

## Another Jewish Nobel Prize for Literature?

The awarding of the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature to Bob Dylan did not, it is fair to say, resound in the Jewish world in the same way as the awards made to Isaac Bashevis Singer in 1978, Saul Bellow in 1976, and S.Y. (Shmuel Yosef) Agnon and Nelly Sachs, who shared the prize in 1966. Dylan transformed popular music, almost single-handedly raising the level of its lyrics from the cheerful banalities of 1950s pop to that of serious culture. He did so by the combination of his words and his music, conveyed through his unique style of delivery and performance. But a pure poet he is not, and the committee that awarded him the Nobel Prize was arguably mistaken to treat him as if he were.

Bob Dylan was born Robert Allen Zimmerman on 24 May 1941, to Jewish parents living in Duluth, Minnesota. But when he changed his name to Bob Dylan, in tribute to the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, and presumably because it fitted his new folk-singing image better, he dropped much of the heritage of the Zimmermans, becoming the *Freewheelin'* Bob Dylan of his 1963 album title. Jewish elements have not been prominent in Dylan's lyrics, and his allegiance to Judaism has been at best patchy: he converted to Christianity in the late 1970s, though he was also linked in later years to Chabad and attended the Bar Mitzvahs of his sons. It is hard to identify Dylan with any organised form of religion.

Readers of this journal, for whom the years of the Third Reich have a special significance, may be interested in one direct reference to Nazism and the Holocaust in Dylan's oeuvre, which occurs in the song 'With God on Our Side', from the album *The Times They Are a-Changin'*, released in 1964. The song is a biting attack on the sanctimonious patriotic notion that the wars fought by the United States of America were morally, indeed divinely, sanctioned, since the USA 'has god on its side'. The song ranges across American history from the campaigns against the Native Americans in the nineteenth century to the First and Second World Wars and the threat of a nuclear confrontation with the USSR.

The song's poetic strengths are immediately evident. It evokes the tragedy of the destruction of the Native American tribes by the –



Bob Dylan

supposedly morally superior – US forces with characteristically pithy, powerfully rhythmic diction:

*Oh, the history books tell it  
They tell it so well  
The cavalries charged  
The Indians fell  
The cavalries charged  
The Indians died  
Oh, the country was young  
With God on its side.*

The song repeats the lines 'The cavalries charged/ The Indians fell' with one small but arresting change, the substitution of the word 'died' for 'fell'. We first view the 'fallen' Native Americans from a comfortable distance, as if their deaths were no more substantial than the staged antics of extras in a Western B movie, only to be confronted head-on with the bitter reality of their slaughter, its bitterness reinforced by the rhyme between 'died' and the title phrase 'God on our side'.

Dylan then runs through the American Civil War, the Spanish-American War of 1898, and the two World Wars at a brisk pace. Of World War I, we learn no more than that 'it came and it went', a piece of insubstantial filler, and of World War II that 'it came to an end'. That seems a strangely brief treatment of the one war in American history in which the USA might truly be said to have had god, or at least good, on its side. Dylan continues with an attack on American claims to the moral high ground in the Cold War confrontation with the godless atheists of the Kremlin, and in so doing invokes the Holocaust:

*We forgave the Germans  
And then we were friends*

*Though they murdered six million  
In the ovens they fried  
The Germans now, too  
Have God on their side.*

I am surely not alone in finding the phrasing here distasteful. Apart from the erroneous implication that the six million perished in ovens, not gas chambers, the crudity of the line 'In the ovens they fried' is jarringly inappropriate. Presumably, Dylan settled on 'fried' because it rhymed with 'side', though a more skilful and meticulous poet would surely have found a superior alternative. More serious, in my view, is the crude instrumentalisation of the Holocaust to undermine the moral legitimacy of NATO and the Western, anti-Soviet alliance. Criticism of the failure of the Western powers properly to indict German civil servants, industrialists, army officers and the like for their activities under Hitler is of course legitimate, as is criticism of West German rearmament in the early 1950s and of the hasty integration of West Germany into the Western bloc in face of the Communist threat. But to exploit the Holocaust for crudely polemical purposes seems to me to betray a loss of moral compass, even for lines written in 1964.

'With God on Our Side' is of course far from the best of Bob Dylan. But how good is his best, when measured against other great poets, for example Dylan Thomas, after whom he renamed himself? The opening lines of Dylan's 'Like a Rolling Stone' (released 1965) are among the most famous lyrics in modern popular music:

*Once upon a time you dressed so fine  
Threw the bums a dime in your prime,  
didn't you?  
People call say 'beware doll, you're bound  
to fall'  
You thought they were all kidding you  
You used to laugh about  
Everybody that was hanging out  
Now you don't talk so loud  
Now you don't seem so proud  
About having to be scrounging your next  
meal  
How does it feel, how does it feel?  
To be without a home  
Like a complete unknown, like a rolling  
stone.*

**Another Jewish Nobel Prize for Literature?**  
continued

Here is another justly famous passage:

*Hey, Mr. Tambourine man, play a song  
for me  
I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm  
going to  
Hey, Mr. Tambourine man, play a song  
for me  
In the jingle jangle morning I'll come  
following you.  
Take me on a trip upon your magic  
swirling ship  
My senses have been stripped  
My hands can't feel to grip  
My toes too numb to step  
Wait only for my boot heels to be  
wandering  
I'm ready to go anywhere, I'm ready for  
to fade  
Into my own parade  
Cast your dancing spell my way, I promise  
to go under it.  
(Mr Tambourine Man, released 1965)*

Much as I like the 'jingle jangle morning', I cannot see that this stands comparison with Dylan Thomas at his majestic best:

*And death shall have no dominion.  
Dead man naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the west  
moon;  
When their bones are picked clean and  
the clean bones gone,  
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;  
Though they go mad they shall be sane,  
Though they sink through the sea they  
shall rise again;  
Though lovers be lost love shall not;  
And death shall have no dominion.  
(And Death Shall Have No Dominion',  
1933)*

This is poetry that seizes at the heart, that engages the mind. This is poetry that has the aesthetic appeal of high poetic craftsmanship.

Dylan's songs are often referred to as the anthems of the youth and protest movements of the Sixties. *Blowin' in the Wind* (released 1963), in particular, is rightly renowned as the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement in the USA:



Bob Dylan at the Western Wall

*How many roads must a man walk down  
Before you call him a man?  
How many seas must a white dove sail  
Before she sleeps in the sand?  
Yes, and how many times must the cannon  
balls fly  
Before they're forever banned?  
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the  
wind  
The answer is blowin' in the wind.*

But stirring though it is, even this appears rough-hewn and declamatory beside the First World War poet Wilfred Owen's 'Anthem for Doomed Youth':

*What passing-bells for these who die as  
cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.*

The almost unbearable poignancy of Owen's sonnet derives in part from the juxtaposition of the terminology of religious ceremonial – a passing bell is the church bell rung to mark a death, while orisons are prayers – with that of the mechanised slaughter of the Western Front. And when Dylan evokes the biblical Abraham in 'Highway 61 Revisited', he weaves him into a surreal tapestry of images, striking but lacking the full power of Owen's use of the same figure, in his 'Parable of the Old Man and the Young', to represent the 'old men' of 1914. For Owen's patriarch-militarist refuses to spare his son's life, as his biblical predecessor did; he ignores God's entreaty, with heartrending results: 'But the old man would not so, but slew his son, And half the seed of Europe, one by one.'

Anthony Grenville

# HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Tuesday 24 January 2017  
2 pm

at Belsize Square Synagogue,  
London NW3 4HX

Please save the date and join us for our service to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

We are honoured that His Excellency the German Ambassador, Dr Peter Ammon, will be our guest speaker on Holocaust Memorial Day 2017. His theme will be 'How can life go on?' Other speakers will include AJR member Eva Clarke and AJR intern Merrit Jagusch.

It is essential we know exact numbers for catering – please call Karin Pereira on 020 8385 3070 or email [karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karin@ajr.org.uk) if you are planning to attend.

## AJR FILM CLUB

Please join us at our next Film Club.

Our film showing will be at  
Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform  
Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North,  
Whetstone N20 9EZ  
on **Monday 13 February 2017**  
**at 12.30pm**

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

A DOUBLE BILL OF VIEWING

### CHURCHILL'S GERMAN ARMY

This is the unknown story of the Germans who fought for Britain. Now, after seventy years, a handful of brave men and women have decided to break their silence. All volunteered to give up their family names and fight the Nazis on the soil that was once their home against the people who were once their neighbours. They were labelled suicide soldiers but they would become Churchill's German Army.

### ALICE HERZ-SOMMER

*Everything is a Present*

Until 106 Alice lived alone in her flat and practiced the piano for two and a half hours every day. She tells her incredible story of survival and forgiveness in this uplifting documentary.

£7.00 per person

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

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

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

On **30 January** and **6 February**  
the German film  
**'Langericht'**

– a moving account of a family's  
experience during the Nazi regime –  
will be broadcast in two parts on ZDF.

## AJEX PARADE

Over one thousand Jewish service veterans, many of whom served during the Second World War, braved a cold Sunday afternoon to pay tribute to those who had fallen in battle.

The annual AJEX Commemoration of Remembrance and Parade also attracted members of the JLGB, friends and families, civic, synagogue and school and youth groups who swelled the numbers marching down Whitehall to the Cenotaph, led by the Band of the Coldstream Guards.

An emotive service was conducted by the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Senior Jewish Chaplain to HM Forces, Rabbi Reuben Livingstone and Rabbi Harry Jacobi, remembering the fallen of all conflicts.

Wreaths were laid commemorating the centenary of the battles of Jutland, Verdun and the Somme by The Jewish Brigade and representatives of the Armed Forces, Cadet Forces, SAAFA, and by the JLGB and youth organisations. A very special addition was a wreath laid by Barbara Winton and

Lord Dubs in memory of her father Sir Nicholas Winton.

The parade marched past the reviewing officer impressively before adjourning for a tea where Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford spoke warmly about the Jewish community's contribution to the defence of this country. He said: "This tradition continues today as we've seen by all those in uniform on parade today, still serving."

The event closed with addresses by AJEX President, Hon Vice Admiral the Lord Sterling and National Chairman Brian Bloom. Both paid tribute to those veterans who had travelled from as far as Israel, Gibraltar and France to attend the parade as well as the serving personnel, JLGB and St John Ambulance who helped with the event organisation.



## AJR'S HARRY CHOSEN BY UNICEF

Like the AJR, UNICEF – the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund – is celebrating a major anniversary this year. The charity has decided to highlight the topic of child refugees as its main focus for the year, and turned to the AJR for help.

We were delighted to put them in touch with 91 year old Rabbi Harry Jacobi MBE, vice president of Liberal Judaism and one of Britain's most senior and respected rabbis. In the 1930s Harry fled the Nazis twice, first from his native Germany to Holland, then from Holland to the UK. Through a high profile visit to Calais and a protest at the House of Commons, Harry's views on the pitiful plight of

many modern refugees are widely known.

In November UNICEF flew Harry to Berlin to meet with a 12 year old Syrian boy, Ahmed, who also escaped twice from his native oppressors – first from Syria to Egypt, and then on to Sweden in 2011.



Rabbi Harry Jacobi travelled to Calais in May 2016 to meet child refugees, ©UNICEF

UNICEF's moving presentation, which juxtaposes Harry's and Ahmed's experiences, was launched at the United Nations in New York on 12 December, as part of the charity's official 70th birthday activities. It is now available on the UNICEF website for everyone to see.

"I hope many will see it and be moved to help UNICEF," said Rabbi Harry.

## SOUTHEND REMEMBERS KRISTALLNACHT

On 9 November at Southend & Westcliff Hebrew Congregation Otto Deutsch shared a vivid account of watching Kristallnacht unfold in Vienna exactly 78 years earlier.

"I can recall it as if it happened yesterday," he said, describing standing with the local Rabbi and watching Torah scrolls being burned.

Otto's own father had been decorated by the Austrian government for serving in the trenches during WW1, alongside his good friend and neighbour Kurt. Unbelievably this same neighbour then informed the Gestapo about his Jewish neighbours and Otto's father was taken to Dachau to do forced labour to build Autobahns.

Otto himself was sent to England on the Kindertransport, along with his cousin Alfred. Here they were looked after by a Christian family in Morpeth, Jim & Nell Ferguson. He never saw his father or his mother Wilma or sister Adele again. But he always remembers his mother's final words to him 'Don't forget your Yiddishkeit'.

Otto's parents and sister were shot and buried in Mali Trostinec, a suburb of Minsk in Belarus, in May 1942, and subsequently exhumed and cremated. Otto made an emotional journey there in 2011 to say Kaddish.

Otto's extremely moving story was followed by a film on Sir Nicolas Winton, who helped to save the lives of 669 Jewish children in 1939 in Prague.

Larry Lisner



## My Story – Lela Black

I am Lela, but it's not the name my parents gave me. It should be Allegra, which my baby sister could not pronounce, so "Lela" I became – even in my passport.

I was born on 15th January 1918 in Salonica, a large bustling city in Northern Greece. I was the third of four sisters. My father was a coal merchant and my mother a society dressmaker. We weren't well-off, but neither were we poor. The only time I felt disadvantaged was when collecting hand-me-downs from my wealthy cousins. As the poor relations, we had to use the tradesmen's entrance!

My parents valued education enormously. At home we spoke Spanish and French, as well as Greek. My two older sisters attended the French Lycée in Salonica, whilst I was sent to the Italian school. The Sephardic Jewish community of Salonica was very hierarchical, with status determined by wealth and profession.

My childhood was a happy one and my teenage years even better; weekends were spent at the Jewish club, playing tennis and partying. That's how I met my husband Joseph. Unfortunately, I was not considered good enough for his wealthy and important family.

Moreover, it was the tradition that men should not marry before their sisters. Joseph, the only son, had four sisters. So we eloped to Athens! After a shaky start, all turned out well and we returned to Salonica where, amazingly, I was greeted with open arms by my in-laws. Two years later, on 1st January 1938, my daughter Marcelle was born.

We then moved back to Athens, where Joseph had business concerns. We lived in a small house, where

we befriended our neighbours – a wonderful Greek family. Katina and Stathis and their two teenage daughters, Themis and Merope, supported us through thick and thin. They adored Marcelle and eagerly took care of her on many occasions.

When the Nazis invaded Greece and the deportation of Jews began, Joseph, Marcelle and I were forced into hiding, moving from one place to another. Ironically, we were ultimately betrayed to the Nazis by a Jew. From Haidari, a transit camp outside Athens, we were herded onto cattle trucks and

deported to Auschwitz in the summer of 1944. I later found out my parents and sisters were deported with their families from Salonica in 1943 and none survived. I will not dwell here on the living hell that was Auschwitz-Birkenau. Suffice to say my Marcelle was gassed on arrival and Joseph perished a few months later. I am the only member of my family who survived the Holocaust.

After liberation, I embarked on a series of long train journeys, my only possession being a small accordion. Arriving back in Athens, I was again looked after by Katina and her family until it was time for me to move on. I had two choices: I could either head to Palestine with other refugees, or go to London where I had an aunt and two cousins. I chose the latter. My journey to London would first

involve a boat journey to Egypt, then a plane direct to Northolt airport. My two-month stopover in Egypt, first in

Alexandria, then Cairo, was the most magical time of my life. Egypt was seemingly unscathed by the ravages of war. I stayed in luxurious hotels and enjoyed high-class cuisine (quite a dramatic change from Auschwitz). In addition to being shown the Pyramids and taken on camel rides, I was courted right, left and centre, receiving no less than three marriage proposals! I turned them all down, under the illusion that life in the UK would be even better, with the streets paved with gold.

What a mistake!

I arrived in a miserable, post-war London of rationing and gloom. My auntie lived in a huge, cold house in Shepherd's Bush and my tales of Auschwitz were greeted with incredulity, since I appeared to be far better off than my relatives in

London. It was only many years later, when the true horror of the death camps was fully accepted by an appalled world, that my cousins acknowledged that I had been telling the truth.

My relatives were keen for me to move on with my life. And so I was introduced to a lovely widower, Jack. He had two young children, Joey and Rita.

I loved Jack very much, although his family always treated me like an outsider. We married in 1946 and had a daughter in 1948. I was so overwhelmed with joy that I named her Marcelle after my first child who was so brutally murdered.

For three years we lived happily in Acton. Sadly, our happiness was short-lived; Jack died of cancer in 1951, aged just 37. Against my will, my brothers-in-law took Joey and Rita away, leaving very little money for Marcelle and myself. Luckily, we had the house – all I needed was a job. I secured a position in John Lewis as an interpreter (I spoke five languages fluently). To ensure a great education for Marcelle I secured a discount at the French Lycée in South Kensington.

When Marcelle was eight, I met a South African entrepreneur, Carl. He was an astute businessman but unfortunately also a gambler.



## Righteous Among Nations Award Dorothea Weber, née Le Brocq 1911-1993

The Bailiff of Jersey led the honours on 20 November for Dorothea Weber, née Le Brocq, who helped save the life of a Jewish woman during the German Occupation, and has now been made 'Righteous Among Nations' by the State of Israel.

Dorothea is only the second Channel Islander to receive the Righteous Among the Nations honour. She was awarded it posthumously for shielding her best friend Hedwig Bercu, despite the Germans' warnings to islanders they would be "liable to punishment" if they hid Hedwig. Indeed the Germans even posted an appeal for Hedwig in local newspapers.

Dorothea was shunned herself by her fellow islanders during the war for marrying an Austrian refugee who was then conscripted into the German army. Despite her own isolation, she risked her life to protect Hedwig.

Speaking at the award ceremony the Bailiff said: "In 1939 Jersey was a small agricultural community, with



some tourist trade from the United Kingdom during the summer months. The arrival of German forces presented everyday challenges which to us now are almost impossible to understand. That is why the extraordinary actions of Dorothea are being recognised."

Immediately after the award ceremony, held at the Tapestry Museum in St Helier, a special plaque was unveiled at 7 West Park Avenue – the home Dorothea shared in secret with her friend Hedwig for over two years.

## Introducing Barbara Honigman

Barbara Honigmann is Germany's foremost Jewish writer and the recipient of multiple awards. Author, journalist, theatre director and artist, her work explores the complexities associated with being a Jew in post-WW2 Germany.

Honigmann's parents met and married as refugees in London, before returning to Germany in 1947 where her father - Georg Honigmann – was chief editor of the Berliner Zeitung.

Barbara will be speaking at London's JW3 on Wednesday 1 March as part of Jewish Book Week. Book online at [www.jewishbookweek.com](http://www.jewishbookweek.com) or call 020 7433 8988.

## KT LUNCH

Wednesday 11 January 2017  
at Alyth Gardens Synagogue, 12.30 pm

We are delighted to be joined by **Rabbi Mark Goldsmith, who is the Rabbi of North Western Reform Synagogue.**

Rabbi Mark Goldsmith has been a rabbi at Alyth since 2006. He gains great fulfilment from working with people of all ages and levels of Jewish knowledge and experience to help them to take new steps on their Jewish journey. Mark's speciality in Jewish study is business ethics on which he frequently speaks, teaches and writes.

For details and booking, please contact Susan Harrod at AJR on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

*We look forward to seeing you*

## MY STORY – LELA BLACK *continued*

Sometimes he would come home from casinos having made a fortune; on others he would lose it all. He adored Marcelle but was incapable of providing financial stability. Nonetheless, he made it possible for Marcelle and me to visit Greece every summer to stay with our dear friends in Athens.

By the time Marcelle started university, Carl was in so much debt that he decided to leave the country, to shield me from any repercussions.



I never saw him again; he died in 1975. To make ends meet, I rented out our house and stayed in Athens with my friends.

In Marcelle's second year, I returned to London to embark on another serious relationship, not with a man this time, but a department store – the most famous one in the world, Harrods! I lived in rented accommodation in Kensington because my own house was still occupied. I was employed in the

Export Bureau of Harrods for fourteen years. I loved all of it; my colleagues, the cosmopolitan atmosphere, the elegance and last but not least, the discounts! Shortly after Marcelle's marriage, I moved to a flat in St. John's Wood.

My retirement brought peace, contentment and

quality time with Marcelle and my two granddaughters, Jacqueline and Danielle, and I always believed in looking forward and not dwelling on the past."

*Lela Black passed away in 2008 after a series of strokes. Her story was sent to the AJR Journal by daughter Marcelle, who has heaps of other material about her mother's life and is hoping to turn these into a book by January 2018, when Lela herself would have been 100. Any ghost writer or publisher interested in helping Marcelle should contact her on [Marcelle.black@fazenet.com](mailto:Marcelle.black@fazenet.com)*



# Letters to the Editor

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

## THE JEWISH BUBBLE

Sir – Why do so many ultra-religious Jews want to return to the life of the 19th century *shtetls*? The Jews of today do not need eruvs. They cause unnecessary friction with our non-Jewish neighbours. If strictly orthodox Jews want an eruv it makes sense for them to live in Israel, thereby not requiring to replicate their *shtetls* in various districts of London and the Home Counties.

Further, why do even the Modern Orthodox want to live in a Jewish bubble? They all live close to each other, send their children to *cheder* and to Jewish primary and secondary schools. It is very rare for them to mix with non-Jews. When it is time for their children to leave home to go to university it is all strange to them. They have had no education on being British and their own country is foreign to them. Many are scared to leave the Jewish bubble. Surely they should not have been put into the bubble in the first place. Surely the bubble should be burst.

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

## A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Sir – I have been reading the AJR Journal for years but find the personal experiences of emigration that you frequently publish very repetitive. A recent piece on Johannesburg, South Africa, was different and made me more fully aware how very different had been my own family's experience of emigration. My father had left it very late ("They are not going to touch me. I have been a Frontkaempfer. I have an iron cross....!") so we ended up in the country now called Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia).

I have had a book on broadcasting in Zambia "Wayaleshi" published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson and a memoir "No fixed Abode" by I.B. Tauris (the latter reviewed by Leslie Brent in your Journal).

Since then I have been amusing myself scribbling mainly short stories – notoriously difficult to get published – so I have contented myself with placing some 30 (mainly about immigrant

communities in Zambia – Polish Catholics and German Jews) on a website [www.peterfraenkel.co.uk](http://www.peterfraenkel.co.uk). The short stories are grouped under "Tales from the Imp".

*Peter Fraenkel, London*

*One of Peter Fraenkel's short stories, 'The Rains Came', appears on page 11.*

## THE BITTER TRUTH

Sir – I felt quite moved after reading Rabbi Walter Rothschild's article 'Stunde Null: A New Start' in your November issue; he could not have expressed the world's problems any better! How sadly true it all is!

*Werner Conn, Lytham St. Annes*

## HOW THE GAS CHAMBERS SURVIVED

Sir – One of the questions raised by Peter Philips in your November issue, "Why was Auschwitz not bombed" reminded me of a lecture on this subject given some years ago by the late Sir Martin Gilbert to his students of the Holocaust, which I was fortunate to be invited to attend.

During the lecture Sir Martin quoted the following extract from a document at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington:

"During the spring of 1944, the Allies received more explicit information about the process of mass murder by gassing, carried out at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In desperation, Jewish organisations made several proposals to halt the extermination process and called for the bombing of the Auschwitz gas

chambers. In the summer and autumn of 1944, the World Jewish Congress and the War Refugee Board forwarded requests to bomb Auschwitz to the US War Department. These requests were denied. The Assistant Secretary of War advised that "such an operation could be executed only by the diversion of considerable air support...now engaged in decisive operations elsewhere and would in any case be of such doubtful efficacy that it would not warrant the use of our resources". Yet within a week the US Air Force carried out a successful bombing raid of the I.G. Farben synthetic oil and rubber works – located less than five miles from Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In subsequent decades the Allies' decision not to bomb the gas chambers or the rail lines leading to Auschwitz-Birkenau has been the source of sometimes bitter debate. Proponents of bombing continue to argue that such an action, while it might have killed some prisoners, could have slowed the killing operations and perhaps ultimately saved lives.

It is of interest to note that during the lecture Sir Martin informed us that Churchill was in favour of the bombing of Auschwitz-Birkenau in order to save lives.

*Betty Bloom, London NW3*

## REFUGEE FROM NAZI PERSECUTION

Sir – I wonder how many readers may have been misled by the paragraph in the recent *AJR Journal* with regard to the story 'Government confirms Child Survivor Fund payments'. I downloaded the relevant form from the internet. Without going into too much detail, I found a number of criteria. I personally only fitted into one: 'Did you flee to escape Nazi persecution?'

At the age of three and a half, after spending some time in an orphanage in Berlin, I was put on the Kindertransport. My father was in Dachau concentration camp and my mother was evicted from her home. She risked never seeing me again but was unable to cope with three little children (she had polio as a



## AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB



Please join us at our new Card and Games Club on Tuesday 31 January 2017 at 1pm

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

Open to all levels Bridge players – come and join us

Card games, Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble – you decide.

Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient – the more the merrier!

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)**

child and could barely walk). She fled hidden in a hay cart with us three and then put me in a home. I had to flee to save me from the same fate as my aunt and grandparents (all of whom were murdered in camps.)

With a heavy heart I filled in the required form. In order to answer the required questions I had to recount the trauma my parents went through. An emotional rollercoaster. I have since discovered that the 'Fund' does not apply to the children who escaped the fate of so many left behind and are not included in these criteria. I maintain because of Nazi persecution we had to flee. We did not come willingly or on a holiday! We came because of anti-Jewish persecution. Our lives were in danger. By the possibility of rejecting our claim of 'compensation', I ask myself and you, the reader, does the German Government imply that we left our mother country willingly or were indeed driven out?

*Ruth Schwiening,  
Market Bosworth, Warwickshire*

### LEOPARDS AND SPOTS

Sir – Francis Deutsch (May) believes the 'offenders' (why not call them murderers and thieves?) have passed on and that we should have stayed in the EU. Personally I have never considered myself to be in exile: any remaining German-ness was knocked out of me in the ghetto and at Auschwitz.

Unlike his colleagues, the German anatomist of the human brain, Professor Paul Glees, was repelled by Nazism, came to England, and went to Cambridge under a scheme set up by Miriam Rothschild. He moved to Oxford and was the only Aryan German not to be interned. In 1961 he accepted a chair at Göttingen, a Nazi stronghold even before 1933. There he discovered that, before drawing his salary, he was required to certify that he was not a Jew. This 3rd Reich law, accepted without question by all the existing professors, was rescinded only after Glees made a huge fuss.

Fast forward to April 2016. That very same Göttingen University does not extend its contract with Dr Samuel Salzborn, the most prominent academic expert in German antisemitism. They don't give a reason. I assume his lectures became uncomfortable – the truth often is. Dr Salzborn has taught at this place of many skeletons in many cupboards since 2012, when it was thought that to have him on board would enhance their reputation. However, there is only so much today's anti-Semites – 'offenders' – can take.

I do not extend my hand of friendship to the leading, and all the other, players in a Europe of few Jews where anti-

Semitism flourishes, whether driven by the natives or the recent non-European settlers. There are exceptions – like those who install *Stolpersteine* – but they are just that: exceptions who prove the rule.

*Frank Bright,  
Martlesham Heath, Suffolk*

### PRINCE MONOLULU OF THE FALASHAS

Sir – A while ago you published a letter regarding 'Prince Monolulu of the Falashas', as he used to be known.

I was intrigued to learn of the man's real identity (assuming it is correct) as I too had heard that he was a flamboyant bookie from Ethiopia but, prior to learning anything about him, I recall that my father had the following encounter with him:

It could not have been that very long after our arrival in this country that my father came home one day full of excitement about someone who had approached him in London's Underground. The man had looked like an 'Indianer' (German for a Native American or Red Indian) with a head dress of feathers, and addressed him in Yiddish: 'Sie haben doch a Koppelke' (Koppelke is derived from 'Kop' or 'Kopf', German for 'head', meaning good brains). He had then proceeded to offer him a trip on a horse. My father was dumbfounded and even more so when the 'Red Indian' told him he was married to a Jewess from Germany – Frankfurt I think it was but I'm not sure. He was pro-Jewish and anti-Nazi.

I'd be pleased to hear from anyone who can come up with some more facts on this fascinating character. I do recall hearing that 'Prince Monolulu' used to wear a headdress with feathers.

*PS: Housing is found and built for migrants, whilst the weather destroys Britain's homes and hopes!*

*Margarete Stern, London NW3*

## My Voice voted Team of the Year



The team behind the My Voice project has been named as Volunteer Team of the Year in the sixth Jewish Telegraph and Jewish Volunteering Network Manchester Jewish Community Awards.

My Voice is a joint pilot project developed by the Association of Jewish Refugees and The Fed – the leading social care charity for the Jewish Community of North and South Manchester – to record the life stories of Holocaust Survivors and refugees in Manchester, focusing on each participant's entire life, not just their experiences of the Shoah.

Accepting the award in front of a packed audience at the Hilton Suite, Prestwich, project coordinator Hila Kaye said: "What started as a small project with five clients and five volunteers has now expanded into a My Voice community – with over 20 volunteers from a spectrum of the Manchester Jewish community. We are all working together to produce these treasured memories of a generation which is dwindling and may not be with us much longer. Time is running out and it is crucial to acknowledge these stories."

Hila particularly highlighted the work of the volunteers for their generosity, understanding, empathy, compassion, patience and dedication – human traits of the highest calibre. As Hila said, their "... lives will forever be bound by these exceptional stories."

Thanks to its incredible success, there are now plans to start rolling out My Voice in London and Leeds during 2017.

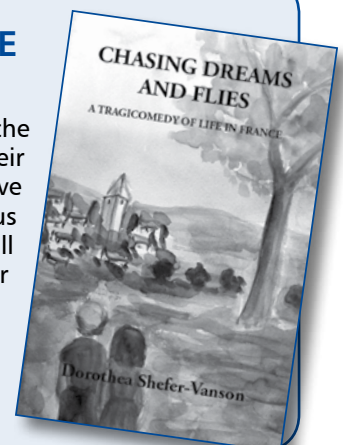
## CHASING DREAMS AND FLIES; A TRAGICOMEDY OF LIFE IN FRANCE

by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Sophie and John decide to retire in France. They find the house of their dreams, but a hostile neighbour and their own ignorance of the French language and culture serve as obstacles to the achievement of their objective. Various characters, both expats and locals, try to help them fulfill their dream. The denouement comes when a neighbour enters their house with murderous intent.

Available as an ebook and in printed form from Amazon, or from the author.

[dorotheashefer@gmail.com](mailto:dorotheashefer@gmail.com)



# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

There is little question that Picasso is the supreme reductionist of the 20th Century.

In the 80 Picasso Portraits exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery his distortion of features eloquently presents the whole person in truncated form. Via various art movements he dallied with in Paris in the early 20th Century, from Surrealism, to Symbolism and Art Nouveau, Picasso fearlessly presented the sexuality of his subjects. He could tear women apart as the master of the jig-saw, but a jig-saw which instantly pieced itself together.



**Woman in a Hat (Olga) by Pablo Picasso, 1935; Musée national d'art moderne Centre Pompidou, Paris. © Succession Picasso/DACS London, 2016**

His paintings dance, they sing, they sparkle with the music of his genius, and understand them or not, they are perfectly assembled. Sometimes you can almost hear a metallic clangor in his works: in others, like the painting of his little daughter Paloma, the curved cheeks of childhood are preserved with little distortion. A realistic portrait of his promoter Gustav Coquillot is full of badinage, bawdy, red-lipped and provocative. In contrast Picasso's German art dealer and protagonist Daniel Henry Kahnweiler is portrayed as a structured cubist mass; you perceive his eyes, his hands his face – within an apparent wall in dull verdant colours.

This work is considered one of Cubism's most outstanding examples, proving how Picasso played with the elements in his life that worked his art; his friendship with Diaghilev, Jean Cocteau, the Ballet Russe, for which he was a designer, and there are line portraits and caricatures of

the composers François Poulenc, Fauré, Igor Stravinsky, and his seaside caricatures of glamorous models and stars.

Caricature was his first childish foray into portraiture, but a room devoted to his wife, Ukrainian ballerina Olga Kokhlovsky, whom he met in 1917, depicts a virtual calendar of their marriage, from her elegant portrait enrobed in brown resembling an Ingres painting, to the breakdown of her features and large brooding eyes, reflecting their actual marital breakdown. No painting describes this better than *Woman in a Hat*, 1935. Olga is reduced to a series of triangles and oblongs, the flourish of a pink feather, the sad eyes and tiny mouth. It is as though she is playing Pierrot to his Columbine. There is even a rough home movie showing the couples' jagged movements as they play with their children and their dogs. There are portraits of other wives, Dora Maar, Françoise Gilot, Jacqueline Picasso, also the photojournalist Lee Miller.

In an early self portrait a pallid 25 year old with huge, dark eyes holds his palette; a reference to his mute sorrow on the death of his idol, Cezanne, who left him with the weight of a powerful artistic legacy. In another he resembles an 18th century dandy in a powdered wig. As France fell to the Nazis in the Second World War, his paintings become darker, the women sadder.

Other women came into his life – models, lovers, wives. The first he lived with was Fernande Oliver, shown in a black mantilla emerging from a vaporous background. The surprise of the show, for me, was an almost Etruscan-like bronze portrait head. Its primitivism is an apt metaphor for Picasso's art.

Until 26 February 2017.

The Ben Uri 'Out of Chaos' tour of 50 works from its Centenary exhibition opens at Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle until **5 February 2017**

## Annely Juda Fine Art

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

**CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**



**Portrait of Olga Picasso by Pablo Picasso, 1923; Private Collection © Succession Picasso/DACS London, 2016**

## REVIEWS

### The world's first scientific superstar

**EINSTEIN: HIS SPACE AND TIMES (JEWISH LIVES)**

by **Steven Gimbel**

*Yale University Press 2015, 208 pp. hardback, £14.99, ISBN 978-0-300-19671-9*

Albert Einstein was a late developer. His early scholastic progress was halting but he rose to become one of the greatest scientists who ever lived. He won the Nobel Prize for Physics although his theory of relativity was branded 'Jewish science' by the Nazis.

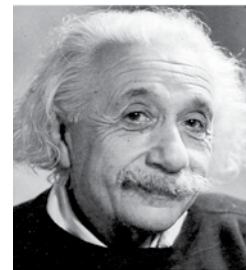
Born in 1879 in Swabia, south-west Germany, Einstein had a multicultural background. In Munich he was the only Jewish boy at a Catholic school, an outsider who would later embrace the *Einspänner* – lone horse – role.

When the family electronics business failed, his parents moved to Italy but Einstein continued his education in Switzerland, renouncing German nationality at 16 in protest against militarism. He focused on professional science but, unable to secure an academic position, became a patent clerk.

Finally he gained his PhD in 1905 for work on molecular dimensions. This was an *annus mirabilis* – the year he published ground-breaking papers on space, time, mass and energy. His career then flourished, with posts in Bonn, Prague and Zurich before becoming a key part of the top physics community at the Prussian Academy of Science and the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, Berlin.

His revolutionary work found widespread acceptance and in 1922 he was awarded a Nobel Prize for services to theoretical physics, particularly the photoelectric effect. He became the world's first scientific superstar.

Einstein was never afraid of controversy with his dress and unruly hair in surrealist fashion. He became a political figure after the First World War, joining the



German Democratic Party, and was an ardent supporter of the Weimar government; both were tarred by conservatives as 'Jewish'. As a Zionist, he toured the USA, combining lectures with promoting the cause, reinforcing this racial identity.

As the political situation in Germany deteriorated he came under increasing attack from the scientific community. In winter he lectured in California and,



when Hitler came to power in January 1933, he decided not to return. His lakeside home in Caputh, Potsdam, was ransacked and his German bank account seized.

Later he wrote to President Roosevelt warning of the dangers of nuclear weapons in German hands, which led to the US developing the atom bomb. As his fame snowballed, he also helped a number of Jewish refugees flee Europe. He was even offered the presidency of Israel after its first leader Chaim Weizmann died in November 1952. In 1955 Einstein himself died an American citizen and global celebrity.

Steven's Gimmel's book is an illuminating and interesting summary. He explains Einstein's theories simply and is enlightening when describing prevalent scientific views and chronicling the great physicist's relationship with his contemporaries.

It would be good to know more about Einstein's personal life and family, particularly his children. Sadly, apart from the cover and frontispiece, there are no illustrations but I really became fascinated by Einstein's life and work whilst reading the book. It certainly whets the appetite to know more!

Janet Weston

## A narrative of exile

### TALES OF LOVING AND LEAVING

by Gaby Weiner

AuthorHouse, 2016, 208 pp.,  
ISBN: 9781524635084

This book is about the fragmentation and subsequent reconstruction of the author's family, torn apart – sometimes too literally – by Nazism. It is also about her own journey of discovery, a journey beset with difficulties.

Weiner describes some of these problems: she started off by knowing very little about her parents and their families; she had difficulties in tracing relatives (especially over 50 years after the end of Nazism); various bureaucracies failed to co-operate in releasing files (MI5 was especially difficult, maybe even more so than the Austrian and Polish bureaucracies); and there was a feeling that on occasions one's Jewishness was not in one's favour. She is seeking to reveal the narrative of her family's exile but such a memoir, involving displacement and dispossession, is inevitably fragmentary.

Then there's the question of how to write such a memoir. Weiner tells us that the book is about her family and their experiences and not about her, but she finds herself – I suspect more than she wanted – writing in the 'I' as she is the unifying factor in this book. And, unsurprisingly, she interprets her parents' lives in part through her own experience of them. She eschews a more academic format – she wants the dead to speak for themselves, yet she inevitably has to act as the translator.

At points, she uses the technique of imagining what her relatives would say or feel: her striving for reconstruction benefits from such a fictional approach.

Even some of the primary sources, such as photos, have to be interpreted. The marriage photo is not what it seems. It appears as a moment of joy but what it reveals to Weiner, among other things, is how important being integrated into British society had become to her parents and their families. She comes to realise how important it was to them to conceal that they were not married and that their daughter, the author, was therefore illegitimate.

When Weiner finds relatives there is no magic moment of togetherness. The degree of Jewish identification separates different branches of her family, as do the widely diverse locations, class and experiences. The dead stand between the living. There's no going back.

Weiner highlights the importance of her Jewish roots through her grandmother, murdered in Auschwitz. Weiner's own mother never spoke of her, and knew little about her. Weiner wants to breathe life back into her grandmother's life and so commemorate her. She writes in some historical detail of Brody, where her grandmother's family came from, and of its earlier Jewish community and imagines their daily experience. She writes similarly about her mother, the third major life in her book, and her mother's trajectory, framed by her life in Vienna, with its own chequered political history during the 1930s and 1940s.

Weiner's father was more political than her mother. In the early twentieth century in Poland, he was involved in many of the political and social movements of the time and was therefore always ready to flee, a pattern which came to dominate – and damage – his personal life, including with his daughter. It was only when she was in her twenties that Wiener started to discover some of her father's many secrets, although some secrets continued to elude her.

Weiner's parents met as exiles in London in 1942, her father having been expelled from Belgium for being a Jew and a Communist. They moved in together and had a daughter (the author). The family's post-war experiences constitute about the last third of the book. The British state did not gladly yield naturalisation to Weiner's mother, and although mother and daughter were close, Weiner's relationship with both parents was deeply marked by their histories. The effects of exile and persecution continue on to the next generation.

Writing such an auto/biography is inevitably fraught with difficulty, which Weiner largely transcends. She is hoping to introduce readers who may know very little about the political circumstances. She therefore provides

significant contextualisation and tries to overcome the consequent slight fragmentation by presenting each person as a separate story. This study is as much autobiography as biography: about how Nazism impacted on ordinary lives and how this leaks into the life of the following generation.

Merilyn Moos

## A tale of women workers

### SNOW FLOWERS: HUNGARIAN JEWISH WOMEN IN AN AIRPLANE FACTORY, MARKKLEEBERG, GERMANY

by Zahava Szász Stessel

Publisher: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., Cranbury, New Jersey (2009).

This book was written in English, but this review is based on a German translation prepared by students and staff at a secondary school in Markkleeberg – a leafy town of 25,000 inhabitants, 4 miles south of Leipzig, where a forced labour camp for women was established in 1944.

To start, the author describes the camp and the women's background. In Markkleeberg 'work' included 12 shifts with dangerous machinery in the Junkers aircraft parts factory, or outside work in the quarry. Many women were only teenagers. Keeping clean was a struggle, shoes were a problem, privacy another. There were, of course, numerous health problems. There was some resistance but the almost total absence of contact with the outside world was stifling.

The book looks at the involvement of the Dresdner and Deutsche Banks in the war effort, how American aircraft experts were attracted to Germany, allowing Junkers to benefit from their experience and research, how the banks were involved in the theft of Jewish property used to finance the concentration camps, and the overall exploitation of its forced labourers.

A whole chapter is dedicated to the camp commandant and his underlings. Of particular interest is the recruitment and behaviour of female wardens, sexual relationships included.

The women tried to keep sane through cultural activities. One managed to publish a book as early as 1946 based on notes hidden in a cupboard next to 'her' machine. Songs were composed and learned by heart because of lack of paper.

One girl had a candle which was lit on Friday evenings but quickly extinguished after the blessings. Inmates were relieved when the rebbetzen told them to eat their regular lunch of soup on Yom Kippur, under these extreme conditions.

German civilians occupied various posts such as engineer and technician. Some dared to leave some food for the

continued on page 10

## Jewish Designers Commemorated By The V&A

Thirty Jewish émigré designers, many of whom escaped the Nazi regime in the 1930s or survived the persecution of the Second World War, have been chosen as the focus for a special project by the V&A's archive department.

The project by V&A's Archive of Art and Design (AAD), the UK's leading collection of archives of applied art and design, will raise the visibility, through cataloguing, digitisation and public engagement, of the archives of thirty Jewish émigré designers in its care. Bringing with them a modernist outlook, these designers' work for large and established institutions such as the General Post Office, London Transport, and British Overseas Air Corporation (BOAC) reached huge audiences and helped to shape British design in the mid – and late – 20th century.

According to Archivist/Project Manager Alexia Kirk: "The personalities of these men and women, who all made their homes in Britain in the 1940s, come alive through their working and personal papers. Included in the project are the archives of well-known designers such as George Him, an illustrator, graphic and exhibition designer, whose work on high

profile campaigns for clients including Schweppes contrasts with more personal projects, such as his unrealised illustrated book *The Life and Death of the Warsaw Ghetto*."

Other, lesser known designers, such as the textile designer Trude Neu, whose archive includes personal recollections of her arrival in Britain in addition to her bold and colourful design work, will be brought into the public eye for the first time. The V&A is delighted to be able increase the online presence and accessibility of these archives, and those of their fellow émigrés, thanks to the generosity of the David Berg Foundation, New York, who funded this work.

On 27 February the V&A will host a visit for members of the AJR to its Blythe House Archive & Library Study Room in February 2017. This will be a great chance to hear more about the life and work of designers included in the project, including Hans Schleger, George Him, Jacqueline Groag and Gaby Schreiber,

and to see a selection of their designs, photographs and papers. See advert for full details and please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk) to reserve a space.



'Address your letters plainly', poster, Hans Schleger, 1942. AAD/2008/11/2/41. ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Design for colouring book, Trude Neu, Hans Schleger, ca. 1930s. AAD/2000/7/53. ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

**AJR GROUPS EVENT**  
**MONDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2017**  
 Victoria & Albert Museum Archives  
 Jewish Emigre designers' archives  
 project at the V&A



We have been invited by the V&A Archives to help them improve the visibility of the archives of 30 Jewish émigré designers held by the V&A's Archive of Art and Design – see article to the left of this advert.

The visit will take place at the V&A's building in West Kensington, Blythe House, which is where the collections of the Archive of Art and Design are stored. The visit will last approximately 2 hours, followed by refreshments. Staff from the Archives will talk about the project itself, and how they are delivering catalogues, images and articles online.

We will arrange travel by minibus, arriving at 10.30am and leaving by 12.30pm. We will then have lunch in a local restaurant before returning home.

**Places are limited due to space. For details and booking please contact Susan Harrod on [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk) or 020 8385 3070**

## Reviews continued from pg 9

Jewish machine operators. There were also prisoners of war, volunteers and forced labourers from all over Europe.

A group of French political prisoners refused to support the German war industry. Their sabotage had a national and psychological value. They worked outside the camp boundaries, on roads or in fields where they could 'acquire' a few onions or carrots. These could be bartered for margarine or a slice of bread. They picked the small leaves of dandelions and ate them as salad. 'We all shared the same conditions, but there was a difference: they (the French) would eventually return home while our return was depressingly uncertain.'

As the air raids on Markkleeberg became more frequent, smaller factories were adapted for the production of Junkers' engines. One had been a chocolate factory, a 20 minutes' walk through town. The inmates were

escorted by guards and had to wear coats over their work clothing, to provide a measure of 'normality'. Most of the inhabitants ignored the women. After the war few would admit that they had known or heard about forced labourers.

When there was an air raid the Jewesses were not permitted to use the shelter but had to remain in the street. But the Soviet and American armies were getting ever closer and on Sunday 8 April 1945 the guards did not appear. The next day no work was done and within a few days some of the barbed wire surrounding the camp had been cut. But although it was now possible to leave the camp, many chose to remain together.

On 15 April 1,200 Hungarian Jewesses and 250 French female political prisoners were sent on a 'death march' to Theresienstadt. Their journey is

described in detail: the effect of air attacks by allied planes, the execution of ill and handicapped women, how the French women (mal)treated the Hungarian Jewesses, the effect of the rain, the continuous and demoralising feeling of hunger, the reaction of the German population. Only 685 women were still alive by the time they reached Theresienstadt 16 days later.

Those who had remained in the Markkleeberg camp were liberated by American soldiers on 18 April.

Finally, the author deals with her return to Hungary and life after the war, followed by 50 pages of reproduced documents containing the names of the Markkleeberg women forced labourers, those who made it to Theresienstadt, and the songs composed. It is a lasting testimony to all these women, but it is not pleasant reading.

Henri Obstfeld

## SHORT STORY

## The Rains Came

by Peter Fraenkel

The driver shook his head. "Dangerous. Too dangerous. You drown!"

We were facing a raging torrent. It would have been foolhardy to try to ford it.

The start of the rainy season had not been expected quite so early. Mrs Strauss might have postponed our trip but she knew that we two youngsters – her son and I – would have been very disappointed. For our vacations we had been promised a holiday in the 'real Africa' – lions and pythons and all. We were on our way to the remote farm near Nega Nega which her husband was managing.

Mail trains did not stop at minor sidings like Nega Nega so we travelled by goods train. The last wagon had one small coupé which could seat three passengers – white passengers, of course. That is what our corner of the British Empire was like in 1944.

Just before we reached our siding the engine driver gave three short hoots. We picked up our suitcases and climbed down to the bare soil of Africa. The engine gave one last short farewell hoot and departed for the south, abandoning us in the bush. There was not a soul around. The station was nothing but an open-sided corrugated iron shed. Farmers had left large churns of cream in it. The first goods train going north would be picking them up.

Mrs Strauss had been nervous: would her husband have remembered to send transport? The transport arrived a little later. It consisted of a two-wheeled ox cart drawn by four oxen. The driver greeted us. Mrs Strauss addressed him as Kumbilwa. With him came a herd boy – a lad of eight or nine.

"Plenty rain!" said Kumbilwa. "Too plenty!"

"But you got across the river?" she asked.

"This morning – early."

For almost an hour we jolted along a rough earth road. The little herd boy walked at the head, guiding the oxen. The driver called encouragement to the beasts and from time to time flicked his whip at them.

Then we had reached this raging torrent.

"You can get us across?" she had asked.

He shook his head. "I promised Bwana Strauss to get you to him safely."

We considered going back to Nega Nega station.

"When is the next train back?"

I suspect Kumbilwa had no idea but was reluctant to admit it. "Tomorrow," he said vaguely.

The idea of a night in that open-sided shack sitting on cream churns did not appeal. I had noticed there was not even a bench.

"Maboonu?" suggested Kumbilwa. It was the term that Africans used for

Afrikaners – perhaps a corruption of the word "Boers". Was he suggesting we ask a nearby Afrikaner for shelter?

It started to drizzle.

"I've met this Afrikaner farmer", said Mrs Strauss. "He came to our farm once to borrow salt. Very poor people. Van Tonder is the name, I think."

The driver nodded. "Van Tonder." Then a chuckle overcame him: "You like nsima?"

The little herd boy laughed out aloud.

Mrs Strauss looked puzzled but her son and I understood: many Africans thought it hilarious that there were whites so poor that they ate maize meal porridge, just as they, the Africans, did. This lost the whites the status of belonging to the master race.

The driver called instructions to the herd boy and a little later we turned off on a side track. Eventually we reached a farmstead. Dogs barked furiously and a tall bearded man emerged, carrying a rifle. He greeted us in heavily accented English. Mrs Strauss explained our predicament.

"Come in," he said "Come and dry yourself."

He and his wife placed chairs for us near a warm cast iron kitchen range. A daughter, aged perhaps ten, prepared sweet coffee for us, using bottled liquid coffee. "If you're lucky the stream will be down by tomorrow morning," said Mr van Tonder "but if there is more rain during the night I don't know. Anyway, neighbours, you're welcome to stay as long as you like."

"Neighbours?" she queried, "Our farm is eight miles from yours!"

"To an Afrikaner you're neighbours. Yes, we like the wide open veld. If we see the smoke of a neighbour's chimney we trek on. Too crowded! Or we used to do in the good old days. Besides – the people of the Bible are always welcome." Then, after a hesitation, he added "but you'd be welcome even if you were English!"

"You don't have much love for them?"

"No. Nor would you if your mother had died in one of their concentration camps. My father always said the English put ground glass into her food. I myself, I don't know. I grew up in the same camp and I only got – pardon my language – I only got the shits."

The Boer War, almost half a century earlier, was still very much alive for them: "We lost our farm. We lost our cattle. They burnt our house. We lost everything. When my old man came back from fighting those Rooineks he found ruins, only ruins, so we gave up on the old Transvaal and trekked north."

As it got dark they lit a small paraffin lamp which barely illuminated half the

kitchen table. In the near-darkness we became drowsy early. They served us fried potatoes flavoured with bits of sun-dried meat. It was not appetising but we were hungry. Mrs Strauss said the boys had better be put to bed early. They led us to a room which their daughter had vacated for us.

There were two beds and a hurricane lamp. Young Strauss, they said, would have to share a bed with his mother. Fortunately their older daughter was spending the night with friends. I soon fell asleep despite a periodic "ping" which puzzled me. Later I awoke to see the little girl sneak in and removed a bucket. It had been placed to catch drips leaking from the roof. She emptied it outside and brought it back reporting that the rain had now stopped. I noticed that her English was very much better than that of her parents. She must have been attending an English-language school.

Next morning she came again bringing a jug of water and a basin. She showed us a drain in the concrete floor into which we could empty our water. She pulled out a coil of wire which had blocked the drain hole.

"Put it back firmly. It stops snakes from getting in. My dad killed one here ... right here". She pointed to bullet damage on the floor near my bed.

Had she told us the evening before I suspect I would not have slept so well.

I was sitting on the edge of my bed putting on my shoes when there was a rumbling sound and suddenly part of wall of our room collapsed. Fortunately it fell outwards. From my seat I could look up to the morning sky and the rising sun. All three van Tonders rushed in to make sure we were not hurt. She turned on her husband berating him in rapid Afrikaans that I had difficulty in following. I gathered she had long been warning him that the outer wall was not stable. I had not observed, the previous evening, that the house was not built of burnt brick but of adobe – a material more suited to the dry climate of the Sahel than to the sharp seasonal rains of subtropical Africa.

They rushed us to the kitchen and served us a breakfast of maize meal porridge – just as Kumbilwa the driver had warned. I found it more palatable than I had expected.

We found Kumbilwa waiting outside. I never discovered where he had spent the night. He said he had already been out to check on the stream. It was fordable now provided we came before the next downpour.

We climbed into our cart. The oxen were already inspanned.

We repeated our thanks to van Tonder. He waved off our little speech. "No Afrikaner ever refused hospitality to a traveller."

So far as I knew this was true – provided, of course, the traveller was white.



### AVIATION HERITAGE MUSEUM OUTING Spitfire Flight

Paul Lang led a very interesting outing to the Heritage Museum in Maidenhead. The group particularly enjoyed operating the Spitfire Simulator, giving all of the thrill with none of the risk! We also had a lovely lunch in the museum restaurant.

*Anthony & Helene Joseph*

### BIRMINGHAM Lucky Escapes

Fred Austin shared excerpts from his memoir *Czech and Mate*, including his escapes from Ostrova, from a near plane crash, and from his dear wife Margaret when he accepted a Headmastership in Lancashire!

*Esther Rinkoff*

### BOOK CLUB Dual Citizenship?

There was a large turnout at Joseph's Book Store where, as well as discussing books, conversation turned animatedly to whether it would be right to apply for German or Austrian dual citizenship following Brexit. Most people felt that it may be an asset for their children and grandchildren. The next book will be George Orwell's *Down and Out in London and Paris*.

*Eva Stellman*

### BRADFORD Sweet Memories

Robert Winterflood led the group through the world's cocoa plantations during a fun presentation on how the bean becomes chocolate. The jury is still out as to which is the 'best' chocolate in the world, with fond memories for some of Ackermann's.

*Stephen Tendlow*

### BRIGHTON & HOVE 250 Years Old

Esther Rinkoff read a newspaper article about German Jews having their German citizenship restored. The large group all agreed it was wrong to do so, considering the circumstances which brought us to the UK. We also discussed the 250th anniversary of Brighton's Jewish community.

*Ceska Abrahams*

### BROMLEY Lively Debate

A full house for the last meeting of 2016 when the group discussed the controversial topic of applying for an EU passport. Many different opinions emerged!

*Esther Rinkoff*

### CARDS & GAMES CLUB Monthly Meets

Great lunch meeting in November with, as ever, a good choice of games to play. Look out for future dates.

*David Lang*

### EALING The Spy Who Loved Us

Acclaimed author Alex Gertis talked about his espionage thrillers set in the Second World War, giving a fascinating insight into life within Nazi Europe.

*Leslie Sommer*

### EDINBURGH Customs & Traditions

Eva Baer hosted a lovely afternoon focusing on customs and traditions, prompting stories from long ago. Everyone enjoyed the superb spread and was in absolutely no rush to go home!

*Agnes Isaacs*

### EDGWARE Lox And Schmaltz

The group watched a very charming film about a Jewish immigrant family arriving penniless in New York in the early 19th century. From selling herrings from a barrel on the roadside they went on to open a high quality smoked fish shop, now run by the fourth generation of the Russ family.

*Susan & David Jacobs*

### FILM CLUB Double Bill Next

We watched *The Woman in Gold*, a moving portrayal of Maria Altman's reclamation of her family's Klimt painting. Next up on 6 Feb will be Churchill's *German Army* and *Eva Sommer-Hertz*.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### GLASGOW

#### If It Is Not Impossible

**B**arbara Winton – daughter of the late Sir Nicholas Winton – attracted a packed audience at Giffnock Synagogue at a joint AJR and Scottish Jewish Archives Centre event. Barbara, who has published a biography on her father, gave a detailed and emotional recollection of his life.

### GLASGOW Chanukah Came Early

One of the highlights of the Glasgow AJR group's 2016 calendar was their very early Chanukah lunch, when many families – including several 'second generations' – enjoyed a delicious lunch accompanied by a wonderful strings trio, including Eric Levin on the violin.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### GLASGOW BOOK CLUB Shadows Of The Wind

Carlos Ruiz Zafon's classic book, which has been translated into 45 languages,

was the subject for the November meeting. The group all agreed that the book – which is based in the old city of Barcelona, the 'cemetery of lost books' – is a complex but highly enjoyable and worthwhile read.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### ILFORD The Name Behind TV

Lesley Urbach spoke about Sir Isaac Schoenberg, who was knighted for his service in helping to invent the television, alongside the more famous Baird.

*Meta RoseNeil*

### KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH Deputies Views

Over 50 members had the pleasure of hearing Jonathan Arkush, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, talk about their work to combat antisemitism, and also respond to questions on inter-faith marriages, faith schools and the Labour Party.

*Susan Harrod*

### LEEDS Make It A Match?

Retired lawyer and Judge Ian Vellins gave an overview on how the musical and film "Fiddler on the Roof" was adopted from Sholem Aleichem's Tevye stories. The audience was fascinated to hear how the stage musical and the award winning film didn't always match up to the original stories.

*Wendy Bott*

### LIVERPOOL Northern Kristallnacht Service



Edwina Curry speaking at the event  
© Karen Hermann Wright

**L**auren Klyne shared a moving account of her grandmother Ruth Edwards' tales of Kristallnacht in Vienna, which changed her life and that of her family forever. Other speakers included AJR finance director David Kaye, and former MP Edwina Currie, who recalled a story told to her by a female resident at Nightingale House London who was living in Berlin at the time of Kristallnacht.

*Susanne Green*

### NEWCASTLE Chanukah Lunch

The crowd particularly enjoyed the Klein Klezmer Band, who came all the way from Edinburgh, and Brenda's lunch was superb. We were delighted to have our Newcastle Volunteers present at the event.

*Agnes Isaacs*

## JANUARY GROUP EVENTS

<b>Pinner</b>	5 January	Keith Simmons – Prison Chaplain – A view behind bars
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	10 January	Social get-together and New Year catch up
<b>Ilford</b>	11 January	Social get-together
<b>Glasgow Book Club</b>	12 January	Social
<b>Brighton</b>	16 January	Social get-together and New Year catch up
<b>Edgware</b>	17 January	'Major Ginsburg – tales of a post-war Jewish Army Chaplain' – Dr Rob Ginsburg
<b>Radlett</b>	18 January	Social get-together and New Year catch up
<b>Harrogate/York</b>	25 January	Social
<b>Prestwich/Whitefield</b>	30 January	Social
<b>North West London</b>	30 January	Social get-together and New Year catch up
<b>Leeds CF</b>	31 January	Social
<b>Book Club</b>	1 February	Discussion and Tea
<b>Ilford</b>	1 February	Harvey Bratt of UJIA
<b>Pinner</b>	2 February	Dr John Matline – American Jewish Gangsters

### NORTH LONDON Historic Buildings

David Tomback of Historic England (formerly English Heritage) took us on a whistlestop tour of Jewish buildings throughout history, from desert tents through to ornate shuls and Israeli sky scrapers.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### NORTH WEST LONDON 1066 And All That

Nick Dobson spoke about the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, which began at 9am on 14 October 1066, with a break for lunch, and ended at 6.30pm after Harold had perished. William was crowned in the new Westminster Abbey on 25 December 1066 and our monarchy has been evolving ever since.

*David Lang*

### NORWICH A Thousand Years Of History

A fascinating meeting looking at the Jews of Norwich, from their arrival in 1066 right through to the building of the present day synagogue in 1948. The talk covered the Jewish massacre in 1190 – the same year as in York, riots in Lincoln and the Edict of Expulsion – and their readmittance by Cromwell in 1656, as well as the destruction of the 1840 synagogue by German bombers in 1942.

*Frank Bright*

### OXFORD Great Social

A lovely meeting in Abingdon catching up with each other's news

and discussing current affairs. All members of the group confirmed their commitment to keeping the group running and the next meeting will be in March 2017.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### PINNER Agatha Uncovered

Geoff Bowden delivered a fascinating insight into the life and disguises of Agatha Christie, who wrote poetry alongside novels, many of which have been turned into films and plays.

*Henri Obstfeld*

### PRESTWICH Lunch was Trumped

Not surprisingly, the US elections topped the agenda for the delicious 14 November lunch hosted by Ruth and Werner Lachs.

*Wendy Bott*

### RADLETT A Good Giggle

One of our members, who has a large record library, hosted us at his flat and shared some light and entertaining pieces of music, finishing with some outrageously funny performances.

*Fritz Starer / Esther Rinkoff*

### SHEFFIELD What a Load of Junk

Members were treated to a talk given by Edward Patnick on his life in the 'junk' business. Edward's most unusual finds over the years include a soap box containing a pair of false teeth and another box containing rare coins and a gold bangle which incorporated a slim gold pen to mark a 'dance card'. The

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### 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

fascinating afternoon was topped with delicious carrot and cheesecake made by shul president Frada Wilenski.

*Wendy Bott*

### WEMBLEY Tower Of Babel?

Wembley members enjoyed a lively catch up during their last meeting of 2016. Current affairs led to talking about foreign languages and we discovered that some of our members are fluent in three or four languages and had careers as translators and interpreters. A very clever group indeed. We look forward to meeting up in 2017.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

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**LOOKING FOR:**



The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and other people looking for help in particular subjects. Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you think you can help.

**Yiddish speaker**

Roger Voss is looking for some help in translating some old family letters from the 1930's that are written in Yiddish script. He would love to know what they are saying.

vosses@tiscali.co.uk

**Rosa Koch**

Freya Leinemann is a student in Leipzig who is writing a dissertation about a publisher during the Third Reich. She is particularly interested in receiving information about Rosa Koch, who witnessed the wedding in Hampstead in 1943 between Otto Heinrich Scholz and Meta Recha Muller.

freya.leinemann@web.de

**Victor E Roth**

Terry Roth is hoping to find more information about his father Victor, who was on the kindertransport from Vienna to London in mid 1939. After staying with a sponsor family Victor was interred and sent to Montreal in Canada.

terrypw@colba.net

**Milenka Jackson**

Nurit Grossman is visiting London from Israel this month to research his thesis on unknown rescuers of the Czech Kindertransport. He is interested in all information on this subject and is especially keen to contact Milenka Jackson in response to a letter published in this journal in 2008.

Grossman.nurit@gmail.com

**Austrian or Yiddish Translation**

Anthony Mair is helping to translate a collection of letters written by a Jewish couple who fled from Vienna to Antwerp in 1939. There are a few expressions in the letter he needs help with, as they are either in Austrian dialect or Yiddish.

antoby@tackleway.com

**Dr H E Cohn and Liselotte Duschinsky, nee Nathan**

Dr Cohn was born Attendorm in Germany. He left before the war and lived at 23 Highfield Gardens, London NW11. He had a brother called Arthur.

Liselotte's last known address was 17 Wessex Gardens London NW11 92S.

Kathyh.cohen@gmail.com

**Peter Paul Kronthal**

Sandra Schmidt is looking for info on her great uncle, who came to London from Berlin in September 1937 and lived in Finchley. He worked as an art dealer until his death in 1967.

Sandra.schmidy@gmx.eu

**Deciphering old German script**

Mr T Cohen has family letters and postcards dating back to 1899 which he needs help with translating.

TWC230442@aol.com

*If you would like to place a search in a future issue of the AJR Journal then please email editorial@ajr.org.uk, including the words SEARCH REQUEST in the title of your email.*

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## OBITUARIES

**Sir Ralph Kohn, born 9 December 1927 in Leipzig; died 11 November 2016 in London**

Parallel careers in the twin fields of science and music were the life-long passions of Sir Ralph Kohn, who died just short of his 89th birthday. A baritone who sang with leading orchestras and accompanists, he was a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Royal Academy of Music, received several honorary degrees, and in 2010 was knighted for services to science, music and charity. Throughout his life he retained a vital devotion to his Jewish heritage, in his family life with his beloved wife Zahava (nee Kanarek), a Belsen survivor whom he married in 1963, his pursuit of Jewish learning, with regular Talmudic study, and his support for Israel.

His golden wedding anniversary in 2013 epitomized his broad multifaceted identity: Klezmer performed by Shir, Bach played by a string ensemble of the Royal Academy of Music, with an eloquent toast by its Principal, moving speeches by three generations of the family, and words of Talmudic wisdom and wit in Ralph's inimitable style.

Kohn was born in Leipzig, the youngest of five siblings. His father Markus Kohn was a self-made textile merchant, from a small town Kalusz, in Galicia, and his mother Lena (nee Aschheim) was born in Berlin. Ralph was born soon after the tragic death from pneumonia of their middle son, Shimon. On the advice of the famous Chortkover Rebbe in Vienna, of whom his father Markus was a follower, the baby was named Raphael, meaning 'God will heal': in hindsight it was a prophecy of Kohn's subsequent contributions in the fields of medicine and music.

From his mother Lena he imbibed a fluency in Hochdeutsch (high German) and German literature, evident in his clear

diction when singing German Lieder; his father shared his love of both opera and Chazzanut, on occasion hosting the renowned Yossele Rosenblatt on his Leipzig visits.

The rise of Hitler forced the Kohns to move twice, first to Holland in 1933, then in 1940 to England. In Amsterdam Ralph Kohn attended a Jewish school, learned Dutch and attended concerts by the Concertgebouw Orchestra. He also studied violin with Sam Tromp, who then survived Terezin: the pair reconnected after the war.

Ralph's violin was left behind in Amsterdam when the Kohn family escaped on 14 May, 1940, the day Holland capitulated to Germany. On board the SS Bodegraven along with the last group of Kindertransportees, they sailed hours before the Nazis reached Amsterdam. Arriving at Liverpool with only his father's tallit and tefillin, they settled in Manchester. Ralph excelled at Salford Grammar School, gaining a scholarship to study pharmacology at Manchester University. His research on histamine led to a prestigious award to study at the Instituto Superiore di Sanita in Rome with two Nobel prize winners, the pharmacologist Daniel Bovet and the pioneer of penicillin, Sir Ernst Chain FRS. Chain was also an accomplished pianist and years later Kohn and Chain would frequently perform together in inspiring charity recitals.

In 1958 Kohn left academia to join the pharmaceutical industry, initially in London as Head of Pharmacology for Smith, Kline and French, and then as MD of the Swiss Robapharm. The 1960s saw dramatic developments in drug

therapy and Kohn realised the need for high quality independent drug testing services. In

1969 he set up his own company, *Advisory Services* (later *Harley Street Holdings Ltd*), focusing on this. Its international success won Kohn the Queen's Award for Export Achievement in 1990.

In 1991 the Kohn Foundation was launched, generously supporting a variety of projects including the Osteoporosis Foundation, the Hadassah and Sha'are Tzedek hospitals in

Israel, the Jewish Music Institute and the Royal Society. It also contributed to many international projects relating to Bach. In 2013 Kohn received the Medal of Honour of Bach's home city of Leipzig. This, plus his 2015 Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, represented a poignant and symbolic closure of the circle of the journey he had taken as a Jewish refugee.

From the 1990s Ralph sang in recitals and recordings, and forged a close partnership with the famous accompanist Graham Johnson. They recorded several CDs featuring Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Mahler, and jointly appeared in many interviews and book launches, including Kohn's final public appearance at JW3 in September when he discussed his autobiography *Recital of a Lifetime*.

He is survived by Zahava, daughters Hephzibah, Michelle and Maxine, their husbands and five grandchildren.

*(A fuller version of this obituary originally appeared in the JC on 25 November 2016.)*

**Malcolm Miller**



Photo: Martin Shaw

**Eugene Black, born Munkacs 9 February 1928, died Leeds 26 September 2016**

Eugene Black was born Jenő Schwarz in what was then the Czechoslovakian town of Munkacs. His parents were Bela Bence and Leni and he recalled growing up in a prosperous family and helping his father in his tailoring business. His main interest was football, although this was indelibly linked to the day in May 1944 when, returning home from a game, he and his parents and two of his sisters, Paula and Jolan, were arrested and transported in cattle wagons, along with thousands of other Hungarian Jews, to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The journey took three days. On arrival he was separated from his family; he never saw them again.

Eugene was selected for slave labour and sent first to the 'Little Camp' in Buchenwald Concentration Camp. After a short stay he was taken with 1,000 Hungarian Jews to the concentration camp of Dora Mittelbau. Here he endured terrible inhumane conditions

and was made to work long hours in the underground rocket factory tunnels carrying stone and debris with little food and no sanitation. By November 1944 he became seriously ill and, following treatment by a German doctor, who in all likelihood saved his life, was sent to a smaller camp nearby called Harzungen, where he remained a slave labourer but on so-called 'light duties'. He remembered long marches to places of work walking through villages and being spat at and abused by the local civilian population.

Finally in March 1945 he was again transported in a cattle wagon with fellow prisoners over many days with no food or water to northern Germany and then on a forced march to the infamous Bergen-Belsen camp. Liberation by the British army occurred on 15 April. Had it been even a little later he would in all probability not have survived.

Yet survive he did and, after a short period working as an interpreter for the British army,

he travelled in 1949 to England and married Annie, whom he had met in Germany whilst also working for the army. They raised four children – two boys and two girls – and he gradually worked his way up in Marks and Spencer from a porter in Manchester to a senior management role across the north of England. Those were arguably his happiest days, with a happy family life and a burgeoning career in what was becoming the prime retailer in the UK. His love of football remained, and he would happily talk about the historic victory of the Hungarian national side over England at Wembley in the 1950s.

Life however is seldom straightforward. In the 1990s he, like many of his generation, faced up to the challenge of confronting his experience. After giving his testimony for the first time to the Shoah Foundation, he became an active member of the Leeds-based Holocaust Society Friendship Association and undertook regular and sometimes taxing visits to schools, colleges, rotary clubs and twice to events organised by the Northern Ireland Police

*continued on page 16* ➔





## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### A Glimmer of Light

In these dark days of doom and gloom my spirits were unexpectedly raised when I attended an evening event in Jerusalem with music provided by young people. The group of well-intentioned (and mostly well-off, though I don't consider myself in that category) ladies to which I belong holds a musical evening once a year, though our monthly meetings are held in the daytime. We usually meet in one another's homes, hear a lecture on an interesting subject and then tuck into refreshments provided by the hosts.

This year the music was provided by pupils of the Jerusalem School for Music and Arts, also known as Hassadna (the Workshop). The school was established in 1973 to provide musical instruction to children in Jerusalem regardless of their financial and social conditions. The idea behind the establishment of the school was that all children are endowed with musical ability, and that this can be developed in the appropriate framework. The school is currently housed in an elementary school in Jerusalem's German Colony, but plans are currently afoot for the construction of a building of their own. The school is funded largely by private donations but is also supported by the Jerusalem Foundation, which provides scholarships for gifted students from disadvantaged families, including some from the Ethiopian community.

And so, as we sat in comfortable armchairs in the elegant home of one of our members, a group of youngsters, mainly teenagers, trooped in, laughing and chattering, bringing a spirit of youthful enthusiasm into our rather staid gathering. When the music began, introduced by the energetic and very young-looking head of the school, our jaws dropped. Each one of the youngsters, whether Sabras or from Ethiopian families (who could also be Sabras) played classical music (a movement from Schumann's cello concerto, a movement from a Mozart violin concerto, a piece for clarinet and piano by an Israeli composer who

is also a member of the staff at the school) played to a level of excellence comparable to anything attained by professional artists. To see and hear these young people attacking the music with maturity and enthusiasm was enough to restore my faith in the future of humanity.

The head told us that a number of the pupils, including some originally from Ethiopia, have served in the IDF in the framework of the outstanding musicians unit, for which there is enormous competition and entry to which requires an extremely high level of proficiency. The young woman who played the cello for us is in the course of applying to participate in that programme, and it seems to me that she is bound to be a shoe-in.

The school also conducts an outreach programme, going into first – and second-year classes at elementary schools all over Jerusalem to identify children with musical ability, providing them with free tuition in the musical instrument of their choice. Some of these children, now in their teens, were among those who entertained us. The pinnacle of the evening came when two of their number, accompanied on the piano by one of their teachers, played a jazz duet on clarinet and saxophone. Though jazz is not my favourite form of music, it was delightful to watch the two boys (aged 13 and 15), from very different backgrounds, playing the music so well and with such harmonious coordination, seeming to be both physically and mentally engrossed in the music.

To see and hear these young people tackling the music with maturity and enthusiasm was enough to restore my faith in the future of humankind.

### Eugene Black Obituary continued from pg 15

Service, to describe his experience and to entreat his audiences to fight intolerance and oppression. He inspired thousands of young people at home and abroad.

He also made visits back to Germany and Poland, including in 2007 when, accompanied by his eldest daughter Lilian, to the German Nazi archives in Bad Arolsen, where to his shock he discovered the fate of his two sisters. They had not as he assumed perished at Auschwitz but had themselves been selected for slave labour and sent to a sub-camp of Buchenwald at Gelsenkirchen. They worked at an oil refinery carrying materials from the canal banks to the factory. In September 1944, along with 150 other Hungarian-Jewish women, they were killed in an RAF bombing raid having been denied access by the SS to the air raid shelters.

Eugene never returned to Munkacs, which is now in Ukraine but Lilian did some years ago and even found the original family home.

Eugene died peacefully with his surviving children close by but, sadly, both his dear wife Annie and youngest child Gloria pre-deceased him. He loved life and his family, including a large extended group of in-laws who had welcomed him when he first came to England. He treasured his memories of spending time in Northumberland with them as a refugee, an experience he would recall when sadly the rhetoric of recent times about the refugee 'problem' has at times dominated the media. He will be greatly missed by so many who loved his spirit, humour and sheer love of life – a true survivor.

Frank Griffiths

### THEATRE OUTING

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Arthur Kipps, an orphan, is an overworked draper's assistant at Shalford's Bazaar, Folkestone, at the turn of the 20th century. He is a charming but ordinary young man who, along with his fellow apprentices, dreams of a better and more fulfilling world, but he likes his fun just like any other – except not quite. When he unexpectedly inherits a fortune that propels him into high society, it confuses everything he thought he knew about life.

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