

AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

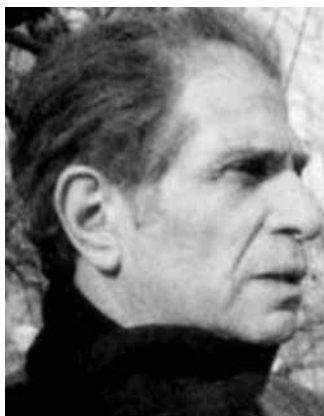
The Miliband controversy in historical perspective

Those familiar with the tactics of the British press will not be surprised at its attempts to use the background of the Miliband brothers against them once they gained high office – David Miliband as Foreign Secretary in the last Labour government, Ed Miliband as leader of the Labour Party in opposition.

When the Germans invaded Belgium in May 1940, the Milibands' grandfather, Samuel Miliband, a Polish-born Jew living in Brussels, fled with his 16-year-old son Adolphe on foot to Ostend, where they were fortunate enough to board a ship that brought them to Britain as Jewish refugees. Adolphe changed his name to Ralph, volunteered for the Royal Navy – as he was not a British citizen he could not be compelled to join up – and later became a well-known Marxist academic at the London School of Economics. He was the father of David and Ed. Samuel Miliband spent the war years in Britain and went back to Belgium in 1946. But the difficulties he encountered there caused him to apply to the British authorities to return to Britain in 1948; in the event, it took him several years and repeated applications before he was granted permission to return in 1953.

The *Sunday Times* was the first to try to use the Milibands' refugee background against them. On 6 April 2008, it ran an article claiming that in 1949 'the family of David Miliband, the foreign secretary, was branded untrustworthy and misleading by Home Office and Foreign Office when it tried to migrate to Britain'. At the suggestion of AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman, I wrote a letter to *The Times*, protesting that this was a travesty of the truth. The real issue in this case was not the dishonest or underhand methods allegedly employed by Samuel Miliband in seeking re-admission to Britain, but the systematic attempts of the Home Office to refuse entry to Jews from Europe, even after the Holocaust. The Home Office decided in 1945 to restrict the number of Jews admitted to post-war Britain to two specific categories: about 1,000

child survivors from concentration camps were admitted, as were a modest number of 'distressed persons', camp survivors, mostly children or elderly people, who had relatives already living in Britain. As a response to the sufferings of the large numbers of displaced Jews in post-war Europe, this was grossly inadequate.



Ralph Miliband

By contrast, some 100,000 immigrants were recruited from late 1946 to come and work in Britain under the European Volunteer Worker schemes. While Jews were excluded, workers from the Baltic states were favoured, even though some of them had extremely dubious wartime records. Numerous Ukrainians (mostly from those areas of Ukraine which had formed part of Poland before 1939) who had served in Nazi-organised units were also permitted to settle here. Samuel Miliband had a very strong case for re-admission: he had family in Britain, and he had previously spent six years in Britain, more than the period of five years' residence normally required to acquire British citizenship. It beggars belief that he should still have been manoeuvring to regain permanent residence in Britain as late as 1953, when most people from Western Europe would have been granted residence easily enough.

The recent article in the *Daily Mail* branding Ralph Miliband, nearly 20 years after his death, as 'the man who hated Britain' took this process of casting a refugee family as outsiders, somehow

not properly British, a stage further. On the basis of a few lines taken from a diary written by the 16-year-old Ralph Miliband in autumn 1940, in which he expressed his extreme irritation at certain British attitudes and institutions, the *Daily Mail* sought to build up a picture of a refugee and Marxist bent on attacking and undermining 'British' values and institutions throughout his life – an aspiration that he had, by implication, passed on to 'Red Ed', his son. Not surprisingly, Ed Miliband reacted strongly against this attack on his late father.

Most of those who have taken the Milibands' side in the ensuing dispute have, quite rightly, pointed to the foolishness of judging a man's life's work on the evidence of a few comments that he had written in an adolescent diary. But it is worth considering what Ralph Miliband found in wartime Britain to provoke his anger and scorn. He had arrived in Britain in May 1940, just as some 25,000 Jews from Germany and Austria were being arrested as potential security risks, despite the obvious absurdity of interning Jewish refugees as spies and agents for the Nazis. Several thousand of the male internees were deported overseas; one ship carrying deportees to Canada was sunk by an enemy submarine, as were two bringing deportees back to Britain from Australia, with the wholly unnecessary loss of many hundreds of completely innocent lives. Miliband would without doubt have known of this, and who can blame him for feeling angry? Were the imprisonment and deportation of defenceless and blameless Jewish refugees consistent with British values? What sort of British patriot is it who would condone the stupidity and inhumanity of the British government's measures, spurred on by the xenophobic hysteria whipped up in summer 1940 by the right-wing press?

Ralph Miliband was also incensed by the policy of appeasement pursued by the Chamberlain government, which

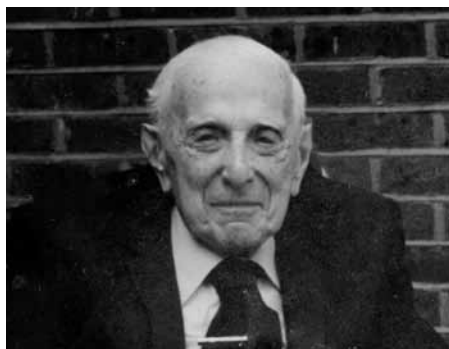
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The Miliband controversy continued

had supinely acquiesced in Hitler's annexation of Austria in March 1938 and had then sold out its ally, Czechoslovakia, under the Munich Agreement of 30 September 1938 (see letter by Katia Gould, p.15). European critics of British policy suspected, with reason, that elements on the right in Britain were not only unwilling to stand up to Hitler, but that they were also unsympathetic to the democratic, progressive regimes in countries like France (the Popular Front government, led between 1936 and 1938 by the Jewish socialist Léon Blum) or Czechoslovakia, admiring instead the 'strong men' leading Fascist movements. Was it not the then proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, Lord Rothermere, who in January 1934 expressed his support for Oswald Mosley in the paper's notorious headline 'Hoorah for the Blackshirts'? Was Ralph Miliband wrong to despise those who sought an accommodation with Germany by cosying up to Hitler? Which more truly reflected patriotic British values – the refugee who volunteered for the Royal Navy, or the fellow travellers of the right whose notion of Britishness was to flirt with the Jew- and Red-baiting enemies of democracy?

Anthony Grenville

Charles Kapralik



Charles Kapralik

Twenty years ago last month, on 1 November 1993, Dr Charles (Carl) Kapralik died. He made an outstanding contribution to the organisations representing the interests of the Jews from Central Europe. Kapralik was born in Sereth (Siret) in Bukovina in 1895. After serving in the Austro-Hungarian army in the First World War, he qualified as a lawyer in Vienna and worked in banking and insurance. After the German annexation of Austria in March 1938, he was asked to advise the representative body of Vienna's

Jews, the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, on the financial and currency issues that, thanks to Nazi regulations, bedevilled the emigration of the Jews of Austria. Kapralik was about to emigrate, but he and his wife Camilla decided to stay on, thereby facilitating the life-saving emigration of large numbers of Jews. The Kapraliks only left for Britain in March 1939. During the war, he was interned for six months on the Isle of Man.

After the war, Kapralik worked for the Central British Fund (CBF) for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation, which was continuing its pre-1945 work as the Central British Fund for German Jewry, established in 1933 to raise funds to enable Jews to emigrate to Britain from Nazi Germany and to support them here. In 1958, on the retirement of Myer Stephany, Kapralik and Joan Stiebel became Joint Secretaries of the CBF (now World Jewish Relief). From 1950 to 1969, Kapralik acted as General Secretary of the Jewish Trust Corporation (JTC) for Germany, which was responsible for the complex task of recovering unclaimed, heirless and communal property, formerly Jewish, in the British Zone of Occupation in Germany.

AJR Centre to close: One door closes, another opens

As we announced in October, the AJR Centre will be closing at the end of this year. We very much hope you will join us for a farewell party at Belsize Square Synagogue on Thursday 19 December in celebration of the Centre and the special place it has held in people's hearts. The gathering will be a chance to remember the camaraderie and special atmosphere of our unique meeting place as well as an opportunity to thank and say goodbye to some of our dedicated staff and volunteers.

The festivities, which will of course include lunch and entertainment, will begin at 11.30 am. As we anticipate a large turnout, please ensure your place by calling 020 7431 2744 or AJR Head Office on 020 8385 3070.

Where one door closes, another opens. We encourage you all to come along to the Community Centre (formerly the Sobell Centre), which meets in the new Jewish Care building, Amelie House, in Golders Green. Our members will be meeting there on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 January 2014 onwards. The Centre organises many of the same activities – including arts and crafts, a discussion group, painting, exercise classes, computer lessons and a music group – that we have offered at Belsize Square. It also serves a wide range of freshly cooked, non-meat hot and cold lunches.

While we are all saddened by the closure of our own Centre with our own identity, we very much hope that our members will feel at home at the Community Centre and join with AJR members and others who already attend.

Following on from the announcement in October, we have been working closely with Jewish Care, and those of our members with any concerns about the move, to help make the transition as smooth as possible. Most importantly, we are arranging for our Centre Manager, Ros Collin, to initially accompany members at the Community Centre and work with colleagues at Jewish Care to familiarise members with the new surroundings. As at Belsize Square and before that at Cleve Road, we will continue to transport members to and from the Community Centre.

Since its opening in 1987, the AJR Centre could not have offered a warm and bespoke environment without the foresight and dedication of a number of people, not least the pioneering work of our late President and former Treasurer, Ludwig Spiro, the generosity of Dr Paul Balint in helping realise the project, and our deeply committed staff and volunteers. Our thanks to everyone for all their great efforts and we look forward to seeing you in 2014.

Michael Newman

The funds thus raised were used for relief projects for the victims of Nazi persecution, in Britain principally for the construction and maintenance of homes for the elderly. The CBF set up an Allocations Committee, through which the money received from the JTC was channelled to the homes, which were jointly administered by the CBF and the AJR. Kapralik gave many years of devoted service to the Management Committee that oversaw the running of the homes.

Kapralik's greatest achievements arguably resulted from his skilful and tenacious negotiations with the Austrian government, as an expert member of the International Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria, based in New York. His work secured for many thousands of former Austrian citizens the social security and pension benefits that Austrian legislation had initially denied them. Kapralik was also Vice-Chairman of the London-based United Restitution Organisation and an active member of the AJR. Fittingly, he spent the final years of his life in Heinrich Stahl House, one of the homes whose establishment owed so much to him.

Anthony Grenville



AJR GROUPS ANNUAL CHANUKAH P*A*R*T*Y



Tuesday 17 December 2013

**at North West Reform Synagogue
Alyth Gardens, London NW11 7EN**

£8.00 per person payable on the door
(places must be booked in advance)

Starts at 11.00 am / Ends at 2.00 pm

**Morning entertainment by George McGhee
Hollywood Musicals**

A presentation with a 'sing-a-long'

This will be followed by a delicious lunch

After lunch we will have further entertainment by Bronwen Stephens, a professional opera singer, who will perform a selection of well-known opera and songs from the theatre.

**It is essential that we know
exact numbers for catering.**

**Please contact Susan Harrod on
020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk**

'Another bumper year' for the AJR

Well over 200 people – members and their guests – enjoyed this year's Annual Celebration Lunch at the Hilton Hotel in Watford.

Welcoming those present, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman said it had been 'another bumper year' for the AJR, crowned by the events the organisation had held in June to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport

– in particular the Reunion at the JFS and the reception by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales the following day at St James's Palace. Andrew also expressed regret at the sad but inevitable decision to close the AJR Centre at the end of the year.

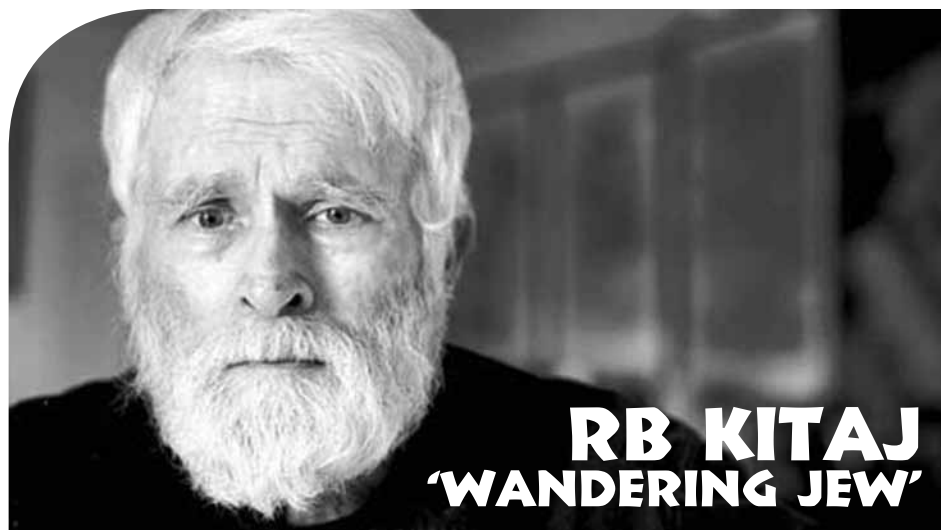
Andrew presented Myrna Glass, who was retiring after 15 years of service, with a gift for her work in helping create a nationwide

network of gatherings that had 'breathed new life' into the AJR.

A 'Medley of Memories', featuring music from, among others, *The Merry Widow*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata* and *The Magic Flute* and performed by Glenys Groves, Jonathan Fisher and Mark Luther with the AJR's own Diana Franklin at the piano, was rapturously received.

Photographs by Alan Ezekiel





Ronald Brooks Kitaj – forever to be known as RB – was born in 1932 in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. His Jewish parents, Hungarian-born Sigmund Benway and Jeanne Brooks, daughter of Russian immigrants, parted soon after his birth. In 1941 Jeanne married Dr Walter Kitaj, a Viennese-Jewish refugee and research chemist, and RB took his surname.

After working as a merchant seaman when he was 17, RB studied at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna and the Cooper Union in New York City. He served in the US Army for two years in France and Germany before moving to England to study at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art in Oxford (1958–59) and then the Royal College of Art in London (1959–61) alongside David Hockney, with whom he maintained a lifelong friendship.

In 1953 RB married Elsi Roessler and, with their young son Lem, they moved to 27 Pickwick Road, Dulwich, south London. With RB now established with teaching posts at the Camberwell School of Art and the Slade and following the success of his first exhibition, the family moved to 131 Burbage Road, Dulwich, with its fine views of playing field and trees.

Dulwich then had a reputation as a sanctuary for Jewish families escaping German-occupied Europe in the 1930s. For example, Gertrude Bing and Fritz Saxl had brought the entire Warburg Library from Hamburg to London as the Nazis had disapproved of it due to its Jewish founder Aby Warburg (1866–1929). Warburg's own books and papers had formed the bulk of this collection, which centred on aspects of Renaissance art. Today the Warburg Institute of the University of London exists primarily to further the study of the classical tradition of art. It houses an archive (including Warburg's and Saxl's original papers), library and photographic collection. Having arrived in England, Bing and Saxl settled at 162 East Dulwich Grove. They often held an open house for young artists, including RB, and art historians.

Leopold Ettlinger (1913–78) had fled Germany and been briefly interned on the Isle of Man with other Warburg

refugees. He secured a job as a social worker in children's refugee camps (Movement for the Care of Children from Germany) in 1940–41. In 1948 Ettlinger was appointed by Saxl curator of the Warburg's photographic collection. He wrote and lectured extensively and became an authority on the Sistine Chapel and Botticelli. He moved to College Road, Dulwich, where he wrote the art history books which brought him fame.

Living almost opposite Ettlinger in College Gardens, Dulwich, was Hungarian-born art historian Johannes Wilde (1891–1970). Although himself a Catholic, Wilde had to flee Vienna in 1938, fearing for the safety of his Hungarian-Jewish wife Julia, also an art historian. He had been an early exponent of the use of x-rays for painting conservation. The couple were initially guests of Sir Kenneth Clark in Britain, and Wilde was soon asked to write a catalogue of the old master drawings at Windsor Castle. He later lectured at the Courtauld Institute, becoming an expert on Michelangelo and the Venetian artists, and was awarded a professorship in 1950.

RB and Elsi's time in Dulwich was not happy. Elsi's depression was heightened by a miscarriage. They also lost their cherished view when a neighbour erected a garden shed; they sought the help of the newly-formed Dulwich Society to try to stop its construction, but in vain. Elsi took her own life in 1969, leaving RB to bring up ten-year-old Lem and their five-year-old adopted daughter Dominie.

Eventually RB left Dulwich to take up a post at UCLA in California. He renewed his friendship with David Hockney, who was also living in Los Angeles, and met the American artist Sandra Fisher, whom he married in Bevis Marks Synagogue, London, in 1983 following a stay in Paris. The following year they had one son, Max. Sandra died suddenly from a brain aneurism in 1994 aged 47 and a grief-stricken RB returned to Los Angeles in 1997 with 13-year-old Max.

Recognition as a major artist was finally achieved when in 1985 RB was elected to the Royal Academy and was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale

of 1995. The London National Gallery exhibited a major exhibition of his works in 2001. However, he took his own life in 2007. A common view is that he had never recovered from the mauling he took from some prominent critics of his 1994 Tate Gallery exhibition and from the death of his beloved Sandra.

RB had a major influence on British Pop Art of the 1960s with his figurative and colourful paintings featuring areas of bright colour and overlapping planes which made his works often seem like collages. There are frequently references to political history, art, literature and Jewish identity, sometimes together on one canvas. He often depicted disorienting landscapes and impossible 3D constructions, with exaggerated human forms. His works often assume a detached outsider's point of view, in conflict with the main historical narratives.

In his later years, Kitaj's works became increasingly personal and he developed a greater awareness of his Jewish heritage. This is portrayed in frequent references to the Holocaust and influences from Jewish writers such as Kafka and Walter Benjamin. He described himself as a 'wandering Jew'.

In 1989 RB published his *First Diasporist Manifesto*, in which he described the essential Jewish condition as one of 'Diasporism', i.e. of living between cultures and nations, never fully belonging anywhere, but taking in the influences of disparate traditions. Clearly, Jewish themes were now very evident in much of his work, which included depictions of Auschwitz, Jewish refugees in Britain, the 'wandering Jew', and his own Jewish wedding in London. Perhaps he had been inspired by earlier visits to Catalonia in the 1960s, when his awareness of the movement for Catalan independence had quite possibly prompted his own interest in his Jewish identity.

RB is today acknowledged as a major member of the 'London Group' of artists from the 1950s, which includes other Jewish artists such as Leon Kossoff, Lucian Freud and Frank Auerbach (himself a Kindertransport refugee). This year has seen special exhibitions of RB's works at the Jewish Museum, London, and Pallant House, Chichester, splitting between them works from a previous recent exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Berlin.

Even if we pass over the overtly Jewish subject matter of much of his work, RB's depictions of the fractured and frequently contradictory nature of modern man make him an essential artist of the post-war period. Artists' reputations often suffer in the years immediately after their deaths. The exhibition at the Jewish Museum had only a few visitors when I visited. It is time for a reappraisal and to place RB on a pedestal next to Freud, Bacon and Auerbach.

David Wirth

'Dulwich artist in residence – RB Kitaj (1932–2007)' by Brian Green, published in The Dulwich Society Journal, spring 2013, is acknowledged in the above article.

THE BEGINNING OF A ROAD

One day in April this year, while randomly checking my emails, I was surprised to see a round-robin message from a cousin in New York to my entire mother's family inviting us to attend a ceremony in Germany. My mother was from Germany and her family are now scattered across the USA, Europe, South America, and Israel.

My great-uncle Jupp (Josef) Weiss, my maternal grandmother's brother, came from a small town near Cologne called Flamersheim and was born 120 years ago on Thursday 16 May. On that anniversary the town had decided to unveil the new street name sign – a new housing estate with the main street to be called Jupp-Weiss-Strasse.

This was giving me a month's notice and I had back-to-back commitments, although that actual day was free. I used the commitments as an excuse for a few days not to go to Germany and open up a very difficult part of the family history. My mother had arrived in London from Düsseldorf in 1933 and would never speak about the country of her birth. But this was ridiculous. If my Aunt Joke, the 82-year-old daughter-in-law (and stepdaughter!) of the man to be honoured, could go, so could I. She was last in Germany in 1945, when she was liberated from Bergen-Belsen. She came to the ceremony, but refused to sleep in Germany: she was driven to and from Holland on the day. If she could do that, I could make the effort to take a one-night trip to Cologne.

I flew with Germanwings, who were amazing, to Cologne and picked up my hire car. Having left home at 5:30 am, I was sitting having coffee outside Cologne Cathedral at midday. Hire car, road system, parking all easy to sort out – even though I was on my own and don't speak a word of German, and even though I had to find someone to show me how to release the hand brake and couldn't get the 'sat nav' to work And here were some of the family: Anat and Atara, two sisters and my second cousins from Israel, Anat's daughter Roni, with Hans-Dieter Arntz.

But what was it all about? Why was Uncle Jupp being honoured?

Last year a German non-Jewish historian and Holocaust specialist, Hans-Dieter Arntz, wrote a book about Jupp Weiss: *Der letzte Judenälteste von Bergen-Belsen: Josef Weiss – würdig in einer unwürdigen Umgebung* (The Last Jewish Elder of Bergen-Belsen:

A Worthy Man in an Unworthy Place) (Aachen: Helios Verlag, tel 0241-555426, 710 pp., ISBN 978-3-86933-082-2, 38 euros).

Arntz was instrumental in getting the local council of Euskirchen to name the street and to put up a plaque on the house where Jupp was born and where my great-grandparents had lived. Arntz explained that he was shocked to learn about the history of the war at school when his parents, who had clearly lived through the experience, never spoke a word about it to him. He has also written a book on Kristallnacht. He lives in the area where Jupp was born and seems to have become fascinated with the history of this one man.

In 1935 Jupp moved to Holland. He worked to get Jews out of Germany but in 1943 was deported to Bergen-

time the camp had been liberated, the disease had killed thousands.

Now, in Flamersheim, the ceremony was in two parts – the unveiling of the street name and then on to the old house, where a plaque explaining Jupp's connection with the property was to be unveiled too.

At the street, my aunt made a speech along with Arntz and several local dignitaries. At the house, one of Jupp's granddaughters, Atara Dayan, made a speech, as did the mayor. Some 120 people, including what looked like a local scout group, attended the ceremonies. Then there were refreshments for everyone in the church hall when we could talk to the townspeople. The Protestant lady priest was interesting. Many people had read the book about Jupp but had found it difficult reading – it wasn't easy to be faced with what had happened in their own town.

As well as attending the ceremony, we went to the local Jewish cemetery, which is small and now well kept. It had been destroyed by the Nazis and reconstituted later by the locals. Some of the headstones were upside down – the locals didn't know which way up the Hebrew letters should go. Our great-grandparents' graves were very much intact and this was a moving moment – six cousins together from three countries – and here were our common ancestors, our great-grandparents Albert Weiss and Mathilde Michel, who died peacefully in the

1920s before tragedy struck.

Back in the 1920s, the Weiss-Michel family owned several shops in Cologne, including ladies' fashion shops and a hat shop, and they gradually built up a large department store called Michel. When Jewish families were no longer allowed to own such stores, they sold it to the Jacobi family (non-Jewish despite the name). The two families were on good terms and Jupp Weiss was in charge of what would today be called human resources at the renamed Jacobi store, until forced to flee. We visited the modern store, rebuilt after being destroyed by Allied bombing during the war, and spoke to the current Mr Jacobi, who showed us some of the history of the place.

The event was well covered by local and Cologne newspapers and there was a radio item too. For me, it is the beginning of a road to discover more about my mother's family.

Madeleine Abramson



The family, with Hans-Dieter Arntz, under the new street name. Madeleine Abramson is on the far right

Belsen. There he was made *Judenältester* ('Jewish Elder') and, unlike some of the 'Elders', he was neither corrupt nor in the thrall of the SS. He was honest and fair and did his utmost to obtain the best living conditions possible for the camp inmates, who respected him, as did the German authorities.

Our information comes from letters he wrote, from his sons, and from obituaries written by other prisoners who survived. The latter say that he was constantly trying to improve conditions and rations, lying about the numbers of inmates present to gain extra food, and keeping spirits up in various ways, such as helping people celebrate festivals and run *seders*. His rigorousness when it came to cleanliness and quarantine kept the incidence of typhus down.

In April 1945 Jupp was put on a train for Theresienstadt. The train was liberated by the Russians but back at Bergen-Belsen, without Jupp's cleanliness measures, typhus took over and, by the



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

A MATTER OF BIAS

Sir – It's one thing for Peter Phillips (November, Letters) to display his familiarity with the British theatre. It's another to evaluate the relative objectivity of the pre-eminent British broadsheets. My wife Rosl and I have been readers of *The Guardian* since the days when it was called *The Manchester Guardian*, with Neville Cardus beautifully writing music reviews and cricket reports. In those days, it was an escape from the platitudes of the *Daily Herald*. Today, *The Guardian* is still the most objective newspaper in this country.

Yes, it gives greater prominence to the Palestinian 'refugees', but it also gives voice to the problems of Israel. When, not long ago, a group of defenders of all Israel's actions wrote a long letter, *The Guardian* published it in full without comment. I have not seen in recent months, either in *The Guardian* or *The Observer*, any support for a trade or sports boycott against Israel. (Speaking of refugees, the Palestinians have used that word to describe themselves for two generations, and the AJR, which consists of people who ceased being refugees generations ago and is exceedingly well run by some who never were refugees, is doing the same.)

Peter's 'objective' *Telegraph* calls the surveillance whistleblower Edward Snowden 'a traitor' and praises the most inept education secretary in living memory to high heaven, while the editor of the 'objective' *Times* tells us on TV that the savagely watered-down version of the report on the scandalous behaviour of the press, which recently received Royal Assent, is 'the end of the democratic British press' (or words to that effect).

Marc Schatzberger, York

Sir – The following is in response to the letter by Professor Leslie Baruch Brent in your October issue.

The year is 1936. We are in Berlin. The Nazis have been in power for three years. Persecuted, impoverished, jobless German Jews are trying to emigrate. Few succeed. Nobody wants us. It is also the year of the start of the Arab Revolt, directed against Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Arabs kill hundreds of Jews. It results in a White Paper, the Peel Commission, which reports in 1939 and restricts immigration to 10,000 desperate Jews per annum, a

minuscule number considering time was not on our side.

Palestine was a natural destination with the prospect of a state of our own so as not to have to depend on the whims of others. Instead of sympathy, the Palestinian Arabs displayed callous hate. Their leader, the Mufti of Jerusalem, was a friend of Hitler, with identical aims. All those prevented from entering Palestine passed through the chimneys of Auschwitz. But for those who now call themselves Palestinians they would have lived.

In 1938 we went to Prague, as did countless others with nowhere else to go. I attended the Jewish school there and have a class photo taken in May 1942 before the school was closed. I identified 38 children, of whom 29 were murdered, and 81 parents and siblings, of whom 67 were murdered. They are not just numbers: my classmates looked at the camera and some of them still smiled. Not for long though. They died a horrible death. All of them would have had a fruitful life but for the Palestinians.

I read the Israeli-based Palestinian Media Watch. The Palestinians' territorial ambition is all the land from the River Jordan to the sea and completely *judenrein*. They teach their children to hate Jews, no different from the Hitler Jugend. One doesn't find any of that in *The Guardian*.

Three professors share the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. All of them are Jewish – newsworthy in itself. Two of them are Israeli; one of them was born in one of those dreadful settlements (Kibbutz Sde Nahum). The third is a Viennese refugee whose daughter is a GP in Israel. One looks in vain for any of that on 'Auntie BBC'.

Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk

Sir – I would like to thank my ('quasi-Doppelgänger'!) Professor Otto Hutter for his measured response to my letter concerning the alleged campaign in the UK against Israel. It so happens that I agree with his view that I was unduly harsh in my comments on Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's article. Unfortunately, by the time I woke up to this, the issue of the Journal had already gone to the printers and I was unable to tone down the first sentence of my letter. This I am happy to do retrospectively, although I totally stand by the rest of my letter in defence of the British media, the much reviled *Guardian* and all.

I would, however, say this to Otto. Having 'a goodly clutch of great-grandchildren' in Israel should not blind him to the gross injustices continuously being meted out to the Palestinians, even to the Israeli Arabs. In my view, it is very much in the interest of his great-grandchildren, as it is of all of us, that Israel finds an acceptable solution to the Palestinian problem. If that were not to happen I would greatly fear for their future.

As for the intemperate response from Peter Phillips: I am unaware that the evil *Guardian* – which is considered the leading paper in the world for its investigative journalism and its independent reporting, whatever he may think of it – has advocated an economic and sporting boycott of Israel, and I suspect this is a figment of his febrile imagination. As for switching to the delights of the Murdoch newspapers, I am most unlikely to follow his advice. I am surprised he didn't include the *Mail* in his list of acceptable papers, though their recent vicious attack on Ralph Miliband might make that a trifle difficult right now.

Coming back to the 'Letter from Israel' by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, I don't know whether I am the only one who would welcome the occasional reference to the real problems facing that country.

Leslie Baruch Brent, London N19

MILIBAND AND THE MAIL

Sir – The dispute between Ed Miliband and the *Mail* reminds me of the history teacher at my school in Beuthen. It was 1937 and I was 13 years old. Her favourite subject was the wickedness of the Communists and Marxists and how they were trying to destroy the Fatherland. One day, when she was particularly angry about them, my friend asked her what was the difference between the Communists and the Marxists. Her answer was 'Marxists are the Jewish Communists.' There was another Jewish boy in the class but we didn't say anything. Of course the *Mail* would never say that – I hope!

Herbert Gillis, Milton Keynes

A LITTLE JEALOUSY?

Sir – In your last two editions I was astonished to see two gentlemen criticise Ruth David so much with regard to her article about visiting St James's Palace on the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport.

Ruth David and I were in the same hostel in Windermere until the end of the war and I know just how sincere she has always been in her work for justice in this world of ours, lecturing in schools here and in Germany so that the events of the past can never happen again.

What upset these gentlemen so much that they had to write such unkind letters about her? Could there be a little jealousy involved due to her 'recognition'?

Inge Hamilton, London SW18

'LITTLE JERUSALEM'

Sir – In the part of Italy called the Maremma (the southern part of Tuscany) there are

three hill towns worth visiting. Solarno and Sovana are lovely but the most important one is Pitigliano – or, as it is known, ‘Little Jerusalem’.

In 1598 a synagogue was built here and a ghetto was later established. By the nineteenth century, a quarter of the population was Jewish. During the last war there were only 30 Jews remaining. These were saved by local, Catholic families. Today three Jews remain there.

So what can a visitor see of what is left of the ghetto? There is what used to be a *mikveh*, a place where *kosher* wine was produced, a place where a *shochet* worked, a bakery where *matzot* was produced, and a site where the dyeing of fabrics and tanning of leather were carried out. The small synagogue was nicely restored in 1995. A place and area well worth making a detour for.

Janos Fisher
Bushey Heath, Herts

THE BEST JEWISH CLUB IN THE WORLD

Sir – I refer to Didi Metcalf’s reminiscences about her mother’s relationship with the Austrian-Jewish ski instructor Walter Neuron in your October issue. I knew Walter Neuron very well. He was, like me, a member of Hakoah, the best Jewish club in the world! He was a wonderful skier and water polo player. After the war he came to see me in the Austrian ski resort of Zürs: I had broken my leg and we just chatted away. I don’t think I knew Didi Metcalf’s mother, Helen Smethurst.

We are all getting very old! I could tell you lots more stories but can’t write them down. At our beloved club Hakoah we had many champions, junior and senior alike, and many famous Jewish people joined. That, of course, made for lots of jealousy in our sporting world. We had tennis, football and athletics champions too.

Ann Marie Pisker, London SW15
Ann Marie Pisker appeared in the 2004 film Watermarks, the story of the Vienna Hakoah Jewish women’s swimming team of the 1930s and their reunion decades later (Ed.).

A WONDERFUL HAVEN

Sir – I read with sadness of the closure of the AJR Centre. I’m not surprised – I always thought the move from Cleve Road would result in a decline in the numbers.

The Centre was a wonderful haven for my stepmother, Trude Schrecker, during the last 20 years of her life and I have happy memories of joining her for a game of bridge during my visits to London. So, as I said, I heard the news with sadness and nostalgia but, of course, it must be much worse for recent participants.

Getting old, as my friend and AJR co-member Victor Ross once said to me, is not for wimps. I find it a constant adjustment of having to give up activities, losing friends and facing the closure of one’s favourite

restaurant etc without the prospect of replacing them. Still, I suppose it’s better than the alternative – especially if you don’t believe in a life hereafter!

Let’s at least hope that the publication of your excellent journal will continue for a bit longer.

Tom Schrecker, Sydney, Australia

BOATS TO PALESTINE

Sir – Does anyone have any information about the boats which travelled down the Danube to Palestine in the summer or autumn of 1939? We both have relatives who made the journey and would like to know more. We believe these boats may have been organised by Zionist organisations.

We have heard that they took only young married couples. I, Carmel, have been told that my aunt and uncle married on the quayside in Prague so that they could board the boat and make their escape. I think they were on a coal barge but they may have had to transfer to a more seaworthy vessel later on. My aunt and uncle were interned in separate camps on arrival in Palestine while Sue’s family were not allowed to land and were sent to Mauritius.

We would like to know more details about these escape boats:

- How were they arranged?
- What were they called?
- How were the Zionists involved?
- What was life like on them?
- We are particularly interested in the idea that they took only married couples and would appreciate information about this.

Carmel Page and Sue Pearson, Sheffield

WHEN IS A POGROM NOT A POGROM?

Sir – I have tried – for two weeks at the time of writing – to agree with Michael Heppner (October, Letters) and have entirely failed.

My late wife, a Viennese Kindertransportee, never hesitated to refer to the event as ‘Kristallnacht’ and would have been astonished to learn that she was romanticising it.

Better to think that the Nazis would have been appalled at how Jews have been able to give the event an unmovable place in history – the absolute converse to the aim of their persecutors!

Alan S. Kaye, Marlow

KINDERTRANSPORT AND IRELAND

Sir – I am a son of the ‘Kind’ Eli Fachler, who spent several years in Wittingehame, Scotland, after he arrived in May 1939. Also, I am the founder/chair of the Jewish Historical Society of Ireland and I write and speak about the Kindertransport.

I recently attended a performance of Diane Samuels’s play *Kindertransport* in Dublin. At the invitation of the director, I had earlier attended a rehearsal and told the cast some of the background to the Kindertransport. In the audience at the actual performance, I met two Irish

members of the Friends (Quakers). They told me they knew of ten Kindertransport children who were ‘half-Jewish’, were taken from the UK to Ireland, and stayed in a school in Waterford. I had never heard of ‘half-Jewish’ children on the Kindertransport and had never heard of Ireland as a destination for Kindertransport children. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Millisle) yes – but not Ireland. Can anyone throw light on this?

Yanky Fachler, Dundalk, Ireland
yanky@eircom.net
tel +353 868 575 162

A SECOND BOOK

Sir – Thanks very much to the people who responded to my earlier request for stories of betrayal in the Holocaust. The book is progressing and should be available in the autumn of 2014.

I would be interested to hear from people who had problems with their education and were denied degrees or had them withdrawn. I also understand that streets named after famous Jews were sometimes renamed and I should be glad to hear of any examples. All contributions will be acknowledged in the book.

Agnes Grunwald-Spier,
author, *The Other Schindlers*,
tel + 44 (0)7816 196517
www.agnesgrunwaldspier.com

CLUB 43 PROJECT

Sir – I am a historian who lived in Britain in the 1980s-90s and often went to Club 43. I am now working on a research project about it and would like to talk to former members. Were you a member of Club 43? If so, please contact me.

Niko Rollmann,
Gaudystrasse 12, 10437 Berlin,
tel 0049 30 44 77 405,
niko.rollmann@gmx.de

AJR LUNCH – A SINCERE THANK YOU

Sir – A belated but sincere thank you to everyone involved in organising this event. It was a really lovely afternoon. The meal was excellent, the staff most efficient and attentive, the musical interlude delightful. As always, it was good to meet folk for a ‘schmooze’.

Hanne and Leslie Freedman,
North London AJR Group

AJR HOLIDAY IN WINDERMERE – A BIG THANK YOU

Sir – Once again, I want to say a big thank you to the AJR for organising a wonderful holiday in Windermere. Also, a big thank you to Myrna Bernard and Jim Sutherland for the way in which they took care of us. They worked so hard to make sure we had a good time and we were encouraged – but never pressured – to take part in outings. It was lovely to meet old friends and make lots of new ones. We all got on well from day one – hope we all meet again.

Rachel Hunter, Sheffield

continued on page 16 ➔

ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

In the National Gallery's new exhibition **Facing the Modern: The Portrait in Vienna 1900** (until 12 January 2014, sponsored by Credit Suisse), we see the old order is dying: classical portraiture, with all its bejewelled formality, is on the way out. The 'New Vienna' presents a middle class in the flux of change. Immigrants flood in from across the Empire, new industrial money invigorates art but, sadly, what begins with liberalisation ends in nationalism and prejudice aimed at the new Jewish immigrants.

Artists with a Jewish background lead



Isidor Kaufmann *Young Rabbi from N.* (c 1910, Tate Images)

the art of protest art, the first tentative steps of Expressionism soon to be stamped on by the oncoming Nazi regime. Up to this point *fin-de-siècle* artists were commissioned by wealthy patrons and the work of the artists in this collection includes iconoclasts **Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Richard Gerstl, Oskar Kokoschka, Isidore Kaufmann** and **Arnold Schönberg**, the composer of 12-tone music.

But the new modernism was diverse, from Schiele's heart-rending family portrait, the flesh leathery, the faces introspective, a baby which will never be born, perched

like a ghost between his mother's knees.

In his own self-portrait with raised bare shoulder, Schiele anticipates Francis Bacon – spiky black hair and flesh exposed like meat. In another style, Schiele's portrait of Erich Lederer shows a young man with a small pale head above an assertive body dressed in lederhosen and with a large hand on his hips. The work of Schönberg, by contrast, is grim and contained, the flesh colours a dull cobalt, while Klimt in his earlier work retains classical detail. His 1894 painting *Young Girl Seated* describes the intricate folds of a blouse in muted colours and his famous *Portrait of a Lady in Black* still retains its classical provenance.

But the Klimt we recognise bursts into action around 1904 in *Portrait of Hermine Gallia*, she of the surreal diaphanous dress, and in 1917 in his flowing and languid *Posthumous Portrait of Ria Munk*.

But in 1846 little was rocking the boat. **Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller's** *Portrait of Schauberg's Wife*, for instance, gives Viennese society what it is accustomed to. Here are all the detail and sobriety of the classical painting, with trimmings of lace and brocade.

The emphasis on death – Beethoven's death mask, as well as Schiele's *Portrait of Ria Munk*, even **Anton Romako's** wistful painting of his nieces (his two daughters killed themselves in 1887 while he himself died two years later aged 57) – can be read prophetically with regard to the future for Viennese art, but the Pre-Raphaelites equally had a propensity for the morbid.

Gerstl's final work, *Nude Self-Portrait with Palette*, with its scrambled background and tousled hair, was said to have been painted shortly before his suicide.

Broncia Koller's study of a young girl with a birdcage typifies change in art. **Carl Moll's** 1906 self-portrait in his study, still classical in tone, with slanted light across the tiled floor, heavy wood furniture and sculpture, shows the artist in the background behind pale curtains – almost an afterthought. This is a view of a changing world: exciting, important and nostalgic.

AJR Chief Executive
Michael Newman

Directors
Carol Rossen
David Kaye

Head of Department
Sue Kurlander Social Services

AJR Journal
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Andrea Goodmaker Secretarial/Advertisements

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

REVIEWS

Making the world a better place

AFTER AUSCHWITZ: A STORY OF HEARTBREAK AND SURVIVAL BY THE STEPSISTER OF ANNE FRANK

by Eva Schloss with Karen Bartlett
Hodder and Stoughton (tel 020 7873 6000), 2013, hardback 336 pp., £20.00, ISBN 9781444760682

In this book Eva Schloss recounts her life story, beginning with a carefree, loving childhood in a peaceful Vienna, through the horrors of Nazism, survival in the post-war world, and up to the present day.

Her early childhood, spent in a leafy suburb of Vienna, was shattered by the Depression, which compelled the family to move and her father to find new means of supporting them. Her home life was not especially religious: she became aware of her Jewishness only when Jewish children did not participate in the religious education of her Catholic school. The Anschluss complicated Jewish life further. Her father went to Amsterdam to set up a business; her mother, brother Heinz and herself planned to join him. They managed to get as far as Belgium even though the justice minister had ordered the Belgian embassy in Vienna not to issue visas to Jews, who 'have for centuries constituted a problem for Europe' (p. 41). Eventually the family was reunited in Amsterdam, where Eva met Anne Frank, who was to feature greatly in her later life.

The German invasion of Holland was problematic once again for the family just as it was for the Jewish population of the country. Like Anne Frank, they went into hiding, were betrayed, and were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau via Westerbork camp. There, Eva's father and brother were separated from Eva and her mother. The horrendous conditions in the camp are described in detail. She saw her father a few times. However, prior to liberation, her father and brother were put on the forced evacuation march of the camp and were not seen again by her mother and herself.

Liberation came with the Russians. Eva, her mother and others were taken to Poland and Ukraine. In Odessa they boarded a British destroyer en route to Marseille, from where they made their way to Amsterdam. Her mother had met Anne Frank's father Otto in camp; he too was on board.

Eva ultimately moved to London, where she took a job in a photographic

continued opposite ➔

studio. She was also reunited with her grandparents and great-grandmother, who had managed to reach England before the war. In time she married Zvi Schloss and had a family; her mother married Otto Frank. Apart from her own business in antiques, Eva began to speak about her experiences and became involved in the Anne Frank house in Amsterdam as well as the Anne Frank Trust. She has become a popular speaker both to schoolchildren and adults in the UK and abroad (and, interestingly, in UK prisons).

The book is gripping from the outset: important messages come through. For instance, she raises the question of why Auschwitz was not bombed. She writes: 'Many things have changed in the world since the end of World War Two, but unfortunately prejudice and discrimination have not.' She points out that, as she saw on her travels, the world has not learned its lessons and that the Holocaust has not woken it to the full horror of anti-Semitism. All this in the introduction, which is borne out as her story unfolds. Likewise, she is curious as to why so many ordinary people enabled the Holocaust to take place.

How true are Eva's final words that 'Remembering should have a smaller place in the world than changing things for the better.' This message must be basic to all who speak about the Holocaust. Of course we must not let the Holocaust be forgotten by the generations to follow but, in practical terms, through that remembrance we must aim to make the world a better place. Especially relevant, when speaking to the younger generations, is the blurb on the cover: 'The good you do touches someone, somewhere.'

Bernd Koschland

Room for more

HIDE AND SEEK

by Bettine Le Beau

Mardibooks, 2013, 119 pp. ebook available from Amazon.com, ISBN 978-1-909227-17-0

Actress Bettine Le Beau's truly moving new memoir tells the fascinating story of how she was hidden and survived during the war.

The child of young Polish Jews, Rachel and Leopold, Bettine – born Betty Fallek – enjoyed a 'fun and carefree' life until May 1940, when Germany invaded her Belgian homeland. So began a series of often worrying adventures for the eight-year-old and her brother Harry, four years her senior. They owed their lives to the brave work of the French-Jewish humanitarian organisation Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants, to whom this book is dedicated. With their mother they joined

the scramble to Paris by commandeering a taxi in the hope of joining their father, who was buying furs for his trade, in London.

At first, they enjoyed a holiday watching the world go by while waiting for visas. All came to an abrupt end when the city fell to the Nazis, starting five years of bewildering uncertainty. Betty was horrified to see men worried about the danger crying during internment in Château d'Audoux, where surroundings were spectacular but food scarce. Soon they were moved on to the godforsaken Gurs concentration camp. Conditions were primitive, families were separated, and children became hungry, cold and ill.

But help was at hand when a group of ten, including Betty and Harry, were smuggled out one pitch-black night. Without their mother they became involved in various moves organised by incredibly courageous people who risked their lives to save them. Bettine, now under a new identity, was warned never to admit she was Jewish. She and a friend ended up on a farm at Souspierre, near Montélimar, where they were happy with a wonderful couple they came to love, even though their education was 'lopsided'. Thus the illustrated account, aimed at younger readers, moves on

Bettine is especially good at remembering how a child thinks. Her style is direct and easy to read. The story is particularly evocative of places experienced during relaxed pre-war days and later of a happy life in rural France feeding pigs, helping with the harvest, and enjoying tasty grapes and ripe juicy peaches.

'Questions for reflexion' addressed to the reader at the end of chapters crystallise and occasionally interrupt the flow of thought, as do some philosophical reflections. The book is interesting, gripping and succinct but quite short – so without a doubt there is room for more!

Janet Weston

Coming-of-age story

THE ODYSSEY OF SAMUEL GLASS

by Bernard Kops

London: David Paul, 2012, 272 pp., £14.99, ISBN 978 09548482 8 6

In 1881 the anarchist organisation Narodnaya volya (People's Will) assassinates the anti-Semitic Tsar Alexander II of Russia, the flames of murderous pogroms sweep through the town of Vitebsk and its surrounds, and a Jewish boy from Muswell Hill in 21st-century London is rescued on board an emigrants' ship bound for England What!

Bernard Kops, the doyen of Anglo-Jewish poetry, has written a great new Holocaust novel. He tells a fantastic and

entirely believable tale. It is about the present. Like a fateful refrain, the menacing sound of Holocaust cattle trucks clanging through the Russian terrain is audible throughout the narrative. But it is also a funny coming-of-age story.

Samuel Glass, hero of the novel, turns up in Vitebsk, the town of his forebears, to confront destiny. He finds himself trapped in the wrong country and the wrong century of a confusing world. Yet the real world proves even more confusing when the sounds of the Holocaust horror follow him back to the Thames Valley.

Most of us know more about pre-war Vitebsk than we think we know. The iconic images of its fiddlers on the roofs populate the best walls of our homes and museums. For this was the hometown of the Hasidic painter Marc Chagall (1887-1985) and the scene of Second World War atrocities, sparing just 118 survivors out of a civilian population of 170,000.

Kops's world, like Chagall's, is centred on magnetic matriarchs. One is Lisa, Sam's widowed mother, who is about to embark on a love affair a year after the untimely death of her husband, Sam's father. Another is Lisa's equally young and desirable great-great-grandmother, who summons our heartbroken hero back into history to assassinate the tsar.

Sam also meets Anne Frank, who wonders why he had to run away from home since 'mine,' she recalls, 'ran away from me.' He watches T. S. Eliot as he climbs off his pedestal to seek out the Jews, as he puts it, 'underneath the piles'.

Kops, 87, is deeply erudite. He hails from the bygone European-Jewish immigrant settlements of East London that once sheltered there from the Holocaust. Sam's Russian *Odyssey* is full of autobiographical turns. The author was first catapulted to fame as an originator of Britain's new wave, 'kitchen-sink' theatre by his 1958 play *The Hamlet of Stepney Green*. He has published seven volumes of verse, more than 40 plays and two autobiographies.

Before he is allowed to return to his mother, Sam must still experience the poverty of Kops's native slums. Sam feels almost comfortable there. In a nod to his own, deprived childhood, Kops observes that 'compassion then was still alive in the shtetl of the old East End.'

Thomas Ország-Land

Thomas Ország-Land is a poet and foreign correspondent. His next book will be The Survivors: Holocaust Poetry for Our Time (Smokestack, 2014).

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An inspiration

Alfred Huberman was a member of the AJR Brighton and Hove Sarid Group for many years. When he retired, he suggested I attend meetings with him. Gradually I became more involved with the group. At a recent meeting, we talked of inspirational people and I thought readers would be interested to know about this remarkable man, who was an inspiration to so many people.



With great-grandniece Elisa

Not tall – but then, if you've been starved, frozen and tortured in your teenage years, your long bones don't grow. So how could a boy who had suffered so much; who knew his grandparents, parents and most of his relatives had been murdered; whose feet had been frostbitten; who had survived typhus and tuberculosis; and who had arrived in this country knowing no English, wearing a ladies' jacket and a pair of shorts and with no possessions, be an inspiration?

I met Alfred (Abram) – Alfie to his many friends – in 1953. A smiling, friendly boy, with no hint of an accent, who didn't speak of his past. Gradually I got to know his hidden depths. He liked everyone and they liked him.

When he was allowed into this country it was on the understanding that he would

not be a burden on the state. He studied tailoring and became an expert in every aspect of that work. At one time, he did his tailoring by day and was a GPO/BT telephonist in the evenings. He saved to buy a house and raised three children. His work ethic had a profound influence on their lives too: the eldest is now a senior nurse/manager, specialising in patient safety, who is completing a doctorate; the middle one is a qualified electrical engineer who runs his own business, specialising in alarm systems; and the youngest served as a Royal Marines Bandsman before becoming a police officer. So Alfred never did become a burden on the state.

Alfred felt passionately that future generations should know about what had happened in Europe during the Second

World War and, although he found it a hard thing to do, gave many talks in schools, universities and Ford Open Prison and to various groups and societies so that the Holocaust should not be forgotten. Under his influence, I intend to help that work continue.

Living with him was inspiring: his understanding of and relationships with people, friends and customers alike have influenced my reactions to people. I know he suffered many health problems but, no matter what happened, he never complained: nothing was bad. He enjoyed life – as he said, what's the alternative? His attitude to life was certainly an inspiration to me. He was my husband, Alfred.

Alfred's influence continues, even with his death in such tragic and unnecessary circumstances. Because of him, as a family, we were able to cope with this disaster. And the hospital has changed everything involved with the investigation he underwent and, under his influence, this story is being used to teach doctors and nurses what could – but need not – happen to their patients.

All Alfred said and did continues to be inspirational to me and to many other people.

Shirley Huberman

University of Leicester Extremes of Human Cruelty Network and 'Holocaust Tourism' Research

In May 2013 the Extremes of Human Cruelty Network, created and led by Dr Sarah Hodgkinson, Senior Lecturer in Criminology, was launched by the University of Leicester. Bringing together academics, practitioners and other interested parties from a range of disciplines, the Network seeks to explore the human capacity to commit cruelties and atrocities towards other humans. It also aims to showcase the existing work and research of contributors, provide a forum to develop collaborative projects, generate debate and discussion, and attract further scholars, practitioners and researchers with an interest in human evil and cruelty.

Areas of interest for the Network include:

- The origins of evil and cruelty;
- Perpetrators;
- Victims;
- How to identify and prevent;
- How to rehabilitate (and deal with) the perpetrators;
- How to support victims and their families.

Exploring why people seek to harm others at an interpersonal level and why people tolerate, encourage or perpetrate atrocities at a mass/collective level is a central focus of the research

of the Network.

Dr Hodgkinson, Associate Member of the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, is currently undertaking research critically exploring the contentious area of 'Holocaust Tourism' and analysing the significant role of former concentration camps in remembering the victims of the Holocaust and educating future generations about Nazi atrocities. For this project Dr Hodgkinson has conducted her own fieldwork, visiting sites in Germany and Austria, and has blogged about her experiences at <http://staffblogs.le.ac.uk/humancruelty/>

She is now surveying visitors' experiences of Holocaust memorial sites and sites of former concentration camps seeking to answer questions including: What draws us to visit sites of atrocities such as the Holocaust? What effect does visiting these sites have? What do we hope to gain from these experiences? Is it important to preserve such places and make them accessible to the public? What impact does visiting such sites have on our understanding of the Holocaust, history and humanity itself?

If you have visited the site of a former concentration camp, or a Holocaust memorial site, and would like to share

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your thoughts and experiences, please fill out our online survey at www.le.ac.uk/extremes-human-cruelty/online-survey

(A hard copy of the survey can be requested via the email below.)

For further information about Dr Hodgkinson's research, the Network, or to enquire about becoming a network member, please email humancruelty@le.ac.uk

Joanna Roberts
*PhD Research Student,
Department of Criminology
University of Leicester*

Chairman reassures members on continuity of services

AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman has given a further reassurance that the forthcoming closure of the AJR Centre (see page 2) will in no way affect the provision of services to members.

He was speaking at a meeting in early November which, as the AJR neared the end of its first year as a newly constituted charitable organisation, provided an opportunity for members to quiz informally the organisation's Trustees and Directors.

It had been a memorable year, Andrew said, recalling the hugely successful 75th Kindertransport Anniversary commemoration, in particular the Reunion at JFS and the reception by HRH Prince Charles at St James's Palace. The AJR had a crowded programme of forthcoming events, he pointed out, including a Kindertransport Tea at the House of Commons later in the month and the continued erection of plaques honouring members who had made a special contribution to this country.

Andrew emphasised that the closure

of the Centre was sad but inevitable – members were not turning up in large enough numbers for it to remain financially viable. He stressed that the Centre's closure and the move to Jewish Care would enable greater resources to be diverted to social services, where they were most needed.

He confirmed that transport arrangements for those experiencing particular difficulty would continue 'in identical fashion', as would all the organisation's activities such as the arts and crafts, computer lessons and a music group.

AJR Chief Executive Officer Michael Newman added that the organisation had been taking on additional staff, especially social workers, in order to deal with increasing demands as the membership aged. He said there were currently some 2,600 AJR members, of whom 500 were 'Second Generation', and that 80 new members had joined this year. Thirty-eight members were aged over 100, he added.



SECOND GENERATION NETWORK

You are invited to attend:

Scattered Ghosts Nick Barlay in Conversation

Tuesday 10 December 2013
from 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
at the Wiener Library

Author Nick Barlay was born in London to Hungarian-Jewish refugee parents. He discusses his new book, *Scattered Ghosts*, the story of his family over 200 years through war, Holocaust and revolution. His research entailed extensive travel, including to Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Austria, as well as Hungary.

The session will be chaired by Robin Cranmer.

Robin Cranmer's father was a Jewish refugee who left Hungary alone in 1939. His father's background and experiences have significantly influenced his work and he now lectures in Intercultural Communication at the University of Westminster.

BECHHOFFER FAMILY REMEMBERED



In October this year Kindertransport refugee Susi Bechhofer (pictured), together with her son Frederick, unveiled a memorial to 28 local victims of the Holocaust, including many members of their own family, in the Bavarian town of Bechhofen.

Susi spoke to those present at the ceremony about the Bechhofer family, who had originally moved from Herriden to Bechhofen, where they had taken the name Bechhofer. The family had lived in the town from as early as 1589 up to 1938, when the Nazis had expelled its Jewish families. Almost the entire Bechhofer family was wiped out by the Nazis; Susi's mother Rosa, one of 13 siblings, perished in Auschwitz in April 1943.

ARTS AND EVENTS DECEMBER DIARY

Wed 4 Monica Bohm-Duchen: 'Art of the Holocaust: Creativity In Extremis' Wiener Library, 6.30 pm. Admission free but booking essential, tel 020 7636 7247

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AJR/British Academy Appeal

The AJR /British Academy Appeal, launched in November 2012 in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Thank-Offering to Britain Fund by the AJR in 1965, has so far raised in excess of £20,000.

The Fund currently supports one-year Senior Research Fellowships in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The AJR and the British Academy are immensely grateful for the support shown by AJR members and for that of the Appeal's Patrons: Lord John Krebs, Principal of Jesus College Oxford and son of Sir Hans Krebs, who handed over the cheque to establish the Thank-Offering to Britain Fund in 1965; Lord Claus

Moser, Fellow of the British Academy and former Chancellor of Keele University, whose family moved from Germany to the UK in 1936 as refugees from Hitler; Sir Roy Goode, Fellow of the British Academy, well-known commercial lawyer of Jewish descent; and Sir Guenter Treitel, Fellow of the British Academy, member of the AJR and generous donor to the AJR/British Academy Appeal.

Members wishing to contribute should send cheques made out to 'The British Academy' to Jennifer Hawton, The British Academy, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH.

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Pinner Rescue and Rehabilitation of WWII Orphans

The Rage to Live author Anna Andlauer painted a vivid picture of the rescue and rehabilitation of WWII orphans by the team of social workers at Kloster Indersdorf, an old monastery not far from Dachau, where Greta Fischer dedicated herself over many years to the welfare of traumatised child survivors. *Walter Weg*

Glasgow Book Club Face-to-Face Meeting

Having read Natasha Solomons's *Mr Rosenblum's List*, members were eager to meet Natasha face to face at the launch of her latest book *The Gallery of Vanished Husbands*. It was interesting to hear the inspiration behind the stories and characters. *Agnes Isaacs*

Ilford Hands-on Talk

The Wallace Collection's Miranda gave us a 'hands-on' talk on the Collection's remarkable paintings and artefacts. We then gave a hearty 'thank you' to Myrna Glass as this was her last appearance at our group prior to her retirement. She will be greatly missed but we say 'hello' to her successor, Kathryn Prevezer. *Meta Roseneil*

Cardiff Delightful Entertainment

Lunch at the Cardiff Reform Synagogue was a pleasant affair organised by Myrna Glass and followed by delightful entertainment by Lynne Bradley, who revealed hidden stories behind *The Wizard of Oz* and *Singin' in the Rain*, read her own poetry, and sang beautifully. *Michel Millodot*

Essex (Westcliff) In-depth Talk

Norton Asbury gave us an in-depth talk on the Wallace Collection. My friends Kevin and Peter went to see it and were fascinated by its array of medieval armour, jewellery and paintings. A must for everybody to see! *Larry Lisner*

Welwyn GC With Humour and Quiet Reflection

Freddie Godshaw, born in Hanover, witnessed the initially petty hurts and humiliations inflicted on the Jewish community. After Kristallnacht the family emigrated to Welwyn GC. Internment on the Isle of Man soon followed and, while there, Freddie had his portrait drawn by Kurt Schwitters. Freddie spoke without bitterness but with humour and quiet reflection. *Marianne Linford*

Birmingham (West Midlands) The Story of Hakoah

We watched the film *Watermarks*, the story of Hakoah, the famous swimming club in 1930s Vienna, which ends with the ladies of the club reuniting in Vienna 60 years later. *Philip Lesser*

Leeds and Manchester Mutual Friends

Members of the Leeds and Manchester groups met for lunch at Brackmans Bakery, followed by a visit to the Manchester Jewish Museum to see an exhibition by Jewish artists including Chagall and Soutine. Some members from across the Pennines found 'mutual friends' from their birth places and had even attended the same *cheder*! *Wendy Bott*

St John's Wood An Excellent Talk

We were given an excellent talk by Gillian Reynolds, the well-known journalist, broadcaster and radio critic. *Avram and Vera Schaufeld*

An Outstanding Success

Our outing to see *Hysteria* at Hampstead Theatre was an outstanding success, with Sir Anthony Sher brilliant as Freud. In a dazzling mix of Whitehall farce and serious debate about Freud's views on psychoanalysis, we saw what happened when the surrealist painter Salvador Dali visited the great man. The icing on the cake was the opportunity to take tea with, and ask questions of, the distinguished actor David Horowitz, who played Freud's doctor. *David Barnett*

Glasgow Past and Present

We enjoyed a talk by Duncan McEwan, a gifted amateur photographer and historian, about Glasgow past and present. A nostalgia trip for some. *Halina Moss*

Wessex Mesmerising Documentary about Sir Nick Winton

We were mesmerised by a documentary about Sir Nick Winton's heroic rescue of Czech-Jewish children. Contemporaneous footage showed some of 'Winton's Children' around the world expressing gratitude and love. We wished Myrna Glass a happy retirement. *Pearl Dale*

Marlow CF 'The M Room'

A record number of people – 15 – attended a talk by historian Dr Helen Fry, who spoke mainly about her recent book *The M Room*, which tells the story of German POWs in the UK and those who listened in to their bugged conversations. Our thanks to Alan Kaye, who again put his lovely house at our disposal. *Arthur Mayer*

Edinburgh CF In Stitches

'Hyacinth Bucket' came to meet the group and provided her usual brand of mayhem. We were in stitches as the very talented group member Lillian Bell, who wrote and performed the sketch, became the much loved Hyacinth for a brief time. *Judy Russel*

HGS Hampstead Heath and Amenities

Hampstead Heath Superintendent Simon Lee spoke about the history, landscape and maintenance of this 790-acre park and the many amenities it offers, including the Pergola and Hill Gardens. *Kitty Balint-Kurti*

Edgware History of Aspirin

We were enlightened by Prof Michael Spiro, who spoke to us about the history of aspirin. *Felix Winkler*

Ealing 'The Rage to Live'

Anna Andlauer gave us a fascinating presentation of her book *The Rage to Live*, which tells the story of displaced orphaned children at the end of the war who were cared for in the Bavarian town of Kloster Indersdorf. *Leslie Sommer*

Glasgow CF A Great Night Out

We enjoyed a first-class production of *Fiddler on the Roof* at Eastwood Park Theatre. A great night out. *Agnes Isaacs*

Kent A Moving Film

How moving to see the film *Watermarks*, which features the reunion of champion lady swimmers from the legendary Viennese Hakoah club together with footage of their pre-war hay day! *Janet Weston*

Prestwich/Whitefield Unique Project

We welcomed TV/theatre presenters Ros and Jane Merkin, who spoke to us about their unique project to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport. They have created the mobile (no props) play *Suitcase*, which they will perform at railway stations up and down the country. *Werner Lachs*

Oxford Inspirational Talk

Chris Rattenbury, an internationally successful weightlifter with the British Paralympic team, gave us an inspirational talk about Wheelpower, the organisation that grew out of Sir Ludwig Guttmann's work at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. *John Fieldsend*

Radlett A Morning of Interesting Reminiscences

Once again we trusted our members to provide plenty of subjects for discussion. And so it proved. The morning was taken up with interesting reminiscences, some amusing, others full of sadness. *Fritz Starer*

Cambridge 'Wrongdoing in Spanish History'

A most stimulating talk by Prof Alison Sinclair, who spoke to us about 'Wrongdoing in Spain, 1800-1936: Realities, Representations, Reactions', the subject of a current exhibition at the Cambridge Library. *Keith Lawson*

Brighton & Hove Sarid Less a Discussion, More a Reminiscence

Greta brought her late mother's ring and told us the story attached to it. Joy

described the stone-setting and memorial service for Lilly Bernstock. Anne showed a photo of her airman father. Shirley said how decorated her uncle in Penang was. Alma told us about her heroic father. We learned that Esther's birth was by hypnosis. *Ceska Abrahams*

Liverpool 'Staging the Kindertransport'

Ros Merkin spoke to us on the subject 'Staging the Kindertransport' about *Suitcase*, a play to be performed in November up and down the country at mainline railway stations. She eloquently described the problems recreating the arrival of children on the Kindertransport and staging the play in a railway station.

Guido Alis

Café Imperial Standing to Attention

A captain, sergeant and fusilier all stood to attention as newcomer Prof Robert Shaw gave us a brief chemistry lesson. He also showed us a fascinating letter from the most eminent of scientists – Albert Einstein.

Esther Rinkoff

Hull CF Enjoyable Get-together

We enjoyed a get-together with a most interesting discussion. All was followed, as always, by a delicious afternoon tea.

Wendy Bott

Norfolk A Card, a Cake and Best Wishes for the Future

Norwich Synagogue was once again the meeting place of the few intrepid indefatigables, but this occasion was different - it was the last time Myrna took centre stage before retiring. There was a cake, a card and best wishes for the future.

Frank Bright

Book Club Pleasurable Afternoon

Meeting at Joseph's Bookstore in Temple Fortune, we discussed Ben Elton's *Two Brothers*, which we found a very interesting read. These afternoons are always a pleasure. Next meeting is on Wednesday 18 December at 2.30 pm, when we will discuss J. K. Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy*.

Margarete Weiss

Newcastle Visit to Discovery Museum

We visited the Discovery Museum to see the exhibition showing immigration from all over the world, including Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Fourth-Generation Yoni and Dina Berg enjoyed dressing up!

Michelle Berg

Wembley To Myrna: Best Wishes for a Long and Contented Retirement

A special meeting as it was the last time Myrna Glass was organising us prior to her retirement. We all felt we owed a great deal to Myrna, who during all those years encouraged us to attend, updated us on AJR events and – last but not least – provided an outstanding tea. We wish her a long and contented retirement and hope she'll visit us at meetings in the future.

Tom Heinemann

DECEMBER GROUP EVENTS

HSFA	1 Dec	Musical Programme with Ruth Rogoff
Ealing	3 Dec	Chanukah Quiz
Liverpool	3 Dec	Chanukah Party
Ilford	4 Dec	Chanukah Party
Pinner	5 Dec	Chanukah Party with Ronnie Goldberg
Wessex	5 Dec	Chanukah Party
Edinburgh	8 Dec	Chanukah Party
Manchester	8 Dec	Chanukah Party at Nicky Alliance Centre, 2.30 pm
HGS	9 Dec	'Desert Island': Your Favourite Book or Film and Why
Essex (Westcliff)	10 Dec	Otto Deutsch Musical Programme
Welwyn GC	10 Dec	Social Get-together at home of Monica
Glasgow	11 Dec	New Year Party
Kent	11 Dec	Chanukah Quiz and Lunchtime Meeting
Leeds	12 Dec	<i>The Nutcracker</i> at Royal Opera Live
Brighton-Sarid (Sussex)	16 Dec	Chanukah Quiz
Edgware	17 Dec	Joint Chanukah Party at Alyth Gardens
Leeds	17 Dec	Social
North London	17 Dec	Joint Chanukah Party at Alyth Gardens
North West London	17 Dec	Joint Chanukah Party at Alyth Gardens
Oxford	17 Dec	'Nicky's Children' DVD
Radlett	17 Dec	Joint Chanukah Party at Alyth Gardens
St John's Wood	17 Dec	Joint Chanukah Party at Alyth Gardens
Wembley	18 Dec	Social Get-together
Cambridge	19 Dec	End-of-Year Social Get-together

East Midlands Excellent Hospitality in an Eclectic Home

Ruth and Jurgen's excellent hospitality in the comfort of their eclectic home made this a most enjoyable meeting. Conversation and home-made apple juice flowed!

Esther Rinkoff

North London Spellbinding Account

We listened spellbound to Angela Schluter's account of her mother's survival under the Nazi regime. The story, untold for 50 years, involved months in a slave labour camp and a brief marriage to a Nazi officer.

Hanne R. Freedman

North West London

Memories from the Law Courts

Reminiscing on several unexpected verdicts while working to briefs from the Crown Prosecution Service and on other occasions representing defendants, Raymond Sturgess also recalled a couple of cases which showed compassion in the English justice system.

Shirley Rodwell

Annual Holocaust Survivors Chanukah Tea

**Thursday 5 December 2013
2.30 – 3.45 pm**

at Mathilda Marks-Kennedy School,
68 Hale Lane, London NW7 3RT

Guests will have the opportunity to talk to our Year 6 class (10-11-year-olds) and enjoy a delicious tea followed by our Junior Assembly with a candle-lighting ceremony and lots of Chanukah songs.

If you would like to come,
please telephone **Mandy Behar** at the
School Office on **020 8959 6089**, Ex 2

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The AJR Paul Balint Centre

at Belsize Square Synagogue
51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX
Telephone 020 7431 2744

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays – 9.30 am to 3.30 pm



MEALS-ON-WHEELS

To order Meals-on-Wheels
please telephone 020 8385 3075

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ONE-TO-ONE BASIC COMPUTER LESSONS

at the AJR Centre
To book a session with Dora
call her on 020 8385 3070

AJR CENTRE 'End of an Era' Luncheon

THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER at 12 pm

Do hope you can join us!

Essential to book

Tel 020 7431 2744

on Tuesdays and Thursdays ONLY

Please send a cheque for £7 per person (*made payable to AJR*) to Accounts Department at Head Office



FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

Mazeltov to Susie and Andrew Kaufman on the birth of their fourth grandchild, Zac Alexander, born 25.10.13, to Nicole and David, and to great-grandparents Eva and Kurt Schapira.

CLASSIFIED

Lady in Hendon, keen Bridge player looking for players to play at her house – tel 020 8202 8617.

LEO BAECK HOUSING ASSOCIATION CLARA NEHAB HOUSE RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

A MORNING AT THE MOVIES

Wednesday 29 January 2014
10.30 am for 11.00 am (prompt) start



Starring
Dame Judi Dench and Steve Coogan



We are delighted to be able to offer seats at £5. The cinema is opposite Belsize Park Tube Station on the Northern Line.

To book your seat, please contact Susan Harrod at susan@ajr.org.uk or on 020 8385 3070.

Activities December 2013

Lunch is served at 12.30 unless otherwise stated

Tuesday 3 December

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Lessons with Dora
- 11-12 Seated Exercises
- 12.30 KT Chanukah Party

Thursday 5 December

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 11.15 Seated Exercises
- 13.30 Entertainer Frank Crocker

Tuesday 10 December

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Lessons with Dora
- 11.30 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 Entertainer Margaret Opdahl

Thursday 12 December

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 13.30 Entertainer Geoff Strum – 'Songs from the Shows'

Tuesday 17 December

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Lessons with Dora
- 10.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group with John Kay
- 11.30 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 Entertainment – André Rieu Film

Thursday 19 December

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 11.30 Seated Exercises
- 12.00 'END OF AN ERA' LUNCHEON (SEE AD AT LEFT)

New Kinder Lunch location

As you may have heard, it is with great sadness that we have decided to close the AJR Centre at the end of this year (see page 2).

Kinder Lunches will now be held on the first Monday of every month at the Hendon Reform Synagogue, Danescroft Avenue, London NW4 2NA. Our first Kinder Lunch will be on Monday 6 January 2014.

Please let Andrea Goodmaker know if you can come along by emailing her at andrea@ajr.org.uk or by calling 020 8385 3091. For catering purposes, we will need to know in advance if you plan to attend.

We look forward to seeing you at the Kinder Lunches and other AJR events in the New Year.

Michael Newman

'THE BEGINNING OF THE END'

The following is an extract from a letter from Katerina Lowova (Katia Gould) written on 22 September 1938 in the north-eastern Moravian town of Frýdek-Místek to her boyfriend (later, husband) in London. Katia Gould died this year – see her obituary in the September 2013 issue of the Journal. The letter was translated from the German by Irene Gould (Ed.).

Dear Ete
I received your last letter today and am compelled to answer you at length as I am astonished how naïve you are in London. You say that by cutting off the Sudeten German areas a trouble spot in Europe would be removed. However, I and any sensible person aware of conditions here knows this would be the beginning of the end. Chamberlain has simply let Hitler dictate the destruction of Czechoslovakia and thus the end of a democratic Central Europe. He was simply bamboozled by Hitler. I have told you repeatedly that a sharp separation between the German and Czech areas is impossible. There are wide areas with 50 per cent Germans, not all of whom are Nazis – what will happen to them?

The issue of the Sudeten Germans will remain a problem in Czechoslovakia even if the areas are separated. Further, we have spent millions on building fortresses and these will now be used by the Nazis against us. The newly created borders lack all natural basis since for

hundreds of years the Riesengebirge, Erzgebirge and Adlergebirge Mountains and the Bohemian Forest have formed the natural borders. It is impossible to defend the new borders. The most important point, however, is that Hitler will never be satisfied with the granting of his demands – he will always want more. He doesn't give a damn about the slum areas. What he wants is the coal mining area and the steelworks – hence precisely the area in which I am living. He has dictated to Chamberlain once already – he will obviously do the same again. He has sold and betrayed a 'friendly' state in a way unknown in history. I should spit at every Englishman for the way they have behaved. They know they have signed our death sentence. And it is ridiculous and paradoxical to offer guarantees to Czechoslovakia after all the existing guarantees have so shamefully been broken.

From a personal perspective, this is our situation. Our house is some 200 meters from the River Ostrawitz. The Poles are demanding the Teschen and Frýdek districts up to the Ostrawitz (I should say that there's not a single Pole in the whole of Frýdek). Ostrawa is 20 km away from us and German territory only 20 kms further. You can see our dilemma!

You are probably hearing the news in London from the German news office. These ridiculous and unscrupulous lies and distortions have probably added a

lot to the Western powers' change of attitude. However, I fear Chamberlain will soon understand what he has done: he has handed over Europe to the Nazis; he has destroyed the only democracy in Central Europe; he will sweep us into a terrible war. It's clear that Hitler will demand not only the German areas – any reasonably intelligent person can see that. I don't know whether you know that both England and France are now hated by every good person but that the whole world is laughing at Chamberlain, who let Hitler dictate war in order to keep the peace.

I could give you 100 examples and proofs of English insanity but am not in a position to do so by letter. I can only tell you that we are at the mercy of what pleases Hitler. Chamberlain carries the guilt and responsibility. It's also clear that, whatever happens, the Jews will be the whipping boys. It would be interesting to know what the English statesmen intend to do with the giant stream of refugees – maybe push them into the Danube if that's what Hitler wishes. And Chamberlain calls it peace-making!

Hitler wanted more rights for the Sudeten Germans. When he got them, he wanted the Carlsbad 'Points'. When the Czechs wanted to give him the Carlsbad 'Points', he wanted autonomy. When he had the offer of autonomy, he wanted separation. When he had the separation, he

Austrian dentistry in the UK

Post-1933 German-Jewish doctors and dentists found fairly ready acceptance in this country. However, by the time of the *Anschluss* in 1938, the doors had been firmly slammed to protect the British dental profession.

Nevertheless, numerous applications for visas and work permits continued to arrive and the government set up a commission for further consideration. It consisted of representatives of the Home Office and of the three then active dental societies.

Their recommendations were that only 40 applicants should be admitted; that each applicant should complete a year's study in a British dental school and then pass the finals examination without special allowance; that each applicant should have a British guarantor so that no financial burden could fall on the state; that the candidates be evenly spread among the various British dental schools, not excluding the London schools as the South East was deemed to be well served already; and that no applicant should then or later make use of the title of doctor from abroad.

Austria had at that time two types of dental practitioner: the *Zahnarzt* with full medical qualification, and the *Dentist* with a lower grade of training excluding surgery.

In the event, 264 applications were received from dental surgeons and 70

from *Dentisten*. This, of course, raised a huge selection problem, it being recognised that many of the applicants lived in great danger.

After further consideration, it was decided to eliminate the 70 *Dentisten* and to limit the remainder to those aged 30-55. This group was now asked to submit a full CV plus a recent complete family photograph. Most of those finally selected had several young children, their choice a noble humanitarian gesture.

The three chosen for the Manchester school were Drs Fuerst, Kurer and my father. All three had owned respected practices in Vienna and, although only final-year students now, were treated with great kindness and respect. (It was my sad fate when following some years later to be told almost daily for five years 'Of course you will never be as good as your old man!')

Without any income for a year, our families lived on meagre charity payments, which were of course returned in due course, and the support of the wonderful Quakers.

After the year's study all three passed the final examination of the Royal College of Surgeons at the first attempt – an incredible achievement considering their difficult social circumstances, language difficulties and even threat of internment. On qualification they had to accept temporary assistantships before being

BOOKS BOUGHT

MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

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**I also purchase
ephemera**

permitted to start their own practices. They were very successful thanks to the large number of refugees in the area who valued their skill and always addressed them as 'Herr Doktor' despite the prohibition.

Dr Fuerst's wife was also a fully trained *Zahnarzt* but was never given permission to practise here, which was sad. After her death he followed their brilliant daughter Lillian to the USA, where she was Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina.

The other two worked happily to a ripe old age and left behind a substantial medical/dental issue.

I have little knowledge of how the other chosen candidates fared, but think with sadness of the 294 applicants who were rejected.

(Dr) Hans L. Eirew



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Harmony in the Old City of Jerusalem hopefully not just another mirage

Although I wasn't in Jerusalem for Jerusalem Day this year, having been called away to fulfil grandparental duties, it was very much in my thoughts. I still have a very clear memory of those six days in June, just 46 years ago, when I was only dimly able to perceive the historic events that were happening all around me. This was partly because my knowledge of Hebrew at the time was minimal and also because I was cut off from the wider world due to the bombardment of Jerusalem by enemy forces and the battle that was being waged for control of the city.

In the first few years of my stay in Jerusalem, between 1964 and 1967, the Old City was inaccessible to Israelis. I remember being taken to high points in West Jerusalem, such as the YMCA tower, to peer out towards the crowded buildings beyond no man's land which seemed to hover in the still afternoon air like a mirage, so near and yet so unattainable.

During those six days of fighting in 1967 the information coming over the radio waves was intermittent and incomplete and what little Hebrew I knew caused me to confuse terms such as Sha'ar Shekhem (one of the gates around the Old City of Jerusalem) and Sharm El Sheikh (the southernmost point of the Sinai Peninsula). Later on my error was pointed

out to me and geographical reality began to impinge on my consciousness.

Soon after the 'liberation' of the Old City, I walked along dusty paths to the Western Wall before the area in front of it had been paved and was mightily unimpressed by it despite its historic significance. Since then I have visited the Old City on various occasions, taken tourists to its colourful markets, attended the swearing-in ceremonies of my children's and grandchildren's military service, and even occasionally searched there for suitable gifts to take on trips abroad.

But to my shame, my knowledge of Christian Jerusalem was limited. The city, both in reality and as a concept, figures very prominently in that religion, which, when all is said and done, has a pretty extensive following worldwide. Whatever the reason for my ignorance, in recent years I began to feel that this was a lacuna in my education. Having grown up in a Christian country and attended a grammar school where from the outset we diligently read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Lamb's essay *A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig*, and similar high-minded texts, and where the Christian ethos predominated, I wasn't a complete stranger to the tenets of that religion.

Actually one can learn a lot about Christianity from listening to Handel's *Messiah*

and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. But for more serious students, I recommend watching *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, which really is based on thorough research!

When the Israel Museum offered its volunteers the chance to participate in a 'mini-course' on Christianity in Jerusalem, I seized the moment. It consisted of an introductory lecture and three extensive tours of churches and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. At last I have visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, first built by Constantine in the fourth century CE and since then embellished and rebuilt by various hands, leading to today's tense *status quo* between various Christian sects. I have walked along the Via Dolorosa, learned about the Italian architect Bernini, who designed many of Jerusalem's churches in the nineteenth century, when the European powers vied for hegemony over holy sites in the city, and trudged up the steep hill on which stands the Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu, commemorating Peter's denial of Christ three times before the cock crowed in fulfilment of Jesus's prophecy.

Walking through the narrow streets of the Old City, one is constantly obliged to manoeuvre one's way through groups of pilgrims who have come from all four corners of the Earth to pay homage at the sites which they regard as sacred. It is a sobering experience to hear the different languages, observe the different clothing and customs, and note their reverence for the city that was sacred to the Jews long before the Christian religion came into being. It is also exhilarating to observe the harmony which prevails between the various groups, as well as between the Jews, Arabs and Christians who rub elbows along those narrow streets. Hopefully, this is not just another mirage.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *cont. from p.7*

A HOME FOR GERMAN-LANGUAGE BOOKS

Sir – I can fully identify with the feelings of attachment that Mrs Kugler has for her books (November). In common with many refugees, my late father had a library which contained the full set of *Jüdische Enzyklopädie*, together with three sets of Goethe in Gothic script, the Leo Baeck Year Books, Journals of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society etc., etc. It is sometimes difficult for people who brought their books out of Europe, often under very difficult circumstances, to appreciate that today this information is readily accessible globally via the Internet, often without charge.

Apart from holding a few copies in central and loan libraries, there is less need for libraries to hold these books in paper

form. Moreover, librarians have to balance the cost of holding printed material readily available elsewhere with other demands.

There is undoubted satisfaction in using a printed book rather than reading the same information from a sterile screen. Perhaps Mrs Kugler can gain some measure of satisfaction from knowing that information today is widely accessible worldwide to a young generation of scholars. It would also appear that antiquarian book-collecting continues to thrive – showing perhaps that digital and written information can happily coexist.

Arthur Oppenheimer, Hove

FIRST RABBI IN A PARLIAMENT OUTSIDE ISRAEL?

Sir – For the first time in Latin American

history, a rabbi has been elected to the Argentine parliament. Fifty-one-year-old Sergio Bergman is a member of the centre-right party in opposition to President Cristina Kirchner and is close to the mayor of Buenos Aires, a possible contender in the next presidential election. Despite the age gap, he is also said to be a friend of the 76-year-old former archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Bergoglio – now Pope Francis I.

Bergman's claim to be the first rabbi in any 'national parliament outside Israel' is doubtful since there was at least one Viennese rabbi in the Austrian parliament before 1914 and there have been at least two chief rabbis in the British House of Lords, not counting Rabbi Lady Neuberger.

Francis Steiner, Deddington, Oxfordshire

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