

# AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Modernists in exile

On 19 May 2016, a conference was held at the University of London's Senate House with the title 'A Modernist in Exile: The International Reception of H. G. Adler', convened by Professor Jeremy Adler (King's College London), H. G. Adler's son, and Professor Elinor Shaffer (School of Advanced Study, University of London). Adler, one of that special breed of Central European polymaths whose *oeuvre* extended from scholarly studies to poems and novels, was a close friend of the anthropologist and poet Franz Baermann Steiner (see the report on the stone-setting in his memory in our January 2015 issue) and a friend of Elias Canetti, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1981; both the latter were refugees from Nazism who settled in Britain before 1939. The three men are sometimes referred to as 'das Dreigestirn', which translates rather weakly as 'the triumvirate', though the German word literally means 'three-stars', conveying more aptly the stellar nature of their contributions to literature and scholarship.

The May conference was a historic landmark: the first conference to be dedicated in his adopted homeland to the full range of works by a major refugee intellectual. H. G. Adler – he stopped using his given names, Hans Günther, because that was the name of the SS officer in charge of the deportation of Jews from the Czech lands – was born in 1910 into a German-speaking Jewish family in Prague, where he studied at Charles University. In February 1942 he was sent to Theresienstadt (Terezin) with his first wife, Gertrud; in October 1944, they were deported to Auschwitz, where Gertrud opted not to let her mother go to the gas chambers alone. Adler was sent to work in labour camps and was liberated at Langenstein, a satellite camp of Buchenwald, in April 1945. He returned to Prague but left for Britain in 1947 to escape the looming Communist takeover. He died in London in 1988. Adler was the product of an extraordinarily highly cultured environment; he took a doctorate in musicology, but was later to emerge as a scholar across a variety of disciplines, combining historical, ethnographical and sociological approaches in his studies of the concentration camps, as well as writing major modernist novels and poems that drew on his experiences.

Adler became known principally for his study *Theresienstadt 1941-1945: Das Antlitz*

*einer Zwangsgemeinschaft (Theresienstadt 1941-1945: The Face of an Enforced Community)* (1955), still the most detailed account of any single concentration camp ever written. His



H. G. Adler, 1910-1988  
(photo by Josef Rast, 1969)

study of the deportation of the Jews from Germany, *Der verwaltete Mensch – Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland (The Administered Human Being – Studies on the Deportation of the Jews from Germany)*, was published in 1974. Neither book has been translated into English, though they are acknowledged as foundational works of Holocaust scholarship and though their author spent 40 years of his life in Britain. The conference held in May aimed to restore the balance between these historical/anthropological studies and Adler's innovative and experimental novels and poems.

Thanks to the devoted efforts of Peter

Filkins, the American translator of Adler's prose works, the novels are at last becoming known in the Anglophone world. *A Journey*, Filkins's translation of *Eine Reise* (originally published in 1962), appeared in 2008, that of *Panorama* (written in 1948, but not published until 1968) in 2011, and that of *Die unsichtbare Wand* (1989) (*The Wall*) in 2014. These are ambitious attempts to convey the experience of the Nazi persecution of the Jews and the concentration camps by means of the techniques of the modern novel; the unconventional innovations and disjunctions that characterise them are profoundly unsettling to the reader. *Panorama* employs a stream-of-consciousness style to encompass the stages in the life of Josef Kramer, a boy in Prague, a victim of the camps and finally a refugee in Britain, seen in a series of scenes resembling the views in the 'wonder cabinets' (the 'panorama' of the title) that toured country towns in the 1930s.

*Eine Reise*, described in the *New Yorker* as a modernist masterpiece worthy of comparison with Kafka or Robert Musil, chronicles the surreal and incomprehensible nightmare of deprivation, deportation and death that overwhelms and destroys the Lustig family, leaving only the son Paul as a survivor; the novel has been called a work of 'Holocaust modernism', and it stands as a living refutation of Theodor Adorno's oft-cited adage that there can be no poetry after Auschwitz. Through the figure of Arthur Landau, the main voice and central consciousness of *Die unsichtbare Wand*, Adler depicts, often with elements of fantasy and the grotesque, a trajectory similar to his own, in which Landau lives out in London what the novelist Cynthia Ozick describes in her review of the book in the *New York Times* as 'the forlorn displacements of a melancholic exile'.

Of these three modernists in British exile, only Elias Canetti, born in Bulgaria in 1905, who had already made his name in interwar Austria with his novel *Die Blendung*, written in Vienna and published there in 1935, received the recognition that his achievements merited. *Die Blendung* was translated into English in 1946 under the title *Auto-da-Fé*, by the distinguished historian Dame Veronica (C. V.) Wedgwood. Canetti moved away from works of literature to pursue his interest in the phenomenon of the crowd that inspired his study *Masse und Macht (Crowds and Power)* (1960), though in his later years he published

### RELOCATION OF AJR HEAD OFFICE

The AJR's Head Office has moved to  
**Winston House  
2 Dollis Park  
London N3 1HF**

The new address is close to Finchley  
Central Tube Station, Northern Line,  
and is on a number of bus routes.

The AJR's telephone number  
remains **020 8385 3070**.

## Modernists in exile continued

his celebrated autobiographical trilogy *Die gerettete Zunge (The Tongue Set Free) (1977), Die Fackel im Ohr (The Torch in My Ear) (1980) and Das Augenspiel (The Play of the Eyes) (1990)*. Franz Baermann Steiner died in 1952, aged only 43; only later did his study *Taboo*, published posthumously in 1956, become a standard work on its subject. Steiner is known in Britain mostly to academic specialists, while Canetti, despite his Nobel Prize, has never achieved widespread recognition in this country.

It is therefore all the more pleasing to be able to welcome a novel that introduces the reader to the refugee milieu in which these three formidably erudite and creative men lived. Jeremy Adler's novel, *The Magus of Portobello Road* (London: Alphabox Press, 2015, price £12.95), is an ambitious attempt to rework the Faust legend, familiar from Goethe's drama, against the background of the London of the post-war decades that played host to a struggling and marginalised group of refugees from Hitler. The figure of Faust, the vastly knowledgeable scholar who, dissatisfied with his life, enters into a pact with the devil, has natural associations with the scholarly refugee intellectuals at the heart of the novel, in which magus-like figures are transported from their Central European intellectual habitats to North Kensington and Hampstead.

It is with pleasurable pangs of recognition that one reads the novel's vivid re-creation of post-war London, in particular the drab, genteelly impoverished neighbourhood where North Kensington shades over into Wormwood Scrubs. This is where Gabriel Prince, a somewhat otherworldly intellectual who has survived the camps, has settled with his wife Beatrice and his young son Johnnie, from whose perspective as a child and teenager in the 1950s and 1960s much of the novel is observed. It is not difficult to recognise some features of H. G. Adler in Gabriel; the real counterpart to Jeremy Adler's fictional Trafalgar Gardens is Dalgarno Gardens, W10, from where his father wrote to *AJR Information* in October 1956 requesting readers to send him material for a revised edition of his Theresienstadt study. A good part of the novel's action takes place in North

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## Visit to Air Transport Auxiliary Museum

Tour led by Paul Lang

5 September 2016

FLY A SPITFIRE STIMULATOR

Join us for a visit to the **Air Transport Auxiliary Exhibition**. Listen to a forgotten story of courage, skill and sacrifice. 70 years on, it is difficult to believe that Britain was so desperate that the amateur pilots of Air Transport Auxiliary (men and women) were employed to fly dozens of different types of war plane between factories and front-line squadrons.

You will have the opportunity to fly a Spitfire Stimulator and we will have lunch in a local restaurant before our return.

For an application form, please call Head Office  
on 020 8385 3070 or email [esther@ajr.org.uk](mailto:esther@ajr.org.uk)



## AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB

Please join us at our new Card and Games Club  
on Tuesday 30 August at 1.00 pm

at North Western Reform Synagogue,  
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN

Card games including Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble – you decide.  
Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient.

A sandwich lunch with tea, coffee and Danish pastries will be served on arrival.

£7.00 per person

Booking is essential – when you book please let us know your choice of game.

Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)



Kensington's landmarks, from Portobello Market to Henekey's pub on Portobello Road; pubs, including the King of Bohemia on Hampstead High Street, play a considerable part in the depiction of London as it swings into the Sixties. The figure of the Hampstead-dwelling writer Zachariah Stubbs (Starobinski) is loosely based on Canetti and the figure of Johnnie Prince's 'Uncle' Frank on Steiner.

But the novel is far more than a realistic *roman à clef*. It is strikingly experimental, not least in the self-referential scenes that present the writing of a novel. Indeed, it is punctuated from the very start by characters protesting against other characters' attempts to write novels. Johnnie's interest in Faust is kindled by Uncle Frank's reading from a life of the Renaissance occultist Johannes Trithemius, and he then goes on to work on a joint project with Zachariah, which fails in a characteristically bizarre manner to see the light of day. Fantasy and elements of the grotesque are woven into the texture of the novel, as in the futuristic machines and robots (named after the letters of the Hebrew alphabet) invented, the reader is invited to believe, by 'Uncle' Anton. When at the novel's end the devil comes to claim his man, it is the acne-ridden, child-molesting publisher Jason Seymour-Hackles, who had rejected Gabriel's manuscript, who is incinerated by a bolt of lightning in Chepstow Villas; after which the assembled literati and intellectuals 'repaired to Henekeys for a drink'. A rollicking good read, which wears its learning and literary sophistication lightly.

Anthony Grenville

## AJR Lunch Sunday 25 SEPTEMBER 2016

If you would like to attend,  
please complete the enclosed  
form and return it to us ASAP



## AJR FILM CLUB



Please join us at our next Film Club.

Our film showing will be at  
Sha'arei Tzedek North London Reform Synagogue  
120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone N20 9EZ

on

Thursday 8 September 2016 at 12.30 pm

A lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be served first.

We will be joined by Maurice Kanareck, who will give a short talk before showing the film

### Prisoners of Conscience

*The story of Russian 'refuseniks'  
and their fight for freedom*

£7.00 per person

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Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070  
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## MISHA'S STORY

**M**y paternal grandfather, Georg Falck, was a distinguished German-Jewish architect with a flourishing practice in Cologne. Seeing the writing on the wall early on, he emigrated with his non-Jewish wife and three children to Amsterdam within a year of Hitler's accession to power, safe at least until the occupation caught up with them, when he was effectively confined to the house for five years. He was never able to work again. My father, Rudolf Julius, was sent to Balliol College, Oxford, in 1937 at the age of 17 and, after graduating in law in 1940, joined the Pioneer Corps. Later he enrolled in the Parachute Regiment and was killed

at Arnhem, five years after seeing his family for the last time and three months before I was born in London to my English mother, Pauline. My pre-history, then, was such that I was predisposed to be fascinated by the great tragic upheaval which was Europe in the 1930s-40s.

My father's background was doubtless what led me to read German for my undergraduate degree and later to undertake a research degree in 20th-century German literature, concentrating on the fascist mentality as portrayed by certain modern novelists. By this time I was married with two small boys and enjoying a break from my then career as a social worker, mainly with children. While I was conducting research for my thesis, the various strands in my background converged when I came across a reference to the remarkable Janusz Korczak, Polish-Jewish paediatrician, social worker, author and broadcaster, who ran an orphanage for some 200 children and was forced to take his charges into the Warsaw Ghetto when the Nazis sealed it off in 1940. He struggled desperately to give them some quality of life as well as to save them from starvation. When he and the children were eventually taken to the train destined for Treblinka he was asked if he wanted to save himself. 'Desertion', he is reputed to have replied, 'is not in my vocabulary.' As someone who had always wanted to write fiction – an ambition inherited from my mother this time – the words ignited a spark that led to my first novel, *Shadow of the Wall*, published initially in 1989. It seemed only right that the story should be directed at young people, Korczak's absolute *raison d'être*, though I never consciously set out to write a children's book. In my four published books it has always been the story rather than the potential readership which has motivated me.

I did a great deal of research and in those pre-internet days I was lucky enough to live in Oxford with easy access to a wealth of material such as journals and memoirs as well as histories. I was aware it was possible that survivors might read the book and I wanted to be true to the



actual events and to the suffering and heroism – an overworked word perhaps but not when applied to Korczak and his co-workers – of those who perished. But I couldn't let my main character die: this was, after all, a children's book and the death of 199 other souls was quite enough for young readers. Hope had to flicker. So 14-year-old Misha, after facing numerous challenges while living with Korczak in the orphanage, manages to escape through the sewers, which was entirely feasible as it was the route taken by a number of survivors. I didn't rescue him in order to write a sequel as at that point I had no intention of doing so but the book was successful – being published in America, where it won an award, and being translated into several languages – so my publisher asked me to continue Misha's story.

That is how Misha came to be a partisan in the Polish forest, a courier for the resistance in Warsaw up to the time of the Warsaw (as opposed to the Ghetto) Uprising, and a prisoner of war in Germany. Finally, having lost everyone dear to him and knowing no one here, he became a refugee trying to make a new life for himself in England under the Polish Resettlement Programme (perhaps treating the entry criteria with a little fictional licence!). This sequel, *Beyond the Wall* (in the first edition entitled *But Can the Phoenix Sing?*, 1993) is told partly from the viewpoint of Misha's stepson as I wanted to highlight the gulf in understanding between members of a new generation and those of the previous one which has known appalling suffering. The contemporary plight of refugees, desperate to reach a safe haven and make new lives for themselves, unfortunately means that Misha's story is as relevant today as it was in the 1940s.

Christa Laird (née Falck)

### Cutting Up the Clouds

by Ella Kaut-Howson



Ella, 14, the granddaughter of AJR member Helena Kaut-Howson, is a pupil at Bolton School in Greater Manchester.

Here I stand  
Cutting up the clouds  
Thinking that I'll never  
Get over this.

Here I stand  
Tearing apart the clouds  
Wondering at the evil  
Of us.

Here I hear  
The trees whisper  
And the songs of  
Silence.  
Here I hear the gulls laughing  
And the cries of  
The dead.

Here I see  
A loyal world  
Bursting with hope  
And death.  
Here I see  
An anxious human race  
Filled with hatred for  
One another.

Here I watch  
The sky turn black  
And the stars  
Gather up.

Here I watch  
The clouds disperse  
And I close my eyes  
And think.

And then I cry.

## Land of hope and worry

History is always interesting, the past is full of surprises, and the future is hard to predict. I write this sitting in Jerusalem on the day the EU referendum results have been published. With no desire to stimulate more angry readers' letters than necessary (and as one who has been an expatriate for so long, I was not myself even able to vote), let me just say that from *outside* Britain it looks like an historic error has been made – but the future may tell.

Jerusalem is a city of so many nationalities living and dead it is almost impossible to count. Yesterday I was at Tzemach, at the southern end of Lake Tiberias. Here there is a plaque at the restored railway station to the Australian soldiers who fell in September 1918 in a battle against Ottoman Turkish forces. Ironically, it seems that most of the 100 or so soldiers who were killed and those others taken prisoner were actually not Turks but Germans, fighting for the defence of Ottoman Turkish interests. Nowadays, Turkey's leader, so keen to dwell selectively on the past, is becoming aggressive towards Germany for not opening up to Turkey and her citizens. It seems that it was a fear of Turkey entering the EU which may have influenced many Britons against it, whereas anyone reading newspapers published outside Britain would have known that the chance of this happening is actually small and dwindling! There is also no gratitude for the sacrifices Germans made 'back then'.

Yesterday I also visited Afule, where a plaque on the restored old station states that in November 1942 69 Palestinian Jews were welcomed here after their return by train from Nazi-occupied lands, having been exchanged for German Templars, who were considered dangerous potential collaborators!

I have just been reading a book concerning the increasingly desperate efforts of citizens of Germany and Czechoslovakia to get papers – any papers: a visa, a passport, a guarantee, a job offer, a work permit, anything – to enable them to get out and continue their lives in a less threatening environment. This morning I and other members of my family were seriously considering whether the time might have come to apply for German citizenship, based on the irony that my late father had

*By the time this article is published the initial excitement will have settled down – I hope. The country, having split almost evenly on this issue of national identity and international commitments, will be trying to work out what comes next and how to make the best of it. That has always been the challenge. It is usually the Jews who – based on experience – have to take these matters most seriously of all. We live in interesting times. But at least we live.*

been born a German before he was 'ausgebürgert' as a refugee in 1939 and later naturalised in Britain as an immigrant.

The mood in the world is changing and neither refugees nor immigrants are as tolerated as they once were – which is not saying much anyway – and no one can tell what sort of lives our children or grandchildren may have and what papers may be the best for them to possess. This journal is read mainly by those who were fortunate enough to become British (or by their descendants, who were therefore born British) and who became loyal British citizens, adopting a new nationality as a means of surviving. But there is no divine law that states that matters cannot change, that the enemy of one generation may be the friend of the next – and vice versa. There is a continuum between Gratitude, Loyalty, Patriotism, Nationalism – and Xenophobia.

The future is still very unclear but already strains are visible, that could theoretically lead to the political breakup of the United Kingdom. What would happen then to the Jewish communities in Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast? Would the 'Board of Deputies of British Jews' continue in its current form? I recall that when Yugoslavia broke up, the Jewish community became in effect the 'last Yugoslavs' – everyone else had split into mutually antagonistic Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, Bosnians, but the Jewish Federation still organised youth camps for children from all the communities of what had once been a united country, still retained links with their fellow Jews in what had suddenly become separate, even enemy states. For a period the only link between

Sarajevo and the outside world was provided by radio between the Jewish communities in Sarajevo and Zagreb – I was once shown the room in Zagreb where in desperate times this communication was maintained.

Of course, we would not expect the same degree of brutal enmity in a less-than-Great Britain – I trust! It is, after all, a while now since the Battle of Culloden or the Highland Clearances – but the whole renewed political isolation outside the Union would mean the creation of new barriers where previously barriers had been removed and could lead to increased complications. For Jews, a people who have been mobile either voluntarily or involuntarily since the time of the Exodus, who have been in Exile or in Diaspora for millennia, who have settled or stayed in countries that were Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim or Atheist, the existence of barriers and borders has often been a major problem, and the removal of such barriers was always a blessing. As a youth I wandered across Europe visiting Jewish communities, taking part in Europe-wide Jewish student or youth activities, and was always aware of the essential futility and stupidity of extreme nationalisms. (After all, I had two grandfathers who had both fought in the First World War – but on different sides!) I grew up a proud Yorkshireman, a Bradfordian, a graduate of the British university system, and I carried my British passport with me wherever I went – and still do – in the certainty that Her Majesty's Government would fulfil its promise to take care of me in times of need. But ...

By the time this article is published the initial excitement will have settled down – I hope. The country, having split almost evenly on this issue of national identity and international commitments, will be trying to work out what comes next and how to make the best of it. That has always been the challenge. It is usually the Jews who – based on experience – have to take these matters most seriously of all. We live in interesting times. But at least we live.

**Walter Rothschild**  
*Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild was born in Bradford, UK, was ordained by Leo Baeck College, and has lived in Berlin since 1998 serving mainly communities around Germany and Austria.*

## 'Schubert Park' – Memories of 'Continental' Jo'burg

The Polish food stores that have sprung up in Britain remind me of the delicatessen shops of my childhood. When I see the *delikatessy* here with their counters full of *kielbasa* I recall the large variety of meat sausage we used to call *polony* in South Africa. At those generally small, overstocked grocer shops the standard loaf was made of sourdough rye with caraway seeds. Sometimes pickled cucumber and rollmops came out of large wooden barrels. You might well hear Yiddish for the stores had been set up to serve the large East European community that preceded those immigrants who in the 1930s came to bustling, cosmopolitan but charmless Johannesburg from Germany and the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In the early years the émigrés inevitably kept much to themselves. Several consulted Dr Hilde Donath about medical problems or called on Dr Joseph to look after their teeth. Ladies might acquire smart clothes from Paula Ritterband's boutique. A Mr Froehlich developed and printed their photographs. An émigré whose name I don't remember repaired their watches. Hugh and Emmy Wilkens (I believe he had been a painter in Ascona) kept bees and provided honey. Gottschalks was the favourite butcher.

For fine jewellery one looked to Else Wongtschowski or her mentor, Kurt Jobst. The charismatic goldsmith (he was also a great chef) was later befriended by Nadine Gordimer, who would marry a refugee from Berlin, the art connoisseur Reinhold Cassirer.

Some commercial premises were on upper floors of office buildings. That was true of the bookshop where Alfred Futran (right-wing extremists had killed his father in Berlin in 1920) sold German-language publications. And the two cafés where the 'Continental' could meet their friends and enjoy an outdoor *Kaffee mit Schlag* were also above street level: Florian's in Hillbrow and Gusti's downtown. The sparkling Gusti Hecht, who hailed from Brünn, had qualified as an architect before becoming a left-wing journalist in Berlin. Resolved to take advantage of Johannesburg's sunny climate, Gusti opened her café on a large terrace on what I suppose was the third or fourth floor of Anstey's, a modern step-like skyscraper that had a department store below.

At first, most 'Hitler émigrés' lived



'Charismatic goldsmith' Kurt Jobst

modestly in flats and small houses in areas near the centre such as Yeoville, Berea and Hillbrow. They might go for a Sunday stroll in the small Joubert Park, which inevitably became 'Schubert Park'. As they and the country prospered – especially during the war, when South Africa began to manufacture the goods it had hitherto imported – the émigrés moved into larger homes with gardens, and sometimes a pool, in the affluent 'Northern Suburbs'.

Some became well-known figures: Peter Rosenberg, a highly cultivated lawyer from Berlin, quickly rose to become general manager of O. K. Bazaars, a retail giant that would have 100 stores around the country. Ernst Ullmann, who had designed Lufthansa posters before emigrating in 1935, received many commissions for South African exhibition pavilions, murals and sculpture.

Many of the newly prosperous aspired to have their houses designed by the highly successful Steffen Ahrends. Way out of town, his own home stood in majestic isolation at the top of a wild, rocky *koppie*, some 6,000 feet above sea level, that today overlooks urbanised Northcliff. Ahrends's father Bruno was a renowned Berlin architect and his home in leafy Dahlem has become the official residence of the Bundestag president. As for Ahrends's son Peter, who left South Africa as a young man to practise the same profession in London, he has a link of sorts with British royalty: his partnership submitted the plan for the National Gallery extension that Prince Charles

found a 'monstrous carbuncle'.

One émigré I remember reasonably well is the subject of a Security Service file at the National Archives in Kew. The dossier on her says she had been married to, among others, Fred Prager, a left-wing photographer from Vienna who would become active in the anti-Apartheid movement. When I knew her, she was Ilse Dadoo, blonde, her hair cropped short, and the lively wife of an amiable Indian doctor, Yusuf Dadoo. Both were Communists. They lived together, openly but discreetly, in a cottage at the back of someone's house in Parktown or Rosebank. They had a daughter, Shireen, who played with my sister. Dadoo would become an anti-Apartheid hero; his grave is a few yards from that of Karl Marx in Highgate.

Ilse would follow Doris Lessing as the wife of Gottfried Lessing, an East German diplomat who had been a refugee in Southern Rhodesia. Ilse had left South Africa for East Berlin after the Nationalists came to power in 1948. That sensational victory (seats, but not votes) of Boer over Briton soon had the émigrés, with their Central European black humour, circulating a *Witz*: 'Have you heard? Katz and Lourie (to this day a leading jeweler) is changing its name – to Coetzee and Leroux!' (two common Afrikaner names). It was a turning point and, of course, no laughing matter. The *Jeckes* reacted in different ways to Apartheid. Some packed their bags and emigrated yet again, back to Europe or to North America or Australia. I would say many who stayed turned to a form of 'innere Emigration'. My impression is that they would not be nearly as active in the struggle against Apartheid as were those with roots in Eastern Europe but, of course, they were far fewer in number.

That question, as well as their contribution to South Africa's economic and cultural development, merits research. I was therefore pleased to note, in the May issue of the *AJR Journal*, that academics in the field will be holding a conference in London next year on those who fled Hitler and found refuge in what was the British Empire.

### Martin Uli Mauthner

Martin Mauthner is the author of two books: *German Writers in French Exile 1933-1940* (2007) and *Otto Abetz and His Paris Acolytes – French Writers who Flirted with Fascism* (2016).



# Letters to the Editor

*The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication*

## 'HELPFUL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE'

Sir – I never thought to see a copy of the accursed, patronising, two-language copy of the *Helpful Information and Guidance for Every Refugee* booklet in readable condition again (insert by Wiener Library in July issue of *AJR Journal*)! I still have an original copy.

I refer in particular to pages 22-23: the 'training of young persons' (Kindertransportees) to prepare them for their future (OVERSEAS – my capitals) – which makes it clear that we were never intended to have a permanent home in this country.

On arriving in this country without parents, we became *de facto* orphans, with most of us never to see our parents again.

Training for boys was to be in Agriculture or Handicrafts; for girls it was to be in Nursing or Domestic Service. God forbid that any academic instruction was given to us!

Palestine was cited as to what manual labour could achieve – shades of Zionist propaganda!

On arrival in London, we were billeted in a former private house six or seven boys to a room and life was ordained by a strictly Jewish Orthodox regime, akin to a penal institution; release therefrom only came shortly before the start of the war, when we were evacuated.

We were dumped on non-Jews in places we knew not, with people who had never met a Jew. Some foster parents were kind, others brutal.

More kindness and compassion was shown to me by non-Jews than by the Jewish community, who by and large wanted to be rid of us.

I could write a book on attaining 90 years of age, when I was specially invited by my former German home town to be invested as an *Ehrenbürger*, the highest honour the city can bestow as agreed by mayor, town council and leaders of the local political parties, for my work in talking to children, students and adults over a period of 28 years and seeing that a memorial to seven German soldiers was replaced with due military ceremony from the First World War.

I did not need the honour of

*Ehrenbürger* or a British Empire Medal – if I have achieved some good, that was sufficient.

*Ernest G. Kolman,  
Greenford, Middlesex*

Sir – Many thanks for the July '16 issue of the *Journal*, making very interesting reading as usual. Also for the inclusion of the Wiener Library pamphlets – not least the booklet on how we should behave, which I certainly do not remember being passed to me on arrival by Kindertransport in June 1939. I do, however, remember being excluded from the local Boy Scout group for speaking German at a meeting! Keep up the good work!

*Werner Conn, Lytham St Annes*

## SECOND GENERATION MEMORIES

Sir – Anthony Grenville's June piece 'Second generation memories' resonates with me as it must with most of the offspring of those who succeeded in fleeing the German and Austrian threat.

I was six years old in September 1938 when my parents and I fled Vienna and, in all the years until my parents died in the eighties, not one word was spoken between us of the life my parents and our family had led in Vienna. In retrospect, it is as if we materialised as refugees in the UK in 1938 out of thin air.

It was not as if the subject was declared taboo: it must have been subconsciously suppressed – the suppression infused in me because I do not remember a willingness or need to ask questions, a circumstance which I will forever regret.

It is ironic that my knowledge of what my parents suffered in Vienna in the thirties after the Anschluss and even before is derived from my reading of George Clare's *Last Waltz in Vienna*.

*Dr Emil Landes, Highgate, London*

Sir – In his relatively short reference to Hedy Lamarr (June issue), Tony Grenville mentions her first career on the screen but makes no reference to her second career as an inventor. The most interesting of her patented ideas was a jam-proof radio-controlled guidance system for torpedoes,

which the US Navy did not accept during the war but which eventually appeared in US warships in the 1960s.

After she had lived in the USA for over 60 years she arranged for her ashes to be taken back to Austria and spread in the Vienna Woods. She also has an *Ehrengrab* in Vienna's Central Cemetery (though for the life of me I can't imagine what lies in it).

*Francis Steiner, Deddington, Oxfordshire*

Sir – Surely Hedy Lamarr, featured with photo in Anthony Grenville's very interesting June article, was vastly more admired for her beauty, and her development of a radio guidance system using spread spectrum and frequency-hopping technology, than her acting ability?

*Joyce and George Schlesinger, Durham*

## COMBATting ANTISEMITISM

Sir – I refer to your contributor, John Mann MP, on the very important subject of 'Combatting antisemitism' (June).

As a longstanding member of the Labour Party and of a British trade union, I have never come across a single instance of antisemitism in either organisation. By antisemitism I mean the kind of aggressive and fanatical hostility encouraged by the civil authorities in Nazi Germany and meted out to me with enthusiasm by the upright citizens (if we can call them that) of the Reich. The solecisms of a few Labour Party members are simply not in the same league and to cast them as such is to belittle the suffering of our people.

As Mr Mann is – or should be – aware, Labour and antisemitism don't mix. Jews have always been prominent and welcome on the left. This cannot be said of the Tories, who seldom miss an opportunity for snide antisemitic attacks such as the unfortunate Mr Miliband suffered with his bacon sandwich. Their sympathies have always been with right-wing demagogues and fascists. No uproar there!

There is no denying the fact that identifying Israel with Judaism does give rise to confusion and this is deliberately promoted by the Israeli government. People are justifiably angry at the illegal activities perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinians, on whom it has inflicted so much suffering. The most effective way to combat any hostility is for Israel to act legally and humanely and not use the suffering of Jews under the Nazis as a 'get-out-of-jail-free' card.

*Heinz Grünwald, Pinner, Middlesex*

## REFUGEES IN THE TEXTILE/ CLOTHING INDUSTRY

Sir – I am researching the contribution made by refugees who came to the UK in the 1930s and worked in any capacity in the textile or clothing industry here. I would be interested to hear about anyone readers know of: where they came from, under what circumstances, who they worked for here and back home, how they got the job,

what happened in the war and after ...

*Dr Anna Nyburg,  
Centre for Languages, Culture and  
Communication, Imperial College London  
a.nyburg@imperial.ac.uk*

### SCHOOL TRACING REFUGEES

Sir – Did you attend Forest School, Walthamstow, London E17 when arriving in the United Kingdom before and at the start of the Second World War?

We are trying to trace refugees who arrived in the UK, including some of the boys from the Kindertransports who attended the school before moving on to other places, including the USA.

If you know anyone who attended the school can you please contact me? I am updating our archives and will arrange to keep you informed of old scholars' reunions etc.

*robertblunden@sky.com  
tel 44 (0)20 8989 5699*

### 'MEMORIES OF A GERMAN CHILDHOOD'

Sir – I remember all the sayings Meta Roseneil mentions in her letter (June). My mother too knew the whole of Schiller's 'Die Glocke' by heart. Also, she had funny versions for many of the lines, e.g. 'Raum ist der kleinsten Hütte für ein glücklich liebend Parr, aber was geschieht, ich bitte, mit der lieben Kinderschar.'

Another was 'Der Wahn ist kurz. Die Reu ist lang.' This was supposed to be at the bottom of a cartoon showing a lot of people sitting around a long table, each holding a glass, and one small wine bottle on the table – i.e. Der Wein ist kurz. Die Reih' ist lang.

*Rachel Mendel, Leeds*

### AFTER BREXIT

Sir – Readers of the *AJR Journal* may like to be reminded that German-born victims of National Socialism have the right to a German passport. This applies to their children and probably grandchildren as well. Holding a German passport would not affect their British nationality or, therefore, their having a British passport as well.

*Peter Seglow, Le Tignet, France*

### 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF CYPRUS EVACUATION

Sir – After the war the British government brought back all Jewish evacuees from Nyasaland (Malawi) and Tanganyika (Tanzania) to Cyprus, many of whom went from there to Britain and some of them maybe members of the *AJR*.

On 12 June 1941 the entire Jewish community in Cyprus, who were Holocaust refugees from Europe – 80 per cent Austrian and German Jews – was evacuated by the British government on board the steamer *SS Hanna*, initially to Palestine and from there to Tanganyika and Nyasaland. My parents and I were part of this transport.

Following letters I sent to the *Jerusalem Post* and the *Jewish Chronicle* in 2003,

I managed to locate ten people who were part of the evacuation and, after carrying out further research, I produced a publication in 2004.

This gave the entire list of the 430 evacuees – of whom 50 stayed behind in Palestine, while the remainder were shipped to Tanganyika and Nyasaland.

June 12 this year was the 75th anniversary of the evacuation. If there is anybody, or a relative of somebody, who was part of this evacuation, please contact me.

*Joe Gellert, Netanya,  
Israel gellertjb@bezeqint.net  
tel 09 833 1373 or 0528 595 242*

### 'THE HOUSE THAT SAVED US'

Sir – Thank you for your kind review of my family memoir in your June issue. May I explain that the reason I wrote the book was for the benefit of my family and cousins round the world. I am the only person who still remembers what happened to the family and hence felt the need to put down a record.

This is the reason why I mention in detail some of the more distant family and their fate. They might otherwise remain forgotten.

May I also correct you in that whilst I was sent to a boarding school in Sussex it only lasted a short time.

In fact, my father's two nieces, whose parents were left behind, joined us in Harpenden and we four all grew up together during the war.

The need to keep the book to a limited length prevented me from going into detail about post-war travels with my French girlfriend and parents!

*Peter Briess, London NW3*

### 'RESORTING TO PERSONAL ABUSE'

Sir – As soon as your opponent in debate has to resort to personal abuse, you know that victory is yours. In her letter in the July issue, commenting on my May letter, Margarete Stern accuses me of writing 'incoherent rubbish' and 'utter drivel' and showing 'malicious distortion' and 'ignorance'. Tut, tut, Margarete. Calm down, dear.

Also, I am really sorry that she believes wives don't want to sit next to their husbands in *shul*. Mine does, and I want to sit next to her. We are happy together. Does Mrs Stern agree with Israel's Religious Affairs Minister, David Azoulay of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, that Reform Jews are a 'disaster', and with Moshe Gafni, of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party, that 'Reform Jews stab the Holy Torah in the back'? Surely not!

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

### 'LETTER FROM ISRAEL' DELIGHTFUL ... AND FORGETFUL

Sir – Alistair Cooke presented 'Letter from America' for many years. In fact, there were over 2,800 broadcasts testifying to the popularity of this style of reportage. It was gentle, sensitive and not usually too

controversial – but surely never 'bland'.

Now, the *AJR Journal* serves an excellent function with historical facts relating to the Holocaust era with personal stories often of a sad and even depressing nature. It is therefore a delight to turn to the back page of the *Journal* to enjoy 'Letter from Israel' with its interesting snippets of family life in Israel. In fact, it is the first article I read before moving on to the more serious and often depressing subjects.

I would not for one moment wish to compare these 'Letters' to those of Mr Cooke but occasionally, with so much unpleasant news at every turn, we need an oasis of positive news and calm to relieve our frayed nerves. Long may the 'Letters from Israel' be sent!

*Marcel Ladenheim, Surbiton, Surrey*

Sir – I find the *AJR Journal* one of the best produced and interesting magazines that I read and always look forward to the next copy. I do enjoy the 'Letter from Israel', especially as Caroline and I have recently made *aliya*.

However, I was rather astounded that Dorothea Shefer-Vanson should state in her June article that 'The Israel I live in is one in which people enjoy a comfortable standard of living ... and on the whole are not beset by financial worries.'

It is sad that she has forgotten the very many thousands of citizens, including many Holocaust survivors, who live well below the poverty line and, though she and her family may not move in that society, it would be entirely false to allow the impression that everyone here has a comfortable financial life.

*Freddie Ingram, Ra'anana, Israel*

### ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

Sir – Your contributor Jenny Manson must be focused purely on Israel for she avoids commenting on the calamitous state of the immediate neighbourhood, which surely is worthy of mention.

It is important to stress that this is the real reason for the plight of the Arabs in Area C.

The rest of the world would like to see a resolution of their problem but, in the absence of properly elected representatives – the Palestinian Authority president was last elected ten years ago – and Hamas, there is no one the Israelis can discuss peace with – if, that is, the Arabs want a fair resolution. Many want to push the Jews into the sea and overrun or plunder the achievements of the Jews since they were given the opportunity to form a state after the flight of the British. The Arabs' education system persists in teaching them to hate the Jews and their geography books show maps of the region without the State of Israel.

The Arabs last had an opportunity when Gaza was evacuated in 2005 – but no such luck.

Previously they were given the chance by the UN in 1948 but they refused and five Arab countries attacked the nascent Jewish

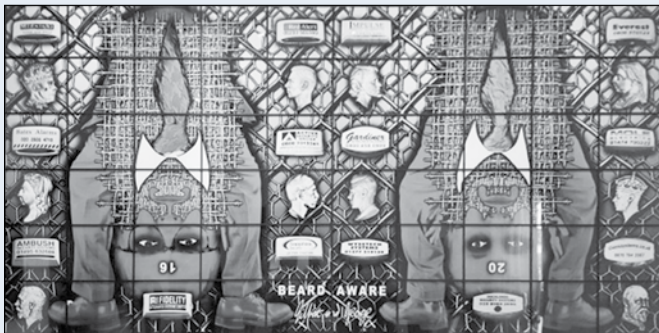
*continued on page 16* ➔

# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

It's that time of the year again when the **Royal Academy** (RA) presents its much anticipated **Summer Exhibition** and, as ever, finds innovative ways to present the nation's art.

This time, the theme is 'Artistic Duos', in which curator Richard Wilson has introduced more than 20 such couplings to showcase their divergent styles. They could be siblings, lovers or friends but, of course, the most obvious couple are **Gilbert & George**, whose massive new wall painting, *Beard Aware*, comments on hirsute ways to disguise. The **Chapman Brothers** are other



Gilbert & George *Beard Aware* 2016

noted participants in this new concept. You could say it was just another device to catch your eye but the most effective device may be smaller in concept and perhaps more poignant in imagery. The Small Weston Room, used to exhibit exquisite miniatures in the past, this year contains images by **Bernd and Hilla Becher** to reflect on disintegrating industrial architecture such as gas tanks and cooling towers, dinosaurs of the 21st Century.

Political or geographical events like the Japan earthquake of 2011 are noted by Japanese artist **Aono Fumiaki** in a moving tribute to that seismic event. He has created sculptures out of broken objects he has salvaged from those who suffered or died, in a gesture to memory, reconciliation, healing, survival and rebirth.

But one of the most powerful exhibits stands alone in the RA courtyard. *Spyre*, by architect/sculptor **Ron Arad RA**, is a 16-metre-high corten steel oval rust-coloured cone involving complex technologies and enabling the huge installation to rotate at different speeds into acrobatic variations. And, if that's not enough, it contains a

## The Pianist of Willesden Lane

The story of Kindertransportee Lisa Jura returns to London's West End:

St. James Theatre,  
7 September to 16 October 2016

tel 0844 264 2140

camera at its peak, relaying footage to a screen on the RA's building. It's impossible not to be aware of the threatening, military implications of Arad's rather deadly looking installation.

Inside, the softer mystique of the oriental magic carpet is imaginatively supplied by Turkish artist and film-maker **Kutlug Ataman**. He has made a multi-image video installation to honour the late Turkish businessman and philanthropist Sakip Sabanci. It makes clever use of a multitude of tiny mobile screens, each a portrait of the thousands of individuals associated with him. Why magic carpet? Well, it is suspended across the ceiling of Gallery 1 and vividly suggests that mythological object in shape, harmony and colour.

Everyone will find something else to dazzle them in the Summer Exhibition. Look out for **Kenneth Draper's** *Reflections on a Quiet Place* and **David Nash's** award-winning *Big Black*. Using wood that has been felled or fallen

naturally, his entry is a tall California redwood, which he has charred to form deep black, velvety surfaces. **Anthony Eyton RA**, a true painter's painter, offers a truncated view in his *Mantelpiece*, with its bric-a-brac. No cleverness here, just delicate and intelligent brushwork.

**Lulu Manassch**, a former Royal Society of Arts' Young Designer of the Year who uses ancient scripts to give a fluid and slightly oriental feel to her work, is showing two exhibits. She used her winning bursary to study the art of India, Asia and South America, which has clearly motivated her direction.

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

## REVIEWS

### Looking backwards

THE JEWISH JOURNEY: A PASSAGE THROUGH EUROPEAN HISTORY

by Edward Gelles

London: I. B. Tauris, 2016, 359 pp.  
hardcover, ISBN 978 1 78453 453 0

This is a very personal book and therefore a hard one to review for any comments will automatically affect the author. The book seems effectively self-published as a compilation of essays, articles and pamphlets, some previously published, some not, now brought together into one compendium. It is a fascinating, irritating and ultimately frustrating – and indeed rather depressing – work.

The author explains how genetic research works and presents the fruits of a lifetime of such research (and, since he was born in 1927, this is indeed almost a post-biblical lifetime of four score years and ten). There is much repetition since the various essays often



Edward Gelles

have to cover the same introductory periods and incorporate overlapping information. Most start with an absolutely brilliant and concise overview of a period of Jewish history, explaining how individuals, families and whole groups moved from one part of the world to another – amazing journeys, amazing migrations, amazing achievements of settling in new environments or relating to new rulers. These are the best parts of the book. Then comes each time a detailed listing of who was married to whom, occasionally why (this referring, however, only to commercial reasons or the linking of rabbinic dynasties), and there follows a very loaded and rather portentous listing of all the ways in which the author is descended from these people. He describes this (p.17) as 'The fascinating field of genetic anthropology'. It is clearly fascinating for some people but it makes each entry little more than the sum of their genetic inheritance and allows little space for individual personal development or responsibility. One example – on p.193: 'It is my contention that the outstanding intellectual gifts of Hirsch Perez Chajes and of his grandfather Zwi Hirsch of Zolkiew might be ascribed in part to immediately preceding Chajes marriages that reinforced the genetic inheritance.' This comes dangerously close to defining people purely by their ancestry and we know what can happen when this is taken too far, if one descends so far how low can one get? Should one trace back to Cain?



It is said that descendants are often proud of their ancestors but how often are ancestors equally proud of their descendants? Did all these people marry *just* in order to make themselves a footnote on future connections? Is there no love at all?

Repeatedly stressed is the idea of the author's being of Davidic lineage – though why this should be so important is unclear: after all, being descended from David does not necessarily make one a Nice Chap – several of David's sons were anything but pleasant and civilised. And David himself had usurped the crown from Saul! As early as p.13 (and repeated on p.164) Rashi appears, both as the author's ancestor and as a descendant of David through Shepatiah, the son of Athalia. All is rather indirect and, since David was famous for spreading his seed widely outside marriage, whereas another son, Solomon, is famous for having many wives and spreading his seed widely *within* marriage, it must be hard to find someone who by now is not somehow linked to these potent potentates. (Not mentioned by the author, Shepatiah appears in I. Chronicles 3:3; he is the fifth son of David (himself the seventh son of Jesse). In Ezra 2:4 and Nehemiah 7:9 his family, returning from exile, now comprise 372 persons! But why stop at David? In I. Chronicles 2:9-15 we have David's genealogy and could theoretically go much further back ...)

Edward Gelles is very proud of his ancestors, all of whom – at least, all those mentioned – seem to have been learned, pious and successful in their times. The lists fill many pages. Somewhere there must be a rabbi or chief rabbi or *Av Beit Din* of some obscure village somewhere in Europe or north Africa to whom he is *not* related but this reviewer has not found them. In pp. 182-85 for example, he demonstrates in acerbic detail how he is related to Karl Marx, Yehudi Menuhin and Martin Buber respectively!

But where does all this lead? The Tree of Knowledge seems less important to him than the Family Tree. He has a degree in Pedigrees. He preaches the dogma of endogamy, demonstrating demography demonically and dogmatically with a superimposed theory of relationships and through pregnancies and progenies the relativity of each individual. He never forbears to mention his forebears and follows every conceivable route to his roots by showing who conceived whom. But to believe that people are just the result of conceptions is a misconception.

At the end of the book, with its detailed charts and footnotes (the later chapters include much detailed scientific information on how DNA tests work), one feels one has learned a great deal about the varying stages of Jewish history in Europe, the interconnections, the enormous amount of travel and networking that led to rabbis moving

from Spain to Poland to Turkey to England and back again (*how* did this networking work?), and that the author has proven to his own satisfaction that he is descended from many people who in their own lives achieved a degree of fame and left famous descendants. But one is nevertheless left with a feeling of 'So what?'

For he does not speak so much of his *own* descendants. Is this glorious line about to die out? Checking internet references to confirm my suspicions, I find that there is never any mention of a spouse or children. Is the 'missing link' in fact the *next* link in the chain of his family history? If so – and the chart on p.23 would indicate this – then it is essentially a rather sad book, looking only backwards and not forwards. Naturally one cannot tell who one's great-grandchildren will ever be or become, but the first step has to be to continue the possibility ... and Gelles has devoted his life to researching the Jewish past rather than creating a Jewish future.

Psalm 1 begins with 'Happy is the man who walks in the way of the Lord.' One could say 'Happy is the man who knows who he is, and where he comes from.' One could even add: 'And who knows where he is going!' For God, 'I am who I am' (Exodus 3:14) was enough.

This book is indeed a fascinating Jewish journey through European history. But what is the destination and what is the destiny?

Walter Rothschild

## A page-turner

### DAS GERETTETE KIND (THE SAVED CHILD)

by Renate Ahrens

Munich: Droemer Verlag, 2016, 352 pp. hardback, €19,99 (E-Book €17.99), ISBN 978-3-426-28114-7

This is a German novel, which has, I believe, not so far been translated into English. It tells the story of a 12-year-old girl, Irma, who comes to England from her home in Hamburg on a Kindertransport in June 1939; of her daughter Leah; and Leah's daughter Rebecca. At the time of the story all three are living in Dublin (as it happens, the author too lives in Dublin and Hamburg!).

The manner of telling the story differs from that of other novels: the three women address the reader directly in sections of varying lengths, which always have the name of their narrator as a heading. So it occasionally happens that one reads about the same event more than once but told from different viewpoints.

Irma is sent to Northern Ireland after she arrives in London and, after a very unhappy period with a childless Jewish couple, lives and works on a farm near

Belfast for quite a long time. Leah would have to be called 'a difficult person': she is emotionally very distant from both her mother and her daughter and is hardly on speaking terms with either of them, while her daughter Rebecca is close to her grandmother Irma ('Oma'). Although Leah herself has not suffered under the Nazis because she was born after the war and in the UK, she is fiercely anti-German. When her daughter Rebecca falls in love with a German student, who attended the university in Dublin for a year, and the pair agree that Rebecca will visit him in Hamburg after his return there, she doesn't tell her mother that she has a German boyfriend – let alone that she is planning to visit him in Germany.

Irma kept a diary as a child and large sections of it are reproduced when she is re-reading it in her old age. She never talked about her childhood or her feelings when she came to the UK without her parents, who, she learns eventually, were deported to Theresienstadt in 1942 and murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

Irma had a very close friend, Lea, before she emigrated and they swore they would always keep in touch and help each other. Irma felt guilty permanently – that she was unable to say 'good-bye' to Lea before she left Germany because her departure was so sudden. When Rebecca is in Hamburg she tries to find out what happened to Lea and succeeds in establishing that she survived the war, which she immediately tells her grandmother. But following prolonged research it turns out that Lea died about ten years earlier, which naturally saddens Irma as it shatters her hopes of being in touch again with her old friend. Irma admits that she gave her daughter the same name (anglicised by adding an 'h' at the end) in order never to forget her friend.

Rebecca's researches have the surprising result of improving Leah's relationship with her mother and her daughter and the three women can now talk to each other more easily and feel closer to each other.

For somebody like me, who didn't keep 'up to date' with his knowledge of the German language, this book reveals some new words: when somebody 'checks in online' before going to the airport he will say 'Ich habe online eingecheckt', while 'to skype' becomes 'skypen'. There are, of course, many other 'new' words – often English terms 'Germanised', especially when they are connected with the use of a computer. There is a lot of conversation, which presumably represents the current use of the German language.

The book is a 'page-turner' – the reader is curious to know what happens next and, in my view, the way the story is told increases its readability.

Fritz Lustig



Renate Ahrens

## GREAT STIRRINGS IN BERLIN - AND A NOSTALGIC VISIT TO KOSZALIN/KÖSLIN

The director of the Cajewitz-Stiftung in Berlin-Pankow, Professor P-A. Albrecht, invited me to take part in a public reading from my autobiography *Sunday's Child? – A Memoir* on 16 June this year. The other protagonist was a Polish Jew, Dr Anatole Godfryd, who together with his young wife had survived the war years in Poland in the most dire circumstances and had published his autobiography, *Der Himmel in den Pfuetzen (Heaven in Puddles – mine had been translated into German in 2009)*, more recently. The non-Jewish Cajewitz-Stiftung, which provides superior housing for elderly people in Pankow, not far from the former Jewish Boys' Orphanage, had acquired the imposing orphanage building from the Jewish community in a pretty derelict state in the late 1990s and, under the careful supervision of Professor Albrecht, it was restored to its former glory. The ground floor is now a public library and the remainder of the building a school. The former *Betsaal* with its lovingly restored ornate ceiling, in which I had my barmitzva shortly before escaping to England in the first Kindertransport to leave Berlin, is now regularly used for lectures, discussions and recitals. It is in this room that the readings and discussions took place, with Professor Albrecht as the moderator.

The room was pretty full – around 150 people had turned up – and the readings were well received. Godfryd's story was in part gruesome (he and his family had escaped from a cattle wagon on its way to a concentration camp by filing through the bars of a small window and throwing themselves out, one by one, from the slowly moving train ...). The discussion centred to a large extent on the question of why it was that Godfryd, who had suffered so badly at the hands of the Germans, had decided to move to Berlin soon after the war, when the Nazis had not yet been rooted out, whereas I had not found it emotionally possible to visit Germany and especially Berlin, from which my whole family were sent to their deaths, until many years later. Godfryd had become a dental surgeon who succeeded in establishing a large and well-regarded practice in Berlin and was greatly bound up, even in his youth, with German culture. (He and his wife were hidden on a small Polish farm for the last 18 months of the war and he kept the impoverished and almost starving farmer and his wife on his side by telling them the stories of operas ...) I am not sure that the question was satisfactorily resolved! There can be no doubt that Godfryd's dental services were in great demand among



**In front of the former Jewish Boys' Orphanage Carol and Leslie Brent, daughters Jenny and Sue, grandson Milo**

artists and intellectuals and he became something of a patron of the arts in Berlin. A very happy ending indeed.

I had planned to leave Berlin after a few days to re-visit Koszalin (formerly Köslin, the town in which I was born) in what used to be called Hinterpommern, almost on the Baltic Sea, which became Polish in 1945 and has virtually no Jewish vestiges other than a few that have emerged since I have visited the hugely enlarged town since the beginning of this century. However, our visit there – I was accompanied by my wife Carol and two of my daughters and one grandson, for whom this was their first visit to Koszalin and therefore of great emotional significance – had to be curtailed by one day because I had been invited to take part in an extraordinary festive ceremony in a school in Berlin-Zehlendorf on the day of our return to London.

This secondary school had decided to merge with a primary school and the schools were therefore faced with the challenge of finding a commonly agreed name. Among the 70 suggestions made, Anna Essinger eventually emerged as the winner. She had been the headmistress of Bunce Court School in Kent, a co-educational *avant-garde* boarding school she had transferred from near Ulm (Herrlingen) in 1933, together with many pupils and teachers, and to which I was admitted soon after my arrival in England. (On the day she was required to fly the swastika flag from her building she decided she could no longer educate Jewish children in Germany and made up her mind to leave.) She is well known in Germany for her work for the Quakers after the First World War (she had spent the war years in the USA) helping to feed children in a starving country and for her advocacy of the educational system of *Reform-Paedagogik*, which was in stark contrast to the rigid German educational system.

She had allies in Dartington School and in A. S. Neill's Summerhill school in Suffolk, but in Germany her child-orientated methods were regarded as revolutionary.

And so I was invited to give the crowded audience on the re-naming day and, among great festivities, a speech (in German of course) describing Anna Essinger, with a few warts and all, to a very enthusiastic audience of teachers, parents and children, who then subjected me to a lengthy interview and a question-and-answer session, with many pertinent questions about my escape from Germany and Bunce Court School. My *coup de théâtre* during my speech was to present the school with a small silver bell, which had been a birthday present from the staff to Anna Essinger (generally known as Tante Anna or T.A.) with the word 'pleeeeeease' engraved on it. When the noise at mealtimes had exceeded acceptable limits she had frequently called out 'Silence, pleeeeeease!' and this bell was given to me by her family after her death. It was enthusiastically received.

Now a few words about my curtailed visit to Koszalin. Accompanied by Professor Albrecht, who wanted to stay for just one day to get to know my Polish friends, we travelled by train from Berlin to Koszalin, a journey that took more than six hours with two changes. (I last made this journey in the reverse direction by fast train, when I was taken by my parents to the Jewish Boys' Orphanage in the winter of 1936, by which time I was no longer able to attend my school thanks to physical persecution and attacks.) I was struck by the vast and largely uninhabited area that was given to the Poles after the war to compensate them for the loss of their eastern provinces to the Soviet Union – vast forests and great tracts of largely uncultivated land.

On arrival in Koszalin, we were greeted on the platform by two Polish couples who had become good friends over the years, and each one of us (all six!) was presented with a bouquet of lovely flowers. It was almost like a homecoming and during our stay (we had booked into a very pleasant hotel on the outskirts) we were treated like celebrities and old friends and shown all the former Jewish sites – the impressive memorial at the site of the Technical University and the 'old' cemetery that, thanks to my visits and the dedicated efforts of my friends Zdzislaw Pacholski and the Catholic priest Henryk Romanik, was re-dedicated some years ago. The only gravestone in it is that of my great-uncle David Baruch – the only surviving

*continued on page 11* ➔

## Celebrating 250 Years of Jewish life in Hull

When thinking about the city of Hull, I don't believe the first fact that would come to mind is that it is home to the longest established and continuous community of Jews in the country, if not in the world! This was the theory put forward at the Jews of Hull Conference which took place in June this year at the Hull History Centre. The conference was an all-day event, organised by the Hull Jewish Archives. On a very hot day, a number of speakers gave lectures on many aspects of Jewish life and legacy in the city, enthralled the packed hall. The conference was a celebration of Hull's 250-year-old Jewish community, which has lived peacefully among its fellow citizens, rarely being troubled by antisemitism and giving back a great deal through charity and public service.

Dr Nicholas Evans discussed the early arrival of Jews in the city. Some of those immigrating were doing so in order to escape persecution in the Pale of Settlement of Eastern Europe. Prior to the pogroms though, Jewish people arrived in Hull to further their businesses and to expand their trades. Many immigrants arrived at the port, in transit to other destinations, notably America, but also bound for other English cities. Evans described how Jews regularly arrived, moved to cities such as Liverpool and Manchester, and returned to Hull only to leave again.



Hull Hebrew Girls School Class 2, c 1930s  
(c DJC/1/10/12/7)

Hull welcomed its Jewish immigrants and allowed them to integrate fully into society. There was no ghetto, as was seen in Manchester and Leeds, as Jewish families were dispersed throughout the city. The Jewish community was responsible for providing huge amounts of charitable funding in order to help migrants move on to other cities and, for the few who remained, to provide the means for them to earn their own living.

Hull had a particularly good record in its support of children arriving on the Kindertransport. Dr Ian Vellins read out a number of heartbreaking letters sent to members of the Hull community from Jews in Germany and Austria begging for their children to be taken in. Hull responded under the leadership of people such as Philip Bloom of B'nai B'rith, by sponsoring children to come and live in their city. Each child had to

be sponsored to the tune of £50 in order to be admitted to the UK, a large sum in those days. Money was raised by both the Jewish and Christian communities and 22 children were welcomed into people's homes. Adoptive parents took in all the children; no hostels were required.

Vellins read snippets from a diary written by a young Kindertransport refugee describing how he was unable to ask for the toilet in English. He crept about the house at night in search of the bathroom but was unable to turn on the lights because the switches worked differently from those in Austria. After three days of misery the child developed a temperature and became quite ill and a German-speaking doctor was sent for. Following a quick chat and translation and a visit down the hall, the problem was soon resolved!

The young refugees of Hull went on to lead fulfilled lives, pursuing careers in such fields as the law and university lecturing. Several refugees joined the British armed forces once they were old enough and made heroic contributions to the Allied war effort.

The day was filled with fascinating insights into the Jewish contribution made to the city, not least by its Kindertransport children.

**Fran Horwich**

*Fran Horwich is the AJR Northern Volunteers Co-ordinator*

## Great stirrings in Berlin – and a nostalgic visit to Koszalin/Köslin *continued*

gravestone that had been found lying in a small stream alongside the cemetery – all others having been used for road building long ago. The cemetery is surrounded by a small fence, with a gate bearing the Star of David, and, apart from my great-uncle's gravestone, contains a large commemorative rock with a plaque in Hebrew and a cypress that had shot up from a couple of feet to well over 20!

Other nostalgic visits were to the large commemorative rock placed near the site of the former huge synagogue, burnt to the ground during Kristallnacht, by a group of pilgrims who had followed the route taken in 1938 by the dissident priest Bonhoeffer on his visit to that part of Pomerania; and to the block of flats near the station where my family had lived and which for many years has carried a large slate plaque which, in three languages, explains that the famous immunologist Leslie Baruch Brent once lived there ...

My family walked in the woods

known to me from my childhood, climbed the 40m tower on top of the hill, from which one gets a 360 degree view for many miles around, including the Baltic Sea, spent an afternoon on the beach, even managing a nostalgic swim, and admired the stork nests that are so characteristic of that part of Poland and that reminded me of my childhood.

Our Polish friends were charming and hugely hospitable and it was a memorable visit, especially for my daughters and grandson, for whom this was the first visit to the town in which I had spent the first 11 years of my life.

Our trip was an extraordinary experience. In Berlin too we were treated with the utmost consideration and affection – taken to the opera and wined and dined and generally mollycoddled. We heard of the UK referendum result on the morning of our last day there and our German friends were as upset as we were. Maybe our flight to Heathrow was

symbolic of the new, deeply divided and xenophobic Britain to which we returned: the BA flight was seriously delayed and Terminal 5 was in such a state of chaos that our luggage appeared three hours after landing, without explanation. We arrived home, hungry and exhausted, at 3.30 am.

**Leslie Baruch Brent**

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### EU REFERENDUM: IN OR OUT?

We met at the North Western Reform Synagogue in London's Temple Fortune area. Mike Freer elegantly explained the case for remaining in the EU: All recent terrorists were home-grown and not recent immigrants. The risk to the economy was greater by leaving. We were only 8% of the EU's exports but the EU was 44% of our exports. Norway wasn't in the EU but had arrangements to allow the free movement of EU citizens.

Sir Bernard Zissman emphasised that the most important thing the EU had produced was peace among nations that had fought wars against each other over centuries. We would be stronger and more stable in the EU, which would benefit our children and grandchildren. We stood a better chance of reforming the EU from within, he added.

A lively Q&A session followed.

*Edgar Ring*

### CHESHIRE CF 'Stay in the EU!'

Over 20 members graced the beautiful home of our host Peter Kurer. In a discussion of 'Brexit', the overall view was that we should 'stay in' the EU! We then watched a lovely film showing Peter's granddaughter, aged 14, talking part in a piano recital in her home city of Jerusalem – we were all duly impressed!

*Wendy Bott*

### ILFORD A Very Happy Day

Michelle Mandel explained how the Six Point Foundation was in a position to give AJR members the benefit of a computer and showed us how it would work. There were many untutored but eager faces keen to learn this modern way of making contact with all and sundry. A very happy day for us all.

*Meta Roseneil*

### LEEDS CF Smiles, Tapping Feet and Clapping Hands

The superb Orthodox Chazan Alby Chait sang songs in Hebrew and English, accompanied on the piano by Phil Cammerman. The room was filled with smiles, tapping feet and clapping hands. And all this was followed by yet another amazing afternoon tea with Barbara's incredible baking!

*Wendy Bott*

### PINNER The Cairo Genizah

An enthusiastic expert told us about the Cairo Genizah, the world's largest and most important collection of mediaeval Jewish manuscripts, which is now housed at Cambridge University. It consists of some 200,000 items, which are slowly being restored, deciphered, translated and correlated. It brings to life the Cairo community as it includes not only religious texts but also such mundane things as bills and personal letters.

*Henri Obstfeld*

### PRESTWICH 'Brexit', Lunch and Good Company

Meeting at Louise's lovely home, we discussed 'Brexit' over a delicious lunch and enjoyed each other's company immensely!

*Wendy Bott*

### EALING A Source of Inspiration

Eva Clarke, who was born in a concentration camp towards the end of the war, talked about her family and, in particular, her amazing mother. Her mother, who survived three camps, overcoming terrible situations, came to England in the late 40s and lived to a great age, being a source of inspiration to Eva and her children and grandchildren.

*Leslie Sommer*

### KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH 'Stay in the EU!'

Our June speaker, the Austrian Ambassador, Dr Martin Eichinger, has been in the Austrian Diplomatic Service for 30 years, his appointment as Ambassador in London dating from January 2015. Austrians would prefer the UK to remain in the EU (the referendum result wasn't known at the time), he said, but the current immigration situation was a major challenge for his country.

*David Lang*

### ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) A Stimulating Day

Southchurch Hall was most interesting and the guide gave us lots of history about the hall and some English medieval explanations. A stimulating day in great company. Thank you, AJR.

*Helen Grunberg*

### RADLETT Jews in the Arab World

Little is known of the fate of the Jewish population in North Africa at the time of the Holocaust. Lynn Julius told us that anti-Jewish feelings were fanned by Nazi propaganda and heightened by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood. Jews in the Middle East and North Africa suffered greatly. More than 100 concentration camps were set up, where many died. Thousands of Jews were sent to Europe as slave labourers. Things would have been much worse but for the British victory at El Alamein and the expulsion of German troops from North Africa by

the Allies. A sombre talk of very great interest.

*Fritz Starer*

### HULL CF Hull's Jewish History

We enjoyed a visit from Michael Westerman, who, among many other things, is President of the Hull Jewish Community and instrumental in organising the 250th anniversary celebration of the first Jewish settlement in Hull. We listened intently to his description of Hull's Jewish history and he painted a vivid picture of the many things he himself remembered while growing up in the area – all most interesting.

*Wendy Bott*

### CAMBRIDGE Women in Jewish Religious Life

Louise Heilbron told us that the first women rabbi, Regina Jonas, was ordained in Germany in 1935. Forty years later, Jackie Tabick was ordained as the first woman rabbi in the UK. Being ordained was one thing, but finding a pulpit another. There remained resistance to appointing women to the job of rabbi as the role was deemed incompatible with a woman's family duties. By the 70s much had changed, women rabbis having become accepted and respected.

*Eva Stellman*

### BRIGHTON Jews in the Arab World

'Harif' founder Lynn Julius showed a film about Jews in Muslim countries over the centuries. She highlighted the violent dispossession in Iraq and the loss of life in many pogroms, especially during and after the Holocaust. No acknowledgement of guilt had been made or reparations paid to the survivors, Lynn said.

*Ceska Abrahams*

### MARLOW Painful Memories

Meeting at the home of Alan Kaye, we exchanged reminiscences about our families' backgrounds. Many of us regretted not asking our parents/grandparents about their history – and most of them didn't want to disclose the painful memories of their refugee experiences anyway. It was also interesting to find out how we all ended up in deepest Berkshire/Buckinghamshire!

*Dennis Dell*

### KENWOOD HOUSE JOY

The history and individuals behind Kenwood House came to life vividly thanks to Mark King, a Blue Badge guide and second generation AJR member. We so admired all the priceless paintings by world-renowned artists. Kenwood is a great treasure in its lovely setting beside Hampstead Heath. Afterwards we enjoyed a very welcome cream tea!

*Janet Weston*

### KENT 'We'll Meet Again ...'

We met for lunch at the Nutmeg Restaurant to discuss the future of this

## CONTACTS

**Susan Harrod**  
Lead Outreach & Events  
Co-ordinator  
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

**Wendy Bott**  
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07908 156 365 wendy@ajr.org.uk

**Agnes Isaacs**  
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07908 156 361 agnes@ajr.org.uk

**Kathryn Prevezer**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07966 969 951 kathryn@ajr.org.uk

**Esther Rinkoff**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07966 631 778 esther@ajr.org.uk

**Eva Stellman**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07904 489 515 eva@ajr.org.uk

**KT-AJR (Kindertransport)**  
Susan Harrod  
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

**Child Survivors' Association-AJR**  
Henri Obstfeld  
020 8954 5298 h.obstfeld@talk21.com

small group. It was amazing to hear from Inge Hack how, after her struggle to come here from Nuremberg, her son had been successful in obtaining a First from Cambridge. 'We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but I know we'll meet again some sunny day ...!' *Esther Rinkoff*

#### WELWYN GC Helping Members to Use Computers

We were welcomed once again in Monica's lovely home and treated to her generous hospitality. On this occasion, we were joined by Claude Vecht-Wolf, the AJR's Computer Co-ordinator, as well as by a lovely sixth-form pupil from JCoSS, Danielle, who was on a week's work experience with the AJR. Sam Ostro told her how he came to be a refugee in WGC and Claude explained how the SPF Connect Programme was designed to help survivors and refugees who find using computers difficult.

*Eva Stellman*

#### EDGWARE Women Rabbis

We very much enjoyed Louise Heilbron's talk tracing the history of women rabbis from the very first, Fraulein Rabiner Regina Jonas, ordained in Germany some 80 years ago. There had been many female Bible scholars, Jewish as well as Anglican, who wanted to become rabbis and vicars respectively but couldn't be ordained. There was discrimination and exclusion until the 20th Century and the first woman rabbi's ordination in the UK in 1975 preceded the first Anglican ordination by 20 years.

*Alice Fraser*

*continued on page 14* ➔

## AUGUST GROUP EVENTS

<b>Ealing</b>	2 Aug	Nick Dobson
<b>Norfolk</b>	2 Aug	Peter Beschoner: 'My Father Hans: The Music Survives'
<b>Book Club</b>	3 Aug	Social
<b>Ilford</b>	3 Aug	<i>The Sturgeon Queen</i> (video)
<b>Pinner</b>	4 Aug	Annual Garden Party
<b>Cambridge</b>	9 Aug	(on Tuesday, earlier than normal) Susan Shaw JP: 'Justice of the Peace, Not Jewish Princess'
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	9 Aug	Godfrey Gould: 'How the Railways Changed Our Lives'
<b>Brighton</b>	15 Aug	Lesley Urbach: 'The Life of Isaac Shoenberg'
<b>Edgware</b>	16 Aug	Eva Clarke: 'Born Survivors: The Extraordinary Story of My Mother's Survival and My Birth'
<b>Leeds</b>	18 Aug	Summer Garden Party at home of Pippa Landey. Guest speaker: Geoff Kamil QC
<b>Welwyn GC</b>	18 Aug	Annual Summer Luncheon
<b>Birmingham</b>	21 Aug	Garden Party and presentation of bench by AJR to Andrew Cohen House
<b>Cheshire</b>	22 Aug	Social
<b>North West London</b>	22 Aug	tba
<b>Prestwich</b>	23 Aug	Social
<b>North London</b>	25 Aug	Annual Lunch
<b>Wembley</b>	31 Aug	David Barnett: 'The most Famous Jewish Victorian Business – E. Moses and Sons'
<b>Pinner</b>	1 Sept	Julian Romain: 'History of Words and Phrases'
<b>Ealing</b>	6 Sept	tba
<b>Book Club</b>	7 Sept	Social
<b>Ilford</b>	7 Sept	Peter Hedderley: 'The Winton Train 2009'

#### SCOTTISH REGIONAL: MEETING UP WITH FRIENDS OLD AND NEW

The Scottish Regional is a focal point in the AJR calendar. This year it attracted almost 50 people, including a good number of second generation members from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Montrose, St Andrews, Newcastle and Cumbernauld. An overview by Sue Kurlander, the AJR's Head of Social Services, was followed by group discussions on the topics 'Are Today's Refugees Yesterday's Refugees?'; 'Will Brexit Adversely Affect Jewish Communities in Europe?'; and 'Looking Ahead'. All

these resulted in intense debate. The overall conclusion was that Britain is a stable democratic anchor in Europe. There were differing opinions about the status of the refugees but it was generally felt that there was a need to help the children.

Deborah Haase of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre reported on the progress of the Holocaust Study Centre, a major project which is supported by the AJR.

The delicious three-course lunch was followed by a superb talk by Olivia Marks Woldman, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

(HMDT), entitled 'Football, Cement and a Wooden Spoon'. It was good to hear the HMDT had a record 5,590 activities

for Holocaust Memorial Day in 2016, with events taking place in such diverse locations as schools and prisons. Educating young people is extremely important but the parents need to learn too!

Everyone was most impressed with Micha Cooper's film *My Dearest ...* – his first film, which he made at the age of 12! Micha, now 14, is a budding third generation filmmaker. He

interviewed his grandparents about their experiences and talks of his great-grandfather's time spent as an internee on the Isle of Man as an 'enemy alien'. The inspiration for producing the film came from a number of war-time letters and correspondence between his great-grandparents over the worry of deportation to a distant land. Micha has now produced 14 films and is a most talented young man with a great future.

As always, the Scottish Regional was a great opportunity to meet up with friends old and new.

**Agnes Isaacs**



**INSIDE THE AJR**  
*continued from page 13*

**NORTH WEST LONDON IDF Volunteer**  
Michael Myers told us about his time with the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). He volunteered to spend two weeks last year in Israel on a scheme organised by Sar-El (Service for Israel), under the direction of the Israeli Army Logistics corps. Only 2.5 per cent of the volunteers for this very worthwhile task come from the UK. Michael has volunteered again to return later this year.  
*David Lang*

**HARROGATE/YORK CF A Leisurely Stroll**  
We enjoyed a leisurely stroll around the beautiful RHS Harlow Carr Gardens, after which we enjoyed refreshments and convivial banter at Betty's Café as well as celebrating the forthcoming birthdays of Edith Jayne and March Schatzberger.  
*Wendy Bott*

**BIRMINGHAM Bright Company and Delicious Food**  
We met on a grey wet June day but the company was bright and the food, as always, delicious – compliments to the catering staff at Andrew Cohen House and to Lesser's for keeping us all together.  
*Esther Rinkoff*

**BOOK CLUB A Lovely Afternoon**  
Quite spontaneously we came to talk about how each of us came to this country and our experiences from then on. Serious but also funny stories. A lovely afternoon.  
*Hortense Gordon*

**NORTH LONDON Herbert Morrison and the Jews**  
We appreciated Lesley Urbach's polished, well researched and original talk on the attitude of Labour leader Herbert Morrison to Nazi antisemitism and the fascists in the UK in the 1930s. His favourable attitude to Jews was not, she told us, matched by any wartime actions on behalf of Jews.  
*Henry Cohn*

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**GUIDED TOUR OF  
HOOP LANE  
JEWISH CEMETERY**  
**by Rachel Kosky, Blue Badge Guide**  
**Monday 8 August 2016**  
This tour highlights the history of the Hoop Lane cemeteries in Golders Green. Opened in 1897 for both the Reform and Sephardi Jewish communities, they contain an array of fascinating personalities for whom this is their final resting place.  
They include those of religious leaders such as Hugo Gryn and Albert Friedlander, actor Sydney Tafler, philanthropist and youth leader Sir Basil Henriques, writer Jack Rosenthal, the parents of Maurice and Charles Saatchi, and 'agony aunt' Marjorie Proops.  
**Following the tour we will have lunch at a local restaurant in Golders Green and the opportunity to speak with Rachel.**  
**Transport between the Cemetery and the restaurant will be provided.**  
For further details, please speak to  
Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070  
or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

**KT LUNCH**  
**Wednesday 10 August 2016**  
**at Alyth Gardens Synagogue, 12.30 pm**  
We are delighted to be joined by **Danny Stone, Director of the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Foundation (PCAAF).**  
The PCAA provides secretariat support for the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism and is a registered charity, whose work is centred on the principle that the struggle against prejudice and discrimination is not just the responsibility of the victims.  
The PCAA's mission is to make antisemitism a societal concern and, in doing so, help create a more tolerant society.  
Danny works closely with John Mann MP, who recently wrote an article in the *AJR Journal* about the Conference on Antisemitism in Berlin earlier this year.  
For details and booking, please contact  
Susan Harrod at AJR on 020 8385 3070  
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*We look forward to seeing you*

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## OBITUARIES

### Andrew Herxheimer, born Berlin 4 November 1925, died London 21 February 2016

Andrew Herxheimer, eminent clinical pharmacologist and champion of evidence-based medicine, has died in London following a stroke.

Born in Berlin, Andrew came to England in 1938 aged 12 with his mother Ilse (née Koenig) and sister Eva. His father Herbert ('Hx'), also a pioneering physician, had been invited to London by A. V. Hill on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning.

Andrew won a bursary to Highgate School and subsequently a scholarship to St Thomas's Hospital Medical School (London), graduating in 1949. Following service with the British Armed Forces in Germany, he began his career in clinical pharmacology. From 1960 he worked at the London Hospital and, from 1976 to 1991, at Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School as senior lecturer and consultant.

In 1962, aware of the need for independent advice for doctors regarding drugs and treatments in the interest of patients, he founded the *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin (DTB)*. Published by the Consumers' Association and subsequently distributed by the Department of Health to all NHS doctors in England, the *DTB* gave prescribers accurate and impartial information for the first time. It had a lasting influence on prescribing habits and was a forerunner of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). It was widely praised for its willingness to challenge big pharma and its quality. Andrew edited the *DTB* for

30 years. He was renowned for his editorial skills and a compulsion for wordplay: he punned adeptly in four languages, French and Dutch as well as English and German.

Andrew's other activities included chairing the Health Working Group of IOCU (International Organization of Consumers Unions) and ISDB (International Society of Drug Bulletins). He was a consultant for WHO, travelling to countries such as Syria, Egypt, Nepal and the Philippines to support government programmes for essential medicines. In 1968–77 he was Extraordinary Professor at the Clinical Pharmacology Department, University of Groningen, Netherlands.

Following retirement from the Charing Cross, Andrew joined Health Service researcher Iain Chalmers in Oxford, where in 1993 he helped to establish the Cochrane Collaboration, a network of researchers reviewing and analysing clinical trials worldwide free of commercial sponsorship. Weeks before his 90th birthday, he spoke at a Cochrane conference in Vienna about adverse effects, warning that unwanted effects of medicines should be taken more seriously.

In 1999 Andrew and Dr Ann McPherson founded DIPEX (Database of Individual Patients' Experiences), where patients can watch videos of other people talking about their experiences of illness. It developed

to a massive scale and currently covers around 100 health-related issues. Now called Healthtalk Online (based at the

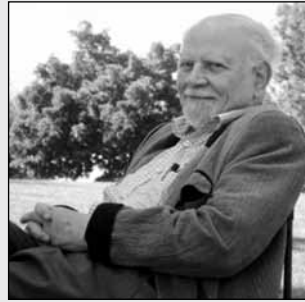
Department of Primary Health Care in Oxford), the website [www.healthtalk.org](http://www.healthtalk.org) received five million visits in 2015. The global reach of this delighted Andrew, an ardent internationalist not least due to his negative childhood experiences in Nazi Germany.

In 1961–74 Andrew was married to textile designer Susan Collier, with whom he had two daughters, Charlotte and Sophie. In 1983 he married Christine (née Bernecker), a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst from Germany.

He was always full of ideas, continuing to think about the interests of patients until he died. He had been planning a series of workshops with the University of the Third Age to help people better understand the medicines they take. He also wanted to build a database of peoples' multi-language biographies, which he nicknamed 'autobiologos'. As a colleague tweeted, '[S]ince Andrew died the planet has already become a less interesting place!'

Andrew Herxheimer MB BS FRCP, HonFBPhS is survived by his wife Christine, his daughters, Charlotte and Sophie, and four grandchildren, Lola, Brodie, Rosa and Conrad.

**Christine, Charlotte and Sophie Herxheimer**



### Ruth Ingeborg Renfield, born Hamburg 25 November 1919, died London 5 March 2016

My mother, Ruth Ingeborg Renfield (née Mehrgut), died on 5 March this year aged 96. Her ashes were interred with those of her mother, Alice Mehrgut (née Cohen), in Edgwarebury Cemetery, London, on 20 April. She left a son and grandson.

My mother was born in Hamburg on 25 November 1919. After leaving school she took a one-year domestic science course then trained for four years as a nursery school teacher, partly in an orphanage.

Through the orphanage she arranged for her younger brother, Heinz, to escape to England in

1938 on the Kindertransport. In February 1939 she was able to obtain work permits via an aunt who lived in England for her mother, a long-time friend (Eva Oppenheim, with whom she kept in close contact until her death) and herself, which enabled them to escape to England. Her father, who was unable to escape, died a natural death shortly afterwards.

After a period in domestic service and of internment in the Isle of Man, she served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, being demobbed in 1946.

In 1946 she married Henry Julian Renfield, who was from Berlin and had served in the Pioneer

Corps, the Royal Engineers and then the Intelligence Corps. They divorced in 1969.

In 1950–65 she ran her own kindergarten or worked in other kindergartens. From 1965 to her retirement in 1982 she was a receptionist at the Oxford Street branch of an international school of languages.

During her retirement she helped for many years with the AJR Luncheon Club at Hannah Karminski House in Swiss Cottage, London. Lunch was £1.25, with 'an extra-large' portion at £1.50. She also undertook home-visiting through the AJR and went regularly to Heinrich Stahl House as a volunteer.

She left her beloved flat in London in 2010 and moved to a care home in Gloucestershire, where she died peacefully.

**Herbert Renfield**





## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### 'My Blue Piano'

An evening to mark the 70th anniversary of the death in Jerusalem of the German-born Expressionist poet Else Lasker-Schüler was held at the Music Conservatory in Tel Aviv in June. The event took place under the joint auspices of the Leo Baeck Institute and the Association of Former Residents of Central Europe (now mainly composed of descendants of those former residents), and consisted of readings from Lasker-Schüler's poetry and letters (in German and in Hebrew translation) and slides showing some of her pictures, as well as music performed by members of the Else Ensemble.

'My Blue Piano', the title of one of Lasker-Schüler's poems, was also the title of a BBC radio play by the Scottish playwright Marty Ross which was broadcast on Radio 4 in 2007. The play combined the facts of her last days with the fantasies of her inner life. The last ten years of Else's life were spent in Mandatory Jerusalem, where she was penniless and endured great physical hardship, being unable to work and living on the charity of a few friends. As she grew older the bohemian lifestyle of her youth was transmuted into an eccentric way of life and dress that didn't find acceptance or understanding among the wider population of the city. Her objective situation, as well as the death of her son in 1927 at the age

of 28, may have served to upset her mental balance, or even to generate depression verging on insanity, though no medical diagnosis of her condition was made.

The musicians at the evening performance in Tel Aviv, all young people from Germany and Israel, met several years ago as students at the Jerusalem Music Academy and today are members of various European orchestras. They played music by Hindemith, Mendelssohn, Bach and others with sensitivity and understanding, and one of their number informed the audience that they had decided to take Else Lasker-Schüler's name for their ensemble in order to strengthen the ties between Israel and Germany as well as to emphasise the role of creative women, and women composers in particular.

After some introductory remarks by Reuven Merhav, the Chairman of the Association of Former Residents of Central Europe, Professor Itta Shedletzky, a world-renowned expert on the work of Else Lasker-Schüler, gave an analysis of one of Else's poems, using her own Hebrew translation to illustrate the originality and significance of the text, as well as Else's ability to create neologisms. Else was one of the few women exponents of the Expressionist school and as such occupies a unique place in the development and history of German art and literature. She was able to escape persecution by the Nazis for both her

race and her art but was unable to find a haven of tranquility in pre-State Jerusalem, where insularity and provinciality prevailed in daily life as in the arts. Today her work is recognised internationally and monuments have been erected to her in Germany and Israel.

Else Lasker-Schüler's *oeuvre* demonstrates her fascination with the Orient, and the few pictures painted or sketched by her that were projected onto a screen above the musicians show her undoubted talent and originality, as do many of her poems. Her drawing of a camel with an Arab rider, under which she has scrawled 'Yusuf riding through the desert', is a marvel of physical representation combined with deep insight into the rider's emotions – and all this with consummate economy of line and form. Other slides showed her drawings of scenes in an Arab coffee house and individual characters whom she encountered (let's not forget that under the British Mandate there was no separation between east and west Jerusalem).

Else also drew extensively on the Bible for her imagery: Biblical characters are portrayed as flesh-and-blood contemporaries in many of her poems, as well as symbolising more general currents and events. She also seems to have imagined that she could converse with them and her 'dialogue' with King David assumed a prominent role in her work and life. Evidently, the events in Europe leading up to and during the Second World War and the Holocaust affected her deeply: in one of her poems she asks 'God, where art thou?' And that is certainly a sentiment which many of us can share.

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

state. The Jews had no option but to beat the Arabs or suffer the same fate as their brethren in Germany and Poland.

I am sure that once the EU, USA and Russia have resolved the problems of Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon, where hundreds of thousands have died, and where Lebanon and Jordan house more than four million refugees, as well as the Arabs pouring into Europe, they will be in a position to encourage the Israelis to make a deal with the leaders of the local Arabs.

In the meantime, steps have been taken to integrate Arabs into Israeli society. Members of the Knesset are voted for by Arabs who qualify. I believe even Israel's Supreme Court is led by an Arab. Many Arabs are working as nurses and doctors

in Israeli hospitals, where many Arabs too are treated. Even supermarkets employ Arabs also. Arabs who have managed to cross the border in the north are treated as well. The BBC – not always a supporter of Israel – produced a documentary about a Syrian who had his jaw replaced by a new technique using a 3D printer. The man was treated and, when asked whether he wanted to return to Israel, replied 'Of course. I am going back to have my new teeth fitted.'

Instead of spreading evil stories about how the Jews are looking after these stateless people, remember the positive side of the Israelis and that technically Israel is still at war with its enemies, with the exception of Egypt and Jordan, with

which they have peace treaties.

Remember the history of all those involved in the conflict; the terrorism; the camps of Jews interned during the war in the Isle of Man and Cyprus; the concentration camps in Europe; the Holocaust; and the formidable efforts of our brethren to stay alive at all costs.

Might I suggest that on her next visit Ms Manson widens her tour of the Middle East and perhaps we will have her comments on her treatment in the Arab countries she visited. She should, however, be wary of visits to IS/Daish-occupied territories as the authorities there are not quite so tolerant of inquisitive ladies.

Laurence Freeman,  
Luton, Bedfordshire

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Telephone 020 8385 3070 Fax 020 8385 3080 e-mail [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)

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