

# AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

An appreciation of the life and contribution to the AJR of Richard Grunberger, whose sudden death occurred as the March issue of the AJR Journal was going to press, is presented in this special issue of the journal. Below, Dr Bea Lewkowicz provides extracts from an interview she conducted with Richard in September 2001 when filming interviews for 'Continental Britons: Refugee Voices'. The extracts focus on how Richard perceived himself as Editor-in-Chief of the AJR Journal, as a writer, and as a Continental Briton. On page 2, Ronald Channing, a close colleague of Richard over many years, writes an appreciation, and on page 5, Dr Anthony Grenville, a colleague and personal friend of Richard, has written an obituary. In addition, we include two articles which Richard, a prolific writer, prepared for publication but, owing to the demands of space, were not included in earlier issues. Finally, the Letters to the Editor columns and, to a lesser extent, the Inside the AJR feature, demonstrate how Richard was perceived by AJR members and colleagues alike.

## Richard Grunberger on Richard Grunberger

Extracts from an interview conducted by Bea Lewkowicz

*How do you see your role as the editor of the AJR Journal?*

I see my role as the editor as somebody who is trying to bridge the gulf of where the refugees came from and where they have found themselves for the last 60 years. I want them not to lose contact with what they have left behind because there was a very rich German cultural Jewish life of which they are the last representatives. On the other hand, I want them to be more acculturated to English life and English culture. I am trying to act as a mediator between the two and as a propagandist for the amalgam of the two cultures. This is how I see my function. I want to point out to them that there is a rich cultural life, particularly in the field of literature. The fact that there are so many literary prizes is a perfect example. It so happens that the person who won the Whitbread Prize, Matthew Kneale, is the grandson of Alfred Kerr, who was the leading drama critic in Germany in the 1920s and before. This is the type of double focus that I am trying to give the journal: keeping a spotlight on Jewish-German culture and on the way the refugees have contributed to British culture - but also on the vast body of culture with which many refugees are insufficiently related. I want to be a guide in that direction.

*How would you describe yourself?*

When I was growing up there was a cliché expression: 'Weltbürger'. I see



PHOTO: THOMAS FURHAUPT, 2001

myself as a European. I am very much in favour of the integration of Europe. Partly because it solves my own problem of identity, but I also feel that there is something to be said for abolishing the narrow confines of the nation-state, the little England mentality. I want people to broaden their outlook and their sense of identity. Even if they are not British-born, they can still partake in this new, involving British identity.

*Do you consider yourself British?*

The fact that I have kept my old surname - which gives me problems every day on the telephone - shows that I am not quite British. There is no way of getting round the fact. But I feel fully in tune with what this country stands for, both politically - as a haven of freedom and tolerance of dissenting groups - and in terms of culture.

*What is the most important part of your Continental identity?*

The Jewish contribution to Austrian and German literature. When somebody called me the poor man's Karl Kraus I took that as a compliment.

*How has your life been affected by being a refugee?*

I have been at the receiving end of the whole experience as somebody who was totally passive - none of these things have I made a deliberate contribution to. I was thrown around by the tides of history. I thought I could find some anchor in Communism and I was gravely disappointed. On the other hand, I feel very strongly for Israel but nonetheless I can no longer call myself a wholly committed Zionist because a Zionist identity somehow would involve shedding the important Central European and English aspects of my identity. So I am a mixture of all sorts of things.

*How different would your life have been had you not been forced to emigrate?*

This is an unanswerable question. I would have loved to turn into a 'Kaffeehaus Literateur', rubbing shoulders and exchanging aphorisms with the likes of Karl Kraus, Alfred Polgar and Egon Erwin Kisch. That's how I would have liked to have grown up. That period was actually drawing to a

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Initial shock

### Richard Grunberger

Arriving in London in the spring of 1939, I found myself in a political culture different from the pressure-cooker atmosphere of Central Europe. Not that British politics lacked heat and passion: Churchill had mud slung at him for warmongering, and the Labour Party had just expelled Aneurin Bevan and Stafford Cripps for advocating a united front with the Communists.

This country's difference from the Continent, as exemplified by Austria, lay in the absence of (a) uniformed militias (e.g. *Heimwehr* and *Schutzbund*); (b) party badges (such as the Social Democrats' three arrows and the Catholic Party's Celtic Cross); and (c) an English-language equivalent for terms like *Putsch*.

What Britain also lacked was a set of political acronyms, like the ones I had learned in post-*Anschluss* Austria. Some of the initials provoked erotically tinged laughter - DdM, the League of German Maidens, was popularly referred to as League of German Mattresses. But most acronyms, e.g. Gestapo, SA, SS, SD - sent cold shivers down one's spine.

Admittedly, some acronyms were in use in interwar Britain, but BUF (British Union of Fascists), SPGB (Socialist Party of Great Britain) and others were confined to the fringes of the political arena. In the intervening 60 years, however, the alphabet soup has spilled into the centre, starting with the SPD and its Lib Dem offshoot. In today's political landscape, alas, initials sprout like weeds: BNP (British National Party), SNP (Scottish National Party), UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party), RESPECT (Respect for Equality, Socialism, Peace, Environment, Community and Trade Unions), etc.

Am I alone in thinking there is something suspiciously Continental - not to say distinctly unBritish - about the rise of parties known by initials instead of self-explanatory names like Conservatives, Liberals and Labour?

close in the thirties but this is my fantasy.

*What do you see as your most important contribution?*

My book *The Social History of the Third Reich*. It has been translated into four languages and published in six countries. It has been in print ever since the seventies, both in this country as a paperback and in America as a paperback. If I am going to be remembered for

anything, it will be for that.

It is very gratifying to me that although I was asked to be the editor of the AJR Journal for 10 years, I am still there after 14 years and the readership has not really slumped, as one would have thought. I find that the readers' letters are of a very high standard. I hope I have managed to raise the level of intellectual and cultural debate carried out in the columns of the paper.

### Richard Grunberger: an institution in his own right

As Editor of the Association's monthly magazine *AJR Information* and, since 2001, as Editor-in-Chief of the redesigned *AJR Journal*, Richard Grunberger fortified the links between the refugees and the rich German-Jewish cultural life his generation left behind and of which they are the last representatives. With equal authority, he fostered the acculturation of the German-speaking refugee community in Britain and did not hesitate to point out and debate what he perceived to be the community's main concerns.


Having arrived in England as a Kindertransportee, he was eventually offered a home with a Jewish family and he went to work in the tailoring trade in London's East End. After studying at Birkbeck College, he was awarded a degree at King's College, London. As well as teaching at the Hasmonean School and Minchenden Grammar School in north London, he wrote a number of essays, plays and books, the best known of which is his *Social History of the Third Reich*.

Richard was unique, an institution in his own right. He applied his phenomenal memory and sharp intellect to placing events in their historical context and to writing penetrating evaluations of current

affairs in the most concise and exquisite English. Each of Richard's pages contains a chapter's worth of ideas: a recent editorial included a history of the Jews in three short paragraphs! Not least characteristic of him was his love for, and doughty defence of, the Jewish people and the State of Israel, which he saw as under threat from atavistic forces supported by misguided liberals and others in the West. For Richard, Europe's apparent antipathy to the security and wellbeing of the democratic and civilised community of the Jewish state may have betrayed a festering antisemitism re-emerging after a half-century.

For more than ten years I had the immense privilege of working with Richard at the AJR offices on the writing, design and publication of the Association's monthly magazine. I was witness to his seemingly inexhaustible flow of knowledge of Continental and British culture, history and scholarship, and to his phenomenal memory and incisive analyses of current affairs, especially with regard to any renewed threat to the survival of the Jewish people. His passing is the end of an era.

Ronald Channing

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## Racism: squaring the circle

Richard Grunberger

It has been a received wisdom of politics that racism is a key weapon in the armoury of the far right. The Dreyfus scandal in France and gory events in Ukraine and Hungary in 1919 amply bear this out.

But the far left too has not been averse to exploiting racial or nationalist resentment. Certain early socialists - Proudhon, Bakunin, even Marx - viewed Jews as precursors of capitalism. When, post-1917, Lenin expropriated factories and banks, he emphasised that their owners had largely been foreign - British, French and Belgian - capitalists.

The year 1923, the most hectic one of postwar Germany, saw a bizarre Communist attempt to bridge the right-left divide by way of racist incitement. The KPD leader Ruth Fischer told a meeting of *völkisch* rowdies: 'You already battle the Jews on ethnic grounds; go one step further and target them as capitalists!' (It may come as a surprise that she herself was Jewish!)

Meanwhile, inside Russia Communist policy *vis-à-vis* the Jews underwent several transformations. While the *Yevsektzia* closed down synagogues and *yeshivot*, the Kremlin sponsored a Yiddish theatre and created Birobidzhan as a 'socialist Zion'. After the Second World War, however, Stalin lapsed into paranoid antisemitism, persecuting Jews as rootless cosmopolitans.

But Jews weren't the only deliberately disadvantaged minority inside the Soviet bloc. Czech gypsies suffered painful discrimination, and in Russia itself the Crimean Tartars, victims of wartime deportation, were barred from returning to their previous homes. The Yugoslav situation was particularly bizarre: during Tito's lifetime the Croat Tudjman and the Serb Milosevic acted as his loyal lieutenants - but after his death they plunged the area into a fratricidal bloodbath.

Throughout the Cold War the Soviets projected themselves as standard bearers of internationalism and the West as deeply racist. How mendacious this propaganda was became painfully obvious after the reunification of Germany, when many more Vietnamese and Africans fell victim to

racially motivated murder in the East than the West. This had a lot to do with the DDR's policy of ghettoising guest workers in segregated hostels and freezing all inter-ethnic intercourse. Likewise, the Soviet authorities created the Lumumba University specifically for African students, but took great care to locate it some distance away from Moscow to avoid ethnic tension and miscegenation.

Meanwhile, one of the great changes transforming the world in the mid-twentieth century - decolonisation - was proceeding apace. Now decolonisation is, by its very nature, leftwing; nonetheless it resulted in new forms of racism, making their appearance in the Congo region, Uganda and Sudan.

Idi Amin expelled 70,000 Uganda Asians, crippling the country's economy, and huge inter-ethnic tragedies played themselves out a decade ago in Rwanda and, more recently, in the Darfur Region.

An interesting example of left-right convergence in Africa is Zimbabwe. Mugabe's policy of expropriating white farmers is simultaneously anti-capitalist and imbued with racist overtones, while the neighbouring countries' collusion with his dictatorial rule smacks of 'my colour - right or wrong!'

In the interim, the allegedly hyper-racist United States has appointed an Afro-American woman to its top diplomatic post, and a Hispanic lawyer to the post of Attorney-General. Meanwhile, what of the country from whose name the term Hispanic derives?

Spain was the one major country in Europe where a Fascist dictatorship remained in unchallenged power for a full three decades after the demise of Hitler and Mussolini. It was only with the dictator Franco's death - in bed - that the transition to democracy started. Subsequent governments modulated from centre-right to provocatively left - both in foreign and home policy. The current administration has withdrawn troops from Iraq and favours (in a traditionally Catholic country) legal recognition of same-sex unions. For all its outstanding left-wing credentials it has, however, not bothered to lay the ugly ghost of racism on the football pitch.

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# Future generations to hear 'Refugee Voices'

## AJR-sponsored Testimony and Archive projects secured

Ronald Channing

Leading researchers and former refugees agreed to benefit from closer co-operation and the exchange of information in recording refugee and survivor testimonies for posterity. This first conference, dedicated to advancing the collection of refugee video and audio archives, was initiated and organised by the AJR and hosted by the Jewish Museum in London.

Each of the participating institution's projects, whether in a university department, library, museum, archive or study centre, has benefited from the support of the AJR's ongoing Educational and Cultural programmes. The creation and availability of the results of their research will ensure that, to generations of scholars and others, these testimonies will stand for all time as living witnesses of the experiences of ordinary people who, dispossessed of their homes and families in Nazi Europe, made new lives for themselves in Britain.

The 30 delegates to the conference, who were welcomed by the Director of the Jewish Museum, Rickie Burman, included leading academics, authors, researchers, curators, archivists and experts in electronic archives, testimony interviewers, librarians, film-makers and project directors, at the forefront of refugee studies in Britain. They represented the Universities of Manchester, Leeds and Sussex, the Wiener Library, National Sound Archives, the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, the Jewish Museum and the AJR's own in-house audio-visual testimony project. Especially welcome were a number of refugees who appeared in the associated *Refugee Voices* film, among them Professor Peter Pulzer, Arieh Handler and Max Abraham.

The conference opened with the first public presentation of the film *Testimonies and Archives*, produced and directed by Dr Bea Lewkowicz for the AJR. Interviewees progressed the film's narrative with their varied accounts, bringing a new and vivid dimension to the recording of life experiences. Dr Lewkowicz regarded this project as complementing much larger but less focused collections such as those of the National Sound Archives, the Shoah Foundation and the Imperial War Museum. The film's considerable potential as an



Professor Peter Pulzer addresses 'Refugee Voices' conference

educational resource was well appreciated.

Dr Anthony Grenville, the project's Director, reported that 90 testimonies out of 120 had already been secured by the core team of interviewers. *Refugee Voices* had sought to capture the whole refugee experience and to obtain a broad representation of the refugee experience from a wide range of backgrounds and geographical origins. Those represented also included camp survivors, hidden children, refugees reaching Siberia and Shanghai, and men who served in the Palestine Brigade.

Begun in 1997 with very limited resources by the Leeds Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association, Trude Silman reported, the *Making a New Life in Yorkshire* project had been placed in the hands of the University of Leeds. The financial support received from the AJR was a key element in achieving a far more professional result. Brett Harrison, consultant archivist, said that in addition to the in-depth interviews held with survivors, their team had collected the full range of documents, photographs and artifacts to complement the recorded interviews, all to be lodged in the University's Brotherton Library. Jennifer Wingate reminded the conference that the National Sound Archive had commenced audio recordings in 1988 and currently held a library of 600 interviews.

Professor Edward Timms spoke in appreciation of the beneficial relationship the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at Sussex had developed over the years with the AJR. Dr Andrea Hammel and Samira Teuteberg described the Centre's creation of 'a giant list of all material available on the subject', encompassing the private papers of refugees from Germany as well as the major collections, as a much-needed research tool for future scholars. Their team was travelling to all parts of Britain, often having to overcome the initial reluctance of a librarian unaware of the value of the collections they possessed.

Sarah Jillings, Curator at the Jewish Museum, explained that their collections were continually being added to as a consequence of new exhibitions, including the *Continental Britons* exhibition about the German-speaking refugee community. *The Last Goodbye*, a travelling exhibition and teaching pack on the Kindertransport, remained in constant demand from schools.

Katharina Hübschmann, Senior Librarian at the Wiener Library, recalled the Library's history and unique collection begun by Dr Wiener in Germany in 1934, which reached safety in London before the outbreak of war in 1939. She referred specifically to the Phillip Manes collection, a uniquely preserved record of existence and cultural life in Theresienstadt, and to the Kindertransport collection based on papers from their reunions. The Library was now undertaking the cataloguing of some 3,000 periodicals - dating back to 1938!

An ambitious scheme to encourage Holocaust education among primary schoolchildren was introduced by Steve Robinson, Project Manager at Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire. With a worryingly high incidence of racism among primary schools in Mansfield and Nottingham, Beth Shalom had determined to counter this trend with a new primary learning centre. It would present a challenge to racism largely by telling the story of the Kindertransport. The children would relive the Kinder's experiences in *The Journey*: leaving home, travelling alone and arriving in a strange land.

The conference concluded with an open forum at which it was agreed to plan a similar gathering next year.

# RICHARD GRUNBERGER 1924-2005

In mourning Richard Grunberger, the editor of our *AJR Journal*, we mourn the loss of a towering figure, almost certainly the last of the refugee generation to occupy the editor's chair.

The *AJR* has been extraordinarily fortunate in the editors of its journal. For most of the nearly 60 years of its existence, the journal has had only two longstanding editors, both of them distinguished figures: Werner Rosenstock (1946-82) and Richard Grunberger (1988-2005). Rosenstock, the *AJR*'s founding General Secretary, was editor from January 1946, at first in collaboration with Ernst Lowenthal and Herbert Freeden. His long term in office was followed by two short-lived editorships - those of Murray Mindlin and the scholarly C.C. Aronsfeld - until in 1988 the *AJR* made the inspired choice of Richard Grunberger as the man to take the journal on into the change of century.

Whereas Rosenstock had been a cautious and diplomatic editor who rarely advertised his learning, Richard Grunberger demonstrated a flamboyance of style and a delight in scholarship that were almost impossible to resist. Whereas Rosenstock, who hailed from the orderly middle-class world of Berlin's Hansaviertel, had the Prussian ability to subordinate his personality to the task in hand, Grunberger displayed something of the expansiveness of the Viennese coffee-house intellectual, perennially eager to communicate to an audience the world of culture and history that so enthralled him. Grunberger's fascination with ideas, with historical details, parallels and intricacies, and with arguments and counter-arguments flowed into his prose and gripped his readers by sheer force of intellect. In his articles, especially his sparkling editorials, one could not but be aware of the man behind the words.

## From Kindertransportee to historian of Nazi Germany

Richard Grunberger was born in Vienna in 1924, into a family in modest

circumstances. His father died when he was ten, and he was brought up by his mother and grandfather, from whom he was parted in late 1938, when he was taken to a suburban station and put on the first Kindertransport train to Britain, never to see them again. His subsequent career was a record of success against all the odds. His education, interrupted by the Nazis, seemed at first to be a lost cause in Britain as well. He passed from Dovercourt, near Harwich, through a succession of camps for refugee children and transient jobs, until he found a home with a Jewish family in Stoke Newington and went to work in a tailoring business in the East End - a source of the Yiddish quips that were to enliven his humorous pieces in the journal.

From these unpromising beginnings Grunberger worked his way up the educational ladder, from evening classes to Birkbeck College and on to a degree in history at King's College, London. Within a few years, the refugee boy with little education and less English had become a teacher. He also had the inestimable good fortune to meet his wife Liesl, a fellow refugee from Vienna. They married in 1947 and were blessed with a marriage that lasted in true happiness and concord for nearly 60 years. Richard's family - he and Liesl had three children, Peter, Helen and Michael, and several grandchildren - was an enormous source of strength and stability to him.

Though he rose to be a respected teacher at the Hasmonian School, Richard wanted more. He wrote historical studies of the SS and of the revolutionary period in Bavaria in 1918-19, but it was with the success of his *Social History of the Third Reich* (1971) that he made the bold decision to become an independent writer. His social history of Nazi Germany - now about to go into its third edition - was a book ahead of its time, in that its focus on everyday life - it has chapters on consumption, health, humour and, of course, literature - anticipated the trend towards *Alltagsgeschichte* and

even the investigation of individual experience through oral history.

## 'Voice of the AJR'

At an age when other men are contemplating retirement, Richard Grunberger took over the editorship of our journal, and in it found his true calling. He became the voice of the *AJR*, articulating the past heritage of our community, the Jews from Central Europe, while placing it in the context of contemporary developments. He was formidably erudite, with an extraordinary ability to recall facts, names and historical and cultural details. His articles could start in Biblical Judea and sweep on, via a pit-stop in nineteenth-century Austria-Hungary, to the Jewish experience of the mid-twentieth century and the present-day Middle East.

Richard always set his encyclopaedic knowledge within a clear historical framework; he could build it into patterns and structures that illuminated and brought meaning to the historical experience of our community. Above all, he set that history in the context of values, the moral, social and cultural values of Central European Jewry - humane, civilised, democratic, and reinforced by an infusion of British pragmatism and tolerance. Richard was, beyond doubt, a polemical writer who loved an argument; he was proud, for example, of his exchanges with Sir Ernst Gombrich about the Jewishness of Viennese culture. But he was also a generous man who was always willing to give his opponents a hearing and who accepted bouquets and brickbats alike with equanimity. He was a convinced supporter of the state of Israel, but never in a spirit of militaristic triumphalism or tribal superiority, attacking only what he perceived as obscurantism or hypocrisy.

That a man so intensely alive to ideas, knowledge and culture has gone forever is hard to comprehend. We will treasure his memory and the power of his pen - we will not look on its like again.

Anthony Grenville

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

## RICHARD GRUNBERGER

Sir - I was deeply saddened to hear about Richard. I spent five years working with him and can say it was one of the happiest and most educational periods of my life.

Richard's incredible depth of knowledge on a vast range of subjects made him a consistently interesting and erudite conversationalist. However, it was his ability to leaven his encyclopaedic knowledge with irrepressible good humour that made him such good company.

Upon first arriving at the AJR in the position of 'Publications and PR Manager', I had recently graduated with a primary degree. Armed with this and a small amount of experience, I managed to fool myself into thinking that my education was complete. How wrong I was. It took Richard almost all of the five years to educate me towards a point at which I could finally be - one hopes - more of a help than a hindrance in producing *AJR Information* each month. In this onerous task, Richard was very ably assisted by the indefatigable Katia Gould.

By the time I left the AJR in order to move to Ireland with my family, the dream team of Richard and Katia had armed me well enough to take up a career in journalism. For this I should like to have thanked them both properly. Too late, sadly, for Richard. However, my thoughts go to his wife and family, who must be devastated.

Maurice Newman  
Malahide, County Dublin

Sir - I first met Richard in 1962, when I was posted to the Hasmonian Boys' Grammar School for my teaching practice. Richard was teaching history there. I was soon invited to one of the literary evenings at the Grunberger home, met his charming wife Liesl, was

rapidly persuaded to undertake a talk on Kafka (for which I was only modestly qualified), and we remained firm friends ever since.

Later I came to learn something of his personal experience as a refugee from pre-war Vienna and the family losses, which had fired his vocation as a historian, his books on Nazi Germany and his life-long hatred of political tyranny.

From the start, I was greatly impressed by his avid and unflagging interest in the cultural scene: politics and literature, film and drama, the whole range. Even in his later years no expedition to see the latest Stoppard or Woody Allen was too far and usually followed by keen discussion at the nearest restaurant.

Then, of course, he was also prolific and versatile as a writer. Scholarly books on German history, journalism, reviews and plays flowed as if from some creative dynamo. His *Social History of the Third Reich* became the standard work in its field. Always well-informed, he was never afraid to be challenging or controversial.

I feel privileged to have been one of Richard's many friends. He was a remarkable man and I cannot really believe that he has gone.

Tony Neville  
Twickenham, Middx

Sir - For many members, Richard was the spirit of the AJR. Some did not appreciate his strong views in defence of Israel, while others felt he brought an unparalleled knowledge of history to his stimulating and challenging writings. For those who looked to his analyses and comments for relief from the sanitised and biased version of events published in the British and European media, his loss will be keenly

felt. His will be a hard act to follow, especially since some people joined the AJR just to read Richard's articles.

Ernest David  
London NW11

Sir - Richard Grunberger was unique. His command of the English language was outstanding. Though he was only 15 years old when he arrived from Vienna with the Kindertransport, he was very much still a 'Continental Briton'. His knowledge of history, literature, politics, theatre, film etc was exceptional. For 17 years from 1986 onwards I ran the FJR club. Yearly Richard gave us a talk about various people such as Kafka and Mahler. He never failed to find a subject to talk about and could always be sure that he would have a big audience. We in Ilford were fortunate to hear his talk in February entitled 'Speaking Memory'. Richard's articles were always fascinating, even though at times I personally needed a dictionary at hand! The *AJR Journal* will never be the same - at least not for me!

Lilly Allen  
Ilford AJR Group

Sir - I worked with Richard for nearly two years and found him a joy to work with. He represented an important aspect of the AJR and one which was often its only public face. He made an enormous contribution to the Journal, which I know was held in high regard by most of its readers. His passing marks the end of an era - I won't be the first, nor the last, to say he'll be a hard act to follow.

Marion Koebner  
Chesham, Bucks

Sir - I met him only once, when he came to see me to talk about some unperformed plays of his, and he then tried to explain to me how it was that he was so passionately pro-Jewish and pro-Israel, and how he owed his debt here for the opportunity of embarking on, and pursuing, an academic career and life. I so enjoyed crossing swords with him and with some of his readers when his and their partiality for all things Jewish and Israeli became too ghettoesque for my gorge. And he did like to improve on one's style,

sometimes thus altering both content and intent. But he was the *AJR Journal*. Follow that!

Peter Zander  
London W1

Sir - Limited personal contact with him augmented the impression, gained from his numerous contributions to the *Journal*, of a man with extensive historical and cultural knowledge, supporting a pleasant personality. He was a civilised human being, whose writings always merited careful attention and, ultimately, the greatest respect. He will be a hard act to follow.

Alan S. Kaye  
Marlow

Sir - To me he was the *Journal*. The March issue, showing, as always, his wide knowledge of historical events and personalities in the context of how they affected, and affect, our community past and present, will be a memorial to him.

Frank Bright  
Ipswich

Further letters on Richard Grunberger will appear in our May issue - *AJR Journal*.

#### ELEANOR RATHBONE: ALTERNATIVE BIOGRAPHY NEEDED

Sir - I was pleased to see Susan Pedersen's biography *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* reviewed in *AJR Journal* (January 2005) for Eleanor was a truly remarkable woman, an outstanding humanitarian activist who, even though she would not have courted publicity, is deserving of much wider recognition. The publication of this book may help restore her to her rightful place in history but, despite Julia Neuberger's praise, Pedersen's biography only scratches the surface of Eleanor's devotion to, and involvement with, the refugee question, and with Jewish refugees in particular.

Given the acknowledged significance of her subject's devotion to the refugee cause, it is odd that Pedersen does not cover this period of Eleanor's life in anything like the same depth as her preceding career. Nor does she argue convincingly how and why her subject became so dedicated to Jews, the

Jewish question and Zionism. These questions and more, as well as a detailed and critical examination of all her humanitarian work for people fleeing Nazi persecution in Europe, are dealt with in my doctoral thesis on Eleanor Rathbone's refugee work, which Susan Pedersen refers to in her footnotes as the only 'study of Rathbone's work for refugees and rescue *per se*'. Hopefully, this research will form part of an alternative biography of Eleanor Rathbone, one which takes a rather different viewpoint to that of Susan Pedersen and which fully explores and evaluates her work for refugees.

Susan Cohen  
London NW11

#### GETTING CERTIFICATES SIGNED

Sir - Further to Mr Ruff's letter about where to get these certificates signed, in the Thames Valley constabulary area it has been possible for a number of years now to get one's signature witnessed and counterstamped at police stations. This cannot be done, though, by any civilian employee; only sworn constables (or, of course, senior ranks) can do it.

F. Steiner  
Deddington, Oxon

#### ARMISTICE DAY

Sir - Re the article on Marion Charles in Weissensee (February issue): Armistice Day is 11 not 14 November, but I am happy to read about honouring German Jews who were soldiers in WWI. My late father was one of them; luckily he came home. Thanks for the magazine.

Alice Fink  
Chicago, IL

#### THE BEAUTIFUL MADAME LUPESCU

Sir - *A propos* Jewish Delilahs, not all your readers may be aware that Mme Lupescu gave rise to a celebrated limerick:

Said the beautiful Madame Lupescu  
As she rode to Rumania's rescue,  
'Tis a wonderful thing  
To be under a King,  
Can republicans match it, I esc u?'

Peter Oppenheimer  
Oxford

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# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Disembodied heads have exercised the imagination of two artists who could not have been more different. The decapitation of Holofernes and John the Baptist - both at the hands of women - is the stuff of **Caravaggio's** nightmares at the **National Gallery**. But New York model/photographer **Lee Miller**, whose work is currently on exhibition at the **National Portrait Gallery**, also became fascinated with floating heads, albeit in a more bloodless and surrealistic style, when she entered the Dadaist world of Man Ray and his friends in the early 1930s. Her self-portrait reveals an enigmatic society beauty about to turn the camera away from herself and on to the world of artists and intellectuals such as Picasso, Max Ernst, Elsa Schiaparelli, Marlene Dietrich, T. S. Eliot and Igor Stravinsky. In these celebrity portraits and group compositions, she never loses the stylised fluidity of the aristocratic



Self-Portrait New York studio 1932  
© Lee Miller Archives, England 2004

fashion world which shaped her, but her early fascination with the Surrealists led Miller into more experimental areas. However, she fails to develop this clarity of vision, turning instead to war photography, covering the liberation of Paris and the concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau with the US

Army as it advanced through Europe.

The Holocaust shaped her destiny. Miller never recovered the creative promise of her earlier years, which appears stunted by the shock of the death camps. Yet the style lingers on in her compositions, even if they betray the ravages of war. In a typical example, *Helen, Queen Mother of Romania*, is dwarfed by the desolate splendour of her palace, and it is clearly this war - so anachronistic to the world of Vogueish celebrity - which has a new presence in Miller's work. But it is a presence she seems loathe to come to terms with.

**Caravaggio: The Final Years** reveals a man haunted by devils. In 1606 he killed a man in a duel and spent his last four years as a fugitive from Rome. The experience lent a bitter and powerful realism to his work. Obsessed with physicality, with murder and death, Caravaggio often offers his audience an alternative vision. In two paintings of *Salome with the head of John the Baptist*, *Salome* has a cynical twist to her mouth in one, and a touch of remorse in the other. In both, the face of her mother, *Herodias*, is most disturbing: does it show an authoritarian, matriarchal sense of justice, or a sad, aged wisdom? In his depictions of Christ, the light does not emanate from Jesus, but from a distant place. Christ is almost obscured in his *Raising of Lazarus*, begging intellectual and philosophical questions about religion's place in the dawning Age of the Enlightenment. Both exhibitions continue until late May.

**\*Jenny Stolzenberg's *Forgive and Do Not Forget***, a ceramic installation based on the shoes of Holocaust victims, will be permanently exhibited at the Buchenwald Memorial Museum as from 9 April. Shown at the Hampstead Theatre last month during Anthony Sher's *Primo*, it will also visit the Imperial War Museum North, the Shipley Museum, Gateshead, the Vancouver Holocaust Centre, and the London Jewish Museum.

## REVIEWS

### A courageous journey of healing

**SEVEK AND THE HOLOCAUST:  
THE BOY WHO REFUSED TO DIE**  
by Sidney Finkel

2005, \$9.95 plus \$6 airmail postage  
(for Europe) and packaging  
from Sidney Finkel, 367 Tulip Circle,  
Matteson, IL 60443, USA

As described by Martin Gilbert in *The Boys*, some 100-odd Polish boys (among them a few girls) who had survived concentration camps or being in hiding were flown to Crosby-on-Eden, England, in August 1945. Among them was Sevek Finkelstein (now Sidney Finkel), who in this slim volume of 104 pages describes his horrendous experiences, his rescue, and, ultimately, his emigration from the UK to the United States. The photograph on the book's cover shows the 14-year-old Sevek in the doorway of the transport plane's hold, smiling broadly and handing down a toddler into the arms of his older brother Isaac, who too had survived the camps and arrived in the same plane.

These are the recollections of a boy who, after an 'idyllic' middle-class childhood in Piotrkow in Central Poland, survived being dive-bombed on the open road shortly after the invasion of Poland, life in the Piotrkow ghetto for three years, deportation to the slave labour camp in Bugaj, separation from his family, incarceration in Czestochowa and Buchenwald concentration camps and, in the final stages of the war, Theresienstadt, where he was liberated by the Russians. His story and that of his family is told simply and without flourishes and, like other eye-witness accounts of the Holocaust, it is a valuable document that is being used by some American schools for the teaching of Holocaust history. It provides cogent testimony for the resilience, as well as the generosity, of the human spirit: asked later in life whether he hated the Germans, he

replied 'No.'

Sevek, together with some ten of the other Polish boys, had the good fortune to be taken to Bunce Court School in Kent soon after his arrival in England. This was the German-Jewish school that had been brought over from Ulm by its far-sighted headmistress, Anna Essinger, in 1933. The book's penultimate chapter describes touchingly what the two years before the school's closure meant to the bewildered and traumatised boy. For him, as for the others, it became the gateway to rehabilitation, a place where he was treated lovingly and caringly and which 'turned me back into a human being'.

Sevek's story undoubtedly has a happy ending. The only other photograph in the book shows him with his American family, and the epilogue is written by his granddaughter and by his son, who concludes: 'For Sevek, it is true acts of courage that allow Sidney, my father, to tell his story so that we too can confront our innermost fears, so that we can take the courageous journey of healing.'

Leslie Baruch Brent

## Tales with a twist

### TALES IN TANDEM

by Peter and Lili Hart

Authors OnLine, 40 Castle Street, Hertford SG14 1HR, 2005, paperback, 211pp. £8.99 UK, \$12.95 USA; also available in e-book format details at [www.authorsonline.co.uk](http://www.authorsonline.co.uk)

A favourite television programme of mine in the late 1970s and 1980s was *Tales of the Unexpected*, a series of self-contained black-humour episodes, many of them based on short stories by Roald Dahl. At its height, the programme was watched by almost half the population and was later sold to 70 foreign TV companies.

*Tales in Tandem*, this paperback by husband-and-wife team Peter and Lili Hart, its cover splendidly illustrated by Henry Mathews, is strongly reminiscent of that memorable TV series. It is divided into seven sections - Fiction, Poems, Humour, Antiquity,

Non-fiction, Authentic War-time Stories, and Philosophical. But it is the fiction section, which occupies almost half of the book, that is most interesting. One simply hasn't a clue as to how any of these 25 stories - some of them covering barely a page in length - are likely to end. In one or two instances, I must confess, I felt slightly cheated, the story somehow defying gravity and seeming to hang loosely in the air. But it really is necessary to see each story as a closed world.

The stories are about everything human, or affecting humans, under the sun: romance, crime, coincidence, ageing, sexual infatuation and repression, jealousy, despair, misanthropy, tragedy, terror. There's a deeply erotic element running through a number of them. Particularly appealing to me - not least for its sense of irony - is 'An Adventure in Frankfurt'. Here, the (unnamed) story-teller is unexpectedly offered a lift by a sexy young lady, who takes him back to her luxurious apartment, cooks him lunch, and then admits - surprise, surprise! - that she's a prostitute. She tells him she doesn't regard him as a client but just wants an opportunity to practise her English! Feeling somewhat slighted at not being regarded as a client, the story-teller wonders, on his return to London, whether his wife will ever believe a story like this - assuming, of course, he ever plucks up the courage to tell her.

Of the rest of the book, I would single out the remarkable love poem *Valentine*, which merits reproducing in full:

Come live with me  
My pretty one, my turtle-dove  
We'll buy a cottage by the sea  
Where roses tempt the honey-bee  
Where gulls are shrieking o'er the bay  
Enjoying every golden ray  
Of sunshine gleaming o'er the decks  
Of little boats, like shiny flecks  
Dancing in the evening light  
But when the moon is shining bright  
Please hold me in your arms divine  
And let me be your Valentine.

The book is by no means perfect: there's an overdose of clichés in some areas, and a tighter editorial hand would certainly not have come amiss.

All the same, if you have a long plane or train journey to make, this book will certainly take your mind off it.

Howard Spier

## Surviving in wartime Italy

### IN LOVE AND WAR: A LETTER TO MY PARENTS

by Maria Corelli

Short Books of Highbury, London, £4.95 paperback

This true story, written in the summer of 1944 to her parents in Sussex by a young Englishwoman who finds herself, her husband Lewis and their Jewish friend Sigbert, a celebrated Jewish opera singer, in wartime Rome in the 1940s, describes their experiences being hunted by the Germans and, often, helped by their Italian friends.

The trio are studying music when Italy enters the war. Apart from the fascists, the locals are not antagonistic to the British or the Jews: at first they manage to continue their musical studies, teaching English, and enjoying Rome's social life. But soon severe food shortages bring suffering. Their financial state deteriorates as the teaching of English is forbidden and they are compelled to seek different lodgings every so often in the most miserable conditions.

Eventually, the trio hide in caves in the mountains near Picinisco together with a German Jewish couple (whose son, a Kindertransportee, is in England). Lewis is arrested by the Germans and imprisoned; Mary and Sigbert return to Rome. Many adventures later, including help from the Vatican, the three are reunited when the Allies recapture Rome.

The book is extremely readable, with no hint of self-pity. It throws vivid light on wartime Italy, and anyone who has had connections with that country (many refugees from the Nazis survived there with the help of sympathetic Italians) will empathise with Maria and her companions.

With the publication now, over a half-century later, of this book, one can only marvel at the strength and determination of this very English

couple and Sigbert to stay alive. Jews are accustomed to persecution, but that this English upper-class couple had to endure - and overcome - it too, makes us admire them all the more.

Now, after a postwar career as a couturière, teacher of Scottish dancing and teacher of Italian, Maria lives in retirement on England's south coast near the home in which she grew up. Her book is one of the few I can read again and again.

Inge Sadan

## Life begins at sixty

### THE MAKING OF HENRY

by Howard Jacobson

Jonathan Cape, 2004, £12.99

With Jacobson one does not always know whether to laugh or cry, but the mixture of the tragic and the ridiculous always keeps one reading.

Henry has an outsize Oedipus complex. But insofar as Henry is Jewish his complex is an Izzipus one, his father being Izzi Nagel, failed upholsterer, mediocre illusionist and sleight-of-hand entertainer. The main thing about Izzi is that he is dead, but he keeps being brought back to life by Henry in imaginary conversation.

Henry's mother is dead too. He wants us to believe that she entered into a *mésalliance* with Izzi, a North Manchester tradesman, whereas her own family were south Manchester aristocrats - at least in their own estimation.

Given such a background, Henry had to be the Jewish *Wunderkind*. In reality, he only half succeeded in his ambitions. He made it to a media studies lectureship at the University of the Pennine Way, until brought down even from those lofty heights by a coterie of feminists.

From schooldays onward Henry had a best friend - and worst enemy - in Osmond Belkin, on whom he 'looked down' from below, for he made it big in Hollywood.

Though he is unmarried, Henry is a serial adulterer. Yet his abiding love is for one of his aunts, whose birth and life are shrouded in deception.

Suddenly Henry's life changes. From a hut in the Pennines he is translated to a luxury flat in St John's Wood. This inheritance involves an aged woman who appears to have been a mistress of Izzipus, whose peccadilloes tended to involve religious Jewish businessmen's wives.

In London, the near-sexagenarian Henry is able to indulge his longing for the exotic. He doesn't want to travel, he just wants to drink cappuccino, eat strudel and fancy himself. He still ogles the women and imagines they are exotic too.

This scenario finally leads to Moira Aultbach, a strudel-baking semi-divorcee. She claims not to be Jewish. Not entirely believing this, he gives her the salt beef test. But the test proves inconclusive: she likes the sandwich but eats it in such a way as to show she's not to the manner born. And there is Henry's happy ending: salt beef mixed with strudel!

John Rossall

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## Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Yad Vashem recently launched a website listing the names of three million of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust ([www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)). Each entry gives the individual's name and place of residence, as well as other pertinent details as recorded in the Page of Testimony submitted for that person.

It comes as a bit of shock to find one's relatives commemorated online. I remember bringing the Pages of Testimony to my parents many years ago so that they could fill them out for their parents and other relatives who were murdered. I recall, too, the effort it cost them to renew those memories.

I wondered then what Yad Vashem meant to do with the pages, though accepted that it was a commendable endeavour, and possibly even helpful in some cases. All this was long before the age of the internet, indicating that someone was displaying remarkable prescience at that time.

Commendable though the project undoubtedly is, it is annoying to find that the information was not keyed in accurately, and that my father is listed as the daughter of his mother and my mother as her parents' son.

Israel has many organisations and institutions dedicated to commemorating the Holocaust. It has marked an annual Holocaust remembrance day ever since the state was established. Israel is a young country, a Jewish country and a country of immigration, so that a large part of the adult population can be defined as Holocaust survivors in the broadest sense of the term.

Survivors are not solely those who went through the concentration camps, as some tend to think. Any Jew who lived in Europe before or during the Second World War, or is the descendant of people who did, can be defined as a survivor. And there is a growing network of organisations in Israel that focus on the psychological concerns of the second and third generations. It cannot be denied that the shadow of that terrible event continues to hang over many of Israel's denizens and to influence its politics.

An hour-and-a-half's drive up the motorway from London and then a minute or two in the direction of Solihull brings one into a spectacularly green area with a beautiful, entirely unspoiled park as its centrepiece. While Paul Oppenheimer regrets he is unable to get down to London more often to attend meetings, living in such an idyllic setting must be some consolation.

Paul was born in Berlin in 1928. The family was Jewish, though not observant: 'assimilated, a typical German family', as Paul puts it. His father worked in a Jewish-owned bank. Paul was particularly close to his brother Rudi.

In 1936, as Hitler's anti-Jewish measures intensified, the family, excepting Paul's father, moved to London to stay for several months with an uncle and aunt. Paul's sister Eve was born at this time and thus held British citizenship, a fact that was to have the greatest significance for Paul.

In September 1936 the family moved to Holland - 'the best years of my life' - when Paul's father obtained a job in the Amsterdam branch of the bank. Anne Frank lived round the corner though Paul didn't know her. But with the invasion of Holland by Nazi Germany in 1940, the Oppenheims were once again subject to anti-Jewish persecution. In June 1943 the family were sent to Westerbork transit camp for several months. As Eve held British nationality, they were not deported: the Germans wanted to exchange people holding British citizenship with Germans held in camps in the UK.

In early 1944 the family were moved to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. They were put in the exchange Jewish section, where they were given minor privileges. But conditions deteriorated. As the war drew to a close, both of Paul's parents succumbed to one or other of the diseases rampant in the camp.

In April 1945, as the Allies approached Belsen, the Germans put the exchange Jews on a 'death train', which moved ahead of the advancing Allies for two

# PROFILE

Howard Spier

## Paul Oppenheimer A man with a mission



weeks. Eventually Paul and Rudi could see Cossacks on horseback. Having recovered from typhus in a Russian hospital, they, together with Eve, with whom they met up again by coincidence, made their way once more to their uncle and aunt in London. Paul is keen to express his gratitude to Rudi, who, by 'never sticking to the rules', effectively kept him alive.

Moving to Birmingham, Paul worked during the day and studied in the evenings, obtaining a first-class honours degree in mechanical engineering. A year later he obtained a master's degree in thermodynamics from Birmingham University. Having completed a five-year engineering apprenticeship at BSA Tools, he worked in other parts of the BSA group. In 1958 he joined Joseph Lucas and later transferred to Lucas Girling, where he stayed for over 30 years. He became a leading authority on national and international standards and regulations for braking systems of road vehicles.

Paul married Corinne, a nurse, who converted to Judaism. She is very active

in their local progressive synagogue, and, he confesses, knows more about Judaism than he does. They have three children and six grandchildren. Now, he declares, he has changed from being a secular Jew to a believer and he regularly attends synagogue - not because of the Holocaust, he is at pains to point out, but because of his wife and family. Paul and Corinne are active members of AJR's popular West Midlands group.

On his retirement in 1990, Paul was awarded the MBE 'for services to the UK Motor Industry'. Yet to local reporters, it was his stay in Belsen that was the most newsworthy element of the story. A photographer persuaded him to attend a reunion of Belsen survivors. From then on, he began to talk freely about the past. Now he had a new mission in life: speaking about the Holocaust as a warning to young people and adults that such events must never happen again.

One of his first lectures was at the Walsall Campus of Wolverhampton University. Last September, he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters by the University. Since he met Stephen Smith of the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, Paul has been a regular contributor to this venture on over 100 occasions. In 1996 Beth Shalom published his memoir *From Belsen to Buckingham Palace*. Paul has spoken to more than 500 organisations on Holocaust education.

Paul played a prominent part in this year's Holocaust Memorial Day ceremonies, meeting the Queen at a reception at St James's Palace for Holocaust survivors and liberators and, with a representative from Amnesty International, performing the closing ceremony at Westminster Hall.

Paul has an acute dislike of therapists and psychologists, who, he says, would argue that he purposely buried his Holocaust past. What therapists and psychologists can't stomach, he insists, is that he's come through all this and is quite normal!

# INSIDE the AJR

## Unforgettable afternoon in Glasgow

A large audience listened with fascination to Henry Wuga's account of growing up in Nuremberg and subsequent experiences. Henry's ability to cope with life as a Kindertransportee was an inspiration to all of us. He went on to become Glasgow's leading caterer. *Claire Singerman*

## Liverpool and the Jews of Shanghai

Fred Elter described Sephardi Jews from Persia and India settling in Shanghai, followed by refugees from the Russian pogroms and, finally, thousands escaping the Nazis. The Japanese invasion of China did not lead to the extermination of the Jews despite incitement from the Nazis. After the war, most of the refugees left China. *Gerald Jayson*

**Next meeting: Thur 14 April**

## Jewish-Christian relations discussed at Leeds HSFA

In her beautifully illustrated talk on 'Jewish-Christian Relations in Medieval Germany as Seen through Art' Dr Eva Frojmovic showed how some Christian documents give pictorial indications of anti-Jewish sentiment and how Jewish documents frequently portray human figures from biblical or other stories with their faces disguised, or partly concealed, to avoid infringing Jewish law. *Martin Kapel*

**Next meeting: Sun 10 April. Dr Martin Kapel, 'The Origin of the Calendar'**

## East Midlands: 95 and a T shirt to prove it

Nineteen members were present, including a couple of second-generation members and some new faces. As usual, we met in a member's home, where we socialised over an excellent lunch. Our oldest member - ex-Vienna - was recently 95 and was wearing a printed T shirt to prove it. *Bob Norton*

**Next meeting: Wed 29 June in Nottingham, usual venue**

## Pinner outing to Disraeli exhibition

Politician, international statesman and successful author, 'Dizzy' towers over his Victorian contemporaries. I found the selection of *Punch* cartoons especially revealing as they portrayed political achievements as they were seen at the time. *Paul Samet*

## North London updated on Middle East

Eighteen of us heard a lucid update by the Israeli embassy's Calev Bender. The latest positive actions by both parties are, of course, to be welcomed, but one fears further obstacles before peace can be achieved. Myrna Glass reported the sudden death of Richard Grunberger: all present conveyed their sympathy and best wishes to the family. *Herbert Haberberg*

**Next meeting: Thur 14 April, 10.30 am. Outing to Cabinet war rooms. Details tba**

## Exhaustive discussions in Bradford

We met once again in Mornington Hall at the Bradford Hebrew Congregation of the Continental Friends. I am always amazed at how Susanne Green manages to discover new persons who came from Germany to England as refugees and live relatively nearby. The meeting itself, well attended once again, proved very interesting, with exhaustive discussions followed by tea and biscuits. *Albert Waxman*

**Next meeting: Mon 4 April**

## Ilford at Disraeli exhibition



PHOTO: ALFRED BUECHLER

**Off to the Jewish Museum: members of Ilford Group ready to leave**

We felt some offence at the obviously 'Jewish' caricature of Disraeli, but you only have to look at back numbers of *Punch* to see Welsh, Irish and other minority politicians depicted in very unflattering terms. The caricatures were not as offensive as those in Continental magazines of Jews in general and 'prominents' in particular. *Peter Hugh Granby*

## Cambridge and the story of Danka Binks

Penny Speller read to us from Danka Binks's *A Young Girl's Journey to England*, the story of her escape from the Warsaw Ghetto and arrival in the UK at the age of 16 after the war, to be re-united with her eldest brother. Danka and her husband John also provided us with a delicious buffet. *Ruth Clapham*

**Next meeting: Thur 14 April. Magen David Adom director Eli Benson**

## Handwriting expert at Pinner

Handwriting expert Allan Conway explained

to some 50 of us that *what* we write is conscious, whereas *how* we write is subconscious: in his words, 'Handwriting is personality frozen in ink.' He showed us how analysis of handwriting is used in determining suitability for employment and how it gives clues about our fears and desires. *Paul Samet*

**Next meeting: Thur 7 April, 2.30 pm. 'Members' Afternoon'**

## Bertha Leverton at Weald of Kent

We were delighted to welcome Bertha Leverton to Tunbridge Wells as our speaker. Her talk turned into a general discussion about KT matters and was enjoyed by all. Max Dickson presented a lovely poem thanking Bertha for all she has done for the Kindertransportees. *Inge Ball*

**Next meeting: Wed 25 May. Magen David Adom director Eli Benson**

## Richard Grunberger at Ilford group

Richard regaled us with anecdotes from his childhood and early life in Vienna, ending with his arrival in England and his first job as gardener-cum-chauffeur. We had been looking forward to hearing Part 2 on a future occasion before we heard the news of his untimely death. *Meta Rosehill*

**Next meeting: Wed 6 April, 10.30 am. Israel update**

## Essex third birthday

We celebrated our third birthday with candles, Kiddush and a wonderful tea. One member sang a Yiddish song beginning 'There burns a sparkling fire/ in our fireplace/ and our Rabbi teaches/ small kids the Aleph Beth'. A few of us remembered the song from our childhood. Almost like a small family, we recalled the various happy and sometimes sad events we shared last year. *Julie Franks*

**Next meeting: Tues 12 April, 11.00 am. Details tba**

## Norfolk: recalling Holocaust Memorial Day

Meeting in Norwich, we partook in a lunch which has developed into a fine art, with Myrna Glass contributing delicatessen unavailable in the Eastern Provinces. Several of us described our once-in-a-lifetime experience when we had the privilege to meet the Queen on Holocaust Memorial Day. *Frank Bright*

**Next meeting: Tues 10 May, 12.00 pm at Norwich Hebrew Congregation**

## North London group at Disraeli exhibition

While the exhibition was well laid out - all credit to the Museum management - it does

seem that Disraeli's perception of Jewishness was more in the mind of his political adversaries than in his own. A very interesting afternoon. *Herbert Haberberg*

#### Leeds HSFA recollections of Holocaust Memorial Day

We discussed the reception at St James's Palace and the ceremony at Westminster Hall. Trudie Silman, who lit one of the 60 candles, described how long the rehearsal took for the candle-lighting ceremony as well as her interview on BBC Radio 2's 'Good Morning Sunday' programme. We were all highly appreciative of support given by the AJR to make the occasion such a positive experience. *Barbara Cammerman*



Members of Harrogate Group, which meets regularly at the home of Inge Little (pictured first left)

#### DIARY DATES

- May 5** Yom HaShoah, AJR Day Centre
- May 8** Frank Foley statue unveiled
- May 16** Northern groups day out, Dewsbury and Bradford
- June 12** Trip to Beth Shalom
- June 19** AGM (at AJR Day Centre)
- June 26 - July 3** Holiday in Eastbourne
- June 29** Scotland and Newcastle Northern Get-together, Edinburgh
- July 6** Scotland Get-together, Edinburgh
- July 10-17** Northern groups holiday, St Annes
- July 13** Day out, St Annes
- August 16** Northern Groups Get-together, Manchester
- September 18** Annual Tea, Watford
- October 23-30** Holiday in Bournemouth
- November 9** Kristallnacht

Please make a note in your diary - this year's annual tea will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Watford on Sunday 18 September. Further information and ticket application forms will appear in future issues of *AJR Journal*.

**Paul Balint AJR Day Centre**  
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#### AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

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#### FUTURE DATES FOR WEDNESDAY LUNCHEON CLUB

- 18 MAY** Hannah Saadat  
'The Bahai Religion'
- 15 JUNE** Michael Smith 'Frank Foley'

#### KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group MONTHLY MEETINGS AT CLEVE ROAD

Monday 4 APRIL 2005  
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Renee Payne  
'Life as a Kind at Cambridge'  
Reservations required  
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Monday - Thursday  
9.30 am - 3.30 pm,  
Sunday 2 pm - 5.30 pm

- April** Afternoon Entertainment:
- Sun 3** CLOSED
- Mon 4** KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
- Tue 5** CLOSED
- Wed 6** Katinka Seiner
- Thur 7** Madeleine Whiteson
- Sun 10** CLOSED
- Mon 11** Kards & Games Klub
- Tue 12** CLOSED
- Wed 13** LUNCHEON CLUB
- Thur 14** Michael Heaton & Lyn Radnedge
- Sun 17** DAY CENTRE OPEN
- Mon 18** Kards & Games Klub
- Tue 19** CLOSED
- Wed 20** Geoffrey Strum
- Thur 21** Mike Marandi
- Sun 24** CLOSED
- Mon 25** CLOSED
- Tue 26** CLOSED
- Wed 27** Lynda Styan
- Thur 28** Guyathrie Peiris & Bill Patrick

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Co-ordinator**  
0151 291 5734

**KT-AJR (Kindertransport)**  
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Editorials and articles published, and opinions expressed, in *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Deaths**

**Masserick, Fred (Bonzo)**, born in Budweis 12.1.15 died 26.2.05 in Liverpool. Deeply mourned by his children and five grandchildren.

**Moos, Marianne**, passed away peacefully in her sleep on 12 February 2005. Sadly missed by her husband, close family and a large circle of friends.

**AJR HOLIDAY IN EASTBOURNE**

Come and join us for 7 nights at the Best Western Landsdowne Hotel

After the fantastic holiday in Eastbourne last year, we have decided to return there

**Sunday 26 June to Sunday 3 July**  
**£445 + £25 single room supplement**

Price includes dinner, bed & breakfast, transport from and return to the Day Centre in Cleve Road, lunch on journey to Eastbourne, entertainment in the hotel  
**Please call Carol or Joan on 020 8385 3070 for a booking form**

Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies

**Charmian Brinson**  
**'Loyal to the Reich'**  
**National Socialists and others in the Rushen Women's Internment Camp, 1940-45**

**29 April 2005 6.00 pm**  
**29 Russell Square, London WC1**

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Enquiries and further information please contact:  
The Manager, Clara Nehab House  
13-19 Leaside Crescent, London NW11 0DA  
Phone: 020 8455 2286

**AJR SEDER NIGHT**

**Second Night Seder Service**  
**Sunday 24 April 2005**  
**The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre**  
**15 Cleve Road, London NW6**

**Rev Larry Fine**  
**will be officiating**

**Please telephone**  
**020 7328 0208 for reservations**  
**£25 per person**

Limited space available for wheelchairs  
6 pm for 6.30 pm prompt start

**Jewish Care & the Otto Schiff Housing Association**

meet the personal and nursing care needs of the Jewish Refugee Community.

Balint House, Leo Baeck House & Osmond House are situated in The Bishops Avenue, where residents live in spacious and comfortable surroundings, looked after in a warm and caring environment. Residents can enjoy a variety of activities and outings, as well as take part in traditional synagogue services and the celebration of Jewish festivals.

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For more information call Jewish Care Direct on 020 8922 2222 or email us at [jewishcaredirect@jcare.org](mailto:jewishcaredirect@jcare.org)

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**OUTING TO BETH SHALOM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTRE LAXTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

Sunday 12 June 2005

£21.50 per person including coach fare, entrance and vegetarian buffet lunch (£9 for those using own transport)

Coach will leave AJR offices in Merrion Avenue, Stanmore at 8.45 am (plenty of parking available in car park)

Booking is essential  
Please call Joan Altman on 020 8385 3085

**Record your past for the future in a personal television documentary**

Many AJR readers will have been, or will have family members who were, affected by the turbulent times of the Holocaust.

Their family history, their sufferings and, in many cases, their success in rebuilding their lives, are worth recording for future generations. It is a triumph of good over evil - of which every family can and will be proud.

Portrait Films are professional film makers who can create an invaluable record of your family's unique story.

The programme will be delivered on video tape or DVD for the benefit of your family and future generations.

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## Arts and Events Diary - April 2005

**Mon 4** Mike Harwood MA, 'Radical Poets: War and Peace'. Club 43. Belsize Square Synagogue. Meetings 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig tel 01442 254360

**Tues 5** *Annelies: From the Diary of Anne Frank*. Premiere. Music by James Whitbourn, Libretto by Melanie Challenger. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Clare College Choir, conducted by Leonard Slatkin. Cadogan Hall, 7.30 pm. Tel 020 8909 2445

**Mon 11** Roy Clements MA, 'An Irish Evening'. Club 43

**Tues 12** Dr Cynthia Hooper, 'Volunteers Against Fascism, Yet Victims of Dictatorship: Remembering the Stalin Era in Soviet Russia'. Wiener Library. 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

**Wed 13 to 2 October 2005** 'The Last Goodbye: The Rescue of Children from Nazi Europe'. Exhibition on the Kindertransport. Jewish Museum, London N3. Tel 020 7284 1997

**Fri 15** Book launch: *The Holocaust and the Moving Image: Film and Television Representations since 1933*. With editors Dr Joanna Newman and Dr Toby Haggith. Imperial War Museum, 12.00 pm-4.00 pm. In association with London Jewish Cultural Centre

**Sun 17** *Reise um die Erde in 80 Minuten* (Around the World in 80 Minutes), revue by Robert Stolz at Berners Hotel, central London. Afternoon concert. Presented by Anglo-Austrian Society as a Viennese coffee house. In German. Telephone 01494 711116 email info@angloaustrian.demon.co.uk

**Mon 18** Robin Hanau BSc, 'Harold Macmillan'. Club 43

**Mon 25** No lecture (hall not available). Club 43

## Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

### Insurance Claims Commission

The freephone number for claimants wishing to check the status of applications submitted to the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims has changed. The new number is 00800 2525 3535. Alternatively, it is possible to call, at regular rates, to the following number in the United States to receive updates: 001 646 519 8767.

Please note that when contacting the Commission you should have available your claims reference number(s). For more information about the work of the Insurance Commission, please visit [www.icheic.org](http://www.icheic.org)

### National Fund payments

Recipients of the \$7,000 award from the Austrian National Fund - made throughout 2002 and 2003 - in respect of lost tenancy rights, personal possessions and valuables will receive an additional payment of €1,000 (approximately £600). The heirs of survivors, who received the original monies but have since passed away, are eligible to receive the payment in their place.

### Swiss bank claims deadline

Applications for dormant Swiss bank accounts must be submitted by **13 July 2005**. In January an additional list of names of owners of Swiss bank accounts was published on two designated websites: [www.crt-ii.org](http://www.crt-ii.org) and [www.swissbankclaims.com](http://www.swissbankclaims.com)

### Austrian life certificates

To the beginning of March, the AJR has notarised 94 Austrian pension life certificates. For future reference, a piece of official identification, such as a passport or driving licence, must be presented when asking an AJR representative to legalise a certificate.

### Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to [michael@ajr.org.uk](mailto:michael@ajr.org.uk) Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.

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DAVID LIGHTBURN on 020 8455 2286

## TWIN YOUR SPECIAL DAY

And make it a  
double celebration



We all watched in earnest the Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations that came directly from Auschwitz. The conditions you witnessed are still being faced every day of every winter by thousands of Jewish people. The elderly, living in Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union who, having survived the Holocaust, now find themselves alone and living in desperate circumstances.

These are the people it is time to remember.

Twin your special birthday with them and help provide meals on wheels, medicines, or winter relief packages. Help secure the aid to the thousands who have nowhere else to turn.

For more information, contact Laura Kaye on:  
020 7691 1771

[www.worldjewishrelief.org.uk](http://www.worldjewishrelief.org.uk)

Email: [info@wjrr.org.uk](mailto:info@wjrr.org.uk)

AJR4/05

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JEWISH  
RELIEF**

## One out of four - thoughts for Pesach

### Bernd Koschland

The *Haggadah* sets the scenario of our history: 'We were slaves unto Pharaoh'. From slavery to freedom and then to Sinai, where G-d 'gave the Torah to His people Israel'. In this spirit of freedom, the Four Sons, based on Torah texts, follow straight on in the *Haggadah* and represent four approaches to the Torah.

I consider this section to be referring to aspects of Jewish education, for young and old, for men, women and children. The *Chacham* (Wise Son) and the *Rasha* (Wicked Son) begin with questions. In both instances, they are answered through a direct instruction (using the 'command form'): 'You shall inform ...' (*Chacham*) and 'give him a blunt answer' (*Rasha*). The Wise Son needs an immediate answer, to enable him to increase his learning of Torah, as the response regarding the laws of the *Afikoman* indicates. The Wicked Son likewise must be dealt with without delay, to counteract his perverse views, which are actually based on knowledge: he is aware of the Divine Service (*Avodah*) and that it has significance, though not for him.

Educationally therefore, questions must be answered as quickly as possible, whether they are asked for the furthering of knowledge (*Chacham*) or to counter ideas which may lead to the rejection of Jewish life and thought (*Rasha*).

The *Tam* (Simple Son) asks: 'What is this all about?' The answer is an indirect instruction (for grammarians, a *vav consecutive*) on how to proceed. He has some idea by asking 'What is this?' Therefore one must take time to explain and broaden his knowledge.

The *She'eino yode'a lishol* (One who does not know how to ask) also requires immediate attention, as indicated again by the imperative '*at p'tach lo*' (open his mind). Inaction in the face of ignorance can lead to lethargy, to turning away from Judaism and to abandoning it

completely, unless action is taken at once.

The Hebrew here is grammatically strange: *at* is feminine and *p'tach* is masculine. This is frequently explained as the dual responsibility of the mother and father in educating their children. The word *at* is made up of the first letter, *aleph* (numerical value one) and the last letter, *tav* (value 400) of the Hebrew alphabet. Rabbi Hayim Halberstam of Zanz sees in this the heavenly gates, from the highest to the lowest, opening to those who know that they do not know. From basic, lowly beginnings, a person can be raised, till he or she reaches the highest heights and, like the *Chacham*, be propelled to probe to the utmost depths of Jewish life and practice.

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES SUNDAY 19 JUNE 2005

at the

**Paul Balint AJR Day Centre**  
15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Guest speaker

**Ned Temko**

**Editor, *The Jewish Chronicle***

#### Agenda

Annual Report 2004

Hon. Treasurer's Report

Discussion

Election of Committee of  
Management\*

\*No person other than a committee member retiring by rotation shall be elected or re-elected a committee member at any general meeting unless:-

(a) he or she is recommended by the  
Committee of Management, or

(b) not less than twenty one clear days before the date appointed for the meeting, notice executed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting has been given to the Association of the intention to propose that person for election or re-election together with notice executed by that person of his or her willingness to be elected or re-elected.

## Newsround

### Post-Dresden legislation

Following a neo-Nazi demonstration which marred Dresden ceremonies remembering the Allied bombing of 1945, the German government is to rush through legislation preventing far-right rallies in May, when the country marks the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

### Far-right groups recruiting from duelling clubs

Neo-Nazis are reportedly recruiting from Germany's traditionally conservative duelling clubs. A number of universities in the state of Hesse, notably Marburg, are said to be providing a flow of graduates to the ranks of the NPD youth organisation and to a shadowy group known as the Young East Prussia association.

### Longest jail sentence for vandalism of Jewish cemetery

A 20-year-old man has been imprisoned for six years for desecrating Newcastle's Jewish cemetery. In 2004 Simon Johnston, born in Northern Ireland, caused £100,000 of damage in Witton Cemetery after smashing 62 headstones and defiling others with racist stickers. The ruling is believed to be the longest sentence for a desecration of a Jewish cemetery in this country.

### Bulgaria's anti-Holocaust policy praised

On a visit to Sofia, US Jewish leaders praised Bulgaria for saving its Jewish population from the Holocaust. According to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, they expressed appreciation for the 'historic decision' in 1943 'to refuse the Nazi regime's order to deport Bulgaria's Jewish community despite the presence of German troops in the country'.

### Begin voted Israel's most popular leader

According to a Channel Two television survey, Menachem Begin is the most popular leader in Israel's history. A total of 32.8 per cent of Israelis considered him the greatest prime minister the country has ever had. David Ben-Gurion came a close second at 32 per cent. Only 7.4 per cent of respondents voted for Ariel Sharon, compared to 14.1 for the late Yitzhak Rabin. Shimon Peres received only 3 per cent of the vote, but beat Benjamin Netanyahu's 2.2 per cent.