



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Philip Roth and the Jews

Philip Roth, who passed away in May, had two great subjects: America and Jews. America dominated his late great novels in the 1990s and early 2000s, what many critics called his "American Turn": *I Married a Communist, American Pastoral, The Human Stain* and *The Plot Against America*. These novels took on the great subjects of post-war American history from the 1930s and McCarthyism to Vietnam, Clinton, race and political correctness. According to the many tributes that followed his death these novels established him as America's greatest writer of the late 20th century.



President Barack Obama presents the National Humanities Medal to Philip Roth in a 2011 ceremony at the White House

But early on Roth was best known for his writings about American Jews. It was the controversies around some of these writings that made his reputation in the 1960s.

Roth was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1933 and was formed by the New Deal, the Second World War and the growing

affluence of Jewish immigrants who had moved from the Lower East Side to the suburbs. This experience set him aside from older writers like Bellow and Malamud.

Roth's first book was *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959) but his breakthrough *Continued on page 2*

THANK YOU!

In this issue we especially thank some of the hundreds of volunteers who physically help AJR members with various tasks and skills.

We should also thank all the AJR members who write articles and letters for the AJR Journal. Your input is always very much appreciated and helps to provide a great read.

If there is anything you would particularly like to see covered in the AJR Journal please let us know.

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Social Services Sue Kurlander
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AJR Journal

Editor Jo Briggs
Editorial Assistant Lilian Levy
Contributing Editor David Herman
Secretarial/Advertisements Karin Pereira

Philip Roth and the Jews (cont.)

novel was the outrageous *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969). These books caught the mood of a new Jewish voice in American writing, what one critic called the "new Jewish visibility". In the late 1950s and '60s a new generation of American comedians like Woody Allen and Lenny Bruce, new young writers such as Roth and a new wave of films like *The Graduate* and Mel Brooks' *The Producers* were funny, irreverent and more open about their Jewishness.

A leading American critic called *Goodbye, Columbus* (later made into a film) "the first, really telling report from the 3rd generation." He meant that Roth's stories were about young Jews growing up in the 1950s and '60s, not immigrants from the old country or even their children. The biographer James Atlas wrote, "Roth represented a later stage in the drama of Jewish assimilation. Where Bellow's resolutely American-born characters still bore traces of their immigrant parentage – they spoke Yiddish, were city bred, struggled to decipher a new world – Roth's grew up in the suburbs." "Green lawns, white Jews," one of Roth's characters remarks about *Goodbye, Columbus* some thirty years later, in *Operation Shylock*. "The Jewish success story in its heyday, all new and thrilling and funny and fun".

Roth's young heroes, characters like Neil Klugman and Alexander Portnoy, were funny, in search of sex, and had plenty of attitude. "Why are you so nasty?" Brenda asks Klugman. It's a question many readers, especially older Jewish readers, also asked.

In a later work, a letter addressed to "The Enemy of the Jews" is sent to the book's publisher; the mail room knows where to forward it. The same would have been true of Roth for some years. For more than a decade he was the *enfant terrible* of Jewish-American writing.

But there was another side to the stories in *Goodbye, Columbus*. *Eli, The Fanatic* was one of the first great American stories to address the Holocaust and tells the story of how a Holocaust survivor

wants to set up an orphanage in the heart of assimilated American suburbia. He meets huge resistance but what is so extraordinary about the story is that the title character, Eli Peck, a respectable and very American lawyer, who starts by representing the community, finds himself identifying with this more traditional kind of Judaism and becomes the "fanatic" of the title.

This is what many of the recent tributes to Roth have missed. He didn't just write about women and sex, America from Lindbergh to Monica Lewinsky, or play clever literary tricks. He wrote some fascinating works about fictional European Jewish survivors who come to America after the war: Mr. Tzoref in *Eli the Fanatic*, but also, famously, Kafka and Anne Frank.

In 1973 Roth published a story, "*I Always Wanted You to Admire My Fasting; or, Looking at Kafka*", in which he asks what if Kafka had not died of TB but had come to America and lived as a middle-aged Hebrew school teacher?

In *The Ghost Writer* (1979), the first part of Roth's four-part series, *Zuckerman Bound*, a young writer, Nathan Zuckerman, goes to stay with a famous writer, E.I. Lonoff, modelled on Malamud, and meets a young woman, Amy Bellette, who turns out to be Anne Frank, who has survived Belsen and like Kafka has come to America. She reappears in one of Roth's last works, *Exit Ghost* (2007), now an old woman ravaged by illness.

Both these stories have an obvious shock value. They are also clever in a way many critics found uncomfortable about Roth's writing in the 1970s and '80s. Roth wasn't always acclaimed as the great American writer of his generation. Martin Amis wrote about this period of Roth's career, "There is not enough laughter or lyricism, there is not enough weather, there is not enough happening on the page. The Zuckerman novels look like life looks before art has properly finished with it." In Roth's obituary in *The Guardian* Eric Homberger wrote, "During the 1970s Roth published his weakest books. Sales were 'soft', and he looked as though he was losing his place... It was not clear that he had anything to say to his readers."

There is, however, something interesting in these stories about Kafka, Anne Frank and in *Eli, The Fanatic*. Roth isn't just playing games. He is trying to find a way of talking about the Holocaust and Jewish displacement. Yes, he was a great writer about America and about Jews in America, from Newark to the Upper West Side. But he was also writing about the great subject of Jewish European history and trying to compare what had happened to Jews in Europe in his childhood with Jews in FDR's America.

Roth is now famous as the American laureate, the writer who told a dark story about American 20th century history. But as the literary critic Bryan Cheyette wrote in his perceptive review of *The Plot Against America*, "There was a time when Philip Roth believed that history happened elsewhere" in east Europe, first during the Holocaust, then under Soviet Communism. This is what he called in *The Anatomy Lesson* (1983), the "world of massive historical pain".

There is much more to Philip Roth than sex and misogyny or novels about America. Perhaps even more than his great contemporary, Saul Bellow, and certainly more than Heller or Mailer, he was aware of the dark history of 20th century Europe and he reflected long and hard on what this meant for an American who had grown up safe and secure in the suburbs. That's why he was so interested in his contemporaries who had been children or young men in 1930s and '40s Europe: Primo Levi, Aharon Appelfeld, Ivan Klima and others. *The Plot Against America* asks exactly this question: What would it have been like if what happened in Europe in the war had happened in New Jersey?

Jews were one of Roth's two great subjects. But for over half a century he kept turning this over and over in his mind, doing lots of different things with Jews. Some of his Jewish characters were writers like Nathan Zuckerman and E.I. Lonoff, some were maniacs like Alvin Pepler. Others were refugees and Holocaust survivors and some were ordinary American Jews from Newark fleeing for their lives from an American right-wing coup.

David Herman

OF ROMANIAN ORIGIN?

The Claims Conference recently announced the availability of funds from the Caritatea Foundation in Romania to be distributed to Jewish victims of Nazism who lived under the Romanian regime anytime between 1937 and 1944, and who are currently living outside Romania or Israel.

Other stringent criteria apply and the deadline for applications is 30 November 2018. Please contact Rosemary Peters on **020 8385 3070** or rosemary@ajr.org.uk if you think you might be eligible and have not yet been sent a claim form. Please note heirs are not eligible for the programme.



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LISTEN OUT

The AJR was delighted to learn that BBC Radio 4 has just released its first Jewish comedy series. Jack and Millie is a six part series about Jack and Millie Lemman, an older couple who are fully engaged with contemporary life while grappling with the absurdities of the modern world. Starring Jeremy & Rebecca Front, Tracey Ann Oberman and Nigel Lindsay, the series is being aired on Wednesday mornings and also available on the BBC iPlayer. Do have a listen and let us know what you think of it.

Wonderful volunteers

We were delighted to celebrate some of our London AJR volunteers at the elegant German House in Belgrave Square on 2 July, at the invitation of the Deputy Head of the German Embassy, Tania Freiin von Uslar-Gleichen.



Some of our wonderful volunteers, together with the Deputy Head of the German Embassy (above centre) and the AJR's Ros Collin (above centre right) and the ARSP's UK co-ordinator Sabrina Groeschel (bottom left).



This year we shared our Annual Celebration of Volunteering with Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP) to mark their 60th anniversary (see separate article on page 11). AJR's current intern from ARSP, Julie Manseck, along with two of her colleagues, spoke movingly about what her year of volunteering has meant to her: "I am 19 and from Germany and during the last 10 months I have been visiting Holocaust survivors as part of my voluntary service with the AJR. I was looking for a way to personally take responsibility for what has happened in Germany's past, and in my opinion there is no better way to do so than by helping the AJR provide social and financial support to those who have been harmed by the terrors of the Second World War.

"One of the things I have learned through befriending AJR members is how important it is to bring people together as individuals and to start reconciliation on a one to one basis. I must admit I was a bit worried about what my clients' reactions would be when I met them for the first time, being German and not Jewish. But, despite my background and the horrors they have been through which were

caused by the National Socialists, they all welcomed and embraced me without the slightest hesitation and have even shared their stories and experiences with me. For some it is the first time they shared their experiences with a German. For some it is the first time they shared their experiences at all. And for some it is the first time of getting in touch with Germany again. Either way, it is not only a huge privilege for me to be able to get to know these wonderful people and to share in a small part of their lives, but I'm convinced it also means a lot to my clients".

AJR Chairman, Andrew Kaufman MBE, then thanked all the wonderful volunteers who provide such a valuable and appreciated service to our members, giving a special mention to two, Hortense Gordon and Peter Wayne, who continue to give selflessly despite being over 95 years old themselves.

As well as a delightful reception buffet, guests could enjoy a guided tour of 'Finchleystraße – German artists in exile in Great Britain and beyond 1933-4'.

Debra Barnes

Something Missing in Brno...

"We're off to Brno", my wife said, looking up from her computer. "I've been invited to present at a conference there". "Where?" I asked. "Brno. I'll write it down: B-R-N-O". "Haven't you missed something out? Like vowels?" "Don't think so."

I learned that Brno is the second biggest city in the Czech Republic, with 400,000 inhabitants. Why then had I never heard of it? Jews first lived there in the 11th Century, eventually thriving, their numbers growing. But 82,000 Jews from the local provinces were deported to Theresienstadt and beyond, 71,000 never returning. We booked to go.

My wife attended her conference, while I joined a walking tour. "See the Real Brno" was the claim. But the guide only addressed Brno's improbable legends, its 'naughty' statues and its bars. No mention of WW2 or its Jewish inhabitants at all. I left the tour, determined to use a guide-book in future.



Brno cemetery



The Holocaust Memorial in a local park

I asked the ladies in the Tourist Office about Jewish sites. They stared at me, but googled and eventually found three sites: Synagogue, Holocaust Memorial and Cemetery. None mentioned in any leaflets. I thanked them and left for the Memorial.

I stumbled upon it by chance. Just a small local park with a children's playground. And a huge black cube-structure, some 10 feet tall. Nothing obvious to explain. I asked Professor Google: its width was exactly 'pi' i.e. 3.14157.... meters, apparently indicating the enormity/ endlessness of what had been lost. Could any visitor have realised this? And the waters running down all four black sides represented tears of weeping and waters of forgiveness. Really? I could see no water anywhere, just dust.

Off to the synagogue. It's a run-down part of town, under the main railway track. I walk up and down the street but see no synagogue. I stand facing a dilapidated workshop and a workman emerges. I ask him, and he says this is it. There is no sign, no mezuzah, no security. Approaching, I see a very small bar-code on the door with the words 'Synagoga info'. But I cannot scan this. Not much to show for a thousand years of Jewish worship in Brno. I leave.

The walk to the cemetery is long, the heat wearying. Just an endless highway. At last a well-maintained building bearing Hebrew script. I enter an office, but it's deserted. I look into the visitors' book – no-one has visited for days. A sign states "If you find yourself locked in, please phone the Police on this number"

I enter the huge grounds. The size of the lost community is clear. I hear only the rustling wind and the distant traffic. The graveyard and tombstones are well-maintained. I read inscriptions, mostly in German. Many don't just recall those buried here, they also memorialise those who died far away and who have no known resting-place. Here is a stone inscribed with 17 names, the Hauser family: 8 died in Auschwitz, 7 in other camps, 2 simply vanished. Here is another with 14 names, the Redlich family: 10 died in Auschwitz, Riga or Theresienstadt, one survived Theresienstadt, and three committed suicide in 1942 in Vienna, the husband and wife on the same day. And so many more.

I sit on a bench and ponder. What was the point of that Holocaust memorial, when no-one knows what or where it is, and what happened during those years? Did the people of Brno collude? Or did they resist? Were there 'Righteous Gentiles' here?

This Jewish Cemetery is Brno's real Holocaust memorial, not that neglected, inexplicable pretentious cube structure in the park. The wholesale destruction of entire families is apparent here, names are respectfully, lovingly preserved. The grounds allow for quiet contemplation. The sun is setting and I leave before I am locked in.

The conference over, we leave Brno. I won't be back in a hurry. It is not just the vowels that are missing from this city.

David Wirth

A family reunion

The Kleeman family reunion. Natasha is wearing a blue and white spotted dress, third row from the back, behind the woman with the flowery jacket.



Like most Jews living in Europe my family's history is one marked by displacement and loss. After witnessing the first four years of the Nazi regime in Germany, my maternal grandfather was forced to flee his country in 1937 and start a new life in the UK.

Other branches of the family fled elsewhere, planting new roots in the United States, South America and other European countries, and splintering our family across the globe. Sadly, this trajectory is a familiar one.

On the first weekend of May, however, our family marked an occasion that was anything but ordinary: a family reunion, bringing together over 50 family members from Holland, Chile, the US, France and the UK, many of whom had not only never met but, until recently, were not even aware of each others' existence.

The event was the culmination of a year and a half of research, planning and perseverance by my aunt, Ann Antrich. After researching our family tree and making some exciting discoveries about our living relations across the world, she set about contacting them, and embarked upon the mammoth task of bringing everyone together in the

form of a reunion. While inevitably not all those she contacted were able to attend the event (our family in Israel, for example, was not represented), the general response was one of enthusiasm and warmth. Many who Ann reached out to were willing not only to fly halfway across the world to attend the event, but to contribute generous donations which helped to make the weekend such a resounding success.

The main event was a lunch party, which took place on Sunday 6 May in a beautiful function room in Camden's Holiday Inn, overlooking the canal. The day was an emotional one, featuring speeches, presentations, video footage from those who couldn't attend and, in true Jewish style, generous helpings of food and drink. We laughed, cried, and shared stories of our family histories and our diverse lives.

In addition, Ann organised a whole weekend of activities, beginning with a very moving Friday night service at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue during which family member and Holocaust survivor Robert Hompes gave a poignant speech paying tribute to the memories of those lost in the Shoah. This was followed by dinner at Harry Morgan's. There was also a group trip to a concert at the Royal Festival Hall, a visit to the Picasso exhibition at the Tate Modern and a guided walk of the Jewish East End with award-winning guide Rachel Kolsky.

All in all, it was an extraordinarily full and memorable weekend. It was fascinating to meet relatives from all walks of life, connected by deep-rooted familial ties but living such culturally disparate lives. During the course of the weekend, I spoke to a neuroscientist from Chile, a photographer from Paris, a surgeon living in Manhattan and so many more fascinating and diverse characters. I got to spend quality time with family I hadn't seen for many years, and forge new relationships with cousins I had never met before.

Inevitably, the occasion was tinged with sadness, and an acute sense of all that we have lost. More importantly, however, it was a joyous celebration of resilience and survival. Speaking at the Sunday lunch, Ann stressed the positive significance of the occasion: "I think I know what our ancestors would say about us being here. They would be happy and proud that this reunion is taking place. They would be thrilled that we have flourished, thrilled that those who found refuge have been succeeded by five, even six generations."

Indeed, the reunion was a profound tribute to the power of familial ties, and to the will of the Jewish people to survive, in spite of persecution and adversity. Am Yisrael Chai: Truly the Jewish People is a people that survives.

Natasha Kleeman

Letters to the Editor

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

TO THE CYCLISTS

Watching the bicycle riders come in at Liverpool Street station on Friday 22 June 2018, all the way from Berlin in six days at 100 miles per day, retracing our path, was a momentous event. Thank you, riders, for your tremendous effort on behalf of us refugees 80 years since arriving in England to escape from Nazism in Europe.

Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx

PLAUDITS

I anticipated the arrival of this month's AJR Journal with some trepidation. However, I have to thank you for a number of things

1. For correcting my letter by noting that Mirry Reich is the **daughter** of a Kind.
2. For publishing my letter.
3. For reinstating the column by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson. This month's article is a fine example of the way she intelligently conveys what is happening in Israel from the perspective of a compassionate (ex British!) and knowledgeable Israeli.

Arthur Oppenheimer, Hove, Sussex

IMPECUNIOUS SETTLERS

In your July issue you published an article entitled *Yekkes in Israel*. This should really read *Yekkes in Palestine*. This fifth Aliyah, which ceased with the outbreak of war in September '39, contributed positively to the development of the country, establishing new settlements based on chicken farming such as Ramoth Hashavim, Sde Warburg, Kfar Shmaryahu, Ramath Hadar, Beth Yizchack.

After investing all their capital in houses and farms, the saying went, "Jetzt sitzen wir am Mittelmeer und haben keine Mittel mehr"! *Ben Lachmann, London NW11*

Note from Editor: Can anyone translate this untranslatable pun?

EVIAN CONFERENCE

The article about Evian in the July issue is most interesting, but a false note is struck at the end when Mr Herman asks what future

historians would say about the politicians of today.

This seems to imply that the refugee crisis of today is similar to that of the 1930s. I find that equating these two crises demeans the Holocaust.

Firstly, it is not clear to what extent the present day "refugees" are genuine refugees, or economic migrants. As for the Arab and other Muslim refugees, they have many of their own countries to go to, but they obviously prefer not to. But for Jews almost all doors were closed, except for the few who were allowed in; and they were denied entry to Palestine, where many would have wanted to go.

And what about responsibility? Instead of future historians asking about the politicians of the West, they should ask who caused the crises which made many Arabs and other Muslims flee. Who caused the warfare in Syria, in Yemen, in Libya and Afghanistan etc.? The question which should be asked of Arab and other Muslim leaders and politicians is why they did not try to stop these conflicts and bring about a better life for their people, and not put the responsibility on the West to sort out this situation.

Mendel Storz, London N 16

Note from Editor: Readers interested in learning more about the Evian Conference may enjoy the book Die Mission, by Hans Habe, published in 1965 by Verlag Kurt Desch GmbH. According to a reader in Scotland who kindly wrote in: "...the book is written in the form of a novel and captures the atmosphere around this shameful conference very well. It has an excellent factual appendix. An English translation, The Mission, has also appeared."

HMD THEMES

I would like to respond to the comments made by Frank Bright (July) who alleged that the HMD theme for 2019, *Torn from Home*, is "exclusively about survivors of the Rwanda genocide". This could not be further from the truth. If you look at the HMD website, the picture highlighting the

topic is from the Wiener Library archives and shows Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution.

I have for a number of years represented AJR on the HMD Partnership Group (most of the organisations attending represent Holocaust based organisations) and you can be assured that the main focus of discussion at the meetings is around remembrance and education of the Shoah as well as subsequent genocides. I was in fact asked to give a presentation at our last meeting on my reflections on what the theme means to AJR members.

What is so clever about the 2019 theme is its continued relevance. Torn from home is how so many refugees or survivors from the Holocaust feel. It also reflects the feelings of those people affected by subsequent genocides.

Carol Hart, Head of Volunteer and Community Services, AJR

Frank Bright's letter discussing the use of the word "Holocaust" rightly condemns its indiscriminate use. We Jews, the primary target of "Holocaust" atrocities, are being written out by others who have made an industry of this word although they have no right to it.

They have built a multitude of organisations that now command Government recognition, with politics the name of the game. Jews are also guilty of building their egos at the expense of six million who cannot answer back.

Ernest Kolman, Greenford, Middx

THE VALUE OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

I arrived in the UK on the last Winton train with my three year old sister. I give talks on behalf of the HET and many WI, U3a, and other groups – 70 talks since Jan 2017... Every school I have visited from Glasgow to the Isle of Wight now teaches the history of the Holocaust and most have taken groups of year 10 students to Auschwitz.

I talk to Year 6 (10 & 11 year olds) and

have received many touching letters from these children as well as the older Year 9 (13 – 15). I give talks when in Prague and other Czech towns and two years ago in Berlin.

Not long ago I visited Japan where I met Fumiko Ishioka, the director of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Centre, and spoke at a school which has a rose garden dedicated to Anne Frank and a large number of translated European books about the Holocaust. Fumiko annually brings groups of students to Europe to visit Holocaust sites.

Before travelling to Japan I was aware of Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat who saved thousands of Jewish families, at first disgraced and dismissed from diplomatic service, now revered and honoured. I am in touch with his granddaughter, Madoka Sugihara.

I cannot possibly compare my talks to the experience of survivors although we lost our grandparents and many other members of our family. The dying words of an uncle in Terezin were 'do not hate'.

My father's brother served with the Czech air force during the war and, having returned, was imprisoned by the communist regime as were many soldiers and airmen who fought for freedom. So I base my talks on three of the phrases/themes of Holocaust Memorial Day: *Do not stand by*, *How can life go on?* and *The Power of Words*.

This is the closing sentence of a letter from an 11 year old... **"I cherish my parents lots now because I have parents to cherish..."**
Milena Grenfell-Baines MBE

ANTISEMITISM NO DEFENCE

That Heinz Gr̃unewald defends the Labour Party against strong allegations of antisemitism is breathtaking. There is clearly a large streak of antisemitism in Labour which cannot be swept under the carpet, hence all the investigations. Jeremy Corbyn must be insensitive or antisemitic to have ignored the

"Freedom for humanity" mural.

To finger UKIP as the party of prejudice in the light of all this puts the tin hat on it. To conflate the desire to control immigration with prejudice, as Mr Gr̃unewald seems to have done, is an emotional reaction rather than one based on facts.

*Anthony Portner and Janet Clarke,
Chertsey Surrey*

Heinz Gr̃unewald wrote in your July issue that Jeremy Corbyn is one of the few honest politicians, and that Corbyn will be the one to quench racism (which presumably includes antisemitism). He added that he despaired of those who fail to recognise this. Mr Gr̃unewald regards the antisemitism shown by Corbyn and the left wing of the Labour Party as not "serious" and says that there has been only "occasional" evidence of prejudice against Jews. I refer Heinz Gr̃unewald to Deborah Lipstadt, who won the landmark legal battle against Holocaust denier, David Irving. Lipstadt says that "Jeremy Corbyn has made "softcore" Holocaust denial acceptable and his leadership has led to antisemitism becoming embedded in the Labour party". Who would you prefer to believe, Heinz Gr̃unewald or Deborah Lipstadt?

Peter Phillips, Loudwater Herts.

DIE BLINDEN

I wore my new school uniform, including a red beret, with the three letters "LMS" stitched on it (the same as the LMS Railway). Waiting for my train during the Blitz my father said "You look like one of the railway porters. Someone will pay you a shilling to carry their suitcase". I was only nine and terrified that this might really happen. The school I was evacuated to, now transformed into a boarding school, was in the countryside. A lot of the girls were German Jewish (like myself).

Reading last month's article concerning the rescue of the Jewish Blind in Austria I remembered two fellow continental pupils, sisters, both fully-sighted. Their parents, both of whom were blind, lived in London. The

sisters received hand-knitted clothing and letters written in Braille from them, and they had a Braille typewriter for their own use.

My grandfather visited a former lawyer who was now blind. This was caused by the Gestapo who had pulled him feet first down the staircase from his flat. In England his girlfriend, Katya, supported them both by working as a nude model in evening art classes.

At Easter each Jewish student received a box of matzos and the other pupils received a chocolate Easter egg. When the bombing got less we were all sent home by train.

Does anyone else (who would now be aged 80 or so) remember the Lady Margaret School?

Renate Treitel, London NW11

DIMBLEBY AND THE BBC

In the July issue of AJR Journal the Letter from Israel mentions that the film footage accompanying Richard Dimbleby's reported visit to Bergen Belsen in 1945 was at first refused a showing by the BBC authorities until it was authenticated.

However in a recent broadcast Richard Dimbleby's son David explained that the BBC refused the showing because they thought the material was too harrowing to view. His father courageously threatened never to broadcast for the BBC again if the film was not shown. Thereupon the BBC recanted and broadcast the film.

Michael Brown, London W5

ANTI-NAZI MOVIES

The article on anti-Nazi movies in the July issue was an interesting addition to a topic broached previously. However, there was one great defect: it dealt entirely with Hollywood.

Although at the time I was decidedly underage for serious cinema, I did occasionally slip into seeing some British films. Three I remember to the present day: *The Spy in Black* starred the great Conrad Veidt and,
Continued on page 8

REVIEW

ASPERGER'S CHILDREN: THE ORIGINS OF AUTISM IN NAZI VIENNA

By Edith Sheffer

W.W.Norton & Company

ISBN 978-0-393-60964-6

The physician who had the world-recognised developmental disorder Asperger's syndrome named after him had a disturbing past, a new book reveals. Author Edith Sheffer – herself the mother of an autistic son – sets the scene in her opening: "Hans Asperger believed he had unique insight into the minds of children, as well as a calling to shape their characters." But she goes on to uncover a darker side which led to fatal consequences for many young patients at his Curative Education Clinic at Vienna's University's Children's Hospital.

Asperger was of a new generation of doctors who gained pre-eminence in Vienna after Jewish clinicians fled the cradle of psychoanalysis and enlightened psychiatry. Reportedly socially awkward, cool and distant but very ambitious Asperger left small town life for what was once the centre of the Hapsburg Empire, cultural capital of Europe and birthplace of modernism.

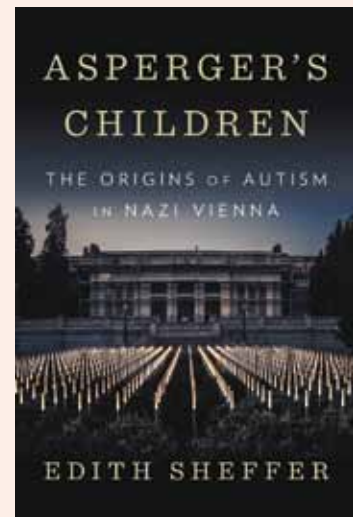
By the age of 28 he was promoted over a senior Jewish colleague, becoming head of the clinic. Child experts debated autism and in 1938 he described autistic

psychopathy in a talk on "The Mentally Abnormal Child". At the same time the Nazis – with their extreme emphasis on athletic, racial and genetic fitness – rolled into Vienna which became the Third Reich's second city. After Austria was annexed terrible events occurred on Kristallnacht including despoiling and burning 95 synagogues and arresting 6,547 Jews with 3,700 sent to Dachau.

A dedicated Catholic, Asperger never joined the Nazi party even following the Anschluss. It saved him after the war but by his own admission "one went along with things" and his career prospered. In this painstakingly researched book Sheffer traces how he embraced Nazi ideals, his judgments on handicapped children became harsher and he appeared to accept sterilisation policy.

Following on from adult euthanasia, the Nazis rolled out a children's programme. It involved medical experiments and killing some with mental and physical disabilities or behavioural problems facilitated by interning problem youngsters. Vienna's notorious children's clinic at Spiegelgrund was set up for youth welfare in 1940. Children were killed in Pavilion 15 and those under observation whose fate hung in the balance were in Pavilion 17. At least 789 children died, barbiturates were used with the official cause of death mostly being pneumonia. Case histories are given and it makes for the most harrowing and horrifying reading in the grimmest of chapters. Correspondence with parents is heart-rending.

Asperger co-founded the Vienna Society



for Curative Education and urged colleagues to send "difficult cases" to Spiegelgrund. He was not himself on the list of practitioners prominent in the killing system but associated with leaders. It is suggested he had a hand in transferring dozens of children to their deaths at Spiegelgrund.

Post-war Asperger distanced himself from his Nazi-era work. But his 1944 thesis "The 'Autistic Psychopaths' in Childhood" defined the syndrome later named after him. He described children with severe difficulties socially, whose problems were sometimes compensated by a high level of original thought and expertise. After interest from distinguished British psychiatrist Lorna Wing it led to establishing Asperger's syndrome in its own category.

Janet Weston

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued from page 7

despite a slightly messy plot, was masterfully suspenseful. Second was *Cottage to Let* in which Alistair Sim swamped the rest of the cast as the (apparently) bumbling counter-espionage officer.

An all-time favourite must remain *Pimpernel Smith* in which Leslie Howard (a Hungarian Jew who portrayed the essence of the traditional English gentleman) rescued some early concentration camp victims. He lost his life when a plane from Lisbon was shot down and everybody "knew" that the incident was "on orders from above" for the merciless way the film had grieved Goering. Later, of course, it came out

that the Nazis thought Churchill was a passenger on the same plane!

E. M. Feld, London N3

STOLPERSTEINE

As a second generation survivor and 81 years after my parents fled Berlin, I arranged to personally be present at the installation of Stolpersteine at their last known addresses, as they married in February 1937 and fled in March 1937 for South Africa.

It was indeed such a privilege to honour them outside their homes which was supported by Stolpersteine.de. The event was also attended by neighbours and the amazing artist Gunther Demnig, whose

project is so well respected and which will hold special memories for me.

Maureen Berlinski, London NW9

PERSECUTION IN HUNGARY

In the July issue you reported on a talk given by Marcus Ferrar about the (mis-)fortunes of a family in Hungary. To set the record straight, and contrary to the implication in the report, Hungarian Jews were already persecuted from 1942 onwards (and certainly did not live peaceably "until 1944"). The antisemitism may not yet have been as virulent as in neighbouring countries but my own father was taken into forced labour in 1942, as were many others.

Mary Dillinger, London NW9

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler



The Fallen Man by Wilhelm Lehmbruck



Die Eltern by Käthe Kollwitz

Outside the RA's Summer Exhibition I noticed two wartime plaques: one honouring the artists killed in the two world wars from the Rifles Regiment, the other, the RA's fallen art students. Who might these artists have become, had they lived?

Tate Britain's *Aftermath: Art in the Wake of World War One* examines the effect of the Great War on British, German and French art, much of it created by soldiers. Nothing here reflects military triumphalism: but on all sides in 1916, people wanted heroes. This did not work for **Wilhelm Lehmbruck**, whose anguished, kneeling sculpture *The Fallen Man*, designed for the war memorial in his home town of Duisburg in 1916, was sharply criticised by the German media. It remains a tragic epitaph for the artist who could not reconcile his wartime experiences and committed suicide in 1919. **Jacob Epstein's** *Torso in Metal* from his famous *Rock Drill* conveys the mechanical impetus of man's will to war, and yet within its technology you sense, like Lehmbruck, human despair. **Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson's** sardonically titled *Paths of Glory* sees the fallen on the battlefield, and his painting *Ypres After the First Bombardment* depicts houses whose windows seem like terrified eyes.

There are countless ways the tragedy of war is evoked here: A flying, suspended angel, a simple array of helmets and the graphic pictures of disfigured faces restored through plastic surgery. **Otto Dix** reveals the connection between prostitution and the war-scarred in his

1923 sketch: *Prostitute and Disabled War Veteran. Two Victims of Capitalism*

One hundred years have blurred the distinctions between friend and foe. **Heinrich Hoerle's** *Cripple Portfolio: The Man with the Wooden Leg Dreams*, or **Conrad Felix Müller's** *Soldier in the Madhouse* prove only too well the futility and mutuality of their suffering. Some artists chose remembrance, such as **Stanley Spencer's** typically overpopulated *Unveiling Cookham War Memorial*, almost obliterating the white, flag-draped cenotaph itself.

The exhibition also reflects on the socio-political aftermath, such as *Die Internationale* by **Ingrid Griebel-Zietlow**, who faithfully copied her father **Otto Griebel's** original (too fragile to travel), showing workers demanding social change. **Edward Burra's** 1930 Expressionist *The Snack Bar*, featuring a barman carving slices of salami and a woman customer stuffing her face, seems a hopeful reaction to wartime austerity. **William Roberts' The Dance Club** presents an inter-war cabaret feeling with a touch of menace.

After the war a shift in female political attitudes occurred and **Meredith Frampton's** 1928 painting *Marguerite*

Kelsey, an elegant woman with short hair and a simple shift dress, has a serene, contemplative expression; only her red pointed shoes suggest a touch of coquetry. **Picasso's** *Seated Woman* by contrast, is robustly sculptural; the fullness of the slightly deshhabillé figure in a chemise has an earthy quality of eternal womankind, beyond the whims of fashion. **Dorothy Brett's** *War Widows 1916* conveys its bleak message in a group portrait with a pregnant woman surrounded by a sombre sisterhood holding a white sheet, one of them reading a letter. On all their faces you see a calm, sad luminosity. That tragedy is nowhere more acute than in **Käthe Kollwitz's** woodcuts of grieving mothers – she lost her son in the Great War. *Die Eltern (The parents)* is a heart-stopping image of two bowed down forms: they could be the stump of a broken tree, so palpable is their pain. I would defy anyone to view her seven images of war and remain unmoved.

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CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST



Catching an interview on BBC television with Nawal al-Saadawi, the Egyptian writer and activist at

the forefront of the battle for women's rights in that country, I realised that there may yet be hope for women in the Muslim world.

A few years ago, I shared the lift in Oxford Street's Marks and Spencer's store with two ladies swathed in the blackest of veils with only their eyes visible to the world. It occurred to me then that if the Muslim attitude to women is so deeply embedded that this attire is maintained even in one of the most enlightened cities in the Western world, there can be little hope for these poor souls.

Here in Israel such attire is not a common sight, although the fanciful headscarves of various shapes and hues worn by Muslim women are widespread. While there is very little to distinguish Muslim men on the bus or in the mall from the average Israeli male, when it comes to their womenfolk old habits die hard, it seems. There is a slight but delicate distinction between the head-scarves worn by Muslim and orthodox Jewish women, with the former extending the covering to their neck and ears.

However, the eighty-seven year-old lady I saw on my TV screen proudly flaunted her shock of white hair and spoke freely about her struggle for women's rights in her country, and especially her campaign against FGM

(female genital mutilation) which is still widely practiced in Egypt (and many other countries of the Middle East and Africa). As a physician, she also condemns circumcision, the male version of the practice, contending that in both cases it is a cruel and unnatural way of interfering with the human body.

She avers that FGM is part of the ideology that seeks to maintain the dominance of men over women, promoting monogamy for women and polygamy for men. "We live in a harsh, patriarchal religious system," she said, claiming that the support shown by some women for the continuation of the practice of FGM is evidence of their 'slave mentality.' That made me wonder whether that is the reason why Jewish women feel they need to cover their hair. Rabbinical authorities in Israel maintain a tight hold on the customs and practices that stem from the age-old belief system that continues to prevail here, defying the trends of modern dress and the exigencies of the climate. But that applies to ultra-orthodox men, too, so at least there is some sort of equality there.

Nawal al-Saadawi claims that the present Egyptian ruler, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, is infinitely better than previous leaders, even though, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, he was not democratically elected. In her opinion the Muslim Brotherhood would have imposed all manner of religious laws, on the grounds that everything comes from Allah. "To play with religion is to play with fire," she added, at the same time insisting that most Egyptians do not support the idea of a religious state.

She has also campaigned against the practice of marrying young girls to older men. She herself was destined to marry such a man when she was only ten, but resisted her parents' plan. When asked how she managed to do that at such

a young age, she just laughed and said "For that you'll have to read my autobiography."

Saadawi has written books describing her childhood and struggle for freedom and the rights of women, and her battle against the brutal male tyranny prevalent throughout Muslim society. She went into exile after her name was put on a fundamentalist death list and was also imprisoned by previous regimes for her activities. Her books were banned in Egypt but she is proud of the fact that they were read nonetheless, even gaining distribution in Saudi-Arabia.

However, there are some flickers of light in the Muslim world. Saudi-Arabia now allows women to drive, has reinstated cinemas in the country and even allows women to attend football matches. Women in Lebanon show their hair and live pretty much as any modern woman anywhere else. Yet long-held attitudes of prejudice and intolerance towards women are still the norm, and even among the Arabs living in Israel it is not uncommon to encounter the so-called 'honour killing' of women by family members, for one trumped-up reason or another.

In Israel, Jewish women are still subject to outdated laws when it comes to marriage and divorce, and if a husband dies his brother is technically entitled to assert his right to the widow. In most cases, fortunately, the civil courts are able to right the injustices that result, and a woman whose husband refuses to grant her a divorce ('Get') may have recourse to the rabbinical court. But it can be a long and agonising process.

Just as in the Muslim world, here too there is still a long way to go before women enjoy equality in the Jewish religion.

Please note the AJR
**ANNUAL LUNCH
AND CONCERT**

will take place on
**SUNDAY
21 OCTOBER 2018**

SAVE THE DATE!
Contact Susan Harrod
for more details

AT YOUR SERVICE: Action Reconciliation Service for Peace

Established to help confront the legacy of Nazism and work towards a more just and peaceful world, the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP) is a German organisation which is this year celebrating 60 years of working in countries with which Germany was once at war.

Its founder, Dr. Lothar Kreyszig, was a minister of the Evangelical Church in East Germany who, in 1958, read the following appeal to the annual Synod: "We Germans started the Second World War and for this reason alone, more than others, we became guilty of causing immeasurable suffering to humankind. Germans have, in sinful revolt against the will of God, exterminated millions of Jews. Those of us who survived and did not want this to happen did not do enough to prevent it.....We plead that other nations, who suffered because of us, will allow us with our hands and with our means to do something good in their countries as a sign of reconciliation and peace."

The first tentative overtures were in the form of reciprocal projects to help in the rebuilding of the cities of Dresden and Coventry, both bombed to destruction in WW2. Over the past 60 years this work has evolved to become more and more international, including placing German volunteers within partner organisations in countries where the ARSP carries out projects, including, of course, in Israel.

The AJR has for many years benefited from the services of an ARSP volunteer, and members may have come into contact with some of these dedicated young Germans. Last year's volunteer at AJR was Merrit Jagusch, who writes:

"For 60 years ARSP has been working to rebuild that which the Nazis destroyed in WW2: working against antisemitism and right-wing extremism. Each year 180 volunteers are sent to 13 different countries in order to work in social projects that further the cause of understanding between peoples. Thus it was that after school I went abroad for a year with ARSP and was able to do my voluntary service in London. This is where I got to know Lilian Levy who told me that ARSP eased her path to reconciliation after decades of avoiding all contact with Germans. Despite her grim wartime experiences she was able to revise her view on Germany through her contact with the ARSP volunteers".

In May the 60th anniversary of the ARSP was marked in Berlin with a four-day programme of meetings, talks and workshops. Merrit says: "We gathered in the very building where once the Reichs Bank



gave orders to finance war, extermination and concentration camps. Today the rooms of the Reichs Bank are put to different use. They are the offices of the Foreign Ministry in Berlin and its doors are wide open and receptive to politics of a new kind".

At the closing ceremony, attended by many dignitaries, including the Israeli ambassador to Germany, German president Frank-Walter Steinmeier spoke powerfully of the need to take Lothar Kreyszig's words to heart – that Germany has no alternative but to look at its history and to learn from it. He said that, due to ARSP, Germany is once again a respected country in Europe, fully committed to Israel's inalienable rights and to world peace.

The meeting was also addressed by three young former volunteers, who spoke articulately and movingly about the impact of their experiences on them, personally and politically. It was interesting to note that many of the young volunteers were going on to a counter-demonstration against the right-wing AfD party that very same afternoon.

For many years several AJR members will have had an ambivalent feeling towards Germany – unable to forgive past atrocities whilst also realising that young people today cannot be held responsible for the sins of their grandparents or great-grandparents. It is the fervent hope of the ARSP volunteers that they can normalise the relationship between those who were thus affected and those who are young, decent Germans today.



Celebrating the volunteers

By Lilian Levy and Merrit Jagusch

Invitation to Germany

My invitation to Hamburg in early May 2018 was for the 73rd annual commemoration of 84 satellite slave labour camps, near Hamburg-Bremen. Over 42,800 slave labourers perished, through hard labour, starvation and ill treatment. The second commemoration ceremony was for the victims of the bombing of the ship Cap Arcona, only hours before liberation.

I was a slave labourer at an ammunition factory in Lieberstat Bilohé, near Hamburg, having been transported from Auschwitz along with 500 other women, together with my sister when we were aged about 12 and 14. We produced bombs and grenades, right up until 19 April 1945. On that date we were all taken from the ammunition factory and driven towards the Cap Arcona, because Himmler had decreed there was to be no evidence left of either the camp or the slave labourers; we were all to be murdered. The ship was scuttled or torpedoed, and with 6800 slave labourers on board, it was the largest single loss of life at sea during WW2. Those that survived the sinking and tried to swim to the shore were shot by German soldiers at the shoreline. Our train was actually bombed by the British on the journey, which killed half of the women with me, but it meant I did not reach the ship. Those of us who survived that bombing were then made to walk to the Port of Lübeck, from where I was subsequently liberated by the British.

The site of the Bilohé labour camp and factory is now a preserved area of woodland. A bunker formerly existed there to where we would pull lorries on ropes, in order to store the ammunition we had made.

The Commemoration of the Cap Arcona catastrophe was at the impressive memorial at Neustadt, on the shores of the North Sea and included a



Mindu Hornick and Barbara Lober at the Cap Arcona memorial. It was the first time they had seen each other for 73 years!

moving wreath laying ceremony, led by government and local authority officials. Members of the Jewish community of Lübeck recited Kaddish.

The commemoration for the end of the war and the liberation of the concentration camps was attended by many survivors and their families from Belarus, France, Great Britain, Netherlands, Israel, Poland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Germany. The speeches generously named many of the visitors and tribute was paid to those who had attended in the past but were no longer alive to do so.

There was another emotional ceremony, with the laying of more wreaths in front of the torture chambers at Neuengamme, Hamburg. This was the administrative centre for the 84 satellite camps and is now a museum and visitor centre, with trained guides. The welcoming speeches, the thanks given to the survivors for returning and the songs were all exceptionally moving. My daughter, Nicola, and my grandchildren, Alex and Bebe, and I were invited to a seminar before an audience of 200 students, reporters and historians. I was very proud of my family's contribution to the evening. On the last day, I also made a recording for the archives.

I have to thank my cousin Rosalind Eldar from Australia, for persuading me to undertake this sad but informative journey, looking back to our past. I

learned many things I did not know before – we were, of course, never given any information at the time. I also reconnected with Barbara Lober, now of Israel, who was in the camps with me and my sister. It is amazing to consider Barbara was a good friend of Rosalind's mother in Czechoslovakia, before the war. I was in the camp with Rosalind's mother. I had not seen Barbara since 1945 but she quickly recognised me! Barbara was accompanied by her twin grandsons and my own grandchildren have formed a lasting friendship with them. They will visit Israel in the very near future.

Mindu Hornick

Note from Editor: In June Mindu Hornick was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Worcester, in recognition of her tireless work in connection with Holocaust education. The AJR congratulates her on this well-deserved honour.

www.fishburnbooks.com

Jonathan Fishburn

buys and sells Jewish and Hebrew books, ephemera and items of Jewish interest.

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

**Contact Jonathan on
020 8455 9139
or 07813 803 889
for more information**

LOOKING FOR?

The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and others looking for people or for help in particular subjects.

Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you can help.

DECIPHERING LETTERS FROM 1939

The Wiener Library will be hosting an online exhibition of letters in German between a refugee child and his mother in 1939. Nik Pollinger would like to hear from anyone who could help decipher the script, in order to provide more information to those visiting the exhibition.
npollinger@hotmail.com

BOGNOR BOARDERS

AJR member Marion is looking for details of any Czech Jewish teenagers

who were in a private boarding school in Bognor Regis between 1938-39 before being evacuated to London.
020 8558 2827

KINDER FOR SAFE PASSAGE

Ujjwal Krishna is an MA student at the University of Sussex who is working on a special Kindertransport research project on behalf of the advocacy group Safe Passage. He would like to hear asap from any Kinder willing to share their stories about how they ended up in the UK and their experiences upon getting here.

U.Krishna@ids.ac.uk

DEAF, MUTE OR BLIND

Amy Williams is seeking information specifically about the Kindertransports which brought deaf and mute children to the UK as well as children who were helped by the Jewish Blind Society.

amy.williams032011@my.ntu.ac.uk

Bergerac deportees memorial



REMEMBER BERGERAC

At the end of April this year Hebden Bridge Rotary organised a trip to Bergerac in France.

Walking through the small park in front of our hotel I came across some monuments: a large one dedicated to the First World War and two less distinctive and cared for monuments relating to WW2, one for the Internees and the other to the memory of 17,828 Deportees, who were all exterminated.

In 2015 a plaque was added detailing the names of concentration camps, many of which I had never heard of, where the deportees ended up.

I discovered that Bergerac had been a key centre for the resistance movement during 1939 – 1945, when resistance workers met secretly to send radio messages to London.

I was born a 'hidden child' in the Netherlands in 1943 and regularly give my testimony at Beth Shalom, mainly to secondary and university students.

Wherever I travel in the world I somehow always find reminders of this dreadful fearful period in our history. The Holocaust should never be forgotten!

Hanneke Dye

Police Event

AJR members enjoyed hearing Assistant Commissioner DC Martin Hewitt speak in depth about his career with the Metropolitan Police. DC Hewitt outlined the work of Police Liaison Officers following the Grenfell tragedy and discussed policing in the modern age of gang culture,

the dangers of the internet and radicalisation – to name but a few topics. Members had many questions which DC Hewitt answered in detail. A most interesting and informative event and we are very grateful to DC Hewitt for taking time out of his busy schedule.



Assistant Commissioner DC Martin Hewitt with the AJR's Susan Harrod

Around the AJR

Most of these reports are summaries of much longer reviews which, due to lack of space, we are unable to include in their entirety. If you would like further information on the actual event please contact either the author or the AJR regional co-ordinator.

EALING

Lynne Bradley entertained us with singing, poetry and amazing anecdotes from famous screen and stage musicals. She gave a particularly fascinating insight into the making of the films of *The Wizard of Oz*, *West Side Story* and *Singing in the Rain*.

Leslie Sommer

PINNER

Brad Ashton spoke on "Scams and how to avoid them". (Not the sort of scams that you – and we – were thinking of but those of the hilarious variety perpetrated by entertainers). Lots of good laughs and some giggles too!

Henri Obstfeld

CONTACTS

Susan Harrod
Events and Outreach Manager
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

Ros Hart
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator
07966 969 951 roshart@ajr.org.uk

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

Karen Diamond
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator
07966 631 778
karendiamond@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

SCOTLAND ANNUAL GATHERING



We were delighted to welcome members from Arran, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle and St. Andrews to Edinburgh's Salisbury Road Synagogue.

Our annual Scottish gathering is a wonderful opportunity for members to meet, socialise and discuss interesting topics. The bond uniting all survivors now includes our 2nd Gen members and we were delighted to see a large number of them at this meeting.

We were most privileged to have

Ruth Davidson, Leader of the Scottish Conservatives, as our guest speaker. In a world where antisemitism and nationalism are on the rise again, she urged survivors to speak of their experiences so that young people can hear and learn at first-hand of the terrible events of the Holocaust. A film crew, working on a Kindertransport documentary, was present at the event.

To attend AJR meetings in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Newcastle or a 2nd Gen meeting contact Agnes Isaacs
agnes@ajr.org.uk

AUGUST GROUP EVENTS

All AJR members are welcome at any of these events; you do not have to be affiliated to that particular group. As the exact timings of these events are often subject to last minute changes we do not include them in the AJR Journal and suggest you contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

Ilford	1 August	Andrew Leigh – Time to move: when and where?
Pinner	2 August	Annual Garden Party
Dundee	2 August	High tea at the botanic gardens
Kensington	6 August	Social get-together
Ealing	7 August	Film afternoon: "Everything is a Present – the life of Alice Hertz Sommer" – still playing piano at 106 years old
Nottingham	9 August	Social get-together and lunch
Prestwich	13 August	Social get-together
Edinburgh	15 August	Theatre outing to see Daniel Cainer at the festival
Edgware	15 August	Andrew Leigh – Time to move: when and where?
Glasgow 2nd Gen	16 August	Outing to Nardinis in Largs
Kingston / Surrey	20 August	Social get-together
Birmingham	21 August	Strawberries and Cream Tea – a summer get-together
Hull	21 August	Lunch at East Park Gardens
Leeds CF	22 August	Summer Party, with piano-playing vicar Roger Quick
North West London	28 August	Jo Briggs – Editor of AJR Journal
Glasgow Book Club	30 August	Book group meeting
Muswell Hill	30 August	Joint with North London – Annual Lunch with Lynne Bradley entertaining
North London	30 August	Annual get-together – Lynne Bradley entertaining.

A different channel

The Channel Islands have been featured regularly in the AJR Journal over the years, as the only part of Great Britain to be occupied by the Germans during the war. Here AJR member Dr Elena Rowland, who originates from Slovakia, tells us about her recent visit to the beautiful island of Jersey.



The picturesque island of Jersey

As the child of Holocaust survivors I was aware of atrocities against the Jewish population in Europe but knew little about occupation in Jersey. Actually, growing up in Europe, I did not even know where Jersey was.

If you visit Jersey use your time effectively and go to see the War Tunnels which were actually the German underground hospital and wards used for recovering soldiers. On the walls of the tunnel is evidence of occupation, with photographs and videos of forced military control of the Island. The Germans used the slaves from Eastern Europe, Spain and Portugal to work in inhumane conditions in order to expand the tunnels, but they were never completed.

Jersey was taken by force on 1 July 1940 and occupation ended in May 1945. The majority of the population decided to stay in Jersey, but children and people who had family in the UK were evacuated to the mainland. Islanders suffered greatly under occupation: they were cut off from information, the local paper was under censorship of the Germans, trees were cut down, and the Germans took over hotels

and big houses. The supply of food was cut off; there was no electricity, only candles. St. Helier was at the point of starvation when, eventually, the Red Cross supplied the parcels which saved many lives.

The Germans regarded Jersey as a strategic point. In December 1940 there were 1,750 Germans in Jersey, within a year there were 11,500. The entire population had to be registered: 21 October 1940 was the registration date for all Jews, and at the end of May 1941 all Jewish businesses were banned from trading. Orders from Berlin in 1942 decreed that the islanders must give up wireless sets: to possess a radio was an offence.



One of the displays in the Jersey Wall Tunnels

Germans wanted to be friendly with the locals, buying sweets for the children; they encouraged the locals to inform on their neighbours, and girls to find soldiers as boyfriends – but not everyone bowed under the pressure of occupation. The walls of the tunnels commemorate local people who were heroes; they sheltered escaped Russian slaves or helped Jews. Some Islanders were rewarded for their bravery in March 1966 because they showed compassion towards the Russian slaves, some hid Jews. Among them were Dorothea Webber and Albert Bedane who received the Israeli honour of “Righteous Amongst the Nations”. However, Mrs Louisa Gould was betrayed by the locals and was deported to a concentration camp and thence to a gas chamber.

On 9 May 1945 Jersey was liberated by the Royal Navy and British Army after five years of occupation; there were scenes of great jubilation and from the balcony of the Pomme d’Or Hotel the Union flag was unfurled. On the 50th anniversary of war’s end a sculpture by Philip Jackson was unveiled by the Prince of Wales in Liberation Square.

OBITUARIES

Gena Turgel

Born Krakow 1 February 1923

Died London 7 June 2018

Hundreds of tributes have been paid to the 95-year-old 'shining light' who tended to a dying Anne Frank, survived the camps, married her British rescuer, and shared her story with millions of people around the world. This is a short summary of her life.

Gena Goldfinger was the youngest of the nine children of Samuel and Esta Goldfinger, who ran a small Krakow textile business. Samuel had fought for the Austrian Army during WW1 but died the year before Hitler came to power.

Gena was 16, with dreams of becoming a doctor, when the Nazis bombed Krakow in September 1939. In 1941 she and her mother and four of her siblings moved to the ghetto.

One brother was shot by the Nazis, another fled and was never seen again. Her married sister with her husband were both shot after trying to smuggle food into the Plaszow labour camp. Then in the winter of 1944 Gena and her mother and sister were forced to spend four weeks on a death march to Buchenwald, before being taken by cattle train to Bergen-Belsen.

There Gena worked in the hospital where she nursed Anne Frank as she died of typhus. After the camp was liberated in May 1945 Norman



Turgel, then a sergeant working for British military intelligence, was one of the first Allied soldiers on the scene. He fell in love with the hollow eyed, starving girl while rounding up the SS guards for interrogation. Stunned, she accepted his proposal and three days later, they celebrated their engagement. They married in October 1945 and Gena's wedding dress, made from a British army parachute, is now in London's Imperial War Museum.

The Turgels settled and spent their lives in Stanmore, where Gena maintained a perfect home. Her mother survived until the age of 99 and attended grandson Jonny's barmitzvah, grateful that the family line had not been ended by the Nazis.

The story of Gena and Norman Turgel

was told in the BBC2 series 'What did you do in the war, Auntie?' and in Gena's best-selling book, *I Light a Candle*.

The journey took her to thousands of schools and educational establishments across the country, sharing a testimony that no one who heard her speak will ever forget.

Everyone who was lucky enough to know Gena personally will remember her as beautiful, elegant and poised. Emeritus Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks described her as "a blessing and inspiration".

Gena Turgel is survived by her three children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Norman predeceased her.

Jo Briggs



Friedel Barton
 Born 8 August 1918
 Died 25 May 2018

Friedel was born Frieda Fanger in Berlin to parents who had fled from Latvia and Lithuania. Her father was a master tailor and her mother helped customers choose styles and fabrics.

Friedel loved to read and did well at school. Unfortunately her reward for coming top of the class was a copy of "Mein Kampf"!

Friedel hoped to become a nursery teacher but, thanks to the Nuremberg laws, the only training she could undertake was beauty therapy. As life was getting hard for even secular Jews she wrote to King George VI for permission to come to Britain. She begged her parents to also flee Germany and, thanks to a guarantor, they settled in Leeds. Of their extended family only one aunt and uncle survived, who are now memorialised in Dresden.

In Britain Friedel worked for the International Volunteer Service for Peace where she met William Barton, a Quaker and conscientious objector. They married in 1942 in Cambridge, near Bill's family home, and became wardens in a Quaker hostel for Jewish refugees.

After the war they moved to the Midlands. In 1946 their son Paul was born and in 1949 their daughter Claire. William then

moved to a job in Quakerhaus in Vienna and they spent several happy years there. The Quakers provided a discreet venue for meetings between Soviet and Western diplomats, enabling the powers to come to an agreement on mutual withdrawal from a neutral Austria in 1956.

The family then returned to Britain and settled in Hendon. Friedel took a secretarial course and landed a job at University of London assisting Dr Basil Bernstein in his research in Child Psychology. She also developed an interest in Spiritual Healing, gaining a diploma to practice as a healer. She continued to work at the University until the age of 70.

After Bill's death in 1988 Friedel moved to the South coast. Her final home was in Suffolk near her daughter and son-in-law and grandsons Simon and Oliver. She will be sorely missed.

Claire Duncan

WHY NOT TRY AJR'S MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE?

The AJR offers a kosher Meals on Wheels service delivered to your door once a week.

The meals are freshly cooked every week by Kosher to Go. They are then frozen prior to delivery.

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Tante Anna remembered at Bunce Court

The AJR unveiled a commemorative plaque in honour of Anna Essinger at Bunce Court on 25 June 2018. Anna Essinger was the Founder and Headmistress of Bunce Court School, which closed in 1948, and this 70th anniversary ceremony was attended by a number of old 'Bunce Courtians' and family-members of Ms Essinger.

Anna Essinger was a German Jew born in 1879. In 1933, due to the impending Nazi threat in her homeland, she moved her school with its 66 mostly Jewish pupils to safety in England, re-establishing the institution in Otterden, Kent.

The school was called New Herrlingen School (after the school left behind in Germany) but came to be known as Bunce Court. Essinger also established a reception camp for children who came to Britain on the Kindertransports, some of whom continued at the school. The last pupils to join the school were child camp survivors of the Holocaust, by which time Essinger had taught and cared for over 900 children.

The Bunce Court School alumni were devoted to the school and organised reunions for 55 years after it closed. 'Tante Anna' remained in contact with many of them for the rest of her life, which she spent at Bunce Court.

The plaque is the brainchild of the illustrious zoologist and immunologist Professor Leslie Baruch Brent, a former pupil at Bunce Court. It states that Anna Essinger is "remembered with affection by so many for her great foresight, progressive educational endeavour, wisdom and compassion." 88 year-old ex-pupil Susi Davids said, "Tante Anna was fantastic. She was virtually blind but she noticed



The Old Bunce Courtians left to right Gabriele Foti, Michael Jackson, Heidi Goldsmith, Ruth Danson, Leslie Brent, Karl Grossfield, Susi Davids, Heinz Redwood, Martin Lubowski

everything! The most important thing I learnt from her was that we were all equal and we all counted, whatever our academic ability, as long as we did our best."

Ex-pupil Martin Lubowski, 87, said, "Tante Anna was wonderful but fierce! We all had to do manual work in the house and gardens as well as our academic work. Tante Anna gave me a book on flowers for my birthday. I thought it was for girls so I asked if she would change it for a dictionary, which she did. I can't believe I had the guts to ask her!"

Ex-pupil Heidi Goldsmith, 85, said, "I was here when I was seven years old. I loved it here. I learnt so many skills which I still use. Thanks to Tante Anna I can do everything around the house: tiling, laying floors, decorating – everything."

AJR Trustee Frank Harding, said: "It is with great pleasure that we commemorate the life of Anna Essinger by recognising the devotion and care she gave to pupils at Bunce Court, many of whom had been separated from their families. We would like to thank Julia Miller, current owner of Bunce Court, for generously allowing us to install this plaque on her property.

"Through the AJR plaque scheme we are honouring prominent Jewish émigrés from Nazism who made a significant contribution

to their adopted homeland. We have unveiled plaques to Sir Rudolf Bing at the Edinburgh Festival and at Glyndebourne. Other plaques have commemorated the Nobel Prize-winning biochemist, Sir Hans Krebs, and Sir Ludwig Guttmann who founded the Paralympics. We have also installed a plaque on the site of the Cosmo restaurant in Swiss Cottage, in London, a famous meeting place for the refugees.

Debra Barnes

Michael Newman, CEO of the AJR, writes: "Having been fortunate to attend, I have to add that this was one of the best events we have done. It was a great tribute to a great lady whose character and pioneering work had an inspiring and profound impact on many of our members".



Frank Harding unveils the plaque

AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB



Monday 13 August 2018 at 1.00pm
 at North Western Reform Synagogue,
 Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN
 Bridge, card games, backgammon, scrabble. You decide.
 £7.00 per person, inc lunch



Booking is essential – when you book please let us know your choice of game.
 Please either call Ros Hart on 07966 969951 or email roshart@ajr.org.uk

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LUNCH

Wednesday 8 August 2018
 At Alyth Gardens Synagogue
 12.30pm
 We are delighted that we will be
 joined by James Bulgin from
 The Imperial War Museum, London



James is Head of Content for the new
 Holocaust Galleries at the Imperial War
 Museum. He holds an MA in the subject of
 the Holocaust, and is in the latter stages of
 a PhD at Royal Holloway College, University
 of London, under the Crosslands scholarship

Call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070
 or email susan@ajr.org.uk
 £7.00 per person. Booking is essential.

COME TO THE SEASIDE



Tuesday 14 August 2018

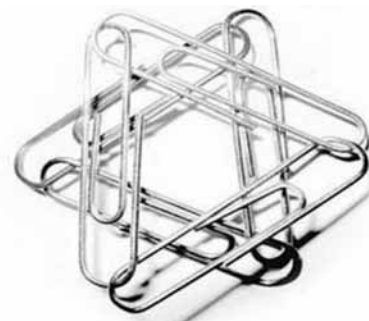
Join us for a delicious Fish & Chip lunch
 and stroll along Southend sea front
 Coach Leaving Finchley Road and
 Edgware.

Contact Susan Harrod on
susan@ajr.org.uk



AJR FILM CLUB

PAPERCLIPS



on **MONDAY 13 September 2018**
 at 12.30pm

Lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish
 pastries and tea or coffee will be served first:

Paperclips is a 2004 documentary film
 written and produced by Joe Fab, and
 directed by Elliot Berlin and Joe Fab, about
 the Paper Clips Project, in which a middle
 school class tries to collect 6 million paper
 clips to represent the 6 million Jews killed
 by the Nazis.

£8.00 per person inc lunch
BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

Please either call Ros Hart
 on 07966 969951 or email
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KINDERTRANSPORT @ 80

Official Commemoration Event

On the afternoon of Thursday 15 November 2018 there will be an official commemoration event for those 10,000 children who arrived on the Kindertransport on the eve of WW2.

The event will mark 80 years to the day when Jewish, Quaker and community leaders met with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to ask Britain to help Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. The commemoration will recognise the great contributions to Britain of the Kinder, and celebrate

this country's proud history of providing sanctuary to those fleeing conflict and persecution and those British citizens who offered help and homes to vulnerable children.

The event will be open to everyone connected to the Kindertransport: the Kinder especially, but also their descendants, the foster families who took in Kinder and/or their descendants, those who assisted in organisations, faith groups or as individuals and those representing faith groups and refugee organisations active then and now.



Attendance is by invitation only and capacity is limited, so please email kindertransport@safepassage.org.uk (or ask AJR to email on your behalf) if you would like to come or nominate someone else.

Lord Alf Dubs, Barbara Winton

Special Memorial Concert

The Wiener Library has announced details of a special memorial concert to mark the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht and the Kindertransport

on 22 November 2018 in central London. It will start at 18.30 with a VIP reception at which Dame Esther Rantzen DBE will be the special guest.

Tickets priced £30 have just been released. Book now at www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/Whats-On or call 020 7636 7247.

FANCY A CRUISE?



Full details are now available of the 'AJR Cruise' this Autumn.

We will be cruising on P&O Ventura, leaving Southampton on Monday 11 November, returning on Friday 23 November (11 nights). Ports of call are Lisbon, Valencia, Cartagena, Gibraltar, and Cadiz.

AJR staff will be on hand throughout and will also accompany any excursions. Those of you who have cruised before will be aware that the ship provides a full itinerary of events throughout the day with a wide range of activities to suit all tastes.

For more details contact Susan Harrod on susan@ajr.org.uk or 020 8385 3070.

In search of a producer

A German author, Ursula Krechel, won the Frankfurt Book Prize in 2012 with her novel "Landgericht" (County Court). It is a fictionalised account of Richard Kornitzer's return to Germany in 1949 to reclaim his home and help, as a former judge in prewar Berlin, to restore justice. He met further humiliation: discounted as a stateless displaced person and denied a job as 'not German' as well as flagrant antisemitism and accusations of disloyalty by swanning off on an exotic holiday (8 years exile in Shanghai!). When his fight to reclaim his profession as a judge succeeded, he found himself

among colleagues who had never left their posts after the war and were continuing to interpret Nazi laws in their own interest.

"Landgericht" became so popular that a German TV company commissioned a two part film that was broadcast in Jan. 2017 and again in Feb. 2018. Kornitzer's daughter, Ruth Barnet, who had already written her own book about her father's story, decided to write it as a stage play, and is now looking for a producer who can raise funds to produce the play professionally, preferably in London. Please contact Ruth on rutheclb@gmail.com.

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