

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

How the Jewish refugees thanked Britain

One of the most striking initiatives ever mounted by the AJR was the 'Thank-You Britain' Fund, which evolved out of a proposal in 1963 that the Jewish refugees from Central Europe should make a public gesture of thanks to their adopted homeland. The idea was the brainchild of Victor Ross, a former refugee who had worked in publishing and journalism and had written a humorous account of the refugee experience, *Basic British*; as readers know, he still wields an elegant pen today. The AJR, and in particular its chairman, Hans Reichmann (who died in 1964), had been thinking along similar lines. After the AJR took on the administration of the fund-raising, Ross became co-chairman of the Fund's organising committee, alongside Werner M. Behr, Vice-Chairman of the AJR.

AJR members were first informed about the planned expression of thanks to Britain in a report on the Association's general meeting that appeared in *AJR Information* in March 1963. In the autumn, the journal made a fuller announcement, linking the proposal explicitly to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the arrival in Britain of the bulk of the refugees from the German-speaking lands in 1938-39, following the Anschluss and the 'Crystal Night' pogrom:

In November, 25 years will have elapsed since the mass exodus of the Jews from Central Europe started. During the few months between the pogroms and the outbreak of war, this small island ... rescued more Jewish persecutees than any other single country. The Executive is considering ways of visibly expressing the gratitude of the former refugees to the British people, and it is hoped that details of an appropriate scheme will be announced shortly.

The decision to establish the 'Thank-You Britain' Fund was communicated to AJR members in late 1964. They were invited to contribute to the Fund, the proceeds of



The Mall Room, British Academy

which were to be used for the awarding of research fellowships and the holding of annual (later biennial) lectures, both under the auspices of the British Academy, a highly respected institution that to this day plays a significant role in supporting and promoting research and scholarship in the humanities. Intended to serve as 'a perpetual memorial of our gratitude', the research work sponsored by the Fund was to be devoted to the welfare of the inhabitants of the UK, on the model of the Beveridge Report that had laid the foundations of the post-war welfare state.

The Fund's patrons could scarcely have been more eminent. They were the distinguished economist Lord Robbins, President of the British Academy and author of the Robbins Report that revolutionised higher education; Sir Isaiah Berlin, a member of the Academy's Council and one of the great intellectual figures of his day; Professor (later Sir) Ernest B. Chain and Sir Hans Krebs, the two refugees from the Continent who had won Nobel Prizes by 1964; and a third refugee, Professor (later Sir) Ludwig Guttman, Director of the Stoke Mandeville Spinal Injuries Centre, where the Paralympic Games were founded.

The 19 members of the Fund's committee included leading figures in the AJR and other refugee organisations like the Leo Baeck B'nai B'rith Lodge, Self-Aid of Refugees, Club 1943 and the New Liberal

Jewish Congregation (Belsize Square Synagogue), as well as representatives of the Czech and Hungarian refugees. Among them were AJR Chairman Alfred S. Dresel, Arnold Horwell, Egon Larsen, Hans Blumenau, Hans Jaeger and the indispensable Werner Rosenstock. Happily, two are still with us: Victor Ross and Carl Flesch, while Eric Gould's widow Katia has for years been one of this journal's much valued proof-readers.

The Fund proved an outstanding success. The organisers' target of £40-60,000 was easily exceeded; by the time the Fund was handed over to the British Academy at a ceremony in the Saddlers' Hall on 8 November 1965, it had reached £96,000, several hundred thousand pounds in today's money and an astonishing sum for a relatively small community not long settled in Britain. There were over 3,000 contributors, ranging from Isaiah Berlin (who sent his contribution via N. M. Rothschild & Sons) to a lady who gave £102 18s. in memory of her late husband, from the restitution money she received from Germany.

The British Academy took over the administration of the Fund, which, adding gravitas, it renamed the 'Thank-offering to Britain Fund'. The first of the lectures held under its auspices was given in 1966 by Lord Robbins; other lecturers included Roy Jenkins, Arnold Goodman, Robert Blake, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Ralf Dahrendorf and Lord Woolf, as well as three former refugees, Arthur Koestler, Otto Kahn-Freund and, in 2004, Claus Moser. The first research fellowship was awarded in 1967 to John Patmore, lecturer in geography at Liverpool, for research on countryside planning and recreational facilities, the second in 1968 to Robert Skidelsky, for his study of Oswald Mosley, and the third to Rita McWilliams of Cambridge, for her work on university

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A salute to Wolf Suschitzky

The appearance of a handsome volume, *Wolf Suschitzky Photos*, edited by Michael Omasta and Brigitte Mayr of SYNEMA, the society for film and media, and Ursula Seeber of the Österreichische Exilbibliothek at the Literaturhaus in Vienna (Vienna: SYNEMA, 2006, ISBN 3-901644-18-0), reminds us of the impressive contribution Wolfgang Suschitzky has made to the art of photography in Britain. Born in Vienna in 1912 to a bookseller father – his cousin was Joseph Suschitzky, who ran the fabled Libris bookshop on Boundary Road, London NW8 – Wolf Suschitzky now lives in Maida Vale.

The book charts the career of Suschitzky – who left Vienna when the Austrian government suppressed the left in 1934, coming via Holland to Britain – with a marvellously evocative selection of his photos, including such favourites as those of the pre-war Charing Cross Road, of St Paul's Cathedral in 1942, shot through the shattered window of a bombed house, and the later portraits that range from Alexander Fleming and Aldous Huxley to Guy de Maupassant (of London Zoo). The expert essays that accompany the photographs make this book a must for those whose interest in Suschitzky has been whetted by the recent exhibition *Wolf Suschitzky Cameraman* at the Austrian Cultural Forum.

Alongside publishing and psycho-analysis, photography was one of the areas of British life that was most significantly influenced by the refugees from Central Europe. Major figures like Laszlo Moholy-Nagy of the Bauhaus and John Heartfield, creator of photomontage, spent some years in exile in Britain, while Stefan Lorant founded the phenomenally successful *Picture Post*, working with the photographer Felix H. Man. Germany and Central Europe had been far ahead of Britain in this field, thanks to the technically advanced equipment produced by firms like Leica and to the avant-garde aesthetics of the

pre-Hitler period, which brought a new spirit of socially conscious realism to photography. Emigrés like Suschitzky and his sister Edith Tudor-Hart, also a photographer, imported this new approach into Britain.

Suschitzky is equally well known for his work in film. He was the cameraman for an acclaimed film version of *Ulysses* (1967), which conveyed the atmosphere of Joyce's Dublin to near-perfection, and for Mike Hodges's 1971 gangster classic *Get Carter* – hence the nutshell version of his life story: 'Fled Hitler, Loved Lenin, Shot Michael Caine'.

Suschitzky, a modest man who lets his achievements speak for themselves, never allows his personality and views to intervene directly in his photographs, yet they breathe an unmistakable air of humanity, of egalitarian interest in the everyday life of ordinary people, of compassion for the downtrodden. Today, his photos of London, whether of West

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education for women. Among those short-listed for the first award was Michael Meacher, but he withdrew to follow an alternative career.

The Fund has richly fulfilled the aims of its founders, who would surely be proud of its function within the British Academy. Sadly, though, the link with the AJR has become obscured over the decades, and the conditions governing the fellowships could do with updating. At the outset, some refugees objected that the expression of gratitude to Britain was overstated, especially as the community had amply repaid its debt to Britain by service in both war and peacetime; Britain, others felt, had hardly gone out of its way to welcome those fleeing Nazi persecution. But the overall attitude was more accurately reflected by a former Kindertransportee who had become head of department at a college in Jamaica:

I will never be able to repay all the kindness and understanding that was shown to me from simple Lancashire cotton workers to Quaker refugee workers and Jewish manufacturers. I am now a British subject and could not wish for anything better. I am trying to repay part of my debt by teaching as a British subject in Jamaica. What I can send is totally inadequate, but I try to say 'Thank you' every day by my work.

Anthony Grenville

End society or working-class slums, evoke the atmosphere of bygone decades with the almost palpable intensity that is the hallmark of true art.

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, if required, £5
payable in advance

Agenda

Annual Report 2006
Hon. Treasurer's Report
Discussion

Election of Committee of Management

All questions for the chair should be submitted by Wed 16 May to the Head of Administration at Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx. HA7 4RL.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The following members will be proposed for election or re-election to the Committee at the AGM on Tuesday 5 June 2007:

Mr A C Kaufman, Chairman*
Mr W D Rothenberg
Vice Chairman & Hon. Treasurer
Mrs E S Angel, Secretary*
Mr P Dannenberg
Mr C W Dunston, Trustee
Mrs D Franklin, Trustee
Mrs G R Glassman, Trustee*
Mrs J Millan
Mr E Reich
Mr A Spiro

*Committee members retiring by rotation and being proposed for re-election

Anyone wishing to propose any other member for election as Hon Officer, Trustee, or Committee member must submit to AJR's Head of Administration such a proposal signed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting and with the signed agreement of the person being proposed no later than 16 May.

AJR Directors
Gordon Greenfield
Carol Rossen

AJR Heads of Department
Marcia Goodman Social Services
Michael Newman Media and Public Relations
Susie Kaufman Organiser, AJR Centre

AJR Journal
Dr Anthony Grenville Consultant Editor
Dr Howard Spier Executive Editor
Andrea Goodmaker Secretarial/Advertisements

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



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On being Jewish



About a year after the First World War, I was born a Jew in Vienna – not exactly an auspicious time or place, as it turned out 18 years later. I was born a Jew, just as I was born blonde and blue-eyed – not by choice or merit, but by an accident of birth. For that reason, I never felt my Jewishness to be a cause for either pride or celebration.

As I was growing up, Vienna was still trying to adapt from its role of being the centre of a powerful empire to being the capital of a small, land-locked, bankrupt country.

Of the city's 2 million inhabitants, 10 per cent were Jews. Many of them were struggling to make a living, but it was Jews who were in the forefront of the arts and sciences. Sigmund Freud, of course, was one of Vienna's most famous citizens. Stefan Zweig and Franz Werfel were internationally renowned writers. Jews were among the most popular librettists, composers, satirists, actors and edited the most prestigious national newspapers. Until 1934, when the diminutive Dollfuss established a mini-dictatorship, they were also active in politics. In 'Red Vienna' there were at least two Jewish Social Democratic *Stadtträte* (city councillors). Despite the economic depression that gripped the world in the 1930s, talented Jews thrived in inter-war Vienna. Generally, Austrian Jews were relaxed about their religion. Two members of my own family 'married out', and no one sat *shivah*.

There is no doubt at all that the contribution Jews everywhere made to mankind is out of all proportion to their number, given that they form just a tiny percentage of the global population. After all, three Jews – Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein – all born in the nineteenth century, all original thinkers, all pre-eminent in their own field, arguably changed the world, for better or for worse. But let us examine their commitment to Judaism.

The Marx family converted to Protestantism, for purely pragmatic

reasons, in 1824 when Karl was six years old. He married the distinctly non-Jewish Jenny von Westphalen and ended his life as a freethinker. He described religion as 'the sigh of the oppressed, the heart of a heartless world' and – famously – as 'the opium of the masses'. Sigmund Freud always disliked religious ceremonies and, shortly after his arrival in England, in 1938, he wrote to the Yiddish Scientific Institute that, while he 'gladly and proudly' acknowledged his Jewishness, his 'attitude towards any religion, including ours' was 'critically negative'. Einstein, although drawn to Zionism in the 1920s, never liked what he saw as its nationalistic and militaristic aspects and always advocated peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs. Offered the presidency of Israel, he declined but remained Israel's friend to the end of his life. He was, above all, a humanist and a pacifist who took a rather philosophical view of religion.

Thus we can see that these three hugely influential men chose different paths: Marx severed his ties with both his origins and his religion; Freud clung fiercely to his roots but was an unrepentant atheist; and Einstein embraced Zionism, albeit with reservations, but did not practise orthodox Judaism.

British Jews as a whole are as divided on religion and Israel as the readers of the *AJR Journal*. I, personally, while always being aware of my Jewishness – how could it be otherwise when I so narrowly escaped the fate of the six million? – belong to one race only – the human race. As its member, I will always deplore the death and maiming of any Arab child as much as that of any Israeli child, and condemn injustice and inhumanity wherever I find it. As for religion, I happily go along with the prophet Micah, who preached the virtues of justice, mercy and humility. If I succeed in practising those, I consider myself to be a good Jew.

Edith Argy

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AJR Annual Report 2006

Highlights of the year

The year 2006 was one of growth for the AJR as we achieved an overall increase in membership, further developed our regional groups programme, and extended our social services programme to new areas of the country.

In May we made an historic first overseas trip when 24 members visited Berlin for a four-day cultural tour of the German capital. The itinerary included visits to the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Memorial, inaugurated the previous May, where we were welcomed by the Deputy Speaker of the German Parliament and at a reception hosted by the city's Mayor.

Also for the first time, we organised a three-day visit to London in November for our members who live in Scotland and the North of England. More than 40 members made the trip, which included visits to the Cabinet War Rooms and the Wiener Library. They also joined members from the London area for a national get-together at the Imperial War Museum, a visit which included a talk from *The Times* Comment Editor Daniel Finkelstein.

We returned to the Watford Hilton for our Annual Tea and were greatly entertained by Glenys Groves and colleagues from The Royal Opera, who performed *A Summer Serenade with Strauss and Friends*. It was wonderful to see so many of our members enjoying the splendid tea.

Personnel and membership

There has been an increase in staff in both the North and South of England. At Head Office, Lorna Moss replaced Joan Altman, who retired after seven years' service as Carol Rossen's secretary. Rosemary Peters joined us as Michael Newman's secretary and Hazel Beiny was recruited to help expand our Southern region groups

programme.

To help meet the increasing demand outside London, we added two new Northern social workers: Eileen Brady in the Newcastle area, and Anthony Fagan to work alongside Barbara Dorrity.

At the end of 2006, the AJR had 3,222 members (3,196 in 2005), including 235 new members (167 in 2005).

Social and welfare services

The social work team continues to offer the best possible support, advice and assistance to our members throughout the country and we were delighted to be able to expand our team in the North of England and Scotland. Eileen Brady and Anthony Fagan will help us serve a growing number of our Northern members. They are both highly qualified and bring their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm for the benefit of our members.

Our social workers liaise closely with the AJR Centre, the regional groups and the Claims Office to identify and assist any member who may be in need of our services.

The team also works closely with colleagues from other organisations which serve Holocaust survivors to exchange ideas, share clients and plan the provision of future services.

Our welfare benefits expert continued to help our members with claims for Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Benefit.

Regional groups

With the recruitment of a second group co-ordinator in the south of the country, we were able to start three new groups: Edgware, Hendon and West Hampstead. Of the 22 Southern groups, eight meet monthly and six bi-monthly. The Aberdeen and Dundee groups have merged with the

main Edinburgh group and we now have 14 northern AJR groups which meet regularly alongside our smaller gatherings in members' homes. In 2006 we held 204 meetings nationwide attended by 4,076 people.

In April the Leeds group unveiled their *Holocaust Memorial Book*, which contains the names of family members who perished in the Holocaust obtained from our members who now live in the Leeds, Bradford and Harrogate areas. This was made possible by a substantial grant from the AJR Charitable Trust. The book contains over 400 names arranged over 73 pages which are turned weekly; members are informed when their page is on view. By request, copies of the book are now in the archives of Yad Vashem in Israel, the Washington Holocaust Museum, and the Imperial War Museum and Wiener Library in London.

A talented group of speakers inform, educate and entertain members, in addition to the socialising and interesting discussions which take place. The groups have also resulted in many new members for the AJR as well as acting as a forum for the AJR and other relevant projects.

The success of the groups is due largely to the fact that there are members prepared to involve themselves with the meetings. Their support is much appreciated.

Regional get-togethers

For members in the South of England we organised regional get-togethers in Tunbridge Wells and Welwyn Garden City, which featured a highly entertaining talk by journalist and social commentator Eve Pollard.

At the Edinburgh gathering in June, members heard about the Heartstone Holocaust Exhibition and, from author John Minnion, about his

book *Hitler's List*. At the Manchester meeting in August nearly 100 members enjoyed a talk by guest speaker Professor Eric Moonman OBE.

Holidays

In July we held our annual Northern holiday in St Annes-on-Sea, where 41 members from Glasgow, Newcastle, Chesterfield, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford and London enjoyed a relaxing week. An additional 37 members from Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool came to join the holiday-makers for a day out in St Annes during the week.

Our other holidays to Bournemouth and Eastbourne were as popular as ever, with long waiting lists for future trips.

Volunteers

Our dedicated volunteers continue to assist the day-to-day work of our organisation. As well as making home visits, they helped out at Head Office, at the AJR Centre, and at regional group meetings. Rita Rosenbaum continued to arrange for the *AJR Journal* to be recorded for and distributed to blind and disabled members.

Volunteers continued to receive support and supervision as well as the opportunity to attend forums held, in the latter part of the year, in conjunction with volunteers at the Holocaust Survivors Centre. We also continued to work closely with other organisations, including various London universities and B'nai B'rith 1st Unity Lodge. In addition, we continued our association with Action Reconciliation Service for Peace, arranging for four students from Poland and Germany to act as befrienders to our members.

Last summer we held a thank-you tea at Wizo House, where our volunteers were entertained and enjoyed a splendid cream tea.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

With the time period for most

compensation procedures having expired, much of the work of the Claims Office centred on ensuring payments reached their rightful recipients and assisting applicants with appeals for rejected claims.

The Claims Office dealt with numerous enquiries regarding the Austrian General Settlement Fund, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, and dormant Swiss bank accounts, as well as the Belgian government compensation scheme and the French railway litigation. We also received more than 120 requests for applications to the Hungarian government's indemnification programme.

In a development which will greatly assist our members and the work of the AJR we received formal notification that the AJR may notarise annual life certificates for all German pensions.

AJR Journal

The *Journal* maintained its characteristic and lively blend of information on AJR and communal matters together with a mix of cultural material. Consultant Editor Dr Anthony Grenville continued his penetrating analyses of historical issues pertaining to the lives of members.

Point of View columnists provoked intense debate, sharply reflected in the correspondence columns. Here, issues pertaining to Israel and the Middle East were invariably the most passionately discussed, with the *Journal* maintaining a position of strict political neutrality. Also providing insight into this subject was Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's thoughtful Letter from Israel.

Reviews of books, and occasionally of theatre and cinema events, continued to feature, accompanying arts correspondent Gloria Tessler's masterly reviews. Humour, tinged with a dash of nostalgia, was injected in articles by Edith Argy.

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the launch of *AJR Information*, the *Journal's* forerunner, we produced a

commemorative edition containing excerpts from a 1946 edition.

AJR Centre

The newly renamed Paul Balint AJR Centre celebrated another very busy and enjoyable year. As well as serving lunches and delivering Meals on Wheels, we arranged the monthly Luncheon Club and Kindertransport lunches.

We also organised a number of events alongside our popular keep fit classes on Wednesdays and Thursdays and our lively and interesting weekly discussion group. Our clothes sales still prove popular, as do our monthly chiropody and bi-annual optician visits.

In addition to a Yom Hashoah service and lunch, our Seder night was as successful as ever and we had a very large Kristallnacht service followed by lunch, also attended by members from Scotland and the North of England. We also catered for the AGM and, for the second year running, provided a tea for our Holocaust Memorial Day service at Belsize Square Synagogue.

We were fortunate to have the BBC film at the Centre during the summer (for a documentary broadcast in March) and we held a celebratory lunch to mark the 20th anniversary of the Centre, at which former staff, volunteers and dignitaries were present.

We also organised outings to the Cabinet War Rooms, Brighton and Hove, and Wilkin & Tiptree Jam Factory and museum.

Kindertransport

Led by its Chairman, Hermann Hirschberger, KT continued an active programme centred on popular monthly luncheon meetings at the AJR Centre followed by a guest speaker.

In July a surprise party at the AJR Centre organised by Susie Kaufman and Bertha Leverton celebrated Hermann Hirschberger's 80th

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Annual Report continued from page 5

birthday. An enjoyable Chanukah party at the Centre completed the year's activities.

The KT-AJR planning committee was regularly consulted on the acquisition of a replacement sculpture, which was erected on the concourse of Liverpool Street Station, and the wording of the two plaques. Leading Israeli sculptor Frank Meisler, a Kind himself, conceived and created a moving representation of five children arriving at the station after their escape from Nazi Europe. Special appreciation is due to Erich Reich, who managed the project. The AJR Charitable Trust generously agreed to fund the major part of the new project.

Work commenced on creating a Kindertransport survey to document the lives of Kinder, their experiences before and after the Second World War, and their contribution to life in this country.

Bertha Leverton continued to edit the much-appreciated quarterly *Kindertransport Newsletter*.

Refugee Voices and education

Dr Anthony Grenville and Dr Bea Lewkowicz oversaw the completion of the 150 interviews which will form the basis of the *Refugee Voices* project. The interviews will be fully transcribed, edited and catalogued.

In addition to grants to several institutions to support their work in Holocaust education, the AJR Charitable Trust made a substantial donation to the Wiener Library to defray the costs of its relocation in 2009.

All in all an extremely busy year. Our energies and resources are devoted, as ever, to ensuring as far as we are able, that our members enjoy a more comfortable life.

Andrew Kaufman
Chairman

Finance Report

AJR - Income and Expenditure Account
Year ended 31st December 2006

Income:	2006		2005	
	£	£	£	£
Membership/Donations and Legacies	81,604		121,692	
Other	7,208		5,324	
		88,812		127,016
Less:				
Overhead Expenses				
Salary Costs	84,317		72,797	
AJR Journal	52,646		51,309	
Administration/				
Depreciation	23,003	22,361		
		159,966		146,467
(Deficit)/Surplus:	-71,154		-19,451	

Summary of Balance Sheet
at 31st December 2006

	2006	2005
Current Assets	223,738	296,087
Less: Current Liabilities	2,104	3,299
	221,634	292,788
Represented by:		
General Fund	292,788	312,239
Net deficiency for the year	-71,154	-19,451
	221,634	292,788

David Rothenberg, Hon. Treasurer 01/04/2007

AJR CHARITABLE TRUST
PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

Summary figure for the year ended
31st December 2006

Income:	2006		2005	
	£	£	£	£
Takings - Day Centre and meals-on-wheels	82,862		84,963	
Donations received	0	82,862	60	85,023
Less outgoings:				
Salaries	96,025		87,278	
Catering costs	180,887		174,956	
Sundry expenses	80,758	357,670	74,140	336,374
Deficit funded from Charitable Trust	-274,808		-251,351	

AJR CHARITABLE TRUST -
Summary Income and Expenditure Accounts

Year ended 31st December 2006

	2006	2005
Income		
Covenants/Donations/		
Claims Conference	678,561	422,020
Investment income	522,698	443,112
Sheltered housing	42,086	43,110
	1,243,345	908,242
Legacies	1,108,544	2,349,838
	2,351,889	3,258,080
Less outgoings:		
Day Centre	274,808	251,351
Self Aid, Homecare and		
Emergency Grants	771,731	711,520
Other organisations	298,223	148,707
Administration/Depreciation	941,580	806,340
	2,286,342	1,917,918
Surplus on realised and unrealised investments	1,043,350	1,423,973
Net Movement in Funds	1,191,910	2,764,135
	2,235,260	4,188,108

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

THE STREETS OF MUNICH

Sir – Anthony Grenville was right to say in his informative article about Munich (March) that Nazism plays no significant role today. When I said in my letter concerning *Stolpersteine* that some things had not changed, I was referring to the atmosphere which in some respects is still very reminiscent of the sinister milieu described so well in Feuchtwanger's *Erfolg*.

The officialdom in Munich certainly finds too much remembering as distinctly *ungemütlich*. My friend the Munich artist Wolfram Kastner is in constant trouble with the authorities in Munich and Salzburg for remembering in unauthorised ways and quantities well above their comfort zone. A typical example was his request to commemorate the 1933 book-burning on the spot where it had originally taken place. The request was turned down by Munich town hall on the grounds that there was no historical continuity. How come? Wait for it! The Nazi book-burning had taken place on the lawn of the Koenigsplatz. They then paved the whole square over to hold parades. After the war it was grassed over again. The grass on which the commemoration was to take place was not the same as that on which the original book-burning had taken place. Therefore no historical continuity! The bureaucrats of *Erfolg* would have been proud to think that one up! Following considerable publicity for the town hall, the commemoration was eventually sanctioned.

Concerning the Munich Jews of today, many of them are recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union and therefore not overly concerned with local matters. As for the 'natives', no one is trying to coerce them into having any *Stolpersteine* for their relatives against their will. All *Stolpersteine* are sponsored anyhow. They, on the other hand, should not dictate to others how we want to commemorate our murdered relatives. I regard the streets of Munich, where they walked, as the right place for my five Munich family members who perished in the Holocaust to be remembered.

Peter Jordan, Manchester

Sir – With reference to your excellent article on Munich, on 22 March a new

Jewish Museum was opened there with an official ceremony at the Rathaus to which a number of former Jewish citizens were invited by the Mayor, Christian Uehde. They were also asked to join him at a preview two days earlier. There is a Chair of Jewish History at the university, established ten years ago. The anniversary is being celebrated by events organised this summer by the holder, Professor Michael Brenner. These include a lecture on Lion Feuchtwanger and Munich by Hans-Jochen Vogel, former Mayor, Federal Minister of Justice and SPD Chancellor candidate.

Edgar Feuchtwanger, Winchester

JEWISH STATE AND JEWISH VALUES

Sir – Having enjoyed a long absence from Britain, one of my more interesting tasks on returning was to catch up with the January and February issues of the *AJR Journal*. That, of course, included the always fascinating Letters to the Editor.

What joy to read of Peter Zander's strength of character in carrying his integrity with him where'er he goes. Even to Berlin. Given that he is only concerned with his British and German nationality, it is a shame that he feels obliged to write also about Israel.

Francis Steiner is maligning Hitler if he accuses him of having been influenced by the Mufti of Jerusalem. From what I have read very few Jews had intended to emigrate to Palestine before Hitler. A tiny number of those organised in Zionist movements – I was one of them – were prepared to spend their lives working in a kibbutz. Of course, once Hitler's persecution started – I wonder who put him up to that – the few turned into masses. My brother was one of them.

Perhaps Francis Steiner has not heard of the Muslim Brotherhood. One article in their constitution demanded the annihilation of the Jews, in line with an action by the Prophet Mohammed, who, it is written, on one occasion wiped out a whole town of Jews. I doubt whether, in 1928, the Brotherhood really feared the coming of a Jewish state.

He also seems to believe that a Jew ceases to be a Jew if he is not religious. Presumably, by this argument, an atheistic or agnostic Israeli is not a Jew. When the various Jewish community councils from

different countries met to discuss what help could be given to Jews in Germany and in Austria, they decided to include the non-believing Jews in their assistance schemes.

It is probably correct that, had it not been for the Holocaust, the State of Israel might not have come into being in the way it did. Has it occurred to Erika Millman that without the support of America, Israel might be in danger of being annihilated?

May I suggest that all who see themselves as Jews are accepted as such? It is like being part of a huge family connected by strands of common roots, especially when antisemitism and anti-Judaism are still rampant all over the world. It would be unnatural for us not to be concerned for the well-being of Israel, a country initially created to be a haven for Jews. Of course, it is not obligatory.

Eric Sanders, London W12

Sir – I am surprised to find myself categorised by Peter Phillips as anti-Israeli (March). My thought was, and is, that the country would appear to have run out of ideas about its future international relations. Of course, its continuing need to be, and to feel, secure takes priority.

I may, in comparison with others, be ill-informed about Israeli strategic thinking, but the establishment of the State of Israel and its immediate concerns must be a bar to looking ahead to what kind of world our successors must be encouraged to want to live in. Nation-states are not necessarily the last word on the subject. Thinking does not stop today.

Alan S. Kaye, Marlow, Bucks

Sir – Your article in memory of Herbert Sulzbach (February) praises his humanity and the value of mutual respect, tolerance and democracy. Reading letters in recent issues of the *Journal* makes me wonder what has happened to those values among my fellow Jews.

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I believe I have a democratic right to be critical of the Israeli government without being called self-hating or antisemitic. Your correspondent reports that antisemitic attacks have reached record levels, which is, I believe, due to Israeli policies.

H. L. Vajifdar, London SW13

Sir – I was appalled at the views expressed under the heading 'Stick up for Israel' (April). I am amazed any of your readers feel moved to condone the Israeli policy of 'dominating, expelling, starving and humiliating an entire people' (in the words of a group of experienced IDF officers). Are these readers honestly in favour of building settlements on occupied territory, in clear violation of international law? Of the massive increase in settler numbers since the Oslo peace talks? Of the illegal appropriation of land by building parts of the separation wall on Palestinian land, beyond the 1967 borders? And the now well-documented shootings by the IDF at unarmed civilian targets?

Maybe it is high time to profile in your pages some of the many organisations within Israel which are fighting for a different way forward: Rabbis for Human Rights, Checkpoint Watch, Breaking the Silence (testimony of soldiers who have served in the occupied territories), the Bereaved Families Forum/Parents Circle, the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, Yesh G'vul, Physicians for Human Rights – to name but a few. Surely the least we can do is attempt to understand why so many voices within as well as outside Israel feel compelled to speak out against the aggressive actions of successive Israeli governments.

Caroline M. Salinger, Leicester

Theriesenstadt

Sir – May I ride to the rescue of Anthony Grenville regarding whether or not Theriesenstadt was a ghetto (Letters, March). I was there for 15 months before being sent to Auschwitz and from there to a slave-labour camp. Theriesenstadt was a ghetto. It may have been a grim place compared to home, but it was paradise compared to anything that followed.

Frank Bright, Ipswich

Rabbi Carlebach: A Correction

Sir – As a non-Jewish reader, may I say how much I enjoy your journal, especially the lively Letters page.

A small but significant correction should be added to your article on Hamburg (March, page 2). Unlike his son Julius, who became a lecturer at the University of Sussex, Rabbi Joseph Carlebach did not come to Britain. Showing great courage, he decided to

stay behind to care for the Jewish community in Hamburg, together with his wife Lotte and their youngest children. In 1942 they were deported to the death camps in the East.

Further information about the family can be found in *Jedes Kind ist mein Einziges*, the poignant memoir by Miriam Gillis-Carlebach about her mother Lotte and their family life in Hamburg.

Professor Edward Timms
Centre for German-Jewish Studies
University of Sussex

Jews and Nobel Prizes

Sir – I strongly object to the phrasing in the article by Victor Ross (April). He describes the disproportionate amount of Jews who 'grabbed' a Nobel Prize. It is my understanding that this prize is awarded to deserving and special people in politics, the arts, literature, the sciences, etc. I am not aware of anyone, particularly a Jew, ever 'grabbing' this prize. Talk about Jewish self-hatred! I think an apology and a correction are in order.

Ellen Stein, Bronxville, NY, USA

Dresden: A Valuable Antidote

Sir – Your by now annual 'In Memoriam' for the deported and then murdered Dresden Jews in 1943 is a valuable antidote to too much guilt for the subsequent bombing of that city two years later. Those who fail to see the connection may be reminded that the burning of German cities began on 10 November 1938.

Enid and Robert Miller,
Leatherhead

Memories of Danzig

Sir – I was very interested to read the two articles on Frank Meisler in a recent issue. He came from Danzig, as I did. It certainly brought back memories.

In the profile there was mention of a Dr Itzig, who was head of the Jewish congregation in Danzig in 1939. He succeeded my father, Ernst Berent, in that position after we left Danzig in 1938 and came to England. I believe that between them Dr Itzig and my father organised the Kindertransports from Danzig. As far as I remember, father even had an interview with Anthony Eden about this and about the possibility of allowing Jewish children into Israel, or Palestine as it then was.

Father was very much concerned with the AJR in its early days – they published a most impressive obituary after his death in the *AJR Information* of November 1961, a copy of which I treasure.

F. Renee Martin (née Berent), Sheffield

AJR Diversity

Sir – There is something unusual about the *AJR Journal*. In contrast to all the other

journals that land on my doorstep, I read it from cover to cover. My interest in it would, however, be enhanced if the *Journal* reflected the diversity of the cultural background of the AJR membership more.

I appreciate that the great majority of AJR members come originally (or are descendants of former refugees) from Germany or Austria (my wife came to the UK with the Kindertransport from Vienna). But surely there are others. Many came from Czechoslovakia – and not only from the German-speaking Sudetenland but also from the Czech- (like myself) or Slovak-speaking parts, Hungary, Poland and other European countries. I feel that the *Journal's* contents should better reflect this diversity by occasionally (more than at present) including articles and news of interest to this section of the membership. Am I alone in this view?

Professor Pavel Novak,
Newcastle upon Tyne

Black Book: A Balanced Picture

Sir – Disturbed, like your critic, by the film *Black Book* (March), I have just visited the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation to get a balanced picture. The best estimates say approximately 24,000 Jews went into hiding in the Netherlands and about one in three of these were captured. Rescuers faced great difficulties, including the rationing system and the Dutch police, who mostly collaborated with the Germans. Dutch Calvinists were especially altruistic. There was also a strike of municipal workers in Amsterdam and other cities against the arrest of Jews. (It's a disgrace that we outside the Netherlands do not participate in the annual February commemoration of that event.) *Black Book* seems to have created no great stir in Holland.

George Landers,
Crete, Greece

The Humour of Theodore Bikel

Sir – On reading the article by Harry Bibring in a recent issue, I came across the name of Theodore Bikel. I am the daughter of the actress Clara Meisels and Abish Meisels, who translated *The Merchant of Venice* and other works into Yiddish. Mama retold the story that when she was appearing at the Grand Palais in Whitechapel Teddy played a little boy and sat on her lap (I can't remember the name of the play).

On his return to London after the war, he called on my parents for a visit. I was out of the ATS by then and had the pleasure of meeting him. He is a delightful person with a great sense of humour but I thought his best joke was that mama ought now to sit on his lap.

Ruth Schneider, London N8

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

For 25 years Polish-born artist **Roman Halter** held in his memory the faces he saw on the transports to Auschwitz. The face of an angelic young girl in her mother's arms. The mothers who accompanied their children rather than relinquish them to the Nazi murderers. The face of his mother



Roman Halter *Moses the Prophet* 1974-77, oil on canvas

looking down from the synagogue beneath the fine veil of her mantilla. The face of his brother who was hanged. The face of the man who died on the electrified fence because he had lost his children. The faces of starvation. And, most symbolically perhaps, the face of Moses the Prophet.

Halter clung to these faces with the same tenacity with which he clung to life itself. After losing his entire family to the Nazis. After Auschwitz, after the death march from which he escaped and flew to Britain in 1945. After mentally and emotionally processing every loss, agony and cruelty dreamed up by man's inhumanity to man.

Today, 60 years after those unspeakable events, the **Imperial War Museum** is showing the seven oil paintings which Halter began in 1974, created from the pain of memory, separation and imagination.

The Museum is negotiating to include them in its permanent Holocaust Exhibition.

In Britain, Halter became a successful architect and developed the artistic talent for which he stands in a class of his own. It was honed through visits to the National Gallery, where Renaissance images of the Crucifixion resonated with his experiences. Christ crucified came to represent the body of his brother, executed by the Nazis for a compassionate deed. This painting, *Shlomo I*, recalls the anguished Christ figure taken down from the cross. *Woman Wearing Mantilla* was inspired by **Goya's** portrait of Dona Isabel de Porcel, which reminds him of his mother.

The work has the iconography of Christian Renaissance art in its taut and strongly defined composition and the anguished power of the faces. Each image contains many smaller faces – a Talmudic symbol perhaps? *Moses the Prophet* is depicted in a *talit* and *tefillim*; his face has a terrible majesty. He is an anguished father; a tortured Christ looking down on Jewish suffering. Within Moses's multiple faces, Halter miniaturises the subjects of the other

six paintings.

Renoir is often dismissed as a chocolate-box artist but **Renoir Landscapes** at the **National Gallery** describes his rigorous journey through Impressionism to artistic uncertainty. The early landscapes from 1865 are limpid and visionary, hinting at the dappled and delicate effects to come. This typifies the Fontainebleau school, where we see Renoir skimming rather than lingering on the subject and in this he was influenced by **Courbet** and later **Degas**. In 1873 Impressionism was at its height, with Renoir seeking freedom through innovative experimentation with brushstrokes, but from 1881 he lost his verve; the work became edgier, the colours broken up; sadly the vibrancy had gone. It was as though for all his lustre Renoir could no longer find voice in a new genre. His genius belongs to Impressionism alone.

REVIEWS

Two faces

FROM OUTSIDE IN: AN ANTHOLOGY OF WRITINGS BY REFUGEES ON BRITAIN AND BRITISHNESS

edited by Nushin Arbabzadah

London: Arcadia Books, 2007, 180pp., £11.99 paperback

This book is published on behalf of the British Council, the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations and an organisation with which the AJR has enjoyed a highly positive relationship, as Anthony Grenville shows elsewhere in this month's edition of the *AJR Journal*.

The book's dominant tone – an expression of the profound feelings of rejection experienced by so many of those who wish to settle in this country – is firmly set in the opening words of a foreword by the writer and journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown: 'This country has two faces when it comes to incomers. They never look at each other. One is warm, the other surly. These days it is mostly the surly one we see.'

The book comprises, in chronological order, contributions – memoirs, stories, poems – by refugees from Chile, Vietnam, South Africa, Uganda, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and elsewhere.

The first, and longest, section is devoted to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism, with contributions from three authors. First is a short essay on perceptions of England by Richard Grunberger, the much-missed editor of this journal. When he was growing up in Vienna, Richard writes with characteristic wit, England was 'a tepid place where little happened and was disconnected from the drama of the continent ... I imagined that court circles consisted of aristocrats who not only owned thoroughbred racehorses and greyhounds, but to some extent also looked like them.' More mundanely, Richard somehow knew that the Englishman's 'favourite breakfast cereal was *Haferschleim* (porridge oats) – a compound word whose *Scheim* (mucus) component made me gag.' The reality of living in England though was to change his perceptions radically, as he came to appreciate that with all its faults, this country was unique in its devotion to liberty.

Irene K. Schmied writes movingly about the installation in September 2003 of the *Für das Kind* memorial sculpture at London's Liverpool Street Station and contributes a short story entitled *Fireflies*.

continued on page 10

REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

In two admirable poems – *Arrival* and *Cocoon* – Lotte Kramer describes, albeit ambivalently, a happy new life in England.

It was certainly a success story for these refugees, who, the editor says, established over 100 companies and gave employment to 250,000 people as well as introducing some of the modern science-based technological inventions of the time, such as new methods of photography, electronics, radio and television. For members of many other nationalities, however, it was by no means such a success story. As they see it, people up and down the country, the tabloid media, the authorities – all demonstrate attitudes of xenophobia and racism.

Qobo Mayisa, a refugee from Zimbabwe, sums up vividly what many present-day refugees to the UK encounter: 'I could never ... feel too comfortable and make myself at home. Newspapers ran anti-immigration headlines and below them inflammatory stories ... My refugee colleagues and I were put under so much mental pressure that we were left traumatised. To us, Fortress Britain was writhing from infection and at any time would vomit us out.'

The contributions to this book demonstrate clearly, and from the refugees' viewpoint, how attitudes to them in the UK – islands with a tradition of receiving refugees which goes back to the twelfth century – have deteriorated in recent times. This is a sad, deeply disturbing book.

Howard Spier

Demonised by right and left WHAT DO ZIONISTS BELIEVE?

by Colin Shindler

London: Granta, 2007, 116pp.,
paperback £6.99

The quick answer is that Zionists believe in the necessity of an autonomous homeland for the Jewish people. Within that definition, however, come a host of widely different interpretations. The overlap between the Zionism of George Eliot, Avigdor Lieberman and Yossi Beilin is negligible. For that matter, there is little overlap between the views of Anthony Wedgewood Benn, who was a keen Zionist, and his alter ego, the bitterly anti-Israel Tony Benn.

In this excellent book, Shindler discusses who were and are the Zionists, what Zionism taught, where it stands today, and what its future might be.

This compact book provides a rapid overview of the topic. But the reader who does not know Moses Hess from Rudolph Hess or Myra Hess may be

bemused by the succession of characters rushing past like actors in a silent movie. Equally, the academically inclined reader will complain about the absence of their favourite characters.

Shindler points out the options available to the nineteenth-century Jew. The orthodox religious groups advocated political quiescence in the Diaspora while waiting for the Messiah. The German Reform Movement recommended the abandonment of even praying for a return to Zion and aspired to become Germans of the mosaic persuasion. Among the radicals, there was the wish to unite with other radical groups to bring about world socialism and, in 1897, they formed the Bund.

Thus Zionism was opposed not only by the religious authorities but also by the secular left-wing movements. It was supported only by *Klal Yisrael* – the Jewish masses. It succeeded because sufficient idealists were found to colonise Palestine. The *Mikveh Israel* agricultural school, founded in 1870, was the first overtly Zionist enterprise. Successive waves of persecution, beginning with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, underlined the correctness of the Zionist analysis, and a Jewish state was established in 1948 – a magnificent achievement, if too late to save but a remnant of European Jewry.

Since then, of course, what Zionists believe has changed. Zionists in the Diaspora now are people concerned about the welfare of the state, plus a small group intending to emigrate there.

The sole point on which I take issue with Shindler is his statement that Zionism arose during the same period of history as Arab nationalism. I do not deny that a Palestinian identity exists at present, but it has few historical roots. As late as 1956 Ahmed Shukairy, Saudi delegate to the UN and later head of the PLO, declared 'It is common knowledge that Palestine is nothing but southern Syria.' There is a question as to whether Arab nationalism exists at all – Arab countries were carved out by the allies after the First World War and only Egypt had a historical identity. Saudi Arabia was formed through an act of aggression in the 1930s with the expulsion of the Hashemite Sheriff of Mecca. Al-Qaeda is an imperialist not a nationalist movement.

The success of Zionism has not brought about the hoped-for normalisation of Jewish life. Denial of the rights of Jews as a nation has been added to a denial of their rights as individuals. Jews have long been demonised by the extreme right. Their murder in Israel is now encouraged by the extreme left.

Bryan Reuben



Letter from Israel

Israel possesses many places of archaeological, historical and religious significance for all mankind. The modern state has constructed buildings and established sites with meaning of a more contemporary and/or national character. But there can be few spots which combine so many levels of significance for so many people as the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

In the 40 years since it was founded, the Museum has grown from a modest assortment of artworks and archaeological artifacts to one of the world's most extensive collections. It encompasses Jewish ethnography, Israeli art, period rooms, American and African art, archaeology, a very respectable collection of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and modern art and sculpture, as well as a few old masters, Judaica, and of course the Dead Sea Scrolls, housed in their own unique building, the Shrine of the Book.

The scale model of Jerusalem at the time of the Second Temple which was formerly situated in the grounds of the Holyland Hotel has recently been added to the Museum's collection, adding yet another dimension to what was already a wide-ranging collection.

When my husband and I retired, we sought a channel for our abilities and decided to contact the Israel Museum, where we were promptly enrolled as volunteer 'hosts'.

After completing a one-month course of lectures and tours in an attempt to familiarise us with the Museum's labyrinthine galleries, we were each issued with a wine-coloured waistcoat and a scarf bearing the Museum's logo, sent to our appointed places, and told to help visitors find whatever it was they were looking for.

All through the year the Museum throbs with visitors from every corner of the world intent on passing some time in its cool interior and benefiting from its cultural offerings. Many enquiries are about mundane things such as eateries and toilets, but we are also able to help visitors find specific exhibitions or displays about which they have heard. We greatly enjoy being part of the community of the Israel Museum.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

A restoration comedy

It's a good thing we weren't rich. It cut our losses when the Nazis robbed us. They came to take my father, but he had left an hour earlier, so they killed his dog instead. My father was a forgiving man, but that was one murder too far. Like the Nazi big shots deciding who was a Jew, he had strong views on who was a Nazi. His life-long allegiance to Wagner and his circle tested his faith but he came through with flying colours, holding aloft his friendship with Wagner's grandson Wieland and the medal that proclaimed him a freeman of Bayreuth.

Another of his heroes was Goethe. He (my father, not Goethe) was an example of that fatal attraction exerted by German culture on Jews seeking intellectual self-improvement – the wonderful flowering that went up in flames.

Goethe was at the heart of my father's collection of first editions and manuscripts. When the Gestapo shot the dog, they vandalised the library, ripping out pages to use as lavatory paper (mainly *Faust*, Part II), playing football with suitably shaped objects, and leaving the rest for the runners of Hitler's thief-in-chief to pick over for the Führer's mega-museum to be built in Linz in celebration of the 1,000-year Reich. I have the letter from a local ignoramus in which he humbly enquires which of the surviving possessions of the 'Jew Rosenfeld' might be worthy of consideration. There is no mention of the inroads made by crapping and scrapping since there were still a few thousand volumes to choose from. Those which did not merit grand larceny were distributed to minor libraries and museums, some finally finding their way into the Austrian National Library (ONB).

My father never talked about his lost possessions and I only learned many years



later that he had made an attempt to recover some of his favourite pieces. The ONB had taken a casual look at its shelves; they excused their lack of success by explaining that the intake of 'confiscated goods' had overwhelmed the staff at the time, so that to their eternal shame their high standards of record-keeping had slipped. They did find a few books, identified by my father's *ex libris*, which they defaced with a rubber stamp before returning them as the 'rightful property' of my father, no longer Jew Rosenfeld but with his full name, title and honorifics restored.

My father never built up his collection of books again. But being a collector at heart, he dabbled in records (Wagner) and, for a time, even in postage stamps showing musical subjects (Wagner).

My mother had her own collection of books, mainly relating to the works of Freud, having been one of his disciples. I particularly wanted to recover a first edition of his collected works, bound in leather, which the professor had inscribed to her. No trace of that, as you can imagine. So I asked a distant cousin of mine, Randol Schoenberg, to help me. He was not only the grandson of the noted 12-tone Schoenberg but had recently distinguished himself by winning a David v. Goliath battle against the State of Austria before the US Supreme Court, which resulted in the rightful owner getting back some \$170m worth of Klimt

paintings. Just the man, I thought, to get me my Freud.

Randol told me that he did not do single books, not even collections bound in leather, but he thought that with the right evidence, he might get me Austria.

My quest continues. I have found the most delightful of pen pals with whom I correspond about the pain of loss. Mag. Lessing is full of sympathy and understanding. She sends me enchanting letters from Vienna, sometimes in English, sometimes in German. Her English is impeccable, which immediately brands her as a non-native. I also get letters from a Sir Franklin Berman which are neither as elegant nor as eloquent. Most surprising of all, I have been inscribed on the Roll of Honour of the Viennese Kultusgemeinde, attested by a document signed by Dr Ariel Muzicant, quite possibly another Wagnerian. My father, who was more deserving of such an honour, merely had an offer of having his driving licence restored without payment of the usual renewal fee. This concession arrived too late to be useful – some ten years after his death.

The message from both Mag. Lessing and Sir Bernard is the same: we are on the cusp of restitution. Only a few formalities stand between me and justice being done. Or more likely 12.5 per cent of justice, since I must realise, which Maggie Lessing is confident I do, that I am going to be paid out of a pot shared with 20,000 other hopefuls, so that no one can actually get anything until the last claim has been assessed and the respective entitlements apportioned. This could even work to my advantage if other claimants give up or die – unless I die first, in which case the advantage is nullified. All this is, of course, subject to no further problems arising and taking due account of the fact that I have already had a lump sum sufficient to pay for documenting and xeroxing my claim.

I have no idea if Mag. Lessing has other pen pals. I like to think I am the only one, but if you have heard from her, you are one hell of a privileged victim.

Victor Ross

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

INSIDE the AJR

Pinner: the 'Me-Now' generation

Clive Lawton told a full house that instant gratification was contrary to accepted Jewish values, but that children growing up in this uncertain world hooked on mobile phones and playstations were adaptable and could be taught proper responsibilities towards their fellow humans.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thur 3 May. Jane King, 'Coram's Children'

Jewish genealogy in Glasgow

Michael Tobias showed us how he traced via www.jewishgen.org the globetrotting of two families from the mid-1800s – one from Holland, the other from Poland/Prussia – for proof of a Jewish wedding required by a young couple seeking an orthodox marriage ceremony.

Jonathan Kish

Next meeting: Sun 2 Sept. The return of Michael Tobias

American-Jewish music in Hendon

Alan Conway followed Aaron Copland's 'Fanfare for the Common Man' with records of Jewish theatre music saved from oblivion by collecting and recording these lovely songs. We heard the Andrews Sisters and Richard Tauber singing in Yiddish.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: Mon 14 May. Frank Miller, 'The Story of the Bagel'

Wessex talk on Vienna coffee houses

Otto Deutsch recalled how his family would put on their best clothes on Shabbat and make their way from their flat in Favoriten to the Kaffeehaus. Then came the exciting choice: which of the dozens of cakes? Otto spent years after the war as a tour guide so he was able to compare childhood visits to the Grinzing suburb and the Kahlenberg mountain with visits in recent years.

George Ettinger

Ilford musical morning

Walter Woyda gave our well-attended meeting a very enjoyable talk on *Milk and Honey*, a musical about a group of people going to Israel to celebrate Independence Day.

Lili Pollard

Next meeting: Wed 2 May. Dr Helen Fry, 'Refugees in Uniform'

Norfolk hardy souls

We hardy souls from far and wide met for a real Continental Jewish lunch *geschleppt* from Wembley by the

indefatigable Myrna. Frank gave an account of the talk on the fate of his classmates and their families of the Jewish school in Prague he had given to the Ipswich HQ of the Suffolk County Council on Holocaust Memorial Day.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: Thur 7 June. Usual venue

Kirkaldy exhibition

Anne Frank's cousin from Switzerland spoke about their childhood days as part of the Heartstone Anne Frank Memorial and Holocaust Survivors' Testimonies Exhibition. Heartstone is working with Yad Vashem on the ongoing Holocaust Exhibition project.

Jonathan Kish

HGS talk on Jews and Greeks

Rabbi Simon Francis told us Jews had had contact with Greek civilisation for over 2,000 years. It had been suggested that Socrates had known of Isaiah. Their life under the Ottomans was peaceful for centuries, but, following the Greek-Turkish war, in 1922, many non-Jewish Greek refugees settled in Salonica and the Jews and the newcomers never established close bonds. The Jews held on to wearing Ottoman-style clothing so, when the Nazis invaded, the Jews had few friends and almost all were transported to Auschwitz.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: Mon 14 May. Dr Sheila Marshall, 'The Jews of South Africa'

Superb meeting in Westcliff

Dr Helen Fry's history of the Alien Section of the Pioneer Corps was so well researched that I was unaware of most of the facts even though I myself had served in that corps. It was also great to meet again Bertha Leverton MBE, who joined us for a short period. A superb meeting.

Ken Ward

Next meeting: Tues 8 May. Jeanette Rosenberg, 'Genealogy'

Next outing: Thur 31 May. Wiener Library

Chacun à son goût in South London

Naomi Hyamson, mezzo, accompanied by Harold Lester on piano, performed a programme of songs entitled 'Chacun à son goût'. There was something for everyone: music from opera and musicals and numbers performed in German, Yiddish, French and English. A delightful afternoon.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: Thur 10 May. Jack de Metz, 'Fair Reporting on Israel'

Brighton & Hove Sarid discussion

Hazel had a long list of subjects to discuss, ranging from current affairs to ethical issues. The meeting was well attended and we enjoyed measuring the breadth of our diversities.

Fausta Shelton

Next meeting: Mon 21 May. Sidney Levene, 'My Life as a Barrister'



At opening of Kirkaldy exhibition: (from left) Heartstone Director Sitakumari, The Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown MP and Ms Wanda Hunty, Curator of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, Poland

Cleve Road: *The Grand Tour*

Walter Woyda played us extracts from *The Grand Tour*, a musical about a Jewish man escaping from the Nazis. Music and lyrics are by Jerry Herman and it opened on Broadway in 1979 and has never been staged elsewhere. A request was made for George Layton to be one of our speakers alongside Walter's return.

David Lang

Tues 15 May. 'The Wiener Library: Past, Present and Future'

Edgware musical meeting

Some 30 of us were treated to fine samples of music from Bach to Berlioz all expertly explained by Brian Moser. A most pleasant hour.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: Tues 15 May. 1st birthday celebration

Oxford planning summer lunch

Our Israel Embassy speaker was ill but we hope he will 'schedule us in' at a later date. We discussed our future programme and decided to hold a summer lunch on 31 July.

Anne Selinger

Next meeting: Tues 8 May. 'The Board of Deputies'

North London and South African Jewry

Dr Sheila Marshall proved a most erudite speaker on this subject. Our recent range of speakers has provided stimulating subjects greatly contributing to the enjoyment of the 25-plus members present.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thur 31 May. 'Israel Update'

FURTHER MEETINGS

West Midlands (Birmingham) Tues 1 May. 'The Wiener Library: Past, Present and Future'

Cardiff Wed 9 May. 'Israel Update'

Herts Thur 17 May. 'Audiology'

Cambridge Tues 22 May. Outing to Flag Fen

Refugees from Nazism who fought for the Allies during the Second World War

Reunion at Imperial War Museum,
Tuesday, 4 September 2007

Dr Helen Fry, who in the autumn will be bringing out a book on the subject entitled *The King's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens*, and Suzanne Bardgett, Project Director of the Holocaust Exhibition, are working closely together to ensure that the Reunion does justice to the scale and variety of the contribution made at that time by former refugees. It is hoped that the event will be covered well by the press.

The programme will begin at 4.00 pm with tea and a speech of welcome by Field Marshal Lord Bramall (former Chief of Staff and Chairman of the Museum's Trustees when the Holocaust Exhibition was first developed). This will be followed by

an historical overview by Dr Fry including reminiscences from several veterans. Following a screening of *Lift your Head, Comrades*, a 10-minute film about the Pioneer Corps, Suzanne Bardgett will talk about the importance of the Museum's collecting work. A Reception with food and wine will be held in the Museum's Main Atrium. The event ends at 8.30 pm.

Dress code for veterans: blazers and medals; 'lounge suit' for other attendees.

Tickets will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact Jessica Mani on 0207 416 5285 or at jmani@iwmorg.uk by 30 June 2007.

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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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 16 May 2007

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Katharina Hübschmann

Senior Librarian at
the Wiener Library

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 14 May 2007

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Mary Kayitesi-Blewitt

Director, Surf Survivors Fund
'Memories of Rwanda'

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

May Afternoon Entertainment

Tue	1	CLOSED
Wed	2	Katinka Seiner
Thur	3	Guyathrie Peiris & Bill Patrick
Mon	7	CLOSED - Bank Holiday
Tue	8	CLOSED
Wed	9	Sheila Games
Thur	10	Michael Heaton
Mon	14	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue	15	CLOSED
Wed	16	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	17	Madeleine Whiteson
Mon	21	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	22	CLOSED
Wed	23	CLOSED - SHAVUOTH
Thur	24	CLOSED - SHAVUOTH
Mon	28	CLOSED - Bank Holiday
Tue	29	CLOSED
Wed	30	Margaret Opdahl
Thur	31	Paul Coleman

DIARY DATES

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, Merriem Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

It is with great sorrow that the family of John Seiniger announce his death on 16 March 2007 in the Lindo Wing of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, just before his 100th birthday. He will be greatly missed by his family and his many friends.

Classified

An AJR member is looking for an aspiring musician, singer, player, accompanist who would like to have numerous books of music, scores etc. Please telephone 01372 458883.

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Centre. Clothes sale, separates, etc. Wednesday 9 May, 9.30-11.45 am.

The Trustees, Management and Staff of the AJR wish AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro a very happy 95th birthday

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Nursery School: 9.15am - 12.15pm
Belsize Under 3s: 9.30am - 11.30am

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Lily Freeman invites all her friends to the opening of her exhibition

'HAPPY PAINTINGS'

at Hampstead Museum, Burgh House, New End Square, London NW3

3-13 May, 12-5 pm

(closed Mon & Tues)

Tel 020 8458 5020

Opening Reception:

Thur 3 May, 6.30-8.30pm

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Call Lorna on 0208 385 3070 or Carol on 020 8385 3085

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sunday 8 July 2007 - Sunday 15 July 2007

AT THE FERNLEA HOTEL
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Tel 01253 726 726

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

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Search Notices

Collins, Lisle – (née Ehrenburg?), a refugee, possibly a Kindertransportee, from Berlin, was at Bunce Court for a short time. She married Captain Leslie Collins RA, who possibly served in Indian army. A daughter born around 1943 was named Margaret and lived in Worthing in 1944-46. Contact desired to share memories of friendship. Any info pls to alt@leslieturner.org

Mann, Walter and Elisabeth – my grandparents from Germany. He was a dentist in London before WWI; she may have been a piano teacher. They had a son: Franz Richard, born 1914. They were interned on Isle of Man during WWI then sent back to Germany. My father was sent to an uncle in Paris. My grandparents were in concentration camps and my grandfather died in one. My grandmother lived in Berlin but had no real relationship with my father. My father always said Thomas Mann was his uncle. Any info pls to jcalvi@tiscalinet.it

Mayer-Wolf, Oscar – was one of founders of Naharia by a group of Germans in 1934. Could this be the same Mayer family that left Langenlinsheim for England? Pls contact Aaron Sovers at ashovers@aol.com

Ostrava Moravska – Did you escape through the coalmines in 1938-39 or do you know someone who escaped on that route or helped someone to escape? Do you know other routes between Czechoslovakia and Poland? I am a Swiss historian writing a book about rescuers – people who helped others to cross borders illegally – during WWII and later. Any info pls to iboesch@smile.ch

Ravensbrück – I am searching for survivors of this camp for a book. Also, further to a notice last December, I am still searching for survivors of the Jewish Hospital in Berlin. Some readers called about the Jewish Hospital but failed to reach me. Pls call again on 0208 740 9506 or email me at Sarah_helm@btconnect.com

Arts and Events Diary – May

To 26 May *Kindertransport* The play by Diane Samuels. Hampstead Theatre, London, tel 020 7722 9301

To 27 May *Absence and Loss* A photographic Holocaust memorial exhibition London Jewish Cultural Centre, tel 020 8457 5000

Tues 1 May Prof Robert Wistrich, 'Laboratory for World Destruction: Germans and Jews in Central Europe', London Jewish Cultural Centre, 7.30 pm, tel 020 8457 5000

3-13 May 'Happy Paintings'. Exhibition by Lily Freeman at Hampstead Museum, Burgh House, New End Square, London NW3, 12-5 pm, tel 020 8458 5020

Mon 7 No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43

Thur 10 *Remember*, a play about the Holocaust performed by Finchley Catholic High School, Finchley Arts Depot, 7.30 pm, tel 020 8445 0105 ext 248

Mon 14 Howard Isenberg, 'Toscanini in London' Club 43

Mon 21 Prof Steven Aschheim,

'Icons Beyond the Border: Why Do We Love (Hate) Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Franz Rosenzweig, Hershom Scholem and Leo Strauss?' UCL, Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, 6.45 pm, reception 6.15 pm in Haldane Room (Gower Street entrance), tel 020 8381 4721 or 01273 678771

Mon 21 Dr Nicholas Worrall, 'Brecht's "The Mother" in a Post-Communist World' Club 43

Tues 22 Prof Steven Aschheim, 'Locating Nazi Evil: The Contrasting Visions of Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt and Victor Klemperer' Centre for German-Jewish Studies, Sussex University, Brighton, Arts C110, 5.00 pm (tea 4.30 pm in Arts B127), tel 01273 678771

Mon 28 No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43

28 May-1 June A Spiro Tour to Berlin Tel Spiro Ark on 020 7723 9991

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

Central Office for Holocaust Claims Michael Newman

Insurance Commission winds up its work

Having made payments totalling more than US\$300 million to settle 48,263 claims, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) was wound up at the end of March.

Established in December 1998 and financed by European insurance companies, ICHEIC received more than 90,000 claims. The bulk of the money was allotted to just over 14,000 victims (or their heirs) who shared an overall sum of \$238 million. A further 2,900 applicants who claimed for policies sold by insurance companies in Central and Eastern Europe that were nationalised or liquidated after the Second World War and for which no present-day successor could be identified shared \$30 million.

ICHEIC also distributed \$1,000 awards to 31,000 victims (\$31 million) whose claims were deemed credible but could not be substantiated due to 'the ravages of war and the passage of time'.

In addition to these awards for unpaid policies, ICHEIC allocated \$200 million to finance humanitarian projects benefiting needy survivors and Holocaust-education projects.

The Commission received before the deadline 91,558 claims, two-thirds of which did not name the insurance company with which the policies were supposedly held.

Wertheim settlement: Claims Conference announcement

The Jewish Claims Conference and the German retail group KarstadtQuelle have reached a settlement in their dispute over a property in central Berlin.

KarstadtQuelle agreed to pay 88 million euros to the heirs of the so-called Lenné-Triangle property which formerly belonged to the Jewish Wertheim family and was seized by the Nazis. According to the Jewish Claims Conference, KarstadtQuelle's payment is one of the highest ever paid as compensation for confiscations carried out by the Nazi regime.

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merriem Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to mnewman@ajr.org.uk

Witnesses to history

'Remembering the Children'

Professor Tony Kushner gave this year's Leonard Montefiore memorial lecture, invited by the '45 Aid Society. In his lecture, 'Remembering the Children: Britain, Refugees and Survivors from Nazism', he differentiated between those who came to Britain in the 1930s and the far fewer who arrived following the end of hostilities in 1945.

After the war, historians had paid scant attention to the children who had survived Nazi persecution when contrasted with the 1.5 million who were murdered along with their parents. The acceptance of the temporary immigration of the children of the Kindertransport was a direct result of Kristallnacht in November 1938, contrasting with President Roosevelt's refusal to support the entry of refugee children into the USA. The Refugee Children's Movement lobbied for the admission of children and the British government accepted up to 10,000 below 17 years of age as temporary residents. The children were sent to isolated parts of the country and were often set apart in the school classrooms. Most contributed to the war effort or gave loyal service in the forces.

Karen Gershon's 1966 study, which related 234 individual stories, was the first reference in a refugee history. Bertha Leverton organised the first Reunion of Kindertransport in 1989 in London, making the Kindertransport part of British history. Co-authored by Shmuel Lowensohn, *I Came Alone* added considerably to the number of personal stories. At the third and final reunion in 1999, a commemorative plaque was dedicated at the House of Commons, and in 2003 a statue was unveiled on the concourse of Liverpool Street Station, where most had arrived.

Collectively known as 'The Boys', child survivors of the concentration camps, Otto Schiff helped persuade the Home Office to take up to 1,000 for rest and recuperation, accepting eventual return to their countries of origin. In all, 723 were flown to Britain by the RAF and, rather like the Kinder, settled away from the main urban areas. Many of the children wished to go to Palestine, but

took the opportunity to leave the DP camps.

Ben Helfgott, Chairman of the '45 Aid Society, was the recent guest of Radio 4's *Desert Island Disks*, relating his life in the ghetto after the German invasion of Poland, the murder of close members of his family, and his eventual opportunity to come to England. He took great pride in representing Great Britain at the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956 as a British weightlifting champion.

'The Single Light'

The youngest of eight children, Ernest Levy was born in Budapest into a strongly orthodox Jewish family, celebrating his barmitzvah as Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia and expelled Jews of Hungarian origin. In his newly published autobiography *The Single Light*, written with David Spear, he recalls the seven concentration and labour camps he survived, including Auschwitz. As the Russians closed in, inmates were force-marched to Belsen but, despite typhoid, he lived to choose repatriation.

Back in Budapest he underwent a crisis of faith but, recalling those who had helped to save him, he revived his Jewish faith and a passion for music, by the early 1960s serving as a *chazan* in a Glasgow synagogue. Since making his home in Scotland he has educated and enlightened many young people with accounts of his experiences as a true witness.

The Rev Ernest Levy's autobiography was launched at the House of Lords, hosted by the ever-ebullient Lord Janner and organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust, which he chairs. Jim Murphy MP, a member for Glasgow, recalled how he had become a longstanding friend of Ernest when a student some 15 years previously. Rev Levy replied that he was privileged to be surrounded by friends, family and other important people. The taxi driver bringing him to the Lords reception had asked 'Why Scotland?', to which he had replied that it was 'a beautiful country with wonderful, good-hearted people'.

Newsround

Concerts in memory of German-Jewish composers

A group of German artists has honoured German-Jewish musicians' works and lives in a series of concerts in Los Angeles. Among the composers are Arnold Schoenberg, Erich Zeisl, Alexander Zemlinsky, Pavel Haas, Viktor Ullman and Wladyslaw Szpilman (the latter portrayed in Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist*). The idea of memorialising not only the works but also the lives and fates of the Jewish composers originated in 2001 in Schwerin, where Volker Ahmels, director of the Schwerin Conservatory, organised an international festival known as *Verfemte Musik*.

School teachers drop Holocaust lessons for fear of giving offence

UK school teachers are dropping controversial subjects such as the Holocaust and the Crusades from history lessons because they do not want to cause offence to children from certain races and religions. According to a report by the Historical Association, produced with funding from the Department for Education, the teachers are generally well-intentioned.

Paris exhibit on deported Jewish children

An exhibition at the Paris city hall contains thousands of photographs, official documents, lists and personal testimonies pertaining to deported Jewish children. In all, 11,400 French children were deported, 6,000 of them from Paris.

Nazi war criminal loses court battle

Uki Goni, an Argentine researcher and journalist, has won a three-year battle in the Italian courts against Nazi war criminal Erich Priebke, who sued Goni and his Italian publisher for 50,000 euros. Priebke, who is known for filing lawsuits, was discovered in Argentina in 1995 and was deported to Italy, where he was given a life sentence for the deaths of 335 people in what has come to be known as the Ardeatine Caves Massacre.

Former Russian soldier fights neo-Nazi propaganda

With the help of friends from the Union of Jewish Soviet War Veterans, Boris Stambler, an 81-year-old retired engineer who lives in Moscow, is continuing his decade-long legal battle against Russian antisemitic publications. His longest struggle is against Viktor Korchagin, the owner of a Moscow bookshop who has published a number of anti-Jewish texts including Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.