



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Bit of a business

*The Passenger* by Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz, tells the story of a German Jew on the run immediately after Kristallnacht. Boschwitz was himself a German Jewish refugee who died when his ship was sunk by a German submarine in 1942. One of the most surprising things about the novel is that the central character is a businessman.



Just some of the many brands and products that were established by Jewish refugees who came to Britain

Much of the novel is about his attempts to raise the capital to flee to safety. So many of the best novels or memoirs about Jewish refugees are about intellectuals or people from the arts. Businessmen rarely feature. In *Second Chance* (1991), a classic study of two centuries of German-speaking Jews who came to Britain, fewer than 30 out of 667 pages are about refugees from Nazi Germany who went into business or industry.

But Jewish refugees had a huge impact on businesses, big and small, from Ackermans Chocolates, founded by Werner Ackerman, to Baron Kagan (born Juozapas Kaganas in Lithuania),

who made Harold Wilson's trademark Gannex coat, from Tom Kremer who invented more than 250 games and toys, including the Rubik Cube, to Dame Stephanie Shirley, who started an early business technology group on her dining room table with £6 in 1962. In 25 years as its Chief Executive, she developed the company, now called Xansa into a FTSE 250 leading technology group.

The range of businesses they started or took over are fascinating. Many of the best known were in the arts: especially publishers (Phaidon, Thames and Hudson, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Andre Deutsch), art galleries (Roland, Browse & Delbanco, *Continued on page 2*

## 80 SUMMERS ON

This issue goes to press in the middle of a heatwave and an incredibly busy summer for the AJR as we continue to mark our 80th anniversary. Please book for our special tea party on 12 September if you haven't yet done so.

Meanwhile we are delighted that 80 members have already come forward to sponsor one of the 80 oak trees we will be planting later this year. We are still looking for sponsors for our 80 time capsules and volunteers to help with local PR and to look after our trees – please email [80trees@ajr.org.uk](mailto:80trees@ajr.org.uk) or call the office if you can help.

We hope you enjoy our summer issue.

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

### AJR Team

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### Heads of Department

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**Social Services** Nicole Valens

### AJR Journal

**Editor** Jo Briggs  
**Editorial Assistant** Lilian Levy  
**Contributing Editor** David Herman

## Bit of a business (cont.)

the Marlborough co-founded by Harry Fischer, Annely Juda and the Crane Kalman Gallery) and film companies, the most famous being Alexander Korda's London Films. Then there were famous cafés and restaurants such as Cosmo's, Café Daquize in South Kensington, and Louis' Patisserie founded by Louis Permyer and famous shops like Biba in Kensington, hugely fashionable in the 1960s and early '70s, founded by the Polish refugee Barbara Hulanicki.

Many refugee businessmen and women contributed to British culture and Jewish philanthropy. Baron Kissin, a businessman and financier born in Danzig, the son of Russian Jewish parents, came to London in 1933 and worked in import and export, before going into financial services. He later became a director of the Royal Opera House for more than a decade and was chairman of the ICA.

Sir Ralph Kohn fled to Britain in 1940 after the German invasion of Holland. A world-famous scientist, he spent twelve years as senior executive in the international pharmaceutical industry, and in 1990 received the prestigious Queen's Award for Industry. Kohn is also a talented musician. In addition to giving many public performances, he has recorded sixteen CDs including the Song Cycles by Schubert, Schumann, Beethoven and Mahler. He has also made orchestral recordings with the English Chamber Orchestra and is particularly associated with the music of Bach. Kohn financed John Eliot Gardiner's Bach Cantatas project. His Foundation is closely involved with the Royal Academy of Music in their Bach Cantata Series, and Wigmore Hall's International Song Competition, London. He is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music (London) and Doctor of Music.

Alexander Margulies, born in Galicia, moved to the UK from Germany. He became a successful businessman. During the war his company made aircraft components; its employees included refugee workers from 25 families he had helped to escape from Nazi Europe. An avid art collector, he collected work by Derain, Modigliani and Soutine. In 1965 he became chairman of the Ben Uri Art Gallery. He also donated

a number of his paintings to the Tate Gallery in London and to the New Art Museum in Tel Aviv and was a tireless supporter of Jewish and Israeli culture.

Sir Erich Reich was born in Vienna in 1935 and came to Britain with the Kindertransport at the age of four. He worked for Thomson Holidays and Thomas Cook before setting up Classic Tours in 1987. He later raised millions of pounds for charity and as Chairman of the AJR Kindertransport Group, he organised the celebrations marking seventy years since Parliament allowed the Kindertransport children into Britain.

Sir Nicholas Sekers came to Britain in 1937 and founded the West Cumberland Silk Mills at Hensingham. He later became a patron of the arts. He was a trustee of Glyndebourne, chairman of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, a member of Council of the Shakespeare Theatre Trust and of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg was another Hungarian businessman and philanthropist. Born in Budapest in 1921, he came to Britain with £100 in his pocket and set up in business in the metals trade (Ingot Metal Investments) as part of the war effort. In 1965 he established his charitable foundation and was knighted in 1976.

Others made enormous contributions to medical research. Rolf Schild came to Britain as a child. During the 1950s he and his long-standing business partner, Peter Epstein, established SE Laboratories to design and develop innovative pressure transducers. In 1985 Schild and Epstein led a buy-out of the medical part of the company and this was subsequently floated on the USM as Huntleigh Technology PLC. During Schild's Chairmanship, Huntleigh was granted three Queen's Awards for Export and two for Technology Achievement. His wealth was estimated at almost £100 million.

George Weisz, born in Hungary in 1929, fled to London in 1939. In 1960, he bought a small factory that supplied components to several car manufacturers, then signed a contract with the Ministry of Defence to provide it with parachute release actuators used by RAF pilots. But he is best known

for inventing an artificial ventilator pneumatically powered by its own oxygen tank and was awarded a Queen's Award for Technological Achievement in 1993. He became a passionate supporter of the arts and Jewish culture.

There are interesting distinctions between Jewish refugees who became successful in business and industry. The earlier people left Nazi Germany the easier it was to bring with them some capital. Secondly, publishers and art dealers often set up in London but manufacturers tended to start up businesses outside the south-east, especially in depressed areas of the country. Mac Goldsmith, one of the German car industry's most distinguished innovators, set up a company near Leicester. Fred Worms set up his light engineering company in south Wales, Djanogly's became a major East Midlands hosiery and knitwear business (the Nottingham Manufacturing Company) and Henry Knobil's Texture Jersey plc had plants in Corby and Leicester. By 1947, according to Herbert Loeb, about a thousand manufacturing firms in Britain had been started by refugees. They produced everything from knitwear and leather goods to industrial chemicals and plastics. They were mostly medium-sized firms. Three quarters employed between 50 and 500 workers. Very few (7.6%) employed fewer than 50 or more than 1000 (5.7%).

They faced considerable obstacles: insufficient capital, older refugees struggled to learn English and to familiarise themselves with business and labour practices as well as markets. During the war, there were material and labour shortages and the problem of internment. But, according to Loeb, by 1947, 'more than three jobs had been created in Britain for every refugee admitted from the Nazi *Reich* and some adjoining countries.'

The impact of these businesses was enormous. Creating jobs, founding companies which became household names, pioneering new forms of industrial design, and then pouring profits into philanthropic projects in the arts and throughout every aspect of Jewish culture and learning. It was a huge, if sometimes unacknowledged, success story.

**David Herman**

# AJR Annual Tea Celebration

## 80 YEARS OF AJR

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ONLINE  
EVENT

# German citizenship and pension changes

**New legislation enables previously ineligible descendants of German Jews, and Jews who lived in Germany, to become eligible to apply for German citizenship.**

This success was achieved by the Article 116 Exclusions Group, led by Felix and Isabelle Couchman. It represents Germans – predominantly but not exclusively of Jewish heritage – and their descendants, who had previously unsuccessfully applied for re-naturalisation under Article 116 of German Basic Law.

The new law now covers those:

- who "lost" or "gave up" their German citizenship before 23 February 1955
- formerly excluded from acquiring

German citizenship because of entering a marriage, including descendants of German nationals in the territories annexed by the Nazis, who were excluded from collective naturalisation because of their "race" i.e., including those in the Sudetenland, Memel and Danzig.

- who were born and grew up in Germany before the Nazis took power but who did not formally hold German citizenship.
- who "lost" or "gave up" residence in Germany, if such a residence had been established before 30 January 1933 or, in the case of a child, between 30 January 1933 and 8 May 1945.
- children adopted before 1977.

These applications are not subject to any time limit and those who were previously rejected now have 10 years to re-apply.

AJR's CEO, Michael Newman OBE, said: "This new legislation will enable the descendants of Holocaust refugees and survivors from Germany to right a longstanding injustice and to help reconnect with a country to which their forebears contributed. Our congratulations to Felix and

Isabelle Couchman and all those who worked tirelessly with them to achieve these significant improvements in German citizenship laws."

Further details can be found at: [www.bundestag.de/inneres?url=L2Rva3VtZW50ZS90ZXh0YXJjaGl2LzlzMjEva3cyNS1kZS1zdGFhdHNhbmdlaG9lcmlna2VpdHNNZXRidHotODQ2OTUw&mod=mod539058](http://www.bundestag.de/inneres?url=L2Rva3VtZW50ZS90ZXh0YXJjaGl2LzlzMjEva3cyNS1kZS1zdGFhdHNhbmdlaG9lcmlna2VpdHNNZXRidHotODQ2OTUw&mod=mod539058)

### Widow/ers of German victims

The German government has also announced that some widow/ers of Jewish Nazi victims who were receiving a pension directly from the German government (such as the Bundesentschädigungsgesetz, or BEG) might be eligible for up to nine monthly payments (also known as spouse payments).

To be eligible the widow/er must have been married to the victim at the time of his/her death. The widow/ers may apply if the victim died after 1 January 2020, and the widow/er fulfils the other technical requirements.

The application form can be downloaded from: [www.badv.bund.de/DE/OffeneVermögensfragen/UebgangsleistungenEhegattenNSOpfer/antrag.html](http://www.badv.bund.de/DE/OffeneVermögensfragen/UebgangsleistungenEhegattenNSOpfer/antrag.html) or by calling +49 (0)30 187030 1324.

## Books Bought

MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

020 8364 3554 / 07855387574  
[ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk)



# A STEP CLOSER TO HARWICH

Thanks to a generous donation from the AJR, the dream of a new memorial to the Kindertransport in Harwich is moving closer to reality. Mike Levy, Chair of the Harwich Kindertransport Memorial and Learning Appeal, provides an update.

The Essex artist Ian Wolter is currently working on the second of five figures – children of different ages descending a ship's gangplank on to dry land. It will be an immensely moving tribute to the Kinder, their parents and those who helped bring them out of danger but this is not all. The memorial will be part of a whole town-wide Kindertransport heritage trail and a new generation of educational resources telling the full and complex story of Britain's role in the rescue of the nearly 10,000 children.

Ian Wolter explains: "One of my child models is six years old. Full of energy and enthusiasm, he can hardly stand still for a minute. It is sobering to think that the Kindertransport refugees were as young as four. Some of today's child refugees are even younger. It is a privilege to work on this important and hopefully thought-provoking memorial."

With the AJR donation of £22,500 and many generous benefactors, the



Ian Wolter's pencil drawing

target of £140,000 for the statue is within reach. At the time of writing, the gap stands at around £30,000. This means we are tantalisingly close to seeing Ian's wonderful conception come to fruition. The memorial figures to be cast in bronze will be located right on the Harwich quayside – within sight of the actual landing place of many thousands of Jewish refugees. Moving quotes from the Kinder will be carved into the bronze and space is allowed between them so that children can get in amongst the figures to explore their power at close hand. This quote from Rabbi John Rayner will be etched into the memorial figures:

*We disembarked at Harwich and were taken out into some fields. The sun*



Ian Wolter working in his studio

*was shining, the air clean, the grass greener than I had ever seen it, and if ever freedom was a tangible thing, it was so that morning in Harwich*

If we can raise the remaining £30,000 we are on target to unveil the memorial for Refugee Week in June 2022. Can you help us get there and 'complete the journey?'

For more information on the plans for Harwich and on how to donate to the Memorial Appeal, please visit

[www.kindertransport-memorial.org](http://www.kindertransport-memorial.org)

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# LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



## L'ETAT C'EST MOI



The tendency to equate the state with one's person (expressed in the phrase 'l'Etat c'est moi' [I am the state])

was a feature of the monarchies of Europe in the period during and after the Middle Ages. With the passage of time, the introduction of republics, democracies and various forms of constitutional monarchy that equivalence became a thing of the past, and today is identified largely with the seventeenth century French king, Louis XIV (and to a limited extent France's post-WWII president Charles de Gaulle). The phrase epitomises the arrogance and self-importance of the person uttering it.

I have not heard those words spoken by Benjamin Netanyahu, but his behaviour in the latter part of his twelve-year 'reign' as Israel's prime minister, as well as in the manner of his leaving that position, indicates that he may well think and believe it.

Indications abound of his supercilious and condescending, or even downright destructive, attitude to those who have acted to oust him from power. It started with his campaign to discredit the new government and its members. That having failed, it was evident from the behaviour of the Likud members of the Knesset when the incoming prime minister was presenting the new government's policy to the House that a highly-orchestrated chorus of heckling, disruption and just plain name-calling was under way. Incoming Prime Minister Naftali Bennet was not allowed to complete a single sentence or phrase. While the Knesset Speaker did his best to keep the Knesset members under control, the task was obviously beyond him. The uncouth behaviour of the Knesset members put Israel as a whole to shame in its own eyes and those of foreign observers.

But that wasn't all. Before leaving the Prime Minister's Office Netanyahu instructed the staff there to shred documents. The full extent of the damage thus caused is yet to be assessed, but that is something that no responsible public official should do. In addition, the entire handing-over procedure from the outgoing to the incoming prime

minister took all of half an hour, which seems unlikely given that Netanyahu was in office for twelve consecutive years. The customary ceremony in which the departing official wishes the incoming one success and good fortune in his/her role was omitted completely.

To top the begrudging handing-over of power, Netanyahu and his family declined to leave the official residence at Balfour Street in Jerusalem. It's as if the defeated prime minister of Britain refused to leave 10 Downing Street, or the outgoing President of the USA would not go out of the White House. Eventually, it seems, some kind of agreement was reached and the Netanyahu family has been given a date by which it must vacate the premises. Don't worry, there's no need to feel sorry for them, as they have at least one apartment in Jerusalem as well as a fine house in Caesarea.

Sadly, it all goes to show, despite notable successes, just who and what has been behind the formation of Israel's domestic and foreign policy for a very long period, with consequences that are visible world-wide.

## BEM GALLERY

The AJR wishes a huge mazeltov to these members who were each recently presented with their BEM during separate, socially-distanced events.



Elfriede Starer being presented with her BEM by Robert Voss, HM Lord-Lieutenant for Hertfordshire



Renate Collins at her outdoor presentation ceremony



Simon Winston



# Letters to the Editor

To submit a letter please email [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk). Please note that 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.

## THANK YOU

**MICHAEL NEWMAN** would like to thank all those kind members who have written to congratulate him on being awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday honours.

## APOLOGIES FIRST CHAIR

Thank you to all readers who spotted the incorrect captioning of a photograph in our July 80th anniversary, when a photograph of Alfred Wiener was wrongly assigned to the AJR's founding chairman, Werner Rosenstock.

One of the people who wrote in was Michael Rosenstock, Werner's son. Recounting his own memories of AJR's early days Michael told us: "I accompanied my father to the office in what must have been the early autumn of 1941 when he just went there to open the mail. I think what struck me most was the mass of railway lines behind the building stretching all the way to West Hampstead and (from south to north?) from Finchley Road tube station to the LMS station at Finchley Road & Frognal."

## HMD AND OTHER GENOCIDES

A letter in your April issue stated: "The Holocaust might well have been prevented had Hitler and the German Nazi party been more attentive to the prior Ottoman genocide".

With some rare exceptions the willingness, participation and support for the Nazi ideology by a supposedly civilised, educated, progressive nation created an all-time human catastrophe.

Please let there be some dignity and sensitivity to us survivors. Such statements are beyond belief for those with our knowledge and sad experience. There is no space for imagination and comparisons when we address this very serious topic.  
*Susan Pollack, MBE, London, NW11*

## EU REALITY – PRO BREXIT/ANTI BREXIT

Baroness Deech (June 2021) says that she doesn't recognise any resurgence

of antisemitic, xenophobic, flag-waving sentiments in Brexit Britain. She should have been on London's Finchley Road a few weekends ago, when a convoy drove past in cars draped in flags, chanting '\*\*\*\* the Jews and rape their daughters'. This was accompanied by a rash of reports of physical assaults on Jews. 'Brexit Britain is as good a place for Jewish life outside Israel as anywhere'? Pull the other one.

Both Baroness Deech and Peter Oppenheimer seem to believe, contrary to all the evidence, that Jeremy Corbyn is some kind of ally of the EU. But Corbyn's hostility to the EU is long-standing and well documented. He was part of the left-wing group around Tony Benn who campaigned against the EU in the referendum of 1975. This group's brand of Europhobia was based on the notion that the EU was an agency of capitalism, a left-wing counterfoil to the Brexit nationalists' view of it as an 'empire'. By preventing the Labour Party from campaigning against Brexit in 2016, Corbyn was instrumental in narrowly depriving the Remain camp of victory. The plain truth is that on Europe Corbyn is closer to Baroness Deech and Peter Oppenheimer than to me, rather as Tony Benn and Enoch Powell joined forces in 1975 from opposite ends of the political spectrum to assail the pro-European centre. *Les extrêmes se touchent.*  
*Anthony Grenville, London NW6*

## "PERHAPS A TOO ORIENTAL FLAVOUR"

David Herman implies (July) that Sir Anthony Eden was somewhat hostile to Jews, quoting Eden saying that Isaiah Berlin suffered from "perhaps a too Oriental flavour". I would love to know David's source. I can still remember my parents' delight, when Chamberlain was replaced by Churchill and Halifax by Eden. "Eden halt mitt die Yidden" was the saying amongst their friends. And they carried on believing this particularly when Eden made allies of the Israelis at Suez. Of course, Eden came from the aristocratic class and very few of them befriended Jews. Eden may have had their attitude but I think it very harsh to link him with the proven antisemites, Patrick Hamilton, Evelyn Waugh and David Lean. (It was only after Lionel

Bart's musical *Oliver* that Fagin was no longer depicted as having a huge nose and thick foreign accent. Lionel – RIP).  
*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

## SUDETENLAND

With reference to recent correspondence regarding Sudetenland, I was born in Teplitz-Schoenau and my family had lived in and around the town for about 200 years. Many years ago I took my wife, two sons, their (English) wives and my grandchildren to Czechoslovakia to show them my family's ex home. I was standing outside my grandfather's home and surgery and was just about to take a photograph when I heard some people just behind me. One asked in German "Did you live round here?" I said "Yes." She then confirmed that she had lived just up the road and had been expelled in 1945. Her next question was "and when did they throw you out?" When I replied 1938 she queried the date until I informed her we are Jews. The conversation stopped and they walked away without another word.

The Sudeten Germans, whipped up by local Nazis, welcomed Hitler and the Nazis, eagerly took our houses, apartments and businesses which were taken away from us when Germany took that part of Czechoslovakia after the Munich agreement. The locals got what they deserved.  
*R. J. Norton, Nottingham*

## DEFENDING ISRAEL

I was surprised the AJR published the letter by Fred Stern (read July) which does no service to Jewish people and contained the prejudicial assertion of the superior intelligence of the Jewish nation. Just think of those words, only ever so slightly edited, in the mouths of those in the 1930s who regarded their race or nation as superior. Mr Stern's later evocation of a comparison between the reaction to George Floyd's murder and the fate of the Jews in the 1930s and 40s was shameful too, as no comparison between those events makes sense. Finally, to refer to his fellow UK citizens as the ignorant multitude is below the level of civilised debate.

When I read this type of stuff it makes me want to be as far removed as possible from such sectarian interests. Israel does not need defenders of the nature of Mr Fred Stern.  
*Anthony Lipmann, Somerset*

I was shocked to read Fred Stern's words "the superior intelligence of the Jewish nation". I have looked for an element of humour or irony, but failed to find it. If one accepts that one nation or race has superior intelligence, one has to accept that other(s) have inferior intelligence – isn't that what got us all here in the first place?

My sincere apologies if I misinterpreted the words. In fact, I rather hope that I have.  
*Judith Rhodes, Leeds*

#### FINCHLEYSTRASSE AND THE COSMO

Although, together with my mother I shopped regularly in Finchley Road (we were registered for our food rations at John Barnes as I still insist on calling it), I never heard it being called Finchley Strasse.

I did, however hear a rumour that the Cosmo restaurant was originally called the Cosmopolitan. At some point early on the 'politan' part of the sign fell off it and it was never replaced. Hence the name Cosmo.



Group photographs of children on the Danziger Kindertransports

## LOOKING FOR?

### FRANK, SIMON & OTHERS

Andrew Bennett seeks information about:

- Matilde Frank (née Hanau), born South Africa, died Berlin, 1973. Daughter Dorothea Frank, born Berlin (married Fritz Gotfurt), died 1995 London NW4.
- Rosa Simon (née Hanau), Born South Africa, died Cambridge, 1946. Husband Dr. Otto Simon, Born Magdeburg Germany. Lived in Cambridge. Died 1961, London NW2.
- Daughter Eva Simon (married Rudi Bandman). Born Magdeburg 1903. Died 1985, London. Son Kurt Simon, born Germany 1910, lived in Kenya, married Irmgard Weitzenkorn, died 1980, Wembley Park.  
[tunyduffy@gmail.com](mailto:tunyduffy@gmail.com)

### LEO MOSKOWITZ

The Jewish Museum in Dorsten, North Rhine-Westphalia, acquired this Torah mantle in 1987. Does anyone have



[braun@jmw-dorsten.de](mailto:braun@jmw-dorsten.de)

any knowledge of **Leo(pold) Moskowitz** or his parents Chaim David and Zvia Moskowitz?

### JOSEF and LENA CAVANAGH

Seeking information on Lena Cavanagh, chef at the prestigious 'Haunch of Venison' pub, Salisbury, and husband Josef (both originally from Austria). They lived in a caravan in Amesbury, Wiltshire and fostered a child between 1961-1965.

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

### VIKTOR POTARAVSKY

Wolfgang Zabrzynski seeks information on Viktor Potaravsky, a Jewish engineer from Brno/Brünn who was engaged to Wolfgang's great aunt Elisabeth Sztwiertnia. Viktor was last heard of in 1938 but it was rumoured that he may have escaped to England.

[zabrzynski@aol.com](mailto:zabrzynski@aol.com)

I wonder if there is any truth in these rumours?

*Peter Seglow, London NW3*

### GDAŃSK KINDERTRANSPORTS

I am a writer, historian and researcher at the National Museum in Gdańsk.

I am compiling a book on the Danziger Kindertransports. It should include not only the documents I have collected, but also – above all – the memories of the participants

in the Danzig transports.

I would like to ask for your help: From you, who as children took part in the Gdańsk transports, and from you – the children and grandchildren of those who have already passed away. If we don't do it now, no one else will. We have a shared responsibility to tell this story so that our children and their children, everyone, will know it. It is also a duty to those children who, as Frank Meisler said, were unable to leave the continent, did not go to London and 'went East'.

I would be grateful for any memoirs; or any, even very small, document that has survived from those years, for photographs or drawings (of course, I mean copies of documents, photocopies or scans). This is my appeal to the Kinder, but also to your children and grandchildren: if you know the story of your parents and grandparents, write it down and put it in our book of memory.  
*Mieczysław Abramowicz PhD, Ul. Abrahama 49, 80-307 Gdańsk, Poland.*  
[mieczyslaw.abramowicz@gmail.com](mailto:mieczyslaw.abramowicz@gmail.com)

# Shanghai's 'Little Vienna'

**Around 18,000 Jews fleeing Hitler found refuge in Shanghai – but how did they survive, especially under Japanese occupation?**

Jonathan Kaufman, former China bureau chief for the *Wall Street Journal* (he has since moved to academia), provided an answer in his recent *Kings of Shanghai: Two rival dynasties and the creation of modern China* (Little, Brown). He explained how, in the 19th century, the world's major economies forced a weak China to let them carve out and administer enclaves along the coast; there, Chinese laws would not apply.

Shanghai was the largest of these ports, and the Anglo-American 'international settlement' was the largest of the city's special zones. British and American officials governed it, but two Jewish families dominated Shanghai's economy. Kaufman vividly describes how the Sassoons and the Kadoories moved from Baghdad to Mumbai, Shanghai and Hong Kong, as they built up their fortunes – from rubber to luxury hotels. Opium, however, was the foundation of much of the Sassoons' wealth in China.

Between them, these rival dynasties of financiers and traders turned Shanghai into a thriving cosmopolitan metropolis. They used their wealth to overcome the barriers in Shanghai's European society. Snubbed by local British bankers, the Sassoons started their own bank – HSBC. Britain, as Kaufman recounts, gradually accepted the 'Kings of Shanghai' and their families. They mixed with the aristocracy (a Sassoon became the Marchioness of Cholmondeley), and with royalty. Flaunting their wealth, the families lived extravagantly. Sir Victor Sassoon, for example, kept a stable of racehorses, apocryphally claiming that one race was greater than the Jews – the Derby, a race he had of course won.

But both families also used their wealth to help the less privileged, including Jews already living in Shanghai; they had come from the Middle East or fled from Russia after the revolution in 1917. The rich merchants extended their benevolence to the Central Europeans who, after the



Seward Road in Shanghai's 'Little Vienna' in 1943

*Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht* in 1938, started arriving in increasing numbers. The refugees had learned that, although nearly all countries had closed their doors, they could still enter freely the extra-territorial 'concessions' in Shanghai and elsewhere in China.

Ely Kadoorie, the biggest benefactor in the city's Jewish community, persuaded Sir Victor and other leaders to join forces to help these mostly middle-class immigrants reaching Shanghai. To aid their work, the Sassoons and Kadoories appealed to charities in Europe and America, such as the Joint Distribution Committee. They set about finding shelter for the immigrants – whether rooms in private boarding houses, or the Chinese YMCA and the Salvation Army. They fed them and helped them find work, from looking after the young and sick to manufacturing.

Sir Victor paid the refugees' entry taxes; he turned the floor of one of his office skyscrapers into a reception centre, where refugees were issued with bedding and cutlery; the basement became a kitchen that prepared 1,800 meals daily. Sir Victor set up a fund to supply free milk daily; he opened a 'thrift shop', where refugees could sell their belongings; he trained 200 men to become carpenters and mechanics.

Richer refugees lived in the elegant French concession, or the posher parts of the 'international' one. The poorer majority lived among thousands of poor Chinese in the rundown Hongkew district. There, they set



A Shanghai newspaper vendor with a young Jewish refugee

up outpatient clinics and schools, started businesses or practised their professions. Sir Victor helped them as they renovated disused or partially destroyed buildings (Japan bombarded Shanghai in 1937). Hongkew and its commercial centre became a 'Little Vienna', with its restaurants, such as *Das Weisse Rössl* (White Horse Inn), delis, cafés, theatres and cabarets, newspapers and sports clubs.

Berlin and Tokyo eventually halted immigration. After the US entered the war in December 1941, Tokyo occupied the enclaves. Funds from abroad became scarce, and had to be channelled via Switzerland. The 'kings' worked with the Japanese who, significantly, did not carry out the wishes of Colonel Josef Meisinger, aka the 'butcher of Warsaw'. He visited in 1942 and urged the occupiers to get rid of the Jews.

Instead, they squeezed the now stateless Central European refugees into a rundown 'designated area' in Hongkew. Hunger and illness prevailed in this informal 'ghetto', but by the time the Americans liberated Shanghai, no Jew had been murdered.

Civil war and the Chinese communists' victory led to yet another exodus of the Jews. The synagogue became a hospital, where a portrait of Mao replaced a torah. Today, the Chinese have banned plans to raze Hongkew; it is now a 'heritage' tourist attraction; the old synagogue is a museum – about Jewish Shanghai.

**Martin Mauthner**



# WANTED: MORE RIGHTEOUS TESTIMONY

**The Rescuers – Last Chance Project is a race against time to document further untold, first-hand stories of the numerous remaining diplomats who helped Jews to escape. It is part of The Joyce D. Mandell Rescuers Collection of testimonies about righteous diplomats turned rescuers during the Holocaust, which is to be showcased at the USC Shoah Foundation this autumn.**

Thirteen diplomats – including Swede Raoul Wallenberg and Americans Varian Fry and Hiram Bingham – are already featured in filmmaker Michael W. King and Joyce D. Mandell's award-winning documentary *The Rescuers*, which describes the actions of these diplomats' tireless efforts to save Jews and others and earned them the status of "Righteous Among the Nations," an honorific used by the State of Israel to describe non-Jews who risked their careers and lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

This is the world's largest-known WW2 filmed historical compilation dedicated to testimony about the "Righteous Diplomats" and it is being made available to the public through the Visual History Archive in the autumn in conjunction with the 82<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of WW2.

"We can all be uplifted by the fact that the stories of these rescuers are themselves being rescued for posterity. Now they can inform and inspire future generations just as they are doing for viewers today," said Stephen Smith, Finci-Viterbi Executive Director of USC Shoah Foundation.

Among those already featured in the Joyce D. Mandell Rescuers Collection are testimonies from survivors and relatives who recount the stories of the following diplomats: German diplomat (and Nazi Party member) Georg F. Duckwitz in Copenhagen; Americans Varian Fry and



The Brazilian rescuer Aracy De Carvalho



Portuguese rescuer Carlos Sampaio Garrido

Hiram Bingham in Marseilles; Japanese Consul Chiune Sugihara and Dutch Jan Zwartendijk in Kaunas; Turkish Consul Selahattin Ülkümen in Rhodes; British Captain Frank Foley in Berlin; Polish diplomat Henryk Sławik in Budapest; Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who helped coordinate rescue efforts in Budapest in 1944 along with Monsignor Angelo Rotta, Papal Nuncio to Hungary; Portuguese Consul Aristides de Sousa Mendes in France; and Swiss Consul Carl Lutz in Budapest.

The collection also features a segment from His Royal Highness Prince Charles, The Prince of Wales, who reveals a little-known story about his grandmother Princess Alice of Battenberg.

The collection is now hoping to collect testimony about 17 other "Righteous Diplomats" and is currently working to identify people who knew one of them as well as from Holocaust survivors who benefitted from their assistance.

"This is our last chance to document first-hand accounts related to diplomats who were at the centre of the 20th century's most unforgettable events," King said. In what he calls "a race against time", *The Rescuers* research team is hoping to speak to anyone who may have information.

Here is the list of the additional diplomats the team is hoping to profile. The countries in brackets refer to the locations of the Jewish people they worked to help:

- Brazilians **Aracy De Carvalho** (Germany) and **Luiz Martins de Souza Dantas** (France);
- Consul-General **Feng Shan Ho** (Austria);

- Ecuadorian **Manuel Antonio Muñoz Borrero** (Sweden);
- El Salvadoran **José Castellanos Contreras** (Switzerland);
- French **François de Vial** (Italy);
- Italians **Pacifico Marchesini** (The Netherlands), **Giorgio Perlasca** (Hungary) and **Monsignor Angelo Rotta** (Hungary);
- Peruvian **José Mária Baretto** (Switzerland);
- Poles **Władysław Bartoszewski** (Warsaw) and **Konstanty Rokicki** (Switzerland);
- Portuguese **Carlos Sampaio Garrido** (Hungary);
- Romanians **Constantin Karadja** (Germany) and **Florian Manoliu** (Hungary);
- Slovak **Ján Spišiak** (Hungary);
- Spaniards **Ángel Sanz Briz** (Hungary), **Eduardo Propper de Callejón** (France), **Sebastián de Romero Radigales** (Greece), and **Dr. José Ruiz Santaella** (Germany);
- Swedes **Per Anger** (Hungary), **Lars Berg** (Hungary), **Carl Ivar Danielsson** (Hungary), and **Elow Kihlgren** (Italy); Swiss **Harald Feller** (Hungary), **Ernst Prodolliet** (Austria), **Ernst Vonrufs** (Hungary), and **Peter Zürcher** (Hungary)

Anyone with pertinent information visit [www.rescuersdoc.com](http://www.rescuersdoc.com)



**Martin Kitchen from California has sent us this heartfelt tribute to a gentleman who was very important to his young life and whose story will sadly be only too familiar to some of our first generation members who were not welcomed into Britain with open arms.**

During the war I was a very small boy in Sevenoaks. Frequently sick with bronchitis, pneumonia and most of the infectious diseases that were so prevalent in those days, I was often in need of medical attention. No doubt our health and well-being were seriously disrupted by the Luftwaffe's bombing campaign. Sevenoaks was on the flight path of German bombers targeting London, so that when the Luftwaffe began night attacks in October 1940, we seldom had an uninterrupted night's sleep. Although things improved when the Germans switched to targeting other cities and ports, there was a series of intermittent raids and false alarms until the "Baby Blitz" from February to June 1944. This was followed by the V1 Doodlebug rocket attacks, beginning in June, a considerable number of which landed in Sevenoaks and the surrounding area. I have no memory

of ever being frightened during these attacks and disruptions. This was life as I knew it to be. It was only when the sound of a restored Heinkel 111 bomber flying overhead on its way to an air show 40 years later, or a live broadcast with the sound of a siren warning of a scud attack on Tel Aviv in February 1991, triggered off anxiety attacks that left me frozen with fear that I realised the deep-rooted effect of wartime experience.

Probably the major cause of my respiratory problems was that our house was freezing cold. Like the vast majority of British houses at that time, we had no central heating. Fuel for the few open fireplaces was in very short supply and electricity was rationed and intermittent. After the war, as things began to get back to normal, I had no further such illnesses.

Our family doctor seems to me now as a relic of the past, a figure from one of the innumerable whodunits of the time. In an impeccable Savile Row suit, with a suave bedside manner and an arrogance that was matched by his total professional incompetence, he was something of a caricature figure. With a childish disposition to instant judgment that I have yet to outgrow, I loathed him. Mercifully he soon vanished from my life. I later learned that under the terms of the National Service (Armed Forces) Act he was obliged to serve

King and country in the Royal Navy.

His replacement seemed to me to come from another world. He was unlike anyone that I knew. He seemed to be very short and slight compared with my former doctor. The records show that in 1946 his height was five feet and six inches, his weight 134 pounds. He wore granny glasses. His closely cropped moustache was a facial ornament with which I was unfamiliar. He spoke halting English with a very strange accent, which greatly amused me. I remember him asking me: "Do you like roast lamp?" That still makes me smile. He was the kindest, gentlest, most lovable man I have ever known. He was also, in contrast to his antecedent, a superb doctor. When I was sick, he got me well again very quickly, which in the days before penicillin was quite an achievement. His consulting room also had a somewhat strange atmosphere, but it was one in which I felt completely confident. His pediatric skills were such that I unflinchingly submitted to the hypodermic needle. I should add that I was much smitten in kindergarten by his daughter Hannah, a plump little redhead, with her father's comforting disposition. I greatly preferred her to the class beauty, the vicar's daughter, and photos show us always close together.

After the war my parents moved to Bristol and that might have been the end of the story, had I not frequently looked back with

affection to the few years that I was under his care. I came to realise that he was a Jewish refugee and I guessed he came from Austria, probably Vienna. I began to imagine him as a character out of Arthur Schnitzler or Joseph Roth. None of these forms of otherness would have had any meaning to me as a young boy, as no-one bothered to explain to me who this strange man was. When I began to understand and got at least an outline of his story, I realised that among the noxious diseases against which he had vaccinated and inoculated me, was the insidious malady of antisemitism. Some 40 years later I asked my mother what had happened to Dr Haupt after the war. She told me that when the former GP returned to civilian life his former patients, for obvious reasons, opted to stay with Dr Haupt. Thereupon the returning war hero mounted a vicious antisemitic campaign, claiming that as a typical Jew Dr Haupt had stolen all his patients, while he risked his life confronting Admiral Doenitz on the high seas. This crusade had some effect. Heads began to shake in the golf club, the masonic lodge, the amateur dramatic society, the women's institute and on the tennis courts. My mother claimed that the two physicians went into partnership, but I found this highly improbable.

With the invaluable help of the Sevenoaks' local historian, Matthew Ball, I was able to patch together an outline of his story. The result was deeply troubling. Ladislaus Haupt was born in Vienna in 1898. I know nothing of his childhood beyond a mention that his father committed suicide in 1909. In August 1933 he married Gerda Fischhof who was born in Vienna in 1912. He, his wife and daughters Ilse and Hanna escaped to Britain. In a survey made shortly after the commencement of hostilities, Ladislaus and Gerda are listed as living at Slater's Bungalow in Rotherfield Peppard. Ladislaus is listed as being "without occupation", his wife's occupation was "unpaid domestic duties." Subject to the Aliens Order of 1920, Dr Haupt registered with the police in December 1939. He was temporarily exempted from internment and special restrictions until further notice.

They were not to remain long in this pleasant setting in the Chiltern Hills. In June 1940 he was interned as an enemy alien. Largely due to expressions of outrage

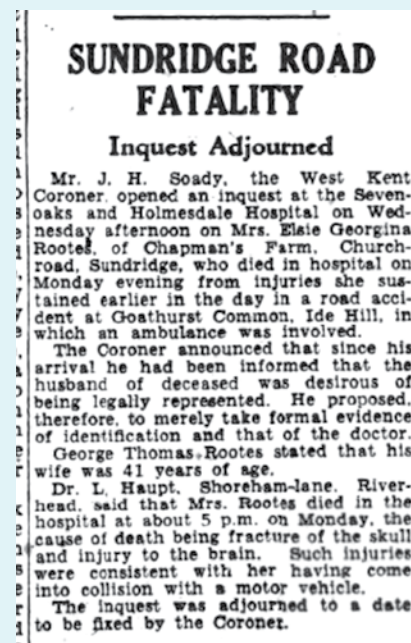


Enemy Alien registration card for Ladislaus Haupt

in Parliament, he was released in August. Evidence suggests that the Haupt family moved to Sevenoaks soon thereafter.

Ladislaus Haupt's youth was spent when the antisemite Karl Lueger was mayor of Vienna, but with a large and influential Jewish population Lueger had to modify his position, much to the disgust of his rabid following and coined the flippant phrase: "I decide who is Jewish." 92% of Austria's 190,000 Jews lived in Vienna. They played a leading role in the Social Democratic Party, which was the only political party that welcomed Jews as members. The situation worsened markedly with the advent of Dollfuss' Austro-Fascism. Dr Haupt was 39 years old in 1938 when the Germans annexed the country and the Jewish population was instantly subjected to a regime of unprecedented brutality and ferocity.

Dr Haupt and his young family must have felt immense relief to have escaped the tragic lot of being Jews in Nazi controlled Vienna and to have found refuge in an idyllic Oxfordshire village. No doubt internment as an enemy alien must have come as a terrible shock and humiliation, and although there is no means of telling how he actually felt, it is safe to assume that once established as a general practitioner with a busy practice, he must have considered himself to be relatively secure. During his lifetime Austrian antisemitism varied from coffee table *klatsch* and social discrimination to sadistic extremes. On the other hand, British antisemitism is shockingly exposed in the files of the Ministry of Information. Jews were seen as scapegoats for many of the difficulties of wartime life, particularly the black market. Many expressed the view that although Hitler was a bad man, at least he knew what to do with the Jews. There can be no doubt whatever that the intensity of



Newspaper report of an inquest carried out by Dr Haupt

the campaign against Dr Haupt when the war emergency was over must have come as a terrible shock. Life for the Haupt family had become intolerable. I am interested in this case not only because of the very important role Dr Haupt played in my life, but also because, as a professional historian, I suspected that it was a typical case of the insidious antisemitism that is still prevalent in Britain and remains largely concealed.

In September 1946 Dr Haupt, listed as a stateless doctor, emigrated to America. Within days the doctor and physician Ladislaus Haupt, now known as Leslie George Haupt, of Chicago, Illinois, having sworn that he was not an anarchist and was not intent on overthrowing organised government by force, filed a petition for naturalisation for the whole family and thereafter Doctor Haupt was free to practise his profession in his new home. The children's names were changed to Lizabeth (Ilse) and Lee (Hanna). Dr Haupt died aged 87 and is listed in the database of holocaust survivors and victims at the USHMM.

This is a sickening tale of a remarkable man who played a brief, but very important part in my life. The impression of human warmth, understanding, and caring, coupled with professional expertise was indelible. I am deeply grateful to him and would like to pay him a modest tribute.





# NEXT GENERATIONS

## The Association of Jewish Refugees

### A 2G'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

Since its foundation in 2000, Exiled Writers Ink has worked on many projects designed to support the work of exiled writers, refugees, and migrants. The organisation's founder and director, Dr Jennifer Langer, explains what drove her to set it up and how it has helped her to reconcile some of her own experiences of being Second Generation.

In the late nineties I became set on defying the stereotype of refugees exploiting Britain's welfare and being bogus. I felt that it was imperative for refugee writers' voices to be heard so that insights could be gained, not only into the pain of the refugee experience, but also into the complexity of the experiences and concerns of writers from diverse regions. Arguably, I developed a politicised identity and the desire to right wrongs through growing up hearing about injustice and loss and the political situation in Germany. My father frequently sent letters to newspapers about Nazis.

It was my visceral feeling of difference as the daughter of refugees that drew me to establish the organisation and to empathise with the refugees of today. Broad similarities can be drawn between some of the experiences and sensibilities of refugees from the Nazis and those of contemporary refugees.

My parents were single people who fled Nazi Germany for Britain where they met. My father had been arrested on *Kristallnacht* and incarcerated in Buchenwald concentration camp. Although he was silent about the ordeal, the testimony he wrote for the Wiener Library revealed the horrors he endured. He fled for his life having been granted refuge at Kitchener Camp, Kent. Subsequently, he was interned on the Isle of Man on suspicion of being an enemy alien following which he was deported to Canada. My mother too, desperately searched for a place of safety. She had been bound for Uruguay but finally entered the UK on a domestic's visa.

Eventually my parents learned that they were the only survivors of their respective families but my parents never spoke to me of their trauma, although there were photographs of their murdered relatives in our living room. However, I chose not to ask questions and shut off my mind about the way they had died.

Fundamentally, my refugee roots permeate my being. The memory of loss is my history. Certainly, numerous current refugees are afflicted with the trauma of loss and the atrocities inflicted on them and it may only be many years later that they feel able to integrate their trauma experiences into narrative. Mir Mahfuz Ali, the exiled Bangladeshi poet, informed me that Exiled Writers Ink had provided him with a community of writers, a haven out of his sad isolation. Riot police in Bangladesh had shot him in the throat during a protest, leaving him unable to speak. When he arrived in England, seeking both medical treatment and political freedom, he felt deprived of an identity because he had lost his mother tongue

and felt invisible. In 2014 his first poetry collection *Midnight, Dhaka* was published. Politics is inextricably linked with the literary work of writers who fled because

of oppression, persecution, war, imprisonment, lack of freedom of speech and more. To be an exiled writer is to use writing as a tool to speak out against continuing injustice and abuse in the country of origin. With this courage comes risk, even in exile.

In my experience, most current refugee writers express minimal affinity with the new external space of exile, portraying it negatively. This is due to their sense of destabilisation and their negative reception by the host community, bound with difficult experiences of immigration, detention and racism. Similarly, there was opposition to Jewish refugee immigration throughout the late 1930s and it was difficult for the refugees to gain acceptance by the host community. For current refugees the sense of alienation is compounded by the devastation in the country of origin, stimulating the need to idealise the past home in the desperate search for identity. The paradox of nostalgia for the home country, despite the trauma, is reminiscent of my parents' ambivalent stance towards Germany – a kind of love-hate relationship.

My forthcoming poetry collection *The Search* is an exploration of my complex sense of identity as the daughter of German Jewish refugees. I dream of a lost world snatching at fragments striving to create narrative. Yet crucially my sensibility of otherness is dialogically engaged with contemporary refugees and the oppressed in my dynamic quest for insight and shared traces.

Jennifer's book *The Search* will be published in September by Victorina Press. [www.victorinapress.com/product/the-search/](http://www.victorinapress.com/product/the-search/)

Exiled Writers Ink develops and promotes the creative literary expression of refugees and migrants, encourages cross-cultural dialogue and advocates human rights through literature and literary activism.

[www.exiledwriters.co.uk](http://www.exiledwriters.co.uk)



# Inspired by AJR

**Sophia Engel** worked for one year as a volunteer for the AJR under the auspices of Aktion Suehnezeichen/ARSP (the German organisation dedicated to peace and reconciliation). This October she will be starting a course at the *Kunsthochschule*, the college of art in Weißensee, to study Textile and Surface Design. Much of her textile work is influenced by her experiences at the AJR, about which she writes so movingly.



A Hamsa embroidered by Sophia, which features on the shoulder strap of a dress she has recently made

To put it extremely short, Judaism made me feel like I belong. I grew up with a mom from Bosnia, who sadly did not teach me her and half my family's mother tongue. Growing up like that had a profound impact on me, I realise now. I am constantly looking for my place, my people, and to me it feels like a door to my heritage and culture has been shut in my face, due to the lack of possible communication. I firmly believe that

language is much more than a simple way of communication, it transports a culture, a world view and values.

When I started working in the Jewish community I met some of the most incredible people I know and I encountered a culture that took me in, welcomed me and treated me as one of theirs. I felt like I had a purpose with the work I did and like I did something

good that went beyond my own being. Building friendships with women and men who survived German persecution, possibly by my own ancestors, and who took me into their lives and hearts nevertheless, has touched me so deeply and has forever changed me. Judaism and my encounter with it has made me grow, has given me so many people to love and a community I feel welcome in and I love to give back to. It left a mark on me.

## Celebrating our volunteers

This year we were once again forced to hold our annual Volunteer Celebration online but, if we say so ourselves, we're getting very good at this.



Our wonderful volunteers were delighted to receive a box of cocktails and snacks to enjoy while listening to some inspirational speakers. Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow told us about his incredible charity, Mary's Meals, which provides life-changing meals to some of the world's poorest children

every school day. Leeds-based Chazan Alby Chait entertained us with tales of his online musical services which have been viewed over half a million times during lockdown and brought hopes to so many during the dark times of the past year, and ended with *Adon Olam* to the tune of *I'll Be Back*

from Hamilton. Our coordinators ran an interactive quiz based on the locations of our volunteers, and we heard from Jo Briggs about a new volunteer role – tree guardians for the '80 Trees for 80 Years' project. Hopefully next year we will be able to celebrate in person!

## AJR INTERNATIONAL FORUM CONNECTING NEXT GENERATIONS

We are delighted to announce our hybrid (online and in person) conference on 3 & 4 October 2021. The programme for Sunday 3 October will be online only, while the programme for Monday 4 October will be both online and in person at Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge in London. We are putting together an informative and engaging programme, which will be of particular interest to second and third generations. Topics will include identity, trauma, legacy, memorialisation, literature and more. Full information about our speakers and ticket availability will be on our website very soon.

We're really looking forward to seeing many of you there, either in person or online.



# Necessary but impossible

In the third of his series of articles for the *AJR Journal* the Senior Archivist for The Wiener Holocaust Library, Howard Falksohn, reflects on how many writers featured in the Library appeared to struggle with their Jewish identity.

Jean Améry (1912-1978), *The Philosopher of Auschwitz*, had an existential crisis. In many ways he encapsulated the dilemma experienced by many Jews of mixed heritage whose families had assimilated to the point of losing their Jewish identity but who were nonetheless persecuted for their Jewish roots. In his essay *On the Necessity and Impossibility of Being a Jew*, he poses the question: "Can it be thinkable that I, the former Auschwitz inmate, who truly has not lacked occasion to recognise what he is and what he must be, still did not want to be a Jew?"

"If today discomfort arises in me when a Jew takes it for granted, legitimately, that I am part of his community, then it is not because I don't want to be a Jew but only because I cannot be one and yet must be one..."

For Améry the fact is that he could not identify with his Jewish cultural heritage nor did Jewish religious practice have any meaning for him even though his ancestors were observant.

"If I were to look like I had stepped out of Johann von Leer's book *Juden schauen*, it would have no subjective reality for me; it would, to be sure, establish a community of fate, but no positive community between me and my fellow Jews."

What compels Jean Améry to self-identify as a Jew is his shared victim status brought to the fore by the Holocaust which he witnessed at close quarters. Indeed he examines with forensic and dispassionate detail his feelings of being beaten and strung up by the Gestapo in Belgium for

distributing antifascist literature in another essay *On Torture*.

"Solidarity in the face of threat is all that links me with my Jewish contemporaries... without the feeling of belonging to the threatened I would be a self-surrendering fugitive from reality"

The Wiener Holocaust Library holds hundreds of collections of papers, documenting the experiences of families who were persecuted by the Nazis. Virtually all of these families were Jewish but very few were strictly orthodox in the sense that they davened three times a day, put on Tefillin or uttered blessings on a regular basis. No, these families were by and large assimilated. Some may have attended synagogue on Yom tov, or celebrated Passover. Few were kosher or strictly observant of the Torah. Indeed, for some families the Jewish faith no longer played any role in their lives: they had either become Communist, Atheist, Zionist, Catholic, Evangelical or even Buddhist. Of course this didn't exempt them from the Nazi racial laws. The following three examples from our collections will give a sense of the differentiated picture of Jewish identity amongst the Nazi-driven Diaspora.

The Library holds a set of interviews conducted by Theo Richmond for his acclaimed book *Konin: A Quest*. They document Jewish life in this small town in Poland in the interwar years. Nathan Bezunski describes how as a child he was a member of the Hasidim and that he would wear the long black kaftan and sidelocks. He spent 8 hours a day at Cheder learning the Torah and when older studied the Talmud. His family came from generations steeped in this tradition. Even as an adolescent he began to have doubts about his religious practice. By the time he emerged at the end of the war having survived the Holocaust he had lost his faith completely. How could there be a God after Auschwitz?

At the other end of the spectrum Karl Wahle (1887-1970), descended from Jewish merchants in Prague, had converted to Catholicism out of conviction in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Vienna to Alfred and Evelina née Strakosch.



Jean Améry, 1865-1923

He studied law, volunteered during World War One and shortly after his return became a judge. In 1927 he was appointed to the board of the Commercial Court, Vienna, becoming its chairman in 1931. He was forced into early retirement in 1938. There followed a period of hiding 'in plain sight' during the war years in Vienna. Having survived the war with his wife, Hedwig (who had converted to Catholicism for pragmatic reasons in the 1930s), he was made president of the Commercial Court in 1946, then in 1956 was made president of the Austrian Supreme Court.

Their two children, Francis and Anna Wahle, came to Great Britain on a Kindertransport organised by the Quakers from their home city, Vienna, in 1939. Whilst both children were raised as Catholics, they qualified for inclusion as their parents, Karl and Hedwig, had converted from Judaism. Anna grew up to become an ordained nun and a member of the order 'Our Lady of Sion' (specifically dedicated to Christian-Jewish understanding) and Francis became a parish priest.

Lastly, the Rosenbergs of Posen and later Berlin are more typical of the families represented in the WHL's collections because, though aware of their Jewish roots, were neither observant nor felt the need to adopt another religion. They were assimilated.

Both Felix Rosenberg (1865-1923) and his son Ludwig Rosenberg (1898-1954) were classically trained scholars and Francophiles who taught languages at the Köllnisches Gymnasium and Französisches





Felix Rosenberg,  
1865-1923  
(Wiener Library)

Gymnasium, Berlin, respectively. Ludwig went on to teach for a term at Bunce Court school in Kent and then for the remainder of his life German and French at Dartington Hall school in Devon.

Felix, who was a classical philologist, published a number of articles in various scholarly journals which are preserved as part of the collection. In addition and of particular interest is a set of correspondence from Felix to his family as an itinerant scholar and teacher in Berlin, Heidelberg and Munich and on various excursions to Strasbourg, Frankfurt am Main and Geneva etc between the years 1883-1902.

This treasure trove of letters documents the cultural, social and familial interests of a middle class assimilated Jew in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An avid theatre goer he describes going to the Kroll theatre to listen to Marcella Lembrich as Rosine in *The Barber of Seville* for 1 mark. Then mentions that he has been offered a tutoring position for her boys at their home in the Tiergarten. Likewise he immersed himself for an evening in 16<sup>th</sup> C Nuremberg by watching a performance of the *Meister Sanger von Nurnberg*.

His character observations are astute and sometimes humorous:

"She has the gift to really enjoy small

things such as a flower, and if she likes to converse about her acquaintances, that is if she gossips, malice is never mixed in... Zella is much too simple to be insincere."

"...Uncle Hoffmann from Schlochau recounts how he ordered 2 plaster lions (to embellish the grand gateway to his property) but the tongues stick downwards making them look like sheep..."

Never far from the surface, however, is a preoccupation with his Jewish identity. Whilst it is clear that he is not practising, there are numerous references to the way his Jewishness impacts his life. When applying for a job at a Jewish Gymnasium where most of the pupils but few of the teachers were Jewish, he comments that this is the first time his *Konfession* had no bearing on the application process. He observed that he was attracted to secular Jewish women. He describes eating kosher food at the Seligsohns where they spoke the *Muttersprache*. He recounts with great joy these regular meetings: "You cannot hardly believe what a pleasure it is once a month to be with these educated (Jewish) people" and how it reminds him of his youth sitting at the shabbes table.

When he died prematurely in a tragic road accident he was a member of the Jewish Liberal community.



In a bid to stay physically and mentally fit during the pandemic AJR member Gerti Blum Baruch, 94, has been spending almost an hour a day on her stationary exercise bicycle. Born in Vienna, Gerti came to the UK with her mother in 1939, a few weeks before war broke out. She is a member of Belsize Square Synagogue and attributes her strength to everything that she has been through in her life.

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# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

**It's the colours that first attract the eye. But, rather like Grayson Perry's secret erotic vases, the subject is elusive until you look deeper into the lush green forests and blue streams of surreal Africa and discover brooding presences human, animal or mythic, lurk everywhere.**



*The Paradise Edict* by Michael Armitage, 2019

Kenyan born **Michael Armitage**, whose *Paradise Edict* is shown at the **Royal Academy**, draws on East African tradition, myth and allegory, European art history and his personal life in Kenya, to present a series of vivid, multi-layered narrative paintings. His influences are transnational; from European masters such as Titian, Goya and Gauguin to East African artists like Jak Katarikawe, Meek Gichugu and Chelenge van Rempelberg.

In 15 large paintings, the young artist challenges societal norms, religion, politics and contemporary culture. In works produced over the last seven years, he uses a local material known as *lubugo* or bark cloth, traditionally made in Uganda from the inner bark of the Mutuba tree or Natal fig by the Baganda people, and used for ceremonial purposes. Armitage adapted his technique to paint on this organic and irregular material rather than traditional canvas. He layers the paint, scraping and repainting to convey both the urban and rural aspects of East Africa.

But from an artist's perspective, the very choice of this fabric reflects the frailty of the life portrayed. The fabric is breakable, the cracks work as metaphor for life which can be beautiful but is an endangered species, begging the question of what will happen if these works are allowed to fray, and who will take on their restoration, if and when necessary.

One of his themes deals with the contested 2017 general elections in Kenya, prior to which Armitage joined a TV crew filming an opposition party rally in Uhuru Park, Nairobi. His experiences inspired *The Chicken Thief*, 2019, in which a tense and frightened

man in jeans, clutching two chickens runs away from a terrifying pursuer, encased in fire. It is a desperate, impressionistic image encircled by car tyres, which in themselves echo the dreadful "necklacing" with burning tyres that was used to kill opponents. Politics and power are represented in this painting in which brilliant, primary colours invoke a sense of rhetoric, energy and violence.

In a generous homage Armitage honours six contemporary East African artists for having shaped figurative painting in Kenya and influenced his own work. But it is in *Paradise Edict*, that Armitage's figurative and narrative paintings really make their point. In *Mydas*, 2019 a frightening mythic bronze male figure with a flying cape, standing on a circle appears to have suffused a woman and child in gold, sitting in a Gauguin-like pose, while a wild cat crouches in the blue background.

The whole flavour of *Paradise Edict* turns the Eden metaphor on its head. This paradise has so much hell in it. There are weird wild animals, crocodiles crawling out of a green-blue idyll, torturers' hands holding down a pair of disembodied masculine legs. Barren pink, fiery trees, and strange animal-humans.

Armitage paints in an *art-naïf* manner, in itself, disturbing. What is he saying? Is he attacking Western stereotypes which mythologises Africa, idealising its physical beauty, its wildness and safari life while ignoring the complexity of its history, culture and politics? His landscapes, in their detail and mythology, reverberate with the drumroll of an Africa we may be afraid to

confront. But Armitage is not afraid to confront it; he asks us to look carefully at his Africa of myth, legend, ghosts and political upheaval, in which beauty and legend, poverty and cruelty rise up from the difficult surface of the *jubugo*, bark cloth he has deliberately chosen, almost as though the material is in itself, a political message. He is asking us to see the Kenya of his birth, complete with its violence, its cruelties and inequalities. If we see violence and terror in his work, there is also humour – chimps wearing lingerie is one example – and poignancy in its appeal to humanity.

Armitage says: "Painting is a way of thinking through something, trying to understand an experience or an event a little better and trying to communicate something of the problem to others".

His imaginative and mythic painting, '*Hornbill*' (21st – 24th September 2013) (2014), represents one of the terrorists who carried out the Westgate Shopping Mall attack, in which 67 people, including children, were killed and repeats the symbol of the Hornbill bird, which references the West African myth that Hornbills bury their dead in the beak of their bill.

*Paradise Edict* is at the Royal Academy, The Jillian and Arthur M Sackler Wing of Galleries until September 19.

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**CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

# OBITUARY

## LESLIE KLEINMAN

Born: 29 May 1929, Ambud, Romania

Died: 30 June 2021, Westcliff-on-Sea



**Leslie Kleinman's father, Martin, was convinced he would see his wife and children again when the Nazis came for him – but it was not to be.**

The Orthodox family lived in a small village near Satu Mare in Romania. Leslie had three brothers and four sisters, and their father was a Rabbi. While they were aware of the war raging around them, their lives remained relatively untouched by the traumas facing other Jews.

But in March 1944 the outside world caught up with them. The Germans arrived in Ambud during Shabbat and a German soldier cut off his father's beard – a terrible insult for a religious man. His father was then taken, supposedly to dig trenches on the Eastern Front but in fact to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In April 1944, the rest of Leslie's family were forced to leave their home and enter the ghetto, where they were held for a month.

From the ghetto, Leslie and his family were deported. They were told that they were being sent to Germany to work, but instead they were also taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Although Leslie was only 14, he claimed that he was older and was therefore selected for work. He was separated from the rest of his family who were all taken straight to the gas chamber except for his eldest sister, Gitta; she was selected for work and sent to Bergen-Belsen. At Auschwitz-Birkenau Leslie was first forced to work on building a railway and later unloading bags of cement from the trains.

Towards the end of 1944, with the Red Army approaching, Leslie was sent on a death march to Sachsenhausen and then on to Flossenbürg concentration camp, where he stayed for approximately three weeks. From there, he and the remaining prisoners were sent on a second death march towards Dachau concentration camp but, whilst they were in a forest, all of the Nazis disappeared, and Leslie was liberated by American troops. One of the soldiers arranged for him to be sent to an American-run hospital where he spent the next two months.

He was sent to a convent to recuperate for six months, during which time he learned that his sister Gitta had survived the camps but had died shortly after liberation.

While Leslie was at the convent, he was told that the British government were allowing 1,000 child survivors to come to the UK. Leslie was one of this group, who became known as 'The Boys'.

In London he met his wife, Eva, a German woman whose father had sent her, her siblings and their mother to Britain to protect them. Eva had worked as a nurse in Kilmarnock before moving to London.

The couple had two children, Steven and Rosalyn, and Leslie set up his own dress manufacturing company before moving to Canada in 1979.

They were married for 49 years but when Eva died of leukaemia in 2004 Leslie came back to London to be close to his children and grandchildren.

In 2011 he married his second wife, Miriam, in Tel Aviv and he also returned to Auschwitz for the first time. The following year he sat Shiva for his family, having never previously taken time to mourn them.

As a volunteer for the Holocaust Educational Trust Leslie regularly shared his experiences with pupils in schools and colleges across the country. Karen Pollock CBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, described him as "an inspiration to all", who worked "tirelessly" to share his experiences of the horrors of the Holocaust with the next generation.

Leslie also accompanied groups on educational visits to Poland and was passionate that the Second and Third Generations continue the hard work of courageous survivors. He was a religious man, who often spoke of nearly losing his faith during the Holocaust. In fact, his commitment to Judaism and the Jewish community was unstinting.

A deeply kind and generous man, Leslie exuded warmth and compassion, always with an infectious smile; he will be very sadly missed.

He is survived by his wife Miriam, his two children Rosalyn and Steve, and three stepchildren: Ros, Martin and Les.

*Jo Briggs*



Leslie and some of his audience during one of the many speaking engagements he took part in for the HET.



# REVIEWS

## THE LOST CAFÉ SCHINDLER

By Meriel Schindler  
Hodder & Staughton

Speaking at the recent AJR Book Club in conversation with Debra Barnes – who leads our *My Story and Next Generation* projects – author Meriel Schindler explained how the café itself was the story's main character. Janet Weston listened in.

Meriel began by reading an extract from the prologue, setting the scene with her father Kurt and her own turbulent childhood when he liked “living on the edge” and had failed to provide the most basic stability. The family lurched between high living and dodging the bailiff, after his fraudulent escapades, ultimately leading to imprisonment.

Kurt arrived in the UK from Innsbruck – where his own father Hugo ran the most popular café in town – when he was 13 and led a roller coaster life. In her meticulous research Meriel was aided by the fact that she spoke German, having moved with her family to Austria for five years at 15. Her legal expertise and her willingness and ability to tackle huge piles of papers proved invaluable.

WW1 survivor Hugo Schindler had bravely defended the stricken Austro-Hungarian Empire against Italy on the southern front. Afterwards he set up the café in Innsbruck's central street in 1922, a classic European coffee house and oasis of beauty and sophistication in a dark period of Austrian history. The restaurant flourished through the jazz age, becoming the place to enjoy coffee, delicious *apfelstrudel* and dance. But it was confiscated by the Nazis and his villa – the best house in town – was taken over by Gauleiter Franz Hofer. After being badly beaten up on Kristallnacht, Hugo eventually escaped to England, joining his wife Edith and Kurt, whose own education was fragmented. Hugo was interned on the Isle of Man briefly

Café Schindler in the 1930s



and then made a modest living as a baker and patissier's assistant. Like so many other Jewish refugees the family lived in reduced circumstances.

After the war they discovered the tragic fate of other relatives. It is particularly poignant when an unopened letter is found marked ‘return to sender’ from the address where Kurt's aunt, uncle and octogenarian grandmother were deported. Hugo decided to return to Vienna where restitution claims were difficult and Meriel's expertise was key to discovering what happened.

The wartime history of the restaurant is also interesting when it became Café Heibl after Nazi Franz Heibl, who ran it for seven years. He was prosecuted by the Nazis for black marketeering and could have faced the death penalty except for the intervention of Heinrich Himmler. But Hugo loved the mountains, being above all a Tyrolean, and returned to Innsbruck to take over the café until he died in 1952. Afterwards Kurt helped run the restaurant until it was sold in 1959. Eventually it closed down before a new dawn in 2010 when it re-opened independently; now called *Das Schindler*, it proudly lives on in the same premises today.

Some of the sub-plots are absolutely fascinating, including the story of a relative, the physician Dr Eduard Bloch, who treated Hitler's mother for breast cancer and received two illustrated postcards from her grateful son. Also how Kurt discovered the whereabouts of former Gauleiter Hofer hiding in northern Germany after the war. He would drive 500 kilometres to visit him, collect a little money and enjoy a convivial meal. Kurt died aged 91 still trying to pursue ill-advised legal cases.

This book is a tour de force as a family saga

which also takes in the role of different branches and their relationship with each other. It is illustrated by a wealth of photos from family albums and records which really help paint the picture of the era in which they lived. Chapters are well set out and one is taken along effortlessly. There is a handy family tree and bibliography although no index. The book closes with some traditional Austrian cake recipes to tempt the palate!

## THE OPENING CHORD: THE LIFE AND WORK OF EVA METZGER

Maggie Challis  
[maggiechallis@hotmail.com](mailto:maggiechallis@hotmail.com)

Eva Metzger led an extraordinary and tragically short life. But she wrote many beautiful and insightful works, which have been compiled into this moving book by the niece she never met.

Eva was born in Mainz in 1921. Her prolific passion for writing began in Germany and her earliest works were written in German. In 1936 she came to England and within a short time had developed a unique style in her new language.

After school in Eastbourne, she took a secretarial course but at the outbreak of war she was evacuated to Wales, boarding with the family of Aneurin Bevan, the “father of the NHS”. She became his personal secretary in his constituency office in Tredegar. Eva was writing copiously at this period, having found a kindred spirit in Nye Bevan.

She had several poems published in *Tribune*. Many speak of the shadow of the future, foretold in the sorrow of the present, and chime perfectly with

the ambitions of Nye and his left-wing collaborators, to build a new world on the ruins of the old one. Other journals which printed her work included *Tomorrow* and *Poetry of Today*.

In 1941 Eva was called up for war work and enlisted in the ATS. Her sense of humour and camaraderie shine through her written works of this period. Once her language skills were recognised, she was transferred to the Intelligence Service, working as an interpreter and transcriber of conversations between German prisoners of war, which had been bugged. Thus she systematically catalogued the atrocities meted out to Jews during WW2.

She became ill in 1946 with the Hodgkin Disease which led to her death in 1950. This small book shows her to have been a witty and poignantly eloquent writer. It is not an overstatement to say that some of her poems are sublime. Her choice of words and similes is powerful: her premature death deprived the world of a considerable talent.

Lilian Levy

#### THE PASSENGER

Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz  
Pushkin Press

This book narrates in chilling detail what it was like to be a respectable, ordinary middle-class Jewish businessman who has to flee the November 1938 pogrom. A bewildered Otto Silbermann undertakes a series of fruitless train journeys from Berlin. On one he manages to cross the frontier into Belgium, but is sent back. Otherwise, his journeys are in Germany; they allow Boschwitz to introduce a range of characters – from thorough Nazis to opportunistic exploiters of Silbermann's misfortune and secret opponents of the regime. The book recreates brilliantly the *Angst*, the torment and the chicanery that Jews trying to flee the Reich must have experienced in those last months of peace. As the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* noted, *Der Reisende* fills a gap: it is the first literary novel around 'The Night of Broken Glass'.

But it is not just the narrative that has brought Boschwitz such widespread

publicity. It is also the circumstances surrounding his book. Boschwitz had in fact fled in 1935. He went to Sweden and Norway, to Luxembourg, Brussels and to Paris. There, aged just 23, Boschwitz wrote the *The Passenger* in a few weeks, shortly after Kristallnacht.

With his mother, he reached Britain. While interned on the Isle of Man, *The Man Who Took Trains* was published, and unfavourably reviewed by the *Times Literary Supplement*. Deported to Australia on the notorious *Dunera*, he was among those the British government brought back, via the Cape, on the *Abooso*. Two torpedoes sank the boat in minutes near the Azores, in October 1942. About

360 passengers drowned, including Boschwitz.

The manuscript of *Der Reisende* lay forgotten. Only the persistence of Reuella Sachaf, Boschwitz's niece in Israel, led to its rediscovery in the German national library's *Exil-Archiv* in Frankfurt. Some eighty years after what is widely regarded as a masterpiece was written *The Passenger* was finally published in its original German, albeit in an edited form.

Martin Mauthner

*The AJR's online event about The Passenger (in partnership with Insiders/Outsiders) is available to watch online: <https://youtu.be/9f1NUVS-K24>*

## NEW BOOK

### INTERMENT IN BRITAIN IN 1940: *LIFE AND ART BEHIND THE WIRE*

By Ines Newman, with Charmian  
Brinson and Rachel Dickson  
Valentine Mitchell


Ines Newman has compiled a fascinating account of the grandfather she never knew. Stripped of his

comfortable life in pre-Anschluss Austria, Wilhelm Hollitscher's meticulous record pulls no punches. It paints a vivid picture of the tensions endured by a Viennese professional adjusting to internment as an 'enemy alien' in 1940. Professor Brinson provides context with expert analysis of the internment process, while Rachel Dickson describes how Hollitscher sat for his fellow internee, the artist Hugo Dachinger. That portrait is now in London's Ben Uri Gallery.

## NEW HOME FOR HSC

Jewish Care has announced that its Holocaust Survivors' Centre (HSC) is relocating from Hendon to a dedicated space within the Michael Sobell Jewish Community Centre in Golders Green. The new site will provide HSC members

with far better access to the wider range of activities on offer at the centre and a wider choice of food, but also better transport links, and for the survivors who also live at Selig Court, a much more convenient commute.



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## ZOOMS AHEAD

Details of all meetings and the links to join will appear in the e-newsletter each Monday.

Monday 2 August @10.30am	Online Yoga: Get fit where you sit <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85077398948">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85077398948</a>
Tuesday 3 August @2pm	Victoria Avery – The Rothschild Bronzes and the Michaelangelo Discovery research project <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87628788053">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87628788053</a>
Tuesday 3 August @4pm	Philip Schlesinger – The Curators of Cultural Enterprise <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81354927707">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81354927707</a>
Wednesday 4 August @2pm	Irene Kyffin – The stories of the Willow Pattern plate <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81841042394">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81841042394</a>
Thursday 5 August @2pm	Sam Hatfield – Chiltern Open Air Museum: its history and its future <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86002844535">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86002844535</a>
Monday 9 August @2pm	The Rt hon Lady Cosgrove – A Judge's Journey <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87518314448">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87518314448</a>
Tuesday 10 August @2pm	Michael Swerdlow – The history of Liverpool's Jewish community <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87438075474">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87438075474</a>
Wednesday 11 August @2pm	AJR Book Discussion (no speaker): <i>Miss Pettigrew lives for a day</i> by Winifred Watson <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82050330549">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82050330549</a>
Thursday 12 August @3.30pm	Kindertransport project <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81588845811">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81588845811</a>
Tuesday 17 August @2pm	Rosalynde Lewis – Jews in the Police Force <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84804020203">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84804020203</a>
Thursday 19 August @2pm	Toni Griffiths – Connecting Small Community History Projects <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89178101475">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89178101475</a>
Tuesday 24 August @2pm	Andrew Leigh – the story of Nightingale Hammerson <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86454821872">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86454821872</a>
Wednesday 25 August @2pm	Edwin Lucas – A tour of the world through sale and pepper shakers <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89467245654">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89467245654</a>
Tuesday 31 August @2pm	Michael Kushner – Black Propaganda Radio <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85378383965">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85378383965</a>



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