



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Fleeing from France

2020 is an extraordinary year for anniversaries. The 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in January, the 75th anniversary of VE-Day in May, and, a few days ago, the 80th anniversary of the Fall of France.



Marc Chagall, Marcel Duchamp, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry were among the large and distinguished group of French artists, writers and intellectuals who fled to America to spend the war.

In six weeks from 10 May 1940 German forces conquered Belgium, the Netherlands and France. They occupied Paris unopposed on 14 June. On 22 June the French surrendered and the Vichy regime led by Marshal Pétain replaced the Third Republic.

France played a fascinating part in the history of refugees during the 1930s and 1940s. First, it was one of the main centres of emigration after the rise of the Nazis and then the Anschluss. Brecht and his wife passed through Paris in 1933, meeting up briefly with Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya. The film director Robert Siodmak directed the last Jewish-made movie to open in Nazi Germany. Goebbels accused him of being a 'corrupter of the German family' and he got on the next train to Paris. Billy Wilder left for Paris a few days after the Reichstag fire, taking with him \$1,000 in hundred-dollar

bills. At one point, Wilder was staying in the same cheap boarding-house as Peter Lorre and the great film composer, Franz Waxman.

Paris wasn't safe for long. In 1939-40 there was a huge wave of refugees from France. Few came to Britain. Most escaped to the United States. These included some of the most famous artists and intellectuals of the mid-20th century.

Many became what one might call, 'birds of passage': people who fled from France to Britain and America after the German invasion, but returned to France after the war. They chose to return for several reasons. First, unlike in central and east Europe, there were homes and families to return to. Many were non-Jews. Paris was not subject to the destruction of cities like Berlin or Warsaw. Second, unlike east Europe, *Continued on page 2*

### ROUTES TO FREEDOM

France makes our headlines twice this month, and not just because we still can't travel there. Our lead story focuses on the huge wave of refugees from France while an article on page 9 looks at the kindertransports that left France for the United States.

Other articles are based on recent online events hosted by the AJR, and on some fascinating stories about the late relatives of some of our members.

We hope you enjoy this issue and that you are staying well and enjoying the little bit more freedom that is gradually being afforded to us as lockdown slowly eases.

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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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## Fleeing from France (cont.)

there was no Communist takeover after the Soviet invasion. There was more freedom of expression in France. Universities, publishers and art galleries welcomed back artists and intellectuals.

Among those who fled France for Britain in 1940 were the physicists, Hans Halban and Lew Kowarski. Halban was Austrian, Kowarski was born in Russia. Both had worked at the Collège de France from 1937-40. They left France for Falmouth on a British collier with 26 cans of heavy water and then worked at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge.

Arthur Koestler had been arrested in France in September 1939 and was interned as a political prisoner in Le Vernet concentration camp until January 1940. He described his experiences there in *Scum of the Earth* (1941), his first book written in English. On his release he joined the French Foreign Legion, but deserted in 1941 and returned to England via Lisbon.

On his way from the south to Paris he might have passed my father, the Polish artist Josef Herman, who was going in exactly the opposite direction. He had met up with a young American woman, June Peach July, who was touring France and gave him a lift to La Rochelle. He was mistaken for a Polish airman and dragged onto a boat and ended up in Britain.

He was one of a number of east Europeans who left France for Britain. Others included the Polish painter, Jankel Adler, the Croatian sculptor, Oscar Nemon who left Paris for England in 1939, and the great Polish historian of ideas, JL Talmon.

Alfred Kerr, Weimar Germany's leading theatre critic, and his family, including his daughter Judith, left Berlin in 1933 and came to Paris via Zurich. He was not successful in Paris. He wrote to his friend, Albert Einstein, "The articles I wrote in French may have won over a few readers, but they earned me very little." The family moved on to London.

The writer and literary critic, Gabriel Josipovici, had a more circuitous experience. He was born in Vichy France

in 1940. He and his mother returned to Egypt after the war, and later came to Britain, just before the Suez Crisis in 1956.

The critic George Steiner was born in Paris in 1929. 'I was from Paris,' he said in 1986. 'It was our concierge, who informed the Gestapo first who the Jews were and how to get them.' His family escaped to New York just in time. Steiner was one of two Jewish children at his school in Paris who survived the war.

And then there were those who never escaped. The parents of George Clare (author of *Last Waltz in Vienna*) died at Auschwitz. Walter Benjamin, one of the great cultural critics and essayists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, failed to cross the Pyrenees into Spain and committed suicide on the French side of the border.

What is striking about those who came to Britain is how young they were. Many were in their 20s and early 30s. Being so young meant they could learn English (unlike poor Alfred Kerr) and have a full career in their new homeland (unlike Adler who never adjusted to the British art scene). There was something else, too. Many of them found a dual voice: part-English, part-European. Not just in terms of language, but also in terms of the tradition they identified with. Josipovici was as happy writing about Proust as he was about Jonathan Swift; Steiner was as interested in Racine as in Shakespeare.

Many never settled in Britain. Kerr and Adler died almost immediately. The physicists, Kowarski and Halban, JL Talmon moved to Israel, Steiner and Koestler kept on the move.

But only a small handful left France for Britain. A much larger and more distinguished group spent the war in America. It is an extraordinary list: intellectuals including Claude Lévi-Strauss, the founder of French structuralism; the author, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (*The Little Prince*); artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst and Marc Chagall; film-makers, Jean Renoir and René Clair; the composers Nadia Boulanger and Darius Milhaud. Apart from the film-makers who went straight to Hollywood, most stayed on the East Coast. The range is fascinating. Artists and physicists, writers and film directors.

Interestingly, few of these were Jewish. They nearly all went back after the war. Their story is superbly told by Jeffrey Mehlman in his book, *Émigré New York: French Intellectuals in Wartime Manhattan, 1940-1944* (2001).

Among the French refugees who went to America, only Lévi-Strauss was transformed by exile. New York opened him to new ideas. In 1942 he met Roman Jakobson, another European Jewish refugee, and he discovered structural linguistics. The other key influence was the Surrealists. Together with Breton and Max Ernst, he visited small antique shops on Third Avenue, shopping for objects from the Pacific Northwest. Through Breton, writes Mehlman, Lévi-Strauss learnt 'the art of unexpected juxtaposition.' From Jakobson, he learnt about systems and structures. Structuralism was born.

Curiously, most of the great names of French culture stayed behind: Aragon and Artaud, Bataille, Camus and Cocteau, Colette and de Beauvoir, Genet and Gide, Matisse and Sartre. It was those who stayed in Paris who set the agenda. Life, of sorts, went on and left many of the refugees behind. For French refugees, just as for refugees from central and east Europe, exile was rarely straightforward.

**David Herman**



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# VA VA ZOOM

**Even before 'Lockdown' became official it was obvious we could not risk the health of our members or staff by continuing to run our Outreach Meetings around the country.**

The immediate issue was telling members and then contacting all speakers and venues to cancel our arrangements. Then we paused to think about how to ensure members were not isolated or without social contact. The word Zoom came into being and with it a completely new way of running the AJR's Outreach programme.

So far we have been able to run at least one Zoom meeting per day, sometimes two, from Monday to Thursday each week. Recent topics have included everything from the stories behind the BBC News to Rosalind Franklin, the pioneer of DNA.

The meetings are all open to everyone and

the details of meetings are advertised in our Monday e-newsletters.

If you are worried about using Zoom for the first time Larissa Jaffe, our Computer Help Co-Ordinator, has a team of volunteers who can talk you through setting it up on your laptop, ipad or phone. Please email Larissa at [larissa@ajr.org.uk](mailto:larissa@ajr.org.uk) if you need assistance.

We very much hope you will join in this new way of communicating and if you have any queries please contact Susan Harrod on [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk) or 020 8385 3078.

### What members say

"Having been introduced to Zoom a few months ago, I have found it an amazing and helpful form of electronic audio and visual communication, especially at this somewhat anxious and stressful time. I have enjoyed joining in on the AJR Zoom meetings and being able to see and hear other members and of course hearing the interesting and informative guest speakers. I

feel it has been very important for AJR, other organisations, families and friends to be able to connect in this way. I have heard many psychologists speak about the possible mental health effects of this isolation period, especially for those living on their own, and feel that these Zoom meetings have been particularly beneficial for those people as well as all those who use it."

– Jacques Weisser.

"I have to compliment AJR on the truly magnificent programme it is laying on for its members during lockdown."

– Jackie Cronheim.

"I really enjoyed David Barnett's talk - absolutely fascinating! Please book me in for his next one. I also really enjoyed the talk by Dan Fox about the Jewish experience in the modern day army. Please thank not only the speakers but also AJR for organising such a great array of speakers for our members."

– Janet Jacobs.

# BARBED WIRE FEVER

**Barbed Wire Fever is a new literary project that explores what it means to seek and provide refuge. Its founder Linda Mannheim explains the story behind the project.**

It started as an exploration of my father's story. Originally from Germany, he came to England on the Kindertransport in 1939. And, as I was thinking about how to tell my father's story, the balance of the world changed. The greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War began.

I was used to hearing from people who - when they got an inkling of my family's refugee past - expressed a lot of sympathy, outrage, reassurance that they would have done the right thing back then. What were those people doing now? I wondered. Were they sticking up for present day refugees?



The My Story testimony project is featured on the Barbed Wire Fever website

What do non-refugees expect of refugees? What do refugees feel that they can tell? I couldn't explore my father's story without exploring these questions too.

The first year of *Barbed Wire Fever* involved writing workshops with refugees, discussions with refugees and non-refugees, and research in archives and at sites linked to my father's years as a refugee. In March 2020, the *Barbed Wire Fever* blog launched, made up of guest posts by refugee writers and artists, representatives of refugee-led groups, and non-refugees involved with refugee support.

I'm particularly interested in hearing from refugees and former refugees who might want to contribute a post. No one is expected to tell the story of how they became a refugee (though, you can tell that story if you want to).

**Note from Editor:** AJR's Debra Barnes was recently invited to write a blog post for *Barbed Wire Fever* about her experience as a second generation survivor working on the *My Story* project. You can read Debra's and all the other posts at [www.barbedwirefever.com](http://www.barbedwirefever.com)

# Born to care

**AJR's social workers have always played a key role. Here we look back at the life and work of one of our very first social workers, Margot Williams, written by her daughter Diane Lobatto.**

My mother, Margot Williams, née Hillel, was born in Berlin in 1911, the only child of an eminent neurologist father but I only know little about her mother. Her father died very suddenly when my mother was 21, and this severely traumatised her as she was very close to him.

She had a cultured upbringing and wanted to become a doctor but, with the rise of Hitler, she only had enough time to train as a nurse.

She was fortunate to secure a sponsor and arrived in Britain in April 1939 with just a few belongings, including some monographed silver cutlery which I still have to this day. She had to leave her mother behind and they never ever saw each other again. My grandmother passed away with MS in an Amsterdam hospital in 1943. They were only allowed to write occasional Red Cross letters of 25 words. This parting left my mother with an insecurity of never seeing people again, as a result of which she was fiercely protective of me, her only child.

It had been her intention to go to New Zealand but she never actually travelled any further than England. Speaking little English, she was sent to nurse in a hospital in Frimley, Surrey. It was a huge cultural change from the large city of Berlin to a small county hospital in a new country.

In May 1940 she was sent, as an enemy alien, to the Isle of Man. She spent a year there and had good memories of those days. On returning to London, she was sent to St Alphage's Hospital in Greenwich. She re-established contact with some of her old school friends from Berlin and various medical friends, one notably being Sir Ludwig Guttman, who worked at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and founded the

Paralympic Games.

A hospital co-worker told her about a gentleman in London who was very depressed because he was paralysed from the waist down due to contracting polio in his teens. She visited him and the following year they were married; I was born in 1945. My father had been born in England but had spent three years in Vienna in an iron lung. He had learnt to speak Viennese German so I was brought up bilingually.

By that time my mother had left the nursing profession and trained to be a social worker. She worked full time but, with the help of a housekeeper, looked after my father with true devotion. She joined the AJR where she worked tirelessly for 32 years as a social worker, attending numerous meetings, writing reports and subsequently interviewing numerous older refugee applicants for admission to the care homes which had gradually become established.

She also became extremely involved in Belsize Square Synagogue, the community set up in 1939 by refugees. She performed the ritual cleansing of ladies who had passed away and sat on the Ladies Guild and various other committees.

She learned to drive so that she could take my father out and, from the mid-fifties onwards, we were able to go abroad on the car ferry to France. My mother involved herself in many aspects of my father's interests. My father was a philatelic journalist and she accompanied him to many functions and exhibitions, both nationally and in Europe.

Just before my mother's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, my father died very suddenly. Being a very determined lady my mother returned to work just five days later as she said it was the only way she could cope with yet another big bereavement in her life. She retired at the age of 72 and threw herself into voluntary work at the enquiry desk of the Royal Free Hospital. She also learned to play bridge, become involved with the B'nai Brith Lodge and retained strong links with the AJR. She was still driving and doing voluntary work, rushing around as usual, until shortly before she



Margot Williams in 1995

died at the age of 87.

She was thrilled to become a grandmother for the first time in 1971 and again in 1974 and was extremely close to my two sons, Howard and Matt. My mother imbued in both boys a great sense of culture and love of the arts, always taking them to museums, children's concerts and the theatre. I am sure that it was from these visits that Howard's love of London and history, and Matt's love of the theatre were born.

My mother always refused to return to Berlin, but several years ago an opportunity arose for me to go with a group. After a lot of soul searching I decided to go and, having done much research, I was able to retrace my mother's footsteps and also visit the graves of my grandparents. I was also pleased to travel recently to the Isle of Man to meet the archivist in Douglas who found the complete record not just of my mother's arrival on the island, but also all the details of her arrival in England, her last known address in Berlin, and the address to which she went when she left the Isle of Man.

When she was 84, I took my mother to see Matt\* in his pink baby-grow, banging the drums in the live show of *Shooting Stars* at the Hammersmith Apollo. She was by far the oldest person in the audience and was completely bemused; she certainly did not seem to understand what she was watching or to get the jokes.

My mother always set a courageous example, and proved that it is possible to rebuild a good and worthwhile life even after having had to flee one's country, leaving loved ones behind, and having one's life totally disrupted.

**Note from Editor: \* Diana's son is the actor and comedian Matt Lucas.**

# LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



## THEM AND US



There has always been a divide between rulers and ruled. That is the way of the world. Countries have to be

governed, and some people have the urge to govern them. Western societies have accepted the system of democracy, supposedly guaranteeing equal representation for all, with rule by the majority being generally accepted as the best solution. The overriding principle is that every individual is equally valuable to society, and each person's voice has the right to be heard.

In Israel today there is no entrenched ruling class, and democracy prevails. When Israel's founding fathers established its governing institutions the emphasis was on the equal distribution of wealth, the absence of class distinctions and the need for society to care for those in need (thus following traditional Jewish values).

The ethos underlying Israel's social fabric has since shifted away from those principles. Today it is acceptable, albeit not entirely desirable, to have a society of 'haves' and 'have-nots,' and despite attempts to provide for the disadvantaged, this divide appears to have become ever more firmly entrenched.

Another overriding principle underlying most modern societies – Israel included – is that of justice, the concept of equality before the law, the view that no one can be considered above the law. And this brings us to painful recent events which have further deepened the rift within Israel.

The Coronavirus pandemic has disrupted societies all over the world, causing lockdowns and hardship for many. The UK has recently been riven by a scandal over the unsanctioned cross-country drive (supposedly to obtain care for his child) by a senior government adviser, thereby disobeying the lockdown rule which the rest of the country has had to obey. The Prime Minister has refused to condemn that act, thus overturning the concept of equality before the law.

The President of the USA has openly declared that he will not wear a mask, even though this is the recommended way of avoiding transmission of the disease. He, too, evidently considers himself above the law.

At the recent Pesach (Passover) festival, when it is customary for families to eat the festive meal (the Seder) together, for the first time in Israel's history families were forbidden to congregate, and many people were forced to sit alone or communicate with their relatives by electronic means (Zoom, etc.).

It did not take long, however, for the media to publish photos of the Prime

Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, enjoying the Seder with his son who does not live under his roof. Worse still, the President of Israel, Ruby Rivlin, was shown in the company of his grandchildren, who do not live with him.

Israelis expressed outrage at the hypocrisy of the self-same leaders who had called on them to observe social isolation. But instead of calls for resignation, the public seems to have shrugged its shoulders and carried on. At least the lockdown restrictions were eased soon afterwards, whether prematurely or not time will tell.

The most flagrant example of spurning the principle of equality before the law is provided by the current Prime Minister. After evading justice for years by a series of legal and political ploys, Benjamin Netanyahu was finally brought before a court of law on charges of corruption, bribery, and misappropriation of funds. Any other politician so charged would have resigned long since, but not Mr. Teflon. After avoiding being brought to justice for many years, just before he entered the courtroom he launched an unbridled attack on the police, the media, the judicial system (whose judges are his appointees) and the Attorney General.

Democracy is still maintained, at least in theory. The only problem lies in the inability of the electorate to see through politicians' lies and manipulations.

## TECH TALKS

**Most AJR members now rely on their phone and tablets more than ever before. So make sure you use it effectively.**

Having retired in 2017 after spending 46 years in the IT profession, Steve Newton now volunteers for the AJR and other organisations by providing IT advice for the organisations and our members. Since lockdown he has been offering free online talks under the name Tech Talk. They

take place each Thursday at 11.00am via Zoom with the aim of showing how to get more out of your devices.

If you'd like to participate drop an email to Steve at [sl.newton@ntlworld.com](mailto:sl.newton@ntlworld.com) and you'll receive a weekly invite and handouts from each session. You will also get Tech Talk Tips (useful tips about using your devices) arriving in your inbox from time to time.

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# 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.

## AMADEUS QUARTET

The article by Jo Briggs (June) omitted reference to circumstances that played a key role in the foundation of the Amadeus Quartet.

In 1940/41 Norbert Brainin, Peter Schidlof and Siegmund Nissel were interned, as 'enemy aliens', at various locations including the Isle of Man. During this time they met Dr. Ferdinand Rauter, a pianist and dedicated teacher and lecturer on music, who strongly encouraged them to form a quartet; he also at this time laid the foundations of the Anglo-Austrian Music Society.

Coincidentally, he also met my father, another internee, and eventually became my brother-in-law. Internment had some happy outcomes!

*Freddy Kosten, London N3*

I wonder how many other readers of the *AJR Journal* were at the debut concert of the Amadeus Quartet (who had previously performed as the Brainin Quartet) at the Wigmore Hall, in January 1948.

Our extended family of Brainins - of which I was the youngest member – attended en masse and I well recall the post-concert crush in the Artists' Room where much embracing took place but hardly a word of English was heard.

*Mary Brainin Hutterer, London N3*

## SUNSHINE HOSTEL

As a result of my *Letter from Israel* about the Sunshine Hostel (May) I was contacted by an AJR member wanting information about the hostel before my parents were there.

While replying I suddenly remembered I had the book *No Longer a Stranger*, edited by the late Inge Saddam and privately published. The book contains testimony from some twenty Kindertransportees, including my late father, Manfred Vanson. Among the photos is a group photo of children at Sunshine Hostel, with myself as a baby on the lap of one of the girls. I sent the text and the photo to the member, and she replied with a message from her mother saying that she was the girl on whose lap I was sitting. Talk

about things coming full circle!  
*Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, Israel*

## REMEMBERING.....OR NOT?

Michael Brown writes (May) that he remembers boarding the ferry at the Hook of Holland in August 1939, but cannot recall parting from his parents or boarding the train and his journey through Germany and Holland.

In the summer of 1941 I was part of a small American Kindertransport from Vichy France to the United States. A dangerous train journey through occupied France took us to the Spanish border where we changed trains under the watchful eyes of uniformed Gestapo, then continued to Lisbon to board our ship. I also do not remember saying goodbye to my parents. Nor do I have a single memory of the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, or even being on the ship.

For years I wondered how it was possible for a 10-year-old not to remember spending two weeks on board a ship. Eventually I came to understand that I found the experience of being parted from my parents so traumatic that the only way I could deal with it was to banish it and the journey taking me away from them from my memory. It was not a conscious or voluntary choice. It just happened.

I'm not surprised that Michael Brown does not remember parting from his parents and part of the journey after leaving them. I'm certain there are others who coped with such desperate separations exactly as we did.

*Eve Kugler, London N3*

## FAMILY MATTERS

In the introduction to *Family Matters* (May) Victor Ross described complicated family ties and marriages between relatives. He referred to a distant relative who "suffered from dwarfism" and seems to have had a metabolic or enzymatic disorder of the digestive tract which caused him excessive flatulence.

Consanguineous marriages between blood relatives have a statistically higher risk of

genetic defects manifested in their offspring. A conceived child carries one gene from the mother and one from the biological father. A pathological gene (or 'sick gene') can run in a family for generations but express itself only if marriage is between blood relatives.

Consanguinity amongst Jews was part of their culture, to strengthen family links and improve their financial situation. The genetic disorder haemophilia was first mentioned in the Talmud; when the mother is a carrier it is transmitted to her sons.

The truth is that inbreeding is common worldwide. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were first cousins and she spread haemophilia across the whole of Europe. Madness, porphyria and different genetic disorders were not unusual in royalty.

In some countries consanguineous marriages are prohibited but in the UK marriage between first cousins is allowed. It is advisable, however, to seek a genetic screening to reduce the risk.

*Dr Elena Rowland, London SE18*

## A BETTER WORLD?

Ruth Barnett's *Reflections on a Better World After* (June) included an example of 'quote mining' that reveals how hard it is to escape conventional wisdom even when envisaging a *Better World*. It is quite wrong to assert that: "Margaret Thatcher would have us think there is no such thing as society." What Mrs Thatcher had been referring to was that society is blamed for the failures of people's lives, and for our social ills, while she advocated that people ought to take personal responsibility and show civic virtue to change society. The opposite philosophy, in fact, from the one she is accused of holding.

Even in the midst of pandemic, the Culture Wars (that originated in the US between 'progressives' and 'conservatives') poison and embitter conversations, and set one *Weltanschauung* against another; it is a zero sum game. I see little possibility of a *Better World* emerging after Corona while this plague of ideology rages on.

*Greg Lubinsky, London NW6*

Who is there so bold as to tell the 7.954 billion people who dwell on this earth what they may or may not do? No two people have lived, thought, spoken or acted alike for an infinite variety of reasons. What is good for one, is bad for another. To dictate one's opinions is presumptive. History is witness; the continuous unrest is proof.... The unlikely has become reality from which we should all learn, because it has all happened before and will probably happen again.

*Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx.*

### A HISTORY OF DISEASE

While timely, your feature on *A History of Disease* (June) raises questions concerning the causes of different diseases at Auschwitz. Fleas are known to transmit typhus only in the tropics, whereas the body louse carried the typhus pathogen in Auschwitz and in German occupied Poland. Typhus had been eradicated from Germany by 1900, hence the Nazis' fear of typhus as it advanced eastwards. They referred to typhus as a *Judenfieber*, and this was the pretext for walling off the Warsaw Ghetto. Although typhus was hardly a problem where it was endemic - anyone contracting typhus before adolescence would experience something like mild flu - it could be fatal to anyone from a non-endemic area: to German soldiers, or indeed to Jews from Western Europe in Auschwitz. The fiction of typhus delousing was the pretext for the murderous horror of the gas chambers, in terms of deception and in the genocidal use of Zyklon B, which was a delousing product since WWI for clothes and enclosed spaces but which the Germans turned to deadly use in Auschwitz and Majdanek.

Your article discusses nutritional issues but the problem was surely typhoid – confusingly in German called *Typhus* – but with a bacterial cause carried by water or rotting food, whereas for what is in English typhus but in German *Fleckfieber* the body lice carry a rickettsial pathogen (rickettsia are neither bacteria nor viral). Auschwitz kitchen staff were routinely tested for typhoid rather than for louse-borne typhus. I addressed the confusion between louse-

borne typhus and typhoid in my book *Epidemics and Genocide* (Oxford 2000).

I agree that Allied research in medicine was more successful than what the Axis managed – Ernst Chain is rightly mentioned; but despite a Nobel Prize in 1945, he was disgracefully never more than on a short term contract while at Oxford. But look at the bigger picture: 6226 refugees in health care came to or through the UK, including 4470 who were medically qualified or were refugee students who could complete their studies, 537 in dental surgery (my father included, my kindertransportee mother eventually qualifying in dentistry), 759 can be identified who came as nurses or trained in nursing (actually the full number must be nearer a thousand). Britain recognised all foreign medical degrees from January 1941. When it came to the new NHS in 1948, the contribution of Jewish refugees as clinicians and in health care was enormous.

The inconclusive Nazi search for a typhus vaccine caused many prisoner deaths, especially in Buchenwald. See: <https://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/science-and-suffering-online>

Finally, who gets the Viennese Latin joke: *Wenn Dir ein Laus am Ohr ist, pax drux bis goris*? (Clue: pronounce the "Latin" in a Viennese accent).

*Professor Paul Weindling, Oxford*

### 104 IS NO DIFFERENT

Thank you for the fascinating article about Greta Simmons' chance encounter with Hitler (June). Greta was my aunt by marriage and my mouth fell open when I saw her photo in the *Journal*. Your article brought back memories of being in her lovely home in Pinner, listening to the many stories of her life.

When Greta was 100 she moved to a home near Leeds to be near her granddaughter. As she was the last Jew alive who had met Hitler, the *Yorkshire Post* conducted a birthday interview with her, asking: "What is it like to be 104?" Her immediate reply was,

"No different from 103".  
*Gaby Glassman, Pinner*

### BEST HOLOCAUST LITERATURE

D.H. Dobson wrote (June) that the best book about the Holocaust for him was *Boy 30529: A Memoir* by Felix Weinberg.

Very late in life Felix Weinberg discovered that he and my husband Avram had a shared history. They had both been to Auschwitz and on the death march to Blechammer, Gross Rosen and Buchenwald, from where they were finally liberated. He sent us his book and after many telephone conversations they arranged to meet, but as neither of them was well this was postponed until just before Felix died.

My husband had a large collection of Holocaust literature but most often referred to *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* by William L. Shirer. I am only now reading Felix Weinberg's excellent book for the first time  
*Vera Schaufeld, Wembley*

### AJR PLAQUE IN BERLIN

Your article (June) referred to British Consulate staff across Germany who worked "to expedite the emigration of Jews from the Third Reich to Britain". Without doubt the most important of these diplomats were Consul General Robert T. Smallbones and his Vice Consul Arthur Dowden in Frankfurt.

The extraordinary service rendered by these two selfless diplomats to thousands of desperate German Jews was honoured on a bronze plaque unveiled on the site of the former British Consulate General in Frankfurt on 8 May 2013 and fully reported in your June 2013 issue. Several UK guests at the unveiling represented the families of those rescued, including Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, David Rothenberg (an AJR trustee) and members of the Goldsmith-Stanton families, who initiated the project. The entire project was financed by the City of Frankfurt.  
*John D. Goldsmith (Basel, Switzerland) & Ann Stanton (London NW3)*

# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Oxford's **Ashmolean** opened its **Young Rembrandt** exhibition less than three weeks before lockdown. But now you can view it online. We learn from curator An Van Camp that the Dutch master was no genius or child prodigy, but a rather insecure 16 year old whose hard work and diligence earned him the eventual status of one of the greatest artists of all time.



Rembrandt,  
Self-portrait  
wearing a  
soft cap, c.  
1633

Focusing on the decade between 1624 and 1634, from Rembrandt's apprenticeship in his birth town of Leiden, to his success in Amsterdam, the exhibition explores the artist's development through sketches, prints, paintings and self-portraits.

After university Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn was apprenticed for three years to a local painter, Jacob van Swanenburg. But it was his subsequent six months in Amsterdam, studying with Pieter Lastman in 1624, which proved the catalyst.

Rembrandt's early work, including an impressionistic study of an old man, probably his father, and a sketchy view of the outskirts of Leiden, demonstrate the sensitivity that became his hallmark, but revealed a certain lack of confidence. This tentative approach was emboldened on his return to Leiden where he set up his workshop a year later.

His early faulty perspective and anatomical awkwardness are evident in *The Spectacles Seller (Allegory of Sight)* and *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple*. There is a burst of emotional energy but the clumsiness makes the subjects appear cartoonish. In *The Baptism of the Eunuch* his perspective has improved but the emotional charge is gone and the figures are static. It was the same with his often wobbly printmaking, but it is in the

imperfection where we see his intense desire to learn, improve and experiment.

In Leiden portraits of his elderly parents reveal his empathy with character rather than youthful beauty, a strong feature of his maturing work. In *An Old Woman*, called *'The Artist's Mother'*, (c. 1627–9) age and wisdom contribute to a tight-lipped introspection in which the subject seems to search deep into her own soul. The light here does not come from her eyes but simply a glint on her mantle and her white collar.

By now Rembrandt was working closely with his contemporary Jan Lievens and both artists won the attention of the influential art patron Constantijn Huygens, Secretary to the Prince of Orange, Frederick Henry. Huygens was so taken by Rembrandt's painting *Judas Repentant* while it was still a work in progress that he became an enthusiastic collector of both artists and commissions soon came from the Prince and other court officials. Rembrandt painted a series on the *Passion of Christ* for the Prince, and in 1629 Charles 1 was presented with two of his paintings. In order to boost his reputation and income Rembrandt made reproductions of some of his works, aided by the professional printmaker Jan Gillisz Van Vliet.

A growing interest in naturalism led Rembrandt to a new way of painting women and peasants. In contrast to the

idealised female forms popularised by artists like Titian, he went for realism, painting larger women with sagging bodies. Realism also gave way to vulgarity. He did not shrink from painting peasants urinating or defecating!

By his return to Amsterdam in 1631, he had become one of the most sought after portraitists, noted for the depths of his character painting, but also for his nocturnal atmospheric scenes, his dramatic contrasts of light and shade. He married Saskia, a cousin of the art dealer Hendrick Van Uylenburgh, who had given him studio space. Saskia's appearances in his work made a youthful contrast to his gallery of the elderly. You can view *Young Rembrandt* at <https://www.ashmolean.org/youngrembrandt#widget-id-1964241>

The Ashmolean hope to show **Young Rembrandt**, featuring 30 paintings and 90 drawings and prints from international and private collections, beyond its original closing date and plan to announce revised exhibition dates as soon as possible.

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE



# SENDING CHILDREN ACROSS THE POND

About one thousand unaccompanied Jewish children were evacuated from Nazi Europe, some via France, to the United States. To find out more, I went to Paris to meet a leading authority, **Laura Hobson Faure**, professor of Modern Jewish History at the **Université de Paris-1**.



Laura Hobson Faure, with her book *Un Plan Marshall Juif* (A Jewish Marshall Plan).

Sitting in a café opposite the Jardin du Luxembourg, Laura told me more about this harrowing and complex KT story. Several agencies - secular, Jewish and Quaker - were involved and they did not always work together harmoniously.

Guided by its historian, Katy Hazan, Laura focused her research on the contribution of the remarkable Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE). Set up in St Petersburg in 1912 to improve the health of Jewish populations, it continues to this day. In the US, OSE-Kinder or their descendants still keep in touch with one another.

In the 1920s the OSE relocated to Berlin, and in 1933 it moved to Paris. After Kristallnacht, it helped to bring persecuted German and Austrian Jewish children to France – mainly the Paris region. So that the children remained in a German Jewish environment, the OSE placed them in care homes, where qualified staff looked after their welfare. Wealthy French Jews helped fund the work, among them two baronnes: some 130 children lived in the Château de la Guette, outside Paris, run by Germaine de Rothschild; Yvonne de Gunzburg raised money to acquire further accommodation. Both women left for the US early in the war.

When Hitler invaded northern France in 1940, the OSE and the Château de la Guette had to move their Kinder to the unoccupied Vichy zone. The children again lived in communal homes in different

regions, for example in Bourboule, a small town in central France that had specialised in treating children's ailments. After the Nazis occupied Vichy France in 1942 and started deporting Jews, including children, to the death camps, the children were given false identities and 'hidden' with families, usually Catholic.

One of the most celebrated of the OSE's workers was Andrée Salomon, who had been living in Strasbourg, where many Kinder entered France. She set up 'colonies' in eastern and then in central France. Salomon, who died in Israel in 1985, volunteered in 1941 to work in Vichy's internment camps. She joined the Résistance and was among the Jews and non-Jews, such as the Quakers, who smuggled children into Switzerland or Spain after 1942. She saved about 1,000 children from deportation, and sent 300 children to the US on the legal transports that left France in 1941-42, organised by the US Committee for the Care of European Children.

The severe bureaucratic hurdles in the US mirrored those in Europe. Congress was unwilling to modify the quota rules, partly because of the prevailing antisemitism, despite pressure from President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor. The welcoming organisations, moreover, disagreed on whether to place the children with foster parents, or again arrange for them to live communally.

Behind the dispute lay a basic question: was

the goal rapid assimilation – through living with families around the country – or was it respect for their background and traditions by living together in dedicated children's homes? With antisemitism rampant, some philanthropists thought it a bad idea to concentrate the Kinder in the New York region, and favoured their dispersal.

Laura's own family history stems from shtetls in today's Belarus, and that, along with the late discovery of her Soviet Jewish cousins, is the source of her interest in the Holocaust and its aftermath. She grew up in Michigan and graduated from Bryn Mawr, the renowned women's college in Philadelphia, before going to Paris to work as a teacher.

With time on her hands, she enrolled at the Université de Paris-8, and that was the stepping-stone to an academic career as a historian. Her thesis, later published as a book in French, was '*A Jewish Marshall Plan: The American Jewish Presence in Post-Holocaust France, 1944-1954*'. Laura followed up that work with research into the migration of Jewish children to France and the United States during and after WW2, and the networks they later established as Holocaust survivors.

She has completed the first volume, on their experiences in Europe; a second volume will cover their years in the United States.

**Martin Mauthner**

# My Cousin Otto

**I first met Otto in 1950 when I was 15 years old and he was 40. We went to a football match in Vienna together with my father, Dr Marcus Pfeffer. Austria FC, Vienna's foremost team, was playing. Otto was a big fan. My parents were visiting Vienna for the first time since we had fled in February 1939. The only family member still alive in Vienna was Otto.**

Otto was my first cousin, the youngest of three children born to Joseph and Anna Demant. My mother lived with them since she was orphaned when 14 years old. The Demants had done well since coming to Vienna from Tarnopol. As Otto was growing up, they moved from Sir Tom Stoppard's Leopoldstadt, the Jewish district, to an apartment in the Innere Stadt, a more affluent area. Joseph worked in, and later owned, a wallpaper factory. He drove a Daimler when hardly anyone in Vienna, including my parents, owned a car. He became a Kommerzienrat, a title conferred only on distinguished businessmen. Yet, despite all this, Otto changed his surname from Demant to Durer. "Durer sounded more artistic", he maintained. He was not at all interested in the business world.

Otto wanted to be an actor. He was reasonably handsome but a bit lazy. He was described as effeminate. His lifestyle had to be subsidised by Joseph. While my parents talked a lot about Otto's brother and sister, they never said much about Otto.

After the war we discovered that Otto had survived, and was back in Vienna. He had a job, but Austria FC seemed more important to him than anything else.

I was wrong. There was Dolf. Otto had escaped Vienna after Kristallnacht in 1938, deciding Holland was a safe haven. Also, Holland was known to have a laxer moral code than most countries. Otto made Amsterdam his home, not far from where Anne Frank and her family lived. The Nazis

occupied Amsterdam in May 1940. Otto needed to go into hiding. His new friend Dolf, a homosexual, offered to shelter him in his small flat. They became lovers. The war ended. Otto survived.

Otto went back to Vienna, taking Dolf with him. Homosexuality was forbidden in Austria. They could not live together, and could only meet in secret. Otto joined a film production company. There he met husband and wife, Paula Wessely and Attila Hörbiger - big stars in the theatre world but not yet in films.

"Die Wessely", as she became known, was considered a pro-German sympathiser, having acclaimed the Anschluss and appeared in the Nazi propaganda film, *Heimkehr*. Otto needed to make her popular again. He acquired a film studio in Salzburg and made a series of films with her. "Die Wessely's" name went up in lights once more. Small roles were found for Attila too.

Austria was slowly becoming respected in the international film industry, resulting in Otto being given an honorary professorship by Vienna University. Also, Austria needed a representative at international conventions, and Otto was chosen for the job. At film festivals he met up again with his old friend, the famous Billy Wilder, who, before going to Hollywood, had once been one of Joseph Demant's lodgers.

For us, it had been a joyful reunion with Otto. My parents did not talk about his relationship with Dolf. A few months later they invited Otto and Dolf to our house in Banbury, a market town near Oxford where my father had had his medical practice since early 1945.

Two years after we had gone to see AFC Austria play in Vienna, we played football ourselves - in our back yard in Banbury. Playing were Otto, Dolf and me. My father was the referee. The game did not last long. Otto shot at goal, I missed the ball and it smashed against our kitchen window, shattering it to smithereens. My mother and grandmother, cooking lunch in the kitchen, were not pleased.

I always wondered what Otto and Dolf

thought of our large but ugly house. This really was not their scene. My mother had gave them two rooms on the top floor, next to me. Homosexuals? What were they? Otto and Dolf didn't stay long, preferring to stay with Otto's sister, Gisl, in busy buzzy London.

A few years later Otto and Dolf split. Otto, now highly successful, had bought Dolf two cinemas to manage in Munich - a goodbye present to thank Dolf for sheltering him in Holland, saving his life, and for his unstinting friendship. However, Otto now had someone else in view. A woman.

Nina Sandt was 19 years younger than Otto. She was an extra in one of Otto's films and very pretty. As an important figure in the Austrian film industry, Otto wanted someone beautiful on his arm, so proposed to Nina. We first met Nina in 1956 in Bad Gastein, a mountain resort by the Gross Glockner. I was 21 and had just graduated from Oxford. Nina was 28. I quite fancied her. Otto and Nina were staying in a luxury 5-star hotel. I was jealous. Nina had brought her uncle and aunt along. No doubt Otto was paying. I didn't like the uncle and aunt. They referred two or three times to when the National Socialists ruled Austria. I couldn't help myself. "Why don't you call them Nazis, like everyone else does?" I asked. "Do you find the word "Nazi" embarrassing?" They walked away. Otto and Nina weren't pleased. Nor were my parents outwardly but I felt my father probably approved.

Nina started to play bigger roles in some of Otto's films. Along with "Die Wessely", she starred in *Trees are Blooming in Vienna*, a film that Paula herself produced. Very kitsch but very good box office.

As a family, we began to see more of Otto. His brother Max had arranged for their parents, the Demants, to move to London from Chicago, where they had been living since fleeing Vienna. He found them a flat next door to their sister, Gisl. Otto visited at least twice a year. He also came to Banbury once with Paula and Attila. Some disapproved of us giving hospitality to Paula because of her Nazi connection.

In 1962 Otto was involved in the re-making



Otto as a young man



Peter Phillips (centre) with Otto (left) and Willi

of Wedekind's *Lulu* - a hugely successful film in 1929. The new film was to be shot in Salzburg where Otto had all the latest camera and lighting equipment. The film starred the internationally known actress Hildegard Neff. In the corner of the set Otto spied Willi Sorger.

Willi was Second Assistant Director on the film. He was not an important crew member but Otto liked what he saw and a new romance was born. Otto asked Willi to move in with him. Was Willi also gay or did he just see this as a career opportunity? Who knows? But what about Nina? Perhaps they were living as a threesome? It was quite possible and, indeed, probable that Willi was bisexual. But eventually Nina realised that she had to move on. As had happened with Dolf, Nina was given a very generous goodbye kiss.

The Austrian film industry was thriving. A film was due to be made called *The Sound of Music*, starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer. The locations were the mountains around Salzburg. Otto offered the producers his studio facilities. The offer was accepted. What phenomenal publicity for Otto, besides lucrative rewards. Otto became very proud of the edelweiss. He also continued making his very Austrian films, most very sugary.

Willi moved in with Otto, bringing his mother, Frau Sorger, with him as housekeeper. I remember visiting with my wife Davida and my four children. Frau Sorger cooked us the most sumptuous Viennese meal. My mother cooked beautiful

Viennese dishes too but, sorry Mutti, they weren't as good as Frau Sorger's.

Otto and Willi tried to introduce my children to opera. Otto had a copy of Zeffirelli's *La Traviata*, starring Placido Domingo. My children didn't become fans, but they did like the music. Otto's flat was rich with culture. Hanging on the walls were, I was told, two original Bruegels. I wonder what became of them?

I made commercials in the UK. A few times I needed a mountainous background. Otto and Willi always proved helpful. They would organise the location, the casting, and provide the equipment, crew and extras. The arrangement suited both of us.

It was during the making of one commercial that Otto brought up the subject of Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane*. He had the rights to the play. Did I want to help him turn the play into a film?

It was 1968. I wanted to help but I produced commercials, not feature films. I consulted a colleague, Doug Kentish and Otto sold him the film rights. I was given 12½% of the net profit (I didn't know until later that most feature films do not make a net profit). It premiered in 1970 in London's West End, with Princess Margaret attending, and had reasonably good reviews but was a box office failure. The main excuse was that it went on general release in the week that the World Cup started on TV. Anyway, there was no gross profit let alone my net profit. The only one who made money was Otto. Many years later, however, some deemed the film a "masterpiece".

Why did Otto find *Entertaining Mr Sloane* so interesting? Its story is of a brother and a sister falling in love with the same man. Are there any similarities with Otto and Nina both fancying Willi? Perhaps.

Throughout the 1970s and '80s Otto carried on making small-budget films, but young filmgoers were not interested in "Die Wessely" anymore, nor in kitsch tales about Vienna filmed to the music of Franz Lehar. Otto had to sell the studio and many of his possessions, including the Bruegels. He still loved being called "Herr Professor" and became a little more open about his relationship with Willi.

However, Otto found it embarrassing sharing rooms, particularly abroad, since they had different surnames. The solution? Willi changed his surname to Durer. Willi Durer. Then Otto decided to go a step further still. He adopted Willi. His lover became his son.

Otto and Willi lived happily together until Otto died in 1994, aged 85. My wife and I saw them several times before Otto's death. Otto loved a melange coffee at the Hotel Sacher, and Willi was always able to obtain opera tickets for the Staatsoper when, officially, they had sold out. We stayed in touch with Willi after Otto died but, just two years after his death, we received news that Willi had died too. He was still in his sixties. Whatever was left in the estate was to go to dear old Frau Sorger.

"A Man in Hiding". It has the makings of a film. Anyone interested?

**Peter Phillips**

# Great Britain waves the rules

Once upon a time a storm raged in the English Channel. The evening papers headlined *Continent Isolated*. That is how the English always thought. We are us on our islands with an Empire behind us, they are them who live in strange ways. The new immigrants from Nazi Germany were experiencing their new home, a nation of honesty, kindness, fairness, reserve, humour. And geniuses at improvising their way out of trouble. Only the English, my father commented, could turn the disaster of Dunkirk into a victory.

These natives welcomed them, yet were highly suspicious. So when the war came they kept them out of harm's way by 'locking them all up' or sending them to the colonies.

In England, from 1937 onwards, my perceptions differed from those of my school friends. I was confronted by the schizophrenia in this new country. On the one hand, significant parts of the English establishment had been started by immigrants (as remembered in this *Journal*). On the other hand, the natives' suspicious attitudes lingered on, 'they' could never be 'one of us'.

Then the class differences. I was a day-boy at a public school; we were different from the boys in the local secondary schools. The Empire was never far away; one of the eight school houses was named after Clive of India. I sensed something wrong but did not understand what. The Empire was run by the upper classes. You rose to a job in the civil service with a degree in classics or economics, not science.

Brilliant English inventors had created the industrial revolution, but now they rarely brought their innovations to market. The joke was *Die Engländer haben das Klo erfunden und sind drauf sitzen geblieben*



This postcard is typical of the patriotic ephemera that was widely peddled throughout Britain during the First World War.

(the English invented the loo and have sat on it ever since). In this land of shop keepers and great new ideas, people continued life as grandpa did. Old ways die hard. Ernest Chain took on the great English innovation of penicillin and made it work in Oxford, but production went to the USA. Over the years, most of the great British businesses have been sold overseas or have outsourced their production, from where we now buy our stuff. The shopkeepers are disappearing, giving way to international financial services which facilitate corporate sales, and to supermarkets in place of super markets. The whole is entangled in a huge bureaucracy. Now our choices and lifestyles are ruled by huge distant corporations, whereas the countries of our neighbours offered choices.

Throughout all my 82 years of life in the UK, schizophrenia and paradoxes lurked in the background. Yet much also changed for the better over the years. Understanding for the foreigner and intolerance of racism have become the norm. But still we don't want 'many more of them here': the desire to rule the waves with our islands at the centre, is still strong.

So, here is a nation long and deeply divided by class, by attitudes to other nations, and by education and skills. Brexit should be no surprise. The English will now have to create a new barrier across the Channel, to isolate the continent forever. The older socialist conservatives will have to rise from their loos, get round bureaucracy and start to manufacture what we need, British-made

for home use. No longer buy everything from China; and no longer blame them for their carbon emissions when so much is due to our imports. England has become the dirty man of Europe, the one country of the EU which consistently resists regulation. And if the English look forward to being rid of EU bureaucracy, think again; any city administration like, say, Sheffield in England is as big as the whole EU admin in Brussels.

But Scotland is a bit different. Their split loyalty to England and to Europe could lead to the best of both worlds; a Scotland independent of England but within the European Union. (Provided nationalism of the *Braveheart* sort is banished).

Such a move would fit well with what is needed to deal with global problems. Now is the first time that we can do anything about it and will also be the last unless we do. Action involves all nations, cooperating with fairness. This, as Leopold Kohr (another immigrant) wrote, can be achieved only by small nations joining in some sort of federation. An independent Scotland joining a union of nations like the EU is a small step in the right direction. The English could then take down their new barrier, re-join the EU and regain their link to Scotland. European Great Britain might indeed again lead a way, and all could live happily ever after.

**Dr Ulrich Loening FRSA**

**Note from Editor: This is a shortened version of Dr Loening's original article.**

# Revisiting emotional visits

In May the AJR hosted a fascinating discussion on 'The emotional impact of visiting sites connected with family history', aimed specifically at descendants of Holocaust refugees and survivors. Our three panellists – David Clark, second generation retired university lecturer, still actively involved in research and in the creative writing field, and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard, second generation registered architect and systemic family therapist, together with Rosemary Schonfeld, second generation who researched and wrote about her family history – have since provided these reports.

**David Clark:** "My mother was born in Berlin. Her father, Siegmund Weltlinger, had been a stockbroker, finding employment in the Nazi era as an administrator for the Berlin Jewish community. Arrested after Kristallnacht, he sent his children to safety via the Kindertransport. My grandparents remained in Berlin, hidden by a Christian Scientist family, the Moehringers. After the war my grandfather co-founded the society for Christian-Jewish Co-operation and entered politics, becoming a deputy in the Berlin Senate.

I had frequently visited my grandparents and joined them on walks and outings. My grandfather died in 1974, aged 88, and my grandmother two years later. I was present at both their funerals. I also met up with my great aunt, the last time in 1988, shortly before her death.

I re-visited Berlin in September 2001 to cover the opening of the Jewish Museum for *Jewish Renaissance*. On arrival I had a shocking realisation. All the people that I

used to visit in Berlin were no longer alive. I felt completely alone and inconsolable.

Fortunately, I had met Rabbi Walter Rothschild at Limmud conferences in England. He was very much alive, with a big heart, and kindly agreed to host me over Shabbat and take me to synagogue. To cap it all, he secured my press pass for the opening of the Jewish Museum.

On the Friday evening, at an Orthodox synagogue, a young girl from a Russian background had her Bat Mitzvah. The next morning, at the Orianenburgerstrasse synagogue, another Bat Mitzvah took place, in a Reform service. The Bat Mitzvah girl happened to be the daughter of Daniel Libeskind, the architect for the Jewish Museum.

This was a complete revelation to me; there I was mourning the passing of the older generation of German Jews, and right there and then I was witnessing the rebirth of a new and vital Jewish community, where East meets West, where a new Jewish museum was being launched with great fanfare and new hopes for the future."

**Teresa von Sommaruga Howard** described a visit to Berlin with her father. "Although he had visited many times before the Wall came down, this was his first visit since then, and the first time he had seen the many memorials to the Shoah around the city. Contemplating the Memorial to the Auschwitz transports had a powerful impact. He suddenly recognised that if he had not left when he did, he probably would not have been alive, and neither would I. The return to his birthplace was a profound experience, for re-awakening both his love of all things German along with the humiliating pain of being forced to leave as a lone 15 year old."

**Rosemary Schonfeld** wrote "I felt privileged to contribute to the AJR's discussion about the emotional impact of visiting my father's country of birth, the Czech Republic. There are many members of the Second Generation making this kind of journey, and for all of us there are both commonalities and a huge variety of experiences. No two are the same. Many of us, for all sorts



David Clark had an emotional revelation while at Berlin's Orianenburgerstrasse Synagogue (aka Neue Synagoge)

of reasons, were unable to make these journeys until middle-age or later, and they are always emotional in one way or another.

It has taken many of us years to formulate our feelings, and a lot of us are still working with and trying to understand what now has a name: Transmission of Massive Trauma. Returning to our parents' homelands means acknowledging, understanding and formulating how this manifests in us as individuals, in ways which are not always immediately clear. I have made three separate visits to the Czech Republic, and each one was different emotionally. I think for a lot of us, it is very difficult to describe our emotions in a detached manner. We all have important stories, and are still grappling with how to tell them in the most effective, positive and productive way.

The full panel discussion is available to view on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEWg6zje0k&feature=youtu.be>. David and Teresa are now co-editing a book on visits linked to family history, provisionally entitled, 'Retracing Family Steps: Gazing upon Ancestral Homes and Haunts'.

# Austrian Social Workers in British Exile

The annexation of Austria in 1938 put a sudden end to the professional development of social work in Austria. But until today very little has been known about persecuted Austrian social workers in exile. A research project, based in Vienna, is now looking at the forgotten history of the profession of social work.

The Anschluss caused devastating effects for both institutions and people engaged in social work. Jewish and otherwise persecuted social workers (in German *Fürsorgerinnen*) were dismissed from their jobs. Some were tortured or killed in concentrations camps, others tried to escape the Nazi regime and some of them were fortunate enough to find refuge abroad. England was an important way out for them and, once in exile, a surprising number of refugees studied social work or became social workers. After the war, some decided to stay, some returned to Austria.

**Else Federn**, born 1874, spent her summer holidays in 1900 working at the "Women's University Settlement" in London. Inspired by these ideas and back in Vienna, she was one of the founding members of the "Ottakringer Settlement", which from 1901 onwards offered education and a community centre in the poor Viennese district of Ottakring. She had a leading role in the settlement for years, retired in the early 1930s, and continued as a volunteer. As she was defined as "half-Jewish" she had to leave Austria. In October 1938 she managed to escape to England, where her brothers were living, and stayed for the rest of her life. The Settlement movement has been a source of inspiration and exchange in the development of new approaches to social work and England has played a particularly important role in that.

**Eleonora Fried**, born in Vienna in 1916, attended the training for female *Fürsorgerinnen* at the Social Women's School of Caritas. She started working at the Tuberculosis Welfare Office of the



Else Federn

Vienna municipality on 1 February 1938 and also studied at the University of Vienna. In spring 1938, she was excluded from university for "racial reasons" and dismissed by the municipality of Vienna. She was able to emigrate to England at the end of 1938 and after 1940 she continued her studies in the US.

**Alice Friedmann** was also able to escape to the US via England. Born in 1912, she studied psychology in Vienna and received her doctorate in 1922. Interested in individual psychology she was working with Alfred Adler. In 1924, she ran homes for children and young people with difficulties using individual psychology. This approach offered a new view on juvenile care taking. In 1938 she fled to England and in 1939 to New York where she became head psychologist in a hospital.

Political or racial persecution did not start in 1938. For some social workers, 1934 gave urgent reasons to leave Austria and emigrate: Jewish social workers because of the increasing antisemitism, socialist and communist social workers because of the prohibition of their political ideology.

The author of the article *Die Fürsorgerin* published in 1930 in the *Handbuch der Frauenarbeit in Österreich* (Handbook on women's work in Austria) **Marie Köstler**, born 1879, mother of several children, was trained as a nurse. In 1922 she became the head of the guardianship



Marie Köstler

office in Styria, and started a political career in the social democratic party. Therefore she was imprisoned in Graz in February 1934. Being expelled from Austria she emigrated to London and returned in 1945, starting to work for the communists.

**Anne Feuermann**, born in 1913, was a member of the Socialist Workers' Youth and after February 1934 was active with the illegal Revolutionary Socialist Youth. In 1935 and 1937 she was imprisoned for these activities. After the Anschluss, she emigrated via Paris to Scotland with the help of the Quakers, where she worked as a housemaid and then, from 1943, as a hospital social worker in Glasgow. She returned to Vienna in 1959, and was chairman of the Bund Werktätiger Juden – Poale Zion. In 1995, the Anne Kohn-Feuermann Day Care Centre was opened in the Maimonides Centre of the Vienna Jewish Community.

The one-year research project *The Persecution of Austrian Social Workers during National-Socialism* aims to recover the life stories of those social workers who were humiliated, tortured or killed by the Nazi regime and the ones who were able to flee, as well as emigrants who turned to social work in exile. Please read more on [www.fuersorge-geschichte.at](http://www.fuersorge-geschichte.at) and get in touch with any relevant information.

**Irene Messinger and Thomas Wallerberger**  
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# OUR SACHA

**John Martins writes: "During this period of lockdown, I have been going through old family photographs identifying people and putting them into chronological order. I came across this article written by my father's older sister which paints a picture of life in their town in the early 1900s. The town was called Gnesen in province Posen, and my aunt's name was Käthe Beutler. I hope your readers find it interesting."**

"I can also cook kosher" she said, "I learnt it when I worked for the K family in Krotoschin but the head of the household died and I had to look for a new job". She stood modestly in front of my mother, full of fear, wondering whether she would succeed in finding another family which she could take care of with all the love of which her soul was capable. My mother liked her immediately. The following morning her suitcase arrived, and Sacha came into our house where she stayed until the end of her life. She was the good angel of my youth.

She wasn't beautiful, our Sacha, with her wide protruding cheekbones, scraped-back hair and long black dresses, but she could do the work of two people. When we got up in the morning the shoes were clean, the fires lit and the breakfast table already laid. Her kingdom was the bright roomy kitchen which always smelt of lovely things as she could cook and bake really well. She was very aware of *kashruth* and woe betide us children if we put our *milchig* spoon in the drawer with the fleischig ones.

Only rarely were we children allowed to enter into the maid's room, to gaze in

amazement at the picture of the Madonna and the crucifix which hung up above Sacha's bed. She was a pious Catholic. She went regularly to church on her free Sunday and, at Christmas time, she took me with her to the cathedral. I will never forget my fear and inner conflict when the congregation knelt down and defiantly I remained on my feet. However, I was so small it went unnoticed.

Then came the first World War and Farmer Zuege, who regularly sold his grain to my father was, like so many others, obliged to take in a Russian prisoner-of-war. When the farmer was in my father's office, the Russian came into our kitchen to ask for a glass of water. Suddenly, Sacha ran to my mother excitedly. "The Russian has kissed the *mezuzza* and said *Shema Israel* to me. He's a Jew". My mother went into the kitchen immediately. There sat Jankel Czemiak, a shoemaker from Grodno who had been taken prisoner in one of the first battles. He was clearly happy to have found a Jewish family and that he would not starve living with a farming family. From then on he always accompanied the farmer when he went into town and, sometimes, he went to the synagogue with my father. But, best of all, he liked to sit by Sacha in the kitchen and tell her about his family, his wife and his two small boys. He got a little money for his work and he passed it regularly to Sacha. "He had to save for something", she told us.

One dark and stormy night the yard dog suddenly started barking and would not stop. We heard Sacha go to the front door and speak to someone. "It was only a farmer wanting to know the way to Tremessen," she said when she got back. "He was starving so I quickly made him a parcel with bread and sausage". The



The maid Sacha Franziska with one of the children from Käthe's family.

following day Farmer Zuegge came and told us that Jankel had fled. Yesterday afternoon he'd eaten with them and then, this morning, when the farmer wanted to take him to the fields, his bedroom was empty. Had we seen him? We had no idea where he was. Some hours later, the local police came and questioned my father who, with a clear conscience, confirmed that he had not seen him. The following Sunday, Sacha went to church to confession. "It is no sin", she said, "I worried so much about him. I hope he soon returns to his family safe and sound."

The war continued. We schoolchildren sang patriotic songs in the hospitals and distributed little gifts. One day my father also got his call-up papers. I sat with Sacha in the kitchen where she sobbed broken-heartedly into her apron. "Don't cry, Sacha", I said, "All men have to protect their country, and, when my father gets back, he will be a hero. Perhaps he will also get the Iron Cross." Sacha did not even look at me. From behind her apron she just kept crying. "Oh, Katka, what do you know, what do you know!"

# OBITUARIES

## RUTH DAVID (née Oppenheimer)

**Born:** 17 March 1929, Frankfurt

**Died:** 6 April 2020, Leicester



**Ruth David, a leading Holocaust educator, speaker and author has died, leaving a host of her memories preserved for future generations.**

Her work received wide recognition and she was an active reader and contributor to the AJR Journal until the end of her life. She is fondly remembered at the National Holocaust Centre where she was known for her “spirited, thoughtful and intelligent nature”. Ruth shared her testimony with thousands of visitors who came to hear her talk and would always invite them to work with her to relate her story to contemporary issues today. The Centre holds her photographic collection recalling her and her family’s story.

After witnessing the devastation of Kristallnacht, including the ransacking of the family home and the beating up of her father, brother and uncle, Ruth escaped on one of the Kindertransport trains in June 1939. She never saw her parents again.

She arrived in Britain knowing no English and bitterly resenting the separation from her family. She lived in refugee hostels and after the war won a scholarship to Bedford College to study Modern Languages. It led to a thirty-year career, teaching French and German to secondary school pupils.

She met fellow teacher Andrew Finch on a language course and they married in 1958. They had two children, Margaret – an immigration lawyer – and Simon – a filmmaker – but the marriage broke down in the 1970s. Twenty years later she married Herbert David, professor of statistics at the University of Iowa. In the US, Ruth finally felt able to draft a childhood memoir. *Child of Our Time* was published in 2003, hailed by the Washington Post as “deeply moving”. The personality of its author radiated from every page, unsentimental, generous and observant. It was followed in 2011 by a companion volume *Life-Lines* revealing letters between the Oppenheimer parents and their children in exile.

After her second marriage ended, Ruth returned to the UK, and her commitment to Holocaust education grew stronger. She became a valued and regular speaker at the UK’s National Holocaust Centre and joined the National Holocaust Commission’s board. Germany recognised her contribution formally, by awarding her its highest civilian honour, the Order of Merit, at a moving ceremony at the German Embassy, Knightsbridge in 2012. It was covered by this Journal in October that year.

For much of her life Ruth was a Quaker. Her son Simon explained: “She pursued research into the vital role they played in helping Jewish refugees flee from Nazi-occupied Europe. The Quakers had secured places for her and her sister on separate Kindertransports, and also ensured her younger brother Michael could escape from an internment camp in France, in February 1941”.

Despite her traumatic background, Ruth was a vivid presence into her nineties, a woman with an extraordinary gift for friendship and a vast network of acquaintances across the world. She died at Leicester Royal Infirmary, from Covid-19.

Janet Weston

## HENRY WERMUTH

**Born:** 4 April 1923, Frankfurt

**Died:** 19 May 2020, London

**Perhaps best known for his attempt to kill Hitler by derailing his train, Abraham Heinrich Wermuth was born in Frankfurt in 1923, the eldest child of Bernhard and Ida.**

As a boy Henry was fiercely patriotic and experienced little antisemitism, although that of course changed dramatically after 1933.

One night in 1938 they were awoken by German troops and deported by train to Krakow (his father’s family were from Poland). There they applied for US visas but, after the German invasion, this proved impossible. The family moved to Bochnia and in 1942 they were split up. Henry and his father were sent to the Klaj ammunition camp, his mother and sister to Belzec, where they were probably gassed on arrival.

Henry was 19 when a disgruntled German soldier whom he had befriended told him that Hitler would shortly pass by Klaj on his way to the Russian front. The night before the scheduled journey Henry broke out of the camp and piled logs and stones on the rail track, hoping to derail Hitler’s locomotive. He waited anxiously for the sound of a crash which never came. He never found out why his ploy failed and assumed that someone removed the obstruction.

Henry may not have changed history but he did survive eight camps, including Auschwitz. When the Americans liberated Mauthausen in May 1945, Henry weighed just 72 lbs and had tuberculosis. His father – who had been incarcerated with him throughout - died of a head wound inflicted by a Nazi guard just days before liberation.

In his memoir, *Breathe Deeply my Son*, Henry wrote: “When we were liberated and I knew the war was over I cried a stream of tears. I couldn’t believe I had so much water in me. Only then I said to myself, ‘You are alive but you are alone’. I went out of barracks and





saw a skeleton in the window of the next block. I saw it was me. I smiled at the skeleton, it smiled back, and I said, 'This skeleton is going to live.'"

After recuperating in an Italian refugee camp Henry began making his way around Europe in search of family and friends. He found none in Germany but learned of an aunt in Stamford Hill. Initially granted a two-year visa, Henry wrote to the Queen Mother and was eventually allowed to settle here.

He used compensation from the German government to build up a successful property business in north London. He met fellow German Elisabeth Stösser, who was working in an antique glass shop, and they married in 1963.

During the 1980s he wrote his memoirs and published four fictional books. He began devoting a great deal of his time to Holocaust education, travelling to schools to share his testimony and raise awareness of the dangers of antisemitism and prejudice. In 1995, he was awarded the Johanna Kirchner Medal by the City of Frankfurt for his attempt to assassinate Hitler.

"All I wanted is to be normal and to have a normal life," he used to reflect. "I wanted to create a Jewish family and raise them with no fear of who they are but with a sense of pride.

"I owe it to my parents to keep their memory alive. For me the pain never heals. I don't want people to forget this chapter of history and the lessons it teaches us. It must never happen again."

Henry is survived by Elisabeth, their two daughters Ilana and Tricia, and their three grandchildren.

# 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.

## HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Lisa Bechner is keen to learn about any child refugees who came on the Kindertransport and later served in the British army, especially if they were at the D-Day landings.  
[lisa.bechner@berlin.de](mailto:lisa.bechner@berlin.de)

## LOEBINGER FAMILY

Bridget King is looking for relatives of Berlin lawyer Günther Loebinger and his wife Maria, née Heller, who died in London in 1997. Günther sadly died at Auschwitz. Bridget has applied for a *Stolperstein* for him.  
[bridget.king@web.de](mailto:bridget.king@web.de)

## CZECH MALT

Thomas Kibelksties is writing a book about beer and malt production in Landsberg by the *Aktien Malzfabrik Landsberg*, Saale, which took over two malt-producing facilities in 1939: *Milchspeiser und Katscher* (Ivanovice), later called Hanna Malzfabrik AG, *Deutsch-Mährische Hanna Malzfabrik AG* in Hohenstadt (Zabreh), the former *Klatscher & Lorenz* (Prag). Thomas needs details of the original owners' families.  
[thomask03@gmail.com](mailto:thomask03@gmail.com)

## JACQUES AISCHMANN

Tom Gamble is seeking information on Jacques Aischmann (1914 – 1962). Born in London, son of Heinrich Aischmann (corset manufacturer from Cologne) and Suzanne Pequery, Jacques lived in Berlin in the 1930s and was imprisoned in Oranienburg concentration camp.  
[info@tomgamblemusic.com](mailto:info@tomgamblemusic.com)

## LIEBERG AND BLOCK

Terry Anne Boyd of Perth, Australia, knows that her grandparents, Wolfgang and Helena Lieberg of Northwick Park, and her great aunt Hilda Block (née Lieberg) of Golders Green sheltered Jewish refugees. She would be delighted to receive more information.  
[terrybchid@yahoo.com.au](mailto:terrybchid@yahoo.com.au)

## THE TIGER IN THE ATTIC

Edith Milton, the author of this book, is being sought by Michael Salmon, whose family looked after Edith in May 1944, before he was born. She moved to the States in 1947 and was last known to be living in New Hampshire.  
[michael.salmon@btinternet.com](mailto:michael.salmon@btinternet.com)

## GERMAN-TO-ENGLISH TRANSLATOR

Stav Meishar is a performer and academic, currently writing a book about a Jewish circus family in Germany ca. 1905-1945. He has collected some German texts relevant to this work and would be grateful for a volunteer to help with German-to-English translations.  
[stav.meish@gmail.com](mailto:stav.meish@gmail.com)

## WHY SURBITON?

In August 1939 Arthur Goldman came, aged 3, from Beuthen (then Germany, now Poland) with his brother and mother. He wants to know why the authorities sent them to Surbiton rather than the Jewish refugee centre in nearby Croydon. From Surbiton, the family went to the Isle of Man and then to Luton.  
[a.goldman1@ntlworld.com](mailto:a.goldman1@ntlworld.com)

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# REVIEWS

## HOUSE OF GLASS: THE STORY AND SECRETS OF A TWENTIETH-CENTURY JEWISH FAMILY

By Hadley Freeman  
4th Estate

This impressive chronicle tells the gripping story of a Jewish family through the 20th century from impoverished roots in Poland to society life in Paris cruelly interrupted by the war.

Author Hadley Freeman found a shoebox of treasured belongings hidden away in her grandmother Sala's closet in Miami after she died and was so intrigued she traced the story back. The main players are Sala herself and her three brothers – Henri, Jacques and Alex Glass who grew up in the pretty town of Chrzanow – eerily only 20 kilometres from Auschwitz.

Their father Reuben never recovered after being badly gassed fighting in the First World War. He took a series of jobs but “each career was less successful than the last” and he died in 1925 leaving his impoverished wife Chaya struggling to feed her family. Meanwhile antisemitism became rife and, in the face of terrible pogroms, one by one the family fled to the French capital, initially settling with other Polish immigrants in the Pletzl.

Here they prospered and assimilated to different degrees. Henri remained the intellectual one, Jacques was an unambitious tailor, Alex a fashion connoisseur and Sala a pattern designer. They became absorbed with French culture but clouds gathered with a rising anti-Jewish feeling culminating in the Occupation. Both Jacques and Alex joined the French Foreign Legion where Jacques bravely escaped from Cambrai prison. Unfortunately back home he soon registered as Jewish and was one of the first to be taken to Pithiviers camp. Amazingly he was allowed home on a brief visit when his daughter was born but ignored advice not to return to the camp. A few months later he was transported to Auschwitz and tragically died.

Alex – who had a much more colourful personality and was a friend of Dior and Chagall – meanwhile continued with his work in Cannes. Disaster struck after an evening at a nightclub when he denounced the Germans and was sent to a concentration camp. Against all odds he escaped by jumping from a carriage of a moving train and lived with a family in the French countryside while working for the Resistance.

Henri became a brilliant engineer, surviving the war in hiding with his wife Sonia under false identities. On the surface, Sala's war was less traumatic, spent in a New York suburb where she had reluctantly married an American. She was introduced to him by Alex who had encouraged his sister to go, leaving her Jewish dentist and socialist fiancé behind. She stayed married for 55 years, continued to be beautifully groomed wearing Alex's couture fashions, but always had a sad look reflecting the sacrifice she made leaving her heart in Paris.

Immediately after the war Alex's couturier business flourished, graduating to him becoming a respected art dealer and friend of Picasso while proudly retaining his Yiddish accent. Henri, despite simple tastes, eventually became very wealthy.

It is refreshing to read an account by a third generation family member who has produced an absolutely compelling page-turner. The book is especially strong on Polish life, the artistic milieu and the politics of wartime France, including resistance and collaboration. The descriptions of people are a great strength. Photographs – always used in exactly the right place – help the reader to visualise the unique and interesting personalities involved and the times in which they lived.

Janet Weston

## THE YOUNG SURVIVORS

By Debra Barnes  
Duckworth Press

I really loved reading this book. It is a beautifully constructed novel which provides a window into the experiences of French Jews during World War Two,

in an extremely engaging way.

The majority of Holocaust literature, both factual and fiction, focuses on Central and Eastern Europe, but in many cases the impact on Western European Jewry was just as dramatic. In all, approximately 77,000 Jews living on French territory perished in concentration camps and killing centres – the overwhelming majority of them at Auschwitz – or died in detention on French soil. *The Young Survivors* gives insight into their journeys and the experiences of those who survived.

The book follows the lives of the Laskowski family after Germany invaded France. As the front cover of the book hints, only three of the five children survived. Although fictional, the children's experiences are inspired by those of the author's mother and her four siblings.

Like many historical novels the book begins in a contemporary setting, with a character reconnecting with someone or something from their past. The narrative is then told in the first person and 'real-time' and in alternate chapters by the Laskowski children who survived. In fact the youngest child doesn't start 'writing' until late in the book, due to the fact that she would have been too young earlier on.

I especially liked the way the book describes events through the eyes of the different siblings, showing how different ages understand and experience things very differently according to their personal needs and interests. While the eldest son rises nobly to the responsibility conferred on him as the new head of the family, his younger brother finds intrigue and teenage camaraderie in the various new situations that he experiences. At kindergarten age their younger sisters' needs are still very primal and she instinctively trusts the adults around her.

Although the story is told through the eyes of children, it is by no means a children's book. It is an extremely emotional story which brought me to tears on more than one occasion but also made me smile numerous times. I felt slightly lost after I finished it, which

I always think is the sign of a genuinely compelling book.

*Jo Briggs*

*The Young Survivors* is published on 23 July. An article from its author, who works for the AJR, will appear in our August issue.

**A GENTLEMAN IN MOSCOW**

**By Amor Towels**

**Penguin Random House**

An Englishman's home is his castle, or so the maxim goes. Perhaps in these days of Covid restrictions, our homes have become more like fortresses, or even prisons. Although, maybe we are learning to see our homes through fresh eyes; finding little areas of tranquillity that we hadn't considered before. Certainly those who are lucky enough to have gardens or balconies have never treasured them more.

I recently read the novel, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, by Amor Towels and it keeps coming back to my thoughts as we grapple with our restricted domesticity. The central character of the book, Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov, is certainly incarcerated, but not in prison or even his home.

The novel opens in 1922, and Count Rostov comes from the wrong class. Being landed gentry, with his own estate in Nizhny Novgorod, he is brought before the Commissariat for Internal Affairs, narrowly escaping a sentence of execution. Instead he is condemned to remain within the walls of the Metropol Hotel. If he steps outside, he will be shot.

How will the Count, who is used to travelling wherever he wished in the most opulent style, cope with living out his life in a small, cramped room in a hotel? Well, the answer is with grace and aplomb. It is as though, surrounded by Bolsheviks, Rostov is the last gentleman in Moscow. He is a man of honour, slow to judge those around him and quick to be of service. I can safely say that he is one of the most captivating characters I have ever read! He is not dispirited or lonely, as he befriends the many visitors to the hotel, and the staff alike. We have the waiters in the hotel's Boyarsky Restaurant, where the Count takes a job; Mishka, his

childhood friend who floats in and out of his life, and an ageing but beautiful starlet with whom he shares a most seductive romance. And of course, there is the Metropol itself, which retains its glamour, as Russia loses hers.

I cannot recommend this exquisitely written book highly enough for, as we are currently confined, it will take you to an enchanting place you will certainly not wish to leave!

*Fran Horwich*

**RECKONINGS**

**By Mary Fulbrook**

**Oxford University Press**

Mary Fulbrook's magnificent summary of the documentary evidence of what happened in Europe in the infamous Third Reich and the 75 years after VE Day should be reviewed by a historian, which I am not. I can barely do more than express my deep appreciation of Fulbrook's work (539 pages of text and 77 of notes).

Apart from the introduction and conclusion, the book is in three parts. The first 281 pages cover the "Patterns of Persecution", analysing the Nazi's speedy creation of a "Bystander Society" acclimatised to the institutionalisation of brutality, murder and the visible machinery of extermination. Fulbrook elucidates differing policies for different victim groups, all in the service of protecting the purity of the superior 'Volk' from inferior groups targeted as 'enemies' to be cleansed out of the Reich.

The second part, 153 pages, covers the failure of any real measure of justice. Fulbrook analyses the very different court systems and attitudes in Austria, East and West Germany. The effects of immediate post-war focus on the 'Cold War' meant leaving former Nazi judges biased towards the defendants while survivor witnesses felt put on trial themselves. The vast majority involved in the perpetration were never called to account and full justice was an impossible task.

The third part, 156 pages, covers memorialisation and the gradual shift

of focus from perpetrators and victim witnesses to encouraging survivor testimony; and tracing survivor and perpetrator post-war experiences.

In my opinion, this book needs to be studied by anyone involved in Holocaust education or concerned about the current rise of fascism and the fact that genocide is currently continuing. Fulbrook's material is rigorous and simultaneously fascinating and horrifying. Presented in a balanced style, it is easy to read but hard to digest without considerable reflection. The wider implications of such a toxic legacy are daunting.

*Ruth Barnett*

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## DOUBLE CELEBRATIONS



The AJR wishes a hearty mazeltov to our Pinner members Bob and Ann Kirk on the joint occasions of their 70th wedding anniversary and Bob's 95th birthday. They came to the UK separately on the Kindertransport and, sadly, neither of them saw their parents again. They later met and married in 1950, and now work together to share their experiences at activities for Holocaust Memorial Day and throughout the year. In the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours they were both awarded BEMs for Services to Holocaust education.

## TO REPLICATE OR NOT?

The Wiener Holocaust Library was recently approached by another organisation wanting to create a replica of one of the artefacts in its collection for their upcoming exhibition. The item in question is the *Juden Raus!* board game, which uses crude antisemitic stereotypes.

The Library's Head of Research, Dr Christine Schmidt, and Head of Collections, Greg Toth, considered the ethics in a fascinating blog.

Greg Toth argues: "The Wiener Holocaust Library is the only institution which has two full sets of the game. Consequently, there is a huge demand for the game and one copy is constantly on loan to external institutions. The Library receives 6-8 requests per year and many of these requests desire the game for long-term exhibitions. However, every time the

game is packed, travelled, unpacked, and displayed, and affected by handling and light exposure, its condition deteriorates. Although in the short term, this minor damage might not be visible to the human eye, in terms of decades, or even centuries, it suddenly does matter."

Christine Schmidt raises further complex questions: "Is it ethical to enter into and embrace the chemical, mechanical and artistic process of replicating an object that had such vile implications and uses, and which was originally created with the intention of tapping into and promulgating racist views? Does the need for this object as an educational 'tool' outweigh the ethics of aesthetic recreation? To what extent does a replica convey the same sort of meaning as the 'authentic' object to exhibition visitors, that 'sacred aura' that often captures the imagination and emotionally moves a



A piece from the infamous *Juden Raus!* board game

visitor? And in the case of Holocaust-era artefacts, is it advisable to produce replicas for education when one of the stated justifications for Holocaust education is to combat denial – wouldn't 'a fake' object undermine these efforts?"

Clearly this is a sensitive issue. We would love to receive your thoughts and will pass them onto the Wiener Holocaust Library. You can also read the full blog and respond direct to the Library via the June issue of its excellent monthly e-newsletter – see <https://wienerlibrary.co.uk/E-Newsletters>.

## BEING SECOND GENERATION

Children of Holocaust survivors and refugees will explore together how it has affected their lives in an online workshop led by Gaby Glassman, a psychologist and psychotherapist who has facilitated

second generation and intergenerational groups since the 1980s.


The workshop is on **Sunday 26 July at 11.00am**. It is only for those who are

second generation Holocaust survivors and refugees, and costs £9. For more info see: <https://www.jw3.org.uk/whats-on/being-second-generation>

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