

## Anglo-Saxon attitudes

An unexpected spin-off from the Chilcot Inquiry into the invasion of Iraq was the dispute provoked when the suitability of two of the Committee members, Sir Martin Gilbert and Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman, was called into question on the grounds that they were Jews. The initial cause of the controversy was an article by a former British ambassador to Libya, Sir Oliver Miles, in *The Independent on Sunday*, saying that both these eminent historians were Jewish and



that Gilbert had a record of active support for Zionism. Miles seems to have been voicing the typical concerns of a Foreign Office Arabist, concerned at the impact on Arab opinion of the presence of two Jews on a committee of five charged with passing judgment on a Middle Eastern issue.

The attack on the two Jewish academics was then taken up in an article in *The Independent* by Richard Ingrams, who broadened it out to cast doubt on the impartiality and reliability of Jews in political matters generally, by implying that Jews have an overriding loyalty to Israel, if often covert. Ingrams stated as a fact that the attack on Saddam Hussein was initiated by a group of American neo-conservatives (all those named being Jews), mostly 'ardent Zionists' who were 'more concerned with preserving the security of Israel than that of the US'.

The argument that members of the Republican right would sacrifice the security of the USA for that of another nation is, putting it mildly, highly contentious, but Ingrams blithely stated it as fact. Presumably because it is for him a 'fact' that Jews have some inherent and inalienable loyalty to Israel, to which national loyalties will ineluctably be subordinated. 'Given that undeniable fact,' Ingrams continued, 'the

pro-Israel bias of Sir Martin Gilbert and Sir Lawrence Freedman ... is a perfectly respectable point to raise.' By adding Freedman to the list of active pro-Zionists (without evidence), Ingrams gave a collective dimension to his 'anti-Zionist' tirade.

The logic of Ingrams's remarks, such as it is, derives at least indirectly from the familiar conspiracy theories used to denigrate and defame Jews ever since the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, first published in Russia in 1903. According to such fantasy constructs, all Jews worldwide were secretly united in a conspiracy to bring power and influence under their (malignant) control, since they owed allegiance, apparently by genetic predisposition, to some central organisation so shrouded in mystery that it could only be identified by the workings of its hidden hand.

The Jews, it was alleged, used their positions of power in the world of finance and banking to achieve their sinister ends by manipulation. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 gave these ideas a new slant. Ideologues of the far right who hated both Jews and Marxists linked the supposed Jewish hold over the USSR to the efforts of the Communist International to subvert the social and political order in the West, thus holding

Jews responsible for fomenting revolution in Western countries. From this emerged Hitler's notion of 'Judeo-Bolshevism', a key concept in the ideological underpinning of his war of extermination against the Jews.

Ingrams's brand of conspiracy theory does not go to anything like such murderous lengths. It offers a watered-down version, where the state of Israel takes the place of the secret Zionist organisation posited by the *Protocols*, and where the efforts of Jews are assumed

to be concentrated solely, though often covertly, on the furthering of Israel's interests and power. As Israel actually exists, the conspiracy has a real object on which to focus; but that object also provides a reality check against which the extravaganzas of the theory can be checked and its absurdities exposed.

For example, it is plainly absurd to deny the loyalty of all British Jews to the country in which they live, by implying that they have some deeper loyalty to Israel. Many Jews have a deep-felt emotional commitment to the Jewish state, but as British citizens still retain an overriding loyalty to Britain. Other Jews, as the pages of this journal show only too clearly, are often sharply critical of Israel and its policies and can hardly be accused of an unwavering promotion of Israeli interests. Therein lies the error of those like Ingrams who seek to deduce people's politics from their racial or national origins.

To argue that a Jew cannot be impartial on questions involving the Middle East is about as sensible as to argue that a minister or civil servant of Irish origin cannot be trusted to be impartial on matters relating to Northern Ireland, as he or she would be predisposed to favour the Catholic camp over the Protestant, the Republican over

**ANGLO-SAXON ATTITUDES** *continued from page 1*

the Unionist. Even in the darkest days of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland, nobody was silly enough to launch a witch-hunt on such grounds. It is also worth pointing out that Israel was not the instigator of the attack on Saddam Hussein. The Israeli government, while no friend of Saddam, recognised that Iran represented the greater threat to its security; by destroying Iraq as a bulwark against Iranian expansion, the Americans unwittingly acted to boost Iran's position of power in the region, against Israeli interests.

Sir Oliver Miles's remarks triggered an energetic response from pro-Jewish commentators. Predictably, some of them tended to locate him in the context of a long and enduring tradition of British hostility to Jews in particular and immigrants and minorities in general. Readers who themselves arrived in Britain in the 1930s as refugees from Nazi persecution will have their own memories of the anti-Semitic attitudes that pervaded sections of British society and of the stereotype image of Jews purveyed by parts of the press. But in the case of the Jewish refugees from Hitler such prejudices hardly ever involved physical violence; and many refugees, when interviewed, say that, though aware of anti-Semitism in British society, they experienced little or none themselves.

Writing in *The Guardian*, Professor David Cesarani pilloried 'Britain's affair with anti-Semitism', but on the strength of surprisingly thin evidence. He claimed that the British ruling elites have long been suspicious of Jews exercising influence over British policy, because Jewish loyalties supposedly lie outside Britain. Cesarani cited Gladstone's attack in 1876 on Disraeli's policy towards the massacres of Christians committed in Bulgaria by the ruling Ottoman Turks; Gladstone, his liberal (and Liberal) conscience inflamed by the Bulgarian atrocities, claimed that Disraeli, his Conservative opponent and a baptised Jew, prioritised 'Judaic' over British interests by favouring the Turks, because they treated their Jewish subjects better than did the emerging Christian states in the Balkans.

The problem with this is that in 1876 Disraeli was two years into his second term as prime minister. That hardly indicates a widespread sense among the electorate (then composed of precisely the upper- and middle-class men generally

assumed to be the bearers of anti-Semitic prejudice) that he was not to be trusted with the national interest – rather the contrary. Gladstone's celebrated pamphlet on the 'Bulgarian horrors' formed part of the political knockabout common at times of heightened political confrontation even a century and a third ago, not an out-and-out attack on Jewish loyalty in the manner of the Dreyfus affair. By arguing that Disraeli favoured the Ottomans because of the tolerance they displayed towards their Jewish subjects, Gladstone might even be said to be paying a backhanded compliment to Disraeli's feeling for humane attitudes, even among Turks. All in all, this incident hardly has the makings of a rabid display of anti-Jewish feeling.

Cesarani's second point was that Jews were excluded from the British security services until well after the Second World War. This will come as a surprise to the many readers of Sarah Helm's engrossing book *A Life in Secrets* (2005), which details the career of Vera Atkins, née Rosenberg, a Romanian-born Jew who came to Britain in the 1930s and became the key figure in the French Section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE). As France was the SOE's principal area of operations, Atkins was one of the most important figures anywhere in the British wartime secret services.

Writing in *AJR Information* of August 1957, the journal's editor, Werner Rosenstock, felt able to laugh off the idea that the Jewish refugees from Hitler were ineradicably differentiated by national allegiance from the British. In an article entitled 'Passport to Swiss Cottage', he recalled how, travelling home from west London ten years earlier on a number 31 bus, he and his fellow travellers had had their journey enlivened by the conductor, who called out 'Swiss Cottage. Have your passports ready, please.' Rosenstock, who had just acquired British nationality, alighted from the bus 'in a paroxysm of laughter'. This anecdote comes from the repertoire of jokes that refugees often told about their relations with the British. With its nod to the popular Ealing comedy *Passport to Pimlico*, the joke shows that most refugees were confident enough of being accepted into British society to be able to take comments like the bus conductor's little sally for the harmless expressions of humour that they were.

**Anthony Grenville**

**KINDERTRANSPORT  
SPECIAL NOTICE**

**15-25 April 2010**

'Kindertransport', an audio-visual sculpture by Ralph Koltai CBE, will have its first showing at the British Film Institute on the South Bank. It is in the form of a globe from which pictures, literature and music relating to the Kindertransport will be screened. It is hoped to have a special viewing for 'Kinder' on 25 April. The sculpture will tour the UK and European departure points of the Kindertransport trains.

**27 June (further details to follow)**

It is planned to unveil a monument to the Kindertransport at the Hook of Holland.

**ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING**

of the  
**ASSOCIATION OF  
JEWISH REFUGEES**  
**THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2010**  
**11.00 AM**

at the Paul Balint AJR Centre  
15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Lunch will be served at a cost of £5. Space is limited. If you would like to reserve a place for lunch, please call Head Office on 020 8385 3070 by Monday 1 June 2010.

**Agenda**

Annual Report 2009  
Hon. Treasurer's Report  
Discussion  
Election of Committee of  
Management\*

\*No person other than a committee member retiring by rotation shall be elected or re-elected at any general meeting unless:-

- (a) he or she is recommended by the Committee of Management, or
- (b) not less than twenty-one clear days before the date appointed for the meeting, notice executed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting has been given to the Association of the intention to propose that person for election or re-election together with notice executed by that person of his or her willingness to be elected or re-elected.

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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.

## 'What is your most memorable seder?'

A few years ago, my cousin Paul joined us at our family seder in London. He was born in Vienna and, with his parents, escaped the Nazis around the same time in 1938 as I did. Whereas I had stayed in England, they had gone to America. The following is the answer to the above question as he related it to us.

Undoubtedly, my most memorable seder was in Washington, where I was stationed as a very young sailor in the US Navy. It was my first posting and, as Pesach was approaching, I started to feel the pangs of being 3,000 miles from home: I wouldn't be able to sit at the family seder my dad would be conducting in Los Angeles.

However, I discovered all Jewish military personnel in the Washington area were invited to a community seder sponsored by the United Jewish Fund of Washington. The seder would be held at the Washington National Cathedral. On the appropriate evening, I arrived at this most impressive cathedral, which was a very important landmark in Washington. I was led into an enormous hall, which contained long rows of tables all suitably decorated for the occasion. There must have been about 300 men and some women, all in uniform, representing the various branches of the armed forces. There was also a sprinkling of uniforms from other countries, personnel from legations and various military attachés. At one table sat two Jewish military chaplains (Army and Navy) together with the Cathedral priest. It was all most impressive and quite intimidating for this young sailor from California.

Eventually I was seated between two women, each of them in uniform. Strangely they spoke with identical accents. Maybe they were sisters but they didn't resemble each other. I asked them about their light German accents. It

turned out they were both stationed at the Pentagon in Washington. One was in the Army, the other in the Air Force. As the two chaplains and the priest alternately conducted the seder, I quietly carried on putting my questions to the two servicewomen. They had obviously

come together for the seder. They both spoke German. No longer able to contain themselves, they told me they were both born in Vienna! Each had been saved by the Kindertransport and had eventually arrived in America. They had been adopted by different families in Indiana. They hadn't known each other in Vienna and had only met as teenagers at a Kindertransport reunion. Towards the end of the war, they decided jointly to 'do their part' by volunteering for the Army. One had later transferred to the Air Force. They had both become sergeants and were reunited at the Pentagon in Washington.

Out of 300 people at a seder in a cathedral in Washington, three unrelated Jewish refugees from Vienna, each of them serving in the US armed forces and wearing a different uniform, celebrated Passover together. Quite a story!

Kitty Gale

### 'REMEMBERING FOR THE FUTURE' 'Question Time' at Imperial War Museum North



Panel: David Berkley, Mayer Hersh, Peter Kurer, Hannah Goldstone, Leah Burman, Inge Goldrein

'Remembering for the Future' was the intriguing title of the AJR Northern inter-generation 'Question Time' event at the Imperial War Museum North for first, second and third generation members in the Manchester and Liverpool areas. We even had a member of the fourth generation present!

The event drew an audience of some 80 people. Our panel was: Mayer Hersh, camp survivor involved in Holocaust education; Inge Goldrein, Kindertransportee and retired judge; Peter Kurer, pre-war refugee and retired dentist; Leah Burman, second generation, child psychologist; Hannah Goldstone, third generation, graduate in Holocaust studies. The proceedings were superbly chaired by David Berkley QC.

Questions posed were on how the three generations are affected by the Holocaust; how to deal with the psychological problems arising therefrom; how best to broach the subject to young people; and, of course, how to ensure these terrible happenings do not disappear into the dustbin of history, of which there is much danger due to the 'revisionism' so current these days. There were also many thoughtful contributions from the audience.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Tania Nelson of the second generation. She, with Susanne Green, Barbara Dresner Dorrity, and Ruth and Werner Lachs, had organised the event and ensured its success. Our sincere thanks to the Imperial War Museum North for allowing us use of their facilities. A DVD of the event will be available for archival and educational use. *Werner Lachs*

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Seelow (population around 5,000) is in the former DDR, about an hour by train from Berlin. A correspondent described it in your September 2005 issue as 'a rather dismal town'. I think 'dismal' is a bit harsh – perhaps 'unpretentious' or 'modest' is a fairer description.

Seelow was home to the Reissners, my wife Vivien's family. Vivien's grandparents – Martha and Louis – and their three children – Ruth, Willi (her late father) and Joachim – lived at 20 Berlinerstrasse until the Nazis arrived. Willi and Joachim (aka 'Achim' and/or 'Johnny') left Germany shortly before the war and made new lives in England. In September 1942 Ruth was transported from the Jewish orphanage in Pankow, where she was working, to Riga where, presumably, she was murdered. We know nothing of the fate of Martha and Louis.

Vivien had always wanted to go to Seelow and this year, we decided, would be the year. Vivien's brother David thought it would be helpful to find out the train times from Berlin to Seelow, so he contacted the local authority for information and this innocent request brought forth a mass of material about the Reissner family and its past in Seelow. What with this newly acquired material and Vivien's personal Reissner archive, we were well prepared for the journey and we set off – Vivien, David and his wife Helen, and I.

We were a bit apprehensive arriving in Seelow that not very cheerful July morning. Vivien's painstaking arrangements had borne fruit, however, and, though we hadn't asked for it, there was a small reception party waiting for us as we got off the train. The delegation was led by one Thomas Drawing from the local authority and included a colleague of his, together with two other young women who were to be the interpreters. Thomas had prepared a detailed programme for the day and, among other things, we were to be shown around the town, get together with the local historian, Michael Schimmel, and meet the mayor. Thomas had gone to serious trouble in organising the schedule and our visit was considered of such significance that a lady from the local press had been sent to cover it.

There is now, of course, no Jewish presence in Seelow. Thomas intimated that there were plans afoot to plant a tree as a memorial in the Jewish cemetery, now a car park (they have since been in touch with us, asking what might be the most appropriate type of tree). Although there had once been a synagogue in Seelow, religious services had been discontinued before the Hitler era; the synagogue building itself was demolished 'because of decay' by a 1934 municipal order. For religious celebrations, the residents went either to Frankfurt an der Oder or Berlin.

## Reliving history: A memorable day in Seelow



Vivien Harris and David Reissner in front of Reissner family home, 20 Berlinerstrasse

Louis Reissner, Vivien's grandfather, kept the Torah and other ritual and ceremonial items in his possession for safekeeping.

In the morning, we visited the sites of the homes of two other Jewish families, the Philippsborns and the Irlmigs, both also members of the Reissner clan. I say 'sites' because all there is to see is two plots of land – there are no buildings. However, we were able to look around 20 Berlinerstrasse, Vivien's family's home. We were given a full tour of the house, including the two-storey, brick-built out-houses where the Reissners pursued their business (they were in skins) and the cellar. The house is now occupied by an elderly lady and her son and both residence and residents bear an unsettling similarity to those featured in the Bates Motel in the film *Psycho*. Certainly, the son seemed to have a rather unhealthy interest in sharp instruments. Mysteriously, there is a Reissner family tale that Louis won a substantial sum in the local lottery which he hid in the cellar of his house and, although we had a careful look round, we didn't see any buried treasure there, alas. Be that as it may, this visit was followed in the afternoon by an altogether more unsettling experience when we met three elderly men who knew Vivien's grandparents.

The three gentlemen of Seelow came to meet us and we talked to them about Seelow before the war. They shared with us their memories of the Jewish population, with which, they said, they had got on very well. They particularly were able to recall Vivien's grandparents and, by all accounts, Louis Reissner was something of a local character. He was certainly, they said, a very nice person and had, on more than one occasion, lent money interest-free to his non-Jewish neighbours. On the fate of Martha, Ruth and Louis, however, these three gents were unable to shed any light. This discussion, as far as it went, was friendly and open but there was a sense

of skirting around the issues.

You see, we didn't ask: 'Since you were so friendly with the Jews, how did you intercede with the Nazis when they came to Seelow? In which attic/cellar/shed/outhouse did you hide these people you liked so much, the Jews? What efforts did you make to discover what had happened to them? Didn't you miss them, these Jewish friends of yours? What do you think about what the Nazis did to them? Does it bother you? Do you think you could have done something?'

No, we didn't ask these questions! Maybe it would have been inappropriate to do so. After all, we were the guests, the visitors. How could we be so direct, so rude, to our hosts? And maybe we don't have the right to ask such questions and make such judgements, anyway. After all, if a British government decided to persecute all the Hindus, would I risk my life to shelter my Hindu neighbours?

Nonetheless, it's easy to see how Hitler was able to do as he pleased. These three elderly gentlemen are ordinary chaps, now retired, who just want to get on with their lives. So what if the Nazis were butchering their neighbours? Well, it mightn't have been true and, even if it was, it wasn't really their business. And they were powerless to prevent it anyway. After all, what can three ordinary chaps do? Better not to get involved. In a way, these three are the Shoah in miniature. Insert that same detachment and disinterest into the non-Jewish populations of Germany and the other Nazi-occupied territories and there you have it – Hitler's willing executioners.

But we didn't ask any of these questions. In contrast, the young people we met seem to want to make sure that what went on isn't forgotten. They told us how they would encourage other members of the family to go through the claims process on the two plots their dead relations owned; Thomas Drawing has plans not only for a memorial on the site of the Jewish cemetery but also for a *Stolperstein* outside the Reissner family home. But the young are often more impressionable than the old and Thomas's attitude can be seen reflected in the openness you see in Berlin, where much of the Holocaust has been dragged out of the woodwork.

We spent only one day in Seelow but it was a memorable one in so many ways. Reliving history is crucial as the years, and the survivors, pass away. And if we don't tread in the footsteps of our ancestors, whose fault will it be if our children inherit a world where Holocaust denial is the norm? Where our history is written by our enemies? What will happen to Jewish continuity then? Yes, it's a challenge all right. Can we accept it? More to the point, can we not?

David Harris

## Thoughts at a Kristallnacht ceremony

by Marianne-Christine Scharfenberg

*Leslie Baruch Brent writes: The author of the following article is a German writer and novelist who grew up in the DDR. She created waves with her autobiographical novel *Wir Sonntagskinder* (Ullstein Verlag, 2002), in which she described her tragic childhood. On 8 November last year she attended a ceremony in the building that housed the Jewish Boys' Orphanage in Pankow-Berlin before the war. This was a commemoration of Kristallnacht and included the unveiling and presentation of a tryptic painting – Kaddish – by Franny Swann, the daughter of Ruth Albert, who had been a day-pupil in the orphanage school, as well as a reading from the German edition of my autobiography (Ein Sonntagskind? Vom jüdischen Waisenhaus zum weltbekanntesten Immunologen).*

*Here Marianne-Christine Scharfenberg describes her thoughts as she waited for the ceremony to commence. Readers of the Journal will, I think, be touched by this poignant memory of childhood – one that clearly troubles her to this day.*

The Betsaal (the hall of the Pankow Orphanage, now used for meetings, discussions and recitals, but was the prayer room or synagogue before the war) is completely full. On the stage is a grand piano. In front of it are a lectern and small table with glasses and a bottle of water. Beside it is a tryptic – demanding attention and pushing everything else into its shadow. Its three sections show barbed wire on a grey background. Thoughts of visits to concentration camps arise. I think I hear voices, remember the smell of barracks. The greyness depresses me. I think of Yad Vashem.

With relief I see that the barbed wire holding the grey captive is torn, has escape holes, allows for hope. The torn ends point into nothingness. In the middle section, the wire seems to bend outwards as though a force has blown it apart from within. The perspective reminds me of works by Vasarely, but without his colourful cheerfulness.

People who have come to the event walk past me, look for seats, arrange their coats, shuffle their feet. They interrupt my thoughts. I look up to the damaged ceiling of the Betsaal.

Suddenly I feel once again the guilt of the past. 1953 in Pankow. An eight-year-old, I lived with my parents in a flat

in the triangle formed by the city hall, the old parish church and the Jewish orphanage.

My sister Bele was still not fully potty-trained, even though she'd been going to school for two months. Her floodgates opened up whenever she remembered we no longer lived with our beloved grandmother.

The children in the school quickly noticed her problem. When Bele stood in the schoolyard with a patch developing in her crotch and crying, they would

*Again and again this phrase. I didn't know what it meant. I was happy to have escaped. I ran to the other side of the street and yelled with the mob 'Filthy Jew, filthy Jew!' Again and again 'Filthy Jew!' I felt good because I thought an adult who was being insulted by children and didn't defend himself deserved it.*

tease her. They pushed her till she fell in the dirt. Then they jeered at her, drunk with victory: 'Filthy girl, filthy girl, filthy girl!'

One day Bele once again stood in her puddle in the yard. Before I could get to her she was already on the ground, encircled by a jeering mob of children. I of course tried to save her – as well as our honour – nearly every school break. In my family nothing was particularly clean – but 'Filthy children!' I couldn't let that go unanswered.

Blind with rage, I swung my school bag around me. I hit the first yelling blighter on the head with it. His glasses flew through the air in a high arc, projecting colourful reflections of sunrays and landing next to my sister in the puddle.

'Now there's really going to be trouble!', I thought. I pulled Bele up

and dashed with her into the street. We ran. In a small chestnut copse near the church Bele couldn't go any further. I couldn't take care of her any more – this time it was all about me.

Between the stands and the people of the weekly market, I thought I'd escaped. The market was behind me; I could see the city hall. I cried with rage and fear, felt the bruises from the last class fight. The cry 'Filthy children, filthy children!' became weaker and weaker. I could hear only the noises of the street now. I was exhausted and stopped running. I took a deep breath and looked behind me.

I saw a mob of children on the other side of the street. They were interested in a very thin man in a long, black coat and a black hat. Beside him were a few smaller children, also dressed in black. The mob came closer to the man and the children, yelling frenetically. I didn't understand what they were chanting. They grabbed at his shopping bags, pulled at them, laughing and jeering as they did so. People in the street stood still and laughed along with the children – the show was obviously very funny. The man in the black coat did nothing to defend himself. Suddenly I understood what they were yelling. No longer 'Filthy child, filthy child!' – but 'Filthy Jew, filthy Jew!'

Again and again this phrase. I didn't know what it meant. I was happy to have escaped. I ran to the other side of the street and yelled with the mob 'Filthy Jew, filthy Jew!' Again and again 'Filthy Jew!' I felt good because I thought an adult who was being insulted by children and didn't defend himself deserved it.

I was pulled out of my memories. In his unmistakable, vulnerable manner, Leslie Baruch Brent entered the Betsaal. Without touching the ground – so it seemed to me – he glided past the tryptic and sat on the chair behind the small table. Pale, a little nervous, he arranged his printed pages and began reading. About his Jewish childhood. A childhood full of fear, isolation, deprivation. He read for three quarters of an hour.

Afterwards, as we enjoyed a pleasant meal in a restaurant with lively conversation and in a convivial atmosphere, I remained alone in my shame at my actions back then.

*This article was translated from the German by Kelly Neudorfer.*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### SAYING KADDISH

Sir – As one of the very few Kindertransport children who have ended up in Denmark, I want to say how much I enjoy reading the *AJR Journal* every month. It is extremely informative and sometimes also amusing. Although I have been living in this country since 1949, I am still a British subject as I feel grateful to the UK for taking me in when I was 13 years old.

My story is the traditional one: I said goodbye to my dear parents at the railway station in Vienna and, as in so many other cases, it was a parting forever. In my heart, I, like so many others, have never got over this. I have been to Vienna several times as I still have friends there. Although I had been informed a long time ago that my parents had perished, I didn't know the exact circumstances. After making further enquiries some years ago, I learned that they were deported to Maly Trostinec in early May 1942 and shot on arrival.

Against this background, I was interested to read the letter from Otto Deutsch in your February issue. I was especially pleased that a monument had been erected in memory of our loved ones. Like Mr Deutsch, I would have liked to go to Maly Trostinec and say Kaddish, but, as in his case, my age, my health and the long journey are serious obstacles to such a plan. In any case, I was pleased to learn that the Jewish community in Minsk has taken the initiative to make sure this crime is not forgotten.

*Marianne Egtman (née Schlesinger)  
Kokkedal, Denmark*

Sir – Records I found at the Wiener Library a few years ago showed that my father's sister, Fannie Koppel, was taken from Berlin to Minsk in 1942. She had been widowed in the early 1930s. Her elder daughter was deported to Poland in October 1938; her younger daughter escaped to England to work as a servant. Though I never believed that my aunt survived, it puzzled me for a long time that she was taken to Minsk. I learned about Maly Trostinec and the gas wagons for the first time only last summer. Her terrible death distresses me deeply – and that she was without family in the end only adds to my sadness.

*Eve R. Kugler, London N3*

Sir – I learned after the war that my uncle, Arthur Stern, was taken to Maly Trostinec from Terezin. I was further told that following an attempted break-out of some of the inmates to try to join the partisans in that area, the Nazis lined up all the prisoners and shot every tenth person as a reprisal. My

uncle happened to be one of those tenth persons. This information emanated from Arthur's mother (my grandmother), who herself survived Terezin.

*Peter Schwab, London NW8*

### THE FARM

Sir – Regarding the article 'The Farm' in the February journal: for your information, Professor Gerald Jayson (Gert Jacobowitz) died in Liverpool in July 2007 having spent most of his working life at what is now Liverpool John Moores University, obtaining a professorship in Radiation Chemistry in 1991. Gerry was also past chairman of Allerton Synagogue and past Master of the Lodge of Israel Liverpool. He was a leading member of the Liverpool AJR group.

Gerry's sister Edith lives in Maidstone and I, his widow, am an active member of the Liverpool AJR group. Harry Gossels (Manchester), Felix Zussmann (London), Robert Sugar (New York), the late Rolf Dresner and his sister Helga (Berlin) were all also on Millisle Farm in Northern Ireland with Gerry. Rolf was the father of AJR social worker Barbara Dresner Dorrity. Gerry and Harry met up again for the first time at the first AJR Northern Get-together in Manchester in November 2002, where by chance they also met up with Barbara.

*(Dr) Sylvia Jayson, Liverpool*

### GERMAN REUNIFICATION

Sir – Anthony Grenville's generally admirable piece on German and European reunification (February) has one important blemish: its unqualified welcome for the extension of NATO – as opposed to the EU – across Eastern Europe.

Precisely because the Cold War had ended, and ended in Western victory, and victory due not to military but to economic and social factors, the United States should have stopped to ask itself how global politics might develop in the days ahead. Instead, it blundered on myopically as if still needing to atone for Roosevelt's gullibility *vis-à-vis* Stalin, and as if Gorbachev and Yeltsin were no more than a latter-day Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Moreover, explicit promises given to Gorbachev that there would be no expansion of NATO were dishonoured, courtesy of Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State.

The anachronism is all the more poignant in view of America's tactic against Russia in the 1980s of encouraging Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan. Today NATO forces in that part of the world include contingents from Eastern Europe. Whether the benefit of that outweighs the costs of gratuitous failure by the Western allies to

seek rapprochement with Russia is – to put it mildly – open to question.

*Peter Oppenheimer, Christ Church, Oxford*

Sir – Anthony Grenville mars his 'Reflections on German Reunification' by some rather sneering references to the British Armed Forces, the same forces that ensured that Jews in this country did not suffer at the hands of Nazi Germany the fate of our co-religionists on the Continent.

More importantly, he gives no credit to successive British governments for being among the principal proponents and drivers within the European Union of the very policy, the eastward expansion of the EU, to which he attributes the 'neutralising [of] the threat of German preponderance' following the country's reunification.

Undoubtedly the British had mixed motives (Thatcherites hoped that enlargement of the EU would weaken the reach of Brussels) but, if the 'peace and stability of Europe' has been achieved – and time still has to tell – at least as much will be owed to the UK as to France.

*Maurice Fireman, Richmond, Surrey*

### GENEALOGICAL LEGACY

Sir – Like no doubt many of your other readers, I was saddened to see the obituary of Theo Marx (March issue), whom I had not encountered for some years but whose delightful personality I remember very well from the 1980s and 1990s.

Your sensitive (and totally deserved) tribute mentioned his masterly genealogical researching of his wife's pedigree. It was in that context that we became acquainted since it transpired that tangential branches of the Kohnstamm family had ended up in Australia and had intertwined themselves through marriages to strands of my own collateral kin who lived in that continent. We thus found that we shared several relatives who were both cousins of Theo's wife and of mine. Having lived in Sydney and met many of these people personally, I was able to expand his family tree data considerably. An unfailingly courteous contact and meticulous researcher, he became an expert analyst of information sources and generously copied me in with his work for the benefit of my own collections. My association with him at that time was, as Ronnie Corbett used to describe his lengthy association with the late Ronnie Barker, 'pure gold'.

As you correctly state, family history research in those days required a great deal of persistence because the resources of the internet were not then available. Luckily Theo's enquiring mind, attention to detail, excellent memory and shrewd powers of observation made him equal to the task. His genealogical legacy will be remembered for a long time.

*Anthony Joseph, President,  
Jewish Genealogical Society of  
Great Britain, Corresponding Member for  
Great Britain of Australian Jewish Historical  
Society, Smethwick, West Midlands*

### REFUGEES FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Sir – Anthony Grenville's excellent book on Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria omits any mention of my late father, Victor

Ehrenberg, or my mother Eva Ehrenberg, née Sommer, who for many years were staunch supporters of the AJR. Could this be because the book is not concerned with those who came from Czechoslovakia? Victor Ehrenberg did, of course, come from Germany, but held a professorship at the German University in Prague in 1929-39.

As for your correspondence on 'British first, Jewish second', this issue was surely resolved by Franz Rosenzweig (my uncle) in his 1918 declaration 'Nicht Deutscher oder Jude, sondern Deutscher und Jude.'

Lewis Elton (formerly Ludwig Ehrenberg), Guildford, Surrey

**Anthony Grenville:** My book discusses a considerable number of refugees from Czechoslovakia, whose German-speaking culture was closely linked to that of Austria (which had ruled the Czech Lands until 1918).

### THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW

Sir – May I convey my congratulations to Hedi Argent (March, 'Emigration') for having been so fortunate as to have been able to come to England in the company of her parents. My emigration was different in as much as I had to say goodbye to my parents on the railway platform at Prague station to the words of my father: 'Hedl, see that the heels of your shoes are always straight!' – meaning of course 'Always look after yourself and don't digress from the straight and narrow!'

I hope I have done that as, after various experiences – some pleasant and some harrowing – I was lucky enough to find a wonderful husband and have been blessed with great sons and grandchildren.

My parents were deported to Lodz, the last place from which I heard of them, and I never saw them again. The loss of my parents and the rest of my family is a heart ache that will stay with me forever. Once more, dear Hedi, I am glad for you and wish you the very best.

Hedy Orchudesch (Bassel), Wembley, Middx

### TOUCHING MEMORY

Sir – Once again, my appreciation for staying in touch through the *AJR Journal* and shedding tears when reading the touching memory of Hedi Argent of her 'Emigration'. So similar to my own, with the exception of leaving behind my dearest parents and darling Grandmama.

Ruth Lansley (née Kormes), Isle of Wight

### 'THE DAY OF RECKONING'

Sir – Everyone in the democracy in which we fortunately live is, of course, entitled to their own opinions. However, I consider it totally out of place that you feel it right that Mr Stern's article should appear anywhere near the very wonderful *AJR Journal* (March). Fortunately, we have Hedi Argent's article on 'Emigration' on page 4. Her feelings portray the feelings of most of us!

(Mrs) H. M. Goldsmith, Edgware, Middx

Sir – Given his sentiments in an earlier issue, which I castigated at the time as anti-British, I am no longer surprised at Fred Stern's latest tirade. But I am slightly surprised at your printing it. Has everybody forgotten that all former 'Kinder', and most members of the

AJR, owe their very lives to being admitted to this country? This fact is not altered by the personal antics of some politicians or by current tax policies.

F. M. M. Steiner, Deddington, Banbury

Sir – I am surprised you published Fred Stern's rantings. Fred Stern dislikes anything British and decided to live in the Costa del Sol. I don't know what he means by 'The Day of Reckoning', but he went too far with his blatant electioneering and personal attacks. Does he seriously think that if we don't heed his warning, we should all emigrate to the Costa del Sol? Nicholas Marton, Bromley

Sir – I am writing to protest against Fred Stern's article 'The Day of Reckoning'. I owe my life to this country, as do most of your readers. What possessed you to give it publicity? Ludwig Berlin, London NW3

### FORMAT OF AJR JOURNAL

Sir – We thoroughly enjoy the *AJR Journal* but, since the majority of the readers are now in their late 70s or early 80s and have poor eye sight, having discussed this with fellow members of the AJR, I am writing to ask you if there is any possibility that bigger and clearer print could be used in the production of a superb journal. Since this is proving difficult, it would be a pity if some of us were denied the opportunity of reading the *Journal*. We do hope you can consider improving the format so that we can continue to keep in touch with fellow members.

Alfred Huberman, Brighton

We are grateful to Mr Huberman for making this important point, which we are beginning to take into account with this issue of the *Journal* (Ed.).

### DIVINE INTERVENTION

Sir – With regard to George Landers's letter in your March issue, it is the message of the event that is the important element for Judaism. Attribute the Ten Plagues or the Crossing of the Red (Reed) Sea to the aftermath of volcanic eruption or any other natural cause, it is the lesson or lessons that underpin, or are derived from, the occurrence that matter. At the root of it all is Divine activity. The story of Egypt, of slavery and freedom, resonates through the ages – the slave workers of the Holocaust and their subsequent freedom are just an illustration! Freedom and its use is the teaching of Pesach, soon to be with us. Faith has been the preserve of the Jewish people and always will be, however much detractors may try to undermine it.

Bernd Koschland, London NW4

Sir – George Landers may well believe that the ten plagues and the splitting of the Red (actually Reed) Sea can be explained convincingly by the volcanic eruption that virtually destroyed Santorini and choose to mock Henry Schragenheim (January) for his claim that they are core beliefs of the Jewish religion. What he fails to appreciate is that the crucial point that makes them miracles is their timing. Had they not occurred when they did, there would not have been an Exodus or Divine Revelation at Sinai and, in

consequence, no Judaism or Jewish people.

In our daily prayers we praise the Almighty for his 'miracles that are done for us every day.' While these may be trivial in comparison with the events described in the Tenakh, they can be noticed by anyone who cares to do so. On the other hand, they can be dismissed as mere chance occurrences. It is this possibility that allows us to have free will and choose what we do – if they were obvious, we would be overwhelmed by the Divine intervention in our lives and be unable to act independently.

Martin D. Stern, Salford

### 'HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' AND 'REFUGEES': IN SEARCH OF A DEFINITION

Sir – Would your readers help explain two words to me? Who are 'Holocaust survivors'? To be one, do you need to have been in a concentration camp or in a ghetto, or – at the very least – in hiding on the continent of Europe during the time of the Nazi oppression?

Personally, I do not think this is the right definition because this would exclude, for instance, the Kindertransport children, who certainly were 'survivors'. Steven Spielberg and his Shoah Foundation team thought of me as a 'survivor' by interviewing me for their archives. Yet I came to England, with my parents, in February 1939, admittedly because I, and they, were fleeing from the Nazis in Austria. But does this make me a 'survivor' in the true meaning of the word – like those who survived the camps?

My synagogue doesn't seem to think so: I have never been asked to speak as a 'survivor' on any of their Holocaust Memorial Days. Am I not asked because my memories are not really my own but those of my late parents or because I am not considered a 'survivor' by the synagogue?

Also, would someone not only define the word 'survivor' but the word 'refugee' as well? Was I a refugee? My father had a sponsor, Sol Badler, in England. We were never 'refugees' in the way that the word is used now. (Incidentally, we have lost touch with the Badlers. Sol would have died many years ago, but does anyone know any of his family? My late parents and I owe our lives to Sol, a distant cousin of my father, Dr Marcus Pfeffer.) Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

### PARTY-POLITICAL?

Sir – I find it upsetting to see the front page (March) touting for David Cameron. Surely this journal should avoid any suspicion of being party-political.

Mrs E. Light, London SW18

### JEW AGAINST JEW

Sir – Regarding Peter Phillips's article in your February issue, I fully agree with his views on 'Jewish do-gooders [who] wash their dirty linen in public'. I hope the Israelis will refuse them visas! They may need them one day!

John Lawrence, London SW15

### 'A JEW IS A JEW IS A JEW'

Sir – Some of your readers have no sense of humour. As to the constant 'I am a better

Letters to the Editor continued on page 16

# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Can a tragic background inspire great art? Holocaust survivors who became great artists prove this point many times, as the Ben Uri Gallery can testify. When he was 15, **Arshile Gorky's** mother died in his arms as they fled the Turkish pogroms against the Armenians in 1915. One hundred miles on foot later, Arshile (real name Vosdanig Adoian) and his sister reached the USA in search of their father, who had left them to fend for themselves. In America, revolutionary ideas were fertile ground for the young artist. There, having rejected traditional art as too conventional, he achieved success with his synthesis



Arshile Gorky, *The Artist and His Mother*, 1926-36 Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, USA) ©

of European Modernism with American Abstract Expressionism. But the anguish of the past and his memories of a pastoral life continued to haunt his art, to which he brought an emotional intensity lacking in the work of other Modernists.

**Tate Modern's** retrospective (until 3 May) analyses Gorky's work from the early still lifes and portraits, heavily outlined in black, to a gradual abstraction in heavy, flat primary colours which begin to betray the Cubist influence of Picasso, Cézanne and Matisse. Gorky tended to rework his canvases over several years but, by the early 1930s, he developed a freer association with abstract ideas, such as his drawing *Nighttime*, *Enigma* and *Nostalgia*, in which dreams seem to take abstract shape. But he also painted realistic portraits of family and friends from the 1920s. Two moving portraits of the artist and his mother, the most illustrious of his

early works, are taken from a single photograph in 1912. They testify to the depth of his loss. The young Gorky holds a posy of flowers like a bridegroom, while to his left his mother, in traditional Armenian dress, stares out with a lifeless and sorrowful blankness. In this intensely moving portrait, Gorky continues to mourn her as both child and man.

With Gorky's growing reputation as a Surrealist-Expressionist, such portraits became more abstract and fantastic. *How My Mother's Embroidered Apron Unfolds in My Life* is a visual memoir of his mother's story-telling, with his face pressed into her pinafore. A decade after he left his homeland, allusive imagery began to appear in his work, such as his *Image in Khorkom*, the village where he was born, which recalls his father's orchard.

Although technically a Surrealist, sharing with his contemporaries the free association of line and rich colour, Gorky differed from them in his nostalgia for nature, which represented the magic of memory, real or imagined. But tragedy pursued him. In 1946 a fire in his rural studio destroyed a year's worth of work. Then, a cancer diagnosis, marriage breakdown and finally a car crash broke his spirit and he killed himself in July 1948. Just as he rejected traditional art, Gorky remained a free thinker, refusing to be bound by the new orthodoxy of European Surrealism. His individualism anticipated Abstract Expressionism.

Another Modernist is celebrated at **Tate Modern** in '**Van Doesburg and the International Avant-Garde**', which concentrates on the geometric abstractionist movement De Stijl, of which Theo Van Doesburg was a founder member and editor of the *De Stijl* magazine. His idea was to create a visual vocabulary of geometric forms, based on the creation of a new society following the First World War. This is the first time the work of the Dutch artist has been seen in Britain. The movement had far-reaching effects, including designs for the Café Aubette in Strasbourg, furniture typography, magazines, stained glass, film, music and sculpture.

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## REVIEWS

### Images of the past

**GERTI DEUTSCH – BETWEEN VIENNA AND LONDON: IMAGES FROM AUSTRIA AND ENGLAND, 1932-1952**

at the Austrian Cultural Forum, London SW7, until 23 April (admission free)

**WIE WIR GELEBT HABEN: WIENER JUDEN ERINNERN SICH AN IHR 20. JAHRHUNDERT (How We Lived: Viennese Jews Remember the 20th Century)**

Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag and CENTROPA Vienna 2008, 254 pp. hardback €29.50

Gerti Deutsch was a well-known professional photographer in Vienna before the war who later achieved distinction in England through her work for the *Picture Post* and other journals. It is one of the aims of this exhibition to make many more people aware of her life and work. She was born in Vienna in 1908 and initially hoped for a career as a pianist, but had to forgo this hope due to a weakness in her right arm. She then turned to photography but her love of music continued to be reflected in her choice of subjects.

In the exhibition, the pre-war period is mainly represented by her unusual and sometimes quirky portraits of personalities such as Toscanini, Marion Anderson and Dea Gombrich. During a visit to England in 1937 she visited the offices of *Picture Post* and the assistant editor, Tom Hopkinson, decided not only to use her work but also to marry her. Following the Anschluss, she moved to London and became a regular freelance contributor to *Picture Post*.

The exhibition shows many examples of her work for *Picture Post*, but for ex-refugees one of the most moving may be a collection of pictures recording the first day in England of children arriving on the Kindertransport. Another display covers an updated theatre performance of *The Good Soldier Schweik* by refugees in London. In 1948 Gerti Deutsch visited Vienna to cover 'A Foreign Correspondent's Life' and again there are many pictures which are of special interest to readers of the *AJR Journal*. A useful, well-illustrated catalogue, including an appreciation by the photographer Wolf Suschitsky, accompanies the exhibition, which continues until late April.

While the exhibition described above celebrates the work of a Viennese professional photographer, the remarkable



book *Wie wir gelebt haben* is based primarily on amateur photos taken throughout the last century and featuring the lives of Viennese Jews. What makes this book particularly evocative is that the people in each photograph are described, often with reminiscences, by a surviving member of the family. Inevitably it is the professional and middle classes which are mainly featured and there are relatively few records left of the many poor Viennese, mostly immigrants from Eastern Europe.

The book is divided into three parts, each accompanied by an introductory article. The first part covers the halcyon period from about 1890 to 1938, when cultural and intellectual Jewish life flourished in Vienna, especially before 1919, when the city was still the capital of an empire. As well as many purely family photographs, there are others which show the lives of people on holiday, at work, at school and in the Imperial Army. Although most of the photos appear to be taken by family members, there are some which were clearly posed in studios with quaint props such as dummy planes or cars.

The second part covers the dark period 1938-45 with photographs of Viennese Jews away from their home city. One section describes the lives of émigrés scattered throughout the world, including Israel, Shanghai, Mauritius, Rhodesia and, of course, the USA and England. Some of the photographs show cheerful people, especially those able to join in the fight against Hitler in the USA or the British army and those who joined the Haganah in Israel. The other, more tragic, section relates to those who became victims of the Shoah. There are remarkable photos taken by deportees from Vienna showing life, or rather existence, in the Opole ghetto, but mostly there are pre-war pictures in happier times of those who did not return.

The final, post-war, part of this book covers the lives of those Jews who returned to Vienna and tried to restart their lives and that of the community. As with the pre-war pictures, these show weddings, outings, sport and business, as well as young people in schools and Zionist youth movements. What the pictures *cannot* show is that these people represent only a very tiny community, a fraction of that before 1938. Nevertheless, it concludes on a positive note, showing that the Nazis did not succeed and that a vibrant Jewish community again exists in Vienna.

This is a truly worthwhile book, recording a memorable and nostalgic past, a tragic period in Jewish history and,

finally, hope for the future. It is unfortunate that so far this book is available only in German, but hopefully it will one day be translated into English.

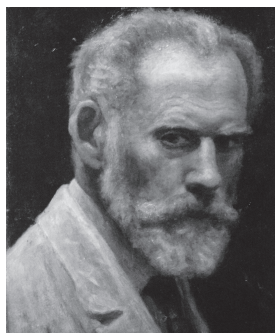
George Vulkan

## EXHIBITION

### 'It is our duty to thank you'

HERMANN HIRSCH, 1861-1934 – EIN JÜDISCHER MALER IN GÖTTINGEN

Städtisches Museum Göttingen



The Göttingen Municipal Museum recently mounted a 'Special Exhibition' entitled 'Hermann Hirsch, 1861-1934 – A Jewish Artist in Göttingen'. Who was Hermann Hirsch and why was an exhibition of his works mounted over 75 years after his death?

Hirsch was a painter and sculptor who, in his fifties, moved to the village of Bremke near Göttingen shortly after the First World War. In 1925 Bremke had 680 inhabitants, 29 of them Jewish, but, although the community was so small, it had its own synagogue, which had existed for about 100 years.

It seems that Hirsch soon became a valued member of the village community and well known and respected in Göttingen. He was apparently readily accepted as the local portrait painter of the middle classes and recognised for his paintings of the local landscape. He is known to have painted the portraits of quite a number of professors at the university, among them the physicist Max Born, the mayor, Bruno Jung, and other prominent citizens.

All this changed when the Nazis came to power. Shunned, he felt lonely and abandoned. He left Bremke in May 1933, moving to Göttingen to live with another Jewish family.

The exact circumstances of Hirsch's death in 1934 are unclear, but it is generally assumed that he committed suicide. The Göttingen Municipal Museum had a few of his works, acquired by rather dubious means seven years after his death. In his will, he left paintings and drawings in his possession to a niece, who had emigrated. Nothing was forwarded to her

as, under Nazi laws promulgated in 1941, such goods became the property of the state and were mostly sold by auction. The Museum paid the ridiculously low price of 10 RM for all works of art left to the niece – documents show that their transfer to the Museum took place a few days before the auction, so it and the auctioneer must have arranged the sale privately.

In 2006 the Museum's director, Ernst Boehme, was prompted by a gift to the Museum of a painting by Hirsch to try and revive the memory of this local artist. He asked freelance historian Rainer Driever to investigate whether enough of Hirsch's works could be traced and assembled so that an exhibition could be mounted and, if so, to curate it.

The exhibition opened at the end of August 2009 and ended in January this year. A distant relative of Hirsch (he was my maternal grandfather's cousin) who had supplied details relating to the family, I was informed by the curator about the exhibition and my wife and I travelled to Göttingen to view it. We were received most cordially. On our first evening, we dined with the curator and Museum director; the next day Dr Driever guided us through the exhibition. This comprised 37 graphic works and drawings and 35 paintings by Hirsch, as well as photos of 30 works which could not be shown as their owners had emigrated to England, the USA and South Africa. The art works were exhibited in five rooms and interesting documents were shown in a sixth. A lavish 70-page guide book contained not only many reproductions of Hirsch's works, but also articles describing his life in detail, local politics between the wars, and an appreciation of his artistic achievements. A book showing all his known works is to be published later this year.

While we viewed the exhibition, a lady from the city administration came to welcome us and press photographers and journalists attended. The next day a local paper carried a full-page article on our visit.

What struck me most during our trip was the attitude of all those with whom we came into contact. It can perhaps be best summed up by quoting from an email I received from the Museum director: 'It is *our* duty to thank you – for having undertaken the troublesome journey, for being interested in our exhibition, for your friendly words about it, but – above all – for your magnanimity in disregarding the terrible crimes the German people committed against your family and European Jewry as a whole.'

Fritz Lustig

## YOM HASHOAH, 27 NISSAN 5770/11 APRIL 2010

In 1951 the 27th day of Nissan in the Jewish calendar was established by the State of Israel as Yom Hashoah, to be observed by Jews throughout the world as the Annual Jewish Remembrance Day for Victims of the Holocaust. Education and awareness have paid an important part in bringing knowledge of this tragedy to present generations.

The dilemma facing the Forum for Yom Hashoah – comprising the 25 organisations in the UK involved in Holocaust education, awareness and remembrance activities, and survivor, refugee and ex-service personnel welfare, including the AJR – is why after all these years does the majority of our community still not recognise or commemorate Yom Hashoah?

The Holocaust is the greatest tragedy to have befallen our people. We must honour the memory of the 6 million Jews who perished, including over 1.5 million children, as well as all non-Jews who likewise perished, to ensure they are never

forgotten or their deaths denied. We owe it to present and future generations of our people, whose knowledge of the tragedy is at best limited, that they should learn the lessons of how it happened, to ensure that it will never happen again.

For every one person who learns and takes notice, there is one more person to shape the future. It needs one more person to stand up to bullying, bigotry, intolerance, prejudice, racial or religious discrimination, to encourage others to stand up with them.

Now, all members of the Forum Group have resolved to develop a new initiative for British Jewry to ensure that current and future generations will have a greater awareness and understanding of Yom Hashoah. They should recognise the day and observe its commemoration and, by this recognition and observance, work towards shaping the future by ensuring that such a tragedy never again befalls our people, or any other race or religion.

Yom Hashoah falls on Sunday 11 April 2010 and will be commemorated at 11 am by a 45-minute ceremony at the National Memorial to the Holocaust at the Dell, in Hyde Park, London, and at provincial centres. All are welcome.

For further information about Yom Hashoah and a directory of events, visit the Forum for Yom Hashoah website: [www.yomhashoah.org.uk](http://www.yomhashoah.org.uk)

Jeffrey Pinnick

### Mission accomplished

Mindful of the murder in Italy in August 1944 of the family of Robert Einstein, cousin of the great scientist, and encouraged by the film *The Sky is Falling* (USA, 2000) to place stones on the graves in accordance with



the Jewish custom, my wife Julie and I decided to pay a visit to the cemetery where the Einstein family is buried.

On Holocaust Memorial Day we drove from Florence to the tiny, walled Cimitero Badiuzza on a windswept Tuscan hilltop, at the end of a long, narrow dirt track. Finally, we reached the monument, erected by the local authorities in the late 1970s.

The murder took place when the Allies were almost literally on the doorstep: a Wehrmacht unit rushed to the villa belonging to the Einstein family, who had fled Germany to Italy, in search of any Jews they could find. Robert Einstein, with the partisans in the forest at the time, returned to the villa to find his wife Nina and two daughters, Luce and Cici, dead. Two adopted children had been spared as they had no 'Jewish blood'. Soon after, Robert Einstein took his own life.

We placed stones on the graves and drove on. Mission accomplished.

Janos Fisher

### Yom Hashoah – 'Remembrance and Hope'

On Sunday 11 April, Pinner Synagogue will host another of its renowned evenings to pay tribute to those who were murdered during the Shoah and those who resisted the Nazis.

The theme this year is 'Remembrance and Hope'. The focus of the evening will be the 70th anniversary of the Nazi occupation of France and the Benelux countries. Our guest keynote speakers will be Freda Wineman, a survivor of several concentration camps, and Marcel Ladenheim, who survived the war years as a child hidden in Paris.

There were approximately 350,000 Jews in France at the time of the country's defeat by Germany in 1940, many of them already refugees from Nazi persecution in Germany and other countries. The treatment of Jews in France and the camps there was a highly sensitive subject after the war and, for over 40 years, the French government refused to admit the responsibility of the Pétain regime and French police in the treatment and deportation of French Jews to camps in Germany and Poland where few survived. It was the trial of Maurice Papon, a civil servant in the collaborationist Vichy government, which forced the country to confront its role in the Holocaust. In 1995 President Chirac admitted the responsibility of the Vichy regime in a speech in memory of the victims of the 'Grande Rafle' (great round-up).

The Drancy camp outside Paris was one of the most notorious transit camps. There is much evidence of brutality there. Over 3,000 prisoners died in the French camps and at least 77,000 Jews were deported.

In all, over 8,000 Jewish children (under the age of 13) from all regions of France were transported to their deaths.

The evening at Pinner Synagogue, beginning with a candle-lighting ceremony remembering the 6 million who perished, will, as usual, be attended by a number of dignitaries and West European ambassadors or their representatives. AJR members are most cordially invited to attend and are encouraged to bring their friends, members of their families and, particularly, teenage grandchildren. **The evening, which is free of charge, will begin promptly at 8:00 pm. Refreshments will be served at 10.00 pm.**

**Freda Wineman:** Born in Lorraine, she and her family went on the run in 1942 but were tracked down after two years. They were deported to Auschwitz and from there she was moved to Bergen-Belsen and then to Ragun and Theresienstadt. She was liberated in May 1945 and arrived in England in 1948. Freda has two daughters with whom she travelled to Auschwitz in 2008 – a film about this journey was shown on BBC's 'Blue Peter' in January 2009.

**Marcel Ladenheim:** He survived the war in France in hiding after his father, aged 32, was captured and sent to Auschwitz in 1941. He was sheltered during the war by Olga Masoli and her sister Esther. Marcel is a fervent follower of news regarding the persecution of Jews and views expressed in today's media regarding Israel and its neighbours.

**Brian Eisenberg, Yom Hashoah Committee, Pinner Synagogue**

## Albania's remarkable philo-Semitism

The objective of the planned documentary *Back from the Brink* (for further details, see my letter in *AJR Journal*, December 2009) was to express gratitude to individuals and/or countries that helped us Jewish refugees to survive. I personally had felt for a long time the need and desire to thank Albania and its population for having saved my life since after Kristallnacht Albania was the only country that was prepared to offer my parents and me a safe haven. This made me keen to include scenes filmed in Albania in our documentary. However, my failure to secure sufficient funding made it impossible to cover the cost this would have involved. Fortunately, the Albanian embassy in London was prepared to enable me and a cameraman to spend three days filming in Albania.

Thus, after 71 years I was finally able to return to Albania – the country that had saved my life. It turned out to be a wonderful experience I will treasure for the rest of my life. Everyone I met in Albania made me feel at home. This included HRH Prince Leka, the grandson of HRH King Zogu, the Director of the Albanian Association of Friends of Israel, and the former Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Israel as well as many ordinary men and women I met in the street who heard my story when they curiously watched us filming. The only thing that marred the joy of my return was that I couldn't find a single individual still alive whom I had known during the five months I stayed in Durrës, Albania's port city, before the war.

Though I vividly remember the generous hospitality Albanians offered us Jewish refugees in 1938-39, I must admit I had not been aware that Albania is the only country in Europe with more Jews after than before the war: there were 200 Jews before and 2,000 Jews after the war. This clearly shows that Albania became a safe haven for Jews during the last war because Albanian families were prepared, even at the risk to their own lives, to offer shelter to Jewish refugees.

HRH Prince Leka and the Honorary Consul of the State of Israel to Albania kindly arranged for me to view in Tirana, the capital, their recently made film *Rescue in Albania*. This shows Jewish refugees who survived the war in Albania telling the story of how kindly Albanians had treated them. It also shows *The Jewish Daily News* of 14 July 1935 reporting that King Zogu offered German Jews visas and even passports to come to Albania and help his country's development. Even Albert Einstein took refuge in Albania for a few days in 1935 before continuing his journey to America with an Albanian passport. Many of the refugees who survived the war in Albania ended up in Israel, though some also went



The author with HRH Prince Leka

to America and Canada. The film was formally launched in Washington DC on the recent Holocaust Memorial Day and my hosts kindly gave it to me on a DVD (anyone interested in viewing this film please contact me via the Journal).

My hosts also took me to the Tirana Museum, of which I was given a conducted tour. The Museum displays much of the country's historical past, including a list of the names of all Jewish refugees who survived the war in Albania as well as of Albanian families who sheltered them. The majority of the families appeared to be Muslims. When I asked how it had come about that Muslims had risked their lives to shelter Jews, my hosts explained that central to Albanian tribal culture is the concept of *besa*. In accordance with this concept, each Albanian family, disregarding their different religions, is expected to treat every guest or visitor as if they were members of their family. *Besa* thus helps to explain the fairly unusual religious harmony that was responsible for the survival of Jewish refugees under the very difficult conditions that prevailed during the last war in Albania and for the religious harmony that still exists today in Albania. My hosts presented me with a large book entitled *Besa – Muslim Families Shelter Jewish Refugees*, written by a Jewish refugee who survived the war in Albania and is now in America.

I hope this article will help to secure Albania and its population the recognition the country and its people deserve for their outstanding friendliness towards Jews.

T. Scarlett Epstein OBE

### Durrazzo camp

My parents and I are indebted to Albania for granting us asylum. Our attempt to leave Vienna was almost too late. After frantic attempts to apply for visas, Albania was the only country prepared to grant a temporary transit visa, which gave my father sufficient time to obtain sponsorship from a north of England business contact for my parents to work as domestic helps in their large house in Leeds.

In Durazzo (now I believe called Durrës) we were housed and fed in a camp run by what must have been a charitable organisation. If any reader has any

information about this latter, I would be very pleased to hear (via the Journal). Cooking and cleaning were done on a rota system and I recall making our own beds and furniture from materials supplied by the camp's organisers.

As a six-year-old, my memory of that time is of an extended seaside holiday in a warm land, with many playmates of my own age. Only a few images remain in my mind: the distribution of second-hand clothing and visits to a harbour-side cafe where bearded men were playing chess at shady tables. Only later did I become aware of the trauma my parents were undergoing at that time.

I would be very pleased to exchange thoughts and memories with any reader who also experienced the Durrazzo camp. So far, I haven't come across any.

Eric Stevens

## ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY APRIL

Mon 5 Bank Holiday Club 43

Mon 12 Dr E. M. Batley, '“Magic Flutes”': Goethe, Vulpius and Schikaneder' Club 43

Thur 15 'Writing Wrongs: The Nazi Era in Fiction'. D. M. Thomas will discuss his novel *The White Hotel* with Eva Hoffman. At Wiener Library, 7.30 pm. Admission free but please tel 020 7636 7247 to reserve a place

Mon 19 Robin Hanau, 'The Significance of Mental Health' Club 43

Thur 22 Dr Daniel Wildmann, 'The Ambivalence of Disgust: Jud Süß in Nazi Germany' At Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

Mon 26 Michael Faulkner, 'Eine Jugend in Deutschland: A Look at the Autobiography of Ernst Toller' (in English) Club 43

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Ernst Flesch on 020 7624 7740 or Leni Ehrenberg on 020 7286 9698

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# INSIDE the AJR

## **Dulwich CF Great start for new group**

A great start for our new group. The dynamic seven include three over-90-year-olds and three ex-nurses. We discussed how everyone arrived in the UK initially and agreed future meetings would be on more current topics.

*Hazel Beiny*

## **Liverpool 'Chicken Soup and Scouse'**

Michael Sverdlow discussed his post-retirement career as a movie photographer and how he came to produce the film 'Chicken Soup and Scouse' – the story of the Liverpool Jewish community from the 1700s to today. Susanne spoke about our participation in the HMD activities and the Anne Frank Exhibition in Chester and told us our Holocaust Memorial Book had been distributed to over 100 Merseyside schools.

*G. Alis*

## **Ealing 'In the eye of the beholder'**

Alan Cohen provoked an animated discussion on 'What is Art'. Given how much tastes differ, perhaps we could liken art to love as in 'the eye of the beholder', it was suggested. **No meeting in April due to Pesach.**

*Esther Rinkoff*

## **Eastbourne Warm welcome for Hazel**

We welcomed Hazel and her cake. It was so noble of her to join us in such foul weather that we plan to show her a sunny sea by meeting in the Conservatory at the Hydro Hotel next time.

*Milenka Jackson*

## **Ilford Enlightened by Helen Fry and James Hamilton**

Helen and James enlightened us on books recently published on refugees who fought for Germany in WWI but fought against the Nazis in WWII. **No meeting in April due to Pesach.**

*Meta Roseneil*

## **Pinner The celebrated Suchet family**

Peter Suchet told us the family had known very little about its origins until recently when his brother David took part in the TV programme 'Who Do You Think You Are?' **No meeting in April due to Pesach.**

*Paul Samet*

## **Outing: 1 April. Freud Museum and Kenwood**

## **HGS BoD overview**

Jerry Lewis gave an interesting overview of Board of Deputies' work, including fighting anti-Semitism, standing up for Israel, and monitoring the media.

*Laszlo Roman*

## **Next meeting: 12 April. Joy Hooper, 'Tickets to All Parts of the World'**

## **Essex Celebration of 8th birthday**

We celebrated our 8th anniversary with members of the Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation, who had come specially to hear Wiener Library archivist Howard Falksohn's interesting presentation on 'Argentina: Place of Refuge for

Jews, Nazis and Other Germans'. Otto Deutsch reported on the passing of group member Ken Ward, recently laid to rest with military honours.

*Myrna Glass*

## **Next meeting: 14 April. David Lawson, 'The Jews of Ostrava'**

## **Bradford CF Pre-Purim special**

There was a large turnout at our meeting just before Purim. We first held a minute's silence in honour of Ibi Ginsburg. After Rudi had retold the story of Esther in a nutshell, childhood memories of Purim were recounted on Susanne's suggestion, enhanced by her hamantashen.

*Anna Greenwood*

## **Next meeting: 13 April**

## **Wembley's brave souls**

Seven brave souls faced the wintry conditions for our monthly get-together. As usual, current affairs topics were discussed. The meeting ended with the tasty refreshments members always enjoy.

*Myrna Glass*

## **Next meeting: 14 April. 3rd anniversary and Social Get-together**

## **Welwyn meeting with Helen Fry and James Hamilton**

Helen Fry spoke about her book *The King's Most Loyal Enemy Alien* – about refugees in the British army in WWII – while James Hamilton, co-author of *Goodnight Vienna*, described how faithfully the characters in that book are based on real persons and the activities of secret services.

*Alfred Simms*

## **Next meeting: 8 April. Howard Falksohn, 'Germans in Argentina'**

## **Temple Fortune The story of the controversial Reszo Kasztner**

Prof Ladislaus Löb told us the story of Reszo Kasztner, who saved over 1,600 Hungarian Jews from the Nazis and was assassinated in Israel in 1957.

*David Lang*

## **Next meeting: 8 April, 2.15 pm. Alan Cohen, 'What is Art?'**

## **Brighton & Hove Sarid Israel update**

Dr Adler described the economic and political situation of the countries surrounding Israel and the scale of tolerance to, or hatred of, Israel, stressing the global spread of Islamic influence.

*Ceska Abrahams*

## **Next meeting: 19 April. Andrew Holder, 'The Bank of England'**

## **Book launch discussed at Cafe Imperial**

A small band of our favourite Veterans met, with most of the talk centring on the recent launch of Colin Anson's *German Schoolboy, British Commando: Churchill's Secret Soldier* (author: Helen Fry, pub. by History Press).

*Hazel Beiny*

## **Kingston CF Sharing ideas, experiences and cakes**

Once again, Susan Zisman offered her home and hospitality for our meeting. Fifteen of us, including a new member, shared ideas and experiences around a table of rapidly disappearing homemade cakes.

*Jackie Cronheim*

## **Edgware Postal history of refugees project**

William Kaczynski spoke to us about his project 'The Postal History of Refugees from WWII'. A fairly large audience very much enjoyed his talk.

*Felix Winkler*

## **Next meeting: 20 April. Prof Leslie Brent, 'Berlin Revisited'**

## **Radlett Jewish refugees at Bletchley**

Ruth Bourne, at Bletchley Park in 1944-46, gave a lively account of the great contribution made by code breakers to winning the war. She referred in particular to the role of Jewish refugees, whose knowledge of languages and intellectual brilliance made them especially suitable for this work.

*Fritz Starer*

## **Next meeting: 21 April. David Lawson, 'The Jews of Ostrava'**

## **Leeds CF Funny and sad stories**

We had a very successful meeting with a full house and a new member. Topic for discussion was 'A New Language, A New Culture, the Funny Things that Happened'. We laughed and almost cried at funny or sad stories members told recalling their arrival in Britain. A sumptuous tea followed with the conversation in full flow.

*Barbara Cammerman*

## **Next meeting: 20 April**

## **Film on Jewish refugees to be shown at Warsaw festival**

The Meridian TV film 'An Alien Loyalty', based on Helen Fry's book *The King's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens*, which includes interviews of AJR members, has been selected for the 7th Jewish Motifs International Film Festival in Warsaw this month.

## **Cambridge World Jewish Relief past and present**

Harry Heber told us World Jewish Relief, which started at the time of the East European pogroms and funded much of the help for refugees in the 1930s-40s, provides assistance to Jewish and other good causes to this day.

*Keith Lawson*

## **Next meeting: 15 April. David Lawson, 'The Jews of Ostrava'**

## **Child Survivors Association – AJR**

Margaret Brearley spoke on the theme 'Non-Jewish Zionism – a Passionate History'. It goes back a remarkably long way! Joanna's cheesecake was delectable, as always.

*Henri Obstfeld*

## **Next meeting: 18 April. A social**

## **Hendon London's first hotels**

David Barnett told us that 250 years ago there were no hotels in London, only coaching inns and coffee houses visited by men only. After the French Revolution, high-grade servants went into the hotel trade. There were 300 hotels in London by 1800. Currently London has more hotels than any other capital.

*Annette Saville*

## **Next meeting: 26 April. Playwright Lionel Goldstein**

**'Hitler's Will'**

**In conversation with Herman Rothman**  
At Imperial War Museum, Sunday 25 April,  
3 pm (entry free)

Sixty-five years after the Second World War, author and historian Helen Fry will speak to AJR veteran Herman Rothman, the last surviving interrogator in the British army who was part of the team that found and translated Hitler's political and personal will.

From his evacuation with the Kindertransport in 1939 to giving testimony in the Auschwitz Trials of 1963-65, Herman will share his memories of some of the most significant moments of the twentieth century. One of the few signed copies of Hitler's political testament is on display in the Imperial War Museum for this special event and senior historian Terry Charman will give an historical introduction. Signed copies of Herman's book 'Hitler's Will' will be on sale.

**Cleve Road: A strange affair**

Prof Gerald Curzon told us of the strange and often stormy relationship between the philosophers Hannah Arendt and Professor Martin Heidegger, who later joined the Nazi Party.

*David Lang*

**Next meeting: 27 April. Jason Caplan, Israeli Embassy**

**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**  
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3077

**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

**OUTING TO KEW GARDENS  
MONDAY 7 JUNE 2010**

The AJR Outreach Groups' Department is arranging an outing to Kew Gardens. This will be a whole day with lunch in the restaurant.

Explore glasshouses, landscapes and 250 years of history at the world's most famous garden. Climb to the treetops, delve into rainforest or discover more on a guided tour which will form part of our visit.

The land train is available for those who have difficulty walking long distances. For further details, please call Susan Harrod, Regional Groups Administrator, on 020 8385 3070.

**Hull CF A very happy Purim meeting**

Veronika gave a brief account of the Book of Esther and we tried to remember our own experiences as children. She also reported that the AJR trip to Israel had been a great success: the itinerary was very good and Carol Rossen, Carol Hart and Joseph had looked after everyone wonderfully well. Susanne provided lots of haman-tashen. A very happy Purim meeting.

*Veronika Keczkes*

**Next meeting: 6 June, D-Day anniversary**

**North London The life of  
Hans Casparius**

Alan Moss gave a talk on the life of Hans Casparius, the Berlin-born scion of a well-to-do family who became a producer of plays, including *Die Dreigroschenoper*, and travelled and photographed the world widely. A most fascinating morning

*Herbert Haberberg*

**Next meeting: 29 April. Andrea Cameron, 'Pear's Soap'**

**'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE**

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

**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)**  
Fred Austin 01384 252310

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

**AJR LUNCHEON CLUB**

Wednesday 21 April 2010

**Joan Rosenberg**  
'Journey of Jewish Music'

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 12 April 2010

**Hermann Hirschberger**  
'The Kindertransport Survey'

**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**

**April Afternoon Entertainment**

Thur 1	*BINGO*
Mon 5	CLOSED – EASTER MONDAY
Tue 6	CLOSED
Wed 7	Douglas Poster
Thur 8	Margaret Opdahl
Mon 12	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 13	CLOSED
Wed 14	Katinka Seiner
Thur 15	Mike Marandi
Mon 19	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Music Matinee
Tue 20	CLOSED
Wed 21	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 22	Ronnie Goldberg
Mon 26	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 27	CLOSED
Wed 28	William Smith
Thur 29	Jen Gould

**Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator**  
020 8385 3070

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

**Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator**  
0151 291 5734

**Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator**  
020 8385 3070

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

**Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator**  
020 8385 3077

**KT-AJR (Kindertransport)**  
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

**Child Survivors Association-AJR**  
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Deaths**

**Brook, Henry** Died suddenly 5 February 2010. Deeply mourned by his wife Heddy, family and friends. (We apologise for any distress caused by the misspelling of this name last month – Ed.)

**Kennedy, Gerty** Born Horowitz, Vienna, 14.11.1914, died peacefully at home in Berkhamsted, 16.2.2010.

**Morland, Henry** (Heinz Merlander) Formerly of Essen and Offenbach, died 6 March. Deeply mourned by wife Ingrid.

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**PAUL BALINT AJR CENTRE**

**Pamela Bloch** Clothes sale, separates etc. Thursday 15 April, 9.30-11.45 am and Wednesday 5 May 2010.



**'MONEY' – A Three-part Documentary Series for BBC2**

We are making a series about attitudes to money and would like to speak to Jewish people from a refugee background as part of our research.

With the recession, the furor over MPs' expenses and bankers' bonuses, we have all been forced to think about our attitudes to money and which value systems we privately subscribe to. The aim of the series is to examine people's philosophical and psychological attitudes to money to paint a portrait of contemporary Britain.

We're particularly interested in talking to people who feel their refugee background has influenced their attitude to money.

Please phone 020 7557 2315 or write to [moneyresearch@bbc.co.uk](mailto:moneyresearch@bbc.co.uk)

**HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS**

Sun 27 June – Sun 4 July 2010  
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**4-DAY TRIP TO GLASGOW**

Sunday 9 May to  
Wednesday 12 May 2010

For members in the South, we will be flying from Luton to Glasgow return.  
For Northern members, alternatives are flying, train or driving

**PROVISIONAL ITINERARY**

**Sunday 9 May**

Fly to Glasgow from Luton to arrive by 1 pm

**PM** Pollok House and Pollok Park with tea in the original kitchens

**EVE** Dinner with entertainer at Glasgow New Synagogue

**Monday 10 May**

**AM** Trip to Loch Lomond with lunch

**PM** Burrell Collection – contains over 9,000 works of art

**EVE** Dinner at L'Chaims Kosher Restaurant

**Tuesday 11 May**

**AM** Garnethill Synagogue and Jewish Archives.

Tour of the Gorbals, where Jews settled on arrival in Glasgow

**PM** Kelvingrove Art Galley and Museum Holocaust Section

**EVE** *Laughter in the Rain* – a musical by Neil Sedaka at The Kings Theatre

**Wednesday 12 May**

**AM** Giffnock Synagogue and Queens Park Synagogue Stained Glass Windows by John Clark

Lunch at the café at *House for an Art Lover*, designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1901

**Estimated cost £400 (depending on mode of travel), 3 nights' hotel stay and all above visits and transport by coach. All flights and bookings must be made by 19 April 2010. Please see enclosed letter for details and contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 for application form**

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**SS BODEGRAVEN**

Were you a passenger on this ship, which brought some 80 Kindertransport children and other families from Holland and arrived in Liverpool on 19-20 May 1940? If so, you may be interested to know that there will be a service to celebrate the 70th anniversary of this occasion on the weekend of 22 May 2010. **For further details, please contact Hans Levy on 01273 724169 or at [hanslevy@tesco.net](mailto:hanslevy@tesco.net)**

**HOLIDAY IN EASTBOURNE**

The AJR are doing another holiday at the **Lansdowne Hotel**  
**Friday 16 July to Friday 23 July**  
£520 per week dinner, bed and breakfast plus £40 per week single room supplement  
to include transport from Cleve Road, lunch on outward journey  
Book early to avoid disappointment  
**Please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070**

**JOIN US FOR A WEEK IN BOURNEMOUTH**

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(formerly Anglo Suisse)

**Sunday 9 May to Sunday 16 May**  
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## OBITUARIES

### Dr Amy Zahl Gottlieb, 1919-2009

The life of Amy Zahl Gottlieb was inextricably bound up with the Holocaust – as rescuer, historian, chronicler and archivist.

Amy Zahl was born in Stepney, the youngest of seven children of immigrant parents. In 1944 she joined the first Jewish Relief Units of the Central British Fund (CBF) for World Jewish Relief, where her work for victims of the Holocaust took her to Egypt, Greece and Italy. Amy put herself in harm's way on many occasions in her efforts to save others. In 1946 she joined the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the 'Joint') and directed the emigration of thousands of Jews in European displaced persons' camps to countries in the West. In the course of this work she met Oskar

Schindler and in 1949 arranged his visa and emigration to Argentina.

In 1962 Amy married the microbiologist David Gottlieb from the University of Illinois. Despite having left school at 14, Amy took a first degree at this university and then a PhD at the London School of Economics. Subsequently she taught history at Illinois, offering the first course there in Holocaust studies.

After David's death in 1983, Amy returned to live in Britain and resumed her work on behalf of refugees. The war-time files of the



CBF had been partly destroyed and partly stored in a lock-up at the back of the Jewish old age homes in Bishops Avenue. Amy took upon herself the huge task of sorting and archiving the enormous amount of material, ensuring that the former refugees had access to their own history: she realised that only those who themselves have had their families and identities torn so cruelly from them can fully appreciate the importance of this. It was at this time that she wrote her book *Men of Vision: Anglo-Jewry's Aid to Victims of the Nazi regime, 1933-1945*, based on the administrative archive of the CBF.

Amy died three days after her 90th birthday. We mourn the passing of a true friend, who spent her life in the service of others.

**Lilian Levy**

### Marianne Elsley, 1923-2009

Marianne was born in Rostock in northern Germany in 1923. Her father was a judge and her mother a doctor. They happened to be Jewish. Her very happy childhood was shattered when Hitler came to power and his relentless persecution of the Jews began. Realising that her life, even as a child, was endangered, she was sent at the age of 15 to England by Kindertransport, where she was lovingly cared for by a Quaker family to whom she was a complete stranger. She never saw her parents again – they were brutally murdered at Auschwitz.



lectures based on the two books, one in America to an audience of 1,500, who gave her a standing ovation. Her books were used recently in a BBC programme, 'Writing the Century', on Radio 4.

Marianne belonged to a local writers' group and was a very keen gardener.

Unfortunately, over a period of ten years or more Parkinsons deprived her of the ability to do any of the many things she once enjoyed so much and did so well. Her profound deafness also robbed her of the pleasures of social life and her love of music.

**Ralph Elsley**

his family perished.

Having been interned on the Isle of Man, Walter was sent on the *Dunera* to Hay Camp, south Australia. After 18 months, he was granted leave to enlist and return to Britain, where he served with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. After naturalisation, when his name was changed to Foster, he served as an interpreter with the occupation forces in Germany, returning to study international relations at the LSE, where he met his wife, Rachel Ginsburg.

In 1950 he joined the Anglo-Austrian Society, founded in 1944 to further the re-establishment of a free, independent and democratic Austria. After the war, the Society devoted itself to relief work, bringing hundreds of Austrian children to Britain for respite care, an activity soon reciprocated by invitations to British youngsters to visit Austria on exchanges which continued until the 1990s. The Society enjoyed the active support of all the British major political parties and of the Austrian government.

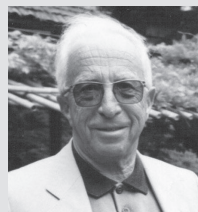
The Anglo-Austrian Music Society, originally founded to give work to émigré musicians, strove to re-establish cultural links broken by the war and was instrumental in organising the first visits to this country of the Vienna State Opera, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the Vienna Boys Choir and many others. It established the Richard Tauber Prize for singers, a biennial competition that continues.

Walter Foster was awarded the OBE and Austria's Grosses Goldenes Ehrenzeichen. He died on 27 December 2009 and is survived by his wife, children and ten grandchildren. For a fuller obituary and details of the Anglo-Austrian Society and Anglo-Austrian Music Society, see [www.aams.org.uk/wjf](http://www.aams.org.uk/wjf)

**Robert Avery**

### Walter Foster, 1923-2009

Walter Foster was General Secretary of the Anglo-Austrian Society from 1959 to his retirement in 1992. He was born Walter Fast in Vienna in 1923, second child to educated, liberal parents who actively supported the Wiener Werkstaette. His entrepreneurial and philanthropic father, a criminal lawyer by training, established an early system for the day release of prisoners, working for a proper wage in his own craft factory, which made all things in wood from precision drawing instruments to prefabricated timber holiday homes. After the Anschluss, Walter was sent to England on a Kindertransport, arriving in Harwich in December 1938, leaving his parents behind and separated from his elder brother, who went to the United States. His father survived the war in Palestine, but most of



Marianne's Quaker friends enabled her to complete her schooling, after which she trained during the war as a nurse. At a hospital in Salisbury she met her husband Ralph. She continued nursing during his six years at university and they had two children: a girl now living in America and a son who lives in London.

When Ralph became a Boarding Housemaster at Bedford Modern School, she spent ten very active years as his valued and efficient assistant.

In 1970 they moved to Banbury to another teaching post and she became the very busy and popular secretary at Overthorpe Hall School, now the Carrdus School. She retired in 1990.

Having moved to Deddington, Marianne was for some years president of the Women's Institute, editor of the *Deddington News*, and a member of a very enterprising Craft Group. She made many friends in consequence.

Then, in order to honour the memory of her parents for the great sacrifice they had made for her, she wrote two books about her escape from the Nazis and the terrible fate that awaited her parents. She gave over 100



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL



### How Israel withstood the recession

**B**een there, done that. Why was Israel not affected by the global economic crisis to the same extent as some other countries, specifically the US and the UK? It was probably due to a number of factors.

In the 1980s, due to a combination of ideological rigidity and economic mismanagement, Israel experienced galloping inflation. This was accompanied by a major banking crisis, triggered in part by the banks' manipulation of their share prices. There are only five major banking groups in Israel and just two of those are really large, so that they essentially operate as a cartel. In 1985 the government bailed out all the banks, i.e., nationalised them, in order to prevent the entire banking system from collapsing. Private assets and savings were frozen for several years, the local currency was devalued and the entire economy was revamped through the concerted efforts of the government, the Histadrut (National Federation of Labour), and the Employers' Association. Most significantly, strict controls on banks' activities were put in place, with particular reference to the Basle Banking Supervision Regulations.

Since then, the socialist ideals that

motivated Israel's founding fathers and dominated its political and economic thinking have been gradually replaced by an awareness that in the long run the capitalist model has more to offer. Even the kibbutzim, the last stronghold of the socialist ethos, have been privatised to a great extent.

There are, of course, other factors at work. As a country with little or no natural resources, Israel has had to rely on its only comparative advantage – its people. Israeli brainpower has given the country high-tech and bio-tech industries that are considered among world leaders. In fact, one of Israel's foremost exports in recent years has been its start-up companies, which are often bought by foreign companies, thus bringing in large amounts of foreign exchange, enriching Israel's treasury through taxation and creating a thin stratum of extremely wealthy people.

But buy-outs apart, there are other reasons for Israel's relative immunity to the global crisis. Israel has no pretensions to being an international financial centre, it has focused on niche markets and its fiscal and monetary policies have been reasonably sensible. Thus, the budget deficit and government expenditure are

kept low by law, and taxes are relatively high. There is an extensive welfare system, and anyone seeking a mortgage must provide adequate proof of payback ability. Government intervention in the currency and financial markets has been drastically reduced and funds are channeled more to R&D and less to propping up unsustainable industries.

Bankers' bonuses exist in Israel, but a relatively small number of people are involved and in recent years there has been greater transparency in this regard. High-tech companies also hand out bonuses to employees, but no one seems to begrudge these. The one public institution that pays its employees a decent wage, the Bank of Israel, comes under criticism for this but justifies it on the grounds that its employees are of a higher calibre than the average civil servant and that it has to compete with the banking sector, where wages are higher than average. It is only fair on my part to admit that, as a former employee of the Bank of Israel, I may be biased on this point.

There are still many aspects of the political system which are deleterious to attaining a healthy economy. These will continue to constitute a drain on Israel's resources until the electoral system is changed to ease the stranglehold that pressure groups have on coalition governments. But unfortunately that is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.

**Dorothea Shefer-Vanson**

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

Jew than you are' followed by 'Oh, no you're not', all I can say is that when I walked up the ramp in Auschwitz Dr Mengele did not ask me which branch of Judaism, if any, I belonged to and neither do the present hordes of anti-Semites. A Jew is a Jew is a Jew and, if we don't hang together, we run the danger of hanging separately.

While I fully agree that we can ignore the liberation of Auschwitz (and forget to mention the thousands who were shot along their death march from that place a week earlier) as a day of remembrance, it does give schools a day on which to recite, perform plays, produce drawings bearing on the Shoah and, certainly here in Suffolk, they have identified with Jewish children of their age who ended their days in death camps.

And they and their teachers prepared for that day in their own time.

*Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk*

#### GOODNIGHT VIENNA

Sir – J. H. Schryer, author of *Goodnight Vienna*, writes (December 2009; novel reviewed in Journal in October 2009) that the central character was 'loosely based' on my grandfather, Captain Thomas Joseph Kendrick, MI6.

It may be of interest that my grandfather was captured by the Gestapo in 1938 and later expelled from Austria. My father, mother, sister and I had to make a hasty exit from Austria shortly afterwards. My grandfather was made commandant of a camp for senior German officers at Trent Park, where

they were interrogated. He was in charge of CSDIC until the end of the war and received the OBE and the American Legion of Merit. He died in England in 1972. *Ken Walsh Howick, KZNATAL, South Africa*

#### 'ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY'

Sir – Concerning Frank Bright's letter (March), the carol 'Once in Royal David's City' refers not, as he states, to Jerusalem but to Bethlehem. The relevant Biblical reference (Luke II, Verses 4-5) reads 'And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.'

*John Buck, London N15*

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