

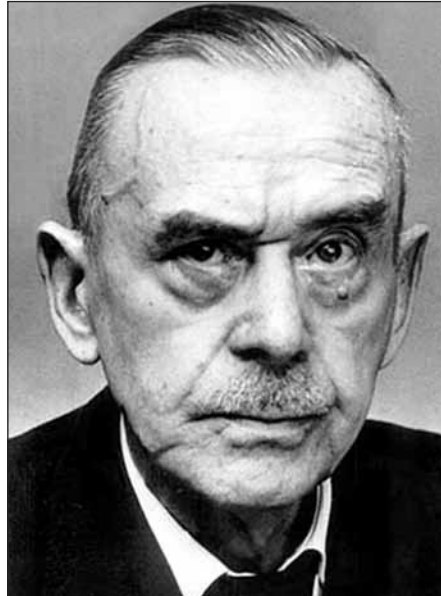
## Literature and disease

As an inescapable element in the human condition, sickness and injury have played a part throughout world literature, from Philoctetes in Homer's *Iliad*, abandoned on the island of Lemnos with a festering wound in his foot, to Shakespeare's demonically deformed Richard III and to modern classics like Albert Camus's *La Peste*, in which an epidemic of bubonic plague afflicts the city of Oran (Algeria).

In the early nineteenth century, the theme of disease took on a new dimension with the Romantics, as a concomitant to that generation of writers' drastic sense of alienation from the commercial, materialistic values that increasingly dominated society in the era of the dawning Industrial Revolution. The artist's awareness of his displacement to the periphery in a modern, market-driven society was first expressed in Goethe's drama *Torquato Tasso* (published 1790), where the artist-hero is presented as having access to a realm of higher truth but, at the same time, as radically unsuited to life in the everyday world: 'Sein Auge weilt auf dieser Erde kaum;/ Sein Ohr vernimmt den Einklang der Natur' (His eye barely rests on this earth;/ His ear hears the harmonies of nature).

Disease as a metaphor for the artist's alienation from the modern world played a central role in the writings of the Romantics, reflecting their sense of the divide that had opened up between art and life. Indeed, disease and early death were a feature of the Romantic generation: they often died young, of disease (Keats, aged 25, of tuberculosis; Novalis, pseudonym of Friedrich von Hardenberg, aged 28, of the same condition; or Byron, aged 36, of a fever contracted in Greece); in accidents (Shelley, drowned aged 29 off the coast of Italy); lapsed into drug use (Coleridge, Thomas de Quincey), or into madness (Friedrich Hölderlin). Often they existed on the fringes of society, only achieving due recognition posthumously.

An archetypal Romantic artist figure in this respect was the poet-forger Thomas



Thomas Mann, 1875-1955

Chatterton, a precocious prodigy who, by the time of his suicide in 1770 at the age of 17, had built up a considerable body of work. Chatterton's premature death in his attic room in Brook Street, Holborn, became emblematic of the unsuitedness of the Romantic poet to life in modern bourgeois society. His life and early death were commemorated by a number of Romantic poets, including Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, while Alfred de Vigny's play *Chatterton* (1835) is one of the key texts of the Romantic movement in France. Other Romantics were also, in Keats's phrase, 'half in love with easeful Death': following the death of his fiancée Sophie von Kühn two days after her fifteenth birthday, Novalis developed something approaching a cult of death and the grave.

By the late nineteenth century, the Romantic theme of the dissonance between art and life had in Germany been developed into a system of ideas that posited a polar opposition between body and mind, health and disease, between the forces of life and strength and those of thought and intellect. Influential here were such philosophers as Schopenhauer, with his bleak vision of the blind instinctual

forces, 'the will', that underlay the surface phenomena of human existence, and Nietzsche, with his ideas of the will to power and his affirmation of 'life' and strength, as well as Darwinian concepts of life as the survival of the fittest. Like everything associated with the realm of the mind, art came to be seen as opposed to life, as part of those elements in the human psyche that threatened to paralyse action and decisiveness, leaving them, in Hamlet's words, 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'.

In the works of Thomas Mann (1875, Lübeck - 1955, Zurich) the theme of the art/life dichotomy reached a highpoint. Mann's early stories frequently revolve around disease and disablement, as in *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* (*Little Herr Friedemann*, 1897), where the main character's existence is defined by his deformity, and *Tristan* (1903), set in a sanatorium, where an artist figure, Detlev Spinell, and a businessman, Anton Klöterjahn, seem to compete for the affections of Klöterjahn's ailing wife. Whereas Klöterjahn is the image of virility and energy - 'Klötten' means 'testicles' in North German dialect - Spinell is an effeminate aesthete who shrinks from life. By persuading Gabriele Klöterjahn to play the 'Liebestod' (Love-Death) from Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, Spinell precipitates the haemorrhage that kills her. The two men embody the contrast between the healthy, 'normal' bourgeois and the artist, who is linked both to creativity and the world of the mind and also to disease and death.

*Buddenbrooks* (1901), the novel that established Mann's reputation, chronicles the decline of a successful Lübeck merchant family, as its 'healthy' commercial instincts are progressively undermined, from generation to generation, by the spirit of art. In this novel, the connection between artistic creativity and disease is made unmistakably plain. When Thomas Buddenbrook, the third generation to

 Literature and disease continued

head the family, weds the exotic Gerda Arnoldsen from Amsterdam, the family's fate is sealed: Gerda, who lives primarily for her music, has the red hair and prominent veins in her temples that are the mark of the artist, and she duly passes her love of music on to her sickly son Hanno, who falls under the thrall of Wagner's music and dies of typhus in adolescence. As the vitality of the Buddenbrooks, expressed both in physical energy and in commercial ruthlessness and decisiveness, gives way to eccentricity, reflectiveness and artistic inclination, the contrast deepens between the healthy normality of the 'Bürger' and those who deviate from the path of normality to indulge in the heady but perilous delights of art and the mind.

It is in *Der Tod in Venedig* (*Death in Venice*, 1912) that Mann works out most brilliantly and profoundly the relationship between art and disease. The novella recounts the respected writer Gustav von Aschenbach's visit to Venice, where he becomes obsessed with a beautiful Polish boy, Tadzio, to the extent of ignoring the outbreak of cholera, and where he dies. But Aschenbach does not die of homosexual infatuation, though that is certainly an indicator of the collapse of his moral and spiritual defences, nor does he die of cholera. He dies, one might say, of art. Aschenbach has sought to evade the 'unhealthy' and potentially immoral, decadent and life-threatening forces inherent in art, by cultivating a form of writing that is highly refined in its classical purity of style and its strict formal discipline, which seemingly reflect a moral aesthetic. But art can never be moral; relying as it does on formal beauty, it appeals to the senses, is thus at best amoral and, as Aschenbach's fate demonstrates, all too often immoral. For

in Tadzio, who is described as 'perfectly beautiful', like a Greek statue, Aschenbach encounters the formal beauty after which he had been striving in his literary works – and it kills him, after first destroying his self-discipline and moral resolve.

Pure beauty of form, the ideal of classical art, has two faces. On the one hand, as in Aschenbach's mature works, it appears as harmonious, serene and rational, qualities linked by Mann to the Greek deity Apollo, god of clarity, lucidity and reason. On the other hand, art derives from the irrational forces of creative inspiration, stemming from darker wellsprings associated in the novella with Dionysus/Bacchus, god of wine and fertile invention; in the nightmare of a Bacchic orgy that torments Aschenbach towards the end of the novella, the true nature of art and the artist is made brutally clear. As the cholera that afflicts Venice has come from the East, from the tropical swamps of the Ganges delta, so too in Greek myth did Dionysus come to classical Greece from India, in a chariot drawn by tigers. As Hölderlin put it in the impassioned opening lines of his poem 'Dichterberuf' ('The Poet's Vocation'): 'Des Ganges Ufer hörten des Freudengotts/ Triumph, als allerobernd vom Indus her/ Der junge Bacchus kam mit heiligem/ Weine vom Schläfe die Völker weckend' ('The banks of the Ganges heard the triumph of the God of Joy, as, all-conquering, young Bacchus came from the Indus, waking the peoples from their slumber with holy wine').

Aschenbach had ventured as far as Venice, famous for its trading links with the East, but not, as he hoped, 'as far as the tigers'. Instead, the tigers came, along with the cholera, to destroy him. In his later novels, Mann was to broaden out the theme of disease to encompass the political and cultural health of Europe. In *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*, 1924), a Swiss sanatorium provides the vantage point from which to explore the competing forces at play in a continent on the brink of world war. Finally, in *Doktor Faustus* (1947), Mann's Faustian hero, the composer Adrian Leverkühn, makes his pact with the devil, by which he will be granted supreme artistic gifts, but at the price of being infected with syphilis; Leverkühn's story unfolds in parallel with Germany's pact with its own devil, Adolf Hitler.

Anthony Grenville

## Special KT Lunch

Wednesday 9 September 2015  
at New North London

Synagogue

Guest speaker: Barbara Winton

Please join us for a special KT Lunch on Wednesday 9 September at the New North London Synagogue, 80 East End Road, Finchley N3. We are delighted that Barbara Winton, daughter of the late Sir Nicholas Winton, will be our guest speaker.

Barbara will be talking about her father's remarkable achievements and signing copies of her book

*If It's Not Impossible ... The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton.*

We are also delighted that some of the Year 6 pupils from Akiva School will be in attendance to meet you and Barbara.

Please strongly encourage your families to accompany you for this unique gathering.

NB: The KT Lunch will be at the regular venue at Alyth Synagogue for the October meeting.

# AJR Lunch

## Sunday

### 11 October 2015

*If you would like to attend, please complete the enclosed form and return it to us ASAP*

10-DAY VISIT TO  
**ISRAEL**  
NOVEMBER 2015



The AJR is considering organising a 10-day trip to Israel in early November this year.

The cost of the visit is not yet decided.

Carol Rossen will be accompanying the trip.

If you would like to join the trip, please contact  
Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070  
or at [lorna@ajr.org.uk](mailto:lorna@ajr.org.uk)  
as soon as possible.

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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.

## ‘WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU’

**S**usanne Medas, herself a former *Kind*, pays tribute to Sir Nicholas Winton, whose obituary appeared in our August issue.

A young man sees the imminent danger of a country being swallowed up by Hitler’s hordes. He knows what this means to thousands of families who have already fled from Germany and Austria – Jews and non-Jews alike – some of them having experienced the horrors of Dachau and Buchenwald thinking they are safe in Czechoslovakia.

Nicholas Winton, aged 29, arrives in Prague in December 1938 and is taken to see the plight of hundreds of families huddled in the open in makeshift shelters – they are fleeing from Sudetenland, which is overrun by German troops and in danger once more.

These people are on their way to Prague, where they will besiege foreign embassies to find asylum anywhere in the world. A British delegation headed by Eleanor Rathbone has arrived in Prague to try and get these men, enemies of the Hitler regime, to Britain – but what of their wives, what of their children?

Shocked by the images of these frightened people, Nicholas Winton has an idea. What can he do to help? He is in Prague for just three weeks so he phones his mother Barbara in London and asks her to enquire at



the Home Office whether there is a chance of bringing children to Britain temporarily until their future becomes clearer and they can be reunited with their parents. This is the reply: ‘Yes, but on one condition – each and every child must go to a foster home or an institution *at no cost to the state.*’ What a task and how many of us would simply have given up on hearing this condition! This is December 1938. Czechoslovakia is invaded in March 1939 ...

Nicholas returns to London in January 1939. By this time, his list of children has swollen to nearly 2,000 – they must be found homes *before* entry visas can be issued. Can this 29-year-old humanitarian, with the help of his mother and a friend who acts as secretary, do it in time?

We know that nearly 700 children did make it and that another 250

children did not because war had been declared and the borders closed. Nicholas Winton wept whenever he remembered it. But what of the amazing achievement of finding all these families in such a short time? That seems like a miracle to me!

The full story of this, and many other remarkable facts, in this man’s life, can be read in his daughter’s book *If It’s Not Impossible* – her father’s motto. I can recommend it!

Thank you, Nicky, for saving our lives and thank you, foster parents, refugee committees and many others, for making it possible. We will never forget you.

**Susanne Medas**



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Any time, day or night*

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VISIT TO

**CHILTERN VALLEY WINERY  
AND BREWERY**

**Henley-on-Thames  
Monday 7 September**



Join us for a visit to this family-owned business producing English wine.

You will have the opportunity to taste and purchase the produce following a behind-the-scenes guided tour of the Winery, Brewery and liqueur production. The Brewery has a Royal Warrant.

Lunch will be provided together with travel by coach.

**For further details, please contact Susan Harrod  
on 020 8385 3070  
or at susan@ajr.org.uk**

### **EMIRATES AIR LINE CABLE CAR**



**Thursday 8 October 2015  
London as you have never seen it before!**

Join us for a day of sightseeing in London. After our trip across the river in the Emirates Air Line Cable Car, we will take a Riverboat for sightseeing along the Thames.

**For further details, please contact Susan Harrod  
on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk**

## 'A SERENE SEDATE OLD LADY ... WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD'

**C**olin Rosenstiel: *At a small party for family and friends to celebrate her 90th birthday in February 2009, my mother made a speech about her experiences in Germany in the period before she was able to escape to England at the end of 1938. I was present and remember it well.*

*After she died in April 2012 we cleared the house that had been my parents' home since 1950 and, among their papers, found what was clearly my mother's text of the speech, which is reproduced below.*

*I have retained the flavour of my mother's English, which wasn't as perfect as it had been in her 1939 correspondence - probably a feature common to many AJR members as they have aged.*

According to the praise you [Colin] heaped on me, one would have thought that my life had been blameless until I grew into a serene sedate old lady. But you will be surprised to hear that actually I have a criminal record.

From the age of 11 or 12 my one aim in life was to annoy grown-up people (not my parents, though) and play practical jokes on them. That became vastly more sophisticated when I met Ed [my late father - C.R.] in 1934. He had a huge repertory which he had acquired at the Manchester Students Union. Foremost to steal brass and enamel plaques in public places, such as telephone kiosks. There was one that read 'make it short, consider people waiting', which we mounted in the lavatory.

Or, at the main entrance to every apartment block 'Nur für Herrschaften', which is untranslatable but means 'only for gentlefolk'. (The back entrance was for tradesmen and servants.) This went to the wash basin.

My greatest success was a large wooden board with 'Attention booby traps' (actually Selbstschüsse means bullets) attached to a weekend bungalow in winter. Nevertheless I climbed the gate, while my friend was watching anxiously, and walked up the drive. The board was fixed with only one nail, so was easily wrenched off.

All these looted objects decorated the loo of the country house of our sports-teacher called Racki of whom more anon.

So I never went out without a screwdriver and a pair of pliers in my

pocket - but I was never caught in these illegal activities; my conviction was not for hooliganism or criminal damage.

The very worst thing we ever perpetrated in those days which, when I think of it still makes an icy stream run down my spine, was thought out by Racki on our holiday [in Kampen] in 1934.

When we left Berlin on the 30th June there were SA men stationed at every street corner. It was the night of the long knives when Hitler killed his opponents in the Nazi party.

We went to an elegant seaside resort called Kampen on the island of Sylt in the North Sea. Racki had intended to lead gymnastic exercises on the beach and had handbills printed to distribute to holiday makers. For this he needed permission from the local bigwig or mayor who had his hand gilded which had been shaken by Goering. He turned him flat down.

Well, the [last] night before we left for home Racki took his revenge. We went to this mayor's house, waited until all the lights were turned off and then started to fill his entrance door to the top with the materials of his garden wall. This wall consisted of layers of rock and turf, so that, when he opened his door in the morning, it all came tumbling down into his entrance hall. Then we unscrewed a huge enamel plate showing his official title crowned by a large swastika, took it to the beach lavatory and fitted it as a lid to the loo.

While Racki, a boy called Teddy and I did all this, Ed, with a lady we had befriended called Rot, posed as a loving couple and patrolled the main road to keep [stood] watch. Ed could not take part in the fun: his [large] shoe size would have given him away.

Next morning the police arrived while we were at breakfast to look through Racki's luggage for shoe patterns. He had trainers with an unusual design of the soles but, of course, he had borrowed a pair of standard tennis shoes. (I don't remember that we wore gloves, unlikely in summer. They could have had us on finger prints.) If we had been caught it would have meant murder, concentration camp, or worse.

It was really terribly irresponsible of Racki to take the risk - there were nearly all Jewish children. (Did you know the story, Re [Renata Gallop, I last saw helping at the Wiener Library - C.R.]? You and Richard [my late uncle - C.R.] were too young, only 10 or 11.)

Well, I survived even this without a

stain on my character, so, where did I acquire my criminal record?

This came in 1936, two years later. Ed was working for a dentist who owned an open Fiat which could be started with a paper clip. He did not have much time to drive, so Ed could have it whenever he wanted.

Ed had a licence then. He gave me my first driving lesson at 1 o'clock in the morning, after a performance of 'Faust' and a supper at a smart restaurant.

We drove to a race track near Berlin [Avus] one could use for a fee when there was no race, but that late it was free.

In Germany ordinary drivers were not allowed to teach, you had to go to a driving school.

So one fine day I was behind the wheel of said Fiat driving through a place called Zossen, the German army headquarters, when I was stopped by a policeman. He asked for my licence - no licence. Ed pretended that he did not know me very well or that I had no licence ... anyway he emigrated soon afterwards. I was duly booked and soon received a summons. Surprisingly, my parents did not make a fuss. My father, a lawyer, went with me to the police station and dictated my defence to the policeman who typed it verbatim. Mainly he pleaded my tender age (17). I did not have to go to the hearing where I was fined 50 mark (£2.50 now but worth more then). It was the minimum, but still I had a criminal conviction.

When I was about to emigrate in 1938, my father managed to get my criminal conviction erased from my CV, so that I could get a visa to England.

After my confession I am gratified that you all came to celebrate my birthday. I can assure you that in my adult life I have been strictly law-abiding, save perhaps exceeding the speed limit occasionally, but not by very much.

Now I like to drink the health of my guests (and here I like to include absent friends, both the ones who can't be with us, like Roger and Ellen [nephew of Ed and his wife - C.R.] who have gone skiing, my American family who have already celebrated at Xmas and the others who left us, Ed & Richard, leaving us their memories), but all of you present I wish you a happy, healthy life and thank you ....

**Connie Rosenstiel**

## Memoir: Marianne

I tugged at my mother's sleeve. 'Oh please, Mama, please!' I begged.

'Not now, darling,' she said, obviously undecided. I pulled her face down towards mine so I could whisper in her ear: 'She's so pretty, I like her best. I'll be ever so good if she can come!'

Mama looked at the papers she was holding and then up at the girl in front of her.

'Fräulein Bachman, it's obvious that my little one likes you. But I must read your references. Would you mind just waiting in the kitchen. Bertha will give you a glass of tea.'

It was December 1937 and my mother was interviewing young women for the post of *Kinderfräulein*. My brother Harry, 14, no longer required such a person. He and the other boys, his older cousins, were nearly always together, able to entertain themselves and go out without a grown-up. But we four girls were still a handful and needed someone to take us to the park and find ways of keeping us out of mischief. We lived in a three-room apartment and there wasn't much scope there for letting off steam. We could easily become bored and quarrelsome.

Up to now it had been Bertha, our maid, who had helped look after us as well as the household. She had been with us ever since my mother's first confinement. During this last week, while my mother had been interviewing, she had walked around tight-lipped, looking as if she were under threat of losing her job. Bertha had been a simple, almost uneducated country girl when she had first come into the family, always fiercely loyal. Her position was certainly never in jeopardy but she was no longer able to cope with the increasingly challenging demands we made on her.

I was very taken with Marianne. The previous day Mama had seen two other applicants, one rather plain and sour-looking, the other overly friendly in an unconvincing sort of way. I had stuck my tongue out at her behind Mama's back and the mask had dropped a little.

Marianne was fresh-faced and would be fun to be with. And to my relief my mother hired her. She was to come every weekday at noon, fetch my sisters from school for lunch, and stay until supper time. While my sisters did their homework I would have her all to myself, to read to me, take me for walks, or play my favourite card game of *Schwarzer Peter* or *Snap*.

I must have been a very spoilt little girl. I remember playing a sort of power game with the poor girl, devising 'punishments' for when she lost at cards, which she invariably did – as I almost always insisted on winning!

'If you lose this game you must read me two extra stories!'

'If you don't win this one you must let me comb your hair and part it in the middle instead of on the side.'

And once, most chillingly, 'If you



Mary Brainin Hutterer

lose this time I won't let you be my *Kinderfräulein* any more!' I was so shocked at my daring on that occasion that I frightened myself into deliberately letting her win ...

Marianne was a great comfort when my father went on his twice-yearly trip to London on business. He wrote long letters to her, sending a message to every one of us saying how much he missed us. I cherished the one for me: 'My dear little Putzi, you must look after your Mama for me and make sure she's happy. I know I can rely on you ....'

No five-year-old ever felt so grown up and important as I did that day, immediately climbing into my mother's lap and saying 'I will look after you, Mama.' As soon as we had all finished lunch I helped her off with her shoes and made her lie on her bed while I curled up next to her to make sure she wasn't lonely.

But I was certainly also a very unobservant child not to know what had been going on all around me, immersed in games and my own fantasy world. It was mid-March 1938 and Papa had been away for over six weeks – an eternity for me. He would bring us presents back from England and I thought no further than that.

One day, coming back from the Stadtpark, holding Marianne's hand, I heard my mother's raised voice from the apartment. Bertha let us in, her finger on her lips. My sisters were gathered in a frightened knot in the hall and even Harry had appeared. It wasn't like my mother to shout but this is what she was doing.

I opened my mouth to ask what was happening but Ruth shushed me.

'It's Papa on the phone' ...

This in itself was very unusual: we knew that overseas calls were expensive. That was why people wrote letters.

'What – all the way from England?' I whispered back.

'I can't hear you!' Mama shouted. Then: 'No, no, don't come back, you mustn't come back – just get us all out of here!'

I started to go to her but my brother yanked me back. He made a sign to Marianne and she herded us, now unprotesting, into the Kinderzimmer, which served as our sitting room as well as the three older girls' bedroom. He and Mama disappeared into the dining room, which housed the sideboard as well as the grand piano, behind which stood Harry's bed. This was the room in which all the Jewish festivals were celebrated and where serious family conferences took place. Harry was suddenly very much the head of the family.

I stopped asking questions after a couple of days and life carried on almost unchanged for me. Except that Marianne started teaching us some English songs.

We sang: 'My pony is over the ocean, my pony is over the sea!' It was only after many years in England that I found out that this wasn't a lament for a lost horse ....

My Viennese nursemaid also taught us how to behave at mealtimes in England. We must turn to everyone at the table and say 'Good appetite!' before we started eating and cross our knives over our forks to indicate we had finished. Both of these instructions of Marianne were met by looks of surprise when we tried them out at meals in London. But of course we never imagined that we would ever really visit England.

We learnt some nursery rhymes and a few strange sayings that sent us unto paroxysms of mirth, like 'It's raining cats and dogs.' This I tried out on Mama and Bertha in German: 'Was regnet es?' I would ask and, when they shrugged, perplexed, I would yell out 'Katzen und Hunde!'

Apart from these lessons, Marianne found all manner of things for us to do and made even a rainy walk in the Hauptallee fun. She opened my eyes to many everyday sights, explained and concocted stories about them, and was unendingly patient with us. She treated Ruth as a grown-up and distracted Hedy and Renee from quarrelling about borrowed books or hairclips.

And then came the day when Marianne didn't turn up at our apartment in the Glockengasse. 'She must have been run over!' I exclaimed dramatically. 'She's always here on time.'

But Mama, a note in her hand and a handkerchief to her eyes, said sadly: 'No, my darling, she's had to go away. She phoned to say how sorry she was she couldn't come and say goodbye.'

I didn't find out until years later that Marianne had been forbidden under the new race laws to work for Jews. Amazingly, Bertha stayed with us until the day we left for England.

Mary Brainin Hutterer



# Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

## HAPPY DAYS

Sir – Perhaps I may be of assistance to Mrs Stern and Mr Vulkan ('Down Memory Lane!', *AJR Journal*, August) before another eruption hits your pages! Boarding House Sachs was indeed at No 3 Adamson Road.

It belonged to my aunt Lilli Sachs and became my mother's and my first home in England on arrival in 1936 – an address one does not easily forget. Moreover, I had the presumption to have business cards printed with that address, offering bridge tuition 'to tournament standard', bridge being a big thing at the boarding house. It was the No 1 establishment in the Swiss Cottage ghetto, boasting a roster of prominent residents: Arthur Koestler's mother was one of them. I also seem to remember occasional appearances by Rudolf Bing, the impresario, and other notables. I became quite an expert on refugee boarding houses. Arguably No 2 in popularity was the establishment overseen by Mrs Peiser, the mother of Lilli Palmer, in Parsifal Road, who became, posthumously, my mother-in-law when I married one of Lilli's two sisters.

Mrs Pick joined the Sachs establishment later, first as manageress then as partner. I believe she took over when my aunt died. Are we not fortunate to live in circumstances where the address of one's beginnings can generate enough heat to cause the lava of nostalgia to flow – and indeed to overflow, in this case seeping into Anthony Grenville's review of Mark Lynton's book *Accidental Journey*?

I knew Lynton well and disliked him heartily. We first met in a very different kind of boarding house, in Paris, established by the Fuchs family for boys attending the Lycée Pasteur, one of the capital's top schools. Their son became Fooks, a well respected conductor. My career was less glorious: I was expelled from the Lycée for general bolshieness and particular impertinence in disputing my 'professeur's' interpretation of Théophile Gautier's important poem *Albertus*. My leaving certificate conceded that I had acquired a commendable command of the French language, but that English would

forever be beyond me.

Lynton and I next met in Cambridge, being arrested on the same night in May 1940 at the outset of a tour of internment camps, ending up on the same hell-ship, the *Ettrick*, and internment in Canada. I think ours was Camp L, near Sherbrooke, where Lynton, the most egregious of snobs – no name ever knowingly left undropped – worked his passage into the court formed round the Kaiser's grandson Fritz Lingen (*vere* Prince Frederick of Prussia), a nice enough chap. Our paths crossed again in 251 Company of the Pioneer Corps, where he was almost as unpopular as Arthur Koestler – no mean achievement – but stayed the course longer. Then, by pure coincidence, we both underwent anti-tank training but served on different fronts, in different regiments, in different capacities.

I am not surprised that Lynton's version of the arrest of Höss differs from Thomas Harding's account (*Hanns and Rudolph* (2013)): he was not always reliable in reporting his exploits. But his courage was beyond question: tank warfare ranked with service in submarines and aerial combat as statistically the most reliable life-shortener. Even anti-tank *training* (my speciality) was pretty deadly: commanding officers were said to have an allowance of 1.3 fatal accidents to officer cadets per course before having to convene a Court of Inquiry. And yes, I did the run up Snowdon with pack and Bren gun – running down the other side was worse. Happy days.

Victor Ross, London W9

Sir – Anthony Grenville's article on Mark Lynton – entertaining and interesting in equal parts – makes the error of saying that 'Teddy' Mitford was the brother of the famous Mitford sisters.

Their brother was Thomas Mitford and he died as a soldier in Burma.

Teddy Mitford is interesting in his own right as a desert explorer in the 1930s, inventor of the sun compass, and one of the founders and commanders of the Long Range Desert Group during the fighting in Africa and then (as described) in Europe.

Richard Schmidt, London NW3

## SHIFTING THE BLAME

Sir – While we cannot blame the post-war generations of Germans for war and Holocaust-related atrocities, I find the trend of shifting the blame for them from Germans to Nazis disturbing. For sure, not all Germans were Nazis, nor were all Nazis Germans, but the Nazis were not creatures from outer space who descended on the hapless people of Germany. They were people with whom we were in day-to-day contact: our postman, barber, tradesmen, pupils or teachers, etc.

But perhaps this shifting of blame is taking place on the shrine of political correctness: 'Don't be beastly to the Germans!' Indeed, during the past 60 or so years many of us have made friends with Germans.

I am prompted to write this letter by the latest example of such blame-shifting as it appears in Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's well constructed review of Adele Bloch-Bauer's *The Lady in Gold* in your July issue. In the middle of the third paragraph on p.8, it says '... what became of ... Austrian Jews after the Anschluss, describing exactly how their homes, commercial enterprises, stocks and shares, bank accounts and other property were stolen by the Nazis, *aided and abetted by the Austrian population and authorities*' (italics added).

Is she telling us that the Austrians were no Nazis – after what is known of how the invading Germans were received in Austria and what atrocities were committed on the streets of Vienna from day one? Five years' suppression of Jewish existence fell on Austria on one day – and the Austrians were not slow to make use of the opportunity.

Reading Ruth Barnett's piece about the Ottoman genocide 100 years ago (also July), many readers will remember Franz Werfel's *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and, while it is unlikely that You Know Who will have read Werfel's book, it has been said that he used the example of the fate of the Armenians to convince himself and his entourage that 'the world' would not lift a finger to interfere with the Nazis' treatment of the German Jews. (Or, as we used to say in the early years of Nazi rule, 'Das Ausland wird das nicht erlauben.') But the 'Ausland' was not interested in what judicially were internal affairs of Germany and the outcome of the infamous Evian Conference, of course, only confirmed his train of thought.

Walter E. Goddard, London SW7

Sir – It was very gratifying to note that HM The Queen took time during her recent state visit to Germany to pay tribute to the 70,000 victims of the former Bergen-Belsen Camp.

The memorial at the Camp states that the victims were killed 'at the hands of the murderous Nazis'. Many media reports of the Queen's visit described the site as a 'former Nazi concentration camp'.

However, the Nazis were not, of course, some evil group of outside infiltrators into Germany who somehow seized power from the good Germans. It was the German democratic process of the time which enabled German Nazis to come to national power. Nazi policies, of course, became national policies and part of the culture of the country. The attempted genocide of the Jews occurred because antisemitism became the policy of the German government at that time, with no dissent allowed.

Often we hear that Britain fought and defeated the Nazis in 1945, as if they were some cruel and vicious subgroup. Britain actually fought and defeated Germany. The Nazis killed Jews? It was millions of both high-ranking and ordinary Germans who had persecuted, discriminated against and killed Jews, or had looked the other way. The camps were German camps, rather than Nazi camps.

No one states that Thatcher's Conservatives launched the war to liberate the Falkland Islands – Britain under Thatcher launched the war, of course. Britain and France did not declare war against the Nazis in 1939 – they declared war against Germany.

Perhaps today's Germans should demonstrate that they accept their national responsibility for the events of over 70 years ago, rather than point their fingers at a group called the murderous Nazis. The wording of such memorials needs to be re-written; maybe text-books need to be rewritten. Otherwise there is a danger of revisionism.

David Wirth, London SE21

### THANK YOU, AJR

Sir – I write this letter to express my gratitude. Not having lived in Glasgow for 38 years, I now return to support my mother, a Viennese refugee of 95. My mother has been a member of the AJR for some years and always appreciated their support. I recently joined and attended some meetings with her, where I have been welcomed and included as a Second-Generation member. I will certainly become more involved with the Glasgow group as, not only does it perform wonderful work in bringing together like-minded people of similar background, but it continues to promote activities and provide assistance to enable a refugee community to meet. This was evident in the excellent organisation and success of the recent annual event. Fortunately I was at the wonderful Scotland welcome dinner but regretfully was not able to attend the outings so perhaps it can be repeated?

However, I recently accompanied my mother to the Book Club in the home of Agnes Isaacs. Although I had not read the book – I was fully informed during the participation and discussion of the featured book – *The Island* by Victoria Hislop – that

it was partly centred around Spinalonga, also serving as a history lesson. It was a most enjoyable event on a lovely sunny afternoon combined with a beautiful tea, for which I thank our Co-ordinator Agnes and Volunteer Anthea.

I would also mention their thoughtfulness in respecting dietary requirements! I welcome the opportunity to attend many more events and make new acquaintances with the future generations.

Ruth Ramsay, Glasgow

Sir – I am writing to say how much my father, Henry Grant, enjoyed his week in Eastbourne recently and I'd like to thank AJR staff so much for making it happen.

I realise that the organisation and smooth running of these trips are far from straightforward – and very probably get more difficult each year. The change of scenery and routine meant an enormous amount to my father, especially in view of his ongoing health issues, and he was so pleased that in the end he was able to participate.

Marion Grant, Northwood, Middx

Sir – My husband Gerald and I would like to thank Carol Rossen very much for all the help she gave us in Eastbourne. It was appreciated that she got us the two front seats in the bus. Please also convey our thanks to her very able assistants.

We were so glad that Carol managed to come this year to be in charge and hope that she will be able to do so next year too. Looking forward to seeing her at the AJR Lunch later in the year.

Anne Goodwin, London NW2

### THE FAMILY BATTSEK

Sir – Brita Wolf of London NW3 refers in her letter (July) to a family Battsek. My late father stayed for a while in the 1939-41 period with a family of this name and I can barely believe there were more than one – does anyone know anything further about this family, what they did, and whether any members (or descendants) are still around?

*Mein Weg nach Jerusalem* by Georg Herlitz (Jerusalem: Verlag Rubin Mass, 1964, pp. 19-20) contains the following account by the author, whose grandmother's maternal family were the Bettsaks. I have translated it as follows:

My great-grandmother, known as Taube Bettsak, as well as a sister and a brother of my grandmother, all lived in Oppeln. Naturally I assumed this name to be a German word, the name for an item of household furnishing, similar to the better-known words 'sleeping bag'.

However, the name is actually of Hebrew origin and is a modification of a Hebrew male forename, though this is hard to make out. I learned this from a most surprising source. In 1912 or 1913, when I was an official at the Combined German-Jewish Archive in Berlin, I was working through the *Book of Certificates*

of the *Town of Goslar* and here, under the papers relating to Jewish certificates, I came across a Jew who was referred to variously as Pessach, Pessak, Petzak, Betzak and, finally, Betsak. So this supposed German word was, in fact, a mutilated Hebrew name. There was therefore no reason to be ashamed of this name and – as I heard from another member of the family whom I subsequently met – to change it to Battsek.

In June 1940 a letter from my grandfather to my father, then aged about 17, was sent 'c/o Battsek at 14, Ashley Court, Epsom, Surrey'. However, this was crossed out and replaced by '11, Grey Close, N.W. 11' and in 1941 he wrote 'Greetings to Frau Battsek and all three'. They seem to have been friends of the family.

Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild, Berlin

### ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Sir – Gisela Feldman (July) is absolutely right in stating that 'Israel forcibly evacuated Gaza to return it to the Palestinians.' The essential part of her statement is: 'return it.' But when she writes 'Sometimes the aim of security might go a little too far' as a whitewash for all actions by the Israeli army, I must ask: 'a little?' How many human lives are 'a little'?

Janos Fisher makes a similar point: The IDF has done its duty to defend Israel more humanely than any other army would have done. In general, that may be true – or not. It does not exonerate commanders or fighters when what they do is not humane. I suspect Mr Fisher has misinterpreted Caroline Salinger when he derides her remark that the Palestinian Authority needs a willing partner in peace negotiations.

L. Roman, on the same issue, objects to peace negotiations on the grounds that Hamas's aim is the destruction of Israel. Is not the aim of the present Israeli government the destruction of Hamas? I am puzzled by the argument. Surely it is a truism that when two parties, at war with each other, want to achieve peace, they need to talk to each other. Refusing to do so is just an excuse for wishing to continue the killing.

Even Nasser and Ben-Gurion attempted it for a short time, although unsuccessfully. It has worked in Ireland. In 1995 the two sides spoke to each other and, from all accounts, came close to a peace accord – until Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by an Israeli right-wing religious fanatic. So who did not want peace?

Caroline Salinger's letter asked three direct questions. Gisela Feldman, Janos Fisher and L. Roman answered not a single one. It suggests that they were unable to do so, which is probably correct. It could be left at that but the subject is too serious and too important to be disregarded. Surely every Jew's greatest concern must be for peace between Israel and Palestine.

# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

A Surreal assembly of boxes, glass bird cages, cones and rolled-up scrolls, a sensual imagining of Andromeda chained to her rock – these are the mental furnishings of American artist **Joseph Cornell**, whose exhibition,



Joseph Cornell, *Object (Soap Bubble Set)* 1941 © The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation/VAGA, NY/DACS, London 2015

**Wanderlust**, is at the Royal Academy's Sunley Room until the end of this month.

As far as Surrealism is concerned, Cornell rejected the movement while being part of it at the same time. The influence of René Magritte is evident in his appropriation of Magritte's imagery – particularly a train exiting a fireplace into an empty room – to reflect his own desire to stop time in its tracks.

Nothing, it seems, could be thrown out: everything could be used. Cornell was a virtual traveller, a mental voyager trawling deep into his mind while never actually leaving his New York home.

In his imagination, the 19th-century grand tour of Europe was a theme to be reconstructed and lived through his work. Museums, bookshops, junk shops, old engravings, faded brown cardboard photographs – these were his source material and, although you have to delve into his work to understand it, grand universal themes – science, geometry,

exploration of sea and astral bodies, and time itself – make the whole thing look like the musings of a mad scientist.

But there was a method to all this madness. Cornell used images of birds to convey his disgust with war and killing – the bird was clearly a messenger from the spirit world and it turns up frequently in his glass domes. One such bird is portrayed behind shattered glass, again a totem for the precarious beauty of life so mindlessly cut short. One is entitled *A propos d'un passage de Plutarque*. Another is called the *Medici* series, another the *Soap Bubble Set* and the *Celestial Navigation* series, featuring geometric pipettes with little glass jugs.

In the 1930s Cornell became known for creating shadow boxes, glass-fronted boxes containing found objects and ephemera, which he would collect and painstakingly classify.

It is certainly an interesting metaphysical view but, apart from the scientific and mechanical aspects to which is he drawn, he is also attracted to the romance of the travel he researched so well but never experienced. For example, hotels with exotic names, such as the Grand Hotel de la Lumière, or L'Etoile, evoking a bygone style of expensive travel. And from this to sailors using the constellations to navigate the ocean. Or a figure dressed as Pierrot. Some of his work resembles mystical book illustrations, such as a floating girl in a high-pointed hat with a sickle moon beneath her encircled by a myriad of stars. The figure is young and innocent and the composition is very geometric.

His *Medici* series recalls the penny arcades of his youth and here he creates a kind of altarpiece of memories with distorted or ghostly images inside.

Cornell may not have completed his formal education but he was involved in Manhattan's cultural experience. The theatre, ballet, art galleries and the cinema all absorbed him and he was not above waiting at the stage door to catch a glimpse of the actresses he admired. He is considered one of America's most enigmatic yet influential artists of the 20th century.

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

## REVIEWS

### A story which must be told

EHRENFRIED & COHN

by Uwe Westphal

Berlin: Lichtig Verlag, 2015, 190 pp.,  
18 euros, ISBN 978-3-929905-33-5

Uwe Westphal, journalist and historian, is the 'go-to' expert when it comes to the destruction of the Berlin fashion industry in the 1930s. In his impressive book *Berliner Konfektion und Mode 1836-1939: Die Zerstörung einer Tradition*, Westphal traces the story of Jewish men and women in the fashion trade, from textile dealers to tailors and retailers. Their struggle against anti-Semitic restrictions, a constant right from the earliest days of trading in second-hand



Uwe Westphal

clothes, came to a head when the National Socialists seized power in 1933. Westphal tells the story of the 'aryanisation' of the industry, the destruction of a whole way of life in Germany, and the forced emigration of many. It was Westphal who was responsible for exploding the myth (evidently a Nazi invention) that 90 per cent of clothes businesses in Germany in the 1930s were Jewish-owned – the reality was a far smaller percentage.

*Ehrenfried & Cohn*, also only in German so far, is Westphal's first sortie into fiction. In an interview which appears online, he explains that after his factual book was published, he received many letters, photographs and eyewitness accounts from people whose families had worked in the Berlin fashion sector and, as he said, 'I decided to condense these individual experiences into a single story about one fictional firm.'

The novel is set in Berlin in 1935, around Hausvogteiplatz, the beating heart of the *prêt-à-porter* trade. (In the second edition of his factual book on the subject, Westphal tells of his attempts in the 1980s to have a monument erected in that square to the Jewish victims of Nazism, only to have his idea dismissed

by GDR officials as part of capitalist history.)

Kurt Ehrenfried is the assimilated Jewish-German businessman, who has left behind the traditional ways of his more observant father to create a successful contemporary women's clothing business. He embraces the new practice of advertising, he uses technology to produce up to 20,000 garments a month when there is the demand for it, and he knows the right people to employ as designers, buyers and office staff. He is married with young children and has a comfortable lifestyle, surviving the upheavals of the 1920s by constantly adapting and learning. His partner, Simon Cohn, represents another type in the sector, the creative director – it is his eye which ensures the right decisions are made with regard to design and detail. Cohn is gay and thus typical of a significant percentage of those engaged in the fashion business, an aspect which is generally underrepresented in research but which Westphal, from his comprehensive study on the subject, is familiar with. Berlin was more liberal in those days than was London, hence becoming a home to Christopher Isherwood and others in the 1930s.

The novel follows the *prêt-à-porter* teams from Berlin on one of their regular trips to Paris, where they see the couture shows and try to copy the latest designs to send home. But their enemies from the newly-created ADEFA, the organisation set up to promote 'aryan' clothes businesses in Germany, conspire to bring about their downfall in one exciting chapter. Inevitably, the 'centre cannot hold', as one of the characters quotes from W. B. Yeats, and the plot becomes the story of the struggle of the two main characters and those they work and trade with to survive against all the odds as the National Socialist stranglehold tightens on them.

Every element of this fascinating story is there and yet the fictional style of Mr Westphal is a little flat: some parts read more like a well-researched case study. An interesting comparison might be the much more lightweight *Some Girls, Some Hats and Hitler: A True Story*, an autobiographical account by the Viennese milliner Trudi Kanter, written many decades after her heyday in the 1930s. The story is similar, yet, as Linda Grant says in her introduction, the fiction fizzles.

Nevertheless, *Ehrenfried & Cohn* makes for fascinating reading; the plot carries the reader on. And one hopes, as Uwe Westphal mentions in his interview, that it will be made into a film – it is a dramatic and visually rich story and one which must be told.

Anna Nyburg

### 'A very unusual and gifted man'

#### RECITAL OF A LIFETIME: A SCIENTIST'S CAREER IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC; A MUSICIAN'S QUEST IN THE SERVICE OF SCIENCE

by Ralph Kohn accompanied by Graham Johnson

London: Raphael Editions 2014, hardback 322 pp., £30

The author explains in his Foreword that

**T**he intended to write a book about his own life for many years and showed a draft to his friend, the pianist and accompanist Graham Johnson. The latter suggested that, as in Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Kohn should write the first part of each chapter himself – the 'Prelude' – to be followed by an interview with him – the 'Fugue'. Bach is Kohn's favourite composer and he therefore followed his friend's suggestion: the book is divided into 24 'Preludes and Fugues', interspersed with eight 'Interludes'.

The volume is also liberally sprinkled with photographs of excellent quality: there is hardly any person mentioned whose photo does not appear on the relevant page. It includes a free CD with recordings of Kohn singing *Lieder*, accompanied by Johnson, which may account for the book's rather high price. At the end of each chapter the author draws attention to a particular track on the CD, which connects with the part of his life just covered. The original texts of the *Lieder* (mostly German) and English translations are quoted at the end of the book, as are the winners and jury members of all the prizes funded by the author's foundations.

Ralph Kohn was born in Leipzig in 1927 – it may surprise many fellow ex-refugees that, in his own words, 'in recent years I feel at home and welcome in this city'. His father was a Hassidic Jew from a Polish town which is now in Ukraine and his mother came from Berlin. Remarkably, he spoke Yiddish to his father but German to his mother. Following the Nazis' arrival in January 1933, the family emigrated to Amsterdam at the end of that year and, after the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, fled to England on one of the last ships leaving Holland for the UK. He went to school in Manchester and wanted to study medicine but was unable to get into a medical school and studied pharmacology instead, finishing with a PhD. He first went to Rome, where

his 'singing career' began – 'for me music is something of a religion in its own right'. He gave his first concert in the Wigmore Hall in London in 1968. From Rome he went to New York, where he was employed by Smith, Kline and French (later Glaxo Smith Kline). Eventually he became the Head of Exploratory Pharmacology, based in London, and did a lot of travelling for his employers including to Japan, Russia and Iran.

In March 1963 he married Zahava Kanarek, who was born of Polish and Czech parents in what was then Palestine but later lived in Amsterdam, where her family and Kohn's became acquainted. They have three daughters, whose lives and achievements are fully described in the book.

In 1971 the author decided to become independent and founded the company Advisory Services (Clinical & General) Ltd, dealing with pharmaceutical products. This business, in his words, 'aimed to make a highly professional job of clinical trials with

first-class investigators, getting the work done within the time we said we would, irrespective of what the results might be'. They received the Queen's Award for Export Achievement. The research director of Glaxo, Sir David Jack, FRS, made this tribute to Ralph Kohn: 'He is a very unusual and gifted man ... his achievement with Advisory Services is particularly unusual in that very few small companies, built up from nothing in less than twenty years, would be honoured in this way. He has succeeded in finding the most distinguished

people in the UK to undertake research of the highest quality and competence – no one else could have done it so well.' He sold the company in 1995.

This did not mean that he retired – 'for me charitable work is a necessity' – and his Kohn Foundation does just that. Another quotation explains it in more detail: 'I can truly say that the happiest years of my life have been these more recent ones when I have worked almost daily in trying to make a difference to organisations that are associated with both science and music, as well as Jewish causes and certain deserving individual cases and humanitarian aid.'

He also made many recordings, mainly with Graham Johnson. In 2006 he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, thus being honoured by establishments of both his passions: science and music. The Royal Academy Bach Prize has been funded by the Kohn Foundation from 2006 onwards and, beginning in 2009, one of his 'cherished dreams' has been realised: the performance of all 215 Bach Cantatas at the Royal Academy, nine concerts each year, with two or three Cantatas performed in every one.

The book is an easy read and the author is clearly an interesting man, who has contributed substantially to this country's achievements.

Fritz Lustig



Sir Ralph Kohn

**D**avid Kaye, the AJR's Finance Director, and I attended the European Shoah Legacy Institute's conference 'Living with Dignity' in Prague on 26-27 May as representatives of the UK government. The conference focused on the social welfare provision for Holocaust survivors living in (the 47) countries that were signatory to the Terezin Declaration of 2009, which committed governments to progress outstanding Holocaust-era restitution issues.

While the principal aims of the conference were to analyse the current status of social welfare benefits for Holocaust survivors and assess ways of improving services to them, the proposed outcomes were to gain public and government commitment to alleviate any social deprivation and launch a database detailing social welfare programmes and enhance services and provision for survivors.

## ARTS AND EVENTS SEPTEMBER DIARY

**To 2 October 2015 'Humanity After the Holocaust: The Jewish Relief Unit, 1943-1950'** This newly curated temporary exhibition marks the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen. The exhibition focuses on the Library's outstanding collections relating to the post-war relief and rehabilitation work of the Jewish Relief Unit in Bergen-Belsen and elsewhere. **At the Wiener Library.** Admission free. Tel 020 7636 7247

**To mid-October 'From Hitler to Hi-De-Hi: The Dovercourt Holiday Camp and the Kindertransport'**. Exhibition on show at the **High Lighthouse, Harwich.** Tel +44(0) 7816 468 760

**To 13 December 2015 'Out of Chaos; Ben Uri: 100 Years in London'** Presented in association with the Cultural Institute at King's College London. **At Inigo Rooms, Somerset House East Wing, WC2R 2LS.** Admission free. Tel 020 7604 3991

## LIVING WITH DIGNITY

There were specific recommendations that the EU should appoint an official to address Holocaust-era issues, including implementation of the Terezin Declaration by its signatory countries, and that governments should each appoint an official to co-ordinate programmes to assist Nazi victims and increase awareness of services and benefits available to them. It was also recommended that Holocaust-related compensation and restitution should be universally tax-exempt, as is already the case in the UK.

The substance of the conference was divided into six panels covering two themes: the current state of welfare for survivors and an exchange of best practices, where we heard from representatives from a combination of government and NGOs.

The panel on which I spoke, entitled 'Innovative Approaches', focused on professional training for care-givers, use of volunteers, public awareness, PR and outreach and was able to make probably the most substantive contribution to the conference as it comprised professionals working directly with survivors. My remarks centred on the AJR's core activities and as administrator of the social welfare grants allocated by the Claims Conference.

Taking into account also remarks by co-panelists, there was a sense that a joint follow-up initiative focusing on support

for social workers, volunteers and care-givers could be explored. Indeed, in his summing-up, the stalwart diplomat and former US Ambassador to the European Union, Stuart Eizenstat, who co-chaired the conference with his Czech counterpart, suggested the formation of sub-groups to monitor the progress being made in each of the areas presented.

Delegates also saw a fascinating presentation by Professor Lyle Scruggs of the University of Connecticut analysing existing welfare mechanisms across the member countries, including a series of data the AJR supplied on the social welfare provision in the UK including any special provisions, tax exemptions or other special circumstances that specifically benefit survivors.

The conference was hosted by the Czech government with support from the EVZ Foundation (the German fund established as part of the slave labour Foundation in 2001 and which makes grants for Holocaust educational and commemorative projects) and the Claims Conference. It also had the patronage of the Czech Foreign Ministry and Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and the European Parliament.

**Michael Newman**

*Michael Newman is Chief Executive of the AJR.*

## Association of Children of Jewish Refugees (ACJR)

**Do you know of anyone who would like to join a social group the parents of whose members escaped Nazi persecution?**

**The ACJR holds social functions every month, including barbecues, walks in the countryside, and musical evenings. We also celebrate Jewish festivals with our own Seder and Chanukah Party.**

**For further details, please contact ACJR Chair Anthony Abbey on 07415 304 832 92 or 020 8201 7986.**

# 'Forgotten Hero' Remembered at AJR Regional in Edinburgh

There are many important and enjoyable highlights in the year but the annual AJR Regional in Scotland is definitely one of them.

Almost 50 people, from Scotland and Newcastle, attended this year's gathering in Edinburgh.

We were privileged to have a very special guest speaker this year. Agnes Hirschi travelled from her home in Switzerland especially for our gathering. Agnes is the stepdaughter of Carl Lutz, who was a Swiss diplomat in Budapest during the Holocaust.

Lutz bargained with Adolf Eichmann, who compared his efforts to save Jews with Moses's parting of the Red Sea. But Lutz's perseverance paid off and he was permitted to issue 8,000 *Schutzpässe* – letters of safe conduct – for 8,000 'units', i.e. individuals. Lutz interpreted this figure as 8,000 families. On running out of his allocated numbers, Lutz duplicated the *Schutzpässe* over and over again, providing safe houses in Budapest. Agnes Hirschi and her mother were both saved by Lutz along with as many as 62,000 Jewish people.

AJR member Eva Szirmai, Agnes Isaac's mother, brought with her to Edinburgh a copy of her and her mother's *Schutzpass*.

After the war Switzerland did not recognise Carl Lutz's selfless act. It is only in the last 20 years that attitudes have



(from left) Agnes Isaacs, Agnes Hirschi, Eva Szirmai

changed and he has received the recognition he so richly deserves.

Following her talk, Agnes Hirschi took part in a Q&A session which was followed by excerpts from *The Forgotten Hero*, a documentary on Carl Lutz's life. Agnes was presented with an AJR *Memorial Book* and several Tartan gifts.

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman read out a personal message to the Edinburgh meeting from Dominik Furgler, the Swiss Ambassador to the United Kingdom, who unfortunately

was unable to attend (see below).

Michael Newman also reported on his recent conference in Budapest in connection with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and Sue Kurlander reported on the AJR's Social Work Department.

It was a fantastic day. First and Second Generation members discussed a variety of topics. It was a perfect opportunity to exchange opinions and get to know each other.

**Agnes Isaacs**

## Excerpts from Message of Swiss Ambassador Dominik Furgler to AJR Regional Meeting

The Association of Jewish Refugees does a tremendous job in educating young people

about the Holocaust. The responsibility falls on all of us to ensure that these terrible events of history are never forgotten.

We feel this sense of duty even more strongly this year: 70 years on from the liberation of Auschwitz, we are faced with a rising tide of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia across Europe.

From the darkness of the Holocaust, examples of extreme bravery and heroism shine through, and this brings me to the story of a fellow diplomat, many years before me, whose bravery and resolve make me feel proud to be Swiss.

Consul Carl Lutz worked with unwavering perseverance as he undertook enormous risk to himself and his family. His actions were not only brave but also an impressive strategic operation. Rare indeed have been the moments when the courageous and forthright action of a single individual has managed to save the lives of tens of thousands.

To do so, Carl Lutz also needed the support of his staff at the Swiss Legation as well as that of his wife, young Jewish pioneers, Hungarian citizens, humanitarian organisations and fellow diplomats such as Raoul Wallenberg.

Carl Lutz deserves our deepest respect. It took far too long for his great deed to be recognised and it is now our duty to ensure that it is never forgotten. In this respect, I would like to pay special tribute to the work done by Agnes Hirschi for her role in promoting and protecting her father's legacy, sharing this inspiring and humbling story with the world.

## Northern Echo

Some 70 members from the Northern Powerhouse foregathered at the so ideally located Leeds Sinai Synagogue for our annual 'Get-together'. Maybe a few more walking/hearing aids but, all in all, an alert and happy band.

The programme was in the same mould as in previous years and the proceedings were opened by Michael Newman and Sue Kurlander, who brought us up to date with the latest developments at Head Office and introduced new members of the team to us. It was good to see, and have the opportunity to talk with, all those wonderful young supporters and to be reminded of the richness of support available to members.

Michael reminded us too of the importance of food to any Jewish gathering and it would be remiss of any reporter not to praise the ladies involved for a really excellent lunch.

Discussion groups on a variety of topics took place during the morning and afternoon sessions.

These gave members the opportunity to come together, to get to know each other better – after all we are from astonishingly varied backgrounds – and to realise that, notwithstanding our great ages, our brains still tick over although our bodies may rebel.

Our keynote speaker, James Smith, co-founder of Beth Shalom, under the banner of 'Cultural Genocide: Did the World Learn from the Destruction of Germany's Jews?', treated us to a brilliant exposé of the life, work and achievements of Raphael Lemkin (1900-59) with links to genocide in other parts of the world.

Lemkin was a Polish lawyer best known for his works on genocide – a word he himself coined in the 1940s. He was also a polyglot speaking 9 languages and able to read 14. His work on genocide led to the Genocide Convention Treaty adopted by the United Nations in 1951. His output was prodigious: he was surely one of the humanitarian 'greats' of the 20th century. James Smith's lecture was



(from left) Michael Newman, Wendy Bott, James Smith

riveting from beginning to end.

Soon home time loomed. It was nice to renew old acquaintances, meet new friends and, on the way home, to ponder on just what kind of glue it is that binds us disparate lot together. But it works. Thank you, Wendy, for your considerable efforts and keeping the peace between us oddballs. Thank you, Sinai, for having us. Sorry about the barrack room damage and please may we come back in two years' time?

**Stephen Tendlow**



### GLASGOW CF House for an Art Lover

Members enjoyed a visit to the lovely House for an Art Lover, built in the style of famous Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Unsettled weather meant that a walk around the pretty gardens was not possible but time was spent chatting in the delightful café and some people bought gifts in the interesting shop.

*Anthea Berg*

### BOOK CLUB A Most Enjoyable Get-together

Our meeting at Café Also at Joseph's Bookstore's was most enjoyable. Eve spoke about Ian McEwan's *The Children Act*, which dealt with the story of a judge and the cases she dealt with. At our next meeting, for lunch on Wednesday 12 August, we will be talking about *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel García Márquez and *After Me Comes the Flood* by Sarah Perry. Even if you haven't read these, do come along for a most enjoyable get-together.

*Margarete Weiss*

### ILFORD Cool Subjects

On the hottest day of the year, only a few hardy members joined us for a friendly social. There was plenty of cake and fruit and it was a pleasant morning with conversations on many cool subjects to divert us from the unusual heat prevailing outside.

*Meta Roseneil*

### LIVERPOOL A Super Afternoon

Members were given a private tour of Speke Hall, a rare timber-framed manor house on the banks of the River Mersey. A sumptuous afternoon tea rounded off a super afternoon!

*Wendy Bott*

### PINNER Eat Better – Feel Better

Never have we had such spirited audience participation as when Sarah Walford spoke to us about the principles of healthy eating. Sarah would avoid the trans fats in margarine, using butter or olive oil, but preferably coconut oil due to its stability, especially to heating. She spoke about cholesterol, carbohydrates, vitamin D and sunshine, advised a low meat high natural vegetable and fruit diet, and warned against the

increasingly high sugar content of processed food.

*Walter Weg*

### CANAL MUSEUM VISIT SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Our visit to the Canal Museum, near King's Cross Station, was something different. We learned about things we had never thought of, including boatmen, cargoes and narrow boats, which played an essential part of commercial life in bygone days. David Barnett guided a most interesting tour, including a peaceful walk along the Regent's Canal, finishing up at the Rotunda restaurant for a delicious lunch.

*Janet Weston*

### EALING Health Matters

Drawing on his long experience as a senior health professional and as an MP with a particular interest in health matters, Dr Eric Moonman gave us insight into the strengths and problems of the Health Service. He also gave us some quite unexpected advice on how to keep healthy. There ensued a lively discussion covering the service provided by GPs, the ambulance service, and the treatment of the elderly in hospitals.

*Leslie Sommer*

### HGS Jewish Heritage in the Arab World

Lyn Julius gave a very thought-provoking explanation as to why there are so few Jewish families left in places like Tunisia, Egypt and especially Iran, where only five families now live. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded on Nazi ideology and the Mufti visited Hitler in Berlin during the Second World War, she said. Lyn spoke with eloquence and with excellent footage. She runs a website called 'Harif' – well worth a look!

*Esther Rinkoff*

### ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) Recollections of a Kindertransport Journey

Our 87-year-old chairman Otto Deutsch gave a very moving account of his Kindertransport journey to England. He arrived in Harwich having said goodbye to his mother and sister Delia at the train station in Vienna, never to see them, or his father, again! He and his cousin Alex eventually boarded with a Christian family in Morpeth near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Before he left Vienna Otto saw Hitler drive past – ironically, Hitler went to school in Linz, not far from Otto's school.

*Larry Lisner*

### ST JOHN'S WOOD First Lady of Anglo-Jewry

David Barnett spoke about Judith

Montefiore. Born in 1784, Judith had a superb education with a wide knowledge of literature, music and art and was fluent in several languages. She wrote the first Jewish cookery/housekeeping book, was a philanthropist, and a full partner in all her husband's activities.

*Elfi Colman*

### 'THE SEAGULL': NOT A MOMENT OF BOREDOM

The revival of Chekhov's first masterpiece was warmly received at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. Not a moment of boredom as the cast supremely acted the quirks of human nature in 1895s Russia.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### RADLETT Herbert Morrison MP

Herbert Morrison was a Labour politician who achieved high office in the coalition government of WWII. Lesley Urbach has made a study of his attitude to Jews, in Europe and the UK alike. In general, she found him sympathetic, particularly in his earlier years in office, but there was some doubt about his later approach. Unfortunately, she didn't have time to speak about the later years on this occasion.

*Fritz Starer*

### BRIGHTON AND HOVE 'SARID' From Pogrom to Palestine

Jenny Manson read extracts from her Aunt Esther's diary, written in around 1918-20, which was found by the family and published. She also gave us handouts of her family tree and photos of her parents. Having experienced a pogrom in her home town in Ukraine, Jenny went to Palestine and was taught by Einstein. She later came to live in England.

*Ceska Abrahams*

### WELWYN GC Great Jewish Lyricists

Mike Levy gave an excellent talk on Jewish lyricists. We heard snippets from songs by, among others, Irving Berlin, Ira and George Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein, Frank Lessor and, the most recent, Lionel Bart. All were geniuses who gave us immense pleasure by turning pen and paper into musical notes.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### SHEFFIELD CF A Fantastic Afternoon Tea

Sheffield Botanical Gardens was the venue for members, who tucked in to a fantastic afternoon tea in the Curator's House Tea Room. Luckily, we hadn't sat outside as the heavens opened, making it impossible to see the gardens in all their splendour – but giving us extra

time for eating and socialising!

Wendy Bott

**NORTH WEST LONDON Wonderful Outing to Rinkoff Bakery**

Our July meeting was a wonderful lunch outing to Rinkoff Bakery in the East End organised by Esther. We were greeted by her husband Ray, a Master Baker, who is the third generation to run what is described as 'Your Specialist Baker since 1911'. We were treated to a most delicious lunch of our choice before being given a tour by Ray and a demonstration by him of how to plait *challah* and make round *challah*.

David Lang

**KENSINGTON Cultural Melting Pot**

Meeting for the second time, and my first, those present introduced themselves. It turned out that they were spread across the globe: from the Philippines and Africa to Prague, Vienna and Berlin and, finally, the beautiful city of Sarajevo. Everyone was connected in this cultural melting pot. Thanks to Walter and Kathy for their kind hospitality.

Esther Rinkoff

**NOTTINGHAM Catching Up on News**

We were hosted by Ruth and Jurgen Schweining in their new home. As usual, Ruth provided a lovely lunch, enjoyed by 14 members from around the area. We were delighted to welcome Esther, recovering from her recent illness. As usual, we had a lovely few hours catching up on news.

Bob Norton

**WEMBLEY 'A Clever Flower'**

Nick Dobson spoke about one of his favourite flowers – the dahlia. He showed us some beautiful slides – many of the blooms he had grown himself – and told us the history of this 'clever'

flower, which apparently has more genes than any other.

Kathryn Prevezer

**EDGWARE The Policies of Herbert Morrison MP**

Lesley Urbach spoke to us most interestingly about Labour MP Herbert Morrison, whose policies had a fairly large influence on the Jewish community.

Felix Winkler

**OXFORD A Great Success**

Our annual lunch, at the beautiful home of Susie Bates in Abingdon, was a great success. Her garden was in full bloom and we enjoyed refreshments outside before a delicious meal.

Kathryn Prevezer

**NORTH LONDON World War I Battlefields**

Kathryn Prevezer gave a most interesting and descriptive talk about her visit to WWI battlefields in France earlier this year. A morning enjoyed by all members.

Herbert Haberberg

**NORFOLK The Tribe of the Israelites Meet for Lunch**

Nine of the Tribe of the Israelites met for a splendid lunch at the Norwich synagogue. The theme chosen by Kathryn was music, each of us choosing a favourite piece. I was astounded by the ability of small electronic gadgets to coax a good sound from the ether, apart from also being a camera, telephone, etc.

Frank Bright

**BRISTOL Musical Selection**

Members enjoyed a deli lunch at Bannerman Road synagogue with a chance to chat before listening to pieces of music we had selected and describing the reasons we had selected them.

Kathryn Prevezer

**Intern Moritz completes his gap year**

Moritz Stegmeier, an Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP) intern, has completed his gap year in the AJR's Volunteers' Department and is heading home to Leonberg, near Stuttgart.



Each year the ARSP sends 180 volunteers to 13 countries to work on a variety of Holocaust-related projects.

As Moritz has always been interested in the Holocaust and has always liked Great Britain and the English language and culture, the UK was his first choice of country. Of special interest to him were projects in which he would have to work with elderly refugees and survivors as, he feels, this is the most direct way to help those who have suffered from Nazi persecution.

Moritz's work at the AJR has included helping at Head Office and assisting members who visit the Sobell Centre. In addition, he has helped Groups Co-ordinators Esther Rinkoff and Hazel Beiny at meetings in Edgware, Ealing and Radlett.

As part of his role, Moritz has also visited five 'lovely ladies', as he describes them, to one of whom he's given computer lessons. The time with these ladies always passed quickly, he says, as he found their stories so interesting.

During his internship at the AJR, Moritz says he has learned many things. Apart from improving his English skills, he has learned what it's like to have a job, to manage life on his own, and to adapt to another country's culture. Furthermore, he has got to know a great deal about the Jewish way of life.

On his return to Germany, Moritz is planning to study medicine.

The AJR, members and staff alike, are deeply grateful to Moritz for his work and wish him well for the future.

**SEPTEMBER GROUP EVENTS**

|                   |         |  |
|-------------------|---------|--|
| Bradford          | 1 Sept  | Social   |
| Ealing            | 1 Sept  | Jenny Manson: 'From Pogrom to Public School, 1918-19'                |
| Harrogate/York    | 2 Sept  | The Ideal Dinner Party Guest   |
| Ilford            | 2 Sept  | Kathryn Prevezer: 'My Trip to WWII Battlefields'                     |
| Edinburgh CF      | 3 Sept  | Social   |
| Pinner            | 3 Sept  | Brian Burford: 'Weird or What?'                                      |
| Newcastle         | 6 Sept  | Speaker: Fiona Frank   |
| Essex (Westcliff) | 8 Sept  | Bring a Poem   |
| St John's Wood    | 8 Sept  | Speaker: Michael Newman  |
| Glasgow           | 9 Sept  | Yom Tov Nosh   |
| Kensington        | 10 Sept | Social Get-together  |
| Wessex            | 10 Sept | Lunch. Speaker: Prof Clare Ungerson about her book on Kitchener Camp |
| Glasgow Book Club | 17 Sept | Discussion   |
| Manchester        | 20 Sept | Musical Meeting  |
| Book Club         | 30 Sept | Discussion and Social Get-together                                   |

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**FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS**

**Deaths**

With deep regret we announce the recent death of **Ludwig Levy** at the age of 90. He will be greatly missed by Barbara and Len, relatives and friends. Ludwig is now reunited with his beloved Martha.

**Eva Weill (née Matzdorf)**, born Berlin 24/12/1914, died 02/08/2015 aged 100. Came to England February 1939 with her sister. Married in Leeds 1955. Moved to Munich 1970 when her husband retired. Deeply missed by her sister Hilda, niece Lydia and friends.

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## OBITUARIES

### Clemens N. Nathan, born Hamburg 24 August 1933, died London 2 June 2015

*I will be forever grateful for his deep insight, sagacity and great counsel. He had a warmth and gentlemanly and diplomatic manner that endeared him to all he came into contact with, and proved that it was possible to make a point – and even disagree – in a calm and measured manner’ (Michael Newman, Chief Executive, AJR).*

A German-Jewish refugee who came to England as a young boy in the 1930s, Clemens worked tirelessly as a passionate champion of Jewish causes, international human rights and interfaith relations. A committed member of the AJR, alongside his parents and sister, he was also a past president of the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA), a Board Member of the Claims Conference, and founding Chairman of the interfaith Woolf Institute.

Born in Hamburg in 1933, Clemens arrived in the UK as a young child when his family emigrated in the mid-1930s to escape Nazi persecution. This seminal event would later drive him to help not only those who were victims of persecution but, more broadly, to champion universal human rights.

Educated at Berkhamsted Boys School and then at the Scottish Woollen Technical College, Galashiels, Clemens joined his father’s textile business, Cunart Company Ltd, based in London. When Clemens was aged 24 his father died and Clemens took over the running of the company as Managing Director. He developed Cunart into a major player in the international textile industry.

During the 1960s and 1970s the majority of men’s suits and more than a third of ladies’ pantyhose sold through Marks and Spencer and other major outlets in the UK were produced with fabric or yarn supplied or sourced through Cunart.

A person of enormous intellect, energy and interests, Clemens devoted considerable time to a wide range of activities beyond the textile industry. Through his involvement with the

Anglo-Jewish Association, Clemens developed his passion for Jewish causes and international human rights. First involved as a young member of the AJA, he later served as Treasurer, later as President (1983-89) and as Honorary Life President.

Clemens pursued reparations through the AJA’s affiliation with the Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations (CCJO), and especially through the Claims Conference based in New York, of which the AJA was a founding member. He served as a Board Member for over a decade as well as Chairman of its Nominating Committee. Here he was involved in negotiations with Germany regarding direct payments to Nazi victims and, increasingly, its funding to aid elderly victims with homecare. There were also talks with Austria about its obligations, including to the Kindertransport children. As Joint Chair of the CCJO, he represented Jewish interests at the United Nations in Geneva and New York as well as at the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

Additionally, he was the founding Chairman of the interfaith Woolf Institute (1998-2003) in Cambridge (previously the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations), dedicated to teaching, research and dialogue between the three Abrahamic faiths. He was also Governor and Honorary Fellow of the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design in Ramat Gan, Israel.

There has been a long family association with the AJR: Clemens’s parents Else and Kurt were longstanding supporters and members of the organisation, as was his older



sister, Renate Herzog, who also sadly passed away in June this year. Clemens was a great help in the organisation of the first Kindertransport Reunion (1988) and attended subsequent Reunions, the AJR’s Holocaust Memorial Day, and Kristallnacht commemorations. He was a guest speaker at Club 1943 and other AJR events.

In 2007 Clemens channelled his human rights activity into the Clemens Nathan Research Centre. In its short lifetime, the Centre has been prolific, organising or sponsoring ten international conferences and producing or contributing to over 20 publications. Perhaps the culmination of Clemens’s efforts was the publication in 2009 of his own book, *The Changing Face of Religion and Human Rights*, which brought together cutting-edge research with his own personal experiences and interests.

In the late 1990s a sarcoidosis of his spinal cord affected his mobility and ultimately left him severely disabled. With great courage and strength of character he continued to lead a normal life, travelling extensively and pursuing all his interests. Blessed with a compassionate and expansive nature, Clemens exuded charm, kindness and good humour, with a ready smile and a twinkle in his eye.

Clemens was married for nearly 50 years to Rachel, who predeceased him by two years. He is survived by his three children and five grandchildren.

### Renate Herzog, born Hamburg 3 December 1931, died Paris 17 June 2015

Hamburg-born Renate Herzog née Nathan passed away at the age of 83 on 17 June 2015 in Paris, two weeks after the death of her brother Clemens, to whom she was devoted.

Renate moved to England with her family in 1936, living in Amersham during the war years whilst attending Berkhamsted Girls School. After school had ended for the day she recalled visiting wounded soldiers at the local hospital with her school friends and offering them sweets and food parcels. Her parents, Else and Kurt, were very



active in the St John Ambulance and she and Clemens also served as nurse and cadet respectively.

In the 1950s she studied French and German at Royal Holloway College, followed by a year studying social sciences at the London School of Economics. After learning about social work at B’nai B’rith, Beaumont Grove, in London’s East End, she joined Marks and Spencer on a staff management course. In 1956 she married Frenchman Philippe Herzog at a ceremony in Upper Berkeley Street officiated by Rabbi Italiener, who had

also married her own parents in Hamburg. She then lived in Paris, where she worked for the Herzog family lingerie shops, and brought up her two children, Bernard and Françoise, as well as her grandchildren, Valeria and John.

Renate was an active member of the British and Commonwealth Women’s Association in Paris, a loyal supporter of the AJR, and an avid reader of its journal. She was a talented and keen artist, working in oil but primarily sketching in pencil and watercolour. She was a woman of good heart: kind and giving, highly perceptive and cultured, and she will be much missed by her French and English families.



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### An unparalleled musical performance

The French word 'mélomane' is the best description of people like my husband and myself – people who love music, go to a great many concerts, and find that without music life is hardly worth living. Its dictionary equivalent 'music-lover' doesn't quite catch the essence of the term.

Be that as it may, if a week goes by without at least one concert to attend, we feel that something is missing from our lives and we are indeed fortunate in having a plethora of excellent performances available for our listening pleasure (not to mention the splendid 24-hour 'Voice of Music' programme on the radio).

But every now and again we find ourselves at a performance that soars above the usual enjoyable evening and takes us to fresh heights. Thus it was a few weeks ago when we attended the subscription concert given by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in which the world-renowned viola player Tabea Zimmermann served as both conductor and soloist.

Born in Germany in 1966, Tabea Zimmermann is today one of the finest violists

in the world, a professor at the Hanns Eisler Music Academy in Berlin and also the mother of three children. To see and hear her perform is an unparalleled musical experience and her inner and outer beauty add to the effect of her marvelous mastery of that very difficult instrument, which she has been playing since the age of three. In recent years she has added conducting to her repertoire of talents and to see her at work is also an unforgettable experience.

For the first item on the programme, Mendelssohn's not very well-known String Symphony No. 10, which he wrote when he was 12 years old, Ms Zimmermann stood at the podium to conduct. She then played Bach's Solo Cello Suite No.2 and managed to make it sound as if it had been written for the viola. For this piece Ms Zimmermann stood alone at the front of the stage while the entire orchestra remained in its place and was evidently as enthralled by her playing as the audience.

Tabea Zimmermann produces a tone of unqualified richness from the viola and also somehow seems to extract a similar quality of sound from the orchestra. This was especially the case in Hindemith's Trauermusik, in which

the ensemble playing attained unimagined heights of sensitivity as well as depths of emotion. Possibly her own personal history may have contributed to this.

Tragedy struck in the year 2000, when her husband of 13 years and the father of her two sons, Israeli conductor David Shallon, died suddenly as the result of an asthma attack when they were on tour in Tokyo. The entire musical world, and in Israel in particular, was shocked by this tragic event - but how much more so must this have been the case for Ms Zimmermann herself. She has since resumed her career and remarried, but it requires great strength of character to recover from a blow like that and evidently she has just that.

The concert ended with Brahms's Serenade No. 2 and, to perform this as well as to conduct it, Ms Zimmermann sat where the first violin is usually to be found, playing along with the orchestra while conducting. Before each movement she seemed to hear the music in her head and began to move her head in time, then giving the orchestra the signal to start and follow her lead. I've seen pianists (e.g. Barenboim) conduct from the piano but never one who sat with the orchestra in this way, a way that Ms Zimmermann has evidently made her own. The end result was, as I have already made clear, both exciting and inspiring.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *cont. from p.7*

The fighting and killing have gone on for about 67 years now. Rehashing the same old arguments from a safe position, some 3½ thousand km away, is of no use. It's sad and counter-productive and not in the best interest of the Israeli people.

I was part of it myself for many years. Now I am pleading with all contributors – let us embark on a correspondence dedicated to achieving peace in the region.

*Eric Sanders, London W12*

Sir – I'd like to reply to some of my critics. If Gaby Weiner (July) and Eric Sanders (August) cannot understand why I, as a Jew who loves Israel, welcome a Tory government, they do not read newspapers nor do they follow what politicians say. Ed Miliband was not a supporter of Israel, nor

is the Labour Party. The thought of Hamas and Hezbollah friend Jeremy Corbyn taking over the leadership of Labour fills me with fear.

Next, I'd like to say to David Kaye (July) that there is nothing 'modern' in his version of modern orthodoxy. Ancient orthodoxy maybe!

Lastly, I turn to Bernd Koschland. He refers to 'wanting liberation on Shabbat'. Is he a member of the Lord's Day Observance Society? Should he not be told that this Society is for Christians and that, anyway, it no longer exists? Let us all keep our Shabbats the way we want. I prefer the Progressive way. My politics may be Conservative. My religion is definitely Liberal.

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

Sir – Some years back I was at a meeting of a subcommittee of the local council. The chairman suggested that some of us should participate in another meeting related to the subject (long forgotten) under discussion. It would be on a Saturday in south London. I stated it was my Sabbath and I couldn't go.

Sitting next to me was a lovely police officer (policewoman in those days), who said to me: 'There is an *eruv* in Barnet.' 'Yes, there is,' I replied. Then she suggested with a big grin: 'Why don't you put a small *eruv* on your car and then you could drive to south London?'

After we had both stopped laughing I replied: 'What an ingenious idea – but sadly it doesn't work!'

*Bernd Koschland, London NW4*

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