concentration camps, notably Belzec. Needless to say, the local population co-operated with the Nazis in murdering their former neighbours.

The area is also distinguished by the very small proportion of its Jews – only about 2 per cent – who survived. Some went into hiding and a handful escaped to the forest and became partisans. My late parents-in-law had left in 1934 for the Land of Israel, having been granted 'certificates' as pioneers because they were members of a Zionist youth movement and had been on a training farm.

But the descendants of that handful of survivors hold fast to what remains of their heritage. Led by Neri and Martha, two energetic women in their seventies, the group meets regularly once a year to remember something that most of them never knew, to share information about what happened and, most importantly, to try and discover more about their own ancestors.

At one point during the meeting a

young man approached our table and thrust a piece of paper into my hand. 'This is a photograph of my grandparents, Shlomo Shachner and Etti Frisch, on their wedding day,' he said. 'My father died 30 years ago and never told me anything about his family. If you or anyone has any information about him, please let me know.' I watched him approach everyone there and repeat the same message. I didn't have the heart to tell him that my connection with Chortkov was tenuous in the extreme.

Time and again I heard people bemoan the fact that they had not asked their parents about life before the war. In Israel when most of them were growing up, parents were preoccupied with earning a living and children did not want to be reminded of their 'diaspora' past. Besides, the general ethos in Israel was that of building a new country and focusing on the future rather than dwelling on the past.

About 100 people from the second, third and fourth generations turned up for the meeting, each one having paid in advance for the privilege. Memorial candles were placed on the tables, which had been laid for the lunch that was to follow. At one point in the memorial ceremony, everyone was asked to light the candles on their table.

Neri gave a short speech about Chortkov and its history, several members of the organising committee read out accounts of the exploits of the local Jewish partisans, most of whom perished, and someone read aloud the verses from *Ezekiel* describing the vision of the dry bones. 'This is exactly our story here in Israel,' he said as he concluded, his voice choked with emotion.

We all sang the Hebrew version of the *Partisan's Song* and *Hatikva*. Then it was time to eat, because no Jewish event is complete without a meal.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Newsround

German Jews support annotated publication of *Mein Kampf*

German-Jewish leaders are backing a renewed effort to publish *Mein Kampf* in Germany for the first time since the war. Under a proposal by Munich historians, the scholarly edition is to carry a critical introduction challenging Hitler's assertions. Stephen Kramer, General Secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said the publication would 'prevent neo-Nazi profiteering' from *Mein Kampf*.

Film on life of athlete Gretel Bergmann opens in Germany

Berlin '36, a film which tells the story of Gretel Bergmann, a German-Jewish high jumper robbed of the opportunity of winning an Olympic gold because she was a Jew, is due to open in Germany this month. Aged 95 and living in New York, Gretel Bergmann is now known as Margaret Lambert. The young immigrant to the USA made two vows – that she would never return to Germany and that she would never speak another word of German. But in 1999 she broke her vows, returning to Germany to attend the dedication of a stadium in her name in her hometown of Laupheim.

New Claims Conference leader appointed

Gregory Schneider has been appointed Executive Vice-President of the Claims Conference. In accepting the position, Mr Schneider emphasised the imperative to address the social welfare needs of Nazi victims and to obtain compensation for Nazi victims who have not yet received payments.

Hundreds of schools to become centres of Holocaust education

Many schools across the UK are to become specialist centres of Holocaust education under a newly launched scheme. According to a report in the *Times Educational Supplement*, the plan forms part of the new £1.5 million Holocaust education project run by London University's Institute of Education. The Holocaust Education Development Programme will provide specialist training for 3,500 teachers – one from every secondary school in England.

Prague exhibition on life of Rabbi Loew opens

A new exhibition at Prague Castle marks the 400th anniversary of the death of Rabbi Yehuda Loew. Rabbi Loew, known as the Maharal of Prague, is remembered for the legend of the Golem, which he is said to have brought to life to protect Prague's Jewish community. The 'Path of Life' exhibition, which focuses on Loew's actual life as well as legends linked to him, includes materials from Prague's Jewish Museum and Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum and will run to 8 November.