

Friends of the 'enemy aliens'

In all the many obituaries, tributes and other articles in the media devoted to Michael Foot since his death on 3 March 2010, hardly any mention has been made of his forthright support of the refugees from Hitler who were interned by the British government in the early summer of 1940. Though Foot was barely 27 years old at the time, he was a prominent feature writer for the London *Evening Standard*, thanks to the patronage of the paper's owner, Lord Beaverbrook, who appointed him editor of the paper in 1942. On 23 July 1940, Foot wrote a trenchant article attacking the stupidity and injustice of the internment of the refugees from Nazism, who had every reason to hate Hitler and to rally to the Allied cause. 'Why not lock up General de Gaulle?', he concluded caustically.

As is well known, Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria fleeing racial persecution formed the great majority of those interned, though the detainees also included non-Jewish political refugees, as well as Italians and people of other nationalities suspected of sympathy for the Axis powers. When Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, the Jewish refugees of German nationality (who included Austrians after Austria's incorporation into Germany) perforce became 'enemy aliens'. At first, the government took no action against them, beyond having them appear before tribunals that assessed the degree of risk they posed to Britain; the overwhelming majority of them were allocated to Category C, indicating that they posed no danger.

With the Nazi invasion of France and the Low Countries in May 1940, however, government policy changed, in response to an increasingly vociferous press campaign that demanded the immediate internment of all refugees in the light of Britain's perilous military position. In May 1940, male 'enemy aliens' living in designated 'protected areas' on coasts exposed to invasion were interned;



Michael Foot, 1913 – 2010

this was followed a few days later by the internment of men classed by the tribunals as Category B. On 25 June, the government ordered the internment of men in Category C, which entailed the rounding up of around 13,000 more refugees. Some 4,000 women were also detained, before the policy of internment was abandoned. During July 1940, that policy was comprehensively discredited in the eyes of the public by events like the sinking of the liner *Arandora Star*, which was carrying internees to Canada, by a German U-boat, with heavy loss of life.

Contributors to the *Evening Standard*, alongside Michael Foot, included the great cartoonist David Low, born in New Zealand and creator of such unforgettable figures as the dyspeptic and reactionary Colonel Blimp and the image of the stolidly unadventurous Trades Union Congress as a carthorse. Blimp was to undergo an unexpected transformation in Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's unforgettable film *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), where the inimitable Roger Livesey portrayed the reluctant conversion of the old warrior to modern methods of prosecuting the war against Hitler, with the able assistance of Anton Walbrook (himself a refugee from

Nazism, as was Pressburger) and the young Deborah Kerr.

Low had long been a committed anti-Fascist and an advocate of a more robust stance towards Nazi Germany than Chamberlain's ill-fated policy of appeasement. His most famous cartoon appeared in the *Evening Standard* in response to the signing on 23 August 1939 of the pact between Hitler and Stalin, one of the great diplomatic surprise packets of modern times, which signalled the imminent outbreak of the Second World War and sounded the final death knell for appeasement. Entitled 'Rendezvous', the cartoon depicts Hitler and Stalin greeting each other with much bowing and scraping over the corpse of a murdered Poland, the pact's most obvious victim. 'The scum of the earth, I believe?', intones Hitler by way of greeting to his fellow dictator, while Stalin responds with the endearing words 'The bloody assassin of the workers, I presume?' Both men carry concealed weapons, and the transparent insincerity of their protestations of friendship highlights the cynical *Realpolitik* behind the pact.

Low's opposition to Fascism, and his aversion to Stalinist Communism, was fuelled by an instinctive sense of justice and a strong feeling of sympathy for its victims. He too did not remain inactive in the face of the internment of the innocent and defenceless 'enemy aliens'. The *Evening Standard* of 19 July 1940 carried a cartoon by him, divided into two parts by strands of barbed wire. To the left, behind the wire, stand the disconsolate internees, sober, reflective and sometimes bespectacled men with the dark suits and intellectual air that characterised the refugees from Hitler in the public mind; forlornly, they gaze out across the wire towards the freedom of which they have been incomprehensibly deprived. The injustice and idiocy of their internment as supposed enemies of Britain is underlined by Low's description

continued overleaf

FRIENDS OF THE 'ENEMY ALIENS' *continued from page 1*

of them as 'German & Italian enemies of Nazism and Fascism'.

To the right, outside the wire, appear a number of manic-looking figures who march around in a demented parody of right-wing militarism; Low calls them 'our own total-minded Little Hitlers'. Clad in trench coats and bowler hats or black top hats and black jackets, they sport placards bearing such slogans as 'suppress the press' and 'death for fool talk'. One man, with the regulation clipped military-style moustache, squats down to squint at the internees through the lower strands of the wire, for all the world like a dog snarling at its prey. There is even a woman, with the mountainous bosom and the flat, pill-box hat that bespeak the right-wing patriotic fanatic, who carries a placard demanding 'lock up all foreigners'. In the left-hand bottom corner of the cartoon, a small girl looks on in bewilderment. She asks the adult accompanying her 'Which are the dangerous ones we have to keep behind barbed-wire, uncle?'

The remarkable change in public opinion towards the internment of 'enemy aliens' that occurred in July/August 1940 was largely the achievement of the friends of the refugees in Parliament and the media. Under wartime conditions, and especially in the emergency situation of summer 1940, it was far from easy for pressure from outside government to effect a change in official policy towards a little-regarded group like the refugees from Hitler. But there were in the House of Commons a number of determined supporters of the refugees bent on righting the glaring injustice of internment. Pride of place among these fighters for justice and liberty must go to Eleanor Rathbone, the Independent MP who sat for the Combined Universities. Her contribution was so great that it will form the subject of next month's front-page article.

Among the other MPs who supported the refugees, three names are most often cited. Particularly impassioned as a champion of the refugees was Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, Labour MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, who was a consistent supporter of refugee causes, during the period of their immigration into Britain before 1939, during the internment crisis, and during the desperate attempts to rescue Jews from the Nazis after 1939; his death in 1943 was a severe loss. A tireless worker on behalf of the Jews, including those seeking entry to Palestine (then under British mandate), Wedgwood was a genuine radical with a strong moral

conscience.

The Conservative MP for Chippenham, Major Victor Cazalet, was another outspoken critic of internment; in the House of Commons, Cazalet memorably described internment as 'a bespattered page of our history', thus providing Ronald Stent, a refugee and internee, with the title of his important study of internment (1980). But Cazalet came from a very different political background to Wedgwood; at the time of the Spanish Civil War, he had been a strong supporter of General Franco, though he swung behind Churchill in his uncompromising stance against Hitler. In 1938 he had visited Vienna, where he was moved to action by the desperate situation of the Jews trapped there by the Anschluss. Cazalet died in 1943, in the aircraft crash in Gibraltar that also claimed the life of the Polish leader General Sikorski.

Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, Conservative MP for Birmingham Handsworth, invited Albert Einstein to Britain in September 1933, following the Nazi takeover of power in Germany; this enabled Einstein to make a memorable speech at an event held at the Royal Albert Hall in support of Jewish academics persecuted by the Nazis. Locker-Lampson was at first sight an improbable ally of the refugees: he was an outspoken enemy of 'Bolshevism' and a staunchly right-wing advocate of 'cleaning out the Reds'. Nevertheless, he intervened repeatedly in Parliament to press the cause of the refugees; it speaks for his humanity that on 25 July 1940 he questioned the Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, over the case of Professor Fritz Mayer, a refugee who had committed suicide when the police arrived to detain him. Along with Henry Graham White, Liberal MP for Birkenhead East and a close contact of the AJR during its earliest years, these men deserve a place in the memories of the refugees from Hitler and their descendants.

Anthony Grenville

AJR Directors
Gordon Greenfield
Michael Newman
Carol Rossen

AJR Heads of Department
Susie Kaufman Organiser, AJR Centre
Sue Kurlander Social Services

AJR Journal
Dr Anthony Grenville Consultant Editor
Dr Howard Spier Executive Editor
Andrea Goodmaker Secretarial/Advertisements

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

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, if required, £6 payable in advance

Agenda

Annual Report 2009
Hon. Treasurer's Report
Discussion

Election of Committee of Management
All questions for the chair should be submitted by Tuesday 1 June to the Head of Administration at Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx. HA7 4RL.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The following members will be proposed for election or re-election to the Committee at the AGM on Thursday 17 June 2010:

Mr A C Kaufman, Chairman, Mr W D Rothenberg, Vice Chairman & Hon. Treasurer, Mrs E S Angel, Secretary*, Mr C W Dunston, Trustee*, Mrs D Franklin, Trustee, Mrs G R Glassman, Trustee*, Ms Karen Goodman, Mrs J Millan, Mr E Reich, Mr A Spiro, Mr Tim Schwarz

*Committee members retiring by rotation and being proposed for re-election

Anyone wishing to propose any other member for election as Hon Officer, Trustee, or Committee member must submit to AJR's Head of Administration such a proposal signed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting and with the signed agreement of the person being proposed no later than 1 June.

**ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY
MAY**

Mon 3 No lecture Bank Holiday
Club 43

Mon 10 Bill Tyler, 'The Inca Trail (with slides)' Club 43

Mon 17 Irene Lawford-Hinrichsen, 'Johann Strauss II and the Last Waltz of the Habsburgs' Club 43

Mon 24 Dr Fred Rosner, 'My Years with the Philharmonia Chorus' Club 43

Wed 26 Prof Detlev Claussen, 'Jews in Football: Mediating between the Gentleman's Sport and the Professional Game' Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247. In collaboration with the Leo Baeck Institute

Mon 31 No lecture Bank Holiday
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

A head to remember

Our Latin master was examining. His victim, clearly unprepared, stood by his desk. A stricken look of appeal went from her to the class. 'Well?' Deafening silence. Then the answer came, in a loud, clear voice. My voice, I realised with horror. I clapped my hands over my mouth but it was too late. The ring of that voice lingered on in the quiet classroom.

Professor Koja sent the girl back to her place with a 'Not Satisfactory', the fail grade. Then he turned to me. 'Do you remember what I said would happen the next time I caught anyone prompting?' I remembered. But it was so obvious that I hadn't meant to prompt. It would have been sheer lunacy in that loud voice and in full range of his vision.

'I'm going to make an example of you now. Put your coat on and stand outside the classroom.'

Outside, in the cold and silent corridor, the tears came. Shaken with sobs, I washed my face under the single cold water tap opposite the door that led into my classroom. It was so *unfair*.

I was so busy washing my tears away that I had been unaware of the approach of a tall, stooping figure. Only when it towered over me did I look up – to find myself in the august presence of Dr Rudolf Kroenig, the headmaster. That leathery-faced god was enthroned in his office, and his younger charges saw him only on the most formal occasions.

'Are you feeling ill?', he asked abruptly but with unmistakable concern. I shook my head. 'Then why, in heaven's name, are you standing out here instead of being in your classroom?' 'B-b-because,' I sobbed, 'Professor Koja sent me out.' 'Oh, and why would he do that?'

Had he lived another four years, how would this man – who always fought injustice and authoritarianism – have fared in the Third Reich? I like to think he would have been a 'Righteous Gentile'. He certainly stood by one distraught Jewish child – who will never forget him.

'Because I prompted. But I didn't mean to.' Had I really seen the ghost of a smile on that stern face? I was almost sure I had.

He straightened and cleared his throat. 'Hmm ... ah, well, you won't do it again, will you?' 'N-n-no, Herr Direktor.'

He disappeared hastily into my classroom. I heard the class rise and sit down again. He exchanged a few words with Koja. Again the class rose. Koja must have accompanied him to the door, for quite close to it I heard Kroenig say in a low voice 'I believe your little sinner is repentant.' I heard Koja's short laugh but didn't catch his reply. The headmaster came out and, without a further glance in my direction, walked away quickly. A few moments later I was readmitted.

I had gained the distinct impression that our headmaster did not approve – for any reason – of children standing

in draughty corridors during lessons and that his disapproval had been conveyed to Koja, however tactfully.

That was at the beginning of 1932 when I was 12 years old. Two years later Kroenig was dead.

The first page of the school's annual report for 1933-34 is entirely taken up by Dr Kroenig's black-rimmed photograph, while the next four pages pay tribute to the man. A committed Social Democrat, he had been honoured by Red Vienna, but was sacked immediately after Dollfuss's victory in February 1934. His staff, and many parents, of all political persuasions, united to petition for his reinstatement. He was indeed reinstated, but too late. Officially, he died of kidney failure but it was rumoured that he had committed suicide, which I am inclined to believe.

He had been head of the school since 1923, and the school was his life. Despite his somewhat forbidding appearance, this least pompous and most enlightened of headmasters, decades ahead of his time, had done all he could to spread liberalism throughout the school. It had been an uphill struggle trying to convert the older and more conservative teachers to his way of thinking and he never sought confrontation, but his favourites had been the young men and women with progressive ideas and first-class degrees. The whole school turned out for his funeral.

Had he lived another four years, how would this man – who always fought injustice and authoritarianism – have fared in the Third Reich? I like to think he would have been a 'Righteous Gentile'. He certainly stood by one distraught Jewish child – who will never forget him.

Edith Argy

A regular to-do

I was in hospital recently with a broken hip but, with all the *tsores* and pain, I must tell you a very funny thing that happened.

Round about Xmas time, an old Jewish lady was wheeled into my ward by the ambulance crew. After she had been settled in her bed, she was very nervous and confused and couldn't find her hearing aid. When I introduced myself and told her I was Jewish, she

relaxed a little.

Soon it was 8.00 pm and the man who hands out the medicine came around to her bed. He asked if she was going regularly as he could give her some Senokot. She answered 'Yes, I go regularly.' He asked: 'How regularly do you go?' 'I go once a week on shabbas,' she replied.

'Well,' he said, 'That's not enough!' and counted out a double dose of

Senokot in his hand.

'What's it got to do with you how often I go?,' she protested. 'It's none of your business!' She asked me to tell him to get away from her – the anti-Semite!

Had he asked *me*, I would have told him twice a year – on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I bet he would have given me the entire contents of the bottle.

Judy Benton

AJR Annual Report 2009

Highlights of the year

Last year was an exceptionally busy time for the AJR as we welcomed a record number of members to our regional group meetings and attended to an ever-increasing number of our members with urgent medical, social and welfare needs.

We also made great strides to promote our Holocaust educational and research projects, enabling the public, students and scholars to access materials and ground-breaking resources that will help create the legacy of the refugees and survivors who settled in Britain.

In January, our Continental Britons exhibition, created jointly with the Jewish Museum London, was on display at Burgh House in Hampstead and we were delighted that the well-known comic actor Andrew Sachs gave a welcoming speech on the opening night.

We were proud to launch our audio-visual testimony collection *Refugee Voices* at an event at the Wiener Library. We are delighted that this remarkable resource, running to more than 450 hours of filmed interviews, will be available at the Wiener and, following discussions, at the Universities of Leeds and Leicester and the German Historical Institute London. Members with access to the internet can read more about this project at www.refugeevoices.co.uk

Following months of dedicated work, we launched the Kindertransport survey 'Making New Lives in Britain'. With first-hand material collected from more than 1,000 former Kinder and their families, the information gathered covers, for the first time, the Continental background, journey to Britain, reception and subsequent experiences and lives of the children of the Kindertransport. More details of this project are available on the AJR website. Special mention must be made of Hermann Hirschberger's great effort in leading the team to produce the survey.

In a new initiative, we held our first Celebration of Volunteering event with a gathering at the House of Lords, hosted by Lord Janner of Braunstone. We are grateful to the actor George Layton, who read excerpts from his book about volunteering. Our dedicated volunteers were presented with certificates recognising the invaluable role they play.

We are also grateful to Edwina Currie, who hosted a magnificent summer regional get-together for 70 of our members at her home in Surrey in June. Her generosity and kindness are much appreciated.

We repeated our three-day visit to London, this time for members from the South of England, and were delighted to welcome Peter Suchet as our guest speaker at a dinner at the Belsize Square Synagogue. The visit included trips to the theatre and museums and a tour of the East End.

The Annual Tea was held at the Hilton in Watford in September. Once again, it was a great success, with 300 members attending a delightful afternoon. We were greatly

entertained by Simon Butteriss, Deborah Crowe and Diana Franklin with music from the ensemble New World Operetta.

Personnel and membership

In our Social Services Department, Maxine Weber replaced Darren Aaron, who returned to his home town of Newcastle in October 2009.

At the end of 2009, AJR membership stood at 3,081, including 156 new members, of whom 48 were 'second generation'. A total of 165 members passed away, 19 cancelled and 42 moved away or their subscriptions were unpaid.

Social and welfare services

Last year, members of staff achieved a higher level of professional social work practice with three members of the Social Services team achieving N.V.Q. Level 3.

As our members age, our social care workers are facing complex issues. Consequently, members of staff are required to make more detailed assessments to ensure that members receive appropriate services such as emotional support and financial help from available social security programmes. We are also experiencing a greater need for applications to the programmes administered by the Claims Conference.

We have developed a close working relationship with the Manchester Federation and, separately, the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board. We continue to maintain links with the Holocaust Survivors' Centre and liaise with local authorities and other allied Holocaust survivor and refugee organisations. To improve staff development, we arrange training courses with partner organisations invited to make presentations.

Financial assistance

As the recipient and custodian of funds from the Claims Conference for Holocaust refugees and survivors living in the UK, the AJR is responsible for distributing grants, which for 2009 totalled a record of just over \$3.1m. The funds are paid to clients of five charities and administered from our offices. In total, we have made some 1,700 grants for emergency purposes.

Additionally, during the year, 321 survivors and refugees (members of these five charities) received Homecare grants at a cost of £846,000. In total, 123,000 hours of care have been provided under this scheme, which helps us to maintain clients in their own homes for as long as possible.

Separately, through our Self Aid scheme, we are pleased to have made grants of £506,219 to 192 members with the greatest need.

Northern groups

In January, we launched the South Yorkshire and Midlands Memorial Book, which was on display at Coventry Cathedral and as part of the national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Coventry.

The Imperial War Museum in Manchester

hosted a wonderful event for over 100 AJR members from the North when we presented AJR Holocaust Memorial Books (Leeds, Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, South Yorkshire & The Midlands) to the Museum. The books will be used as part of the Museum's educational programmes.

The AJR Northern groups' visit to London in March was much enjoyed – especially the visit to the Houses of Parliament and the surprise invitation to 10 Downing Street.

The Northern groups continue to flourish with regular meetings – small Continental Friends meetings held in members' homes in the outlying areas and the meetings with speakers in the main centres. We organised several outings to the theatre, interesting homes and gardens as well as a day out to St Annes-on-Sea to meet AJR members on holiday.

The annual AJR Northern Get-together was held in Leeds, where over 90 members met for a day of inter-active discussions and socialising. The lunchtime speaker was Anita Parmar from the Holocaust Educational Trust.

Members in Glasgow and Newcastle, now supported by the AJR's Agnes Isaacs, also enjoyed a variety of outings and entertainment with visits to the Jewish Film Theatre and the Yiddish Song Project. We also organised a Viennese afternoon with Strauss and Schubert (together with Sachertorte and apple strudel) and 'The Art of the Cantor' with members treated to some of the best *chazanot* from around the world.

Speakers included Aubrey Pomerance from the Jewish Museum Berlin, Michael Tobias from Jewish Genealogy, and Edward Green, HM The Queen's jeweller, at the Scotland Regional meeting.

Chanukah celebrations were held in Glasgow and Newcastle with entertainers (and latkes).

Southern groups

We established a monthly London group in Ealing, bringing the total of gatherings every month to 15, and a new Continental Friends group in Eastbourne in August.

We organised a number of events, including High Tea in Welwyn Garden City, with Peter Suchet as speaker in July, while outings included visits to Kew Gardens, Hatfield House, Rhinefield House (New Forest) and the Freud Museum. We also took groups to Kenwood House and the West Lodge Arboretum and on a special trip to visit the House of Lords.

Theatre outings were to the New End Theatre for *American Song Book* and *Hello Dolly* at Regents Park Open Air Theatre.

Some of the most successful events were the screenings of *Churchill's German Army*, a documentary film featuring several AJR members who served in British forces during the war. Shown first in June at Alyth Gardens and then in October at Tunbridge Wells, we plan to show this film at other venues in the future.

Sadly, in November, having celebrated 15 years of South London bi-monthly meetings in Streatham, it was agreed that this venue was no longer viable for the aging participants. However, the Continental Friends meetings in Kingston upon Thames, Bromley and Dulwich have been gaining strength.

The groups' successes are due not only to the dedication of our staff, but also to the support given by members and volunteers who help by lending their homes for meetings, finding speakers, helping with organising refreshments and generally looking out for each other's well-being.

Last year, from across the country, more than two-thirds of our membership attended at least one regional group meeting.

Holidays

Members from Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Hull and London enjoyed a relaxing week in St Annes-on-Sea. As has become part of the programme, the holiday-makers were joined on one of the days by members from the Northern groups.

There was also the annual trip to Eastbourne in July, when members enjoyed a very full week with entertainment, trips to the theatre and outings to local places of interest.

In November, we organised a well-attended trip to Israel. The group was based in Jerusalem and participated in day trips, including floating in the Dead Sea, to the top of Masada (by cable car), and many interesting sites and museums. There was also time for members to meet up with family and friends.

Claims advice

We guided members with applications for the second and final payments from the Austrian General Settlement Fund as well as ongoing claims for the Claims Conference-operated Hardship and Article II Funds.

Following a court ruling in Germany, the AJR assisted with claims for survivors who worked in ghettos, with those eligible receiving as much as £45,000 in arrears awards.

Advice was also provided to some of the youngest Austrian Holocaust victims, who benefited from a new law enabling them to claim a pension from the Austrian government.

Volunteers

The Volunteers Department has benefited from an intern from the Action Reconciliation Services for Peace who started work with us in September for one year.

This has enabled the Department to launch a befriender service to our clients in the Manchester area, where we have worked very closely with the Manchester University Leadership Programme. It is through their good offices that we have successfully placed eight volunteers with AJR members. This is the Volunteer Department's first initiative in the North of England and we are delighted at its success.

We also instigated, in London, a programme that matches 6th-formers from Jewish secondary schools with our clients who would like help using their home computers.

This project has proved so popular that we now have a waiting list of clients.

The Department continues to find volunteers to help at the regional groups, Head Office and the AJR Centre as well as over 90 befrienders continuing to visit AJR members at home.

AJR Journal

The Journal featured, as before, articles of outstanding interest by regular contributors. Consulting Editor Dr Anthony Grenville wrote articles of predominantly historical content, art critic Gloria Tessler reviewed exhibitions of both general and special interest to members, and Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's 'Letter from Israel' contained insights on topical affairs from a Jerusalem standpoint. Humour (not normally a strong point of the Journal) tinged with nostalgia was provided mainly by occasional contributors Victor Ross and Edith Argy. Peter Phillips wrote a number of provocative articles on present-day dilemmas of British Jews.

Among regular features of the Journal were reviews of books, theatre, music and exhibitions as well as reports on AJR group activities.

Perhaps the most controversial section of the Journal remained the correspondence columns. As previously, the Israel-Arab conflict proved the most passionate area of discussion. Other subjects – for instance, the merits or otherwise of Orthodox and Reform/Liberal Jewry – were hotly debated.

Not without interest is the geographical location of the readership: one issue alone included letters from readers in Germany, Greece, Israel, Switzerland and Venezuela.

AJR Centre

The Centre continued to provide a welcoming setting for members to enjoy delicious kosher lunches as well as a range of entertainment and activities. Alongside the monthly Luncheon Club and Kindertransport lunches, we introduced a monthly film *matinée* and arranged farewell lunches for Bertha Leverton before her emigration to Israel and for Katia Gould's 90th birthday.

Members from across the country enjoyed lunch at the Centre as part of the visit to London in March and the Centre prepared the refreshments at Belsize Square Synagogue as part of the AJR's commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day.

The Centre held coffee mornings before the trips to Israel, St Annes-on-Sea and Eastbourne. Rabbi Steven Katz led our Model Seder and both the Kinder and Chanukah parties were over-subscribed.

With many members increasingly unable to cook for themselves, the Centre continues to arrange for Meals-on-Wheels deliveries in the London area and take-away meals. These vital services reflect our Homecare programme of ensuring that our members' lives at home are as comfortable as possible.

Kindertransport

At the start of the year, we were still receiving congratulatory letters following the Kindertransport Celebration at the Jews' Free School the previous November.

With the unveiling of a statue in Gdansk, there are now permanent commemorations of the Kindertransport in Britain, Austria, Germany and Poland.

The outcome of the survey has proved a great success and the Kindertransport continues to be active with numerous social events and lunches. Following Bertha Leverton's emigration to Israel, Bernd Koschland took over as editor of the *Newsletter*.

Child Survivors Association

The CSA, which became a special interest group of the AJR in 2007, looks after the interests of the child survivors of the Holocaust. With affiliation to the AJR, CSA membership has increased in recent years.

Alongside a programme of social gatherings and guest speakers, the summer strawberry tea was very well attended, as was the splendid Chanukah lunch.

Zachor, the book containing episodes of several members' experiences during the Second World War, continues to be very well received and is due to be expanded.

The World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors Conference took place near Boston, and the European Association of Survivors Conference in Warsaw, with the CSA represented at both.

Jewish Refugees Committee

The microfilmed archive of the Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC), housed at AJR Head Office, has proved to be a logical extension of our work.

The JRC archive receives enquiries from individuals keen to trace family and friends, from German/Austrian pension authorities wishing to confirm a former immigrant's status, from university researchers working on PhD theses, and from organisations tracking down the owners of looted art. On many occasions, there is a link between the AJR database and the refugees named on the JRC files.

Grants

The AJR Charitable Trust (AJRCT) continued its support of the AJR Holocaust Memorial Books with a grant towards the production of the Scotland Memorial Book – the sixth in the series – launched to commemorate Yom Hashoah in Glasgow.

Among other projects, the AJRCT gave a grant towards the recently reopened Jewish Museum London, the Jewish Film Festival and the King Solomon School, to support their programme of educational trips to Poland.

Conclusion

Our members continue to astound us with their zest for life and demands for an ever-increasing programme of events and activities. While we are sadly losing many of our members, we are continuously finding and assisting many former refugees and survivors, some of whom have, surprisingly, never previously heard about the AJR. With members' needs changing, our professional staff continue to help to ensure that they can enjoy a more comfortable life.

Andrew Kaufman
Chairman, Association of
Jewish Refugees

Treasurer's Report 2009

After the ravages of falling markets in 2008, the AJR Charitable Trust recovered substantially on its investment portfolio in 2009 and that improvement has continued in the early part of 2010, although we have not recovered all our 2008 losses. During 2009 we also received some significant legacies, so that our balance sheet at the end of 2009 looks rather healthier than a year earlier. Meanwhile, our expenditure on welfare has continued to rise – it is our policy to insulate from market fluctuations those of our needier members whom we help with regular allowances, emergency aid or home help.

Our welfare resources are augmented, as can be seen from the published figures, by considerable sums received (through the Umbrella Group of UK agencies) from the Claims Conference or, through them, from the German Government, the Swiss Banks Compensation scheme and other agencies, and from the Austrian Government under their Austrian Holocaust Survivors Emergency Assistance Programme (AHSEAP). We have to plan for the future when these very welcome funding programmes might dry up, as, for example, the ICHEIC and Hungarian Gold Train funds have already done.

It is always difficult to know for how long we will have the responsibility of helping our aging members - happily a significant number reach very advanced years, with 33 being over 100 years of age. Balancing immediate needs, our known resources and the needs of the next few years is always difficult, but we anticipate that the bulk of our current reserves is going to be spent over the next eight to ten years assuming just our current programmes continue.

We also have to take into account the ever-reducing contribution of local authorities to assisting for example with home care, and we may well be called on to give even greater help in the future as government and local authority expenditure is cut back.

Having the resources is only part of the picture. Without our dedicated team of social workers led by Sue Kurlander, we would not reach those of our members who need support and it is in helping those members that our money is applied to such good effect.

Once again, I would like to thank Gordon Greenfield, who carries the burden not only of looking after our financial affairs but also manages the financial affairs of the Umbrella Group and the rigorous reporting requirements of the Claims Conference.

David Rothenberg
Honorary Treasurer, Association of
Jewish Refugees

Finance Report

AJR – Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31st December 2009

Income:	2009		2008	
	£	£	£	£
Membership/Donations and Legacies	73,913		78,600	
Other	<u>3,958</u>		<u>4,410</u>	
		77,871		83,010
Less:				
Overhead Expenses				
Salary Costs	58,064		56,691	
AJR Journal	53,732		52,704	
Administration/Depreciation	<u>50,694</u>		<u>52,432</u>	
		<u>162,490</u>		<u>161,827</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus:		<u>-70,112</u>		<u>-78,817</u>

Summary of Balance Sheet at 31st December 2009

	2009	2008
	£	£
Current Assets	18,118	88,047
Less: Current Liabilities	<u>2,179</u>	<u>1,996</u>
	<u>15,939</u>	<u>86,051</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund	86,051	164,868
Net deficiency for the year	<u>-70,112</u>	<u>-78,817</u>
	<u>15,939</u>	<u>86,051</u>

David Rothenberg, Hon. Treasurer 01/04/2010

AJR CHARITABLE TRUST PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE Summary figure for the year ended 31st December 2009

Income:	2009		2008	
	£	£	£	£
Takings – Day Centre and meals-on-wheels	89,007		80,858	
Less outgoings:				
Salaries	97,870		93,753	
Catering costs	189,020		190,285	
Sundry expenses	<u>109,847</u>	<u>396,737</u>	<u>81,904</u>	<u>365,942</u>
Deficit funded from Charitable Trust		<u>307,730</u>		<u>285,084</u>

AJR CHARITABLE TRUST – Summary Income and Expenditure Accounts Year ended 31st December 2009

	2009	2008
Income:		
Gift Aid/Donations/Claims Conference	803,953	710,630
Investment income	487,355	632,818
Sheltered housing	<u>21,843</u>	<u>29,246</u>
	1,313,151	1,372,694
Legacies	<u>1,363,828</u>	<u>607,001</u>
	<u>2,676,979</u>	<u>1,979,695</u>
Less outgoings:		
Day Centre	307,730	285,084
Self Aid, Homecare and Emergency Grants	1,005,177	1,008,253
Other organisations	417,104	283,072
Administration/Depreciation	<u>916,364</u>	<u>968,190</u>
	<u>2,646,375</u>	<u>2,544,599</u>
Surplus/-Deficiency on realised and unrealised investments	2,141,760	-3,945,228
Net outgoing resources for the year	-23,779	-579,066
Net movement in funds	<u>2,117,981</u>	<u>-4,524,294</u>

SPRING GROVE

RETIREMENT HOME



214 Finchley Road
London NW3

London's Most Luxurious

- Entertainment • Activities
- Stress Free Living
- 24 Hour Staffing Excellent Cuisine
- Full En-Suite Facilities

Call for more information or a personal tour

020 8446 2117

or 020 7794 4455

enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk

NEWTONS

Long established
Hampstead Solicitors

Personal and Prompt
Legal Services

22 Fitzjohn's Avenue
London NW3 5NB

Tel: 020 7435 5351

Fax: 020 7435 8881

ajnewton@newtonlaw.co.uk



JACKMAN ■
SILVERMAN

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

Telephone: 020 7209 5532
robert@jackmansilverman.co.uk

WANTED TO BUY

**German and
English Books**

Bookdealer, AJR member,
welcomes invitations to view
and purchase valuable books.

Robert Hornung
10 Mount View, Ealing,
London W5 1PR
Email: hornungbooks@aol.com
Tel: 020 8998 0546





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

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

Sir – I am glad Peter Phillips (April) raised the question of 'who is a survivor'.

A 'survivor' is a member of a group targeted for extermination (in our case Jews) in any of the countries where Germans and their supporters were in power and who was still alive on the day of the liberation.

In other words, the word 'survivor' should be used strictly to describe people who 'remained alive' (see *Oxford Dictionary*) in spite of the Nazis' aim to murder all the Jews they could get hold of, i.e. people who had not managed to flee to the safety of other countries but had survived in hiding places or concentration camps.

A 'refugee', on the other hand, is a person who, as the word implies, found 'refuge', i.e. escaped the imminent danger of being killed.

It goes without saying that the lives of those who managed to escape were not necessarily a bed of roses. However, unhappy and traumatised as no doubt most children and adults were, no one was in danger of their lives, whilst 'survivors' had death staring them in the face on a daily basis.

*Anita Lasker Wallfisch
(69388 Auschwitz/Birkenau), London NW10*

Sir – Holocaust survivors are those who personally experienced the Holocaust in ghettos, concentration camps or in hiding in occupied Europe and, despite constant danger of extermination, managed to stay alive.

Refugees and Kindertransportees do not fit the above category. They did not personally experience the constant danger to life. They escaped disaster before the extermination programme came into being in 1941. They took refuge in various countries before the outbreak of the war and thus were refugees – or, to be politically correct, asylum seekers. Holocaust survivors who came to the UK after the war were classed as immigrants and not asylum seekers.

Today, being a Holocaust survivor is more 'fashionable' than being termed a refugee – there is a huge demand on our time. Hence the refugees' desire to jump on the bandwagon. There is actually a potential danger in their portraying themselves as 'survivors' as this can play into the hands of the Holocaust deniers, whose first question would be 'Just how did you survive?'

Kindertransportees and refugees have a very important function – telling their unique stories of arrival in the UK having

been deprived of their parents and having to adjust to life on their own in a strange country often under very difficult circumstances. But this must not be confused with Holocaust survivors' stories, which are of a totally different nature.

Kitty Hart-Moxon, Harpenden, Herts

Sir – Peter Phillips's letter reminded me of a visit I made to the museum in Teresin which had been a school used to house 10-15-year-old boys. I realised this was the very place in which I would have been incarcerated as a 10-year-old in 1941 had it not been for my father's courage and foresight in getting us out of Czechoslovakia just in time.

Am I a survivor? No, of course not – in the sense that I did not experience the horrors of the camps – but certainly in the sense that I managed to escape that fate.

I agree with Mr Phillips that Kindertransport children are entitled to the term 'survivors', but I would certainly not class myself in that category, having arrived on these shores with the benefit of my parents. We also owe our lives to sponsorship – that of the late Joe and Carmel Gilbert (of Hille House and Wizo fame), who were related.

In addition to defining the words, some of your readers might like to suggest a suitable category for us which distinguishes 'survivors' from 'refugees'. We were after all forcibly exiled and fled for our lives.

Peter Briess, London NW3

Sir – The generally accepted definition of a Holocaust survivor is: 'Anyone who lived in Germany or German occupied or controlled lands between 1933 and 1945 and who was in the target group for extermination, but still alive shortly after the end of WWII is considered a Holocaust survivor.' Explanation: 1933, because that is the year in which the Nazi Party started to control the German government; 1945 because it is the end of WWII; and 'target group for extermination' consists primarily, but not necessarily exclusively, of Jews and Gypsies. As such, it includes those in the above definition who were in camps (concentration, labour or extermination), those in hiding, those with false identification papers, and those who left Germany or the lands legally or illegally before or during the war.

*Hans Weinmann, West Bloomfield,
Michigan, USA*

Sir – Peter Phillips asks 'Who are Holocaust survivors?' The authoritative definition was given by Yad Vashem and reprinted in your

journal in June 2009: '[A]ny Jew who lived under Nazi occupation during the war and who was still alive at the beginning of 1946'. This excludes Mr Phillips – as it excludes me – because we left Austria or Germany shortly before the outbreak of war. I regard it as a sound and sensible definition.

Peter Fraenkel, London EC2

Sir – Yad Vashem defines a survivor simply as one who spent the war years in Europe under the Nazis, irrespective of how he or she managed to survive. No one had it easy – this makes perfect sense to me. A 'refugee', on the other hand, is someone lucky enough to have found a haven in another country. Admittedly, had they not fled they would not have survived – which is some people's simplistic idea of a survivor, although they didn't experience the suffering or the ordeal of having to fight for survival.

Kindertransportees, however, are in a class of their own. They came here as children on their own and, in most cases, lost their parents, siblings and comfortable homes, and were, like all survivors, traumatised by their experiences. However, unlike survivors, their lives were not in danger and they never went in fear as Jews. They are therefore not survivors in the strict sense of the word but are now widely accepted as such – and rightly so.

As to who is a survivor, the line has to be drawn somewhere or one could, for instance, refer to oneself as a survivor simply because had one's great-grandparents not left the Pale of Settlement in the nineteenth century, they would have perished with the others. One could take it even further. At the seder table, we are commanded to believe that had God not brought our forefathers out of Egypt we would not have survived as a people. We could take this argument even further still: every one of us can consider himself a survivor for who can deny that Jews are the world's greatest survivors against all odds throughout their blood-soaked history?

Rubin Katz, London NW11

Sir – Jews survived the Holocaust in many ways. But those who survived the concentration camps are the only Holocaust survivors.

Clare Parker, London NW3

HOLOCAUST AND OTHER GENOCIDES

Sir – I sense, and respect, the hurt and fear behind Rubin Katz's response (March) to my February letter.

The Nazis' 'Final Solution' was only part of their aim to 'purify' Aryan German blood by getting rid of all people with 'inferior blood'. It was not only Jews who were murdered because they were Jews: half a million Gypsies were slaughtered because they were Gypsies and designated by the Nazis as having poisonous blood.

Katz and many others, Jews and non-Jews alike, have been traumatised by living through atrocities and in fear of further attacks. So it is not surprising that he misinterprets my aim to promote understanding of how all

continued overleaf

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

prejudice and racism – not only anti-Semitism – led to so many genocides in the twentieth century.

I believe the only way to achieve 'community cohesion' – in which no one lives in fear of their neighbours – is through bearing to be open to knowledge and dialogue about all atrocities against humanity, not only the Holocaust. The Holocaust is unique but it may not remain so if we close our minds and deny other genocides.

That intelligent people like Martin Stern (also March) and many others deny that the slaughter of Armenians by the Ottoman 'Young Turks' was genocide illustrates the efficiency of Turkey's drive to hide its shameful past. Politicians who sacrifice their integrity and humanity in the name of *Realpolitik*, and people who focus only on the Holocaust, are vulnerable to Turkey's disinformation.

Stern seems unaware that Raphael Lemkin coined the term 'genocide' in relation to the Ottoman genocide against Christian Greeks, Assyrians and Armenians under cover of the First World War, well before the Nazi genocide against Jews and others. It is also not generally known that the term 'holocaust' (Greek: wholly burnt, i.e. sacrifice by fire) was first applied to the torching by the Ottomans of an entire Armenian community locked in their church in the 1890s.

Yes, there were some Armenians who attempted to defend themselves, although most young Armenian men were conscripted into the Ottoman army in the First World War and shot. Not surprisingly, many Armenians fled to the Armenian community in Russia and some fought in the Russian army. This was hardly a reason to arrest all the Armenian intellectuals (potential leaders) on 24 April 1915 and decapitate them. This was immediately followed by the death march into the desert and the slaughter of all the women, children and elderly. Documentation of the planning and carrying out of this genocide, with eye-witness accounts, is held in the British government archives – yet Britain colludes with Turkey in its denial for reasons of *Realpolitik*.

Acknowledgement of genocide, followed by memorialisation and restitution, is a humanitarian issue that needs to be separated from political self-interest. Failure to do so creates impunity for future genocide. This becomes only too evident in the series of over 50 genocides in the twentieth century. German officers of the Austro-Hungarian army were involved in the Armenian genocide and hence able to tell Hitler how it had been done.

The pattern of stages in the development and carrying out of genocide is similar in all genocides. I suggest that Mr Stern might realise this from Greg Stanton's information in the Genocide Watch website. He might also read the latest report on the Armenian genocide by Geoffrey Robertson QC.

As the philosopher Santayana warned, 'Those who cannot remember the past

are condemned to repeat it.' We have repeatedly allowed too many genocides out of ignorance, self-interest and cowardice.

*Ruth Barnett, Life President,
Raphael Jewish Counselling Service,
London NW6*

SAYING KADDISH

Sir – My February letter concerning Maly Trostinec aroused considerable interest. Apart from letters subsequently published in the Journal, I have had telephone calls from others whose loved ones perished in that terrible place. Recently, I attended a Sheffield Continental Friends meeting and there too I found a lady whose close relative met a fate similar to that of my dear parents and sister.

On the last national Holocaust Day, I spoke to a meeting organised by Chelmsford City Council; in the morning, I participated in a combined church service in Saffron Walden. On both occasions, I mentioned Maly Trostinec. At Chelmsford, I also expressed my wish that one day I would be able to visit the site in order to recite Kaddish. Apparently an Anglian TV reporter was present and I later received a phone call asking if I would consent to the TV station accompanying me if ever I undertook such a trip. I'm not sure I would be fit enough to manage such a long trip, but I haven't ruled this out altogether.

Otto Deutsch, Southend-on-Sea

Sir – A few years ago I went to Maly Trostinec with my wife, as my mother, who came from Vienna, was transported there just after she gave birth to me at the end of 1941. Marianne Egtman (née Schlesinger), your correspondent from Denmark, should know that I said a few words at the memorial stone there.

*Jackie Young (formerly Jona Spiegel),
London N2*

Sir – My mother, Klara Herner, and brother Jiri were shipped to Maly Trostinec via 'Transport Bn' in September 1942 from the Theresienstadt ghetto. The Swiss Red Cross notified me on 16 December 1996.

Henry Herner, Caracas, Venezuela

TWEEDLEDEE V TWEEDLEDUM

Sir – Will the people vote for the one or the other, or will they exercise their democratic right and stay at home? Should they cast their vote for Tweedledee, the incumbent, or should they favour Tweedledum, the challenger? One could almost forget the third hopeful candidate who claimed a liberal £23,083, the maximum allowable under the MPs' own rules. Not only the leaders, but their whole unscrupulous flock, sitting behind them – though they often barely form a quorum – quite legally helped themselves to our money. A hung Parliament? Would this be the punishment for its members' evil deeds?

They all fiddled while Britons got browned off and while the country was tumbling into bankruptcy. In 'the other place', their peers

are lordling it as they smile all the way to their discredited banks. It beggars belief that any of the disgraced MPs would offer themselves for re-election. Surely this is democracy gone mad. Would you voluntarily give a blank cheque to a burglar who had taken your car and raided your bank account?

Had it not been for the DT letting the cat out of the bag, the culprits would be blissfully basking in their second homes in perpetuity. The next Parliament would embrace the renegade, recycled robbers and a conglomerate of alien cultures, which would not be very sympathetic to Jews or Israel. More of us would leave in droves except the sycophants, do-gooders, human rights activists and the politically correct cranks that thankfully represent only a minority. Can they not see how anti-Semitism pervades this country? Note the crocodile tears shed for the man responsible for killing Israelis. British hypocrisy knows no bounds. Building in Jerusalem is condemned. Did not God give *eretz* to His chosen people in perpetuity? On the other hand, who gave England any part of the globe or which righteous people condone fighting unlawful wars in faraway countries under false pretences? God only knows what they are doing in Northern Ireland.

None of us Kinder chose to come to this country. However, how many would choose it now? The country has changed beyond recognition. Of course, we will be forever grateful to it for saving our lives, as has been expressed repeatedly. Yet, if these matters are not aired, they would be buried in the mire of history. As thousands of new laws and regulations are proclaimed, scraping away at democracy, it is essential that not only opinions but facts receive the attention of the public – facts which are played out on the stage before our eyes! Where obscurity reigns, freedom vanishes. Let us hang on to what little is left!

Fred Stern, Wembley Park

WOODCRAFT FOLK

Sir – The daughter of Henry Fair aka 'Koodoo', the organiser of the Woodcraft Folk, recalls how the organisation was involved in assisting Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and remembers meeting a number in their house in Wandsworth. Could former refugees who were helped by the Woodcraft Folk please contact me with their experiences of this organisation?

*Howard Falksohn, Archivist, Wiener Library,
4 Devonshire Street, London W1W 5BH,
tel 020 7636 7247
email hfalksohn@wienerlibrary.co.uk*

CAPTAIN KENDRICK

Sir – If you ever came across Captain Kendrick of the British Passport Office in Vienna, or he saved your family, could you please contact me? During the war, Kendrick headed CDSIC back in Britain. I am researching for a book on this subject.

*(Dr) Helen Fry, tel 0779 6213 217
email hpfry@btinternet.com*

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The *pièce de résistance* of the long-awaited reopening of London's **Jewish Museum** is the mediaeval *mikveh* discovered in the home of the Crespin family in the City of London in 2001. Surrounded by pebbles, backed by glass, it has been lovingly restored, stone by ancient stone.

The Museum's £10 million redevelopment scheme, with a £4.2m Heritage Lottery Fund grant and private donations, has tripled the Museum's area into a



Jewish Museum London: Torah scrolls in silver cases, made for the Ba'al Shem of London, 1766-67

welcome space for its impressive Judaica, temple ornaments and historical artefacts. Opened by Nigella Lawson and Alan Yentob, enhanced by the smell of fresh wood and coffee, there were earnest – if silent – audio-visuals of journalist Jonathan Freedland and survivor-luminary Ben Helfgott.

An interactive format will educate children in an 'innovative and compelling way'. With 90 per cent non-Jewish visitors, Director Rickie Burman anticipates it will be a vibrant museum from the cultural and educational perspective. There are reconstructions of the East End Jewish rag trade and a dissertation on Shylock by Sir Anthony Sher. Synagogue treasures are arranged beneath a brass candelabra and an Italian walnut ark with Corinthian pillars and gilded and marbled paintwork, which was used as a steward's wardrobe

in Chillingham Castle until its discovery in 1932. *Ketubot*, Chanucah lamps, Torah decorations – the whole thing clinks with silver and brass and the collective Jewish memory down to the celebration of Shabbat – there's even a mock *challah* to plait.

The writing on the wall includes the dates of the 4,000-year-old Jewish people, from birth to exile and return. But the stress is on Britain: the Holocaust is seen through the eyes of the only known Briton incarcerated in Auschwitz, the late Leon Greenman.

'We don't want the whole thing to end with the Holocaust,' protested one guide. A valid point because Israel, the chameleon from the ashes, is less prominent. 'This is to do with Anglo-Jewish history,' she added. However, from the York massacre to the secret Jews of Tudor Britain, the state of Anglo-Jewry has not always been a happy one.

The Execution of Lady Jane Grey is one of the most devastating paintings in the **National Gallery (NG)**. Created by eighteenth-century French artist **Paul Delaroche**, its poignancy is due not just to the luminous pallor of this 17-year-old queen of nine days. It's not just because she is in pure white, her golden hair tumbling from a blindfold. It's not even the fatherly gesture of the sergeant-at-arms who guides her towards the block. It is because Jane is like a little girl playing Blind Man's Buff, groping, her pale arms, still with the fragile plumpness of childhood, outstretched in terror.

Similar themes by Delaroche in the NG's new exhibition **Painting History: Delaroche and Lady Jane Grey** (until 23 May) include *Stafford on his Way to Execution*, *The Princes in the Tower*, and a grim-faced Cromwell peering into the coffin of the executed Charles I. Delaroche's interest in martyred English royals mirrors post-revolutionary French artists' fascination with English literature and history, just years after their own regicide.

Annely Juda Fine Art

23 Dering Street (off New Bond Street)
Tel: 020 7629 7578 Fax: 020 7491 2139

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

Family histories

THEY CALLED HER CASSANDRA: A STORY OF SURVIVAL

by Renée Tyack
Book Guild, 2008, 146 pp.
hardcover, £16.99

FAMILY CONNECTIONS: GELLES – SHAPIRO – FRIEDMAN

by Edward Gelles
Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2009,
106 pp. hardcover, £18, from 3 Hyde
Park Crescent, London W2 2PW

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS TO AUSCHWITZ: A FAMILY ODYSSEY FROM THE INQUISITION TO THE PRESENT

by Irene Lawford-Hinrichsen
London: Edition Press, 2008, 232 pp.
hardback, £21.95

For someone who has not experienced the Holocaust, any story of survival, any random rescue, any kindness of strangers can make you catch your breath with wonder. Renée Tyack's story, with a foreword by playwright Ronald Harwood, is of her parents, Ruth and Fred Bergmann, who escaped to Britain in 1939 with the help of the Quakers. Ruth is nicknamed Cassandra because of her premonitions of disaster but also because she had the intuitive sense to be one step ahead of danger.

The book is written partly from her mother's written testimony and partly from her own, surprisingly vivid childhood memories. It is a typical tale of wartime amnesia. Despite looming war signals, Fred, a medical student in Leipzig, was an optimist busy with his work and trying to feed his young family. He paid for his student fees by playing in a jazz band and joining a famous football club. But soon 'Juden verboten' signs began to loom and he was prevented from studying his favoured paediatrics. More punitive laws were passed in 1938, but Fred bought a small surgical ward with 20 beds, an operating theatre which he sent to Rotterdam to be shipped to British Honduras. In 1940 the Germans invaded Holland and confiscated it all. Ruth's younger sister disappeared into the gas chambers.

Renée, born in 1934, wore the yellow star and learned to avoid eye contact. She and her brother got used to being spat on. Told that the Nazis were coming for Jewish doctors, Ruth ran to warn her husband. Kristallnacht led to more humiliations for Jews and, in her father's hospital, Renée as a young child faced daily interviews with the Gestapo. With a mixture of courage and audacity, Ruth rescued her father-in-law en route to Buchenwald, and there are other, similar examples of her presence of mind.

continued overleaf

REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

Ruth, whose dreams of becoming an actress were thwarted, was mentored by a leading Berlin actress, through whom she met Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. Her elder sister, Leni, became engaged to Kurt's younger brother, Fritz.

Armed with an invitation from the Quakers to go to England, Ruth went to Dresden for their visas. Fred was under house arrest. She was refused, but had an instinct to wait.

Life in Britain was no joy ride either. Internment, insecurity and separation characterised their first year, while the family moved from hostel to hostel in the north of England, always wondering about moving on to British Honduras, Australia, the USA or South America.

Despite a rather muddled beginning – it leapfrogs between wartime Germany and internment in Britain – the book settles into a more linear narrative and it is in her moving descriptions of her mother, and later her aunts, their marriages and private torments, that Tyack excels.

Fred is less well-drawn. Though he is described in one passage as a remote, authoritarian figure, his clear affection for his children and his sense of mischief tend to belie this, coming through the precise German vernacular of his dialogue. There are vivid descriptions of wartime Kilburn, of the swimming pools in the Macclesfield hospital where Fred worked, of life in various schools, and of the humiliating privations endured in Britain by the internees, and their fears of sudden, forced transportation. This trade in human suffering is a shocking indicator of British insensitivity to Jewish privations under the Nazis, despite the fact that Britain was fighting for its existence.

Family Connections: Gelles – Shapiro – Friedman cannot quite be described as a family history – it is more a highly researched bibliography of rabbinic lineage. Carefully indexed and complete with family trees and extracts from Orthodox papers like the *Jüdische Presse*, Gelles traces the genealogical links between several rabbinic families in Central and Eastern Europe who could be described as the aristocracy of European Jewish scholarship. Certain Chassidim, Cabbalists and Talmudists can be traced, he claims, back to the priestly or Davidic line, even to prophets like Samuel or priests like Eli. Whether this is so or not, their inbreeding is clearly part of the elite Ashkenazi tradition, almost a form of ancestor worship.

In his preface Gelles describes the 'closely woven fabric of the Ashkenazi rabbinate' that flourished in Europe for more than 1,000 years and descended from the eleventh-century scholar Rashi. Protective of its rabbinic status, the tendency was to marry cousins, thus forming newer branches, or 'sprigs', of that dynasty. Or a student might marry

his teacher's daughter and so preserve the highest positions in the seminaries for the chosen few. One Friedman wedding attracted 600 guests with the grand rabbis of the Friedman family seated at the high table, with large sums of money donated to charity. Reading between the lines – and we are merely given genetic lines – the preservation of this specific Orthodoxy meant that the marriages generated a cultural and religious endogamy.

We learn early in the book that the importance of 'yichus', or family lineage, was embraced by the eighteenth-century Chassidic founder Israel Ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov. When his ideas were challenged by the author's ancestor, Isaac Horowitz, Chief Rabbi of Brody, Glogau and Hamburg, he retorted, according to Gelles: 'What can I do? He is of a stock whose descendants are heard when they weep before the Lord.'

Another ancestor, Moses Gelles, who probably died in the 1750s, belonged to the prestigious Brody Talmudic study group, of which only skimpy records survive, having been mainly lost in the Holocaust. A fragment remains in the library of New York's Jewish Theological Seminary. But, despite the scarcity of records, a 'miracle' is quoted in a collection of stories about the Baal Shem Tov. As he passed a Jewish cemetery, he saw a pillar of fire over one of the graves. It turned out to be that of a man described as 'Moshe the servant of God'. Although that very site is now lost to history, the author questions whether it could have been the grave of his ancestor, Moses Gelles.

Edward Gelles traces his descent from this ancestor to his father, Dr David Isaac Gelles, whose paternal line was closely involved with the Friedman Chassidic dynasty of Czortkow but who rejected their Orthodoxy in favour of a more modern outlook.

This is clearly not a book concerned with personalities, but in one welcome extract from the memoir of Florence Mayer Lieblich, a Holocaust survivor, there is a vivid description of Rabbi Israel Friedman's visit to Czortkow, where he was greeted by Chassidim from all over Europe. Lieblich retains a moving memory of this religious gathering, including the women's preparations for the Sabbath.

Perhaps the intense interest Edward Gelles had in writing this monograph is revealed in a chapter on his father, Dr David Gelles, in Galicia in 1883, at the time of Russian pogroms. David broke with centuries of Orthodox Judaism in favour of a modern, mainstream education, a legal career and a life-long interest in Zionism. He and his wife lived in Vienna until the Anschluss, when they fled to England, but returned to Vienna for good in 1949.

David was not alone in rejecting strict family values. The emerging Zionist

movement, the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the problems facing Russian Jewry generated a battle between Orthodoxy and a burgeoning social and political life. Zionism represented the new face of Judaism, even though that too became polarised between Revisionist and Labour factions.

The really interesting question is the break-up of a centuries-old rabbinic elite through these external political factors. Perhaps in another, more reader-friendly book, Edward Gelles might analyse how his family tradition broke down and came to represent more contemporary Jewish attitudes, from modern orthodox to secular.

For anyone seeking a potted history of European Jewry through the experience of one family, **Five Hundred Years to Auschwitz: A Family Odyssey from the Inquisition to the Present** is a good read. Except there is nothing potted or brief about this episodic and densely researched volume, which covers five centuries and 14 generations. A patrilineal Jew (not recognised by Orthodox Judaism), the author has taken upon herself the daunting task of exploring her father's history, which is the eternal Jewish struggle for emancipation and freedom from persecution. Her saga is a tale of trials, tribulations, torture, terror, courage and occasional redemption. As she retraces the steps of her forebears, from the Spanish Henrique de Milao to the German Hinrichsens, up to her own time, she reveals the imagination, courage and energy of this remarkable family in escaping their grim destiny. And many of the characters, such as Alvaro Diniz, who escaped to Portugal in the seventeenth century, and her grandfather, Henri Hinrichsen, in the twentieth, really spring to life.

The book opens with a graphic description of the martyrdom of the author's paternal ancestor, Henrique de Milao, burned at the stake in Portugal by the Spanish Inquisition in 1492. Fast forward 500 years, invert the number and the year is 1942, when de Milao's descendants, having fled their enemies across Europe to become successful businessmen, create a publishing dynasty in Leipzig, about to face extinction at the hands of the Nazis.

It is not just the protagonists who tell their story. The growth of the powerful Leipzig music publishing business CF Peters, in which the author's grandfather became a partner in 1894 and which he defended, effectively with his life, is a very strong element in the book's later stages. Due to the author's immersion in her subject, the wavering fortunes of this company become as much a personal story as that of its partners, many fated to die in the Holocaust.

From Henrique de Milao's first induction into the shipping trade at the age of 13, to the graphic description of his martyrdom at age 81, to the confiscation of Jewish wealth and property in Spain

and Portugal to finance the great voyages of discovery, the story becomes one of endless escape and betrayal, more spine-chilling than many a spy thriller or horror film. But the family demonstrated flair, optimism and commercial acumen in many business fields.

The Henriques, banished from Spain in 1492, first fled to Portugal as secret Jews or Marranos. Fleeing across Europe, involved with the lucrative shipping trade, they still feared the lengthening tentacles of the Inquisition, fuelled by state and royal interests. Many members of the family were tortured by the Inquisition.

Over the next 400 years, the descendants of the martyred Henrique de Milao reached Hamburg, then Glückstadt, Schwerin, before returning to Hamburg, where their family connections launched the Hamburg Bank among their business ventures. But a change in direction drew the author's grandfather, Henri Hinrichsen, away from commerce and into the cultural centre of Leipzig, where he achieved great success with his music publishing dynasty. A wealthy philanthropist honoured by the Kaiser and feted with civic honours, his close friend was the composer Edvard Grieg. He also collected the autographed letters of Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner – all later confiscated by the Nazis. Tragically, like so many others of his time, he failed to take heed of the Nazi bureaucratic death machine.

This is a roller-coaster story of rags to riches and riches to rags, with jealous enemies, occasionally visionary kings, forced conversions, extortionate taxes, court Jews, non Jews, tolerance and virulent anti-Semitism. It is told simply and without sentimentality against the background of the Inquisition, the Seven Years' War, the French Revolution, the Enlightenment and the Nazi era. The author's description of the slowly encroaching Aryanisation of Jewish businesses and professions and the almost bureaucratic restrictions and persecutions which will end in the death camps chillingly revisit the horrors of the Inquisition with which the book opens.

Gloria Tessler

Anti-Semitism revisited

**GLOBALISING HATRED:
THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM**
by Denis MacShane

London: Phoenix, 2009,
paperback pp.198

**TRIALS OF THE DIASPORA:
A HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITISM
IN ENGLAND**

by Anthony Julius

Oxford: OUP 2010, pp.811 hardcover

I read Denis MacShane's book after hearing him speak at the 2009 Limmud conference and thought it would be interesting to compare it with Anthony

Julius's book, due in February 2010. It was a mismatch: Julius's book is ten times as heavy and contains six times as many words. It is two and a half times as long as the King James translation of the Pentateuch.

In 2005 MacShane chaired the first-ever All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the problem of anti-Semitism. Since the first edition of his book in 2008, he had heard President Ahmadinejad rant against Jews and Jewishness at the United Nations and comments that Hitler, at least, was never invited to address the League of Nations. He admits the technical possibility of anti-Zionism differing from anti-Semitism but quotes Martin Luther King that 'When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews. You're talking anti-Semitism.' He ridicules Arab physician and writer Ghada Karmi for claiming 'Israel is encircling the Arab world' and that the Arab world's backwardness in so many spheres is all Israel's fault. Yet the trend in Britain is one of growing anti-Semitism, even though we are threatened almost as much by extreme Islam as is Israel. The first Interparliamentary Coalition Conference against anti-Semitism in February 2009 was ignored by the media in the West and bookstores in the UK refused to give it any prominence. MacShane emerges as a man of immense common sense and goodwill and you should go out and buy his book even at this late stage.

Anthony Julius (aka Princess Diana's divorce lawyer and author of a book on T. S. Eliot's anti-Semitism), in contrast, has written a brilliant, encyclopaedic, closely argued book that is both much more detailed and more narrowly focused. It deals with four phases of English anti-Semitism: the blood-soaked mediaeval anti-Semitism up to the expulsion of the Jews in 1290; literary anti-Semitism from the mediaeval ballad 'Sir Hugh, or the Jew's Daughter' through to Caryl Churchill and Tom Paulin; modern anti-Semitism after the readmission to England; and the new anti-Semitism masquerading as anti-Zionism. (Doubters should consult the Hamas charter, especially Art. 22, which blames the 'Zionists' – i.e. the international Jewish conspiracy – for the French and Communist revolutions and both world wars.)

Julius points out that there has been little anti-Jewish violence in England since the readmission and he is concerned mainly with the day-to-day marginalisations, insults and exclusions. He sees this as more typical of post-Reformation anti-Semitism than the Holocaust, which was in many ways an aberration.

Julius gives numerous examples of the uses of anti-Semitism – it legitimises cruelty, snobbery, social exclusion and commercial disadvantage – but does

Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees

Susan Cohen

Special offer
for AJR readers

£15 no post and packing
order before 30/06/2010
quote reference AJRSC

Please send your orders to:
Valentine Mitchell Publishers
29/45 High Street, Edgware,
Middlesex, HA8 7UU
Tel: 020 8952 9526

not compare it with other racisms. Remarkably, in a book with over 4,000 notes and references, Julius does not cite Jean-Paul Sartre's *Reflections on the Jewish Question* (1946), in which he suggests that the Jew is feared because he is believed to be cleverer than the gentile, while the black man is feared because he is supposedly sexually more potent. Thus the Jew is going to swindle you, and you can't help this because he knows something you don't. On the other hand, the black man is going to marry your daughter ...

This comparison with other prejudices is important. In my childhood experience, Catholics were generally more hated than Jews. A heavy regional accent led to social exclusion. Being black or Asian was a huge disadvantage – 'a touch of the tar brush', people would say of someone a little swarthy. Northerners didn't like the 'soft southerners' and vice versa. Scots were believed to be stingy; 'to welsh' on one's debts was as reprehensible as 'to jew' someone. To this day, Millwall supporters dislike West Ham supporters, a hostility that frequently explodes into violence.

Thus Julius's book is comprehensive, informative and a labour of love (or hate?), but is for dipping into rather than wading through. And its discussion of prejudice could be more nuanced. I am reminded of Harry Golden, humorist and editor of the newspaper *Carolina Israelite*, which championed civil rights for blacks in the 1950s-60s, a cause that was not popular in Carolina at the time. He was approached by a group of white supremacists, who demanded if he would want his daughter to marry a black man. He is reputed to have replied 'Frankly, I wouldn't want her to marry any of you goyim!'

Bryan Reuben

INSIDE the AJR

Glasgow 'Story Telling'

Meeting at the home of AJR Co-ordinator Agnes Isaacs for an afternoon of 'Story Telling', we listened spellbound as members told of a treasured book of Polish poetry, a cherished antique porcelain deer, and related many stories depicting the experiences of people in Europe and beyond during and after the war. All followed by a scrumptious tea and a chance to chat to members old and new.

Anthea Berg

Bromley CF Heated discussion

Over a delicious tea at the home of Liane Segal, we had a somewhat heated discussion about Israel – but who are we to criticise any of Israel's actions? We also discussed future events, welcoming the fact that a commemoration of Yom Hashoah was planned for Hyde Park.

Eva Byk

Hendon History of the Royal Free

Retired doctor Eva Blumenthal told us the Royal Free Hospital was originally a dispensary for treating the poor free of charge and was the first medical school for women in conjunction with the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. In 1975 it moved from Grays Inn Road to its present site in Hampstead.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 24 May. Shirley Bilgora, 'The Search for a Grave'

Ealing History of WJR

Harry Heber gave us a history of World Jewish Relief dating from the early 1930s – the establishment of a fund for sheltering Jews from pogroms in Eastern Europe – to the present day – aid for the Asian tsunami and recent earthquakes.

Renée Tyack

Next meeting: 4 May. Renée Tyack, 'My Parents' Journey'

Ilford 'Life at the Bar'

We were regaled with anecdotes by former barrister Raymond Sturgess, who had many stories to tell and told them well. Another greatly appreciated morning.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 5 May. Robin Hamilton-Taylor, 'Israel Update'

Pinner A productive duo

Helen Fry spoke about the pianist Harriet Cohen, subject of one of her books. Helen's co-author James Hamilton (*Goodnight Vienna*) gave us insight into how they work together productively and revealed his interest in the fictional story of an MI6 connection to a talented musician.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: 6 May. Tony Dinkin QC, 'Silk, Lace and Black Tights: Life at the Bar, 2010'

NORTH MEETS SOUTH: 'A WONDERFUL 3-DAY TRIP TO LONDON'



Our itinerary was extremely varied: Keats House; dinner at Belsize Square Synagogue (see report below); the London Eye (our group's first choice – simply amazing!); the Globe Theatre accompanied by a highly knowledgeable guide (a director!); the Tate; *Jersey Boys* at the Prince Edward Theatre; the Freud Museum in Hampstead. Our trip ended with lunch at the AJR Centre, with nostalgic music by singer Jeffrey Strum. Our thanks to all AJR staff who worked so hard to make it possible for us to have such an enjoyable time in London.

Veronika Keczkas

HGS 'A Strange Affair'

Prof Gerald Curzon introduced us to the intriguing relationship between the philosophers Hannah Arendt, of Jewish origin, and Martin Heidegger, who joined the Nazi Party.

Lazlo Roman

Next meeting: 10 May. 6th anniversary. Ben Helfgott, 'The Holocaust in Poland'

Nottingham (East Midlands) Lunch Get-together

We missed Evie Lake, one of our members who sadly died in her late 90s. Our 103-year-old member couldn't make it this time. We welcomed a new member from Leicester. As usual, the conversation was lively with friendships renewed.

Bob Norton

Wembley Calmed by cakes and tea

Several old/new faces returned to our social at Harris Court. We were in the mood for lively discussion, but delicious cakes and tea helped to calm us.

Laura Levy

Next meeting: 12 May. Social Get-together

Welwyn Exchanging memories

Members from all over Herts enjoyed Monica's splendid hospitality. We exchanged memories of childhood and lucky escapes and marvelled at extraordinary coincidences such as meeting a childhood friend on a London bus after 40 years.

Fred Simms

Next meeting: 11 May. Social Get-together

Bristol/Bath The Suchet family

Peter Suchet spoke to us about his well-known family: brothers David and John and their late father, a distinguished surgeon. Peter showed in a lengthy Q&A session he is no mean public performer himself.

David Hackel

Newcastle upon Tyne 'Story of a Siege'

Tony Fox, a local historian who is organising an exhibition on this event later in the year, gave us a fascinating lecture on 'The Siege of Newcastle in 1644'.

DINNER AT BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

Guest speaker Jeni Barnett, a regular broadcaster on LBC Radio, told us she was born in 1939 in Mile End Road and had been taunted for being Jewish both at school and in her early career. She then hid her Jewish identity for many years, finally admitting it on TV. Jeni and her family also suffered problems in connection with their radical left-wing views. There followed one of the liveliest discussions ever heard at an AJR meeting.

The dinner was well attended by members from both Northern and local AJR groups.

Edgar H. Ring

Temple Fortune George Layton

George Layton, who was born in Bradford but whose parents were born in Vienna, read us his short story *The Long Walk*. This was followed by a lively Q&A session and tea.

David Lang

Next meeting: 13 May. Roger Beales, 'The Bank of England'

Brighton & Hove Sarid A productive collaboration

Historian Helen Fry spoke to us about German-speaking refugees who volunteered to form the Pioneer Corps, while James Hamilton spoke about his and Helen's joint venture *Goodnight Vienna*.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 17 May. 11th anniversary. Mark Perry, 'John Nash and the Royal Pavilion'

REGIONAL GET-TOGETHER IN OXFORD

Wednesday 26 May

**Speaker: Dr Anthony Grenville
All-day event including lunch**

For details, please call Susan Harrod
on 020 8385 3070

Oxford 'The Diversity of Faith'

Rabbi Daniela Thau gave us a most constructive lecture on the 'Diversity of Faith', discussing the best-known religions, their symbols and music.

Anne Selinger

Next meeting: 26 May. Oxford Regional with Dr Anthony Grenville (see above)

West Midlands (Birmingham) 'The History of Broadcasting'

John D. Smith offered a selection of music-related presentations in aid of St Mary's Hospice. 'Radio Memories' took us back to the early days of broadcasting – and then forward through the years with recordings of well-remembered music and speeches.

Philip Lesser

Café Imperial Radio interviews

A great turnout on a lovely spring day in honour of journalist Melanie McFadyean. All our veterans were interviewed, with a

view to Melanie getting a programme on Radio 4.
Hazel Beiny

Edgware 'The Last Jews of Kerala'

Edna Fernandez spoke about the history of the last Jews of Kerala, a state in south-east India, and answered many questions.
No meeting in May due to Shavuot

Felix Winkler

Radlett 'Desert Island Discs'

Judy Kelner played extracts from well-known pieces of classical music, and one piece of jazz, in each instance discussing the music and its composer.
Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 26 May. Oxford Regional with Dr Anthony Grenville (see above)

SECOND GENERATION MEETINGS

Tuesday 11 May 'Victim and Persecutor'. Discussion evening. Wiener Library, 7.00 pm

Tuesday 18 May Ela Kaczmarek, 'Finding Holocaust Information at the National Archives'. Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Ela, an Education Officer at the National Archives, has recently been researching documents relating to the Kindertransport.

For details, phone 0781 357 4699

Cardiff 'Pear's Transparent Soap'

We were regaled with an illustrated talk by Andrea Cameron (from London) on the history of Pear's soap. Andrea was exceptionally knowledgeable and her slides were of excellent quality.
Marian Lane

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

THE MUSIC OF BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

Speaking to the AJR Centre Luncheon Club, Sue Mariner gave us a fascinating demonstration of the music of Belsize Square Synagogue, whose liturgy has its roots mainly in compositions by Sulzer and Lewandowsky. She opened with an excerpt of a reproduction of a 100-year-old recording of the Deutsche Kedusha, sung by Magnus Davidson and the Fasanenstrasse Choir. This was followed by the Synagogue's second cantor, Joe Dollinger, chanting *Adonai Malach*.

Louis Berkman's moving rendition of Psalm 130 (*Mi Ma'amakim*) came next – Sue explained how in the Middle Ages this prayer was mischievously construed as allowing Jews to renege on their debts. The Synagogue's fourth cantor, Larry Fine, sang two items from the Yom Kippur service and the present incumbent, Norman Cohen Falah, concluded with the *Jahres Kaddisch* in jovial, folksy mood. Finally, a surprise: Psalm 114, the second verse of the *Hallel*, sung to a tune so perfectly complementing that of Lewandowsky's first verse that few people realised it was composed by Sue herself!

Walter E. Goddard

Cleve Road A controversial story

Prof Ladislaus Löb told us the intriguing and controversial story of Reszo Kasztner, who saved over 1,600 Jews from the Nazis and was assassinated in Israel after the war.
David Lang

Next meeting: 25 May. Helen Fry and James Hamilton: Harriett Cohen and Goodnight Vienna

ALSO MEETING IN MAY

Kingston CF 6 May. Social and speaker – tbc

Eastbourne CF 27 May. Social Get-together. Details to be sent out

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

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 10 May 2010

Martin Stern

'Why Do We Write Hebrew Backwards?'

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

May Afternoon Entertainment

Mon 3	CLOSED – BANK HOLIDAY
Tue 4	CLOSED
Wed 5	Roy Blass
Thur 6	Madeleine Whiteson
Mon 10	CLOSED
Tue 11	CLOSED
Wed 12	Michael Heaton
Thur 13	Sheila Games
Mon 17	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Music Matinee
Tue 18	CLOSED
Wed 19	CLOSED – SHAVUOT
Thur 20	CLOSED – SHAVUOT
Mon 24	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 25	CLOSED
Wed 26	Mike Marandi
Thur 27	Gayathrie Peiris
Mon 31	CLOSED – BANK HOLIDAY

SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household electrical work

PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518
Mobile: 0795 614 8566

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

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

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

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

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

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

Anniversary

Congratulations to Peter and Marie (Mia) Schwab, who will be celebrating their 65th Wedding Anniversary on 5 May.

Deaths

Fagan, Elsie, born Ilse Holzelmacher, Vienna 26 August 1928, widow of Terence Fagan, mother of John and Margaret, died peacefully in Yorkshire 25 January 2010.

Meyer, Charles (Helmut Karl) of Llanidloes and Offenbach, died 30 March aged 91. Sadly missed by wife Margaret and all his family.

Walter, Illa (née Ilse Fackenheim), born 8 June 1914 Kassel, Germany, died peacefully 28 March 2010 London. Mourned by family and friends.

Consecration

The tombstone consecration for Dr Kenneth Saunders will take place on Thursday 13 May at 11.00 am at Edgware-bury Lane Cemetery, Edgware, Middx.

CLASSIFIED

PAUL BALINT AJR CENTRE

Pamela Bloch Clothes sale, separates etc. Wednesday 5 May 2010, 9.30-11.45 am

INFORMATION ON AJR ACTIVITIES BY EMAIL

From time to time, the AJR circulates by email information of activities, events and projects which may be of interest to members. To receive these notices, please send an email to info@ajr.org.uk and we will add you to the distribution list.

FIRST FLOOR RETIREMENT FLAT FOR SALE IN KENTON

First floor retirement flat with lift. Warden-assisted. Entryphone system
1 fitted bedroom, lounge/dining room, fitted kitchen, modern bathroom/WC
Electric economy heating, residents' lounge, laundry room and games room
Communal gardens
New 99-year lease - In excellent condition
Near shops, synagogues, buses and trains
Asking price £139,000
Please call Carol on 01923 857 822 or 0794 7694 844

ADVERTISEMENT RATES

FAMILY EVENTS
First 15 words free of charge, £2.00 per 5 words thereafter

CLASSIFIED, SEARCH NOTICES
£2.00 per 5 words

BOX NUMBERS £3.00 extra

DISPLAY ADVERTS
Per single column inch 65mm £12.00

COPY DATE 5 weeks prior to publication

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sun 27 June – Sun 4 July 2010
at the **INN ON THE PROM**
11/17 South Promenade, St Annes
Tel 01253 726 726

The cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, is **£582.50 per person**

For booking form contact
Ruth Finestone on (direct line)
020 8385 3082 or 07966 886535

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.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A 5-DAY TRIP TO BUDAPEST?

If you are, please call Carol or Lorna on 0208 385 3070
Numbers will be limited
Please note there will be a certain amount of walking involved

PillarCare
Quality support and care at home

- Hourly Care from 1 hour – 24 hours
- Live-In/Night Duty/Sleepover Care
- Convalescent and Personal Health Care
- Compassionate and Affordable Service
- Professional, Qualified, Kind Care Staff
- Registered with the CSCI and UKHCA

Call us on Freephone 0800 028 4645
Studio 1 Utopia Village
7 Chalcot Road, NW1 8LH

4-DAY TRIP TO GLASGOW

Sunday 9 May to Wednesday 12 May 2010

THIS TRIP HAS BEEN CANCELLED

JOIN US FOR A WEEK IN BOURNEMOUTH
at the **Royale Hotel** (formerly Anglo Suisse)
Sunday 9 May to Sunday 16 May

£420 per week, dinner, bed and breakfast
plus £30 supplement for single room to include transport from Cleve Road, lunch on outward journey

Please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070

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

Colvin Home Care
Care through quality and professionalism

Celebrating our 25th Anniversary
25 years of experience in providing the highest standards of care in the comfort of your own home



1 hour to 24 hours care
Registered through the National Care Standard Commission

Call our 24 hour tel **020 7794 9323**
www.colvin-nursing.co.uk

OBITUARY

Ibi Ginsburg



Ibi Ginsburg in 1945

born in Lithuania and survived four years in ghettos and camps. But they never met until after liberation, when Ibi was sent to work at a monastery near Munich converted into a military hospital. Val, who had lost 13 members of his family in the Holocaust, had spent several months there recovering from his ordeal and had then been given a job as a security man.

The two met, were married a year later and in 1948 moved to England. They settled in Elland, where both worked in the textile industry.

Ibi and Val decided 15 years ago that they owed it to the victims to tell their stories. Val told his in a book *And Kovno*

Wept, published in 1998. The couple have told their story countless times in schools and colleges and at meetings and conferences. Their testimonies have also been filmed by the Steven Spielberg Shoah Foundation and for the AJR's *Refugee Voices* testimony archive.

Ibi regularly attended services at the Bradford Reform Synagogue.

Members of the synagogue and other members of the Holocaust Survivors' Association and many friends attended her funeral at the Park Wood Crematorium in Elland along with her husband, daughters Mandy and Pauline, son-in-law Malcolm, and grandchildren Samuel, Jacob and Amy.

David Edge, a friend for many years, said: 'She was a lovable, feisty woman whose indomitable spirit and will to live enabled her to survive. She was a very special lady.'

This is an edited version of an obituary which appeared in the Yorkshire Post on 6 March 2010.

A Holocaust survivor whose mother and two youngest sisters were murdered in Auschwitz has died at the age of 85. For 66 years, Ibi Ginsburg lived with the memory of the terrible hardship she endured at the camp after arriving there in May 1944 with her parents and three sisters.

She never forgot the number 86711 the Nazis gave her minutes after she and her family arrived along with thousands of other Jews from the Hungarian town of Tokay.

Ibi, who died at her home in Elland, near Halifax, which she shared with her husband Valdemar (Val), recalled how she and her 13-year-old sister Judith were selected to work. Her mother Emily and two youngest sisters Rachel, 10, and Miriam, 7, were selected for the gas chambers. Her father Herman was sent to Mauthausen but survived and was reunited with Ibi and Judith after the war.

Towards the end of the war, Ibi and her sister were sent to Dachau and worked on the same construction site as Val, who was

'It was like a bullet to the head,' Gunter said, thinking back to 9 November 1938, when he was an eight-year-old in Herne, a mining town (now twinned with Wakefield) with a population of about 160,000 and some 70 miles from my mother's home town of Duisburg.

Two days earlier, Gunter's father – awarded the Iron Cross in the First World War – had been warned of what was to happen 'spontaneously' on what came to be known as Kristallnacht by the 'outraged people' of Germany! Gunter, his father and brother had entered the magnificent synagogue in Herne, built in 1911 and featured with pride on the front page of the local paper – the same paper that would 27 years later scream out 'Don't buy from Jews, buy German' – and removed the Sefer Torahs, one of which is now in Ramat Gan.

My mother's second cousin, Editha Jankleowicz, aged six, gazed out of her bedroom window on the evening of 9 November, watching, terrified, the black smoke and flames of the burning synagogue.

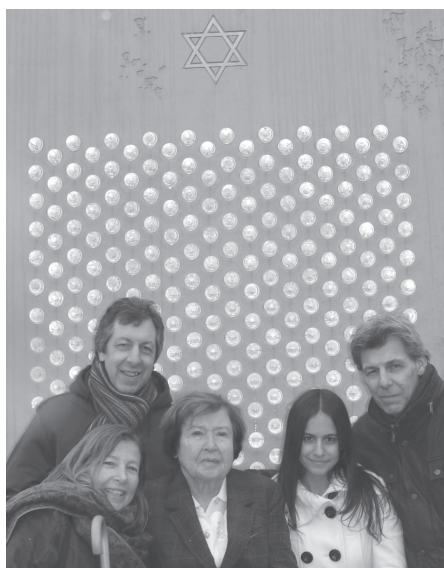
Soon after began the frantic efforts of parents to at least get their children out of Germany. Editha, an only child, was put on a Kindertransport to Belgium (and, when Belgium fell, on a goods wagon to France, then to Vichy France, then, towards the end of the war, to Cadiz, and then on an old, battered boat to Palestine – a story for another time).

Gunter was more fortunate – a Kindertransport to England, ultimately a British citizen, now residing in New York, enjoying what his parents never would – a grandchild.

How was the choice made? Who would go and who would stay? Who would live and who would die? Neither Editha nor Gunter

Back in Germany

by Lester Christie



Back Lester Christie, Jeff Christie; front Irit Matan, Esther Hocherman, Carmi Tzadock

had any idea. Both remember the time of parting at the railway station in Herne as if it were yesterday.

My mother, Toni Berger, 17 years old and living in Duisburg, was sent out of Germany by her widowed mother early in 1939 in a desperate attempt to obtain visas for her mother, Channah, her sister Lottie and her brother Max. Among the few possessions she was able to take was her pocket-size *siddur*.

29 January 2010, Herne. Editha (now named Esther), with one of her daughters Irit and one of her grandchildren Carmi; Gunter, his wife and children with two other

survivors from Herne; myself, my brother Jeff and 250 or so local dignitaries on a freezing snow-filled day, so symbolic of the hardship of camp life – all witnessed the unveiling of a beautiful memorial to the Jews of Herne who had perished in the Holocaust. A memorial illustrating every name, date and place of death, composed of concrete (mixed to the colour of Jerusalem stone) and glass with a black-slate ramp displaying the names of the camps and ghettos in which millions of Jews and others had died. In the background, the doleful sound of a Yiddish folk song 'You watch whilst my village burns' found by Editha and played on trumpet, trombone and tuba drifting into the cold midday air. Editha had fought long and hard to achieve this memorial service.

Gunter, now over 80, well over 6ft, upright, spoke. Reliving those days back in 1938, he visibly crumpled.

Editha spoke – again her memories of life in Herne. She took out the only photographs she had from her childhood: one as a six-year-old holding a doll, the other her first day at the Jewish school. Both had been sent by Editha's parents to my mother in England for safe-keeping and given to Editha by my mother when they found one another at the end of the war by chance. Editha's speech, a reflection of her very being – having learned as a child how to survive: trust no one, rely on no one – was uncompromising.

The speeches at an end and a minute's silence observed, I took out of my pocket the black, leather-bound *siddur* – my mother's *siddur* – and, after a brief explanation of the journey it had made since 1939, in memory of our uncle Max who did not survive and all the other victims of the Shoah, I and my brother Jeff recited Kaddish from that *siddur*, back once again in Germany.



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Refugees: The moral dilemma

Refugees. That word means many different things to many different people.

First of all, of course, the readership of this journal is loosely defined as having once fallen into that category. By today, however, most of those who once sought refuge from a life-threatening situation have settled into the comfortable existence that their adopted homeland offers. Many have gone on to achieve great things, even garnering honours on the way, and both they and their host countries are to be congratulated for that.

Here in Israel, the word refugees is immediately associated with those Arabs, defined today as Palestinians, who left their homes, whether voluntarily or forcibly, as a result of the fighting that erupted after the 1947 UN resolution sanctioning the creation of a Jewish state in part of what is now Israel. It is common knowledge that those hostilities were instigated by a coalition of eight Arab countries determined to put an end to Israel's very existence. Not long after those Palestinians left their homes, a roughly equivalent number of Jews living in Arab countries were forced to abandon their homes and businesses and flee for

their lives. A large proportion of these made their way to the newly-created state. This occurred at a time when the core population of the country was tiny, causing considerable hardship to the entire nation. Nonetheless, every effort was made to accommodate the newcomers, and today most of them and their descendants are well established and constitute an integral part of Israeli society.

While Israel accepted, and did its utmost to assimilate, its Jewish refugees, the Arab countries refused to contemplate integrating their brethren, preferring to leave them stateless and homeless in order to perpetuate their plight and put pressure on the international community to solve their problem. The UN established a special unit, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA), in 1949 to help Palestinian refugees, bestowing refugee status on future descendants of the original refugees, thereby perpetuating the suffering of people who could quite easily have been absorbed in host Arab countries without further ado. This issue still besets any attempt to find a solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

Now, countries all over the world

are facing a growing tide of people from disadvantaged parts of the globe seeking to gain entry into more prosperous countries which could offer them a better future. The Americans have built a barrier to prevent impoverished Mexicans from entering their country. Although England is protected by the Channel, it has still seen fit to demand that France control its coastal areas more vigorously to prevent refugees from Africa finding their way into the UK. Spain, Italy and France patrol their coasts in a vain attempt to prevent refugees from entering.

Now that problem is confronting Israel too. Refugees from Africa are prepared to endure the risks and hardships of travelling on foot across Egypt and the Sinai desert, as well as paying enormous sums to smugglers, to try and get into Israel. On a recent tour of the southern border area, Prime Minister Netanyahu was surprised to hear that about 500 Africans were managing to infiltrate into Israel each week. Media reports stressed that they could represent an economic, demographic and security threat, though this claim does not have a firm factual basis.

So once again Israel is confronted with a moral dilemma. Should it build a physical barrier to prevent any more African refugees entering Israel, or is it more appropriate for us as Jews to refer back to our own history of flight and persecution and offer shelter to those fleeing from a similar plight?

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

ASYLUM AID – *the many parallels*

As a member of the 'second generation', I was intrigued to discover that the organisation I work for, Asylum Aid, was founded by 'one of us'. Ernest Morton was born in Berlin, appeared as a child actor in *Emil and the Detectives*, and arrived in England in 1937. In 1990 he played a central role in founding Asylum Aid. The charity's initial focus was on providing legal advice and representation to vulnerable asylum-seekers, but this soon extended to research and campaigning work.

Working at Asylum Aid since 2004, I have been struck by the many parallels between the experiences of my parents and grandparents and those of refugees arriving in the UK today.

At Asylum Aid we have a dedicated caseworker advising and representing unaccompanied children. Like my mother

who arrived on the Kindertransport, their parents have waved them off – on a plane or lorry rather than a train – to hoped-for safety. The trust those parents place in people in Europe to look after their children must be the same trust that my grandparents felt in 1939.

Many adult asylum-seekers have suffered dreadful persecution, including torture and rape, in their countries of origin so, when they are detained in this country, as many are, this brings back terrible memories and makes the experience extremely traumatic. I am reminded of my grandfather who, having been sent to Dachau after Kristallnacht, reached the safety of England, only to be interned on the Isle of Man.

And I was reminded of my grandfather again recently when I met a woman who, like all asylum-seekers, is not allowed to

work. She told me wryly she was a dentist – and the UK is short of dentists. My grandfather, also a dentist, was not allowed to work in his profession. However, I understand this did not stop him from providing dental services to other Jewish refugees in north London!

This year it is 20 years since Ernest Morton founded Asylum Aid. Our anniversary plans include a guest lecture on asylum and human rights in his memory (he died in 2006), developing our work taking test cases through the courts, and a major fundraising campaign with an ambitious target of £20,000.

With sufficient resources we will be able to continue doing all we can to protect refugees fleeing persecution for the next 20 years and beyond.

Debora Singer
www.asylumaid.org.uk