

## (Mis)understanding the Holocaust

There are fashions in history, as there are fashions in art, politics or miniskirts. The public image of historians as austere devotees to trawling through dusty archives in pursuit of the holy grail of truth is misguided. The academic profession is as keen as any other to jump onto the latest bandwagon, to seize on the fashionable buzzwords and to deploy the latest tools of theory and analysis. Historians' approaches to the Holocaust have accordingly varied very considerably over the decades, as one dominant current of historical interpretation has been succeeded by another. Of course, this is an integral part of the process of history-writing: only through the introduction of new ways of seeing, analysing and writing history can our understanding of historical events, figures and processes progress.

The present consensus is that before the 1960s historians, in particular German historians, ignored National Socialism and the Holocaust to an almost culpable extent. The first general history of National Socialism to sell widely was William L. Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960); the author was an American journalist who had been stationed in Berlin until December 1940. The first major studies of National Socialism in Germany were by Karl Dietrich Bracher, a political scientist, not a historian. And what is usually regarded as the first, seminal study of the Holocaust was Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961); the author was an Austrian-born Jewish refugee working in America, and almost alone in his field. One should not, however, overlook the work that appeared in the 1950s, like that on Nazi anti-Semitism by Eva G. Reichmann, a Jewish refugee from Germany for many years associated with the Wiener Library, and that on *The-resienstadt* by H. G. Adler, a camp survivor from Prague who also settled in Britain.

The upswing in interest in National Socialism in the 1960s among historians



Sonnenstein Castle in Saxony, where 15,000 handicapped people were killed

and social scientists coincided with the rise of the New Left, when the neo-Marxist orthodoxy of the day dictated a concentration on class conflict, especially the struggle of the working class against the ruling capitalist system. An article of faith was the primacy of economic factors as the essential motive force behind history, following the Marxist model that saw economic conditions – the basis – as determining the entire social superstructure of political, cultural and ideological phenomena. Anti-Semitism, an ideology (of sorts), was thus accorded only a secondary, subordinate part in the analysis of Nazism; and Nazism itself was subsumed under the wider category of Fascism, seen as a Europe-wide movement aimed at the suppression of working-class militancy at a time of acute economic crisis.

The New Left went back to the 1930s for its definition of Fascism as a desperate, dictatorial expedient adopted by the capitalist classes to defend their interests; in the classic phrase of the Bulgarian Communist Georgi Dimitrov, speaking for the Communist International, Fascism was 'the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital'. Anti-Semitism became a mere diversionary tactic employed by the ruling elites to inflame racial passions and thereby distract the populace from the real conflict – that between classes.

Where this concentration on economic

factors and class war at the expense of Nazi anti-Semitism could lead was graphically demonstrated in Bertolt Brecht's play *Round Heads and Pointed Heads* (*Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe*, 1936). In this political parable, the ruling elites of the imaginary country of Yahoo call in the agitator Iberin, with his preposterous agenda of setting the two racial groups, Round Heads and Pointed Heads (Germans and Jews), against one another, so as to avert a workers' uprising.

The strategy succeeds: the dynamic of revolution is blunted by Iberin's racist ideology, the old order is re-established, and the play ends with the rich Round Heads and the rich Pointed Heads (all capitalists) feasting together while the workers of both groups are executed. The play has long languished in well-deserved oblivion; its conclusion in particular is insulting to the victims of the Holocaust. In *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941), Brecht even managed the feat of recreating the rise of Hitler, in the guise of the Chicago gangster Ui, without a single mention of Jews, racial ideology or anti-Semitism.

The theoretical underpinning of much of the left-wing history of Nazism and the Holocaust written in the 1970s betrays a similar perspective. Martin Kitchen's study *Fascism* (1976), for example, though its front cover is adorned with images of Hitler and Mussolini, has not a single index reference to the Holocaust, to Auschwitz or even to Jews (the reader is referred to 'anti-Semitism'). This would be unthinkable today. Theories of 'Fascism' enabled fashionably inclined scholars to lump Hitler in with Mussolini and Franco, as key players in a Europe-wide anti-revolutionary counteroffensive; Kitchen's book duly devotes whole chapters to 'Fascism and Industry' and 'Fascism and the Middle Classes'.

Even Tim Mason's studies *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft* (*The Working*

continued overleaf

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*Class and the National Community*) and *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich (Social Policy in the Third Reich)*, which were hailed in the 1970s as combining a neo-Marxist interpretative framework with a 'flexible' analytical approach that transcended Marxist economic determinism, have dated badly. For here, too, the German working class is the main protagonist, and the principal antagonist of Nazism. Though Mason took a more differentiated view of the role of capitalism under the Third Reich, he still claimed that the German working class remained broadly hostile to Nazism and that the pressures this created caused a 'structural economic crisis' that directly triggered Hitler's decision to go to war. Mason adroitly described the events that followed as 'genocidal war', a phrase that allowed him to analyse the reasons for the war at length, while also appearing to encompass the Holocaust, about whose causes he had far less to say.

Since the 1980s, the history of the Holocaust has tended to fragment, moving away from a single framework of orthodoxy to a vastly more varied range of approaches, one of the most significant being the focus on victim groups. Here again, fashion has come into play. Some groups, like the Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), have belatedly received the attention they deserve as the target for outright genocide; they had largely been denied this after 1945 by their marginalised status in society, where they continued to be viewed as social undesirables. But changing social attitudes eventually led to a re-evaluation of their role as victims.

Other groups, like Soviet prisoners of war, of whom some 3,000,000 died in German captivity, have never achieved any significant public profile as victims, not least because the Soviet Union itself never recognised them as such (preferring to ship the survivors off to the *Gulag* after their liberation). Mentally and physically handicapped Germans, who were effectively wiped out in the so-called 'euthanasia programme', the 'Aktion T4' (from the address of its headquarters at Tiergartenstraße 4, Berlin), also remain a victim group without a voice.

Homosexuals, on the other hand, have come to occupy a place on almost all lists of the Nazis' victims. This plainly reflects a widespread willingness to confront the discrimination that gays and lesbians experienced in the countries of Western

Europe after 1945, where homosexuality continued to be illegal into the 1960s and beyond. The most celebrated, not to say sensationalised, expression of that new awareness was Martin Sherman's play *Bent*, first performed in 1979 and filmed in 1997. But the fashionable emphasis on gay rights should not lead to distortions of history, as in the common assumption that homosexuals were targeted for extermination by the Nazis in a manner comparable to Jews.

That many homosexuals suffered and died under the Nazis is beyond question, but their complete extermination was never attempted. If it had been, then the numbers involved would have been very large indeed – there must have been more homosexuals in Germany, however defined, than Jews (who numbered about 1 per cent of the population). There is no evidence of transports taking thousands of homosexuals to extermination centres, as there is for Jews. The elimination of homosexuals from Germany would also have involved an investigation into the SA and SS, homoerotic organisations of the first order, as well as the persecution of huge numbers of Germans. And outside Germany the Nazis showed little interest in eliminating gays: in their eyes, homosexuality was a sign of weakness, so if it flourished in France or Poland, that was not necessarily to Germany's disadvantage.

Behind the relative indecision that characterised policy towards homosexuals lay the Nazis' inability to resolve a fundamental theoretical problem: was homosexuality an inborn condition that could only be eradicated with its bearers, or was it acquired, through seduction or some other influence on a person's sexual development, and therefore reversible? In the absence of any answer, Nazi persecution of male and female homosexuals remained unsystematic. Nevertheless, it is only right that changing attitudes have allowed the suffering that it caused its victims to be recognised.

**Anthony Grenville**

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

## AJR 70th Anniversary Celebrations

### Programme of Events, 20-26 June

The AJR is delighted to announce a programme of events to be held at the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC) from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 June as part of our 70th anniversary celebrations.

Featuring luminaries such as Lord Moser, Anne Karpf and Edgar Feuchtwanger as well as contributions from the AJR and the LJCC, the programme will include lectures and panel discussions, film screenings, a guided tour of Hampstead, and a concert. All events will celebrate the contribution of the Jewish refugees from Nazism to Britain.

**Full details will appear in next month's Journal and on the AJR and LJCC websites.**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of  
**THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES**  
**MONDAY 20 JUNE 2011**  
**11.00 AM**

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

Lunch, if required, £6 payable in advance

### Agenda

Annual Report 2010

Hon. Treasurer's Report

Discussion

Election of Committee of Management

All questions for the chair should be submitted by Monday 6 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 Monday 20 June 2011:

Mr ACKaufman\*, Chairman, Mr WD 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\*, Ms Marion Koebner, 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 Monday 6 June.

## Seder in Bombay in 1944

In 1938 my parents, like many other Jews in Vienna, were frantically searching for a country that would issue a visa to let us in. One couldn't just turn up at a border and claim to be an 'asylum seeker' – though goodness knows we were! Although all the countries of the world had different opinions on nearly everything, they were unanimous in not wanting any Jewish refugees. The wry joke of thumbing through the school atlas, coming to the end, and then asking 'Where else is there?' was not really funny.

There were a few loopholes. It was possible to go to Shanghai without a visa, or one could try for a domestic service post in England, or one could try to bribe a member of one of the South American consulates known to be open to offers. We looked on these possibilities as a last resort because, while various other approaches had already failed, we had become hopeful that, through friends of relatives, we might obtain visas for British India (as it then was). As it turned out, it was well into 1939, past Kristallnacht and all that went with it, before the visas arrived. We could then commence the ordeal of paying the Reichsfluchtsteuer, obtaining police clearance and getting a passport so that the precious visa could be stamped in. We must have been among the last people who were able to leave Vienna before the doors slammed shut – we arrived in Bombay on 24 August 1939, nine days before the war broke out.

There were several hundred German and Austrian Jews in India, many of whom had come some time earlier to fill senior medical, commercial or technical posts. Some of the established residents were quite prosperous and tried to help the more hard-pressed recent arrivals by forming the Jewish Relief Association. The Association also enlisted support from the Baghdadi Jewish community, some of whom were very wealthy indeed (the various branches of the Sassoon family were eminent members).

Although everybody tried to be helpful, my father found the task of earning a living very difficult. In Vienna he had been a trading member of the Agricultural Exchange, commercial experience that was of little value to a penniless refugee. After some false starts, an opportunity arose through

the Jewish Relief Association when the post of manager of their hostel became vacant. At the same time, the demand for places at the hostel was increasing as refugees continued to arrive during the war by an overland route. After some discussion, my father was employed to open a second hostel some distance away and my mother accepted the post of managing the existing hostel.

The hostels were rather spartan and people tried to leave as soon as they were able to make their own way. There were inevitably some residents who never left, but on the whole the pressure on places eased as the years passed. It was thought that good use of the accommodation could be made by offering it to Jewish servicemen stationed throughout India who came on leave to Bombay. By now, large numbers of troops had been sent to India to deal



with the Japanese threat on the eastern border and the offer was greatly appreciated. The hostel became well known among the Army and RAF and quite a number of servicemen spent a few days or a week there. This was so popular that it was decided in 1944 to issue a general invitation for a *seder* at Pesach.

The Rev. Maurice A. Lew had been appointed Jewish Chaplain for the Forces in India with the rank of Captain and obtained an agreement that as many servicemen as possible would be granted leave for the occasion so that some 400 people were expected. My father was charged with the task of organising the entire event (with the help of many lady volunteers). I thought it was rather brave of him to accept because the largest *seder* he had previously organised was in Vienna for our family of four plus a few guests. Observance in our household had been a compromise between my father's and my mother's background. He had

come from a fairly observant, though hardly orthodox, family in Lemberg in Poland. My mother was born in Vienna and her family was, I suspect, Jewish largely in name only. For most of the year we avoided pork or shellfish, but otherwise ate general food. At Pesach, however, we became properly *kosher*. Completely different pans and crockery were brought down from the attic and my father did all the cooking. (He had always been interested in cooking as a hobby.) However, as my mother wryly observed, his strict Pesach observance apparently did not include washing up in spite of all the extra dishes involved.

My father threw himself into this new enterprise with great energy and the preparation for the Bombay *seder* seemed like a military operation. A Baghdadi school was asked to provide the hall. The Army supplied a field kitchen and personnel to operate it. Sir Victor Sassoon agreed to foot the bill for food and wine. My father seemed to be everywhere and I can still see him tasting a huge cauldron of chicken soup. I remarked that I had only previously seen a cauldron like that in cartoons for cooking missionaries by cannibals, but was firmly told to stop schoolboy jokes like that or I would start a new Passover blood libel! It all came together finally without any major hitches and proved to be a great success.

The service was taken by the Rev. Lew while his irreverent 'Other Ranks' audience remarked on the high polish of his Sam Browne belt. There was much banter as to who should ask the 'Four Questions' and one cynic remarked he had a lot more than four questions to ask. It was all great fun and the lady volunteers kept the glasses filled as many had difficulty in counting to four in the number of cups to be drunk. The singing of 'Chad Gadya' finally shook the rafters as it came to the end. In the following weeks, my father had many letters of appreciation and I think it gave him quite a lot of satisfaction at a time when he must have felt disappointed at how his career had turned out.

There was a sad end note in that only a few days later, following an accidental fire, an ammunition ship blew up in Bombay harbour sinking 11 other ships with many casualties. Some of the servicemen who attended the *seder* may well have been among them.

**Walter Bergwerk**

# AJR Annual Report 2010

## Highlights of the year

As the profile of our membership continued to change, in 2010 we established contact with an ever greater number of our members in need of social, welfare and financial assistance, while at the same time organising events to raise the profile of the AJR.

Our regional groups continued to attract many members and our summer regional get-togethers proved as popular as ever with gatherings in Edinburgh, Manchester, Oxford and Temple Fortune. Also, we organised our fifth three-day visit to London, which included outings to Keats House and the Freud Museum and a day in central London. And we were delighted to welcome broadcaster and writer Jeni Barnett, who greatly entertained us at a dinner at Belsize Square Synagogue.

Our annual Celebration of Volunteering took place at the Jewish Museum. Over 90 volunteers attended the evening event, where they had the opportunity to visit the newly refurbished museum. Eve Pollard was our guest speaker and the AJR Centre provided a delicious supper.

AJR nominees were runners-up in two categories at the inaugural Jewish Volunteer Network awards ceremony: individual inspirational volunteer (Klaus Neuberg) and volunteer team (KT Planning Committee). This was a fantastic achievement as there were over 60 nominations in these categories.

In a new initiative, the AJR welcomed a volunteer intern from the German organisation Action Reconciliation Service for Peace. Jan Botsch proved a delightful addition to our staff during his one-year placement and last September we welcomed his successor, Lena Mangold, who is ably following in his footsteps.

In another first for the AJR, we organised two inter-generational 'Question Time'-style events for members and their families in the North of England. Over 70 attended the first meeting, at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester in February, and 60 participated in the gathering at the Royal Armouries in Leeds for members in Yorkshire and Newcastle in September. Panellists and guests included survivors, former 'Kinder' and refugees as well as Second and Third Generation members, which all made for fascinating interaction.

The Annual Tea, at the Hilton Hotel in Watford in October, was once again a great success with 250 members enjoying a delightful afternoon. We were all regaled by the ensemble *With a Song in My Heart*, with the AJR's Diana Franklin accompanying on the piano.

The AJR worked closely with the government to create the post of UK Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, to which Sir Andrew Burns was appointed, and

continues to work with him on a range of issues, including property restitution and access to Holocaust archives.

Over 100 guests attended a lecture by Hannah Lessing, General Secretary of the Austrian National Fund, at an event we co-organised at the Austrian embassy and which was hosted by outgoing Ambassador Gabriele Matzner-Holzer.

We were grateful to James Smith, co-founder of the Holocaust Centre at Beth Shalom, who addressed guests on 'The Legacy of Hope', the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2010, and to AJR member Rev Bernd Koschland, who spoke movingly at our ceremony to commemorate Kristallnacht.

We were also delighted to reach agreements with the University of Essex to acquire our audio-visual Holocaust testimony collection *Refugee Voices*, and with the Freie Universität Berlin, where our archive will feature alongside the Shoah Foundation Institute interviews.

## Personnel

Social Services Department secretary Estelle Brookner retired after 15 years' service; a farewell lunch was held at the AJR Centre. Estelle was replaced by Christine Jones, who had previously worked at Jewish Care's Princess Alexandra Home. We also said farewell to Theresa Alexis, who retired from the AJR Centre.

## Membership

At the end of 2010, total AJR membership stood at 2,988 (3,081 at the end of 2009), including 412 Second Generation. There were 137 new members, of whom 38 were Second Generation. During 2010, 169 members passed away, 39 cancelled their membership, and 49 moved away or their subscriptions were unpaid. Amazingly, at the end of last year we counted among our members 32 centenarians.

## Social and welfare services

In 2010, AJR social and welfare services helped many AJR members relocate to independent living apartments in the newly opened Jewish Care resource Selig Court. We continue to work with Jewish Care and Shalvata to provide continuity of service for these members.

Also, we undertook the major task of reassessing the needs of all AJR members receiving Homecare funding as the Claims Conference introduced stricter eligibility criteria. Working to a tight deadline and aided by regional partner organisations, we made home visits nationwide. Due to the tireless dedication of our team, we ensured that all AJR members continued to receive funding.

We continue to work with the Manchester Federation and Leeds Jewish Welfare Board and are developing stronger links with Jewish Care Scotland. This

enables us to provide the best quality of service for AJR members.

In addition, we arranged training sessions for our social services staff to help maintain their excellent standards.

## Financial assistance

The AJR, the lead agency for the Claims Conference in the UK, is responsible for distributing grants which for 2010 totalled £1.7m. The funds are paid to clients of five charities and administered from our offices. In total, we have made some 1,200 grants for emergency purposes.

There were also 330 survivors and refugees in receipt of Homecare grants with a total of £1,206,000 during the year. In all, 133,000 hours of care were provided. The homecare programme enables the AJR to maintain members in their own homes for as long as possible.

Additionally, we are pleased to have paid through our Self Aid scheme £536,005 to 185 members with the greatest need during 2010.

## Northern groups

Alongside the two inter-generational 'Question Time' events, both of which were recorded for possible future educational use, over 50 members attended a service to commemorate Kristallnacht at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, where the AJR's Dr Anthony Grenville was the speaker.

The Northern groups continue to flourish with regular meetings and made several outings to the theatre, stately homes and gardens and a day out in St Annes-on-Sea to meet AJR members on holiday. We also organised Chanukah parties in Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool.

The annual AJR Northern Get-together was held in Manchester, when over 90 members met for a day of inter-active discussions, socialising and entertainment. The lunchtime speaker was Gillian Walnes MBE, Director of the Anne Frank Trust UK.

AJR members in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Newcastle also had a busy year with a variety of meetings. The Edinburgh group, which meets in members' homes, debated the topic 'Jewish British or British Jewish' and held an exchange of culture at a 'Hungarian afternoon'.

The recently formed Book Club in Glasgow meets every second month with members hosting the event by rotation. Continental Friends' events included story-telling ('Bring a treasured item and share its story'), a theatre outing to *The Cherry Orchard*, and a visit to the Victory Celebrations to mark the end of the war.

Lev Atlas of Scottish Opera enchanted all with his virtuoso violin playing and stories of his life in Russia and members also heard from Ethne Woldman about

the plight of the Targu Mures Holocaust Community in Romania.

Members came from far and wide for the Scotland Regional event, where Paula Cowan, a Holocaust educator and Holocaust Memorial Day Trustee, was the guest speaker.

### Southern groups

Members of our groups in the South had a bumper year of excursions and trips as well as participating in regional get-togethers in Oxford, where Anthony Grenville was the guest speaker, and Temple Fortune, where members heard from journalist Jonathan Margolis.

Twenty lucky members had a memorable day out at Luton Hoo, which included a tour of the stately home and a talk by Mrs Dickenson, a long-standing employee of the Wernher family. In addition to a sandwiches and cream tea and a tour of the grounds, members had an opportunity to learn about the home's history and see the magnificent art works.

We also organised trips to Kew Gardens, the Geoffrey Museum and West Lodge as well as a guided tour of the exhibitions at the new Jewish Museum and a theatre outing to *War Horse*. The Book Club continues to thrive, as does the Veterans' meeting.

### Holidays

The AJR holidays remain very successful. The Northern holiday was arranged in St Annes-on-Sea, at which members from Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Hull and London enjoyed a relaxing week.

In May, members spent a week in Bournemouth, which was very well attended. There also took place the annual trip in July to Eastbourne, where, as part of a full week of entertainment, members went on outings to the theatre and to local places of interest.

### Claims advice

Following a ruling by a German court, thousands of Holocaust survivors who worked in ghettos have been able to obtain pensions from the German government and we guided applicants through the process. In some cases, members have received pensions and back pay awards in excess of £50,000.

We also offered help with explanations to former 'Kinder' about their possible entitlement to an increased pension. This followed the successful campaign led by Hermann Hirschberger MBE to have the value of these pensions reassessed.

### Volunteers

The Volunteers' Department continues to find and support volunteers who help our members primarily in the London area, with some volunteers helping at regional group meetings.

Many of our befrienders are often confronted by difficult questions/comments from their befriendeds, especially regarding end-of-life issues.

We ran a very successful small workshop group. This session, re-run in the spring, was facilitated by an experienced social worker, trainer and counsellor.

### AJR Journal

As previously, regular contributors to the Journal were Consultant Editor Dr Anthony Grenville, who discussed historical issues pertinent to members' experiences; Gloria Tessler, whose reviews of art exhibitions displayed keen insight; and Jerusalem-based Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, with her 'insider' perceptions of life in Israel.

Occasional contributors such as Victor Ross and Edith Argy provided humour tinged with nostalgia; Peter Phillips wrote provocative articles on Jewish life ranging from the Israeli-Arab conflict to aspects of Judaism; and Martha Blend, Leslie Baruch Brent, Gloria Tessler and George Vulkan, among others, contributed insightful reviews of books, theatre and music.

Readers' reactions on returning to their hometowns were an increasingly regular theme of articles. Of unusual interest was the detailed and copiously illustrated 'Guide to Aid Personal Research' by Alan Franklin, Librarian at the Manx Heritage Library in Douglas, concerning the internment of 'enemy aliens' on the Isle of Man. Prominence was given in the Journal to the activities of the AJR's newly formed Third Generation group in Manchester.

Anthony Grenville's book *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970: Their Image in 'AJR Information'* (Valentine Mitchell) was published in January 2010 with the support of the AJR.

To mark the Journal's 65th anniversary, we made all back copies, going back to the first publication in January 1946, available on our website at [www.org.uk/pdfjournals](http://www.org.uk/pdfjournals).

### AJR Centre

Rabbi Katz led our model seder with Belsize Square also holding their seder at the Centre whilst the Synagogue was being refurbished.

The Centre catered the Volunteers' Celebration at the Jewish Museum and the Kristallnacht Service at Belsize Square Synagogue and hosted a wonderful Sunday Strawberry Cream Tea in the summer.

Besides hosting and celebrating the 'Kinder' and AJR Chanukah parties, the Centre continued to arrange the Music and Movement, Keep Fit and Thai Chi classes. Members can also benefit from a chiropodist and manicurist.

### Kindertransport

The monthly 'Kinder' lunches at the AJR Centre proved as popular as ever, with a list of fascinating speakers including sculptor Ralph Koltai and writer Dr Margaret Brierley. 'Kinder' were also grateful to the Centre for organising a

wonderful KT Chanukah party.

The AJR was delighted to send congratulations to former KT Chairman Hermann Hirschberger on being awarded an MBE, the third successive KT chairman to receive a royal honour.

Current KT Chairman Sir Erich Reich represented the AJR at the national Yom Hashoah commemoration at The Dell in Hyde Park and spoke of the invaluable contribution of the refugees to Britain.

The KT Committee also organised an outing to the new Jewish Museum and Bernd Koschland continued to produce the excellent Newsletter.

The AJR received numerous requests to make contact with 'Kinder' and for speakers at events from researchers and theatre and documentary producers.

### Child Survivors Association

The CSA held six meetings. In addition to the AGM, it organised the Annual Conference of the European Association of Survivors at Roehampton University. The Committee published six Newsletters.

Since the Association became a Special Interest Group of the AJR in 2007, its membership has climbed to over 100. It is now the second largest member organisation of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust.

In 2005 the CSA published the book *Zachor: Child Survivors Speak*, containing over two dozen child survivor stories. The first 1,000 books were followed in 2007 by an amended edition of another 1,000. We are working on an enlarged version due to be published in 2011.

### Grants

Alongside its grant to the Holocaust Centre at Beth Shalom, the AJR Charitable Trust supported the City of London Sinfonia and the Jewish Film Festival. Among other grants, the Trust contributed towards Holocaust Memorial Day events at the Finchley Reform and Northwood Synagogues and at the Universities of Sussex and Glasgow. We are also proud partners of a new project commissioned by the London Jewish Cultural Centre developing Holocaust testimonies for use in schools in the future.

### Thanks

As ever, my sincere thanks go to my fellow Trustees and members of our Management Committee as well as to our dedicated and caring staff. Thanks also to you, our members, for your unwavering support and interest in our work.

In celebration of our 70th anniversary we are organising several events this year in which we very much hope you will participate. As always, please do let us know if you are aware of other Holocaust refugees and survivors, as well as their families, who can benefit from our services.

**Andrew Kaufman**  
Chairman  
Association of Jewish Refugees

## Finance Report

### AJR – Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31st December 2010

Income:	2010		2009	
	£	£	£	£
Membership/Donations and Legacies	75,438		73,913	
Other	<u>4,041</u>		<u>3,958</u>	
		79,479		77,871
<b>Less:</b>				
Overhead Expenses				
Salary Costs	57,197		58,064	
AJR Journal	56,056		53,732	
Administration/Depreciation	<u>54,485</u>		<u>50,694</u>	
		167,738		162,490
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus:</b>		<b>-45,637</b>		<b>-70,112</b>

### Summary of Balance Sheet at 31st December 2010

	2010	2009
	£	£
Current Assets	6,032	18,118
Less: Current Liabilities	<u>35,730</u>	<u>2,179</u>
	<b>-29,698</b>	<b>15,939</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
General Fund B/Fwd	15,939	86,051
Net deficiency for the year	<u>-45,637</u>	<u>-70,112</u>
	<b>-29,698</b>	<b>15,939</b>

David Rothenberg, Hon. Treasurer 01/04/2011

### AJR CHARITABLE TRUST PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE Summary figure for the year ended 31st December 2010

Income:	2010		2009	
	£	£	£	£
Takings – Day Centre and meals-on-wheels	73,080		89,007	
<b>Less outgoings:</b>				
Salaries	98,507		97,870	
Catering costs	178,746		189,020	
Sundry expenses	<u>99,290</u>	<u>376,543</u>	<u>109,847</u>	<u>396,737</u>
<b>Deficit funded from Charitable Trust</b>		<b><u>303,463</u></b>		<b><u>307,730</u></b>

### AJR CHARITABLE TRUST – Summary Income and Expenditure Accounts Year ended 31st December 2010

Income:	2010		2009	
	£	£	£	£
Gift Aid/Donations/Claims Conference	701,729		803,953	
Investment income	402,999		487,355	
Sheltered housing	<u>19,605</u>		<u>21,843</u>	
	1,124,333		1,313,151	
Legacies	<u>694,232</u>		<u>1,363,828</u>	
	<u>1,818,565</u>		<u>2,676,979</u>	
<b>Less outgoings:</b>				
Day Centre	303,463		307,730	
Self Aid, Homecare and Emergency Grants	1,018,162		1,005,177	
Other organisations	339,431		417,104	
Administration/Depreciation	<u>1,055,824</u>		<u>970,747</u>	
	<u>2,746,880</u>		<u>2,700,758</u>	
Net outgoing resources for the year	-928,315		-23,779	
Surplus/-Deficiency on realised and unrealised investments	<u>1,296,631</u>		<u>2,141,760</u>	
Net movement in funds	<u>368,316</u>		<u>2,117,981</u>	

## Treasurer's Report 2010

During 2010 our financial position remained stable, as can be seen from the attached summary. As Treasurer, however, I remain concerned by several worrying trends. These may be summarised as the prospect of declining income and increasing costs over the short and medium term.

There are three sources of income which we enjoy, and each of them is declining. Historically, the largest source of our income has been legacies from our members and others. Sadly our members are diminishing in number, and fewer of them have been able to help us in their wills. We cannot foretell the future, but we cannot base our planning on maintaining or increasing our income from that source.

The second source of our income has been from our investments but, with investment returns having dropped dramatically over the last three years, this source can no longer be relied upon as much as previously. As we spend our capital in maintaining our vital welfare services, this source of income will inevitably decline further.

The third source from which we benefit in providing welfare services for our members is money received from the German and Austrian Government schemes to help survivors and refugees. These are administered by the Claims Conference, which also provides funds from its 'Successor Funds'. These derive from heirless German property, of which the Claims Conference is the legal heir.

All payments received from or through the Claims Conference are paid to the United Kingdom 'Umbrella Group', on which the AJR is represented. The entire burden of administering these funds falls on the AJR, and is a significant part of the work of our accounting administration under the leadership of Gordon Greenfield.

The German Government has significantly increased its documentation requirements for 2011. The Social Work team have had to assemble information about each recipient of Homecare funded by the German Government and the accounting staff have had to collate the information in respect of all Umbrella Group recipients, not only AJR members. This has been a very heavy workload, and I would like to thank all concerned for their work in this difficult area. There is some good news, however: thanks to the intensive negotiations by the Claims Conference, German Government funding for Homecare has been increased and extended for a further period.

Other funds administered by the Claims Conference have, however, diminished or ended and we have to plan for a further reduction of funding over the next few years from the Claims Conference's own funds.

Turning to the expenditure side, the requirements of our aging and frail members are continuing to increase, whilst the contributions from the British Government and local authorities are being severely cut back. The financial burdens we will have to take on are increasing at an alarming rate. Even taking into account the sad fact that many of our members are reaching the end of their lives, we are having to plan for many years to come for an increase in the level of dependency of those who survive. This

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demographic pattern is reflected throughout the world for the survivor and refugee community.

Legacies still remain a vital part of our overall finances, and I would urge those of you who are considering their wills to include us as beneficiaries.

Finally, I would like to thank once again all our accounting and administration staff, without whose work and devotion we would be unable to continue with our essential work.

**David Rothenberg**  
Honorary Treasurer, Association of  
Jewish Refugees

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 'A GRAVE MISTAKE'

Sir – I couldn't believe my eyes when I read Peter Simpson's letter in your March issue urging readers to ignore Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) because, in his opinion, it is 'a grave mistake'.

What impertinence! To think along these lines even in the privacy of his home is a disgrace, but to express such an opinion publicly is simply outrageous!

I was privileged to be invited by the Swedish Prime Minister to the Forum on the Holocaust in Stockholm in 2000 where HMD was inaugurated and was unanimously accepted by the 46 heads of state present. All these nations pledged to adopt the concept of commemoration each 27 January, the day on which Auschwitz was liberated by Soviet forces. Auschwitz has thus become the symbol of the evil of the Shoah.

Since then, huge strides have been made in Holocaust education and HMD is a crucial element as it enables communities to come together to reflect, remember and, above all, *to learn*. And learn they certainly do – and not only in a superficial way, as Peter Simpson seems to imply.

Here in the UK, most city councils, schools, colleges and civic authorities, including the Mayor of London as well as the government, now hold events on that day. Many schools devote whole days to workshops and seminars in preparation of HMD, and survivors like myself devote much time and energy to travelling the length and breadth of the country to carry out projects in thousands of schools.

A little knowledge is indeed dangerous and perhaps Peter Simpson should take the trouble to attend some of our seminars in order to learn more before expressing his radical views on the subject. No one objects to Israel holding Yom Hashoah on their chosen date, but please don't impose your views on the rest of the world.

*Kitty Hart-Moxon OBE, Harpenden  
(Auschwitz Number 39934)*

Sir – Peter Simpson suggests we ignore Holocaust Memorial Day as we have Yom Hashoah. These are not alternative commemorations from which one can choose – they serve very different purposes.

HMD was instituted in 2001 as the national commemoration of not only the Nazi genocide, but – in contrast with Yom Hashoah – also of other mass killings

since then, such as in Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia and Darfur. It also seeks to counter not only anti-Semitism and racism, but also prejudice and discrimination on the basis of gender, disability and sexuality.

As victims of the most terrible genocide and longest-lasting persecution, Jews have a special responsibility to publicise to the country their own personal testimonies and experiences and those of their family members as a warning of the dangers of intolerance.

The synagogues in Northwood, Kingston and Streatham deserve much praise for hosting annual HMD educational events with local schools, encouraging thousands of participating youngsters to examine their own personal values in the light of what they learn in these programmes. Likewise, many Jews contribute to the numerous local HMD events for the benefit of their communities, both on organising committees and as speakers. In so doing, they play a major role in promoting tolerance in our multi-faith society, and the ideal of peace in an often fractured society.

We Jews have the opportunity to commemorate the Holocaust on Yom Hashoah each 27th Nissan, the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, as our own day of grieving and remembering the six million. We also have the anniversary of Kristallnacht on 9 November and Tisha B'Av on 9 Av. The four *Yizkor* recitations in the year (on Yom Kippur, Shmini Atzeret, Pesach and Shavuot) also frequently recall the victims.

While HMD is an opportunity when we can contribute something precious to society, Yom Hashoah (and the other days) will remain our private time for remembering the Holocaust. The two days should continue to co-exist and complement each other.

*David Wirth, London SE21*

### 'WINTON CHILDREN'

Sir – As a 'Winton child', I was delighted to read Dr Grenville's article in the April issue. I'm sure it will also please Nicky Winton because, as Dr Grenville says, he always acknowledges that the rescue mission was a team effort. However, I'm convinced that but for Winton most of us children would not have been saved.

Hopefully this article will stimulate your readers to write in about others who helped the rescue effort at the Czechoslovak end – never mind in Britain

– and who have perhaps not been given the recognition they deserve. Two of them are Martin Blake, who was responsible for getting Winton involved in the first place, and Bill Barazetti, who was Doreen Warriner's secretary in Prague and was asked by Winton to look after the Prague end in January 1939 until Trevor Chadwick arrived in March. Barazetti remained vitally involved until after the last train left in August 1939. There is more about them in the book Dr Grenville mentions: *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* by Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Matej Minac, the Slovak-Czech film director, who has produced three brilliant films related to the Winton rescue mission and has done more than any other individual to publicise this worldwide.

Finally, a few minor corrections. On page 2, bottom left paragraph, there are three mentions of 1938, which should, I think, all be 1939. Winton left London for Prague just before Christmas 1938 and not in January 1939. According to Emanuel/Gissing, Doreen Warriner died in 1979 (the same year as Trevor Chadwick), not in 1972. Perhaps Dr Grenville put these in as deliberate mistakes to test how carefully we read his article!

*Tom Schrecker, Val d'Isère, France*

Sir – I suppose you had a good reason for omitting the brave co-operation of Bill Barazetti. My sister, Liselotte Gumpel, Professor Emeritus of the University of Minnesota, was interviewed by the newspaper there, followed by an article about Sir Nicholas. It transpired that she was the only 'Winton child' in the area.

Liselotte was determined to explain that the rescue of her and her two sisters was due also to the altruistic gesture of a woman by the name of Miss Harder: had she not been prepared to take us into her humble home, we would not have survived. However, due to the preconceived 'mode' of the journalist, this was omitted.

Luckily, this good woman is mentioned in Sir Martin Gilbert's booklet *Beyond the Call of Duty*.

*Laura Selo, London NW11*

Sir – Reading again in the Journal about the well-deserved recognition of Sir Nicholas Winton and his colleagues for the Czech Kindertransports makes me ask who, and what organisation, did the same for me and others from Germany, Berlin in particular?

I know nothing at all about these good people – except that the Quakers seem to have been involved – and have only a suspicion who my guarantor was. If this applies to a lot of other Kindertransportees, it would be nice to learn something on the subject in the Journal, even if those we should have thanked may now be long

*continued overleaf*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*continued from page 7*

since dead.

My parents, who perished so miserably in 1943/44, are, of course, at the forefront as being responsible for my being alive and having had a satisfying family and working life.

*Werner Conn (formerly Cohn),  
Lytham St Annes*

Sir – I thought I would just point out what I believe are errors in a few dates in the article about Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick and the 'Winton children'. On page 2, paragraph beginning 'The division between Warriner's work to rescue adults', all the dates thereafter should read 1939 and not 1938. The children's transports did not begin until January 1939. Nicholas Winton arrived in Prague in December 1938 and began his work from then. Trevor Chadwick returned to Britain in June 1939 – not 1938. I am almost certain I am right, but perhaps you could check this.

*Bronia Snow, brosnow@talktalk.net*

Sir – Another wonderful story! You keep uncovering all sorts of interesting aspects of what seems to have been thoroughly studied. Bravo!

*Tom Freudenheim, New York*

*Anthony Grenville: I must apologise for the wrong date, 1938, appearing in the ninth paragraph of my article. This should have read 1939, as in the rest of the article. The date given for Doreen Warriner's death, however, is correct.*

### RESTITUTION IN AUSTRIA

Sir – The AJR is to be congratulated on arranging a colloquium on 'Restitution in Austria Today' in the magnificent surroundings of the Austrian Embassy. As I ascended the staircase and admired the profusion of paintings and artefacts, no doubt on loan from Austrian museums, I could not help wondering if any of them had once had Jewish owners.

Michael Newman gave a useful overview of the state of play in the restitution game, pulling no punches in describing Austria's hard-won progression from victim to perpetrator.

Ambassador Brix, while pointing to progress made, was frank in admitting how much remained to be done. Ms. Webber, Co-chair of the Commission on Looted Art, gave specific instances of difficulties encountered by rightful owners, mitigating the bad news by reading her contribution at top speed in a conversational tone without regard to audibility or concession to the average age of the audience.

One was left with a strong impression of the different approaches to restitution adopted in Germany and Austria – the former a willing co-operator, the latter 'going slow' at every opportunity (as this

writer knows only too well from personal experience).

It is to be hoped that if the AJR celebrates its 75th birthday in the same venue, there will be fewer claims outstanding, and microphones will be used or free hearing aids distributed among the dwindling number of survivors from this year's audience.

*Victor Ross, London NW8*

### ALBANIA AND THE HOLOCAUST

Sir – I read with great interest the letter from Zef Mazi, the Albanian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, in your March issue. I was surprised that he did not mention that at the Holocaust commemoration on 27 January last at the London Jewish Cultural Centre, Imam Maulana Shahid Raza of the Interfaith Forum presented the Albanian Ambassador with a Golden Interfaith Medallion. This was in recognition of Albania's extraordinarily friendly interfaith relations that motivated Muslim and Christian families to risk their own lives to provide shelter for Jewish refugees before and during the last war.

This Golden Medallion really belongs to the Albanian people and I expect the Ambassador will have it displayed in the Tirana museum where it belongs. I hope the AJR also will send a recognition to the Albanian people for having risked their own lives to shelter so many of our fellow Jewish refugees so that it too can be displayed in Tirana.

Albanians maintain their exemplary interfaith relations even now, when such relations are rare in many countries. For instance, there presently exists in Tirana an Association of Albanian Friends of Israel of which the chairman and a number of Muslims are members. I am pretty certain Albania is the only country where such an association exists.

*Dr T. Scarlett Epstein OBE, Hove, Sussex*

### WHERE WERE LONDON HOSTS?

Sir – A few weeks ago I went with my son to an AJR dinner to socialise with a group from AJR branches in Scotland and Northern England who were experiencing London for a week. It was a great evening, but where were the friendly London hosts? Apart from the organisers, there was no one I recognised from the London AJR groups, so there can't have been many present. The big empty space at the back of Belsize Square Synagogue, where there could have been at least four more tables, said it all. No wonder they talk about Northerners being so much more friendly!

At the modest cost of £22 it was excellent value – a modest but very satisfying three-course dinner plus coffee/tea and a superb presentation by Sir Sydney Samuelson. Elsewhere you would probably pay £22 for the meal alone, whereas we were treated to a piece of exciting British film history by someone very special – who not only had us gripped by his 'story' but included fascinating film

clips in his 90-minute presentation. What kept you all away, my friends?

*Ruth Barnett, London NW6*

### SETTLING IN ISRAEL

Sir – John and Susan Fransman are leaving London to settle in Israel. Both were instrumental in founding the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain. As a member of that group, I want to say how grateful I am for their continuous hard work over many years and for their generous, selfless hospitality, warmth, energy and good humour.

Members of the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain met at the London Jewish Cultural Centre to say thank you and goodbye and paid warm tribute to John and Susan. We all wished them a happy future in Israel. They will be much missed. I am delighted that John has agreed to become our Honorary President.

*Wlodka Robertson, London SE26*

### GERMANS AND JEWISH REFUGEES

Sir – I hope someone can provide an answer to Tom Schrecker's question (April) about the number of non-Jewish Germans in Nazi concentration camps. Meanwhile, the following statistics, taken from Peter Hoffmann's massive *History of German Resistance*, may be useful: between 1933 and 1945, 12,000 Germans were condemned to death by 'Special Courts', 25,000 German soldiers were executed after courts martial, and 40,000 Germans were killed after condemnation by 'regular justice'.

*Nicholas Jacobs, London NW5*

### WHAT IF?

Sir – Alan Gill (March) asks 'What if Britain had been occupied, at least temporarily, by the Nazis? ... Would ordinary British policemen be willing to participate in such an act? I like to think that young men ... would just refuse point blank, whatever the consequences. On the other hand ... Am I presenting a blinkered view?'

What happened in the Channel Islands, which were in fact occupied by the Germans, does not make one too confident about how Jews, or at least Jewish refugees from mainland Europe, would have been treated.

*Martin D. Stern, Salford*

### DOZENT LEDERER

Sir – Re-reading last September's issue of the Journal, I realise I overlooked an item which stirred tremendous memories in me – that of the paediatrician who was, as I left Vienna at 16, the only doctor I ever had in Austria. I think I can answer the question at the end of Professor Shaw's article about what happened to Dozent Lederer.

The links go back a long way. In 1913 my father, then a young widower with one sickly child not destined to live long, had the little boy looked after by the then young Dr Lederer, but without

*continued on page 16*

# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The work of the late 17th-century Flemish artist **Jean-Antoine Watteau** anticipated both the essence of the French Rococo and the much later Impressionists. In **Watteau: The Drawings**, at the **Royal Academy of Arts** until 5 June, many sketches were intended as works in progress, yet this use of red, white and black chalk conveys both lightness and seriousness, making chalk go further than it had ever been used before. His drawings are considered the most extraordinary in Western art.



*Sylvia Sims* by Ida Kar, 1953, NPG x 88601

Watteau worked on hand-made gritted paper pre-laid on wire and dried, which gave the drawings an added opacity. His *fêtes galantes*, or elegant social gatherings, are a narrative of high society which includes portraits of elegantly coiffed ladies. His subjects range from the *Commedia dell'Arte* to *Savoyards*, Gypsies who came to town in the winter seeking work as chimney sweeps or knife grinders, to high-ranking Persian diplomats, with colourful attire and animated personalities. Watteau's genius lies in his attention to fine detail and the compassion which lends his poorer subjects dignity and sensitivity. He once

said that he found it hard to convey this immediacy in oils. Watteau drew his inspiration both from contemporary life and historical subjects by studying old masters like Rubens or van Dyck, Titian or Campagnola. His career spanned the end of the reign of Louis XIV, when the academic approach to art was softened by the more relaxed period of the French Regency.

The Bohemian photographer **Ida Kar**, at the **National Portrait Gallery** until 19 June, represents the post-war *avant garde*. All the artistic greats of her era are captured in her lens – the famous subjects besides their even more famous works. The work itself is expressive but not innately innovative. Whether it is Jean-Paul Sartre, Iris Murdoch, Henry Moore, Georges Braque, T. S. Eliot or Bridget Riley, her portraits always dwarf them in the greater presence of their creations. The exhibition follows Kar from her first Cairo studio in the late 1930s to her move in 1945 to London, where she encountered the British art world through Jacob Epstein's family and her second husband, Victor Musgrave. Her first solo exhibition in London was in 1954 and she incorporated the leading artists of the St Ives modern art movement in Cornwall, like Barbara Hepworth behind a netted armature. Stanley Spencer lurks beneath his trademark black umbrella, his face pale and bleak. Laurie Lee looks wistful beside his pin-ups like Gina Lollobrigida, and Doris Lessing is surrounded by hyacinths.

**Luke Kendall** is a young artist to watch. In **The Comical Tragedy of ...**, at the **Air Gallery** in London's Dover Street, he demonstrates his boldly painted and surrealistic approach to childhood, laughter, the unexpected and the unexplained. Behind the laughter there is often cynicism and symbolism drawn from other worlds. A baby whose face is full of oblique experience is shown with a cigarette. One of his most poignant works has two Lego dolls entwined. There is a dramatic sense of scorched earth in his political, anti-war paintings. Kendall's highly graphic and original work features on the album artwork of alternative rock band Secret Cinema Band.

## REVIEWS

### Setting Europe ablaze

**'ARE YOU PREPARED TO DO A DANGEROUS JOB?' AUF DEN SPUREN ÖSTERREICHISCHER UND DEUTSCHER EXILANTEN IM BRITISCHEN GEHEIMDIENST SOE (On the Track of Austrian and German Refugees in the British Secret Service SOE)**

by Elisabeth Lebensaft and Christoph Mentschl

Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010, 296 pp.

This interesting book – which may be of particular interest to AJR members – tells the story of eight Austrian and German refugees who volunteered to serve with the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) – which Churchill had famously ordered to 'set Europe ablaze'. The authors' research began with the chance discovery in the National Archives of two reports on an SOE operation, which led them to other SOE documents, including the participants' debriefing reports. The protagonists were six Austrians and two Germans: Georg Breuer/George Bryant, Anton Walter Freud (a grandson of Sigmund Freud), Karl/Charles Kaiser, Franz König/Frank Kelley, Erich Rohde/Eric Rhodes, Hans Schweiger/Harry Stevens, Manfred Werner/Fred Warner and Harry Wunder/Harry Williams. Another invaluable source was AJR member Eric Sanders, whose own memoir of his experience as an SOE agent, *Emigration ins Leben*, appeared in 2008.

The authors' account of a brief SOE mission in April 1945 is placed in the context of the protagonists' life stories. The book successively records their early life, their flight from racial persecution, and their early experiences in Britain (four of the eight were interned as 'enemy aliens', two of whom were deported – one to Canada and one to Australia) before recounting their training and service in the SOE. The book also traces their post-war experience: most of them were transferred to the War Crimes Group of BAOR, working to bring Nazi war criminals to justice in post-war Germany.

The year 1943, the turning point of the war, also marked a change in British attitudes to refugees. Hitherto permitted to serve only in the Pioneer

*continued overleaf*

## Wearing the right uniform

During my national service (1953-55) my German name puzzled a lot of people. I don't suppose that in today's multicultural Britain a member of the armed forces with a name like mine would encounter as much as a raised eyebrow. But this is now and that was then. Looking back, I think their confusion was understandable. To a professional soldier who had fought in the Second World War, my name would have suggested someone who had wanted to kill him a few years earlier. Was I, in fact, wearing the wrong uniform?

It was easy to convince people I was indeed wearing the right uniform. I merely had to point out that, as a Jew, my good fortune had been that I had found safety in Britain and thus escaped the Nazi regime they had been fighting. That was why I was now British and owed absolutely no allegiance to Austria, let alone Germany. Without fail this was immediately accepted and quite often people added some favourable comment about the recently created state of Israel.

One reason, I felt, for this was the memory of the stark newsreel portrayal of the horrors uncovered at the liberation of Belsen. Another was the then widespread admiration for the Middle East underdogs who had prevailed against superior numbers. Some of the people I spoke to added some relevant incident from their past.

One of these experiences was relayed to me quite early in my period of national service. Having survived a quite gruelling ten-weeks basic training course with an infantry regiment, I was sent on a much gentler course of training for the Royal Army Educational Corps. This, however, included a daily drill parade conducted by a Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) in the Seaforth Highlanders. I imagine he was given this posting as he was nearing retirement. He didn't take his duties too seriously. Dispensing with the customary

ferocity of an RSM, he actively socialised with his charges. He too expressed surprise at finding me in khaki. Having heard my reply, he too accepted it, went on to express unbounded admiration for Israel, and told me the following story.

Early in his military career, during the 1930s, he was posted to Palestine. During his time there, he was detached from his regiment to live in a kibbutz and teach the kibbutzniks how to protect themselves from random Arab attacks. His particular kibbutz was very left-wing and entirely secular in outlook. The members had rejected marriage as an outmoded institution and practised free love. The young Scot was invited to join in, which, I gathered, he did with alacrity. In modern military jargon, he was 'embedded' in that kibbutz. How apt that expression would have been in his case had it been in use at the time! I didn't doubt the sincerity of his declared enthusiasm for the Israeli cause.

Several months later, I was in Singapore teaching British soldiers to qualify for the army's own educational certificates. I was also in charge of a library for the use of the military and their wives. A fair proportion of army wives were German women who had married British soldiers while serving in Germany. No doubt this reflected the scarcity of men in post-war Germany. One day a 25-year-old German wife called Eleanor came to join the library. After I had welcomed her and explained how the library functioned, she said she couldn't help noticing that I had



The author in standard khaki battledress

a German name.

I began my explanation by saying I had been born in Vienna. I still remember her exact words. In her surprise, she said: 'What are you doing in uniform?' Here it was again: the general assumption that because you are born in a particular country you must owe it life-long loyalty. I recounted why I had left Vienna, making it clear that the only uniform the Third Reich would have considered appropriate for me was that of a concentration camp inmate. She now understood and went on to speak honestly about the plan to exterminate the Jews. I mentioned that everyone in post-war Germany claimed to have known nothing of what had been happening in the camps. She said that she *had* known and told me the following story.

She had grown up in a small town on the Baltic coast, where she had formed one of those intense schoolgirl friendships, in this case with a Jewish girl. The time came when her friend's family was ordered to report to a certain place for 'resettlement' in the East. Suspecting nothing, the girls decided they would stay in touch through correspondence. In a tearful farewell, the friend promised faithfully that as soon as she arrived she would write giving details of her new address. Of course, no letter ever arrived. Eleanor's comment was 'What was I supposed to think?' However, even she had realised it would be most unwise to ask questions.

I don't think she made up this story. She had nothing to gain by seeking my goodwill. In time she became a frequent library user keen to improve her educational horizons. I didn't regard her as my enemy – she wasn't guilty of anything. What occurred in January 1933 had set in train two very different sets of events, which 21 years later had caused us both to find ourselves temporarily located on the edge of the Asian continent.

**Erwin Schneider**

### REVIEW *continued from page 9*

Corps, they were now allowed to join active service units. Most of the eight protagonists joined the SOE during 1943. They were recruited in melodramatic circumstances, being approached by a mysterious individual, who claimed to be Swiss, asking if they wanted to do a more dangerous job.

In preparation for their mission, the men were sent to one of the Special Training Schools run by the SOE. Training was intense and could last up to a year, comprising weapons handling, unarmed combat, sabotage, parachuting and, for potential radio

operators, wireless telegraphy.

The book's biographical approach deliberately avoids undue concentration on the mission they carried out. Of 245 pages of text, only 45 are devoted to it. Towards the end of April 1945, they were parachuted behind enemy lines in to the Obersteiermark, where the military situation was one of great confusion; their mission was to make contact with local resistance groups and help disrupt the German retreat. They made a 'blind drop', landing in the wrong place and losing vital equipment, yet, with a mixture of skill and improvisation, they

achieved a measure of success, notably in securing the air base at Zeltweg. Three of them (Warner, Kelley and Freud) were still alive when research began and all were interviewed. They were somewhat sceptical of the results of their mission. Warner wrote, on hearing of the imminent German surrender, 'I can't say that I was sorry! I had not played a very glorious part in it but I can't be blamed for that.' His feelings were shared by his two surviving comrades. Sadly, all three died before the book was published.

**Richard Dove**

## Felix Austria

Well, lucky for some, at any rate. I have recently returned from a trip to my native Vienna, having paid maybe half a dozen visits since the war. Not a regular caller, as you might gather. Most of these visits were on some kind of business and I kept them short and not particularly sweet.

This has not been true of my visits to other parts of Austria, which were annual and enjoyable and mainly devoted to fishing and country pursuits. I have described in this journal how some of us felt that the mountains and lakes around Aussee were extra-territorial – in fact belonged to ‘us’, an oasis to which the natives had access on sufferance. All nonsense, I know, but sustaining in its way, notwithstanding the fact that both Eichmann and Goebbels intruded during our unavoidable absence. But with the passing years even Grundsee was changing – the fish I caught got smaller and fewer – and so in 2000 I took silent leave, certain that with the last year of the millennium a suitable moment for closure had been reached.

And then, after ten years of painless abstinence, came the invitation: would I give a talk in the Freud Museum in Vienna about the link between the Freuds and my family, and do a broadcast on the next day enlarging the subject somewhat to take in my attitude to Austria? I thought long and hard before accepting, and did so only because it was an opportunity to honour my parents. My mother, in particular, was the link with the Freuds, both Sigmund and Anna, and I had given the museum in the Berggasse a substantial hoard of family memorabilia covering not only the Freud connection but also my grandparents’ life in the theatre in Vienna, Berlin and New York. There was to be a small exhibition of relevant books, pictures and letters, and my talk would mark the opening.

The Freud Museum in Vienna is very different from the one in London. The former, in what used to be Sigmund Freud’s apartment, is bare and functional, no longer a home but a site for lectures, an archive, offices. The London Freud Museum, in Hampstead, is where the professor died. His study is as he left it; it contains the famous couch, his desk and chair, his collection of antique artefacts, and the bulk of his library, which he was allowed to remove from Austria when he had to leave in 1938. (‘I can recommend the Gestapo as very efficient removal men,’ he wrote at the bottom of the receipt he was made to sign.)

On arrival in Vienna, I was confronted with a very poor exhibition of my family treasures: not enough thought had been given to selecting pieces that told a story, that were significant in documenting the connection between the families. By that time it was too late to make changes, and my hope to make up for the dull

display with sparkling wit and authentic recollections didn’t come off either. I was able to tell my audience they were looking at the last survivor of Freud’s 70th birthday party in 1926, at which I had been present as a child. The audience was stiffly unimpressed, even though I reminded them that they were being addressed in the very room in which the party was held.

I got more of a response – or at least intermittent signs of life – when I moved on to talk about show business and could throw in that Marlene Dietrich had slept in my house and on my bed (although not while I was around) and was able to report on my one and only encounter with an American president – a three-minute visit with Ronald Reagan in the Oval Office – for which I had prepared a suitable anecdote: I told him I had seen Hedi Lamarr in the nude, not in the notorious film, but in the flesh. His reaction: ‘Great bust, bad legs.’

The impact of my broadcast is more difficult to judge. It was not live and I lacked any sense of who my audience might be. My interviewer was under-prepared, and I had to coach her in questions to ask. There hovered over the whole enterprise, chat and broadcast a deadening lack of professionalism, unthinkable in this country. I thought listeners might be interested in my thoughts on being a ‘visitor’ to Austria, whether I felt Austrian or English. My answer was neither but, while you could take the Ross out of Austria, you could not take Austria out of the Ross (or, more elegantly, in German: ‘Ich hafte nicht an Österreich, aber Österreich haftet an mir’). This gem may well end up on the floor of the editing suite.

One comes away from a trip such as this with conflicting emotions. But there is a constant that has not varied since my first visit in 1952. Whenever I talk to acquaintances who have been through the war, their tales of hardship are never about Hitler’s unspeakable horrors – the trains, the camps, the stench of the ovens, or hunger or shame – not even about the firestorms unleashed by our bombers, but only and always about their fear of the Russian army and what it meant to be in its power.

I shall leave the last word to Thomas Bernhard, Austria’s foremost playwright, speaking through the leading character in his masterpiece *Heldenplatz*, which I saw on my last night in Vienna. Here is what Professor Schuster, recently returned from having spent the war years in Cambridge, has to say about his fellow Austrians (my translation): ‘In the end, people are always deceived by Austria. They eat a nice meal, they drink a cup of good coffee, and forget they are in the most dangerous country in Europe, where evil is routine and human rights are trampled on.’

Victor Ross

### Restitution in Austria: ‘Much has been done, but much remains to be done’



(from left) Michael Newman, Anne Webber, Emil Brix, George Graf, Christoph Bazil

PHOTO: AUSTRIAN EMBASSY LONDON

Speaking to an audience of around 130, many of them AJR members, AJR Director Michael Newman provided an overview of legislation on restitution in Austria in a panel discussion at the Austrian Ambassador’s Residence in London.

Anne Webber, Co-chair of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe, noted that while Austria stood out internationally for its achievements in this field, much remained to be done.

Other members of the panel were Christof Bazil of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and Professor Georg Graf of the University of Salzburg. The event, chaired by Austrian Ambassador to London Emil Brix, was organised by the AJR, the Commission for Looted Art in Europe and the Austrian Embassy in London.

At an event organised by the Anglo-Jewish Association at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, AJR Vice-Chairman and Treasurer David Rothenberg and Director Michael Newman participated in a panel on the work of the Claims Conference. The panel discussion followed a presentation by Claims Conference Executive Vice-President Greg Schneider on the origins, achievements and future plans of the Claims Conference.

AJR member Clemens Nathan gave a talk at The Athenaeum on ‘Compensation and Restitution for the Jewish Victims of the Holocaust’ in which he discussed the principal reparation agreements and distribution of funds to Holocaust survivors and refugees by organisations like the Claims Conference. As well as describing the appalling conditions in which slave and forced labourers toiled for Nazi Germany, he spoke of the efforts of charities such as the Central British Fund, which helped absorb 70,000 refugees into Britain before the outbreak of war.

# INSIDE the AJR

## Glasgow: A day in the life of a cardiac surgeon



(from left) Geoffrey Berg, AJR Groups Co-ordinator Agnes Isaac, volunteer Howard Singerman

A group of nearly 40 AJR members and volunteers listened intently as Geoffrey Berg gave us an excellent account of current techniques in heart surgery. Geoff is Lead Cardiac Surgeon at West of Scotland Heart and Lung Centre at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital in Clydebank.

*Agnes Isaac*

## Ealing Being me

Jenny Manson read from her book *What It Feels Like to Be Me* – a collection of anonymous and uninhibited accounts by individuals of all ages. A very lively meeting!

*Leslie Sommer*

**Next meeting: 3 May. Otto Deutsch, 'Weekends in Vienna'**

## Iford A sad tale

The Wiener Library's Howard Falksohn gave us an illustrated talk on Argentina – as a refuge for Jews, Germans and, eventually, Nazis. It was a sad tale that unfolded before us.

*Meta RoseNeil*

**Next meeting: 4 May. Renée Tyack, 'They Called Her Cassandra'**

## Pinner History of synagogues in Germany

Evelyn Friedlander, of the Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust, speaking to some 50 of us, concentrated on rural synagogues in southern Germany. These communities differed greatly from others in Germany as well as from Polish, Russian, Hungarian and Austrian ones.

*Paul Samet*

**Next meeting: 5 May. Ruth Beckman, 'Opera Houses of the World'**

## Manchester 'Cultural cleansing'

Retired lawyer Ian Vellins enthralled a well-attended meeting on Nazi looted art. We learned of the unbelievable lengths to which the Nazi regime went with its 'cultural cleansing', but also of the incredible efforts to restitute looted works of art to their rightful owners.

*Werner Lachs*

## Norfolk 'We came, we schmoozed, we noshed'

As our meeting took place on the Ides of March, I thought I would emulate the great Caesar: 'We came, we schmoozed, we noshed.' But that wouldn't do justice to Eva's baked potatoes and Myrna's tasty goodies.

*Frank Bright*

## Essex (Westcliff) Security matters

We celebrated our tenth birthday party with a visit from David Ramet, the Community Security Trust's Regional Security Officer. The CST was formed in 1940; now there are 3,000 volunteers and 57 staff. In 2002 Westcliff had 50 trained volunteers - the highest proportion to synagogue membership in the UK.

*Larry Lisner*

**Next meeting: 10 May. Outing to Westcliff – see box below**

## OUTING TO WESTCLIFF AJR GROUP Tuesday 10 May 2011

We are pleased to announce an outing to visit the AJR Essex Group, which meets in Westcliff on Sea.

**The cost of £20 pp includes refreshments on arrival, a buffet lunch, a tour of Westcliff, and return coach journey.**

**For further details please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070.**

## Glasgow CF Saturday night at the movies

Saturday night at the movies proved popular with Continental Friends who attended the gala opening of the Jewish Film Festival at the Grosvenor Cinema in trendy Ashton Lane. *The Honeymoon Suite*, followed by *The Yankles*, brought a smile to everyone's face.

*Agnes Isaac*

## Wessex A life in music

Judy Kelner told us about her family background (the rabbinical Carlebachs) and her life in music - much appreciated by an audience of over 30. Myrna Glass and Herta Kammerling provided an excellent tea.

*George Ettinger*

## Kew Another successful outing

Nineteen members arriving at Kew Gardens were greeted by Myrna and Hazel. When it began to rain, our guide, Judith Lawson, took us indoors, beginning with the Great Temperate House, built in 1848 and filled with tropical plants, followed by the Water Lilly House and the Princess of Wales Conservatory. Then to the Orangery for lunch. Another successful outing.

*Edgar H. Ring*

## HGS Running the Globe Theatre

We enjoyed a fascinating talk by Globe Theatre guide Val Alliez on the building and running of the Theatre. Val's enthusiasm for her subject made our 90 minutes go in a flash!

*Laszlo Roman*

**Next meeting: 9 May. David Barnett and 7th anniversary**

## VISIT TO LUTON HOO

Thursday 19 May 2011

Invitation to a Special Event

A unique opportunity to visit the original home of Sir Julius Wernher and Alice Mankiewicz, both of Jewish German and Polish descent. The exquisite décor has been tastefully furnished in the style of The Ritz. A feast for your eyes as well as your palate!

This special afternoon event will include transport to Luton Hoo; a talk by Mrs Dickenson, a long-standing employee of the Wernher family; a full afternoon sandwiches and cream tea; a tour of the grounds (walking or driven); and an opportunity to learn about the history and see the magnificent art works.

A coach will pick members up from the North London area, returning at the end of the day.

**£30 pp including entrance, guided tour, full afternoon tea and transport**

**For further details please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070**

## Sing-song at Glasgow Book Club

Meeting at the home of Eva Szirmai, we had a lively discussion about characters in our most recent book choice by author Maeve Binchy. We enjoyed a delicious tea, then a sing-song inspired by a character in the book.

*Anthea Berg*

## Edgware Jack the Ripper

The story of Jack the Ripper, with illustrations, was a surprise presentation for members. Myra Sampson's thoroughly researched talk was followed by refreshments and socialising.

*Myrna Glass*

**Next meeting: 17 May. Ronnie Green, 'From Finchley to Suez' and 5th anniversary**

## A Hungarian afternoon in Glasgow

We had a well-attended get-together at the home of our co-ordinator Agnes Isaac devoted to Hungarian culture, presented by Agnes and her mother Eva Szirmai. We were shown photos and maps of Buda and Pest, examples of Hungarian embroidery, and dolls in typical country dress – all rounded off with a taste of Tokay. A delightful occasion.

*Halina Moss*

## ALSO MEETING IN MAY

**Bromley CF 5 May, 2-4 pm.**

**Social get-together at home of Lianne Segal**

**Surrey 8 May, 11 am.**

**Social get-together**

## East Midlands (Nottingham)

**104 years young**

Our first meeting of the year was well attended and included our eldest member, Meta, 104 years young. Two new potential members joined us for an enjoyable lunch. As usual, Esther kept us in order.

*Bob Norton*

## 'Fate has brought us together'

Westcliff AJR Group members Miriam Stein and Leslie Kleinman have married – possibly a first for the AJR! Miriam, 71, from Leigh, and Leslie, 81, an Auschwitz survivor, married in Tel Aviv last month.

Leslie returned to the UK three years ago from Canada, where his first wife died of leukaemia. But Miriam and Leslie's paths had crossed before – in 1946. Leslie, who had run a dress manufacturers in London's East End, had employed Miriam's late husband, Emil, as an electrician. It then emerged that Leslie and Emil had both been child



captives in Auschwitz.

'I feel that fate has brought us together,' Leslie said.

### Radlett An unusual story

Rosette Wolf spoke of her life during the war as a child in Antwerp and in hiding, where she was cared for by a non-Jewish woman. Rosette told the unusual and moving story of one of these children.

*Fritz Starer*

**Next meeting: 18 May. Gerald Curzon, 'Jews and Mental Illness'**

### Liverpool An extremely interesting film

We are grateful to Naomi Brown, daughter of AJR member Kay Fyne, for making her home available for our meeting and providing such excellent refreshments. We watched *Churchill's German Army*, an extremely interesting film about German-

Jewish refugees who joined the British army.

*Guido Alis*

**Next meeting: 5 June. Annual lunch. Guest speaker: Judge Henry Globe, Recorder of Liverpool**

### Wembley monthly social

Members met for their monthly social to enjoy the conversation, the company and the refreshments. Everyone was pleased to welcome a new member.

*Myrna Glass*

**Next meeting: 11 May. Social get-together**

### Edinburgh 'Fifty years ago ...'

'Fifty years ago I ...' was the theme of our most enjoyable get-together at Vivien Andersen's artistic home. The variety of memories shared reflected our group's make-up: First and Second Generation survivors and refugees. We thank Agnes for her tireless organising and Vivien for her warm hospitality.

*Jonathan Kish*

### Temple Fortune A unique hospital

The Foundling Museum's Jane King led us through the history of this unique hospital, showing how Thomas Coram, himself a foundling, created a safe haven for over 27,000 babies.

*Esther Rinkoff*

**Next meeting: 12 May. Aurelia Young, 'The Sculptor Oscar Nemon'**

*continued on page 15*

## 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**  
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

**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**  
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Inge Little 01423 886254

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Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

**Hertfordshire**  
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Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

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Trude Silman 0113 2251628

**Liverpool**  
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

**Manchester**  
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

**Newcastle**  
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

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**North London**  
Ruth Jacobs 020 8445 3366

**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**  
Janet Weston 01959 564 520

**Wembley**  
Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

**Wessex (Bournemouth)**  
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

**West Midlands (Birmingham)**  
Fred Austin 01384 252310

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

## AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 18 May 2011

**D. Bernstein**  
Former Chairman,  
Monarch Airways

**PLEASE NOTE THAT SPEAKERS  
START AT 12 NOON**

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the *AJR Journal*, to phone the Centre on 020 7328 0208 to book your place.

## KT-AJR

Kindertransport special  
interest group

Monday 9 May 2011

**Peter Suchet**  
'A Suchet Family Story'

**KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH  
WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 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 Entertainment

Mon	2	CLOSED – BANK HOLIDAY
Tue	3	CLOSED
Wed	4	Barry Leigh
Thur	5	Ronnie Goldberg
Mon	9	KT Lunch – Peter Suchet – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	10	CLOSED
Wed	11	Ann Shirley & Margaret Colby
Thur	12	Margaret Opdahl
Mon	16	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	17	CLOSED
Wed	18	LUNCHEON CLUB – D. Bernstein
Thur	19	William Smith
Mon	23	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue	24	CLOSED
Wed	25	Simon Gilbert
Thur	26	Jackie Waltz
Mon	30	CLOSED – BANK HOLIDAY

**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**

**Death**

**Brainin (née Kottow) Katinka**, widow of violinist Norbert Brainin, passed away 6 April 2011. Sadly missed by her family and countless friends. A great lady.

**TRIP TO ISRAEL**  
 We are hoping to arrange a trip to Israel from 29 November to 8 December 2011 staying half-board at the King Solomon Hotel in Netanya.  
 £1,300 pp in twin/double room, £200 supplement for single room  
 Price includes El Al flights from Heathrow, transfers to and from hotel, sightseeing most days, entrance fees where necessary. We have been able to book the excellent guide we had on our last trip.  
 For further details, please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070.  
 This will be a fairly full itinerary which will involve some walking.

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 Clara Nehab House  
 13-19 Leaside Crescent, London NW11  
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**SUNDAY 5 JUNE 2011, 2.30 - 5.00 pm**  
 Afternoon tea will be served  
 Everyone welcome

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 The Manager, Clara Nehab House  
 13-19 Leaside Crescent, London NW11 0DA  
 Telephone: 020 8455 2286

**HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS**  
**Sunday 26 June to Sunday 3 July 2011**  
 At the Inn on the Prom  
 11/17 South Promenade, St Annes  
 Tel 01253 726 726  
 Cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast  
 £632.50 per person  
 For booking, please contact  
**Ruth Finestone**  
**on direct line 020 8385 3082 or mobile 07966 886535**

**HOLIDAY IN EASTBOURNE**  
 The AJR are doing another holiday at the Lansdowne Hotel  
**Monday 11 July to Monday 18 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

**'THE JOURNEY'**  
**A TRIP TO BETH SHALOM**  
**Sunday 12 June 2011**  
 An opportunity to see 'The Journey', the latest addition to the Centre  
 Leaving Stanmore at 8.30 am, returning at approximately 6.00 pm (Parking available at Stanmore)  
 £25.00 per person, including travel, buffet lunch, afternoon tea  
 For further details, please contact Lorna Moss or Carol Rossen on 020 8385 3070

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**BOURNEMOUTH HOLIDAY**  
**Sunday 8 May to Sunday 15 May 2011**  
 This year we are returning to the Cumberland Hotel in Bournemouth.  
 The cost will be £500 plus £50 single room supplement (sea view rooms an additional £10.00 per person per night).  
 Price includes transport to and from Bournemouth from Cleve Road, a sandwich lunch on journey to Bournemouth, dinner, bed and breakfast, outing, cards and entertainment. As always, places are limited so please book early.  
 Please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 0208 385 3070 for a booking form.

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**WANTED TO BUY**  
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 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  


## SEARCH NOTICES

**Friedlander, Margaret**, my mother, came to England from Vienna in 1938 and lived with a Max Glaser until 1945. I was born in 1941. Did anyone know either of my parents in 1938-45 or later? Please contact Ann Meron at ann@annmeron.com

**Goldschmidt, Hermann**, my father, from Dortmund, had a married sister in Worms. A son was born in 1923. Would any survivors please contact me? Dr John Goldsmith, Deep Dene, 7 Rose Lane, Liverpool L18 8AD, tel 0151 724 5555

**Hertzka, Yella** (1873-1948), feminist and pacifist, arrived in UK February 1939 to work as horticulturalist/gardener. Information sought by researcher Corinna Oesch, Hans Sachs-Gasse, 17/8, A-1180, Vienna or write to Corinna.oesch@univie.ac.at

**Jews from Berlin deported to Minsk** 14 November 1941 or 26 June 1942. A student at Berlin Humboldt University, I am looking for descendants or acquaintances with information about the lives of these people for a research project. Please contact Martina Berner, Korsoerer Str. 5, 10437 Berlin or at MartinaBerner@gmx.de

I am a Canadian author writing a book on the **Kindertransport** for children aged 10 and over. I would be delighted if you would tell me your experiences. Please contact Deborah Hodge at dhodge@shaw.ca

**Lederer, Ruth** Kindertransportee, born 4.11.1923 in Vienna, parents Herta and Alfred Lederer. Arrived in England summer 1939 from Prague. One address: R. A. Overton, The Green, Bilton, Rugby; a second address: Mrs Forsdike, 68 Hallam Crescent, Leicester. Worked in hospital/nursing home in London in 1945. Any info please to ralfcam@online.no

**Lobl, Dr Elizabeth** Information sought for student writing dissertation on famous German author (her patient). Please contact Jasmin Weber at jasmine-web@gmx.de or at Gutenbergring 2, 84453 Mühldorf am Inn, Germany

**Loewy, Fritz**. I am doing a research project on

this former Vienna Hakoah swimmer. Any info please to Vida Bakondy at vida@strg.at or tel 43-699 108 27 259

**Löwenhardt, Hans-Georg** (b 12.03.1924) and **Alfred** (b 23.06.1926) fled Dortmund March 1939. In London they changed their name to Lowe. In 1960s Hans-Georg Lowe lived in London, Alfred in Toronto. Any info please to John Löwenhardt at deleeuw.johan@gmail.com or tel +31620120422

**Mayer, Ursula**, my best friend from Germany, was sent to England like me. I have had no contact with her since 1939. Born 1929 (?), she came from Stuttgart. Any info please to Erica G. Kanter (née Hecht) at charhos@aol.com or to 9342 Bay Vista Estates Blvd, Orlando, FL 32836, USA

**Philippson, Joanna**, b 23.04.1887 Magdeburg, teacher in Berlin, emigrated to London in 1939, lived in Greenford, Middx in 1960s, died 1977 or 1986. Does anyone know correct date and place of death? If so, please contact Hans-Hermann Fries at hhfries@gmx.net

**Schneider, Fritz J.**, my father, born in Germany, was interned on Isle of Man and 'sent to Canada'. An 'F. G. Schneider' was on the passenger list of the *Ettrick*. Any info please contact Annette on 01892 534 355 or at rayc99@btinternet.com

## ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY MAY

**Mon 2 Pinner Synagogue Memorial Evening. 'Yom Hashoah: Remembering Those Who Perished and Honouring Survivors', 8.00 pm**

**Mon 9 Dr F. Rosner, 'The Life of Rudolf Bing' Club 43**

**Thurs 12 'On Modern Jews and Jewish Modernity: Political Economy and its Interpretation of Capitalism (1900-1930)' Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Arts B 127, University of Sussex, 4.30 pm, Tea from 4 pm**

**Mon 16 May Ernst Flesch, 'In the Wilds of Southern China (with slides)' Club 43**

**Mon 23 'Jewish Life in Morocco' Centre for German-Jewish Studies. Venue: Kings College, London, Strand Campus, Council Room, 5.30 pm Booking not required**

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

## London trip another resounding success



The AJR members' trip to London in March included, among many other things, a visit to the Jewish Museum, a theatre outing to *War Horse*, a visit to the House of Commons with a talk by the Speaker, the Rt Hon John Bercow, and a dinner with London AJR members. All agreed it was a great success. PHOTO: ANITA GROSZ

## INSIDE THE AJR *cont. from page 13*

### Newcastle The Targu Mures community

Ethne Woldman spoke movingly about this Romanian Jewish community, who were living in abject poverty when she discovered their plight.

*Walter Knoblauch*

### Brighton & Hove Sarid The rise of Sussex Jewish News

From the humble beginnings of the Communal Diary sprang the *Sussex Jewish News*, which Doris Levinson - with no editorial experience - has been running since 1993.

*Esther Rinkoff*

**Next meeting: 16 May. Bridget McGing, 'My Father's Roses'**

### Hendon The history of Thomas Cook

Archivist Joy Hooper gave a gripping slide presentation on how Thomas Cook

and Son grew from an idea for Midlands workers into a world-wide service.

*Shirley Rodwell*

**Next meeting: 23 (not 30) May**

### Bradford CF

We held a minute's silence in memory of Ibi Ginsburg and Lady (Margaret) Kagan. Then, having been shown the pages so far completed of Pippa Landey's cookery book, which is based on remembered childhood dishes, we had a lively discussion about Pesach food and customs.

*Anna Greenwood*

**Next meeting: 21 June**

### A topical discussion in Cleve Road

Myrna led a discussion on various topics, including: people who influenced us; the current census; Israel and the Middle East.

*David Lang*

**Next meeting: 31 May. Jane Rosenberg, 'Jewish Humour'**

### Café Imperial Looking at photos

Following my recent trip to Berlin, we spent the morning looking at photos. Congratulations were in order for Willie and Geoffrey, celebrating wedding anniversaries on the day.

*Esther Rinkoff*

**Next meeting: 17 May. Social get-together**

### A scrumptious tea for Kingston CF

Thanks to Susan Zisman for yet another scrumptious tea. In addition, we watched *Watermarks*, about women swimmers of the legendary Hakoah sports club.

*Jackie Cronheim*

### North London: WJR past and present

World Jewish Relief volunteer Harry Heber spoke about the organisation's work from the early 1930s to the present day.

*Myrna Glass*

**Next meeting: 26 May. Prof Gerald Curzon, 'A Strange Affair'**



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL



### Art and more

After several years of work, the reconstruction of the Israel Museum ended last summer when, amid fanfares and extensive publicity, the museum re-opened its doors to the public. We volunteers didn't stop working during the period of renovation, but our activities were severely curtailed. So it was with great excitement and enthusiasm that we resumed our duties in the renewed museum.

Several months have passed since then, and some – though not all – of the excitement has abated. The refurbished museum is bigger, better and easier to navigate than before, though our services as purveyors of information are still required. Visitors from far and near still flock to inspect the new galleries, and many compliment us on the stunning way the museum's exhibits are displayed. Although the museum possesses many thousands of items, the overriding principle behind the current displays is 'less is more', so that instead of myriads of objects vying for the visitor's attention, each object has been carefully chosen and is exhibited in a way that best sets off its unique properties.

Even when most of the museum was closed, some sections – the Shrine of the Book, the model of Jerusalem in

the time of the Second Temple and the Youth Wing – remained open. The Youth Wing, which holds special exhibitions as well as art-related classes, lectures and activities for young and old throughout the year, continued to do so even when getting there involved negotiating a potentially dangerous building site. Now, however, the museum's three main galleries – Archaeology, Jewish Art and Culture, and European and Israeli Art – display a plethora of marvellous objects and artefacts. In addition, there is the Sculpture Garden, an extensive exhibition of contemporary art, galleries devoted to art from the Americas, Africa and the Far East and various changing exhibitions, adding constant interest and innovation to the permanent displays.

My tour of duty on Sunday afternoons ends at 5 o'clock, when the museum closes. In recent weeks I have noticed that it is just then each week that lively groups of Ethiopian children enter the museum and make their way to the Youth Wing. They proceed to several classrooms, where they sit at tables, are given sandwiches and a drink, and then begin to draw, paint and sculpt under the supervision of members of the museum's teaching staff. On enquiring, I was told that the children are recent immigrants

currently residing at the absorption centre in Mevasseret Zion and are brought by bus to the museum each week. All the equipment and materials are provided by the museum. One of the teachers proudly told me that she has devised a special programme for them that focuses on Africa, adding that this gives the children a lot of pleasure.

But the museum does not limit its activities to the education and absorption of immigrants. Classes for schoolchildren intended to build bridges with the Arab residents of Israel and the territories are held in the Youth Wing. Thus, 12- and 13-year-olds from the Arab village of Silwan share classes and activities with schoolchildren from several Jerusalem neighbourhoods, older children come from the Arab Abu-Tor neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and extensive activities are held for Arab and Jewish teachers.

In addition, Youth Wing staff go to Arab and Jewish kindergartens, where they help and encourage the little ones to produce art work of various kinds. This activity is followed by an outing in which the children are brought to the museum. There is also an ongoing two-year project in conjunction with the Nazareth municipality in the framework of which 3,000 youngsters are brought to the museum (not all at once), after which a happening is held in Nazareth.

If more funds were available, more such activities could be held, I was told by Eldad Shealtiel, the director of the Youth Wing.

**Dorothea Shefer-Vanson**

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 8*

success. To show that he did not hold him responsible for the child's death, when he remarried and had two small boys he called the same doctor in to look after my elder brother and myself. In 1926, aged seven and a half, my brother had a scalding accident and for nearly a month hovered between life and death. He had, I believe, one of the earliest blood transfusions, but survived (to the age of 84). In that month Dr Lederer worked himself to the bone to save the child and refused his fee, presumably in gratitude for the confidence my father had placed in him – twice.

A few years later my father caught chicken pox, which, at 48, was no joke. Our

GP declined to treat him with the excuse that this was an illness only paediatricians knew anything about. Lederer argued that he had no experience of treating adults. I well remember the two medical men sitting at my father's bedside, each more or less washing his hands of the patient. Were this to happen today, at least the two doctors wouldn't be smoking across the patient in his bed!

In 1938 Dr Lederer took up an academic appointment in Baghdad but was clearly not happy. The Iraqi summer temperatures must have depressed him as well as the unexpectedly primitive medical facilities and general situation. At any rate, before the year was out, he took his own life. I

don't know what became of his wife, who was also a doctor but seemed to have had no share in his practice in Vienna.

*F. M. M. Steiner, Deddington, Banbury*

#### THE LAST RENAISSANCE MAN

Sir – I have often wondered why there isn't a blue plaque at the Knightsbridge house where Arthur Koestler spent his last years and where he and his wife committed suicide. His book *Darkness at Noon* alone would qualify for this, I believe. So many far less important and less deserving individuals have this honour, why not Koestler, who was rightly called the last 'Renaissance man'?

*Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath*