

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Prisoners remembered, prisoners forgotten

Researching my article on Herbert Sulzbach for our February issue, I was amazed at the extent to which the history of German prisoners-of-war in Britain has fallen into oblivion. Today, nobody seems to know that there were some 400,000 German PoWs in Britain in 1946, dispersed all over the country in some 1,500 camp units. I even discovered a mini-camp in Brondesbury Park, London NW6, about two miles from where I live, where prisoners from Wilton Park in Buckinghamshire, selected to broadcast on the BBC, were lodged in London. Yet the record of the British in re-educating the PoWs in their charge was thoroughly creditable. The official German history of German PoWs in the Second World War explicitly acknowledges that Britain surpassed all other custodian powers in teaching PoWs to respect democratic values and humane standards of behaviour.

Nevertheless, compared to the level of interest in British PoWs in Germany during the Second World War, that in German PoWs in Britain remains negligible. Who now remembers that the original 'one that got away' was a captured Luftwaffe pilot, Franz von Werra? Von Werra was in one respect a rather 'British' PoW: he was determined to escape and eventually reached the then neutral USA, from Canada. As the title of the film about him, *The One That Got Away*, implies, he is often thought to be the only Axis PoW who escaped and reached Germany. But he is remembered, if at all, only because his determination to escape aroused the interest of post-war British audiences eager for stories about escaped PoWs.

The British have an abiding fascination with British PoWs in the Second World War. Books and films about them abounded in the 1950s and 1960s, like the popular film *The Wooden Horse* (1950), the subject of which was a famous escape from Stalag Luft III (with a moving performance from Leo Genn). The sequence of these films ended with *The Great Escape* (1963, with a mega-



The prisoners' yard at Colditz, Oflag IV-C

cast of Anglo-American stars headed by Steve McQueen's motorbike) – appropriately enough, since this mass escape, also from Stalag Luft III, put an end to such attempts: the Germans shot 50 of the recaptured escapees as a deterrent.

The British love affair with escaped PoWs continued with the 1970s TV series *Colditz* (Oflag IV-C); this camp's name so penetrated the public consciousness that, like 'Dunkirk', 'Arnhem' or, for that matter 'Belsen', it came to encapsulate the nation's collective memory of key episodes of the Second World War. The experience of British PoWs in the Far East, where they were exposed to the institutionalised sadism of the Imperial Japanese Army, inspired David Lean's famous *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), with a riveting performance by Alec Guinness. The 1980s TV series *Tenko*, which depicted the appalling treatment endured by British and Allied women in Japanese internment, also showed how interest in Second World War

captives persisted down the decades.

This fascination does not extend to British PoWs in the First World War, about whom very little is known. At most, a few people will have heard of the camp at Ruhleben, near Berlin, where British civilians were interned. The presence of numerous British and French PoWs in Germany during the First World War also vanished rapidly from German public consciousness, unlike that of Russian PoWs, whose suffering is vividly depicted in such bestsellers as Arnold Zweig's *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa* and E. M. Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues*. The fate of the Russian PoWs came to symbolise the senseless suffering of the ordinary soldier in a hopeless war, which was the main lesson of the First World War for liberal intellectuals in post-1918 Germany. The theme reappeared in Jean Renoir's magnificent anti-war film *La Grande Illusion* (1937), which turns in part on the relationship between the captured French officer de Boeldieu and the camp commandant, unforgettably played by Erich von Stroheim.

For the British public after 1945, escape attempts from German camps by British PoWs played their part in the structuring of the national image of the Second World War as a heroic story of British resistance to a menacingly powerful and authoritarian regime. Given that for most of the war, between Dunkirk (May 1940) and D-Day (June 1944), there was no all-important land front in Europe where Britain confronted Germany as it had on the Western Front in the First World War, the triumphant halo of resistance to the Nazis had to be displaced to other areas. The most obvious of these was the war in the air, which acquired an almost mythical stature in public memory, as did civilian defiance of the Luftwaffe's blitz on British cities.

Escape attempts from PoW camps helped to fulfil this function of symbolising

continued on page 2

H.G. Adler: scholar, poet, survivor

An exhibition devoted to H.G. Adler, writer on and historian of the Holocaust, is currently showing at the Maughan Library, King's College London (in the former Public Records Office building, Chancery Lane, until 20 April). The title, 'I Will Bear Witness': H.G. Adler and the Holocaust, describes it very aptly.

Born in Prague in 1910, Adler emerged from that crucible of German-speaking Jewish culture that produced Franz Kafka, Franz Werfel, Max Brod, Egon Erwin Kisch, Leo Perutz and Ernst Weiß. He was a close friend of the Prague-born ethnologist and poet Franz Baermann Steiner; he had Steiner's works published after the latter's early death in exile in Britain. Adler studied literature, musicology and philosophy at Charles University, the prelude to his career as a scholar, poet and novelist. But in February 1942 he was deported to Terezín with his wife, Gertrud Klepetar. As part of his strategy of survival, he determined to write a scholarly account of the camp, which became his pioneering study *Theresienstadt 1941-1945: Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft*.

In October 1944, Adler and his wife were deported to Auschwitz. He was selected for labour, but his wife refused

continued from page 1

the successful resistance of the British and their values to Nazi power and tyranny, and of anchoring it in post-war public consciousness. Sadly, what began as the symbol of a conflict of values has more recently been hollowed out into mere nationalism and anti-German bigotry: the theme music from *The Great Escape* has been adopted by England's football fans as their anthem, alongside their bone-headed ignorant slogan 'Two World Wars and One World Cup'.

Anthony Grenville



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to let her mother die alone and went with her to the gas chamber – one of those acts of selfless devotion by which Jews could assert their moral superiority over their persecutors even at the very end. At Auschwitz, Adler, who came from an assimilated background, learnt about Judaism; he also became aware of the extent to which the state could misuse its power, a central theme in his study of Terezín, and beyond.

After liberation, Adler returned to Prague, but in 1947, with a Communist takeover looming, he left for England, where he spent the rest of his life, dying there in 1988. Shamefully, no British university ever offered him an academic post, and he refused to take one in Germany. His first major work was his meticulously detailed study of life in Terezín, which appeared in 1955. This was followed by *Der verwaltete Mensch: Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland* (1974), another important contribution to the young discipline of the history of the Holocaust. Among his many literary works, the novel *Panorama* (1968) is perhaps the best known.

Regrettably, such early historical studies of the Holocaust as Adler's book on Terezín and Gerald Reitlinger's book on the Final Solution are now largely overlooked. So it is to the credit of Cambridge University Press that at last an English translation of the book on Terezín is to appear in 2008.

Adler's works on the Holocaust made a considerable impact when they appeared. *Theresienstadt* formed an important part of the legal evidence that was presented to the Bundesverfassungsgericht, West Germany's Supreme Court, when it came to pass the Restitution Laws of the 1950s. Adler also advised the prosecution in the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann; Eichmann himself read Adler's study of Terezín in prison, to remind himself of the facts. Hannah Arendt's controversial book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, with its notorious concept of the 'banality of evil', also owed much to Adler, though he disapproved of Arendt's selective use of his work. He is also cited as a respected source in W.G. Sebald's last novel, *Austerlitz*.

On 30 January, a reception was held in conjunction with the exhibition, at which the highlight was an address by Jeremy Adler, H.G. Adler's son by his second marriage and Emeritus Professor of German at King's College. Professor

Adler spoke movingly about his father's Holocaust experiences and his decision to make their description and analysis his life's work. Professor Adler – *der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm* – is an eminent scholar who has written on subjects ranging from Goethe and Kafka to Erich Fried and the Expressionist poet August Stramm. He occupies a place of honour among the children of exiles from the German-speaking lands in Britain who have distinguished themselves as scholars specialising in German literature.

Anthony Grenville

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the
ASSOCIATION OF
JEWISH REFUGEES

TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2007, 11.30 AM

at the

Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Lunch will be served at a cost of £5. Space is limited. If you would like to reserve a place for lunch, please call Head Office on 020 8385 3070 by Thursday 24 May 2007.

Agenda

Annual Report 2006
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 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.

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Views expressed in the *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

How odd of God



There is a debate going on just now about multiculturalism and its discontents. Can Christians and Muslims co-exist harmoniously under the same laws? How many Poles does it take to change an English light bulb? Can Arsenal still call itself an English football club without an Englishman in sight? And where do the Jews fit into all this?

The natives are restless and it shows itself in open hostility or over-compensation. Some of the confusion is semantic, assimilation and integration being used interchangeably. But assimilation means, literally, 'becoming similar' by surrendering identity, being absorbed into the native culture to the point of becoming indistinguishable from the majority. Integration describes a different process with a different outcome whereby shards of distinct cultures, each retaining its own shape and colour, embed themselves in the cement of the host society to form a harmonious mosaic.

Jews are rarely welcomed with open arms whichever way they choose to go. When did you last hear someone say that they actually liked Jews, the way people say they like Italians or those cuddly Austrians? We are not considered cuddly. Antipathy towards Jews is a constant; what varies is the impunity with which it may be expressed. At present, we are in a 'no-holds-barred' phase: antisemitism carries no odium; on the left, it is practised with the abandon that comes with being off the PC leash.

The broad stream of antisemitism has been fed by many tributaries over the years – it has run with blood as well as holy water. At present, daily reinforcements arrive from the world of Islam, from the Arab tendency in some of the media; for the squeamish, there is the all-purpose cloak of anti-Zionism to cover anti-Jewish feeling.

How much of it is our own doing?

Jews enjoy high visibility: there appear to be more of us than can be accounted for by published statistics. Herbert Morrison, Peter Mandelson's grandfather and wartime home secretary, used to say that everybody knew at least one Jew. It convinced him that there had to be 50 million in this country. Hence the myth of the Jewish

lobby, a cohesive power base with an overriding objective. If only! Early in February an advertisement appeared in *The Times* calling for just such a coming together on a programme of apple pieties, except that among the signatories were the names of some notorious self-haters with whom one would be wary of making common cause.

Exerting influence is another matter. In some spheres of public life Jews are prominent, making their individual impact on the economy, the arts, science, medicine, and the law. Two beards and a halo sufficed to change the climate of the twentieth century. Without Marx, Freud, Einstein no book, no painting, no intellectual debate could be what it is today.

So are we Jews cleverer than other people? That would give reasonable cause for complaint. Let's just say that we are efficient converters. Even with a well-laid fire, much of the heat goes up the chimney; a Jewish fire tends to provide a warmer room for the same amount of fuel.

This traditional devotion to achievement – spiritual or material – causes discomfort among the competition. There is an intensity about us, the wariness of the endangered species – call it Jewish arithmetic: one of us has to equal a hundred of them. Disproportion is the word that springs to mind, of numbers to achievements, of individual suffering to collective survival. Remember when 'disproportionate' was the buzzword? I never discovered what would have been 'proportionate' in Lebanon. But I consoled myself with the statistic that while Jews form a fraction of one per cent of the world's population, they have grabbed 20 per cent of all Nobel Prizes. Is this the acceptable face of disproportion?

Concentrates tend to be unpalatable. We Jews may produce an above-average amount of nectar, but to our detractors it tastes just like Camp Coffee straight from the bottle. Perhaps our ultimate offence is survival against all odds. Being a survivor, I admit I feel different, I feel special. Antisemitism is the weather God made for the Jews. I put up with it and have long given up banging the barometer.

Victor Ross

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The Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain-AJR

In June 1995 the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain (CSAGB) was formed when the Chairman and Vice-chairman of its formative group of child survivors of the Holocaust left the Jewish Care-run Holocaust Survivor Centre, which it had helped to found in 1991. We had survived the Second World War, varying in age from older teenagers to babes-in-arms and had experienced Nazi persecution throughout Hitler-dominated Europe. We survived in different ways – in ghettos, on the run, in hiding, or in concentration camps, and a few of our members came on the Kindertransports.

We hold regular monthly meetings. The meetings are organised by an annually elected committee. The Association also publishes a newsletter. For members living outside the London area, it forms the link with the CSAGB. We have been, and remain, a very active constituent of those survivors who support the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, the London Jewish Cultural Centre and the Anne Frank Foundation in their efforts to teach the history of the Holocaust in schools and other institutions. Indeed, we will be the last of the eye-witnesses able to give our accounts.

We are a truly international organisation. Our members were born in many places, from Amsterdam via Cracow to Zagreb. The Association is a constituent member of the World

Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust, which holds annual conferences in North America and elsewhere and represents the specific interests of child survivors. At these conferences, which have taken place for over 15 years, 500 or more child survivors and partners meet during a long weekend. In 2005 the conference took place in Amsterdam and in 2006 near Detroit. This year the conference is planned to take place in Israel; in 2008 the affiliated group in the Washington DC area has offered to be the host.

The CSAGB is also a member of the European Association of Child Survivors of the Holocaust, which includes groups based behind the former Iron Curtain. In America there are a number of Café Europa meeting places for survivors. We found that funding was provided by the Claims Conference. We applied to the Claims Conference and were directed to the AJR. The AJR provides such facilities and much more than the CSAGB, as a small self-help group, could offer its members.

Last November the membership voted to become a Special Interest Group of the Association of Jewish Refugees. As we enter 2007, the integration process has begun and we look forward to playing an active role. To mark this new road, the Association will henceforth be known as the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain-AJR.

Henri Obstfeld, Chairman

'Remembering for the Future'

Pinner Synagogue will be hosting its 18th Yom HaShoah evening on Sunday 15 April. On this day, 62 years ago, Belsen was liberated and a historical recording by the BBC will be played. We do hope that you will be able to attend and bring friends and family with you.

The theme of the evening will be 'Remembering for the Future'. Any teenagers present on the night will hear the stories direct from the mouths of survivors and be able to recount them to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren 70 years from now.

Two distinguished guests will speak on the night. They are survivors Mrs Susan

Pollack and Mrs Anita Lasker Wallfisch. His Excellency Mr Wolfgang Ischinger, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, will also give a short address.

The evening will begin with a candle-lighting ceremony, to be followed by a short memorial service, readings by Pinner youth, the formal addresses and a panel discussion.

If you have not been to a Yom HaShoah evening before, you will definitely want to attend and, for those who have come in previous years, this will be another evening not to be missed. Our speakers will remind us of the special commitment they have made to ensure we can pass

Overwhelming response to Kinder survey

'Making New Lives in Britain', the specially-devised survey launched earlier this year of children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia who arrived in Britain on the Kindertransport in 1938-39, has already received an enthusiastic response. Kinder Chairman Hermann Hirschberger said that 'early signs are very promising.'

Of some 1,000 questionnaires sent out in the first phase, largely to AJR members, more than 500 former Kinder have already completed and returned them to AJR's head office in the reply-paid envelope provided. This almost unheard-of rate of response demonstrates the warmth of feeling that remains among Kinder who shared a common destiny. They and their children have replied spontaneously to Bertha Leverton's and Hermann Hirschberger's letter calling for help in creating an historical archive which will enshrine their unique story of parental sacrifice and settlement in Britain as children.

Survey questionnaires which are being distributed by sister organisations in Israel and the United States on our behalf should add immeasurably to the numbers responding and the store of personal memories and experiences.

To former Kindertransportees who have yet to reply: we do hope you will be able to take part in this unique survey and add to its authenticity.

Anyone wishing to receive a questionnaire, or a supplementary questionnaire for a deceased relative or friend, please give your name and address to Andrea Goodmaker at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, tel 020 8385 3070.

RDC

*The AJR
wishes all its
members
a Happy Pesach*

on the message of tolerance and memory.

Yom HaShoah, An Evening of Commemoration: 'Remembering for the Future' will take place at Pinner Synagogue (5 minutes walk from Pinner Metropolitan Station) on Sunday 15 April at 8-10 pm (no charge).

Gaby Glassman

A heavy, lonely legacy

by Jackie Kohnstamm

Visit many a German town, and you could easily overlook *Stolpersteine* – stumblestones – small brass plaques in the pavement outside house entrances. They are only 10 cm square. You have to bend down to read the dedication etched into the shiny surface: 'Here lived ...', followed by the person's name, dates of birth and deportation and, where known, place of death.

Restoring the individual's identity and place in the world is the inspiration of Cologne artist Gunter Demnig. In 1996 he laid his first *Stolpersteine* for people who have no grave. The majority are for Jews, but other Nazi victims are also commemorated – homosexuals, the disabled, Roma and political opponents of the Third Reich.

I grew up tiptoeing around this area of my family past. My mother, born in Berlin, was the youngest of three children, the only one still at home when Hitler came to power. By 1936 she had persuaded her parents to let her go and, with a domestic permit, immigrated to London. Her parents, plus a stream of uncles, aunts and cousins, remained in Germany and were eventually deported and murdered. That much I knew – the bare facts.

One day in the 1980s, my aunt, who was visiting from New York, dumped two plastic bags at my feet: photos, jewellery smuggled out of Germany in 1939, papers entrusted to non-Jewish friends on the eve of deportation, letters of farewell to their children.

When a few years later my uncle in Tel Aviv died, I was at it again, wading through more yellowed papers: a 1905 vaccination certificate, German school reports, an inventory of possessions shipped from Hamburg to Haifa. Plus sheaves of letters from Berlin. I peered at my grandfather's tight, black handwriting and at my grandmother's looser, spidery hand. My grandparents were at last trying to emigrate, but the outbreak of war and the rigour of the British censor put paid to any further correspondence. A terse two-liner from the British authorities in Palestine put their immigration application on hold, and that was the end of that.

I brought the folders back to London, but my mother wouldn't look at them. So I added my uncle's bagloads to my aunt's and shut the cupboard door. It felt like a heavy, lonely legacy.

One evening last winter I switched on the computer and 'googled' my



Stolpersteine artist Gunter Demnig at work

mother's maiden name. To my amazement, my grandparents leaped onto the screen, together with their address in Berlin. I watched two pictures materialise. Stumblestones. 'Here lived Max'; 'Here lived Amalie.' I dashed to the cupboard to check dates of birth, of deportation to Theresienstadt, of death. Everything was accurate. But I am their only living descendant. Who had done this? Then I noticed the date the stones were laid: 30 November 2005. It was now 4 December, only four days later.

In January I stood outside an imposing block of flats in west Berlin. The stumblestones resembled two tiny footprints in the ice. So this is where my grandparents lived out their last years, I thought. A young man let himself into the building. 'May I step inside for a moment?', I asked. He and his partner invited me in for tea, for a ride in the lift – 'The original one – your grandparents will have gone up and down in it!' I was touched by their welcome and struck by their wish to acknowledge this dark era of their history.

My grandfather Max had been a freemason, and I learned that his and



Mally and Max, 1936

Mally's *Stolpersteine* were two among several that Wolfgang Knoll – now project co-ordinator for Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg – had sponsored out of a desire to honour the Jewish members of his lodge who had perished. He gave me a tour of family addresses: Sigmundshof 22, where my mother was

born – these days an empty space with a tree; Kurfürstendamm 96, where she grew up; the freemasons' building in Emserstrasse; Littenstrasse, where the family's tie factory used to be; the rebuilt house at Heilbronnerstrasse 22, once the home of Max's sister and business partner Marie Greiffenhagen, which became one of the infamous *Judenhäuser* from which she and many others were deported. I began to place my mother's family in space as well as in time.

In May, for the *Stolpersteine* project's tenth anniversary, I gave a talk in a Berlin school about the family's experiences. Photos gave faces and personalities to the names engraved on the stones. People were keen to look at my grandmother's locket, its first time in Berlin for 67 years. Adults expressed surprise that so much had survived the turbulent years of flight and war, and gratitude at being allowed a personal glimpse into the impact of persecution. I was not the only one to have grown up during decades of silence – so had they. How much of the horrors had our parents and grandparents known about at the time? That had been a no-go-area for all of us. We each had a piece missing from our jigsaw of the past, and I realised in that schoolroom that I represented their missing piece. It was a disconcerting moment.

In the project's early years, local councils tried to block it. *Stumblestones*?! The bureaucratic brain could not think beyond Health and Safety. Eventually the message got through: you don't stumble *over* the stones – they are flush with the pavement – you stumble *upon* them! There are now 1,000 *Stolpersteine* in Berlin, over 8,000 throughout Germany, with a long waiting list for more. Local co-ordinators help establish biographical details – particularly important for Jewish victims as the last given address was usually not their own, but a *Judenhaus*, where they were herded before deportation. German schools have been involved since the beginning, the pupils helping to research the fate of individuals and raise money – 95 euros each.

Not all reactions are positive. 'Jews have had enough done for them!', said one woman, slamming her front door. Jewish responses aren't always favourable either: some believe walking on the memorials is a desecration,

continued on page 10

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

'THE WAITING ROOM'

Sir – I have just finished watching the wonderful programme on BBC Four about the AJR. It was positively uplifting! I am not sure whether it was filmed at the Day Centre – I presume it was. What was most satisfying and enjoyable was the dignity, enthusiasm and great humour of those who were filmed.

Although those taking part in the programme were all refugees from persecution, the programme was remarkably positive. They serve as a great example of the power of overcoming adversity and being committed to rebuilding their lives despite the horror and loss they experienced.

Jubilee House and the Day Centre demonstrate so well how care for the elderly can be a dignified and enlightened task.

*Chris Ure and family
Felmersham, Beds*

Sir – I watched a wonderful half-hour programme on BBC4. It looked as if it was from a day club for Jewish people. How delightfully refreshing, witty and amusing the Jewish refugees were. Such strength of spirit, having been through such a terrible upheaval in their lives, shows what a marvellous group of people they are.

Mary Young, Yeovil

Sir – I was so disappointed with the programme about our Day Centre on BBC 4. Due to the inexperience and lack of interest of the young reporter, the Day Centre appeared little different from those shown sometimes on the main channels. Boredom was held at bay only by the 'performance' of the two male members – one by his beautiful playing of the violin, the other by his robust views on the disadvantages of marriage! Incidentally, I also agree with the view that the German and Austrian refugees should not be lumped together. We suffered the same fate but *vive la différence!*

(Mrs) Marion Smith, Harrow, Middx

Sir – 'The Waiting Room'. What for? The staff and volunteers do a magnificent job – nothing of this was mentioned or shown. There was no introduction and not much of an end. Seeing the premises and people one knows on TV gave rise to discussion among us in NW London, but what did this programme do for other viewers? Many members must have missed it altogether as the Journal was

not received by some until after the programme was screened.

Hortense Gordon, London NW2

OUT OF LOVE

Sir – If Victor Ross (March) has fallen out of love with the English (not the British?) this is his own affair. But we can dispute his reasoning. There is a difference between the USA and the UK in that in America the majority of people are originally immigrants themselves or stem from immigrant families.

Yes, there is a powerful Jewish lobby in the USA which is missing here. But this is hardly the fault of the English. One might say that it is less necessary here or it would have emerged.

Like Victor Ross, I have come to the conclusion that we first-generation refugees will never be 'genuine Englishmen'. The second generation – our children – have no such problems. Could this be a case of sour grapes?

Carl F. Flesch, London NW6

Sir – I'm sorry Victor Ross has fallen out of love with the English. My love for them has deepened rather than diminished over the years. What he calls the 'double bluff of self-deprecation, the arrogance of learning worn lightly' I, who come from a country where nearly everyone is a *Herr Doktor* and lets you know it, find rather refreshing. As for the 'ice-cold heart behind good manners', in my experience the opposite is true. Behind a rather cool facade, there beats a warm heart. If antisemitism exists in this country, as it probably does, I have never encountered it. It has to be said, though, that, unlike Victor Ross, I have never mingled with the English *beau monde* nor have I ever aspired to become an English gentlewoman. I am what I am – an Austrian Jew, a loyal British subject and a citizen of the world.

Edith Argy, London W9

Sir – I am appalled by the final sentiment expressed by Victor Ross. I would have expected something better from someone associated with my late uncle Werner M. Behr in the Thank-You Britain Fund. We are emphatically *not* defined by the labels and libels of our enemies! We introduced the first successful monotheistic religion and moral code, which others imitated only much later. We do not cower as abject slaves to the prejudices of others!

Michael Feld, London N3

STICK UP FOR ISRAEL

Sir – It is time that some of your readers stopped their verbal sniping at Israel and the Israeli army. They are a very small few fighting against vastly superior numbers to try and ensure the safety of their country's citizens and leave a safe haven for any Jewish person to visit or go to live. Stick up for Israel and cheer them on!

Frank Reichmann, North Leigh, Oxon

Sir – It was heart-warming to find so many of your contributors making such a wholehearted case in favour of Israel (February), whilst expressing their uninhibited feelings about the Jewish anti-Israel clique. Diaspora-based anti-Israel Jews do not seem to remember that Israeli citizens who are continually harassed by rocket attacks and suicide bombers are more than entitled to expect their government to defend them.

Dr Fred Rosner, Chigwell, Essex

Sir – Re the popular 'poor Palestinian rhetoric': it is hardly surprising that families 'enjoying' eight, nine or more children will suffer poverty. Also, having just returned from a Nile cruise and a visit to Cairo, I can confirm to the bleeding hearts that the poverty in Egypt is of third-world proportions – in spite of having amazing natural wealth in the form of the Nile and the Suez Canal and tourist potential worthy of the premier league. To the Palestinian sympathisers, I recommend a visit to Egypt for a reality check.

M. Ladenheim, Surbiton, Surrey

BACK TO GERMANY

Sir – Mrs B. Cohen (February) fails to understand why some people visit Germany for pleasure, but that others visit out of a sense of duty to the vanished Jewish communities does not seem to have occurred to her. I visit my old home town of Wesel every year on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, when a Gedenkfeier takes place at the city hall with a candle-lit procession to the Mahnmahl in the shadow of the local cathedral. The year before last I was instrumental in having a granite memorial plaque unveiled in the military part of the city cemetery to seven German-Jewish soldiers killed in action in the First World War. This year, on Holocaust Memorial Day, after I had written a strong letter to the local press the previous year, a wreath-laying ceremony took place at the Mahnmahl for the first time.

As the last active member of a once flourishing Jewish community, I feel it is my duty to keep their memory alive and engage in dialogue with, especially the young, but also older citizens. Mrs Cohen might ponder on what she could usefully do in this field instead of withdrawing into a bitterness which does no good.

Ernest G. Kolman, Greenford, Middx

Sir – Most Germans living today are deeply regretful of what happened. Has anyone

ever heard of a country that persecuted Jews later making compensation payments? Of course, these do not atone for the millions who were murdered, but they enable survivors to live in their old age free from financial worry.

Henry Schragenheim, London N15

'I AM NOT A GERMAN!'

Sir – Max Sulzbacher states (March) that I 'was presumably born in Germany'. In fact, I was born in Vienna – which, despite the Anschluss, was, and still is, in Austria. Why he presumed that my strong feeling of Jewish identity meant that I must have been born in Germany baffles me. Surely the German Jews wanted to integrate with their fellow countrymen more than the Jews did in any other European country. Have I been wrong in believing this all these years?

*Peter Phillips
Loudwater, Herts*

IN MEMORY OF HERBERT SULZBACH

Sir – Re the article 'In memory of Herbert Sulzbach' (February), I took over his position as senior interpreter in Scotland. I got to know him quite well. We were a few weeks together before his transfer to England. He was very keen on re-education and encouraged me to approach this way with the collaboration of Col Faulk of MI9, the political intelligence department of the War Office. He deserved all the honours he received. It did not stop me from investigating any war crimes which may have been committed by the thousands of PoWs passing through the camps. I must have behaved like a 'mensch' because, before my transfer to the south, I was presented with a hand-carved chess set by the prisoners. Little did I know then what happened to my parents and brother!

*Henry Grunfeld (formerly of Dortmund)
Manchester*

Sir – My late father, Martin Sulzbacher, knew Herbert Sulzbach quite well due to the similarity of names. In 1973 we bought his book on his experiences at the front in the First World War which he described with such patriotic fervour. We were also present at a lecture he gave and at which he produced a video of the 'Gestapo List'. This showed the names of people who would be dealt with by the Gestapo when the Germans invaded England. His name was included and underneath was my own name. This was, of course, a *Doppelgänger*, whom I arranged to meet. He was no relation but a chemist who worked with Chaim Weitzmann.

Herbert Sulzbach and his wife were buried in the Christian Hampstead cemetery. Had he or his father converted to Christianity? Obviously he had not reconverted to Judaism on the rise of Nazism. Our admiration for his good work has diminished due to this sad fact.

Max Sulzbacher, London NW11

HMD AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Sir – I attended the Holocaust Memorial Day event at Brent Town Hall. The programme made us think about the life we live today, about human nature, about the future. I regret that most of the 200 people there were of my generation – pensioners who remember well the Second World War and all the horrors of those years. What have we done wrong that younger people cannot find the time to attend a Sunday afternoon meeting to honour the past and learn from it?

Hana Nermut, Harrow

STOLPERSTEINE CONTACT

Sir – Some 10,000 *Stolpersteine* have been laid in Germany thus far (see article on page 5 – Ed.). Those who would like to find out more should contact Koordinierungsstelle 'Stolpersteine' für Berlin, c/o Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, Stauffenbergerstr. 13-14, 10785 Berlin, or Frau Frankenstein, tel 030/26 39 89 014, fax 030/26 99 50 10, email stolpersteine@GDW-Berlin.de.

*Professor Leslie Baruch Brent
London N19*

ILLUSTRATED BOOK OFFER

Sir – My husband Moss was born in the East End of London. I am getting ready to write his biography – illustrated as I am an artist. I have recently become very conscious of the fact that Moss is not the only 'East Ender' to have experienced a fascinating childhood in London, Germany, or wherever the winds of fate happened to blow them before, during and after the war. I would be delighted if anyone reading this letter would send me, via the AJR, a copy of their own experiences – no longer than 1,000 words. If chosen as suitable, these stories too will be illustrated and published.

Laura Meyer Levy, Wembley, Middx

ARE JEWS A RACE?

Sir – I have never agonised about being of the Jewish race. Unlike Jack Lee (March), I would never put 'White European' on any form for fear of falling foul of the Trade Description Act or being accused of impersonating a member of the Aryan fraternity. What happens when they see my *ponim* and all is revealed? Mr Lee may be blond and blue-eyed but I went AWOL when these were distributed.

Frank Bright, Ipswich

LIGHT AND HOPE

Sir – Members of my family have been told of the ongoing care and consideration you gave to my cousin Angela Aranykova over a long period. The AJR receives little publicity and no credit for the financial assistance it also provides for survivors. This is a great pity because you bring light and hope to the darkness of the later years of people such as Angela. For all this, I am deeply grateful. *Egon Philip, Haifa, Israel*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Henry Sanders has been dubbed the last German Expressionist. Born Helmuth Salomon in Dresden 1918, Sanders came to Britain in 1933 and studied at Hornsey College of Art. Interned and sent to Canada when war broke out, he would sit on the camp's washroom floor, sketching furiously in charcoal. His tender yet dynamic animal studies recall the strong, pared-down line of an artist faced with the urgency of the moment.

Some of his work lay in obscurity for 35 years but now it is shown in an exhibition at **Etz Chayim Gallery** in Northwood and **Pinner Liberal Synagogue**, most of



Henry Sanders *The Basket Carrier* (series-village Catalonia) 21"x 15.5"

it selling for under £300. On that washroom floor of his internment camp, he drew and redrew one theme – *Leda and the Swan* – in which a woman and a swan merge and then part, internalising a highly sexual theme.

But this is not the case with his oils or even his beautifully executed guaches. Conscious of the raging mood of Expressionism in Germany, a largely Jewish

fin-de-siècle movement condemned by the Nazis as degenerate, Sanders's work is not informed by the urban experience of his countrymen but by Catalonian village life or the tranquillity of Hampstead. Such rural empathy puts Sanders out of touch and out of time with the reactive German Expressionist movement symbolised by **Kollwitz, Schiele** and **Kokoschka**. Like them, he avoided the cliché of beauty. Unlike Schiele, he did not challenge those clichés or push out the boundaries between beauty and ugliness.

While some of Sanders's work is comparable to that of **Emil Nolde** and others who were challenging the political forces of their time, London was not a city of urban decay or social disintegration and many of Sanders's landscapes could be considered abstract. His courageous and emotional use of colour is almost closer to Impressionism. Widely exhibited in London, but not featured in auctions for years, he could surely have been a major artist of his time.

Shame on the **National Portrait Gallery!** The home to some of Britain's most exciting portraiture has lent itself inexplicably to a new exhibition on fashion which is one of the coldest and most exploitative shows I can remember. I say inexplicable unless, of course, the NPG has an overwhelming need to jump on the celebrity bandwagon. **Face of Fashion**, until 28 May, features Kate Moss looking as though you'd surprised her in her bath, there's a pantomime redhead in a ruff and the portrait of a man with a cut throat. The waifs and strays of fashion strike bogus attitudes of sex and bondage.

But where is this face of fashion? Most of the subjects are undressed and of the now-unfashionable size-zero build. Five leading US and European fashion photographers are claimed here to shape our ideas of beauty, sexuality and fame. Did I miss something?

By refreshing contrast, an adjoining room has some penetrating photographs by Don McCullin, featuring religious leaders like Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks, Tony Bayfield and Dr Rowan Williams.

REVIEWS

Foul deeds recorded

SEFER ZIKARON/ BUCH DER ERINNERUNG: JUDEN IN DRESDEN, DEPORTIERT, ERMORDET, VERSCHOLLEN, 1933-1945
Arbeitskreis Gedenkbuch der Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit Dresden e.V., 2006, 407pp., distributed by Thelem, Universitätsverlag Dresden (mail@thelem.de)

This outstanding book is a memorial to those whose fate is described inside, all of whom, bar a handful, perished. It is illustrated with copies of documents and with photos taken in happier times by the few who managed to leave and – just as important – get beyond the reach of German Jew-hunters. Thus Kindertransports to Holland ended up in Auschwitz via Westerbork and there is a case of a refugee joining the Foreign Legion, which handed him over. The few who survived within the Reich lack such mementos. Given that pictures speak louder than words, the book has a particular resonance – it is not just a list of names, dates and summaries.

The archives of the Jewish community went up in flames. In any case, the number of those who registered before 1935 was vastly augmented by those made Jewish by the race laws. Two survivors began to make a list of those they remembered and sought to correspond with those abroad, but the Communists discouraged such contacts. In 1995 a working party was formed under the leadership of Lilli Ulbrich and it took ten years to trace the names – not only as a memorial to them but also as a reminder of what became of them in those days under the eyes of their fellow Dresdeners.

They were a special group. I know from an exchange of emails last year with Ulbrich that Dresdeners pretend to be victims and not active and zealous NS perpetrators, do not wish this impression to be questioned by revelations which show their stained past, and regard Victor Klemperer's *Diaries*, which tell that the firestorm actually saved lives, albeit Jewish ones, as getting in the way of their illusion. The effort of the working party, and of the many volunteers who sieved through more than 170 sources, including concentration-camp archives

and research theses, combed deportation lists, questioned Dresden men and women, and wrote to emigrants or their descendants, is therefore the more wonderful. Some 2,000 of the over 7,100 people persecuted under the race laws are recorded here.

It is a story of unrelenting abuse. A total of 724 men, women and children, stateless or of Polish descent, were put into a goods wagon in October 1938 and dumped in Poland, where, after the German invasion, they were annihilated. The rest, driven from their homes into *Judenhäuser*, from *Judenhäuser* into the local Hellerberg camp, subjected to forced labour by local enterprises taking advantage of such cheap employees, and having to walk for miles to work, were sent to Riga, Auschwitz or Theresienstadt with the outcome identical.

On the book's dust jacket is a sepia photo of Ita Guttman with her twins Renate and René. It was taken in Theresienstadt by a German propaganda department. Having served their purpose, the three – the father had already been murdered – were sent to Auschwitz, where the mother was killed and the twins, four years old, experimented on by Mengele. Renate survived and her story, in her own words, is on pp.134-35. After years of being pushed from one orphanage to another, she was adopted by a family on Long Island who found her brother. Externally she became an American, became the best student, won all the prizes, gave the speech on prize-winning days, and learned how to fit in. But there is not a day on which she is not aware of the void within. And she is one of the few lucky ones.

Frank Bright

A story told with art

ROMAN'S JOURNEY

by Roman Halter

Portobello Books, 2007, 304pp., £15.99

There is a genre of concentration-camp stories. They follow a pattern: pre-Nazi – idealised picture of a cohesive Jewish family; after Nazi occupation – a story of horrific persecution told in plain language. Roman Halter's account is more ambitious: just as in *Konin* Theo Richmond gave us a memorable picture of an entire community, so Halter gives us a vivid portrait of one extended family living in Poland in the town of Chodesz. There are some less-than-perfect aspects: wives die in childbirth;

Roman is teased by his sister; life for the adults is hard. Yet the men are resourceful, turning their hand to any work that will enable them to feed their numerous offspring (Roman's father is a timber merchant).

Relations with non-Jewish neighbours are friendly and Roman's wet-nurse, Mrs Lewandowska, is a particularly warm figure in Roman's life. His is an active childhood, swimming in the local lake and trying to fish with his half-brother Iccio. There are amusing accounts of their attempt to rob a 'piggy bank' in order to buy a fishing rod and of a trip to the slaughterer with a struggling duck. Roman has a sharp awareness of family relationships and the dialogue with his companions is convincing.

The by now familiar story of the gradual destruction of Jewish life by the occupying Germans is told with simplicity. For a start, the 12-year-old Roman is forced to slave for the local SS chief. On his way home, he witnesses the clubbing to death of some of his schoolmates by the SS. His former friend from the community of Volksdeutsche does not hesitate to knock him down when ordered to do so by the SS chief. One by one, members of his family are taken away and the rest have to move to cramped quarters in the Lodz ghetto. The wanton brutality of the guards is appalling. However, his dying grandfather gives him a life-enhancing message which enables him to endure terrible suffering.

When the ghetto is finally cleared he survives the selection for the gas chambers at Auschwitz because of his skill as a metal worker. From there he is transferred to a factory in Dresden where he survives the firestorm after the massive Allied air raids. A forced march westwards enables him and some fellow prisoners to escape into a devastated and still hostile German countryside. By hitching lifts on the roof of trains and long treks through Czechoslovakia, he reaches his home town, but his hopes of finding any members of his family alive are dashed. Brought to England, he joins the number of teenage boys who are given the chance to recover from their ordeal. He then uses his talent for drawing to train as an architect whose skills are much in demand.

This is a story of amazing courage and resourcefulness told with art and without bitterness which has to be read to be believed.

Martha Blend

Essential reading

CONFRONTING THE PERPETRATORS: A HISTORY OF THE CLAIMS CONFERENCE

by Marilyn Henry

London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006, 272pp., cloth £49.50; paper £20.00

I was very worried when I was asked to review this book. It is written by Marilyn Henry, with a foreword by Sir Martin Gilbert, and commissioned by Rabbi Israel Miller and Saul Kagan, the long-time leaders of the Claims Conference. It contains lots of notes and appendixes. It does not make easy reading. None the less, I sincerely believe that every Holocaust survivor should obtain a copy.

Of course the book is heavily biased in favour of what the Claims Conference has achieved and it tends to skate over some of its failures. However, there is no doubt that much has been done for the German survivors and, interestingly, the Claims Conference's full title is The Conference on Jewish Claims against Germany. Furthermore, Marilyn Henry is an American and she does write from an American perspective rather than a European one. Perhaps because the Germans, particularly Konrad Adenauer, admitted their guilt quite early on after the Second World War, the Claims Conference accomplished much in its negotiations with them.

Today, more than 90,000 Jewish victims of Nazism continue to receive monthly pensions direct from Germany, totalling more than 450 million euros each year. Yet, as a born Austrian, I cannot help but feel that the Claims Conference has failed me and my former countrymen. As Moshe Jahoda, Director of the Claims Conference at the Vienna office, said: 'The bitter fate of the Austrian Jews is a terrible one.'

Suffice it to say that the Claims Conference agreed the paltry sum of \$210 million from the Austrian government for its General Settlement Fund, in full and final settlement of all claims, even though there were 20,000 claimants! The conference had 'not devoted enough time or effort to Austria', said Rabbi Miller. A high-ranking, current Claims Conference leader also admitted to me that in its negotiations with Austria, 'mistakes were made.' There was not enough backing from America due to the traditional view that Austria was a Nazi-occupied country, as well as Austria's importance as a Cold War buffer state. Israel too was unhelpful. It saw Austria as an important transit point for Jews fleeing the Soviet Union and Eastern

continued overleaf

Did You Close the Door Softly?

by Ruth Lansley

And what was it
 You packed into your small cases
 As you were ordered to
 As you left your home
 Your bed
 Your chairs and table
 The unfinished embroidery
 Oh, dear mother
 Never to be finished
 Now by you?
 Did you close the door softly
 Glancing
 Not believing
 Never again
 To see all the photographs
 Looking at you for the last time
 Hanging on walls
 Of us when we were babies
 And those on the sideboards
 Standing side by side
 Of us
 Your children
 As we grew up
 All saying farewell?
 Did you close the door softly
 For the last time
 As you left
 Fearful
 Tearful
 Frightened
 Lonely without us
 Gone long ago
 Not giving comfort
 To you dear mother
 And dear father?
 Were you able to give comfort
 To each other
 Give courage?

REVIEWS continued from page 9

Europe and did not want to jeopardise this situation. In 2001 an agreement, it seems, was concluded that benefits of \$480 million were to be paid to Austrian survivors. How this fell to \$210 million is not explained! Ariel Muzicant, the President of the Austrian Jewish community, asked for funds to rebuild the Hakoah Sports Stadium. This certainly does not explain the difference! It seems therefore that money was taken from survivors for the pet projects of others. The World Jewish Congress even built a Yiddish theatre in Tel Aviv with some of the takings.

However, I applaud the Claims Conference for what it has done for German Jews and, on their behalf, I thank it. Indeed, though personally disappointed by the Claims Conference's dealings with Austria, I willingly commend its book to readers so that they can make up their own minds about its successes or failures.

Peter Phillips

'Stolpersteine' – continued from page 5

others that dogs might dirty them. As for me, the worst that could happen to my grandparents happened decades ago. Let their stumblestones be ignored, dirtied, dug up and replaced, if only now and then a passer-by might pause and reflect.

Big Holocaust memorials arouse big emotions, and the sheer scale of the crime needs to be remembered. Yet it is hard to grasp. What are the next generations to do with inherited feelings of guilt, shame and helplessness? Many are latching onto the stumblestone project. It resembles a pebble dropped in a lake, say the organisers – the ripples grow ever wider. Requests come in daily from ordinary Germans: they can't change the past, but they want to make a gesture, if only to bring someone back from oblivion to the street where they lived.

Tracing relatives of the deported after so long is difficult, finding them a matter of luck. A tricky question debated by the co-ordinators is: what would a descendant feel who discovered stumblestones had been laid without their permission? In my experience, great relief. Complete strangers have acknowledged my grandparents' lives and worth as human beings. What is more, their *Stolpersteine* have provided the key to opening my cupboard. I have cracked the Sütterlin script and can at last read their letters. Between banalities and coded references to the latest Nazi actions runs an undercurrent of increasing bewilderment, fear and dogged getting on with daily life. For the first time, I can hear my grandparents' voices speaking directly from out of the past.

This is an amended version of an article which appeared in Second Generation Voices, October 2006, No. 33.

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Letter from Israel

Just when we thought we had enough enemies on the outside, up pop new ones from within! A respectable professor of history produces a book claiming that maybe the medieval blood libels were true and Jews did indeed kill Christian children and use their blood in baking *matza*. This theory is based on the incontrovertible fact that some Jews confessed under torture. Well, that proves it then...

Anyone with the slightest knowledge of the laws of *Kashrut*, especially the strict taboo on consuming animal blood of any kind – even a speck in an egg – can only smile wryly at the idea of Jews using human blood in *matzot*. If blood is used anywhere in a religious ritual it is in the communion service (alias *Kiddush*), when believers delude themselves that they are drinking the blood of Christ.

And now the 'flower of Anglo-Jewry' – the so-called Independent Jewish Voices – seeks to detach Israel from its politicians. True, Israel's policies are not without blemish, but that is the case in most democratic regimes. Oddly enough, the dictatorships are no better. To condemn Israel because of its policies serves merely to assist those who seek to harm Jews.

In the millennia-long course of its history the Jewish people has managed to survive those who sought to destroy it. While there would doubtless be many more of us had it not been for the various forms of persecution we have endured, assimilation and intermarriage have probably made greater inroads into our numbers. Having our own state is the best guarantee of our survival.

George Steiner once claimed that the establishment of the State of Israel had done the Jews, and especially the 'Jewish genius', a disservice, because whereas dozens of Diaspora Jews had been awarded Nobel Prizes in the sciences, no Israeli ever had. Since then, several Israelis have gained Nobel Prizes in those fields.

Imperfection is part of the price one pays for democracy. But in which country is perfection to be found?

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

PROFILE

Frank Beck

Dr Fanny Stang

The last Jewish graduate of Viennese medicine



Until the *Anschluss*, Viennese medicine led the world, and Fanny Stang was probably its last Jewish graduate.

Fanny Knesbach was born in 1914 in Poland, the younger child of orthodox parents of the merchant class. The family moved to Vienna when she was a little girl and from an early age she spoke Polish, Yiddish and German.

She had a happy childhood, and did well in the Viennese educational system. As one of very few Jewish children in her particular school, she had some problems with maintaining her orthodoxy. As her school-leaving exams approached, she was given a chance opportunity to look through a microscope and see the components of a drop of human blood. She was so fascinated by its infection-fighting mechanism that she decided on the spot to study medicine.

Her decision met with immediate parental disapproval. Whilst it was desirable, even laudable, for a boy to study medicine, the same was not true for the daughter of an orthodox family: medicine was not a ladylike occupation. Fanny insisted, even going on a simulated hunger strike at one point, and her father finally gave way. To show her appreciation, she added Hebrew to her Latin and English studies. Armed with a reluctant and strictly limited subsidy from her father, she entered the medical school of Vienna University in 1932.

Fanny was in her final year in 1938 when the Nazis took power in Vienna. There was some talk of her not even being allowed to take her final exams, but the university decreed that, as her father was a World War One veteran, she would be permitted to take her finals. Needless to say, she passed, and a doctoral diploma was issued, in the traditional Latin, but over-stamped in bureaucratic German with the proviso that the holder, as a Jew, was forbidden to use it to practise

medicine in the German Reich.

There followed Kristallnacht, and it was evident to all Austrian Jews that there was no future for them in Vienna. Fanny's brother Leo, who had always been a Zionist, escaped to Palestine with the aid of the movement of which he was a member. Fanny obtained a domestic visa for England. For the journey she would volunteer as a guardian of children on the Kindertransport. When it was all arranged, and her suitcase was already packed, she received a summons from the authorities. She was to attend on the following morning, four days before her intended departure. Sensing danger, she took a train that very evening, while her parents arranged to move home and disappear.

On arrival in London, she met a volunteer helper at the station who arranged for her to stay in a Jewish hostel. It was later that very night that she met another volunteer helper, Maurice Stang, who was destined to be her husband and life partner.

Maurice was an academic and linguist

(his German was flawless) and he had fought in the Spanish Civil War. With his help, she laid her plans to re-qualify while working as a laboratory assistant for her keep. They married hurriedly, initially not even telling her parents, with whom she was in constant correspondence. War broke out, and Maurice did war work then joined the army and served in Africa and Italy.

Fanny's war was spent in the company of her newly acquired family and friends. She soon discovered that the fees for studying in Edinburgh were considerably lower than those charged in London, so she took the Scottish medical exams and then went north to do her clinical work. All this time she was only able to see Maurice for short periods when he was on home leave.

After the war she learned of the fate of her parents; an attempt to escape to Palestine via the River Danube had been foiled by ice in Yugoslavia, and the Germans had caught up with them and shot them and their fellow Jewish escapees as a matter of policy. Fanny only slowly came to the realisation that this had occurred after living for some years in the hope that they might have been spared. All this is touchingly described in her books *Fräulein Doktor* and *A New Beginning*, which she wrote and published later in life.

Fanny qualified as a medical practitioner in Britain, only to find great difficulty in starting a career in general practice. Doctors returning from military service had priority, and a newly qualified female refugee had no chance. Fanny went into public health, and inadvertently found the basis of a very successful career. Maurice returned from the army and took up secondary teaching for a living, whilst pursuing the study of languages and their literature which were his great love. They set up home together, and enjoyed a perfect and happy relationship, which lasted until his unexpected death from a heart infection 50 years later. They travelled and enjoyed their respective work.

Fanny's own career was so successful that on her retirement she was awarded honorary fellowship of the Institute of Public Health. She is currently in her 93rd year, and lives in Hammerson House, a sheltered community in North London.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

INSIDE the AJR

Pinner cinema

Pinner Synagogue having been transformed into the local Odeon, Alf Keiles showed us *Pin-up Girl*, the war-time musical starring Betty Grable, Alice Faye, Joe E. Brown and other favourites. Music, spectacular tap dancing, a minimal storyline, nostalgia – and, of course, tea, cakes and chatting. We all had a lovely time.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thurs 12 April. Robert Keating, 'The Rothschilds and Waddesdon Manor'

Cardiff speaker's friendship with Belsen rescuer

Mady Gerrard, originally from Budapest, told us how she was rescued from Belsen by a British serviceman. She described subsequent details of her life, including the fact that following publicity surrounding the liberation of Belsen, she met her rescuer and they became friends.

Charles Meyer

Liverpool: 'India through Jewish eyes'

In an exciting account, Avril Lappin told us there were Jews on the Indian sub-continent thousands of years ago. Various migrations followed, and Jews had always been accepted as fellow Indians. Avril's lively description of the wonderful reception she received from the Mumbai, Kochin and 'Villager' Jews had us all in thrall.

Gerry Jayson

Next meeting: Thur 26 April. 'Refugee Voices'

Weald of Kent briefed on Mid East situation

The Israeli Embassy's Robin Hamilton-Taylor gave us, with the aid of a powerpoint presentation, a most informative talk on the Middle East situation. As usual, we are grateful that Jane Dickson looks after the inner man – and woman! And thank you, Myrna, for all your hard work.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: Tues 24 April. Celebrating Israel's Independence Day

Hendon talk by Wiener Library Archivist

Howard Falksohn told us that Dr Alfred Wiener founded the Library in Berlin in 1933, moved it to Amsterdam in 1938, and relocated it to London in 1939. The Library supplied information to the British Government during the war and

afterwards. As their lease is now running out, they are planning to move to premises in Birkbeck College.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: Mon 23 April. Susannah Alexander, 'History of the Jews in England'

Cleve Road journey through history

We enjoyed a fascinating journey through history with Susannah Alexander's overview of the history of the Jews in England. Susannah highlighted the fact that although time may have passed, many of the challenges faced by today's society resemble those faced previously.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: Tues 17 April. Update from Israeli Embassy

Edgware: optimism needed in Mid East

A very interesting lecture by Robin Hamilton-Taylor from the Israeli Embassy who spoke to 25 of us about the latest events in the Middle East. One has to be optimistic, even when one of the parties is not willing to co-operate to find a peaceful solution to this problem.

Naomi and Felix Winkler

Next meeting: Tues 17 April. Ronald Channing, 'Current Affairs'

Ilford and New Year of Trees

Twenty-seven people attended our Tu B'Shevat seder. Under the guidance of Myrna Glass, it was fascinating to learn the significance of the 15 varieties of fruit given to us to taste. A delicious way to spend a morning.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wed 11 April. A Board of Deputies representative on 'Past, Present and Future'

Sheffield CF talk on Prague

Sixteen of us heard Dr Miriam Jelinek speak about 'Prague Then and Now'. It was revealing to hear her describe the experience of being a child and student there in the 50s under the Communist regime. We decided to devote some of our future meetings to discussions not only on Prague but also on other places of our origins.

Susanne Pearson

Cambridge account of Jewish life in Greece

A well-attended meeting, including several new members. Few of us had been aware that the considerable Jewish presence, especially in Salonika, was decimated during the war-time occupation, leaving currently less than 5,000 in the community. The death camps and flight to Israel account for the virtual elimination of Jewish life in Greece.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: Thur 19 April. Otto Deutsch, 'Vienna Coffee Houses Now and Then'

West Midlands – a cheering winter event

A warm welcome from Corinne and Paul Oppenheimer to their delightful home. Some 20 attended and enjoyed the generous hospitality. The occasion was deemed a very cheering winter event.

Philip Lesser

Essex (Westcliff) celebrates fifth birthday in style

We celebrated our fifth birthday with a birthday cake. Special guest Myrna Glass brought her two grandchildren. We reviewed the past years, remembering those who had died and reminiscing about speakers, guests and special meetings. All joined in singing favourite songs accompanied by Boris Chait (86) on his mandolin.

Larry Lisner

NB: No meeting in April because of Pesach

Edinburgh: dilemma of the Diaspora

Vivien Andersen gave us a poignant glimpse into her ancestors' history in Germany. Over two-three generations her father's family exemplified how they were viewed as 'noble Israelites', whose dedication to the 'Vaterland' was turned into ashes in the Holocaust. Later, Susanne introduced to us Eileen Brady, the AJR's new part-time Social Worker in the North.

Joe Kish

Stimulating meeting in North London

For the most interesting meeting in a long time, our thanks go to Mr and Mrs Jack de Metz, who introduced the subject 'Fair Reporting on Israel', which turned into a discussion on UK media treatment whenever Israel is mentioned. Most stimulating!

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thur 26 April. Details to follow

Optimistic view on Mid East at Brighton and Hove Sarid

Aubrey Milstein spoke to us about the Six-Day War. Describing the current situation in Israel, he cheered us up with his optimistic view.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: Mon 16 April. Prof Scarlett Epstein, 'From Assimilation to Jewish Identity'

OTHER MEETINGS

Wembley CF Wed 18 April. Inaugural meeting. Contact Susan Harrod at Head Office

Surrey Thur 19 April. Coffee Morning at the Saunders

South West Midlands Sun 29 April. Details being sent out separately

Continental Friends in the North

It all started when a small Harrogate AJR social group was formed five years ago. This successful small gathering includes people from York, Otley, Wetherby, Poole in Wharfedale and surrounding areas. Although people did not previously know each other, the group now has a family feeling of friendship and shared past history.

As a result of the success of this small Harrogate group, the AJR has established in the North similar small social groups called Continental Friends – in Leeds, Bradford, Hull, Sheffield, Edinburgh and Manchester, where we have four local Continental Friends groups in the Cheshire, Didsbury, Broughton Park/Crumpsall and Whitefield/Prestwich areas.

Most meetings of Continental Friends in the North are held in members' homes. We have enjoyable interactive discussions on topics of mutual interest. Meetings are held approximately every two months.

By holding these smaller gatherings, we are enabling members to meet in their local areas. This is especially helpful for those who would find it too far to travel to the meetings held in the main centres.

The AJR also has more formal social groups in the North in Manchester, Newcastle, Liverpool, Leeds (HSFA) and Glasgow. These are larger gatherings of members who meet in a local hall, usually with a speaker.

The Continental Friends and main AJR

groups from across the Northern region join up for get-togethers several times during the year. At these functions, those with a similar original background can share reminiscences and talk about issues of mutual interest – and sometimes meet up with others they haven't seen for more than 60 years!

For information about Continental Friends groups in the North, please contact Susanne Green, AJR Northern Groups Co-ordinator, on 0151 291 5734.

Susanne Green



Dr Margaret Brearley, advisor to the former Archbishop of Canterbury on matters connected with the Holocaust, gained rapturous applause for her talk on 'Jewish Creativity' at a monthly Kindertransport Luncheon at the AJR Centre in West Hampstead

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

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

Bristol/Bath
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

Cambridge
Anne Bender 01223 276 999

Cardiff
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Cleve Road, AJR Centre
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Dundee
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edgware
Ruth Urban 020 8931 2542

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

Glasgow
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

Harrogate
Inge Little 01423 886254

Hendon
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Hertfordshire
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

HGS
Gerda Torrence 020 8883 9425

Hull
Bob Rosner 0148 2649156

Ilford
Meta Rosenell 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

**Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups
Co-ordinator**
020 8385 3070

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

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

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

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

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 18 April 2007
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Fiona Bruce
TV Presenter

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the *AJR Journal*, to phone the Centre on 020 7328 0208 to book your place.

KT-AJR

**Kindertransport special
interest group**

Monday 16 April 2007
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Erich Reich
will speak about his
experiences in Israel

Reservations required
Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS
CLOSED ON TUESDAYS**

April Afternoon Entertainment

Mon	2	CLOSED – Pesach
Tue	3	CLOSED
Wed	4	CLOSED – Pesach
Thur	5	CLOSED – Pesach
Mon	9	CLOSED – Easter Monday
Tue	10	CLOSED
Wed	11	Jen Gould
Thur	12	Margaret Gibbs
Mon	16	KT LUNCHEON – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	17	CLOSED
Wed	18	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	19	Margaret Opdahl
Mon	23	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	24	CLOSED
Wed	25	Paul Coleman
Thur	26	Simon Gilbert
Mon	30	Kards & Games Klub

DIARY DATES

22-26 April	Vienna trip
14 June	Windsor Castle with Royal Weddings Exhibition talk
24 June	Bournemouth holiday
-1 July	
8-15 July	St Anne's holiday
15 August	Frogmore House with Guided Tour & Savill Garden

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, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

Congratulations to Alex and Michael Newman on the birth of their daughter Sadie.

Death

Mohr Charlotte (Lotte, née Bach), born Nuremberg 8 March 1922, died peacefully in London on 31 January 2007. Beloved wife of the late Rudolph Mohr and dearly loved by her children Diana and Nicholas, son-in-law Anthony, daughter-in-law Sara, and grandsons Marcus, Edward, Sam and Asher.

Classified

For the purpose of serious research, I am anxious to have access to as complete a run as possible of the periodical *Aufbau* (paper version). Helpful suggestions/offers would be greatly appreciated. H. C. Poswiansky, c/o 26a Tottenham Street, London W1T 4RQ.

Female AJR member looking for live-in companion. Please call Ruth Finestone on 07957 665 468.

HANDING THEM DOWN

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odetteandmartin.gaba@ntlworld.com
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at **7.00 PM**

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The quiz will be conducted by professional quizmasters. 2nd and 3rd generations welcome. Please send cheque for £15.00 per person (made payable to KT Publications) to:
Judy Benton, 4 Dudley House, Stratton Close, Edgware, Middx HA8 6PL enclosing a sae.

Please indicate meat or vegetarian.

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sunday 8 July 2007 –
Sunday 15 July 2007

AT THE FERNLEA HOTEL
11/17 South Promenade, St Annes
Tel 01253 726 726

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Travel to St Annes by RAIL, NATIONAL COACH or CAR
Please contact Ruth Finestone on 020 8385 3070

AJR TRIP TO VIENNA

Following last year's successful trip to Berlin we are arranging a trip to Vienna from 22 to 26 APRIL. There will be a full agenda with sightseeing. Some walking will be involved. For further information, please call Carol Rossen on 020 8385 3085



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Obituary

Trude Grant

Trude lived a life marred by upheaval, hardship and much painful loss, yet with resilience and goodness and great love for her husband of over 60 years, Henry, and her children and grandchildren.

Trude met Henry on a farm in Ilam in 1940 in a camp for refugee children who had come from Austria on the Kindertransport. They worked hard through the poverty refugees faced in those times and the painful knowledge of their loss in Austria. Trude found much strength in her mother, who had managed to flee from Austria with her.

The highlight of her life were the births of her children, Marion and Peter. Trude always showed phenomenal support for them. Perhaps it was the influence of her own

mother or the fact that she had such a wonderful rapport with children. That ability also saved her from an unpromising career in a uniform factory in Burton. Instead, she found employment as a teacher's assistant and worked with nursery school children until her retirement.

In later years, she kept her mind active through the University of the Third Age and she and Henry went regularly to concerts at the Wigmore Hall. She joined the B'nai B'rith Lodge in Wembley and was extremely active in the association of Jewish Friendship Clubs. All knew her as a very loyal friend and a fun-loving, lively, yet very modest person.

Extracted from eulogy by Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton, Rabbi, Liberal Jewish Synagogue

Search Notices

Lothar Gruenwald, born Vienna 1880, was a musician (piano). Last heard of 1941 Rio de Janeiro, new name Lotario Grunwald. Any info pls to traude.triebel@inode.at

Eva Gisela Haas, born Czechoslovakia 1924, lived with family (later foster parents) Mr and Mrs F. Davis, 6 Gibbon Road, Nunhead, London SE15. Eva learned family's business, hairdressing. Any info pls to Morris and Hilda Gold (formerly Hilda Haas) at Morrisdior@aol.com

Esme Kinder, my partner (maiden name), born in Gibraltar, believes her paternal grandfather left Germany during the war, possibly on a Kindertransport. Any info pls to margkurt@aol.com

My friend **Evelyn Kligler** was a Kindertransport child. She lived with a family in England (the lady's name was Phoebe). Any info pls to suedenton@boomclub.com

Edith Robinsky, music teacher at Jüdische Schule in Chorinerstrasse, Berlin, until c. 1943. Any info pls to Prof Steven Robins at

robins@netactive.co.za

Sigma, a German-Jewish refugee born 1939-40, stayed for many months during the war with Jack (later Sir Jack) and Peggy Longland in Welwyn Garden City. Pls contact me re biography of Sir Jack - Mark Lambert at lomondluddite@btinternet.com

Heinrich and Siegfried Steinhardt, last heard of in Worms. Any info pls to bobbybnj@comcast.net

Tchelebonne Philip/Phil, last seen Metz, France, in 1962. His parents, Bulgarian Jews, emigrated c 1925 to New York, where Phil was born. Phil was hoping to go to Israel. Any info pls to caroline@aallum.eu

Gertrude Wolfgang, from Germany or Austria, lived with Black family in Newport, Monmouthshire. Her childhood friend in Newport, Heather Johnson, remembers that after the war Gertie learned her father had been shot, but her mother liberated from a concentration camp by the Americans. Any info pls to GothamPH@aol.com

Arts and Events Diary - April

From 23 April to 18 May **Absence and Loss** A photographic Holocaust memorial exhibition London Jewish Cultural Centre, tel 020 8457 5000

To 8 April **Champion of the Child: Janusz Korczak** Exhibition Jewish Museum, Camden Town, tel 020 7284 1997

Mon 2 No lecture (hall not available) Club 43

Mon 9 No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43
11-13 **Refugee Archives: Theory and Practice** International conference, University of Sussex tel 01273 678837

Sun 15 **Yom HaShoah, An Evening of Commemoration: 'Remembering for the Future'** Pinner Synagogue, 8-10 pm

Mon 16 **Michael Faulkner, 'German Politics under Soviet Occupation, 1945-1949'** Club 43

Tues 17-Sat 21 **Kindertransport** The play

by Diane Samuels. West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds. Tel 0113 2137 700

Wed 18 **Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, 'The Dignity of Difference'** In association with Shalvata. London Jewish Cultural Centre, tel 020 8457 5000

Mon 23 **Hans Seelig MA, 'A Few Musical Anniversaries of 2007 (including Buxtehude and Johann Stamitz)'** Club 43

Wed 25 **Orlando Figes, 'The Gulag in Memory'** Wiener Library-Birkbeck College joint lecture series. Room B33, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7626 7247

Mon 30 **Ernst Flesch MA, 'A Trip through Southern Africa (with slides)'** Club 43

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

Central Office for Holocaust Claims Michael Newman

The Netherlands art restitution: a reminder

Following a recommendation from the Ekkart Committee, the Dutch government has announced a revised deadline of **4 April 2007** for applications to the NK collection of artworks.

Although hundreds of works of art were returned to their rightful owners after the war, the NK collection comprises 4,217 works - including 1,750 paintings - many of which were owned by Jews prior to the Second World War but were confiscated or purchased illegally by members of the German occupying forces.

Further details about the collection and details of how to apply are available at www.herkomstgezocht.nl/eng/

Hardship Fund: an update

Towards the end of 2005, AJR members were alerted to the possibility of making an application to the Hardship Fund, which was introduced to enable Holocaust survivors who had lived in former Soviet-Bloc countries to receive compensation from the German government.

At the time of the announcement it was understood that the criteria of those eligible to claim the one-time reparation of 2,550 euros (approx. £1,700) had been expanded to include survivors who had been in Western Europe during the Second World War (former Western persecutees). In response to the announcement, we assisted some 500 members, the majority of them Austrian, to lodge applications.

The AJR was recently informed that while the applications of Western persecutees are being processed, no awards to them will be paid from the Hardship Fund at this time. The Fund will, however, continue to make payments to survivors who lived in former Communist countries.

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 mnewman@ajr.org.uk

Perspectives of war

'Prelude to Genocide'

Professor Richard Evans, a key witness in the Deborah Lipstadt-David Irving case, delivered the Lord Merlyn Rees Memorial Lecture at the House of Lords, for the Holocaust Educational Trust, on 'Prelude to Genocide: The Nazis and the Jews, 1933-1939'.

In the German election of May 1928 the Nazi Party had gained 12 seats in the Reichstag, just 2.6 per cent of votes cast, said Professor Evans and, as a consequence, they 'decided to downplay antisemitism in their propaganda'. By the election of 1932, the Nazi vote had risen to 34 per cent. The Brownshirts were 'the glue' which held disparate groups together. Accusations that Germany's half-million Jews had 'stabbed the country in the back' were totally at odds with the facts; Jews had served loyally in the armed forces in numbers at least equal to others. In the main, being politically liberal or conservative did not prevent their being called Bolsheviks or revolutionaries, which they hated.

In preparing for war, Hitler sought to drive the Jews out of Germany. From 1933 onwards legislation deprived Jews of their rights, businesses were 'Aryanised', with Stormtroopers preventing customers from entering Jewish shops, cash was expropriated, Jews were deprived of citizenship, and there was Nazi intimidation and rioting on the streets. On Kristallnacht 30,000 were arrested, with hundreds murdered and others released only on assurance of emigration. Professor Evans maintained that in private not all Germans were antisemitic, but fear of violence and intimidation assured their public acquiescence. Except during the 1936 Olympic Games, Nazi propaganda was unremitting with newspapers, newsreels, school textbooks and suchlike all indoctrinating antisemitism, reinforced by the Hitler Youth.

The Lipstadt-Irving trial had 'uncovered historical mendacity', said Professor Evans, and 'showed that Irving had falsified history'. But he believed that present laws were sufficient to deal with Holocaust denial, although there remained a need to educate our own youngsters

Black-and-white

I have no wish to usurp the subject-matter of my colleague, arts correspondent Gloria

Tessler, but I could not resist mentioning the exhibition of superb black-and-white photographs, taken by Wolf Suschitzky, which I saw displayed at the splendidly refurbished Austrian Cultural Forum in Kensington. Now approaching his 95th birthday, after fleeing from his native Vienna in 1935, Suschitzky captured the atmosphere of pre-war London, as well as the stark reality of northern towns, in black-and-white photographs of great impact and simplicity.*

Aged 24, he took Charing Cross Road as his subject: a double-decker bus circling Cambridge Circus, an elegant cigarette-smoking couple in a Lyons Corner House in 1941, a smartly-trilbied Freddie Mills look-alike just yards from the side street where Mills later committed suicide. But these images were not published until 70 years later. In the age of universal digital cameras, it's good to recall the film-based classic Rolleflexes and Leicas with which such photos were taken. Perhaps I'll load a black-and-white film in my old Rolleicord and give it a try.

Holocaust memoir digest completed

Holocaust-education specialist Esther Goldberg (Lady Gilbert) presented the third and final volume of the Holocaust Survivor Memoirs which she has edited, published by Vallentine Mitchell, at a reception at London's Great Portland Street Synagogue. It is designed for teachers and students to study the Holocaust through the words of survivors as found in their published memoirs.

Esther Goldberg read extracts from the volume, which reminded her audience that, despite the destruction of 1,000 synagogues and Jewish property, by 1939 more than half of German and Austrian Jewry had escaped. By the end of 1940, however, more than 40 ghettos had been established and, with the invasion of the USSR in 1941, *Einsatzgruppen* were slaughtering Jews from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Sir Martin Gilbert reviewed half-a-century's writing on the Holocaust: the 1940s and 1950s had concentrated on the perpetrators, he said, but by the 1970s acts of Jewish resistance received recognition.

**Wolf Suschitzky Photos* is published by Synema at £25.

Newsround

Poles reunited with Jews they hid in wartime

Some 60 Holocaust survivors have been reunited in Warsaw with the Polish families who hid them from the Nazis in the Second World War. The Poles are recipients of Yad Vashem's Righteous among the Nations award. It is the largest such reunion in Poland for decades.

Jewish cemetery in Bavaria vandalised

More than half the graves in a Jewish cemetery outside the town of Diespeck in Bavaria have been desecrated. The cemetery dates from the eighteenth century.

Men charged with burning copies of *Diary of Anne Frank*

Seven men have gone on trial for burning copies of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in the village of Pretzien near Magdeburg. The men are charged with incitement and denigration of the memory of the deceased. If convicted, they could face five years in jail.

Holocaust 'jokes' on sugar packets

Packets of sugar bearing the likeness of Adolf Hitler and carrying Holocaust 'jokes' have been found in cafés in Pozega in Croatia. The local district attorney has opened an investigation.

Elie Wiesel accosted in hotel

Police have issued an arrest warrant for a New Jersey man suspected of accosting Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize-winner Elie Wiesel in a San Francisco hotel earlier this year. Holocaust-denier Eric Hunt, 22, was being sought on charges of attempted kidnapping and committing a hate crime. At the time of the incident, Wiesel was attending the World Forum, an inter-faith conference on non-violent conflict resolution.

Baby boom in Israel following Lebanon war

Israel's recent war in Lebanon led to a baby boom. A report on Israeli TV said the number of pregnant women who conceived during the 34-day war last summer increased by 35 per cent over the same period in 2005.