



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Quality not Quantity

Holocaust education has never been better funded than it is today. And yet ignorance and intolerance appear to be on the rise. Perhaps our expectations of education are unrealistic?



The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum utilises digital technology to teach children

In March JW3 hosted a discussion, featuring almost a dozen leading figures in Holocaust education. The event was called, "Has Holocaust Education Failed?" (see <https://livestream.com/accounts/13926423/events/8597893/videos/188909671>).

It is easy to see why they chose such a title. Every day on social media I come across hostile comments about Jews, antisemitism and the Holocaust. The unpleasantness and ignorance are astonishing. Often these messages equate Israel with Nazi Germany or South Africa. Sometimes they deny the Holocaust. Or they belittle or trivialise it, arguing that far fewer than six million people were killed. They don't quote evidence or sources. They just insist that the Holocaust is

a myth, invented to justify the state of Israel.

Holocaust deniers have been around for years. The rise of social media, however, means that instead of crackpot pamphlets and green ink letters, these messages are now available any time you go online. It is so easy to type a few words of hate and there they are on the internet.

There is a second factor. In recent years, two new groups have been drawn to antisemitism and Holocaust denial. The rise of antisemitism on the Left, which no one could have imagined a few years ago, has added a new intensity to the problem. And the spread of antisemitism in the Muslim

Continued on page 2

HAPPY SEPTEMBER

Welcome to our September issue, which contains some useful news and advice regarding reparation funding as well as a 'new look' list of all AJR events coming up.

We are grateful to the many AJR members who have contributed to this issue. Their articles and letters are very much appreciated and help to make our magazine an interesting and varied read that, we hope, will appeal to our broad membership.

Wishing you a Shana Tovah and all the very best for the coming year.

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Please note that the views expressed throughout this publication are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

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Quality not Quantity (cont.)

world means that Holocaust denial has a considerable new audience with easy links to Muslims in Britain. Finally, this has coincided with a new polarisation in our politics, ten years after the financial crisis, after a decade of austerity and, of course, in the aftermath of Brexit. Holocaust denial is part of this new anger.

What is really troubling, though, is that this explosion of Holocaust denial and antisemitism is happening at exactly the moment when considerable resources are being poured into Holocaust education. From the 1960s, the post-war silence about the Holocaust began to be broken, reaching a climax at the turn of the century. The American Holocaust Museum and the new Holocaust galleries at the Imperial War Museum, films like *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist*, and a proliferation of books, including children's books, were all part of a new awareness.

Above all, there have been so many initiatives to increase Holocaust education. In 1988 the Holocaust Education Trust was founded. One of the HET's main achievements was ensuring that the Holocaust became part of the National Curriculum for history. Since 2001 there has been an annual Holocaust Memorial Day. The AJR is the UK's largest dedicated funder of programmes and projects promoting teaching and learning about the Holocaust in the UK (see the AJR website). Alex Maws runs an important Holocaust Education programme with conferences, a programme of academic scholarships and grants for important new initiatives in Holocaust education.

Holocaust education has never been better funded. The transformation in recent years is extraordinary. And yet go on social media and you will see disturbing hate messages about the Holocaust on a troubling scale. The obvious question is: Why? Surely, the more educated we are, the less intolerance and ill-informed prejudice there should be?

How do we explain this? First, *quantity* of education doesn't necessarily mean *quality* of education. In 2016 the UCL Centre of Holocaust Education produced a publication, "What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools." (<https://www.holocausteducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/What-do-students-know-and->

[understand-about-the-Holocaust1.pdf](#)) It was the world's largest ever research study of its kind. The report contained good and bad news.

First the good news. The Report found that, "By Year 10, more than 85 per cent of students reported that they had learned about the Holocaust within school." It went on, "Overwhelmingly, students were familiar with the term 'the Holocaust' which the majority most clearly associated with the persecution and mass murder of Jews. The vast majority of students surveyed (83 per cent) believed the Holocaust was important to study at school, 81.8 per cent of students found the subject interesting and over 70 per cent of those who had already learned about the Holocaust said they wanted to learn more. Those who had been given the opportunity to hear a survivor of the Holocaust speak in person appeared to find this an especially powerful educational experience."

But there was bad news as well. The report concluded that "the majority of those who took part in this study appeared to lack core knowledge and understanding of key features of this history." Most had little understanding of why Jews were persecuted and murdered. Three in four students "grossly overestimated" the number of Jews in Germany. "A third massively underestimated the scale of the murder of Jewish people, with 10.3 per cent appearing to believe that no more than 100,000 lives were lost." There was similar ignorance about who the perpetrators were, when and where the Holocaust took place (55 per cent thought that it mainly took place in Germany, only 7 per cent knew it started with Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union). In other words, schools are failing to teach children the basic history of the Holocaust.

Secondly, Holocaust education is uneven in its impact. The better educated you are, the more you watch TV channels like BBC2 and BBC4, the more you go to museums and art cinemas and have access to history books, memoirs and Holocaust fiction, the more you will know. But many of these resources are concentrated in London. And even if pupils have heard of the Holocaust and Nazism that doesn't mean they have even the most basic understanding of the causes of antisemitism or the nature of the Holocaust.

Alex Maws, the head of Educational Grants and Projects at the AJR, is less alarmist.

"The implied weight and responsibility of 'Holocaust Education' is an unfair burden," he wrote recently. "It's unfair to teachers, it's unfair to students." We are unclear about what we mean by Holocaust education and, worse still, our expectations of Holocaust education are unrealistic. Do we want to teach schoolchildren history or do we want them to become better human beings by learning about the Holocaust?

We also need to bear in mind the practical realities of time in the classroom, he argues. Teachers just don't have enough time and too many are self-taught. So, what's the way forward? One solution, according to Maws, is better teacher training, both as part of their original training to become teachers but also with additional specialised courses in Holocaust history. Another solution is new, more exciting forms of education such as digital engagement, using new technology to stimulate students' interest, such as the pioneering programme at the National Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire.

The UCL survey pointed to problems with historical knowledge. But one major advance has been that more and more children and teachers recognise that the Holocaust was a huge event. What has changed is children's empathy. When they hear testimony from survivors, they are deeply moved. Teachers often speak of the impact of these encounters with historical witnesses.

Then there is the elephant in the room. Much of the antisemitism today is fuelled by myths about Israel. Is it time to think about how to teach children about Israel as well as about the Holocaust, or at least to include the birth of Israel as part of the history of the Holocaust? This, not Holocaust education, could be the best way to combat growing antisemitism.

David Herman

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CLAIMS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN FUNDING

At its recent annual meeting the Claims Conference announced that the German government has agreed:

- Approximately \$50 million increase in worldwide funding for social welfare services for 2020.
- Staggered increases for survivors receiving either Article 2 Hardship Funding or a pension from the Central and Eastern European Fund, eventually rising to €580 monthly by January 2021.
- From January 2020, a monthly payment of €513 for surviving spouses, for a period of nine months
- A pension to people who have been recognised as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, 277 of whom are currently living in poverty

Other key developments include the roll-out of the Kindertransport Compensation Fund (the Claims Conference has produced a new video explaining the registration process, which can be viewed on <https://vimeo.com/344852327>) and an expansion of places in Romania from which claims for incarceration can be considered.

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman, who attended the meeting, commented "As ever, survivors are indebted to the significant strategic successes of the Claims Conference in securing, yet again, further increases in both social welfare funding and reparations."

THANK YOU JUDGE



Judge Edward R Korman being presented with a symbolic gift by Claims Conference president Julius Berman (right) and co-chair of the negotiating delegation Roman Kent.

Judge Edward R. Korman, who supervised the class action lawsuits against Swiss banks and other Swiss entities in the 1990s, has been honoured by the Claims Conference for his part in securing payments of almost \$1.285 billion for more than 458,400 Holocaust victims and heirs worldwide.

In 1995 actions were filed against a number of Swiss institutions, accusing them of collaborating with and aiding the Nazi regime by accepting, laundering and otherwise

concealing illegally obtained Nazi loot, much of it the assets of Holocaust victims.

Now, after more than twenty years of litigation and implementation of the settlement agreement, the Final Report of the Swiss Banks Settlement has just been filed (www.swissbankclaims.com). At its annual meeting the Claims Conference presented Judge Korman with a shofar as a symbol of a call to action in setting things right.

Dutch Railways Fund

Holocaust survivors and the families or heirs of Holocaust victims, who were transported to concentration and extermination camps during World War II by Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS), the Dutch state railway company, may now be eligible to receive a lump sum payment.

At the end of June 2019, NS announced that it will compensate Holocaust survivors and the families or heirs of Holocaust victims who were deported on its trains to concentration and extermination camps during WW2 when the Netherlands was under Nazi-German occupation. Under the

proposal, NS will pay €15,000 (\$17,080) to Jewish, Roma and Sinti survivors who were transported to concentration or extermination camps and who were alive as of 27 November 2018, the date the compensation program was conceived. NS will also make awards to the widows/widowers and/or heirs of those who perished.

For full guidelines and the application form, see <https://commissietegemoetkomingns.nl/en>. You can also contact Rosemary Peters or Melanie Jawett at the AJR on 020 8385 3088 for assistance.

Banking charges

A number of AJR members have recently sought clarification regarding banking charges for Holocaust compensation payments, particularly with regard to funds which have recently become available: for example those who came to England on a Kindertransport or were deported via the Dutch Railways.

In 2000 many UK banks agreed not to charge any commission on Holocaust compensation payments. This was followed in 2002 by published guidance from the British Banker's Association (BBA, now part of UK Finance) which pledged that UK banks should also make a repayment in respect of any commission that they had charged on Holocaust reparation payments prior to the year 2000.

No banking commission should therefore be levied on any of the Holocaust compensation schemes. In incidents where charges are levied they can be recovered by contacting the bank in question.

If any readers would find it helpful to receive a copy of the full text of the BBA's 2002 guidance please contact Melanie Jawett at melanie@ajr.org.uk

REMEMBERING & RETHINKING THE KINDER

ADJUSTING TO A NEW LANGUAGE

With the AJR's help, a German professor, Eva-Maria Thüne, came to Britain in 2017 to interview Kinder about their experiences here, especially their having to switch to a new language. *Gerettet* (Saved) is the title of the recently published book in which she records the fruits of her Kindertransport research.

German-born Eva-Maria Thüne has been working as an academic in Italy for 35 years. She now lives with her British husband in Florence, and is professor of German Language and Linguistics in Bologna, at what is considered the world's oldest university. As Prof. Thüne has no family ties to the Shoah, I asked her how she came to publish a book about the Kindertransport.

When she was 17 years old, she explains, she joined Aktion Sühnezeichen (Action Reconciliation/Services for Peace), a German movement founded to confront the Nazi legacy. Through it she went with other young people to work in the archives of Auschwitz/Birkenau and in the fields around the camp. That strongly influenced her research interests: for years now she has been studying the 'Jekkes', the German-speaking refugees who settled in Palestine, and is especially struck by the fact that many continued to speak German. During her work she first heard about the Kindertransport, a topic less familiar in German and Italian than in British or American academia.

The many unaccompanied children who arrived in Germany during Europe's "migration crisis" in 2015 (more than a million refugees, half from Syria, came to Europe that year) reminded her of the Kindertransport. Two years later, during a six-month stay as a fellow of Clare Hall in Cambridge, Prof. Thüne - helped by scholars such as Tony Grenville and Mike Levy - started to find out more about

that earlier rescue operation. Through announcements in the AJR Journal and the newsletter of the Kinder themselves, she arranged to interview 24 of them (along with 18 other former refugees who also came as children, in their teens or as young adults, but not on the Kindertransport) and took part in meetings of Kinder organised by the AJR. Eva-Maria Thüne sees her work as complementing the AJR's *Refugee Voices* and other previous studies in Britain.

Prof. Thüne's interviews were mainly in German. She says it was not that easy to find people who still spoke the language and were also willing to be interviewed in it. "The most common answer I received on the telephone was: 'I speak the German of a child'." But all interviewees - whether they spoke German well or not - were able to transmit their experience. And some Kinder were telling their stories for the first time.

The Kinder made clear how most of them were unprepared to live in what was then a largely monolingual Britain, with English already becoming a dominant world language. "We talked about their experiences," she tells me, "and how these shaped their whole lives; and about their trips back to Germany or Austria and how the significance of these changed over the decades."

As a linguist, Prof. Thüne wanted to know how Kinder felt in the new culture: why did some stop using and forget German, while others retained or even relearned it later; did the second generation pick it up? "Learning a language is never just a technical achievement, but is connected with deeper processes," Prof. Thüne told me. In fact, the interviewees went beyond these questions, talking about their parents, the journey itself and their arrival in the UK - the whole experience of trauma and rescue.

As examples of what Prof. Thüne heard, she cites one respondent who recounted: "During the war one was not supposed to speak German and my mother had told me: 'Don't speak German' and 'Be



Eva-Maria Thüne

English'. But the English tended to react like this: 'Where do you come from?' 'I'm from Germany'. 'Oh.' Brief silence. 'How is it you're here?' 'We had to get out.' One didn't talk about the Jewish background."

Another Kinder recalled: "The school uniform was wonderful. Finally I was exactly like the others. I had never been like this. It was a great liberation. There was no difference and that was wonderful."

One of the most important lessons Prof. Thüne learned from her research is that "it is difficult to generalise. Each story has its own development, difficult moments and outcome. This is true not only for the experience as a whole but also for the specific matter of language competence. Many of the interviewees didn't consider themselves bilingual in English and German but during the interview they managed surprisingly well in German."

Eva-Maria Thüne hopes to find a British publisher for *Gerettet*, not least so that Kinder descendants can read it. The book's first chapter looks at the lives of the interviewees before coming here and contains memories of childhood, school and first experiences of antisemitism. A second section starts with the journey to Britain, arrival and first impressions - especially the impact of the new language and culture, as well as the contact with foster families and life in the hostels. In the final chapter interviewees review trips back to where they came from, speak about the traditions in their families and reflect

TRANSPORT

on being bilingual and on their identity in general.

Eva-Maria Thüne plans to continue her linguistic studies linked to the Kindertransport and follow up *Gerettet* with further works based on her research. "I would like to focus on the second generation" she says, "and how they elaborate the often hidden experience of their parents and other family members."

Constantly in contact with other languages, other cultures and points of view, Prof. Thüne says, "Since my youth I have believed in the European project. One of the lessons of the Kindertransport is that we in Europe must better understand the different historical perspectives that have been developed in the various European countries. The narration of the 20th century differs when told by a British person or by a German or by an Italian. They all think they are speaking about the same things - and some of the events were indeed 'international' - but then there is the national perspective. We need greater reciprocal understanding of these different national perspectives, if we are to develop a common ground which can serve as the basis for developing ideas for our common future."

Martin Uli Mauthner

See www.gerettet2019.wordpress.com for more information about Prof. Thüne's book. Details of her work on the 'Jekes' can be found at www.uni-salzburg.at/index.php?id=23142.

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Anne Frank (left) and her friend Hanneli Goslar on the Merwedeplein in Amsterdam. Goslar appears in the published *The Diary of Anne Frank* with the name Lies Goosens. Courtesy of Anne Frank Fonds — Basel via Getty Images.



Squinting, Anne looks up.

She greets the camera with quick and happy smile.

In truth, Anne thinks of herself as

happy on the inside

and other people think she's

happy on the outside.

In truth, Anne thinks of herself as unlike

a frolicsome little goat tugging at its tether:

an outside image she pins to herself in critical contemplation.

Outside, for now, on the neighbourhood square,

She crouches, revealing knobby knees.

She crouches close to girlhood friend Lies, who shyly brushes hair from her face.

For her part, Anne finds Lies a bit on the strange side.

She is usually shy.

However, she says what she thinks, and lately Anne has come to value her a great deal.

For her part, what Anne says is not what she feels.

By her own admission, though, she is trying very hard to change herself.

She keeps trying to find a way to become what she'd like to be

and what she could be if — if only there were no other people in the world.

Vanessa Waltz

This poem was first published in *PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators* in Spring 2019. Its author Vanessa Waltz has served on the judging committee for the New England Holocaust Memorial's student essay contest in Boston. She has published work with The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, *The Fortnightly Review* in France, the *Jewish Journal* in Los Angeles, the Kindertransport Association in New York, *Mslexia*, and *Trollopiana*, the last two outside London. She earned an MA in English from Middlebury College in Vermont USA and completed her studies at Lincoln College, Oxford in 2010.

Anne on the Square, 1940

Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

THE SONG OF DINA

Following your review of "Song of Dina", I would like to comment that the Bible mentions Dinah only very briefly. We are told that she is born to Leah (NOT Rachel) and that she goes out to meet the daughters of the land (something quite understandable for a young girl growing up without female siblings or friends) where she is spotted by Shechem, the prince of the Hivites, who violates her. That is all! We learn of the terrible revenge that two of her brothers exact on the entire Hivite tribe, but nothing is said about Dinah's reaction or her life thereafter. Consequently, over the centuries many legends have been woven around her story, more recently in the popular book "*The Red Tent*", and the opera is the latest manifestation of this tradition.
Shoshanah Hoffman, London NW4

KINDERTRANSPORT MEMORIES

The reference to 'an Anglo Jewish publisher, Dennis Cohen' in your review of *Wilfrid Israel* (July), and to the fact that Dennis helped to organise the first Kindertransport, stirred my memories of the famous Levy and Cohen houses (at 66 and 64 Old Church Street, Chelsea) and the less well-known fact that number 64 then contained a squash court, beautifully located partly below ground, with a viewing veranda.

Following our arrival on the March 1939 Kindertransport, my sister and I were based at Number 66 for several years and Benn Levy taught me to play squash in number 64 (the houses allowed open access, via a shared garden). This turned out to be very useful during the years I later travelled - and even worked - in East Africa (with a squash racquet in my luggage), since making friends in new locations became that bit easier.
Freddy Kosten, London N3

EASTBOURNE THANKS

Many congratulations and sincere thanks, well deserved, to Carol Rossen and team for the exceptional, wonderful

service provided to all of us participating during our stay at Eastbourne in July. This was in fact my very first time in joining members of AJR – a superb experience, certainly to be recommended to anyone who has never participated in the past.

John S. Edelmand, Luton

OUR FRIENDS IN THE ARSP

Action Reconciliation/Service for Peace is a Christian charity founded in 1958 in Germany. It aims to create better understanding between people from different cultural and religious backgrounds and its volunteers are engaged in helping victims of Nazism, working in the countries which were occupied by Germans during WW2, cleaning Jewish cemeteries and memorials.

One of their volunteers, 19 year-old Ricarda Pasch, joined the elderly Holocaust survivors on our recent holiday in Eastbourne, playing games with us in the evenings and accompanying our trips. With her tact and good manners she very quickly made friends amongst us. I wish Ricarda all the best in her studies and hope that her enthusiasm never leaves her in her future career.

Dr Elena Rowland, London SE18

WYBERLEY REMEMBERED

I was thrilled to see this article in the August Journal. My mother Edith (Edita) Maud Hirsch, aged 15, was on the July 1939 Kindertransport from Prague. During my childhood I knew very little about her journey. She thought it was the Red Cross that had organised it and on arrival she was sent to Burgess Hill.

In later years I did some research and found that she was on Winton's List. It stated that she had been sponsored by The Grand Order of Jacob. I later identified the 'children's home', as she described it, as Wyberley Ladies Convalescent Home in Burgess Hill. I also knew that it had been demolished

in later years. So I am delighted to learn that there is a commemorative information board. My sister and I live in Kent, and intend to go to see this. If there are any other second generation kinder in the Kent area I would love to hear from them, via pdvarty@gmail.com
Patricia Varty, Kent

RIDDING POLITICS OF RACISM

In response to Ian Austin MP's article (August) we feel that, as long-time members of the Labour Party with similar refugee backgrounds to his, we do not recognise the picture of the Labour Party that he paints. Further, the hysteria surrounding the subject does not match our experience of Labour Party politics either at local or national level. Would we stay in the Labour Party if it were antisemitic, particularly with our politics and Jewish heritage? Of course not.

The examples cited by Austin are familiar to us: the antics of Ken Livingstone which led to his expulsion from the Party, trolling of Jewish MPs on social media, identification of antisemitic behaviour leading to expulsion, Jeremy Corbyn's so-called approval (i.e. a tick on a social media platform) of a racist cartoon – for which he has roundly apologised, and so on. The Party has needed to take action on these, which it has. But to say that the Party has been 'poisoned' by antisemitism is taking these relatively few incidents to a wholly unacceptable level.

Labour Party members are bewildered by the sudden turn that we are told our Party has taken. From antisemitic attacks on former leader Ed Miliband (viz. the bacon-sandwich eating incident) by hostile media, the Labour Party is now accused of the same.

There is little empirical evidence to support the idea that the Labour Party is rife with antisemitism. The evidence rather indicates how hard the Party has worked to rid politics of anti-Jewish

racism. For example, in July 2019, a new website was launched on dealing with antisemitism together with the publication of a pamphlet, *No Place for Antisemitism*. This is illustrative of the continued attempts of the Party to listen respectfully and sensitively to all concerned parties. We find the personal attacks on Jeremy Corbyn's leadership unhelpful and abusive of those of us continuing to campaign for a Labour Government. We want to add also that support for the plight of the Palestinian people and criticism of a right-wing Israeli government does not constitute antisemitism, but rather a sensitivity to the difficult politics of the region.
Prof. Miriam David, London, N6 and Prof. Gaby Weiner, Lewes, East Sussex

FREIER FAMILY

I was delighted to read your article (August) about Rabbi Dr Moritz and Recha Freier, who founded the Youth Aliyah movement.

I worked for the Freiers in Berlin when I was a teenager, looking after the children and doing some light housework. They were a wonderful family who treated me as one of their own. Some years later Recha provided me with a reference to support my application for a German pension.
Regina Horn, Hendon

ARCHIVES ONLINE

Our July issue contained a news piece about Arolsen Archives being made available online. The website address for the archives is now <https://arolsen-archives.org/>

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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.

PASSENGER ON THE SS WARSZAWA

Isabel Vincent is looking for a passenger who was on the SS Warszawa when it landed in England on 30 August 1939. He was a Polish boy of 16 or 17 who was helped by two sisters, Ida and Louise Cook. Isabel is writing a book about the sisters, and would very much like to identify this

boy who was one of the last refugees they helped before war broke out.
ivincent@nypost.com

PAINTINGS BY ALFRED COHEN

The Alfred Cohen Art Foundation and Ben Uri Research Unit are collaborating in a major exhibition and publication marking the centenary of painter Alfred Cohen (1920–2001). If you know the whereabouts of any Cohen works (specifically his St. Paul's, c.1960) they would be delighted to hear from you.
max.saunders@kcl.ac.uk

RECOGNISE THIS BOAT? (below)

AJR member Anita Grant would like to know whether anyone can identify the boat in this photograph.
debra@ajr.org.uk



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ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Helene Schjerfbeck,
Self-portrait with Red Spot,
1944 (Finnish National Gallery)



I had never even heard of the Finnish artist Helene Schjerfbeck, whose current exhibition at the Royal Academy is the first in the UK for 130 years. But I have never been more excited by an unfamiliar artist than with this highly original Nordic painter whose dour, yet delicate brushstrokes in portraits, landscapes and still lifes involve so many styles and art genres without ever submitting to any of them.

In her native Finland this artist (1862 – 1946) is a national treasure, but her fame seems to dwell solely within the archipelagos and boreal forests of her homeland. Although influenced by old-master painting, particularly the Dutch school, her portraits make the most dynamic impact.

Unremittingly self-critical, Schjerfbeck's self-portraits betray the gradual changes in her face that mood and life experience bring. Her portraits, both of herself and her mother, of whom she was the sole carer, are particularly revealing. Both sit on a rocking chair; she, nervous, hunched forward, hands clasped, clearly despairs at having to abandon her work to take care of her mother. The grey-haired mother is relaxed, engrossed in her book, glasses perched on her nose. Both are very Nordic portraits: the young woman tense and anxious; the older

woman reconciled, loved, taken care of.

This artist's work has all the mystery of dark forces at play in her mind, hidden, yet prevalent. And yet she paints her mother with unquestioning love. Another probable selfie, *The Schoolgirl 11* (1908) shows a girl in black, hands clasped to her breast, her red hair in a long braid, unaware of what life may bring. *Fragment* (1904) is an exciting attempt at an ancient Florentine fresco. The surface is scraped and re-worked many times to reveal different layers of paint in their fading colours.

Schjerfbeck was born into a poor middle class Helsinki family in 1862. When she was four she fell down some steps and broke her left hip, resulting in a life long limp. Unable to attend school for long periods, her father gave her drawing materials which, a few years later, so impressed the Finnish genre painter Adolf von Becker, that he arranged for a scholarship at the Finnish Art Society in Helsinki. In 1880 her prize-winning painting *Wounded Soldier in the Snow* won her a travelling bursary by the Senate of Finland, enabling her to work in Paris and Brittany, and later in St Ives in Cornwall on a grant from the Finnish Art Society.

Eventually stifled by the academic demands of teaching art, plus bouts of ill health, and longing to engage creatively in the political turbulence facing her country, she moved 30 miles away with her mother, where she began to develop her Modernistic style, retaining her European influences. She fell unluckily in

love with one of her models, forester and artist Einar Reuter, and disappointment introduced a maturity, cynicism and deeper realism into her work.

But the approach of old age, the coming to terms with loss and disappointment are particularly expressive in her later self-portraits. There is a silence about these works, a rawness, a questioning without answer. Her 1939 *Self Portrait with Black Mouth*, is devastating, almost skeletal. Detail vanishes to convey fear and bitterness. Others nod to Munch's *The Scream*. They are a far cry from her 1895 self portrait showing a young Nordic woman, in semi-profile, slightly insouciant, blonde hair pulled back, and wondering what life will bring. I highly recommend this exhibition at the RA'S Gabrielle Jungels-Winkler Galleries.

Until 27 October.



Helene Schjerfbeck, *My Mother*, 1902

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Who was the tiger who came to tea?

In his excellent obituary of the late **Judith Kerr**, **David Herman (July)** gives a fitting tribute to this popular and much-admired author. Indeed **Michael Newman, AJR Chief Executive**, described Kerr as “a cultural icon whose books were loved by generations..... she leaves a rich legacy of charming and enduring stories and will be greatly missed”.

But is Judith's autobiographical trilogy *Out of the Hitler Time*, detailing her family's experiences as refugees from Germany, really the only one of her writings linked to the events of that time? When asked what was the real underlining theme of *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* - maybe a reference to the stability of the fifties being threatened by the new brasher attitudes of the sixties, or perhaps an allusion to events even further back - Judith simply responded that it's just about a tiger who came to tea, that's all, it does not symbolise anything else.

However children's author Michael Rosen, himself Jewish, has said that the tiger could be interpreted as a vision from her past - an underlying threat, robbing the family of everything they own and disrupting the comforting routine of a young child's daily life. “Judith knows about dangerous people who come to your house and take people away. She was told as a young child that her father could be grabbed at any moment by either the Gestapo



The tiger helping himself to whatever took his fancy



The tiger taking his leave in Judith Kerr's seminal book

or the SS - he was in great danger..... So I don't know whether Judith did it consciously or not - I wouldn't want to go there - but the point is he's a jokey tiger, but he is a tiger."

The story describes a tiger ringing the door-bell unannounced. He does not introduce himself, but asks to join Sophie and her mother for tea. They could hardly say no to this oversized visitor. Judith, who illustrated the book herself, drew the tiger twice as tall as the others in the family, who are shown as thin and small characters, probably easy to intimidate. Once inside the house, the tiger takes complete control, eating and drinking everything on the table, before rummaging around the kitchen “to see what else he could find”. He ate and drank everything he could lay his paws on – even “all the water in the tap” - and then simply left, with no suggestion of paying them back or somehow returning the favour. The family was left with literally nothing to eat, and therefore had to leave the house for dinner. They thought they might see the tiger again, but he never did return– maybe he went to make his ‘request’ at another house elsewhere.

Should the family have resisted the tiger's requests/demands, however politely these were put? Should they not have stepped in when the tiger was taking so much more than he'd originally asked for? Should they have reported the tiger? If so to whom? And why did Judith pick specifically a tiger as the subject of the story? Was it because the words Tiger and Hitler had 4 letters in common, both ending with the same two letters? Are not the lines of the stripes of this creature equivalent to the lines of the swastika on the uniforms of a Nazi officer in terms of the threats and danger they pose? Does the Tiger's act in bringing to an end the flow of life-preserving water from the taps recall the shower heads in the death camps from which likewise no water flowed? Does not Judith's drawing of the raised paw of the tiger leaving the house resemble the raised arm of the Nazi salute?

In denying such an interpretation, was Judith simply trying to protect her very young readers from such an underlying meaning?

David Wirth

“The best place in France”

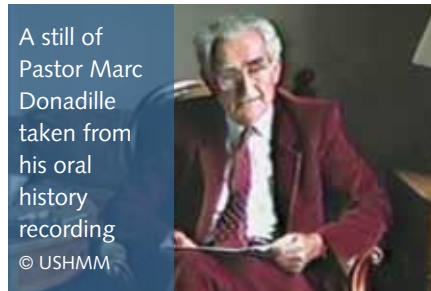
A new novel, *From one Hell to Another*, focuses on the little-known and heroic role of the Spanish in the Résistance in the Cévennes region of France. Its authors **Liz Cowley** and **Donough O'Brien** recently visited the region and learned that it played an equally important role in providing sanctuary to Jews fleeing the Holocaust. This is their account of what happened in the Cévennes during that terrible time.

During the darkest hours of the Holocaust, there was perhaps one small part of Europe where Jews were more fortunate to have found themselves - the Cévennes. This area of heavily wooded mountains in South-West France had a long history of both resistance to outside authority and of helping the oppressed. Predominantly Protestant, it had suffered badly when Louis XIV revoked the famous Edict of Nantes, the treaty that protected Protestants' rights. Oppression from Paris and the 'Camisards War' followed.

The title of our novel overtly refers to the horrific exodus of 500,000 Spanish refugees fleeing from their Civil War through the snow of the Pyrenees, only to arrive in France, a country soon also to be plunged into war. But the title could equally apply to the Jews of France – augmented by thousands of Jewish refugees who had fled from other countries plagued with antisemitism and hoping for a safe life.

During the Holocaust, of all the countries occupied by the Nazis, France had the best survival rate for Jews, with 67,000 out of 333,000 sent to their deaths – horrifying enough. But 22 per cent was much better than the 91 per cent of Polish Jews murdered, or 45 per cent in Belgium or 71 per cent in Holland.

And in all of France, the Cévennes was certainly the best place to be. Marshal Philippe Pétain's government of the Vichy



A still of Pastor Marc Donadille taken from his oral history recording © USHMM

so-called 'Free Zone' started to round up Jews over-enthusiastically, to appease the Germans. They even, for instance, sent 4,000 Jewish children to Auschwitz whom the Germans had not even demanded. In the Cévennes there was soon effective resistance. And perhaps not surprisingly, in view of the area's religious history, this was led by Protestants – especially their resolute Pastors, all very young, because the Cévennes was regarded by their church as a Protestant training school. Many of them were later designated *Les Justes*, 'The Righteous Ones', for their brave work.

The most famous was Pastor Marc Donadille – both courageous and outspoken. He bluntly warned the Vichy authorities *'Don't forget you are in Camisard country. Like their ancestors, the Cévenoles today are ready to take up arms if the State commits acts against their conscience.'*

He even addressed a Prefect who had lamely protested that he was merely 'obeying the orders' of Vichy's Premier, Pierre Laval: *'Let me say this. When you are facing your God, he won't talk about Pierre Laval. He will ask what you, yourself, did.'*

Hundreds of Jews, of all nationalities, were hidden in the countryside of the Cévennes – not just locals – but from all parts of France and also from Belgium, Holland, Germany, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Turkey and many other countries. All thought that France would be a strong and safe refuge, and were terrified by her sudden and unexpected military collapse.

Some Jews sadly proved reluctant to follow quickly enough the advice of the Pastors, one tragically writing later to Pastor Laurent Olivès: *'If I had entrusted my parents to our Cévennes and your protection they would have escaped their terrible destiny at Auschwitz'*.



Goering inspecting art plundered from the Jews

Many children were hidden and saved by brave men and women in the Cévennes, some being baptised as Christian.

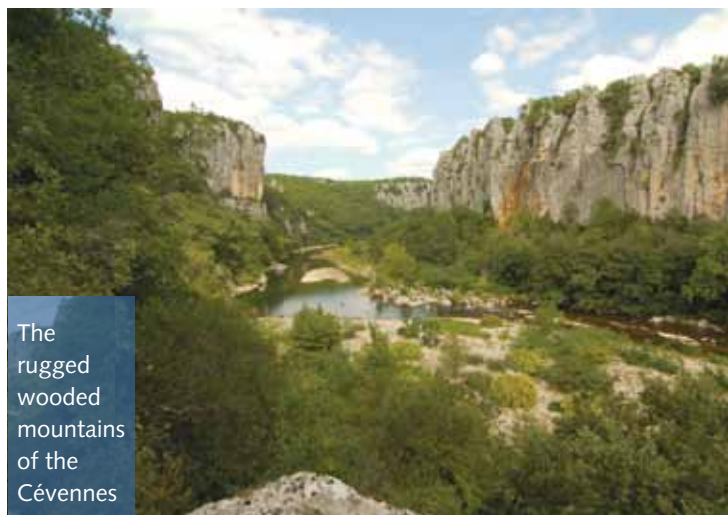
While the rugged mountainsides were an advantage, a disadvantage was the local knowledge of the compliant French police actively hunting Jews for their German masters.

Our book also touches on a key motive – jealousy of the Jews. We feature a prominent Jewish surgeon who had fled from Poland, Germany and then Paris, who was also an art collector. He and his wife were arrested early and sent to the holding camp at Drancy, near Paris, and then Auschwitz. The main reason? Goering's art agents wanted the paintings. They failed to steal them, as their daughter Sarah, and the paintings, were hidden by Spanish friends. She later got some measure of revenge.

Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering had, strangely, an equivocal attitude towards Jews. His beloved godfather was half-Jewish and Goering helped many Jews to escape. But that didn't stop him greedily stealing from others. Indeed, he boasted the most valuable private art collection in the world. Incredibly, his four castles were filled with 1,400 looted paintings, 350 sculptures and 168 tapestries – artworks worth £23 billion at today's prices.

Of course, the Cévennes was only a partial survival success. The *raffes*, or round-ups by Vichy, did catch Jews - and French records listed their eventual tragic fate.

But thanks to the historical attitude of the local inhabitants and the determination of the Protestant community, the Cévennes region stands out as a place where compassion and bravery did at least help many to survive.



The rugged wooded mountains of the Cévennes



Château du Tournel à Mont-Lozère-et-Goulet

Visiting the Cévennes today

If you visit the Cévennes today, you will find that not much has changed in a couple of centuries – the same villages and the same stone houses half-buried in the rugged wooded landscape.

The Cévennes hills are the southern end of France's Massif Central, and the beautiful rocky countryside is penetrated by spectacular gorges carved by millions of years of river erosion. As gateways, Anduze and Ganges are lively market towns and Alès became a coal-mining centre, only made possible by the English invention of the railway. Indeed, in 1838 an Alès mining director was sent off to visit 'Monsieur Stephenson' to buy some engines.

St Hippolyte-du-Fort was also industrial, with some mining but especially the silk industry that employed 300,000 people in the area. You can see that many houses still boast a row of small window vents, showing they operated as 'magnaneries', or silk-worm nurseries. For two centuries one of the largest silk-producing regions in the world, the Cévennes industry was finally doomed by the Suez Canal bringing cheap silk from China and then the Americans inventing nylon. There are two excellent silk museums in the area.

St Hippolyte also had a military preparatory school for fifty years, and its barracks in 1941 housed 'Detachment W', a contingent of British soldiers and airmen, of whom a large

number managed to escape thanks to local resistance help and the very relaxed attitude of their French guards!

St Hippolyte has adopted the slogan, 'A calm centre of a world of possibilities'. In addition to local attractions like the mediaeval town of Sauve, there are the Roman cities of Nîmes and Arles, the beautifully restored aquaduct, the 'Pont du Gard', and the salt marshes of the Carmargue. For those interested in religious history, St Hippolyte has the second largest Protestant Temple in France, and nearby is the 'Musée du Désert', commemorating the many difficult years the Protestants had to endure, which they called their Desert.

The area is easy to visit from Britain, with airports and high-speed rail connections at Nîmes and Montpellier.

Much of the tourism in the area is rather specialist – silk enthusiasts, walking tours, painting courses and, more recently, botanical tours – because of the wealth of unspoilt plants and flowers.

And while there are several monuments to the Résistance, including one for the tiny Spanish and French group who beat 900 Germans (and inspired our book), there is none for the Jews or their Protestant protectors.

Perhaps there should be.



FROM ONE HELL TO ANOTHER
by Liz Cowley and Donough O'Brien
From Fascist Spain, to war again
ISBN 978 1 789018813, Matador

After a gruelling escape through the Pyrenees snow from the horrors of the Spanish civil war, Carmen and her Spanish family settle in the apparent peace of southern France. But relief is short-lived. Within months France, too, is plunged into war – and, worse, a rapid defeat.

Under the control of Hitler's puppet Vichy regime, the region is plagued by starvation, restrictions and atrocities, especially against Jews, propelling Carmen to join the Spanish – now bolstering the French resistance. With the help of the British S.O.E, and against huge odds, they win a spectacular victory over the Germans.

Based on true but largely untold events, this sweeping adventure is a heady mix of romance, horror, betrayal and warfare.

German Jewish film makers in Hollywood PART 3

1940s, Film Noir and Beyond

Jewish film-makers from Germany and Austria made their most memorable contribution to American cinema during the mid and late 1940s writes Joel Finler.

Following the anti-Nazi cycle of the war years, 1942-44, which featured numerous Jewish refugee character actors, it was now the turn of the many brilliant émigré directors (and composers). Such directors as Robert Siodmak and Max Ophuls, writer-director Billy Wilder and Otto Preminger who had arrived from Vienna in 1936, had all spent some years in Hollywood before they were able to take advantage of the looser studio controls over film projects from about 1943-44 onwards. Drawing on the strong Germanic tradition of low-keyed black-and-white drama and crime movies dating back to the silent years, they played a major role in developing a new American cycle of dark and atmospheric thrillers popularly known as *film noir*. Around the same time they were joined by a number of expatriate composers who were inspired to provide suitably atmospheric scores and gained a new recognition, along with the directors, for the quality of their work. Franz Waxman and the Hungarian Miklos Rozsa, for example, both won Oscars and nominations for their *film noir* scores.

Relatively early in the *film noir* cycle in 1944 both Billy Wilder and Otto Preminger had their first big successes. Preminger's breakthrough film was *Laura* (for 20th Century-Fox), an ingenious and complicated murder-mystery based on the book by Vera Caspary. In the same vein he also went on to direct the thriller *Fallen Angel* in 1945 and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950) co-scripted by Ben Hecht and the Jewish émigré writer Victor Trivas. However,

the special quality of *Double Indemnity* (1944), Wilder's third feature as writer-director at Paramount, was reflected in its many Academy Award nominations: best picture, Wilder as director and co-scriptwriter with Raymond Chandler and Rozsa's evocative score which captured the amoral and sleazy side of contemporary Los Angeles found in the original book by James M. Cain and the movie version starring Fred MacMurray, Barbara Stanwyck and Edward G. Robinson. (The following year the prolific Rozsa was again nominated for Wilder's "noirish" drama, *The Lost Weekend*, and won his first Oscar for Hitchcock's *Spellbound*.)

Wilder himself had previously made good use of his experience as a refugee trying to enter the US from Mexico as the co-writer of the script for *Hold Back the Dawn* (1941), while his later ventures into *film noir* would include *Sunset Boulevard* (1949) with a brilliant Oscar-winning score by Franz Waxman and *Ace in the Hole* (1950) starring Kirk Douglas.

Continuing our 40s chronology, Hungarian-born Michael Curtiz, long resident at Warner Bros. as the studio's leading contract director, brought another James M. Cain novel to the screen featuring an Oscar-winning performance from Joan Crawford as *Mildred Pierce* and a score by Max Steiner in 1945. Later that year Edgar G. Ulmer from Vienna, unrivalled in Hollywood as the master of low budget black-and-white movies, directed a classic noir thriller, *Detour*, for the Poverty Row PRC studio and followed it up with the low-keyed drama *Ruthless* three years later.

In 1947 it was the turn of Curtiz (Kurt) Bernhardt who directed a pair of complex psychological thrillers which were also effective star vehicles. Guided by Kurt's sensitive direction,

This is the third in our series of articles looking at the huge contribution made by German Jews to Hollywood. Part 1 (*Lights...Camera...Action*) appeared in July 2017 and Part 2 (*Anti-Nazi Movies*) appeared in July, 2018.

Joan Crawford gave one of her best performances as the mentally disturbed heroine of *Possessed* (score again by Waxman), while Robert Taylor starred in the murder-mystery *High Wall* at MGM with a score by the Polish-born Bronislau Kaper who had first made his name as a composer for films in Germany in the early 1930s.

Another veteran of the early German talkies was the Russian-born Anatole Litvak who contributed *Sorry, Wrong Number* in 1948 the same year that both Fred Zinnemann and Max Ophuls ventured into *noir* territory for the first time. Zinnemann at MGM directed the suspenseful thriller *Act of Violence* featuring another score by Bronislau Kaper with a young Berlin-born André Previn on the conductor's rostrum at the beginning of his long and distinguished career as a composer, arranger and conductor in the movies. For the brilliant Ophuls, his last two American features were suitably low-keyed and memorable dramas. *Caught* was produced by Wolfgang Reinhardt with a script by Arthur Laurents and a background score by the émigré composer Frederick Hollander. *The Reckless Moment* which followed in 1949 also starred James Mason. Produced by Walter Wanger, the plot line involved an accidental murder and a blackmail plot, all effectively brought to the screen by Ophuls, with a score by the Viennese-born Hans Salter. In 1951 yet another Oscar-winning German immigrant, the Alsace-born William Wyler, directed Kirk Douglas in *Detective Story* a powerful *noir* drama set mainly in a New York police station.

Virtually all these directors (and composers) had been living in the US ever since their first arrival in the 1930s and thus had had the chance to familiarise themselves with American culture before resuming their cinema careers. Fritz Lang, for example, stated



that, "Having come from Germany, I was very happy to get a chance to live here and become an American ... I drove around the country and tried to speak with everybody ... And I got a certain feeling of what I would call American atmosphere". (Fritz Lang in *America*, 1967). In fact, Fritz Lang's entire output during this decade presented a mixture of *noir* features and spy thrillers beginning with *Manhunt* (1941), while *Cloak and Dagger* (1946) dealt with US secret service operations in Germany during the war. (Lilli Palmer starred while Max Steiner supplied the score; the supporting cast included Vladimir Sokoloff and Ludwig Stossel as a Nazi officer.) The 1942 assassination of Reichsprotektor Heydrich was the subject of *Hangmen Also Die!* (1943), co-scripted by Lang and Bertolt Brecht with music by Hanns Eisler and small roles for Alexander Granach and Reinhold Schunzel. And for producer Walter Wanger Lang directed both the suspense drama, *The Secret Beyond the Door* (1948), score by Rozsa who was an old hand at composing music for this type of film by now, and *Scarlet Street* which starred Edward G. Robinson, music by Hans Salter.

However, of all the German Jewish émigrés, it was Robert Siodmak who was most closely identified with the *noir* genre during these years, directing one film after another, eight titles in all from 1944 to 1949. An offbeat thriller, *The Phantom Lady* (1944), marked his first memorable venture into *noir*

territory, while *The Spiral Staircase* (1945) revolved around the unmasking of a psychopathic serial killer. *The Killers* (1946) was the first of two features starring the young Burt Lancaster. Produced by Mark Hellinger, it was loosely based on a Hemingway short story about the fatalistic demise of a gangster, earning Oscar nominations for both Siodmak and composer Miklos Rozsa. While *The Dark Mirror* was an unusual psychological drama involving the investigation and uncovering of one of twin sisters who was a murderer. Burt Lancaster, by now an established Hollywood star joined Siodmak again for *Criss Cross* (1948). The violent action plot with various twists and turns and a surprise double-cross, as the title suggests, was scripted by Daniel Fuchs, photographed by Franz Planer and scored once again by Rozsa.

The 1940s decade had been characterised by the quality of its often brilliantly executed high contrast and low-keyed black-and-white photography of mainly urban settings and interiors at night. Thus, the *film noir* phenomenon, with its strong Germanic influence, was reaching its end by the early 1950s when the Hollywood studios began shooting more films in colour and then widescreen, especially from 1953 on. The cheaply run RKO studio, however, continued to turn out numerous crime movies in black-and-white such as Otto Preminger's offbeat thriller starring Jean Simmons as a murderess in *Angel Face*, while director Josef von Sternberg's suitably exotic last

American feature was the action thriller *Macao*, released in 1952.

It is perhaps appropriate that Fritz Lang should bring the *noir* cycle to an end: *The Big Heat* (1953) was followed by *While the City Sleeps* and *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* for RKO in 1956. Lang had been the first refugee director to make his mark in Hollywood twenty years earlier with the suitably downbeat crime drama *Fury* in 1936.

For many of the other German and Austrian immigrant directors their legacy continued and reached a remarkable peak in terms of prestige and accomplishment: Billy Wilder with *Some Like It Hot* (1959) and *The Apartment* (1960), Otto Preminger with *Exodus* filmed entirely in Israel, William Wyler with the Oscar winning *Ben-Hur* (1959) and the first Barbra Streisand movie *Funny Girl* in 1966. This presents, perhaps, a fitting conclusion to the story of the contributions made by the refugees in Hollywood from the 1930s to the 1960s.

My essay, "More Jewish than Hollywood" appeared in the BFI's film magazine, *Sight & Sound*, in the June 2019 issue as part of a Weimar Cinema Special in conjunction with a season of Weimar films screened at the BFI Southbank. My piece was loosely derived from two articles which first appeared in the *AJR Journal* in July 2017 and July 2018 the Jewish film-makers in Germany prior to Hitler.

REVIEWS

ENOSH

By Rudi Leavor BEM

A cantata by AJR Bradford member Rudi Leavor has recently been performed twice in the north of England.

Enosh (the title is taken from Psalm 103) is a collection of songs from the German Liberal/British Reform liturgy, liberally arranged for chorus and orchestra and connected by original recitatives for soprano soloist, which tell the story of the Holocaust in telegram form.

The choir was mainly from the Leeds Philharmonic Society, with whom Rudi has sung for 50 years, augmented by a few highly professional singers.

SPOTLIGHT ON REMARKABLE BUTTON-MAKER

Hundreds of beautiful buttons feature in the wonderful *Lucie Rie: Ceramics and Buttons* exhibition at York Art Gallery's Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA). The show celebrates this extremely important area of work from one of the world's most famous ceramic artists, proving so popular with visitors that it has been extended to 3 November.

The artist's extraordinary life is explored from her award-winning success in Austria during the 1930s to her move to the UK and the creation of her inspirational "Button Factory".

Lucie Marie Gomperz was born in 1902 into an affluent, cultured Jewish family and brought up in Eisenstadt, a prosperous area of Vienna, enjoying an idyllic childhood. Her Uncle

Sandor – Alexander Wolf 1871-1946 – encouraged her interest in the arts. He was involved in the family winemaking business but was an archaeologist in his spare time and inspired his niece's love of ceramics. Rie was trained at the prestigious Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts) in Vienna where she had a flourishing career.

But she was forced to flee her childhood home and arrived in the UK just before the war, making her home and workshop at 18 Albion Mews, near Hyde Park, from 1939 until her death in 1995. Decorative buttons and jewellery were in demand during the war as fashion accessories were scarce.

Curator Dr Helen Walsh explained: "Lucie was struggling to get established on the British potter scene and had to think of ways of making a living. She started by helping in a glass button factory run by fellow Austrian Fritz Lampl, trading as Bimini. Once she set up studio in her home she employed other Jewish émigrés and members of the community supported each other."

Soon Rie turned her skills to ceramic buttons. The meticulous records she had kept of glaze recipes from Vienna proved invaluable when fashioning buttons to match particular fabrics. After the war she hired German émigré Hans Coper to help her fire buttons. He became a partner in the studio until 1958 with their friendship lasting until he died in 1981. Rie and Coper supplied major departmental stores, including Heal's and Liberty, as well as prestigious craft galleries. They developed modernist tableware and the growing interest in Rie's more individual bowls, bottles and vases allowed her to stop producing ceramic buttons.

About 550 buttons as well as examples of her ceramics and some by Coper are on display as well as clothing to show the context. Before her death her work featured in several retrospective exhibitions and she received honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Art, London and Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. More honours followed as Rie became an OBE in 1968, CBE in 1981 and Dame in 1991.

Dr Walsh said before she organised the exhibition she hadn't fully realised the importance of Rie's work. "Learning what she went through with the war has transformed my opinion of her. It is a quite incredible success story," she explained.

Janet Weston

FROM LEOPOLDSTADT TO LOUDWATER: From Pfeffer to Phillips by Peter Phillips

This beautifully produced book contains a touching life story and has been self-published by AJR member Peter Phillips.

Note from Editor: Readers may be aware of the forthcoming new play by Sir Tom Stoppard, entitled *Leopoldstadt*. It begins its first run at London's Wyndham Theatre in February. AJR member Peter Phillips has been liaising with the play's producers regarding a special preview performance in January, for Holocaust Memorial Day, and has kindly secured 20 free tickets exclusively for fellow Leopoldstadters. Please contact peterphillips35@tiscali.co.uk for more details. The 20 tickets will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

Dunera Boys

The Dunera Association, which aims to connect the Dunera Boys and Singapore Internees with their family and friends worldwide, has published a new website

www.duneraassociation.com. It shares a wealth of information about these two groups of German and Austrian Jews, many of them refugees from Nazi occupied Europe, who were interned by the British government in Australia and/or rounded up in Singapore.

Books Bought

MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

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What if...?

In the cool of the evening in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, my father and I would go for a walk, lighting our way with a torch – in case of snakes. Street lighting was rudimentary in this remote colonial outpost.

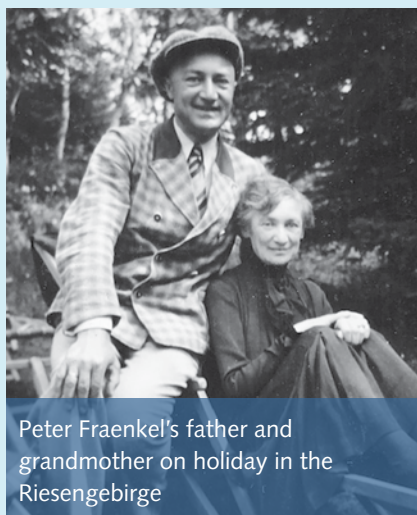
Peter Fraenkel recording African music in Malawi



Dad was struggling to make a living as a dry cleaner. It was not the career he'd envisaged. Back in Germany he had studied law but then become an income tax official. But this grounding was useless for a refugee in South Central Africa. He spoke about what might have been if the Nazis had not come to power. Or the great inflation had never happened. Or the world had not shut most gates against the likes of us. What if...?

He had studied in both Berlau and Berlin, where his maternal grandparents lived. When he exhausted his monthly allowance he would dine there and accompany them to the 'Lokal' to consume a litre of beer – never more, never less. The Kempners had owned a factory making overcoats at Goerlitz, Lower Silesia. Grandfather Kempner decided to sell up at the age of only 45, calculating that the proceeds would allow them to live out their lives in comfort.

They rented a comfortable flat in Berlin's West End. Every morning the maid



Peter Fraenkel's father and grandmother on holiday in the Riesengebirge

brought up warm delicious bread rolls, before my grandfather walked to the barber. The maid laced grandmother into a corset, then the two of them walked to a nearby café for coffee and cake and to read newspapers attached to wood frames.

Twice a year they took holidays in a spa town, sipping mineral water to cure all ills. They walked in the beautiful parks, to the pavilion where the band played operetta tunes. In the evening they went out for a beer - one litre each, just as in Berlin.

On high holidays they went to synagogue, he dressed in tailcoat and top hat. They did not take their Judaism very seriously. Several of their friends had actually converted, to help their career prospects, even telling jokes: *Cohn, newly converted, pleads with Levy to get himself converted as well. Why? "Because I'd like to have some gentile social contacts."*

In an earlier period any apostate might be ostracised by the Jewish community but by 1910 the world was stable and nothing upset their relaxed, comfortable life style.

The maid slept in a narrow room next to the kitchen. Once a fortnight, a washer woman came to scrub clothes by hand in the washroom in the loft, before hanging it to dry and then ironing it. In the corner of each room (except the maid's) stood a tall tiled oven. The concierge brought up brown coal 'briquettes', the size of a small loaf of bread. On the maid's day-off, old man Kempner himself fed such briquettes into the oven – and grumbled.

The maid did most of the cooking. Mother Kempner occasionally baked butter biscuits filled with jam. Margarine was considered

fit only for servants and the poor. Father Kempner, however, permitted the maid to put butter on her bread. His wife accused him of showing too much interest in the maid. He protested – rightly – that this was slander. It irritated him particularly as the maid was very plain.

The Kempners quarrelled incessantly. But my father kept out of their quarrels. They told their large circle of acquaintances that he was a wonderful grandson. They never thought it suspicious that his visits were always in the last week of the month. Once, as a young blood, my father had ventured into a casino and lost his entire month's allowance. He wrote to his father begging for money. His father, a well-regarded small-town lawyer, could have afforded it. What came back, however, was a brief telegram: "Go hungry!"

The world was stable and nothing – they thought - could upset their lifestyle. But after 1914 the world collapsed into war and then hyperinflation. The Kempners, however, timed their exits well. She died first and her husband was devastated. My father sat with him as he wept. But he, too, died shortly after. They just managed to avoid the financial collapse.

My father – Herr Regierungsrat Doktor Hans Fraenkel turned dry cleaner and laundryman – reflecting on these golden days would calculate, on our evening walks, what he would have inherited from his two lots of grandparents if the currency had not collapsed. It was a tidy sum. He could have lived as they had lived.

A dream!

Peter Fraenkel

Around the AJR

These are just a few of the many recent AJR events around the country.

GLASGOW



Glasgow members enjoyed a barbecue (despite the rain) at the home of Anthea and Geoff Berg. It was great to see so many people at the event, catching up and making new friends.

Agnes Isaacs

NORTH LONDON

Simon Watson told us about the history, methods and benefits of Tai chi and we were treated to a short but graceful demonstration. We were left spellbound and totally relaxed on possibly the hottest day of the year!

Hanne Freedman

CONTINENTAL FRIENDS



Chris Tweddle and Dina Leboutillier

AJR Continental Friends held their summer lunch at East Park, Hull, and enjoyed celebrating Dina Leboutillier's 90th birthday!
Chris Tweddell

EDGWARE

Members chatted and laughed throughout our annual summer tea party and several new friendships were made in the warm and happy atmosphere.

Ros Hart

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PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR NEW HERTFORDSHIRE AJR OUTREACH GROUP

This will incorporate our Radlett Group, but is also open to all members in Hertfordshire and the surrounding areas.

The first meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2019** at **10.30AM**

at

Elton House

Elton Way, Bushey, Hertfordshire. WD25 8HA
(opposite The Hilton Hotel, next door to Costco)

We are very grateful to Elton House for welcoming us to their brand new luxurious facilities. There is on-site parking and the venue is fully accessible.

At our first meeting we will be welcoming **JONATHAN SUMBERG**

BBC News Cameraman and Producer who will be telling us some incredible behind the scenes stories.

We will then continue to meet on the third Wednesday of each month.

Please contact Karen Diamond on karendiamond@ajr.org.uk or 07966 631 778



AJR's Annual Tea and Concert

Please join us on **SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2019** at **2.30PM**

at

South Hampstead Synagogue
3 Eton Road, London NW3 4AY



Award-winning **ROBERT HABERMANN** sings THE GREAT AMERICAN 'JEWISH' SONGBOOK

The show has been specially created for AJR, Robert will be featuring songs from many of the most popular American Jewish songwriters and many others

Contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or susan@ajr.org.uk for details and to book.

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Jonathan Fishburn

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

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

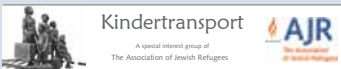

Contact Jonathan on

020 8455 9139

or **07813 803 889**

for more information

FORTHCOMING AJR EVENTS

TITLE	DATE	VENUE	DETAILS	CONTACT
KT LUNCH 	11 September	North Western Reform Synagogue	Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Director of <i>Refugee Voices</i> – the AJR's ground breaking Holocaust testimony of over 200 filmed interviews. Dr Lewkowicz will talk about Kinder who have taken part in the project.	Susan Harrod
FILM CLUB 	16 September	Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform Synagogue	<i>The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel</i> – British retirees (Maggie Smith, Judy Dench, Bill Nighy) travel to India to take up residence in what they believe to be a restored hotel. Less luxurious than advertised, The Marigold Hotel charms in unexpected ways. Booking essential	Ros Hart
CARDS & GAMES 	7 October	North Western Reform Synagogue	Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble, Rumikub, Games dependent on numbers being sufficient. Light lunch served before games commence. Booking essential	Ros Hart
ANNUAL TEA 	22 September	South Hampstead Synagogue	See the insert in this month's Journal for full details – and don't forget to book.	Susan Harrod

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The AJR operates a nationwide network of Regional Groups that offer our members a unique opportunity to socialise with friends of similar backgrounds. There will be an interesting programme of speakers, plus the opportunity to meet up with old friends and make new friends.

There will always be the opportunity for socialising at each meeting, plus a cup of tea or coffee and some cake in true AJR style.

All AJR members are welcome at any of these events; you do not have to be affiliated to that particular group. Please contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

GROUP	CO-ORDINATOR	AUGUST	EVENT
Whitefield/Prestwich	Wendy Bott	2 September	Social get-together
Ealing	Ros Hart	3 September	David Barnet - <i>History of Joe Lyons tea shops and corner houses</i>
Ilford	Karen Diamond	4 September	Nick Dobson - <i>Swinging London (London in the 60's)</i>
Muswell Hill	Ros Hart	5 September	Joint lunch with North London
North London	Ros Hart	5 September	Annual lunch with Muswell Hill
Pinner	Karen Diamond	5 September	Dan Fox - <i>A Modern Jewish Experience of the British Army</i>
Leeds	Wendy Bott	5 September	Diane Dixon - <i>A remarkable life story</i>
Didsbury	Wendy Bott	11 September	Social get-together
Edgware	Ros Hart	17 September	Charlotte & Tony Balazs - <i>The Dorice restaurant on Finchley Rd, once frequented by the refugee community</i>
Bromley CF	Ros Hart	18 September	Social get-together
Hertfordshire	Karen Diamond	18 September	Dr Helen Fry - <i>The Secret War of Trent Park – Bugging the Nazis in WW2</i>
Wessex	Ros Hart	24 September	Toni Griffiths - <i>Medieval Jews</i>
Birmingham	Karen Diamond	25 September	Lunch and Speaker: Jo Briggs, Editor of the AJR Journal
Book Club	Karen Diamond	25 September	Book Club
North London	Ros Hart	26 September	Rosie Axon - <i>Chiltern Music Therapy</i>

OBITUARIES

EVA KOR

Born: 30 January, 1934, Romania
Died: 4 July 2019, Krakow, Poland



Eva passed peacefully in Krakow on a trip to Poland. She has touched hundreds of thousands of people over her 85 years through her message of overcoming tragedy, finding forgiveness, and healing.

Surviving the Holocaust at age 10 meant that Eva emerged from a childhood full of fear, loss, grief, and displacement. She and her twin sister, Miriam, were the sole survivors of her immediate family, losing two sisters, her mother, and father on the selection platform at Auschwitz. In addition, she and Miriam were put through the horrific and inhumane experiments by Nazi doctor Josef Mengele. But rather than allowing the darkest moments of her life to define her, she moved forward headfirst into a life of purpose.

Serving eight years in the Israeli army, Eva tried to create a new life for herself through learning a new trade and getting to know her fellow soldiers. After meeting another survivor and getting married, Eva moved from Tel Aviv, Israel, to Terre Haute, IN, where she spoke no English. Learning the language, raising two children, and working in real estate for 34 years, Eva tried to put her past behind her. But when the NBC special *The Holocaust* premiered, Eva realised the community finally had context for her tragic history. This newfound visibility and understanding led to a path filled with searching for Dr. Mengele's files, speaking all over the world, helping individuals in search of their own healing, and founding a museum that continues to grow every year. Eva blazed trails for Holocaust education and brought the story of the Mengele twins and Dr. Mengele's experiments into the international spotlight by founding the organisation CANDLES (an acronym for "Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors") in 1984. Through the program, she has located 122 other survivors of Mengele.

The themes of Eva's life are apparent. We can overcome hardship and tragedy. Forgiveness can help us to heal. And everyone has the power and responsibility to make this world a better place.

OUR BRISTOL TRIO

In the last few months, the Bristol group has been saddened not once, not twice, but three times, as beloved long-term members have passed away. The group decided to dedicate their next meeting to them and their amazing lives.



We started with Trevor Bedeman talking with great fondness about his dear friend, **David Hackell**. Trevor befriended David whilst he was still living in Bath, after his dear wife passed away, and Trevor accompanied him to AJR meetings and helped him greatly when he moved to Nightingale House in London. David was a lifelong member of AJR and enjoyed the meetings and connections and friends he made immensely. David was 16 when he came to the UK on the Kindertransport. He was tall, with blue eyes and he realised very quickly during Kristallnacht that he wasn't safe staying indoors, so joined in the riots against his fellow Jews. He blocked this memory for many years, and only remembered it when he visited Frankfurt on business many years later. He loved literature and poetry, and if his life had been different, Trevor feels he would have been an academic or a writer. When David passed away, Trevor gave all his papers and historical evidence of his interesting life to the Wiener Library.



Hella Hewison was loved by all the group, and her sudden death of a heart attack a couple of months ago shocked us all. She lived a full and active life right up to her death. Her daughter Jane told us how Hella had trained to be a nurse and then a midwife in

preference to being interned on the Isle of Man. Hella was put on a train from Berlin to Hanover and from there to the UK. She had in her pockets a small teddy and an English/German dictionary. Both of these treasured items are now in Jane's possession. In Germany Hella's family lived an affluent life style. Hella's dad told her that if she survived it was her duty to tell the world what had happened, something Hella could not do until many years later. She did not speak of her Jewish roots to anyone until Jane and her brother were adults. Hella was married in a Christian church to a Christian man, and Jane and her brother went to Sunday school. Ironically, in her latter years, Hella became a well-known speaker on the Holocaust on BBC Bristol TV and radio. She joined AJR and enjoyed getting together with people who had similar stories to hers.



Bettina Cohn had been ill prior to her death, and sadly deteriorated over the months until she passed away at the age of 99. She was still active and interested in life, and was a stalwart member of AJR. Marianne Parkes and Walter Finlay regaled us with some of Bettina's history. She had, like Hella, trained to be a nurse. She travelled all over the world and lived her life to the full. On Holocaust Memorial Day in 2018 Bettina was the guest of honour at Bristol's City Hall and gave a presentation to a packed auditorium.

All three of these Bristol veterans were spoken about with genuine fondness and they will be greatly missed from the group. We wish their families long life.

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



A COLLEGE OVERLOOKING LAKE TIBERIAS



A visit to the north of Israel brought me to the Kinneret Academic

College, perched on a promontory overlooking Lake Tiberias, where my grandson Gil is studying for a degree in Energy Engineering. After exploring various other academic options, Gil settled for the degree course at this college, which offers various specialities in technical subjects as well as general studies, and serves the population of the region, both Jewish and Arab, though many students – like Gil – come from other parts of the country..

I was able to interview the President of the college, Professor Shimon Gepstein, who has retired from his post as Professor of Biology at the Haifa Technion. In our meeting Professor Gepstein told us that many of the academic staff at the college are in fact retired academics from other institutions, and in this day and age it is important to find useful employment for people who are experts in their field and are eager to impart knowledge to the younger generation of students.

It would be hard to find a setting more enchanting than the vista overlooking the Lake of Galilee, which may be a more appropriate term for that particular body of water than one that refers to Rome's River Tiber and Emperor

Tiberias. The college library, which was inaugurated in 2010, is built with windows that set off the view to perfection while letting in the light that irradiates the building's open, wood-lined interior. Sponge mattresses have been placed along one interior wall on some of the wide wooden steps inside the building that go up to the top level, enabling students to take a rest when studying gets too much for them. I only wish I'd had that possibility when I studied at university several decades ago. But the view of central London just can't compete. The ultra-modern library contains many thousands of volumes as well as an array of computers providing access to virtually all the academic research being conducted throughout the world.

Driving home past the emerald-green countryside of Israel in spring-time after a particularly rainy winter, I felt elated at the thought that our grandson is about to embark on a career at the forefront of one the most pressing concerns of our modern world, one that is assuming ever-increasing importance. As the world finally wakes up to the fact that the subject of energy is one that will continue to preoccupy humankind in order to guarantee our future and that of our planet, it is becoming increasingly pressing to apply our minds and capabilities to overcoming the problems involved. I salute the Kinneret Academic College for focusing on one of the most crucial topics of our time.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson was born in London during WW2 to parents who were refugees from Nazi Germany, She emigrated to Israel in 1964.

Events and Exhibitions

SEPTEMBER 2019



One of the many book covers designed by Facetti for Penguin Books in the 1960s

GERMANO FACETTI

An evening celebrating the life of the Mauthausen survivor who changed the face of publishing in Britain, becoming Art Director of Penguin Books in the 1960s.

10 September

Italian Cultural Institute, London

www.eventbrite.co.uk

TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

Former Kind Dame Stephanie Shirley will talk about her story and how she became a successful businesswoman and pioneer of IT.

17 September

JW3, London

www.jw3.org.uk

ANNA GMEYNER & ELISABETH DE WAAL

Dr Nadia Valman will talk about the Austrian author and playwright Anna Gmeyner and novelist Elisabeth de Waal, both of whom came to the UK as refugees.

17 September

Persephone Bookshop, London WC2

020 7242 9292

DEATH MARCH ESCAPE

Jack Hersch tells the incredible story of his father Dave, who not only endured the hell of Mauthausen but also managed to escape two death marches.

25 September

JW3, London

www.jw3.org.uk

THE ESCAPE ACT

A one-woman theatre show incorporating circus and puppetry based on the life of Irene Danner, a Jewish acrobat who survived the Holocaust.

26 September

Circomedia, Bristol

www.theescapeactshow.com

PAINT A FOUNDATION STONE

AJR is very proud to be one of the supporters of Foundation Stones, inviting people from around the UK to paint a commemorative stone to be placed within the foundations of the new UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre at Westminster.

These stones will be laid in remembrance of the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution.

Each Foundation Stone will represent a commitment from communities across the United Kingdom to learn from the past and to build a future free from all forms of prejudice, discrimination and hatred. The project is aimed at

community groups, schools, individuals - anyone who would like to make a tangible commitment to remember and learn from the past.

The project was recently launched on *Good Morning Britain* by the co-chairs of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, Lord Pickles and Ed Balls.

Painted stones might commemorate an individual, represent the community taking part, depict a scene of peace or beauty or say something about hopes for the future. Each design will be individual and represent a unique contribution to British remembrance of the Holocaust.

"Big Ideas is delighted to be working with the AJR for the Foundation Stones project. We look forward to receiving stones from AJR members, and hope that you will not only take part in the project but also encourage colleagues, friends and family to support the new Holocaust



Some of the stones received so far

Memorial from its very foundations," said Dr Virginia Crompton, CEO Big Ideas

Foundation Stones is funded by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation and delivered by Big Ideas. If you would like to take part, please email FoundationStones@big-ideas.org for a free digital resource pack. All stones received will be showcased on www.big-ideas.org/foundation-stones-map/

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