

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Coalitions and other concoctions

That the coalition government now in power in Germany after the recent dead-heat elections consists of the right-wing Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and the left-wing Social Democrats (SPD) has given rise to the customary combination of hilarity and incomprehension in most of the British press: what funny fellows these Europeans are!

In fact, the record of coalition governments in post-war Germany, including the cases of government by a 'Grand Coalition' of CDU and SPD, is good. Coalitions of all shades - excluding the far right and the far left - are commonplace in the parliaments of the *Länder*, the states into which Germany is subdivided, and if anyone believes that these are worse governed than the British regions, then I invite them to visit Düsseldorf, Cologne and Hamburg and compare them with Birmingham, Sheffield and Liverpool.

The Grand Coalition that governed West Germany in the electoral period 1965-69, under Chancellor Kiesinger (CDU) with Willy Brandt (SPD) as Vice-Chancellor, successfully overcame West Germany's first economic recession. This threat to the young Federal Republic's stability was overcome largely through co-operation between Karl Schiller (SPD), the minister of economics, and Franz-Josef Strauss (CSU), the hard man of the right, as minister of finance. Underpinning the edifice of the coalition was the understanding between the leaders of the two parliamentary parties in the Bundestag, Rainer Barzel (CDU) and Helmut Schmidt (SPD), Brandt's eventual successor as Chancellor.

The post-war West German constitution was designed to promote effective coalition governments, given that electoral systems based on proportional representation routinely produce governments consisting of more than one party. This was the result of the bitter lessons learnt under the Weimar Republic (1918-33), when repeated breakdowns of weak coalition governments contributed decisively to the collapse of the parliamentary system and to Hitler's rise to power.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel

In January 1919, the democratic parties - the SPD, the Centre (the Catholic party) and the Democrats, the left-liberal party - swept to victory with a large majority over their opponents on the right and left. But only 18 months later, the government suffered a decisive reverse in the elections held in the wake of its mishandling of a failed right-wing military coup, the Kapp Putsch.

By contrast, the right-wing DNVP, the 'Deutschnationalen', whose inflamed nationalism caused them to reject 'Western-imposed' parliamentary democracy as such, and the Independent Social Democrats, shortly to merge with the Communists, improved their shares of the vote substantially. So resounding was the electors' rejection of the 'Weimar parties' that the SPD, the leading pillar of Weimar democracy, retreated into opposition. Even the wave of solidarity created in the democratic camp in June 1922 by the assassination of Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau, a Jew, by nationalist fanatics did not lead to a lasting consolidation of the pro-Weimar centre.

The apparent stability of the Weimar Republic's years of prosperity, 1924-29, proved deceptive. The elections of 1928, in which the coalition parties far outpolled the Deutschnationalen, the Communists (and the tiny Nazi Party with some 2 per cent of the vote), should have ushered in a period of triumphant democratic consolidation. In fact, the Grand Coalition presided over by Hermann Müller (SPD) was weak, badly split between partners that placed their

party interests above the interests of the coalition and the nation. In March 1930, under the shadow of the Wall Street Crash and the looming Depression, the coalition broke apart. For the remaining three desperate years of its existence, the Weimar Republic was governed by presidential decree, not by its parliament.

Advocates of Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system often cite this sorry story as evidence of the superiority of a system that delivers a clear majority of seats in parliament to a single party - even if that party secures under 40 per cent of the vote - thereby securing firm government, not wishy-washy coalition compromises. The history of British politics over the post-war period, however, hardly bears that judgment out. Can anyone say that the Major government delivered 'firm government' between 1992 and 1997? Or the Heath government of 1970-74, which was forced into a notorious U-turn in economic policy when faced with rising unemployment, then was overwhelmed by the miners' strike of 1973-74?

Nor did Labour governments perform any better. Harold Wilson's government of 1964-70 grappled unsuccessfully with Britain's deep-seated economic problems, never recovering from its forced devaluation of the pound in 1967. Wilson's government of 1974-76 suffered the humiliation of calling in the International Monetary Fund, and its successor under James Callaghan proved powerless to deal with the 'Winter of Discontent' brought on by trade union action in 1978-79.

The exception, of course, was Margaret Thatcher, who pushed through her reforms with great energy. But after her third election victory in 1987, even the Iron Lady ran off the tracks. Would a coalition government have allowed the narrowness of focus that led to the introduction of the Poll Tax? Or to Nigel Lawson's budget of 1988, which precipitated the British economy into an unsustainable boom followed by the inevitable bust of the early 1990s, presided over by Norman Lamont in distinctly Weimar-like fashion?

Anthony Grenville

George Who? Anthony Grenville

One of the characteristics of the British that most struck the pre-war Jewish refugees from Central Europe was their reserve. That stolid refusal to display emotion could be an advantage, as when it enabled Londoners amidst the Blitz to dismiss their troubles with a 'Not too bad' or a 'Can't complain', but often it appeared to the more expressive and voluble refugees as a form of emotional constipation.

What are the surviving refugees and their British-born descendants (hopefully emotionally non-constipated) to make of the recent spate of national weep-ins, as when the death of a former footballer dominates newspaper headlines and BBC news bulletins? George Best never even performed at the highest level: though he helped Manchester United win European honours at club level, he never appeared for his country - Northern Ireland - in a World Cup or a European Nations Cup. Compare that with Pele, who represented Brazil in four World Cups (1958-70). Best's greatest international performance was in Northern Ireland's defeat of Scotland in ... I forget when, and so have 99 per cent of football fans.

The fact is that Best, once he gave up football, was a media creation, endlessly photographed, blonde on arm and glass in hand - and that when pretty boys with flowing locks and come-hither eyelashes were ten a penny in the discos. Otherwise, his record over 30 years consisted largely of being convicted for drunken driving and wasting the donated liver that might have saved his life. He continued to appear on our front pages and TV screens drunk and dishevelled, famous only for being in the news.

Unsurprisingly, the tributes to Best were led by chat-show hosts such as Michael Parkinson and chroniclers of ephemera like Hunter Davies. *The Independent's* Yasmin Alibhai-Brown chipped in with the argument that the emotional outpouring on Best's death was a blow against the English male code of the stiff upper lip. But a night-club predator like Best makes for an unlikely feminist icon. He was, however, proof of the power of the media to generate surges of emotion around the celebrities they create then consume. Those who live by *The Sun* die by *The Sun*.

Berlin visit

We have now managed to reduce substantially the cost of our visit to the new Holocaust memorial in Berlin. The four-day visit is planned to coincide with the 61st anniversary of the end of the Second World War in May.

The revised cost, which includes tours of the Jewish Museum and the Wannsee Villa, will be around £450. The cost includes flights, transfers, accommodation and

breakfast, coach travel throughout Berlin, and an official tour guide.

Owing to what will be a full programme, this visit will not be suitable for people with walking difficulties.

To reserve one of the limited places on the trip, please telephone 020 8385 3070 or email socialsec@ajr.org.uk.

Michael Newman

The Kindertransport monument

There has recently been controversy surrounding the Kindertransport monument at London's Liverpool St Station. It may be helpful to put on record the sequence of events.

The original concept of a glass suitcase displaying items brought by some of the Kinder was conceived and designed by Flor Kent. She was commissioned by World Jewish Relief (WJR) to complete the project and made a tremendous contribution in helping to find the required funds. Unfortunately, despite the use of an anoxic environment as recommended by experts in the field of art conservation, the idea of exhibiting original artifacts in a glass enclosure in an outdoor space such as the Liverpool St Station Piazza failed. Months after the unveiling some of the items were clearly decaying.

The Imperial War Museum advised that these objects should be placed in a controlled environment. It became necessary to open the suitcase and remove them to a place of safety. It was WJR's responsibility to the Kinder and the donors to protect these artifacts. Flor's concept unfortunately proved unworkable and it was crucial to replace the original monument commemorating this unique event.

When I became involved some five years ago, considerable funding was required to complete the project. I organised and participated in a 'Bike Ride' from Berlin to Auschwitz, which virtually raised the outstanding amount. My view was that in considering a second project, a different perspective was required given

the impossibility of displaying original artifacts at the station, the lack of signage, the 'plinth' area, and the issue of again raising funds for a similar project.

Flor Kent was included in the discussions. Several suggestions were put forward. It was unanimously agreed that the glass suitcase concept was unworkable. Flor agreed to bring new ideas and to help raise further funds. While she did produce a different concept - a large, bronze-cast suitcase (which could no longer display Kinder items) - raising the additional funds for a second project by the same artist was potentially a far more serious hurdle.

Meanwhile, the state of the suitcase was deteriorating. Over two years had elapsed

Continued on page 4

 **JACKMAN ■
SILVERMAN**

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

26 Conduit Street, London W1R 9TA
Telephone: 020 7409 0771 Fax: 020 7493 8017

AJR Heads of Department
Gordon Greenfield Finance

Carol Rossen Administration and Personnel

Marcia Goodman Social Services

Michael Newman Media and

Public Relations

Susie Kaufman Organiser, Day Centre

AJR Journal

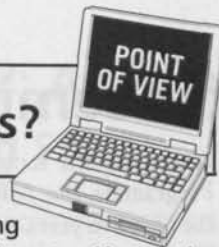
Dr Anthony Grenville Consultant Editor

Dr Howard Spier Executive Editor

Andrea Goodmaker

Secretarial/Advertisements

Are there too many immigrants?



In January 1939, when I saw Piccadilly Circus for the first time, British fascists were selling their antisemitic journal *Action* at every street corner. In Trafalgar Square a speaker was telling the crowd: 'These German Jews come to Britain in their fur coats and we are supposed to feel sorry for them.' In April 1939 the *Daily Express*, which at that time had the largest sale of any paper in the British Isles, wrote: 'We don't want antisemitism in this country. The British Government must forbid more German Jews to come here.'

Others supported us. The Conservative leader, Lord Baldwin, started the Baldwin Fund to pay for Jewish refugees to seek refuge here. I went to a cinema in Ware, Herts, where, following the newsreel, the Archbishop of Canterbury asked the audience to donate to the cause of German-Jewish children, and boxes were passed round the cinema. This fund was later used to finance the Kindertransports. Other politicians, such as Michael Foot, Lord Wedgewood-Benn, his son Tony Benn, Eleanor Rathbone, and many others supported us.

Today's asylum-seekers are not Jewish, and in the last general election the Conservative leader, himself the son of Jewish immigrants, led a campaign against further immigration. The media has blurred the difference between asylum-seekers and economic migrants, and complains that millions of pounds are spent every year on their social security. The media omits to tell its readers that asylum-seekers are not allowed to work, as was the case with Jewish refugees in the Thirties.

However, we did not receive any social security. There were no economic immigrants then because Britain had almost three million unemployed. Today Britain is crying out for labour, and yet work permits for immigrants are strictly limited. While critics bemoan the large number of immigrants the government,

instead of defending immigration, prides itself on its restrictive entry regulations. We are told that there are not enough workers to replace the growing number of pensioners. But there are millions of people wanting to come here to work! *The Economist* recently published statistics showing that we need a million immigrants per year to prevent us from curtailing future pensions. Politicians and the newspapers have completely ignored these statistics.

We've also been told that England is too small to accept more people. We are overcrowded. But Israel may teach us a lesson. When the Soviet Union opened its doors to emigration, one million Jews emigrated to tiny Israel - the size of Wales and much of it desert. Their labour has completely transformed the country. Engineering industries have been created and this small country is now competing with Silicone Valley in California. The new immigrants into the UK are black or brown, or speak a different language. The Jewish immigrants from Russia 100 years ago also spoke a different language and had a different religion and completely different customs. At the time, there was a great outcry against these people - who were supposed to increase unemployment, reduce the wages of working people, and lower moral standards by bringing crime and prostitution to the East End. The first Aliens Registration Act was passed before the First World War with the specific purpose of keeping Russian Jews out. All Jews - Russians and Germans - are now integrated.

Many Jews are apprehensive about the influx of so many Muslim immigrants and believe it will increase the danger of terrorism. This belief is as prejudiced as the belief of those who claim that Jews control the media and are tricky in business. There is no reason why more recent immigrants should not similarly integrate and be an asset to this country.

Peter Prager

NEWTONS

Leading Hampstead Solicitors
advise on
Property, Wills, Family Trusts
and Charitable Trusts

French and German spoken
Home visits arranged

22 Fitzjohn's Avenue,
London NW3 5NB

Tel: 020 7435 5351
Fax: 020 7435 8881

CONSULTANT

to long established English
Solicitors (bi-lingual German)
would be happy to assist clients
with English, German and
Austrian problems.

Contact Henry Ebner

Myers Ebner & Deaner
103 Shepherds Bush Road
London W6 7LP
Telephone 020 7602 4631

ALL LEGAL WORK
UNDERTAKEN

AUSTRIAN and GERMAN PENSIONS

PROPERTY RESTITUTION CLAIMS EAST GERMANY - BERLIN

On instructions our office will
assist to deal with your
applications and pursue the matter
with the authorities.

For further information
and an appointment
please contact:

ICS CLAIMS
146-154 Kilburn High Road
London NW6 4JD

Tel: 020 7328 7251 (Ext. 107)
Fax: 020 7624 5002

Prague Winter seminar

Czech Jewish communal leader Tomas Kraus put it succinctly: 'A seminar in Prague is best arranged for December - it's too cold for delegates to see the city, so you'll have to focus on work instead!' Armed with this blunt message, we set about informing more than 70 colleagues who work with Holocaust survivors throughout Europe on the AJR's role in improving the lives of its members.

The Seminar for European Social Welfare Professionals we attended was organised by the New York-based Claims Conference as an opportunity to network with peers and hear from experts as well as share effective interventions and strategies.

One of the meetings AJR's Head of Finance Gordon Greenfield, Head of Social Services Marcia Goodman and I attended was a presentation about the Claims Conference's own resources and its allocation of over \$130 million a year to fund social and welfare programmes. Included in this sum are monies the AJR receives for survivors and refugees in our Homecare programme as well as the cost of operating our social services department. Also included are the funds the AJR distributes on the Emergency Fund and the Austrian Holocaust Survivor Emergency Assistance Programme.

Together with this institutional allocation and individual awards and pensions, the Claims Conference has over \$1.1 billion at its disposal and continues to work with the German government on addressing the needs of Holocaust survivors.

In the 'Connecting with Isolated Survivors' workshop, Marcia Goodman gave a presentation on the AJR's development into a truly national organisation. As well as the social services department, which maintains contact with

survivors, she focused on the Outreach Programme the AJR has developed over the past five years and which now operates 35 regional groups nationwide, including our latest addition in Cardiff.

In addition to highlighting the renewed dangers of antisemitism and Holocaust denial, Moshe Jahoda, Executive Vice President Associate of the Claims Conference, gave a detailed presentation on the 'Impact of the Political Situation in Germany and Austria on the Resources of the Claims Conference'. Using the example of the Austrian General Settlement Fund (GSF), he explained that there had been 20,000 applications by survivors to the Fund in 2001, but that the number of survivors in 2005 had dropped to 14,000. His estimate of the current value of the assets stolen from pre-war Austrian Jewry was \$12 billion.

Among other workshops were 'Working with Holocaust Survivor Advisory Committees', 'Jewish Identity after 1945' and 'Responses to Trauma', which featured a presentation by Judith Hassan, Director of Jewish Care's Holocaust Survivors' Centre.

Closing the conference, Ben Helfgott, a member of both the AJR and the Claims Conference board, reiterated the groundbreaking achievements of the Claims Conference and its determination to represent survivors throughout the world.

Representatives of the Claims Conference said that they too had benefited from a deeper understanding of the unique communities of people with whom we work. We attach great importance to their acknowledgement of the need to set up a two-way dialogue on a wide variety of issues.

Michael Newman



Networking in Prague: AJR's Marcia Goodman, left, with Nilu Aronovici and Franca Oprescu of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania

Vienna GSF - agreement at last

Towards the end of December, the one remaining US class-action lawsuit against the Austrian government was dismissed. This paved the way for a final agreement on the \$210m General Settlement Fund (GSF) and the long-awaited distribution of compensation funds to survivors.

In accordance with legislation adopted by the Austrian parliament last November, some GSF applicants will now receive an advance payment ranging from 10 to 15 per cent of the final award to which they should be entitled. Up to the middle of January, 3,000 such advance payments had been made by the National Fund, which hopes to complete the processing of all claims by spring 2007.

Michael Newman

Continued from page 2

since the unveiling, little progress had been made, and funding for a replacement had still not been secured.

In July I met by chance Frank Meisler, an internationally known sculptor and a Kind himself. He offered to provide a new concept without charging for his time. His idea was to show a group of Kinder, one of them looking back along a railway track. This, with the appropriate signage, would make it clear to the public what the monument represents. While Flor's original project was very innovative, her replacement idea of a large, closed bronze

suitcase was also a different approach from the original.

It would have been remiss not to consider Frank Meisler's alternative. Given his status and with the support of the AJR and the Kindertransport Association, we have been able to raise the funds necessary to complete the new project. The model of Frank Meisler's monument was shown to a number of people including the Kindertransport Planning Committee and committee members of the WJR and the AJR. All voiced their approval. Corporations of London officials saw the model and were

apparently about to give their approval when they received an objection from Flor.

I, and everyone involved with the project, are sad that after giving up so much of her time and having taken advice from experts in the field of art conservation, Flor's original, imaginative idea proved unworkable. Now, a new model that could be in place by next spring is being prepared. I hope that the very idea of such a monument will help us all overcome feelings of disappointment.

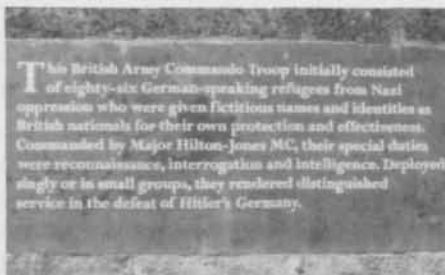
**Erich Reich, Treasurer
Kindertransport
AJR Special Interest Group**

Churchill's 'unknown quantity': A unique commando troop

Howard Spier

In Aberdyfi's Penhelyg Park, in a stunning setting overlooking Cardigan Bay, a monument commemorates the members of a unique commando troop who were billeted in the area for nine months in the midst of the Second World War. The monument was unveiled in May 1999 by Meuric Rees CBE, the former Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, in the presence of 28 survivors from the UK, New Zealand, Australia, the USA and Canada.

The commando troop was the brainchild of Earl Mountbatten, then Chief of Combined Operations. Its formation was authorised by Winston Churchill himself, who, regarding the troop as an unknown quantity, described it as 'X Troop'. In the legal language of Aliens Tribunals, the recruits were 'refugees from Nazi oppression'. Of over 350 such refugees who volunteered for unidentified 'dangerous duties', 86 were chosen initially.



The refugees were mainly of German or Austrian nationality, their principal distinction being their fluent German and their potential to reach the highest standards in commando skills. (Interestingly, neither the monument nor an official leaflet devoted to it contains any reference to the Jewish origins of most of the soldiers.) Aged mainly between 18 and 25, some had already been active in resisting the Nazis, but the majority still had to prove their worth. For many, their wait included a period of internment and service in the initially unarmed Pioneer Corps, the first unit of the British Army to accept alien recruits.

The purpose of 3 Troop, as it came to be called, was to produce soldiers who, whether attached to other elite troops in the front line or behind enemy lines, would carry out intelligence,

interrogation and reconnaissance tasks.

Under Army Council Order, each recruit was obliged to adopt a British name and identity. One man who chose 'Smith' had to choose another name as he couldn't pronounce it properly!

On the Troop's arrival in Aberdyfi (then Aberdovey) in September 1942, only the local policeman shared its secret. Locals suspected it but kept quiet. Billeted in private homes, the commandos entertained the village with a variety of lectures and social events. Two Troopers married local girls.

The Troop's commanding officer was Bryan Hilton-Jones, a Cambridge modern languages graduate. Training included camouflage, rock-climbing, demolition and street fighting. The men did not qualify for commissioned rank until mid-1944, by which time it was evident that the 3 Troopers could not attain their full potential as a specialised elite without adequate status. With the removal of the restriction on promotion, eighteen 3 Troopers became officers.

Although a self-contained unit, 3 Troop was part of 10 Inter-Allied Commando, which at the time consisted of, among others, a Dutch

Troop in Portmadoc, a French Troop in Criccieth and a Polish Troop in Fairbourne. Within 10 Inter-Allied Commando, 3 Troop was also known as 'The British Troop'. With the exception of 3 Troop, each component of 10 Commando trained to fight as an entity.

By the end of the war, individual 3 Troopers had taken part in the Italian and Adriatic theatres, including the invasions of Sicily and Normandy and the campaign from the Maas to the Elbe. They won praise for their special contributions. A total of 20 members of the Troop were killed in action and 22 were wounded or disabled.

In April 1946, Major Hilton-Jones MC noted that 'This band of "enemy alien" volunteers earned for itself a not unflattering reputation ... in no small measure due to the sincerity and wholeheartedness put into his services by every member of the "Troop". For them perhaps more than for many others it was a question of self-respect and self-justification.'



Last September, the Old Comrades' Association of Army Commandos was wound up in a moving ceremony on the parade ground of the Royal Marines museum in Portsmouth. Only three former 3 Troop members attended the final reunion. But several family members of former 3 Troopers were there too - delighted to have taken part in the ceremony to mark the end of a brotherhood which had meant an enormous amount to them all.

I am grateful to Colin Anson and William W. Dieneman for providing me with background information and photographs for this article. A detailed study of 3 Troop is to be found in Peter Masters, Striking Back: A Jewish Commando's War Against the Nazis (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1997) - H.S.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

BIAS AND UNTRUTHS

Sir - It is indeed frustrating to read an article which contains bias and untruths. A cousin of mine, who lived in Haifa, wrote again and again in the angriest terms about the dishonesty of the Israeli papers. It happens here too: I am certain I am not the only person who writes in protest to one of the British daily papers attempting to put the facts right and, of course, finds that his letter has not been published.

This is not so with the *AJR Journal*. My personal experience has been that whenever I wrote a letter, it was published, as was the one by Shmuel Herold (January 2006). For this reason, it would have been wiser of him to have wasted less space on indignation than on factual rebuffs, as two other correspondents did.

Rudi Braude was surely wrong in stating that Inge Trott could not follow Palestine's (the name of the area) fortunes and, at the same time, believe that Israel won her wars due to superior weaponry. Perhaps she is guilty of over-simplification. In 1948 it was arms from Czechoslovakia that saved the day; in 1967 it was superior strategy and the sheer inefficiency of the Egyptian army. He is nit-picking when he claims that there was no Palestinian territory because the Palestinians had rejected the UN partition resolution. He is mixing up the terms 'territory' and 'state'. It is correct that the Egyptians ruled the Gaza Strip and had it in their power to create a Palestinian state; nevertheless they treated it as Palestinian territory and supported the PLO. The Jordanians did not conquer the Gaza Strip. It is true that in 1948 many Palestinians left the parts allocated to the new Israel voluntarily, believing the promise of the Arab League states that they would be able to return in triumph. It is equally true that thousands of Arabs were ejected by Israel as potential fifth

columnists. The Arabs remaining lived, and still do, in their own villages and as such were no danger to Israel. Even so, they have less civic rights than the Jewish Israelis. Rudi Braude should really study the facts before making misleading statements.

Inge Trott was certainly right to condemn the Jewish settlements in Palestinian lands but, if she included the West Bank in that comment, she is floating in mixed currents. The West Bank was Jordanian territory. Large numbers of Palestinians settled there with the approval of King Hussein. At the start of the Six-Day War, Israel offered not to include the West Bank in its warfare if Hussein kept out of the war. He did not and thus the Israelis also occupied the West Bank. Inge Trott should know this and not take her facts from her friendship with one Palestinian woman. Professor Bryan Reuben recently explained the West Bank details in one of the Journal's issues. I have done so in the past. It is clear that people only read, or only believe, what suits their fixed views. Incidentally, in 1970 the Egyptian army almost annihilated the PLO fighters.

Finally, Inge Trott is equally right in claiming that Israel has been guilty of a policy which has led to many human rights abuses. But she must also realise the historical truth that even before the war, organised Arab gangs attacked the legally acquired Jewish settlements, and that it was the Arab states which refused to obey the United Nations and make peace with Israel. Furthermore, the anti-Judaism of the Islamist extremists goes back to the foundation of the Islamic Brotherhood in the 1920s. It has proliferated and led to the suicide and other terrorist attacks all over the world. The truth has many facets.

*Eric Sanders
London W12*

IMPOSTOR LEAVES STAGE

Sir - Mention of the grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm II in Anthony Grenville's article (January 2006) reminds me that in 2001 the director of the local amateur theatre, the Civic Playhouse (now called the J. B. Priestley Theatre) was Christiaan Hohenzollern, a very good-looking young man with a slight German accent. I asked him if he was a relation of the Kaiser and he said he was a great-grandson. However, the committee made enquiries, discovered he was an impostor, and he was summarily dismissed.

*Rudi Leavor
Bradford*

POLES AND MIRACLES

Sir - I read with great interest Professor Brent's article in your December issue. He is obviously very impressed by the Polish people he met and thinks a miracle has happened, or is happening, with regard to Poles' attitudes towards antisemitism. Regretfully, he is very naïve if he believes this. Today Poland is 'Judenfrei' and they can afford to show remorse to individual and selected Jews, particularly as the country is now part of the EU.

May I point out that after the war many of the camp survivors wanted to reclaim their homes, only to be kicked out by the local population. Many were killed for daring to reclaim what was justly theirs. So far as I am aware, Poland has not paid a single penny of restitution to any Polish Jews who survived the camps. No compensation has been paid for confiscated property. May I also refer Professor Brent to the last instalment of *Auschwitz: The Nazis and the 'Final Solution'*, shown on BBC2 on 10 December 2005, specifically when a camp survivor of the Blatt family tried to view his former home.

*Manfred Landau
London NW11*

CUT OFF FROM ROOTS

Sir - I totally agree with S. Halberstam's letter (December 2005), in which he states that he feels cut off from his German roots and requests articles pertaining to the culture of his

parents, specifically a reprint of Richard Grunberger's articles. With my German-born parents and almost all their friends now having passed away, I must rely on the odd German TV show to hear the language - I have no occasion to speak it any longer. It feels as though some of my persona has been cut off.

Perhaps other contributions from your Editorial Board or from readers could be printed on, for instance, the humour of the 1920s-50s, the cultural and theological thought of those times, refugee experiences, portraits of major thinkers, or just stories of everyday life.

*Dorothy Graff
Melbourne, Australia*

MAKING A NEW LIFE

Sir - Re your series on the Making a New Life Project, my late husband, Wolf Salinger, was born in Berlin in 1915. His father was a successful dentist and he and his younger twin brothers had a normal, happy Jewish upbringing. He always intended to follow his father's profession but in 1933, at the age of 18, when he applied to the university, he was turned away because he was Jewish.

In March 1939 he obtained an emigration permit to Britain but, when war was declared later that year, he was interned on the Isle of Man. On his release, he obtained a job as a pipe-fitter in a Manchester heating and ventilation firm. In 1948, married with a baby daughter and tired of being a blue-collar worker, he brought his family to London and joined another heating firm, this time as a white-collar worker. He was the only Jew in the firm but was never made to feel an outsider. He made many friends and was eventually made a director.

Although his dream of becoming a dentist was thwarted by Hitler, imagine his pride and joy when his only granddaughter obtained a place at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

*Margaret Salinger
Stanmore, Middx*

ANGELIC AGENT

Sir - The end of the DDR in 1989 gave me an opportunity to investigate what

became of a property we owned and used at weekends in Gross-Glienicke on the Sacrower See some 10 kilometres from Potsdam. Once I had completed the spadework, I looked for an agent to take on the formidable bureaucracy and the business of restitution. I turned the pages of the *AJR Journal* in 1992 and found an advert by Nagel and Partner, Immobilien, now located in the Jägerstrasse 65, 10117 Berlin, tel 030/422 611-0.

Due to the more recent economic recession, the various complications challenging ownership of our restitution/sale of our property have only just been resolved. However, over the entire period of almost 15 years Nagel and Partner have behaved in an exemplary manner and I appreciate the help I had through the advert in this journal.

*Peter L. Berger
London NW1*

HAKOAH WEST HAM

Sir - Since West Ham United have doubled their intake of Israeli players, bringing it to the grand total of two, they can now boast that they are the only Premier Division club with more than one registered Israeli player. All they have to do now is to recruit another nine to justify a change of name to Hakoah West Ham. I like to think that this is their ultimate aim, remembering that in the mid-1920s Hakoah Wien, at that time one of Europe's leading Jewish football clubs, scored a famous victory (5:0) against West Ham on the Londoners' ground. Some of my AJR contemporaries may appreciate this day dream - not to mention that well-known Israeli fan Ken Livingstone!

*Frederick W. Rosner
Chigwell, Essex*

JOLLY OLD TIME MUSICAL TEA

Sir - I'd like to thank Sonja Shindler for her report on our musical meeting (West Midlands, January issue), but a very important event was not reported: the 80th birthday of our dear Henny Rednall. Hoping for more such 'get-togethers'!

*Terry Patrick
Walsall*

ARE YOU ON A LOW INCOME AND IN NEED OF HOMECARE HELP?

AJR might be able to offer you financial assistance for cleaning, gardening and caring.

Members who might not otherwise be able to afford homecare please contact:

**Estelle Brookner, Secretary
AJR Social Services Dept
Tel: 020 8385 3070**

Companions of London

Incorporating
Hampstead Home Care

A long established company providing care in your home

*Assistance with personal care
General household duties
Respite care
Medical appointment service*

**'OUR CARE IS YOUR CARE'
020 7483 0212/0213**



SPRING GROVE

214 Finchley Road
London NW3

**London's Most Luxurious
RETIREMENT HOME**

- Entertainment-Activities
- Stress Free Living
- 24 Hour Staffing • Excellent Cuisine
- Full En-Suite Facilities

**Call for more information
or a personal tour**

**020 8446 2117
or 020 7794 4455**

enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk

Simon R Rhodes M.Ch.S. STATE REGISTERED CHIROPODIST

Surgeries at:

**67 Kilburn High Road, NW6 (opp M&S)
Telephone 020 7624 1576**

2 Pangbourne Drive
Stanmore Middx HA7 4QT
Telephone:020 8958 8557

Visiting chiropody service available

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Edvard Munch, *The Scream* (1893)

The primal *Scream* of the Norwegian artist **Edvard Munch** (1863-1944) has been described as the world's most copied painting. The very sight of it evokes mankind's visceral fear of both the known and the unknown. Stolen from art galleries, emblazoned on T-shirts, merchandised to the point of cliché, *The Scream* comes in several versions, like symbolic fliers for Munch's self-portraits which largely convey his loneliness and depression. But if you are looking for *The Scream* at the **Royal Academy's** exhibition, **Edvard Munch by Himself**, you won't find it. What you will find is an odyssey of suffering and self-discovery so intense as to arouse in the viewer a deep and unexpected compassion.

Shades of Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* come to mind when you realise that Munch never wanted to sell a painting, so much a part of his private hell had his art become. Early in his career he abandoned Oslo's radical Naturalist movement and turned increasingly to interior expression, which generated a 60-year span of self-

portraiture. His art could be as convoluted as that of Van Gogh, whom he admired, but he later turned his obsessions to exposing the real or imaginary power of the femme-fatale - whether his mistress, Tulla Larsen, Charlotte Corday or Salome, whose smirking power fascinates him.

Munch's mother died when he was 6 and his elder sister when he was 16, and both tragedies inform and dignify the work of this nineteenth-century painter who is both Symbolist and Expressionist. His narrative of his early work describes his sister as the unattainable nymph of the deep waters; his mother is equally unfathomable. Later he meets Larsen, a demanding heiress, and their liaison ends in a fight which results in Munch accidentally shooting his left hand. This accident, the blood on his hands, the blood red hair of his mistress, become artistic symbols as Munch increasingly sees himself as the hapless target of the 'scarlet woman'. The gunshot episode inspires several paintings in which the murder of the French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat by Charlotte Corday implies Munch's exposure to a vampiric, cold-blooded mistress.

Rejecting marriage, Munch nevertheless longs for the love of an earth-mother, who is neither ethereal waif nor femme fatale and he finds her for a while in the arms of his 17-year-old model Ingeborg Kaurin. The works which feature the two of them show him at his happiest - no longer a victim of his own misogyny, but a man at peace, both father and lover to a wise, young brown-haired woman with an air both worldly and disarming. It is the strength of these paintings which makes you feel party to a certain tenderness between them.

But Munch, deeply influenced by his contemporaries, Freud and Nietzsche, whom he never met, has a breakdown and returns to his native Norway from Germany, where he first made his name. Increasingly his work illuminates his loneliness: he is a man of bright colours and deep pessimism - an artist of unforgettable power.

REVIEWS

Tales of extremity

TINI'S PEOPLE

by Edith M. Kozdon

Philadelphia, PA: Xlibris Corporation, www.xlibris.com, 2005, 284pp., paperback

FROM LWÓW TO PARMA: A YOUNG WOMAN'S ESCAPE FROM NAZI-OCCUPIED POLAND

by Klara Rosenfeld

London: Vallentine Mitchell, Library of Holocaust Testimonies, 2005, 160pp., paperback

A DANCE OF LIFE

by Stella Mann

London: Kamal Editions 2005, telephone (PA to Stella Mann) 020 8346 6881, hardcover

I often wonder what were the personal characteristics or specific conditions needed to survive a hell more fiery than any medieval deist could have imagined. Extraordinary character and willpower? Good connections? The assistance of 'righteous Gentiles'? Pure luck? Or a combination of all these and more? Each new memoir by a Holocaust victim which appears - and this is a genre which has grown exponentially in the last few years - inevitably helps to cast light on how all of us may act, in so far as we have options, in conditions of extremity.

Common to the survivors whose tales of horror are told in these memoirs is that all of them - 'ordinary' people - were caught up in a war in whose politics they had little, if any, interest. Somehow, in their hour of greatest need, they obtained the support they were seeking.

Tini (Ernestine) Kozdon was born into a large, traditional Jewish family in a village in Austrian Moravia. Amidst the complex religious and national patchwork of this part of Central Europe, the author herself encountered little, if any, anti-Jewish prejudice in early years. Having broken out of an unsuccessful arranged marriage, Tini, divorced with two

children, married Willi Kozdon, a German Catholic - a marriage unprecedented in her community. Despite pressure from the increasingly influential Nazi authorities, certain members - though by no means all - of Willi's family, and even Tini herself, Willi refused even to consider abandoning his wife. One day, in emotional turmoil, he spoke freely to a sympathetic stranger, unaware that the man was a Gestapo officer. But Bernhard Asmus, a policeman transferred to the Gestapo by official command, was no ordinary Gestapo officer: he was from then on to intercede on a number of occasions to help Tini and Willi, and other needy individuals, Jews and non-Jews alike.

Tini's daughter Hedy perished in a camp; her son Fredi managed to get to Britain, where he joined the Free Czech Army and married a Scottish girl, who has brought Tini's tale to life. As Tini's world crashes, it is her total bewilderment at finding succour on the part of a Catholic German husband and later - of all people - a Gestapo officer, which suffuses this book and constitutes its poignancy.

Klara Rosenfeld's memoir too is a tale told by an ordinary person, one whose only wish is to be allowed to get on with her life. Klara too is a member of a large, traditional Jewish family. However, unlike in Tini's case, Klara's 'Aryan' boyfriend ends their relationship under his family's influence, leaving her devastated. As the Nazi grip on Lwów tightens, she is guided through her crisis by Italian soldiers who, disgusted by the barbarism of their German allies, enable her to reach, with false documentation, the safety of a convent in Italy. As with Tini, Klara's reaction to the end of the war is ambivalent: she has little family left to rejoice with.

Yet it seems to me that Klara's book ends more abruptly than it needs to have ended. A 21-page introduction by a scholar connected to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem institute on the Nazi 'liquidation' of the Jews of Lwów, valuable though it may be in another context, here seems superfluous: the political history of the Holocaust,

including that of the Jews of Lwów, has been told in numerous other publications. It doesn't seem to fit in with the deeply personal narrative in this latest contribution to Vallentine Mitchell's admirable Library of Holocaust Testimonies series. Only on the back cover do we learn, in no more than a few dozen words, that, following the end of the war, Klara joined other Jewish survivors on a 'kibbutz' in Palma, that the next year she accompanied hundreds of other survivors on a ship bound for Palestine, that the ship was caught by the British, and that the passengers were sent to prison camps in Atlit. On her release, Klara chose to stay in Palestine, met her husband-to-be, and lives there to this day. It's a great pity that this extremely relevant information on Klara's further life was not expanded into at the very least a postscript.

Three years ago, I wrote a profile in this journal of the indomitable, diminutive, larger-than-life - call her what you will - 91-year-old Stella Mann. Born in Vienna, Stella began dancing lessons at the age of ten; at 17 she opened her own dancing school. Having fled Austria in 1938, leaving her family behind, she spent the next four years on the run, experiencing imprisonment and deportation. In 1942 she began working in Brussels in a Jewish orphanage. Immediately after the war she married a British soldier and returned with him to his native England. Here she restarted her dancing career, out of which came forth the fabled Stella Mann School of Dancing, which remains to this day in London's Hampstead area. Since her retirement in 1985, Stella has pursued her interests in painting, poetry, bridge and computers, among, no doubt, many other things.

Now, at the tender age of 94, Stella has brought out a publication which seriously defies description. Stylishly bound in purple, this weighty (in all senses of the word) tome of some 75 (unnumbered) outside pages is a stunning compilation of photographs, news clippings, poems and splendid art work. Alternate pages of this magnificent publication flow with the

author's stream-of-consciousness autobiography, a tale told in laconic, guileless verse.

But don't expect to see Stella's *magnum opus* lying on your coffee table! Many of her former students have requested copies and it is a limited-edition publication. I had to fight hard to hang on to my review copy.

Howard Spier

Unbearable desolation

THE WHITE CITIES: REPORTS FROM FRANCE 1925-39

by Joseph Roth

Granta Books, November 2004,
301 pages, £14.99, hardcover

The numinous title of this fascinating book is somewhat deceptive. However, the subtitle and the date span serve as indicators of the vastly contrasting range of material to be found within this volume, ably translated, as ever, by Michael Hoffman, which leads up to Roth's untimely death in May 1939.

The 'white cities' of Provence - Avignon, Marseilles, Arles, Nîmes, Tournon, Lyons, Vienne and others - which Roth recorded in reports to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* - are emblematic of the love affair with France which the author experienced in his early years in the country. The tone is often lyrical, as Roth contrasts the cities he had dreamed of as a boy to his 'gray [sic] childhood in gray towns'. Nevertheless, acute observations of detail and atmosphere place the descriptions well within the bounds of reality and bring the locations vibrantly to life, or, in the case of Vienne - where 'nothing happens ... any more' - confer a death warrant on a town in which the policeman and the visiting author are 'the only living beings'.

Among a welter of colourful imagery is a striking depiction of the hapless bull trapped inside the amphitheatre at Nîmes, where bullfights are offered as Sunday entertainment: 'Now he is the embodiment of all the martyrs of

history. Now he looks like a mocked, beaten Jew from the East, now like a victim of the Spanish inquisition, now like a gladiator torn to pieces, now like a tortured girl facing a medieval witch trial, and in his eyes there is a glimmer of that luminous pain that burned in the eyes of Christ.' It appears that the author and a small white dog are the bull's only supporters. 'But what can two poor pups like us do against five thousand people?'

Written in 1925, this report uncannily foreshadows what is to come. Roth believes that Jews fare relatively well in Paris, a city where fun prevails; even in Vienna's Prater, he asserts, 'there is almost no hint of anti-Semitism Because people go to the Prater to enjoy themselves. In the Taborstrasse, on the way back ... the anti-Semite begins to feel anti-Semitic again.' Nevertheless, danger signals erupt in the most unforeseen places. For example, a reunion of 'La Renaissance Latine', formed to counter 'the ill effects of Teutonic and Bolshevik culture', opens with fascist-style singing. And this is only 1926.

The rise of Nazism inevitably casts a shadow over many of the later extracts. As we have seen, France was not exempt from the same curse. An essay in 1931 on the celebrated French novelist Georges Bernanos, who had just brought out a book on the anti-Semitic publicist Edouard Drumont, underlines the danger of such a publication 'at a time when anti-Semitism is making great strides in Germany'. Even more noxious is the indifference to the atrocities in Germany displayed by French - and Western - intellectuals, who, Roth observes, 'have taken refuge in the myth of the "German soul"'.

Roth's prescience in repeatedly advocating some form of European unity - the Third Reich excluded, of

course - as a guarantor of future peace, is a rare indication of a more optimistic strain of thought. But always prevalent are signs of the inner demons of drink and depression which plague this gifted and highly intelligent writer and, as he sits in a bistro in June 1938, watching the demolition of the hotel which was his home for 16 years, the desolation he so poignantly conveys is almost unbearable.

Emma Klein

To My Holocaust Mother

The photo from another age and land
Shows urging eyes and your protecting
hand

Which cared for me till I was ten
And on my own could stand.

From all the troubles you shielded me,
From hate, violence and anxiety.
My growing-up was not yours to enjoy,
Nor my thanks when no longer a little
boy.

They demeaned and mistreated us for
many years.
Deported father and you. Aunts Metah,
Hertha and Lizie,
Uncle Emil, cousins Hugo and Young
Eva too.
Dismissively gassing and burning all
of you.

No grave is there to hold your ash,
No trace of the victims was to remain,
Only the photo and these words now
survive,
To remind us of your love and lives.

Gert Jacobowitz (Gerry Jayson)

WANTED TO BUY German and English Books

Bookdealer, AJR member,
welcomes invitations to view and
purchase valuable books

Robert Hornung
10 Mount View, Ealing
London W5 1PR
Email: hornungbooks@aol.com
Tel: 020 8998 0546



Letter from Israel

'After the holidays' is a key concept in Israeli life and culture. It is the stock answer to such questions as 'When will the car be mended?', 'When will the plumber come?' and 'When can I see the doctor/dentist/hairdresser?'.

In Israel religious festivals are marked on a national level. Schools and offices close and everyone slopes off to the beach or synagogue, according to their inclination. This year, because of the strange concatenation of the solar and lunar calendars, the Jewish holidays (lunar) fell solely on weekdays (solar) for a month. This meant that during that period Israelis passed routinely from weekend to holiday to weekend to holiday, with scarcely a single working (or shopping) day in between. In the entire month of October there were just eight full working days.

Schoolchildren rejoiced, and probably so did their teachers. Their parents, however, were less happy. Anyone working in a tenured position also benefited, as all those days off were both compulsory and paid. Good Jewish housewives slaved incessantly in steamy kitchens while their husbands prayed for the good of their souls (but displayed less concern for the state of their soles).

When the month was over and normal service was resumed, a huge sigh of relief could be heard throughout the country as children went back to school, parents returned to work, and the shops filled with customers once again.

However, many supermarket shelves remained empty as produce had not been picked, milk had not been pasteurised, and poultry and beef had not been ritually slaughtered during that time.

But as I sat with my German teacher a couple of days after the holiday month ended, both our phones rang incessantly. Now, my new curtains would be put up, her bridge group would meet again, my new treadmill would be delivered.

It all seems somewhat loony.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Annely Juda Fine Art

23 Dering Street (off New Bond Street)
Tel: 020 7629 7578
Fax: 020 7491 2139

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

Sitting comfortably in her cosy Edgware flat, surrounded by pictures of her children and grandchildren, there is little to show how Judy Benton saved her life by escaping from Nazi Germany in 1939.

Judy's father and mother-to-be escaped the pogroms of their native Poland to settle in Meissen, Germany, in 1919 and, by dint of hard work, established a flourishing factory making soaps, perfumes and candles. They lived nearby the factory in a spacious apartment. Judy, their second daughter, born in 1921, was a rather sickly child and, unfortunately, did not benefit from a happy childhood. Beginning school belatedly at the age of seven was a true awakening. She excelled at art, needlework, sport and German, and kept her place at the top of the class. 'I loved to go to school and couldn't get there quickly enough', she recalls

Though her parents gave little encouragement, at the age of ten Judy won a scholarship to the high school, where she was practically the only Jewish child. But when the Hitler Youth banned classmates from speaking to her, life became unbearable. Seated apart, her desk was marked with a yellow star underneath which was written 'Dirty Jew'. By 1937 her family were totally ostracised and it was not safe to walk in the street. Judy's parents did contemplate leaving the country, approaching an aunt in the USA, but nothing came of it.

One day in August 1939, arriving home to find her parents had been taken away by the Gestapo, Judy was warned by neighbours that they were coming back for her. She decided to leave immediately, having the presence of mind to take her stateless German passport, birth certificate, her parents' *Ketubah* and a little money, and catch the train for Dresden. At the synagogue, she was told that a Kindertransport train was leaving from Leipzig that evening so, fortified by sandwiches and extra cash, she set off.

At Leipzig station, where distraught parents were pushing their children onto the train, people assumed that the 17-year-old Judy was a travelling

PROFILE

Ronald Channing

Judy Benton

'It was hatred that destroyed people'



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

companion. This gave her a brainwave: she bought a toy nurse's uniform from a nearby shop and, with her newly adopted status, nobody thought to question her when she rejoined the train. Before they crossed the Dutch border, Nazi Brownshirts stormed the train and Judy discarded her Star of David necklace and ring. It was a completely different story in Utrecht, where large numbers of Jewish women arrived with mugs of hot chocolate and pastries for the children.

After crossing the Channel, they arrived at a London terminus where all those tired and distressed children were taken to individual homes. For Judy, Woburn House arranged accommodation in London's East End, where she was amazed to speak to a policeman in Yiddish! Soon she was found a place at an agricultural college near Guildford, training people to join kibbutzim in Israel/Palestine. There she met her future husband, John Benton, who was also a refugee, from Berlin.

They married in St Albans in 1942, having been evacuated to a hostel in the town. As 'friendly enemy aliens', they both undertook war work, John making pontoon bridges and Judy sewing uniforms and fire-watching in the

evenings. At that time, she found English people unfriendly, the weather cold and damp, the food strange - and being called an enemy alien and a 'bloody German' did not help. They moved to a rented flat in Chiswick in 1943, the year their daughter Ruth was born, with John coming home for the weekends, and later lived in Hampstead and Cricklewood. At the war's end, Judy found out that her parents had been sent to Auschwitz, but her sister had reached safety in Denmark. Their son David was born in 1947.

Despite her young family, Judy continued to go to work. After establishing her own dry-cleaning business, she acquired a small B&B hotel in Paddington, regularly welcoming foreign guests. In 1967 John's American employer invited his family to settle in Long Island. Judy enjoyed the American life style, travelling daily to New York to work in the accounts office of a travel agent. Her daughter Ruth, who had married and remained behind, encouraged her parents to return to England to be with their two grandchildren, which they did in 1980, but only two years later John died at the tragically early age of 62. David completed his education in the US to become today one of the country's leading hoteliers.

Judy was appointed a warden of a B'nai Brith home in Golders Green, on duty day and night but, after moving to her flat in Edgware in 1982, she joined the staff of a local dry cleaners and stayed for several years. Judy is delighted to have befriended her near neighbour and founder of the Kindertransport movement, Bertha Leverton, and is always happy to volunteer her help with mailings to members and catering at their functions. The children's stories that she writes, alas, remain unpublished, but are assuredly appreciated by her four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, both in England and in the US, where she is a frequently welcome visitor. Invited to return to Meissen in recent years, she told the town's leaders that she no longer bears hatred - it was hatred that destroyed people.

INSIDE the AJR

Inaugural meeting in Cardiff - the 19th Midlands and South group

Myrna Glass welcomed everyone, explaining how the AJR groups had developed over the last seven years as well as the role played by the Claims Conference in many people's lives. It was agreed that the new group would aim to meet three or four times a year, with Monday 3 April suggested as a date for the next meeting.

Myrna Glass

A right Scottish knees-up

Irene Conway entertained an audience of almost 50 with songs and stories at a pre-Chanukah Party in the New Synagogue Hall in Glasgow. It's not often our members get a chance to sing 'Daisy, Daisy, Give Me Your Answer Do', shortly after joining in with energetic renderings of traditional Hungarian and German songs!

Clare Singerman and Steven Anson

Next meeting: Sun 19 March

Lively entertainment in Yorkshire

Members from 10 Yorkshire towns met at the Bradford Synagogue Hall in Shipley for the music-hall atmosphere of an AJR pre-Chanukah Party. Following the lively entertainment provided by Alan Harris with Hot Rhythm and Dynamite, all enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea. A number of members originally from Budapest met for the first time.

Susanne Green

Everyone a winner in Cambridge

Danka and John Binks organised the much-appreciated Chanukah spread, at whose heart were latkes and donuts, which Myrna had brought from London. Following a multi-faceted quiz, Anne Bender, who had contributed the quiz prizes (everyone a winner!), spoke of the origins of Chanukah and lit the candles. A jolly morning.

Francis Deutsch

Next meeting: Thur 9 Feb. Ben Barkow, 'The Wiener Library: Past, Present and Future'

Chamber music concert at Liverpool social

We were treated to a delightful chamber concert by Jim Hutton, violinist with the

Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and his wife Nicola on keyboard, making the audience think of the vast performance and composition talents lost in the Holocaust. Olga, now living in Liverpool, was able to attend her first AJR meeting along with her sister Rachael, who was in hiding in Italy during the war.

Gerald Jayson

Party atmosphere in Ilford

Over 30 people attended our pre-Chanukah Party. Myrna taxed our brains with a challenging quiz, the candles were lit and we partook of Chanukah fare. There was a happy party atmosphere as friends chatted together and looked forward to 2006 and sharing more time with our AJR colleagues.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wed 1 Feb. Prof Leslie Baruch Brent, 'A Refugee and Transplantation Immunologist'

Wessex Jolly

Our thanks to Myrna Glass for organising a pre-Chanukah Jolly attended by over 30 avid partygoers. A lively quiz got everyone in the festive mood. Two fourth-generation boys (five months and three and a half years respectively) gladdened the laps of the oldest present. Thanks also to Mark Goldfinger for his last-minute location of a welcoming new venue - the Acacia Hotel - for our gathering.

Susy and Cliff Ellis

Afternoon tea in Newcastle

Among those present at our pre-Chanukah social were new members from Newcastle and South Shields and a former hidden child from Boulogne. In an update on Holocaust education, Henry Ross JP emphasised the need for the continuing education of people about these events. The Kol Hashirim Choir then enchanted us with songs from classical, popular and Jewish works.

Walter Knoblauch

Popular event in Manchester

Our pre-Chanukah social - a popular event in our calendar - was greatly appreciated by some 60 members and guests. We were entertained by the talented Kletzmer duo Shta'im Lecha'im. Seasonal refreshments were served and there was a most congenial atmosphere. Thanks are due to Susanne Green for her invaluable help with the arrangements. Social worker Barbara Dorrity was also in attendance to help people with claim forms.

Werner Lachs

Lunchtime hospitality in South-West Midlands

Having once again enjoyed the lunchtime hospitality of Ruth and Alan Jackson, we watched a film about the founding of Israel provided by one of our members, Ruth Price. Among issues discussed were visits available for refugees to the towns where they were born, and attracting more people to our meetings.

Richard Neubauer

Pinner's 8th birthday

Some 50 people attended our annual Chanukah Party in Pinner *shul*, organised by Vera Gellman and Irene Marcus. Gaynor Ellen, daughter-in-law of Alf Keiles, sang for us to the recorded accompaniment of her musician husband. She has a wonderful voice and charisma to go with it and she gave us a wide variety of songs from musicals and traditional jazz.

Ernest Simon

Next meeting: Thur 2 Feb. Rev Malcolm Weisman, 'Are there Jews beyond Watford?'

Alaskan Jewish life discussed at Leeds HSFA meeting

Our guest speaker, Geoffrey Brownhut, said there were about 6,000 Jews in Alaska out of a total population of 2 million. Jews were originally attracted to the state by the fur trade, but many came as members of military bases and stayed on. Many local enterprises, including Alaskan Airlines, now the fifth biggest airline in the USA, were founded by Jews.

Martin Kapel

Watching wastelines in North London

Our Chanukah Party was a tremendous success, not least due to the efforts of Helen and Leo Horn, who plied us with latkes and the like 'for the benefit of our wastelines'. Surprisingly no one answered all the quiz questions devised by Myrna in the time allowed. What we did have though was a wonderful time, so thank you for everyone's effort.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thur 23 Feb. Peter Sinclair, 'Journeys through Europe'

Oxford: a well-integrated group

We had a well-attended and enjoyable early Chanukah Party and quiz along with tasty traditional fare, followed by a discussion on the history of Chanukah and other festivals. We are becoming a well-integrated group and must thank Susie Bates, our local organiser. We've

now fixed dates for meetings for the whole of 2006.
Oliver Lawson

Next meeting: Tues 21 Feb. Rev J. Fieldsend, 'Can We Believe?'

Essex booby prize

Everyone being in a Chanukah Party mood, Myrna organised a Chanukah quiz. The first prize was won by Edna Levis, a Kindertransport member, but the booby prize went jointly to Boris Chait, who fought in the Polish army, and to Sidney Graham, who was born in Poland and fought in the British army.

Larry Lisner

Next meeting: Tues 14 Feb. 4th Birthday Celebration - Food and Music

Real party atmosphere at Brighton & Hove Sarid

There was a real party atmosphere and Fausta Shelton had arranged the tables with a colourful array of food. Following a quiz with many prizes, members enjoyed traditional Chanukah fare.

Next meeting: Mon 20 Feb. Susan Conway, 'Wills and Inheritance Tax'

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Norwich Wed 8 Feb. Lunchtime Get-together

West Midlands (Birmingham) Sun 12 Feb. Two lunchtime Get-togethers in different parts of Birmingham. For details call group contact

Surrey Sun 12 Feb. Get-together. For details call Edmée Barta

Kent Thur 16 Feb. Frank Miller, 'The Story of the Bagel' plus Bagel Lunch

Herts Tues 28 Feb. (if Jan. meeting does not take place due to bad weather)



Sisters Olga Ancona, left, and Rachel Hastings at Liverpool Chanukah Party. Olga is a camp survivor; Rachel survived the war in hiding in Italy. Olga, for whom this was the first AJR meeting, recently came to live in Liverpool from Rome to be near her sister.

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Fausta Shelton 01273 734 648

Bristol/Bath
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

Cambridge
Lisel Eisner 01223 356721

Dundee
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

Glasgow
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

Harrogate
Inge Little 01423 886254

Hertfordshire
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

HGS
Gerda Torrence 020 8883 9425

Hull
Bob Rosner 0148 2649156

Ilford
Meta Roseneil 020 8505 0063

Leeds HSFA
Trude Silman 0113 2251628

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

Norfolk (Norwich)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

North London
Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

Oxford
Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Sheffield
Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London
Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)
Ruth Jackson 01386 552264

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Weald of Kent
Max and Jane Dickson
01892 541026

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Ernest Aris 0121 353 1437

Myrna Glass, AJR South and Midlands Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

Susanne Green, AJR Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
15 Cleve Road, London, NW6
Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 15 February 2006
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Gina Monty

Honorary President of Wizo UK

KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 6 February 2006

Leslie Brent

Immunologist

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT FROM
FEBRUARY 2006, THE DAY CENTRE WILL
NO LONGER BE OPEN ON SUNDAYS

February Afternoon Entertainment

Wed 1	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 2	Paul Coleman
Mon 6	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 7	CLOSED
Wed 8	Katinka Seiner
Thur 9	Jack Davidoff
Mon 13	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 14	CLOSED
Wed 15	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 16	Jenny Kossew
Mon 20	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 21	CLOSED
Wed 22	Kentertainers
Thur 23	Michael Heaton
Mon 27	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 28	CLOSED

DIARY DATES

30 January	20th anniversary of opening of Day Centre
25 April	Yom Hashoah
11-18 June	Eastbourne holiday
27 June	AGM
9-16 July	Lytham St Annes holiday

For further information about any of these events, please call us on 020 8385 3070.

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merriion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

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

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Births

The Trustees, Management and Staff of the AJR wish Ruth and Eric Finestone mazeltov on the birth of their ninth grandchild, and Ruth's father Frank Henderson's eleventh great-grandchild.

The Trustees, Management and Staff of the AJR wish Dr Bea Lewkowicz and husband Malcolm Miller mazeltov on the birth of a daughter, Julie, a sister for Alexander and Benjamin.

Deaths

Ashbrook, Herbert, formerly Hermann Eschelbacher, Düsseldorf, son of Rabbi Dr Max Eschelbacher. Died peacefully on 11 November 2005 at Sunridge Court Residential Home, London, aged 93. Retired antiquarian bookseller of rare erudition. Much missed by his sister Nancy Wolfson of Birmingham and her family.

Geiringer, Hedvika (Hedy), born 1914 in Bratislava, died peacefully on 2 December after a short illness. She will be sadly missed by family and friends.

Hahn, Rita passed away 20.12.05. She was loved by all and will be sadly missed by Rita, Kurt, Steven and family, Laurence and family, Freddy and all remaining friends. Never forgotten.

Ney, Elisabeth (Lisbet), born Stuttgart 6.2.11, the youngest of five children. Died peacefully in London 19.12.05. Mourned by her nieces and nephew, their extended families and her many friends in Britain, Israel and the USA. Senior Social Worker Nottingham and London. Avid concert- and opera-goer and lover of the arts. Will be remembered by the many children she helped, including through the Kindertransport.

Spiegel, Natalie, née Margulis, has died at the age of 82. A Kindertransport member, Natalie became a top figure in the world of couture as a designer of wedding dresses.

In Memoriam

In memory of **Richard Grunberger**, the distinguished Editor-in-Chief of the *AJR Journal*, who passed away in February 2005 - the Trustees, Management and Staff of the AJR.

ACACIA LODGE

Mrs Pringsheim, S.R.N. MATRON
For Elderly, Retired and Convalescent

(Licensed by Borough of Barnet)

- Single and Double Rooms.
- Ensuite facilities, CH in all rooms.
- Gardens, TV and reading rooms.
- Nurse on duty 24 hours.
- Long and short term and respite, including trial period if required.

Between £400 and £500 per week
020 8445 1244/020 8446 2820 office hours
020 8455 1335 other times
37-39 Torrington Park, North Finchley,
London N12 9TB

**Leo Baeck Housing Association Ltd
Clara Nehab House
Residential Care Home**

All single rooms with en suite bath/shower
Short stays/Respite and 24 hour
Permanent Care. Large attractive gardens,
Ground Floor Lounge and Dining rooms,
Lift access to all floors. Easy access to
local shops and public transport

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

**STUDIO FLAT
AVAILABLE FOR RENT**

at 15 CLEVE ROAD
SINGLE OCCUPANCY
£452 PER MONTH

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT
CAROL ROSSEN ON
020 8385 3070

Colvin Home Care

Care through quality and
professionalism

Celebrating our 25th Anniversary
25 years of experience in providing
the highest standards of care in the
comfort of your own home



1 hour to 24 hours care

Registered through the National Care Standard Commission

Call our 24 hour tel 020 7794 9323
www.colvin-nursing.co.uk

2s COMPANY

2s Company specialises in
companionship, whether for yourself,
your family or friends. We can be there
at any time and any place to accompany
you on any shopping trips, journeys,
holidays, walks or even a cuppa. Living
in or living out.

Why not call us for an informal chat on
020 7586 8988 mobile: 0778 880 8907
ALL STAFF SCREENED AND VETTED

**HOLIDAY FOR
NORTHERN MEMBERS**

Sunday 9 July -
Sunday 16 July 2006

AT THE FERNLEA HOTEL
St Annes

The cost,
including Dinner, Bed and
Breakfast, is £405 per person

The hotel charges a
supplement per room for sea view
or deluxe room

Programme includes
ENTERTAINMENT
OUTINGS

PLEASE BOOK EARLY TO AVOID
DISAPPOINTMENT

Please contact Ruth Finestone on
020 8385 3070

PillarCare

Quality support and care at home

- Hourly Care from 1 hour-24 hours
- Live-In/Night Duty/Sleepover Care
- Convalescent and Personal Health Care
- Compassionate and Affordable Service
- Professional, Qualified, Kind Care Staff
- Registered with the CSCI and UKHCA

Call us on Freephone 0800 028 4645

Studio 1 Utopia Village
7 Chalcot Road, NW1 8LH

ALTERATIONS

OF ANY KIND TO
LADIES' FASHIONS

I also design and make
children's clothes

West Hampstead area 020 7328 6571

SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household
electrical work

PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518
Mobile: 0795 614 8566

Arts & Events Diary February

Mon 6 Prof Irene Bruegel, 'When Bohemian Jews Became Germans' Club 43

Mon 13 Prof Michael Alpert, 'Intellectual Voyages in Medieval Spain' Club 43

Tues 14 John Goldsmith, 'Technology Transfer from Nazi Germany: A Refugee Engineer's Story' Continental Britons seminar series. Arts B127, Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, 4.30 pm.

Wed 15 Prof Dennis B. Klein, 'The Return of Repressed Memory: Freud and Other Jews at the Genesis of Psychoanalysis' Venue: Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel Leo Baeck Institute on 020 7580 3493. Wiener Library-Leo Baeck Institute-Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex Lecture series

To Sun 19 'The Last Goodbye: The Rescue of Children from Nazi Europe' Jewish Museum, Finchley

Mon 20 Dr Gwen Williams, 'The Early Detective Story (to the 1930s)' Club 43

Tues 21 'Jews and Others: Multiculturalism Today' Panellists include Melanie Phillips and Lord Bikhui Parekh - part of series celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Jews' readmittance to England London Jewish Cultural Centre, 7.30 pm

Sat 25 Feb to Sun 5 March Jewish Book Week. All events at Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1. To purchase tickets tel 0870 060 1798 or visit www.jewishbookweek.com

Mon 27 Irene Gill MA, 'Refugees in North Oxford during World War II: A Child's Eye View' Club 43

Tues 28 Dr Helen Fry, 'Refugees in Uniform: Germans Who Fought for Britain in World War II' Continental Britons seminar series. Arts B127, Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, 4.30 pm.

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Centre for German-Jewish Studies Tel Chana Moshenska on 01273 678837

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Hans Seelig on 01442 254360

Jewish Museum, Camden Town, tel 020 7284 1997

Jewish Museum, Finchley, tel 020 8349 1143

London Jewish Cultural Centre, tel 020 8457 5000

Search Notices

Domestic servants in England - a historian, I am searching for people of Austrian or German origin who escaped to England from Nazi Germany in the late 1930s and worked as domestic servants in English homes. Any info please to Traude Bollauf, Neulerchenfelderstrasse 5-7, Stiege 5, Tuer 2 A-1160 Vienna, Austria

Feiner, Ruth - wrote lyrics to popular songs composed by my father, Ernst Freudenheim, in Berlin in late 1920s. Apparently emigrated to UK. Any info please to Tom L. Freudenheim, 3723 Harrison St., NW Washington DC 20015 tel/fax: 202/966-1264 mobile: 2 0 2 / 2 0 3 - 8 5 8 5 e m a i l : tom@freudenheim.com

Frauenschule Wirtschaftliche - If you have info on anyone in this school of household management in Wolfratshausen/Oberbayern in 1926-38, please contact Hannelore Greiner at Historischer Verein Wolfratshausen, Loisachufer 1, D 82515 Wolfratshausen, tel 0049 8171 10512 fax 0049 8171 407959

Fuld (first name?) - girl born Frankfurt am Main 1923, parents Frieda and Otto. Left for England on Kindertransport in 1939. Any info please to Rosl Reuther at GundR.Reuther@t-online.de

Harzberg, Franz - born May 1921, may have arrived in London from Upper Silesia around 1939. Had nominated address of Manville Road, London. Any info please to Geoff Levy tel + 64 9 5286314 Home + 64 9 3796302 Work + 64 21 688315 mobile

Leidler, Ludwig - born Vienna 26.1.32, Kindertransport to England 1939. Any info please contact Peter Breuer, 27 Balmoral Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SSO 7DG, tel 01702 340 077

Markus, Edgar - my grandfather and his parents, Rosa and Josef (or Alfred) Markus, left Vienna in August 1939 for London. Any info please to Vivian Hirsch at vivian@vivianhirsch.com

Michaeli, Gilah - last known address Cotleigh Road, London NW6 in 1980s. Any info please contact Peter Block on 0 2 0 7 3 2 6 7 1 7 6 o r a t peter.block@virgin.net

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Belgian compensation - Solidarité 3000

Holocaust survivors from Belgium who have previously received less than 3,000 Euros in compensation for lost or stolen assets from the Belgian Indemnification Commission (also known as the Buysse Commission), the German government or other restitution programmes will receive an award from the Fondation du Judaïsme de Belgique, a Belgian Jewish foundation.

The Solidarité 3000 initiative will entitle Holocaust survivors who lived in Belgium between 1 May 1940 (the German occupation) and September 1944 (the liberation) to a minimum of 3,000 Euros in reparations. Holocaust victims who have previously received less than 3,000 Euros in compensation are eligible for the difference up to that amount. Holocaust victims who have never applied for compensation for lost or stolen assets, or previously been ineligible to apply, are now entitled to claim.

The Belgian Indemnification Commission was established by the Belgian government together with banks and insurance companies to provide compensation for assets sequestered from Jews during the Nazi era in Belgium. The residual funds from the Commission will now pass to the Fondation du Judaïsme de Belgique and the interest earned will be used to finance Solidarité 3000.

The deadline to apply to the Solidarité 3000 initiative is **31 March 2006**. Completed application forms, which are available from this office together with an English translation, should be sent by post to the Fondation du Judaïsme de Belgique, Avenue Dupetiaux 68, 1060 Brussels, Belgium.

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. Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.

AROUND
and
ABOUT

with Ronald Channing

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre 20 years on

Almost unbelievably, it is 20 years since the AJR's Day Centre first opened its doors to members. Ludwig Spiro, then the AJR's long-serving Honorary Treasurer, and now its Life President, had by 1984 established the need for a day centre in north-west London and, in the following year, with the full backing of the AJR Charitable Trust, he set about finding and financing a building suitable for conversion. The Trustees of the Paul Balint Charitable Trust generously agreed to fund the purchase of 15 Cleve Road in West Hampstead, Lucas Mellinger was appointed architect, Ludwig's emphasis on the scheme's eight sheltered flats helped to obtain planning permission, and the Sobel Centre proffered their expertise.

During the development phase, thanks to the generosity of Rabbi Rodney Mariner and Belsize Square Synagogue, permission was granted for temporary use of the synagogue hall. The centre opened there for two days a week with an AJR organiser, Sandra Randall, and a number of volunteers, including Susie Kaufman, Eleanor Angel and Helen Grunberger, who undertook the cooking. From the very first it proved extremely popular.

The Paul Balint Day Centre in Cleve Road, to which the Day Centre was transferred in July 1987, was a purpose-built centre offering delicious continental-style lunches, keep fit lessons, painting and arts and crafts classes, cards, chess, bingo, discussion groups, talks and afternoon entertainment, a trolley shop, hairdressing, tea dances and, of course, care and companionship. An AJR Club and other cultural events were organised in the evenings. Sylvia Matus, who only recently retired, was appointed Day Centre Organiser and, with her deputy Renée Lee, served for many years making a real home from home. Ruth Anderman was responsible for catering. At its official opening in September 1987, attended by Sir Geoffrey Finsburg MP, AJR chairman



Day Centre Organiser Susie Kaufman

Theo Marx referred to the Day Centre as 'the biggest project ever undertaken by the AJR'.

Today's centre still goes out of its way to satisfy the needs and appetites of German-speaking Jewish refugees, many of whom rely on the centre's organised transport to get there. As well as a shop, other services and entertainment, everyone enjoys the excellent lunches, cooked on the premises. In the last 12 years a considerable demand has arisen for meals-on-wheels, 800 of which are currently delivered each week in an area from the West End to Northwood. Cards and games feature on Mondays, entertainment and keep fit each twice a week, and sitting in the garden on warm summer days is a favourite. All the Jewish festivals and special birthdays are celebrated. The monthly Luncheon Club, founded and organised by Anne Marx, invariably plays to a full house, and the members of the KT-AJR Kindertransport group also enjoy monthly luncheon meetings.

The number of members attending the centre on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays has suffered an inevitable decline, but for those who regularly come to the centre it is an essential part of their lives, providing support and human companionship. Susie Kaufman, who is now the centre's Organiser, said 'No one is ever turned away. We are looking forward to looking after our members for many

Newsround

Slovakia publishes wartime news

The Slovak Institute of National Memory has begun publishing information on anti-Jewish measures introduced during the Second World War. According to the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York), information publicly available for the first time includes the names of over 10,000 Jewish-owned companies that were liquidated. There will also be detailed information about each Jew persecuted by the state on www.upn.gov.sk.

'British Schindler' honoured in USA

Ninety-six-year-old Sir Nicholas Winton has received the Washington Hebrew Congregation's Edlavitch-Tyser Family Relations Forum Award for humanitarianism. Rabbi Bruce Lustig, the senior rabbi of the 10,000-strong WHC - the largest Liberal congregation in the USA - said he hoped to persuade President Bush to honour Sir Nicholas as well.

Moscow rally against far right

About 3,000 people have marched through Moscow's city centre in a protest against fascism. The Moscow Without Fascists march, organised by a coalition of liberal political parties and human rights groups, was a response to a rally of some 1,500 people against illegal immigrants believed to be the biggest ultra-nationalist street protest in Russia in over a decade.

Hitler's watercolours on eBay

A painting entitled *Munich*, bearing Hitler's signature and described by the seller as a rarity, has been put up for auction on eBay for £1,400 on the Austrian page of the eBay auction website. Another painting by Hitler, *Bad Gastein*, sold for over £3,000.

Mel Gibson to make film on Holocaust theme

Mel Gibson, whose film *The Passion of the Christ* was regarded by many Jews as antisemitic, is to make a film about the Holocaust. The new film tells the love story of Flory Van Beek, a Dutch Jew whose Gentile neighbours hid her from the Nazis. The film is based on her book *Survival in the Valley of Death*.