

AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Political murders

The murder of Jo Cox MP on 16 June 2016, shortly before the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, was a shocking instance of political violence almost unique in recent British history. Such instances of politically motivated violence in Britain are mercifully rare. To find an assassination of a serving prime minister one has to go back to Spencer Perceval in 1812. Perceval's assassin, John Bellingham, appears to have been motivated by a personal grievance, not by political conviction. More recently, the attack on the Liberal Democrat MP for Cheltenham, Nigel Jones, in January 2000, was also carried out by a lone attacker with a private grievance, exacerbated by mental problems.



Murdered Labour MP Jo Cox

Politically motivated murders in Britain over recent decades can, almost without exception, be traced back to causes external to the day-to-day run of domestic British politics. The most obvious case is the campaign of violence mounted from the 1970s by militant Irish Republicans, which culminated in the bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton during the Conservative Party conference in October 1984, killing five people. The Irish National Liberation Army murdered Airey Neave, Conservative MP for Abingdon, by blowing up his car in the Palace of Westminster car park in 1979. Ian Gow, Conservative MP for Eastbourne, was murdered by the IRA in 1990, while the IRA bomb intended for Sir Hugh Fraser, Conservative MP for Stafford and Stone, in 1975, succeeded only in killing the renowned cancer specialist Professor Gordon Hamilton Fairley. The attack on Stephen Timms, Labour MP for East Ham, in 2010, was carried out by a Muslim extremist in protest against the Iraq war.

The murder of Jo Cox, by contrast, was entirely a home-grown matter. Her alleged attacker, Thomas Mair, is British, and his motives were apparently rooted in domestic British concerns. As he launched a savage, cowardly attack on a defenceless woman, Mair is reported to have shouted 'Britain first!' or 'Put Britain first!'; in court, he gave his name as 'Death to traitors, freedom for Britain.' Mair may well turn out to be a paranoid loner but he has a recognisable political agenda – that of the extreme nationalist (or even proto-fascist) far right, heightened by concerns about the

erosion of national sovereignty, the dilution of 'British identity', and the supposed complicity of certain politicians, principally on the left, in those processes.

This is a pattern easily recognisable from Germany in the years of extreme turbulence that followed its defeat in the First World War. The suddenness of the German military collapse in autumn 1918 meant that German public opinion was unprepared for it and, on the right, unwilling to accept the reality of the Allied victory. Germany's wartime military leaders, Field Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff, who had effectively been in control of Germany since 1916, vacated the political scene as defeat loomed and, in an act of gross political cowardice, left the task of negotiating peace terms with the victorious Allies to civilians who had borne no responsibility for the policies that had led Germany to catastrophe.

The German delegation that travelled to Compiègne in November 1918 to sign the harsh terms of the armistice dictated by the Allies was led by a civilian, Matthias Erzberger, a leading politician of the Centre (Catholic) Party. Responsibility for accepting the terms of the armistice and, later, of the yet more onerous terms of the Treaty of Versailles (June 1919) perforce rested with the civilian governments that shouldered the heavy burden of governing Germany in the wake of military defeat amidst extreme political instability. Many right-wing Germans chose to ignore the historical realities and believed the notorious *Dolchstoßlegende*, according to which the German armies, undefeated, had in autumn 1918 been 'stabbed in the back', Siegfried-like, by the treacherous machinations of left-wing revolutionaries and Jews operating on the home front.

Germany, which before 1914 had known little political violence, became fertile soil for it after 1918. The unstable coalition that attempted to govern Germany in November 1918, consisting of the Social Democrats (SPD) and the more militantly left-wing Independent Social Democrats (USPD), fell apart in late December 1918 as radical left-wing elements in the newly founded Communist Party (KPD) sought to initiate a revolution on the lines of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. To put down this

Link with Wiener Library underlined at event celebrating AJR's 75th anniversary



At a reception in July at the Wiener Library to celebrate the AJR's 75th anniversary, a special plaque on the Library's Wall of Honour dedicated to Hans Reichmann, AJR Chairman 1953-63, and his wife, Eva, the Library's Director of Research from the end of the war until the 1960s, was unveiled.

In his welcoming address, Wiener Library Chairman Anthony Spiro stressed the bond between the AJR and the Wiener Library as being 'strong and close'. 'As refugee numbers decline', he added, 'the importance of our work remains – to ensure that, through education and our archive of documents and personal papers, the events that created the refugee generation are never forgotten.'

Andrew Kaufman, Chairman of the AJR, noted that 'We are here to remember Hans and Eva Reichmann, who did so much to define the relationship between our two great organisations.' He also paid tribute to Anthony Spiro's late father, Ludwig, the AJR's former Life President, 'who as our Treasurer did so much to advance and develop the AJR and was the inspiration and driving force for the creation of the AJR Centre.' Anthony Spiro too, Andrew declared, was 'playing a leading role in setting and navigating the course for the AJR and the Wiener Library.'

uprising, the Social Democrat-led government was forced to rely on the army and, in particular, on irregular paramilitary units known as *Freikorps*. These were composed largely of aggressively nationalistic and anti-Semitic young militants bitterly opposed to the parliamentary institutions of the infant Weimar Republic, to any orientation of Germany towards the liberal democracies of Western Europe, and to any

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Political murders continued

fulfilment of the terms of the armistice and the Treaty of Versailles. Many *Freikorps* men were involved in the brutal conflicts that took place after the armistice in the former German territories in the east that had come under the control of Poland and the Baltic states, where they conducted actions against both local Slav nationalists and Bolshevik units.

The fruits of such attitudes once they were let loose amidst the political turmoil of Germany in 1918/19 rapidly became clear. The leaders of the Communist Party, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were murdered by *Freikorps* men in January 1919 in the wake of the failed uprising in Berlin; the leader of the USPD, Hugo Haase, was assassinated that autumn; and in Munich, where a radical left-wing regime had assumed power, the left-wing leader Kurt Eisner, a Jew, was assassinated by a right-wing extremist. That act of terror set in train a sequence of events that led to the 'cleansing' of the city in May 1919 by right-wing paramilitaries led by men like Franz Ritter von Epp. Later, Epp would re-emerge to abolish the Bavarian government in March 1933 and hand power to the Nazis. Among Epp's men, who indulged in atrocities like the savage killing of the pacifist anarchist Gustav Landauer, a Jew, was the future leader of the SA (Brownshirts), Ernst Röhm. There were numerous *Freikorps* units, including the *Freikorps Roßbach*, which numbered the future commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss, among its members, and the *Marinebrigade Ehrhardt*, under Captain Hermann Ehrhardt. Robert G. L. Waite's study of the *Freikorps* is aptly entitled *Vanguard of Nazism*.

Political murders rocked the unstable foundations of the Weimar Republic. Matthias Erzberger was murdered in 1921 and in June 1922 Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau, a Jew, was assassinated by young militants implacably hostile to Germany's new parliamentary democracy and to Jews, socialists and those who sought to stabilise Germany's position within the new post-1918 European order. Ehrhardt's *Freikorps* mutated into the *Organisation Consul*, which was responsible in the early 1920s for hundreds of political murders, mostly of those suspected of 'betraying' Germany by co-operating with the Western Allies, either directly or, like Erzberger and Rathenau, by indirect

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Visit to Air Transport Auxiliary Museum

Tour led by Paul Lang

5 September 2016

FLY A SPITFIRE SIMULATOR

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You will have the opportunity to fly a Spitfire Simulator and we will have lunch in a local restaurant before our return.

For an application form, please call
Head Office on 020 8385 3070
or email esther@ajr.org.uk

association with the 'enemies of the German people'. The frightening mentality of these young right-wing extremists was the subject of Klaus Theweleit's study *Männerphantasien (Male Fantasies)* (1977), which reveals the aggressive, proto-fascist attitudes, the virulent misogyny, and the glorification of 'hardness' that characterised them.

The *Organisation Consul* came into its own during the period of the great inflation in Germany that culminated in the political, social and economic turbulence of 1923, starting with the French occupation of the Ruhrgebiet in January of that year. The extreme right dispensed a bizarre and brutal form of justice, whereby alleged traitors were sentenced to death by secret tribunals modelled on the medieval German *Vehmgericht* (a mysterious, sinister institution best known for its appearance in Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*), and promptly murdered. To strike fear into the hearts of their enemies, these right-wing vigilante units adopted the menacing motto 'Verräter verfallen der Feme' ('Traitors will be dealt with by the *Vehmgericht*'). *Freikorps* men struck at ordinary people suspected, for example, of giving information about hidden arms dumps to the French authorities, at left-wingers like the Bavarian Independent Socialist leader Karl Gareis, murdered in June 1921 for his efforts to expose the activities of local paramilitaries, and at alleged spies and informers, real or imagined.

A member of *Organisation Consul* was Albert Leo Schlageter, a fanatic who had already shown a frightening propensity for violence in the fighting against the Poles in the disputed region of eastern Silesia. In April 1923 Schlageter was arrested by the French occupying authorities; he was charged with sabotage and espionage, and executed in May. In the mythology of the far right, he became a nationalist hero, a martyr for Germany in her sacred battle for independence from foreign control and against

AJR Lunch

75th Anniversary of the AJR

Sunday

25 SEPTEMBER 2016

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NORTH WEST LONDON LUNCH

Tuesday 27 September 2016

12-2.30 pm

at Alyth Gardens Synagogue

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ENTEBBE RAID – 'OPERATION
THUNDERBOLT'

To mark the 40th anniversary of the Entebbe rescue mission, we welcome Professor Saul David, accomplished speaker, historian, broadcaster, and TV and radio presenter. He will speak on his book *Operation Thunderbolt*, which had a 5-star review in the *Daily Telegraph* in June: 'a brilliant account that reads like the plot of an action movie'. Filming will start in November 2016.

Booking Essential
£8.00 pp to include
two-course lunch

Please speak to
Esther Rinkoff
07966 631778 or esther@ajr.org.uk
or Eva Stellman
07904 489515 or eva@ajr.org.uk

RELOCATION OF AJR HEAD OFFICE

The AJR's Head Office has moved to

Winston House
2 Dollis Park
London N3 1HF

The new address is close to Finchley Central Tube Station, Northern Line, and is on a number of bus routes.

The AJR's telephone number
remains 020 8385 3070.

domestic treachery. The dramatist Hanns Johst, a leading figure in the Nazi literary pantheon, wrote a play in Schlageter's honour; the drama *Schlageter* (1933) completed the transformation of a murderous fanatic into a national icon, symbol of German manliness, heroism and self-sacrifice. His murdered victims were vilified or erased from the historical record. As long as the Nazis ruled, 'Death to traitors, freedom for Germany' might have been their epitaph.

Anthony Grenville

A breath of fresh air

It's like a breath of fresh air to walk into the beautiful new Centre of Ceramic Art at York Art Gallery and spot work by refugee artists Lucie Rie and Hans Coper.

Reopened in August 2015 after an £8 million refurbishment, the gallery was a well deserved finalist in the Art Fund's 2016 prestigious Museum of the Year award.

British studio ceramics lie at the centre's heart, with work by Rie and Coper heading two of the main displays. Rie was educated at a *Kunstgewerbeschule* art school, arriving in London in 1938 as a Jewish refugee from Vienna, where her father was an eminent doctor and friend of Sigmund Freud. Although already successful in her native land, she began making jewellery and buttons to make ends meet while becoming established here.

Coper fled Berlin in 1939 and in 1946 began working as an assistant to Rie before setting up his own studio in Hertfordshire.

York has a collection of over 50 of Rie's pots, almost 600 of her buttons, and over 30 of Coper's pots. Curator of Ceramics Helen Walsh explained: 'They are such big figures. When we redid the gallery the collections had grown really substantially and now we hold the largest collection of British studio ceramics in the UK.'

The field had been dominated by the Anglo-Oriental style of Bernard Leach but Rie took on the Modernist movement. People loved the colour and shapes of her pots, which she wanted to be both beautiful and useful.

According to Ms Walsh, 'Studio ceramics is a little-known area of British Modernism so we were keen to introduce people to key artists and the type of work they were producing. Lucie Rie and Hans Coper were two of the first. We chose to highlight them in particular as, when they came to the UK and started working, they brought this kind of European aesthetics. It really came with them. It was their

originality that was completely different to that of anybody else.'

Now York is planning for 2018 a Rie exhibition featuring her work and the buttons she made initially (from the Anthony Shaw collection).

During the second half of the twentieth century ceramics became more highly valued and Hans Coper was the first living British potter to reach over £1,000 at auction. He created stunning pieces of pottery, perceived by many people to be exquisite sculptures - although described by the artist himself as pots not art. His work is more abstract but always functional.

Both artists achieved worldwide recognition and their works go for

mind-boggling sums.

Rie was made a Dame in 1991 for her contribution to ceramics and is best remembered for her bowl and bottle forms. She worked until illness forced her to give up at 88 and died in 1995 aged 93. Coper died in 1981. Today their work is found in major museums and private collections worldwide.

The gallery's large collection was built up after a bequest by Eric Milner-White, Dean of York, inspiring more private collectors to leave works. W. A. Ismay's bequest incorporated work by the two potters. Henry Rothschild - another Jewish refugee - gave the gallery some of his favourite pieces, including works by Rie.

A trip to the Capital of the North, with its light, airy and innovative ceramic arts centre, is a must.

Janet Weston



Hans Coper Large Bottle 1958-1959 © The Estate of Hans Coper/York Museums Trust

Sponsorship scheme for refugees in UK launched

A scheme to allow community groups to sponsor a refugee family has been launched by the Home Secretary and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The scheme will enable groups, including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses, to support resettled refugees in the UK.

In order to apply for the scheme, sponsoring organisations must have status as either a registered charity or community interest company, the consent of the local authority in which they wish to operate, and a comprehensive plan for resettlement.

Sponsors will be responsible for providing housing for the refugee family, as well as helping them to integrate into life in the UK and access medical and social services, arranging English-language tuition, and supporting them towards employment and self-sufficiency.

A 'Help Refugees in the UK' webpage - www.gov.uk/help-refugees - has been developed to make it easier for the public to support refugees in the UK and allow local authorities to focus support on the goods and services that refugees need.

Sir Erich Reich, Chairman
AJR-Kindertransport
Special Interest Group

Major Holocaust heritage centre to open in the North of England



Leeds HSFA Chair Lilian Black

The University of Huddersfield is to join with the Leeds-based Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association (HSFA) to create a major centre for memorialisation of the Holocaust.

The University's Heritage Quay archive will house the Holocaust Heritage and Learning Centre for the North of England. The Centre is expected to be open to the public from October 2017.

The move follows an award to the HSFA of £604,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £100,000 from the Pears Foundation, and £50,000 from the AJR. Individual donations take the total funding to over £900,000.

The HSFA's Chair, Lilian Black, whose father Eugene survived Nazi persecution, delivered this year's Holocaust Memorial Lecture, an annual fixture at the University of Huddersfield. 'The legacy of the Holocaust survivors in Yorkshire is now secure,' she declared, 'and will be made available to pupils, students and the wider community for teaching and learning.'

AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman said: 'It gives us great pleasure to sponsor this dynamic project, which will deepen and enhance Holocaust education and memorialisation in the UK and reflects our intention to perpetrate the legacy of Holocaust refugees and survivors who made new lives in this country.'



Lucie Rie Bowl/ 1949 © The Estate of Lucie Rie/York Museums Trust (Henry Rothschild collection)

The man with a brolley

The cartoon shows a man with a brolley arriving on a station platform, sadly watching his train depart ahead of him. A caption underneath is in Hungarian so there's no chance of deciphering its meaning. What an impossible language! No connection or clues to the meaning of any of the words. I can get by in German, French and some other languages. Wasn't Hungarian devised only for its native speakers? Surely no one can possibly learn it as a second language!

A second cartoon portrays two full-length Jewish-looking men engrossed in serious conversation, their spoken words transcribed below – but again in that ridiculous language. The reason why they are so earnest and why that man wanted to catch that train will have to remain hidden from me. And dozens more cartoons in the sketchbook. Lots of pairs of men, often contrasting in a humorous style – one fat and one thin, one tall and one short, one shabby and one well dressed, one policeman and one arrested criminal. All engaged in conversation, but their words unknown.

In the late 1960s, when I was a teenager concerned with – well, those things that teenagers are always concerned with – my mother went back to Hungary. Back in 1957 she had been given an exit visa on compassionate grounds as my father had fled with me in his arms a few months earlier. So she could legally return. My father couldn't go back. He didn't ever want to. And my own position had been uncertain.

When she returned home to London a few days later my mother showed me what she had brought back. An old and large book containing dozens of stuck-in original cartoons and caricatures and some framed family portraits in coloured chalk. 'Who was the artist and which gallery have these come from?' I had asked. 'They were drawn by your grandfather who was an artist' came the reply. So I asked some more.

My mother's parents had enjoyed a wonderful life in Miskolc, Hungary, not far from the border with Ukraine. I had to find it in an atlas – and there it was. But only until 1944. A big house, big garden, tennis court, servants. She had been a proud housewife, bringing up a daughter; he had worked in insurance. And produced the most wonderful art in his spare time. Sometimes even for money. See this cartoon? It had been mass produced as a picture postcard for sale in the town. And that cartoon? It had appeared as an advert in the local newspaper for the local jeweller. But mostly just for pleasure. All prominently signed with the same carefully written name:



the war ends too soon, might still be too many Jews left alive. Ghettos were created, the chance for escape was lost. Twelve thousand were sent away by train each day. Germany might have been losing the war against the Allies but it was increasingly winning its

war against the Jews. The crematoria in Auschwitz couldn't cope with the numbers arriving. My mother was only 21.

She was freed from Auschwitz early in 1945. Exhausted from making bombs for the Germans as a slave labourer. On the way back home she knocked on a farm door to ask for food. A gun was pointed to her head instead. Get lost, they said. She made her way back to Miskolc. No sign of her parents. Or anyone else she had known. Someone

'Szepesti' – his surname.

When the war broke out they didn't leave. Why *should* they? After all Hungary was an ally of Germany. Hungary was already on their side. And 10,000 Jews had died fighting for Hungary in the First World War. Yet in 1919 there had been pogroms against the Jews. And in 1938 Hungary showed solidarity with Germany by emulating the Nuremberg Laws: Jews were restricted from entering many professions and most were denied the vote. The antisemitic Nazi-like Arrow Cross Party achieved 25 per cent in the 1939 elections, so – thank goodness –



wasn't in power. We'll just sit out the restrictions, they probably thought. Stay in our nice house in our nice town. Why would Germany invade its own ally? And later on: see, we're right – Germany is now losing the war – in probably just a few months it will all be over, we'll have made it. Whoops, they got that just a little bit wrong.

Germany invaded on 19 March 1944. And quickly forced Hungary to place 300,000 Jewish labourers at the disposal of the Reich. The Arrow Cross was quickly installed as the government – and the decision was made to deport all the Jews. The round-ups started in May. The Hungarian authorities co-operated enthusiastically. No time to lose. If



else was living in her house. She knocked on the door. She explained why she was there. The occupants told her to get lost. So she left for Budapest. And started a life there. Marriage (with a camp survivor of course – what else would she have in common with all the others now?). Children. Qualifications. Good jobs. Nice flat. Good area. Two children. The Communist regime had suppressed antisemitism. But when the revolution looked like succeeding and the antisemitism was emerging again, he decided to flee. With me in his arms. And she followed later. Reunited in London. Refugees for a second time. No good jobs now. Nowhere to live. No possessions. Qualifications not valid here. Can't even speak the language. Hard times.

Yet she had always wanted to go back. Now I knew the reason. It was the sketchbook and the framed portraits. After her family had been taken and forced into the Miskolc Ghetto their servant had taken the sketchbook and the framed pictures and brought them into her own home. And now she returned them to their one surviving owner.

I looked at my grandfather's self-portrait. It was dated August 1943. He had been a humorous man, full of jokes. But here he is, looking to the left, deadly serious. Striped bow-tie and white collar. Hair carefully combed back. Why doesn't he face the viewer? After all, he was probably looking at himself in a mirror? Isn't that how you do a self-portrait? But not here. What has distracted him? And all in a black frame.

I turned to his portrait of his daughter, my mother. It was dated 1944 – no month. So just before the ghetto, the deportation, the camp, the labour, the return. But she too is looking away – to the right. Don't you face the photographer or artist when they are capturing your image? Bright red headscarf. Deep blue blouse. Chestnut hair. A serious face. Sad and resigned eyes, firmly fixed into the distance – but on what? And all in a gold frame.

And what to do with all this artwork now? Parents and siblings gone. While I'm living the drawings are safe.

Looked at and looked after. But there's no one else to pass them to. There are no close blood relatives now. Maybe the two earnest Jewish-looking men are discussing whether they – together with their creator – will be remembered in the future. And the man on the platform with the brolley realising he's missed his train is just wanting to travel into the future so he too doesn't remain behind, forgotten.

David Wirth

Harwich – a new life and a new freedom



PHOTOS BY ADRIAN GODDARD AND RONALD SCUTCHER

The AJR couldn't have made this a more impressive event if they had done backflips along Platform 6 in good old Liverpool Street Station!

I felt privileged to be allowed to join as a second generation participant, but with a legacy of my own – the memories of the ordeals of my own parents before they made it to Britain from Berlin in 1938. Although their ship had docked in Southampton, the 'Nicholas Winton Train' became symbolic of their journey to a new life and a new freedom. I thought about them a lot on that train to Harwich.

On arrival on Platform 6, I found myself embraced by the Austrian Ambassador and welcomed by Tobias, a young, vibrant Austrian man who had come along with the Ambassador. Tobias stayed for the ride and his conversation during the day made me aware of a new compassion and awareness in someone young and hopeful which we don't often come across in a world that all too often seems ferocious and unlistening.

I was uplifted by the extraordinary welcome in Harwich for all the Kindertransport survivors who had had the courage to make this journey. The entire occasion was extremely moving: the children's applause as we got off the train, the warm welcoming speeches,

the individual posies for all the *Kinder*, the special tour of Harwich on the old red bus with its vintage seating – great stuff! It was wonderful to see sea and be transported so expertly and in such style to surprise places.

The service at St Nicholas Church was very moving and what a beautiful thought to show us in the wonderful atmosphere of the Electric Palace Cinema old Pathé clips of newsreels of the *Kinder's* arrival in England. It rather reminded me of the Saturday morning pics of my youth. I was very moved to have *Kinder* sitting next to me right there and very touched to spot Tobias struggling with a battered umbrella when the rains came to cover Harry, one of the *Kinder*, as they sought refuge during the break. Some of us stumbled in the rain towards an elegant hotel which served up a lovely menu. It was good to talk, just as it was good to have a day alone for reflection and for loving, if painful, memory.

The inclusion of the children of today as part of an experience of this kind is inspirational and it's good to know that their own endeavours will go towards helping other refugee children. Many thanks to the AJR for all their original thought and work in this.

Yvonne Klemperer

I wanted to thank AJR staff for their help with the day trip to Harwich, in facilitating contact with the *Kinder*, encouraging and supporting the day. I was really impressed with Board of Deputies' President Jonathan Arkush: nobody could have expressed better my feelings about the need to learn from Europe's painful history and to apply those lessons to our world today, both in extending compassion to victims of the current refugee crisis and in the constant need to guard against all kinds of prejudice and intolerance. Through education of our younger generation we may hope to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past and leave a better world for our own children.

I was rather nervous about inviting people who are Jewish – or at least highly likely to be Jewish – to a Christian church. I'm not particularly religious myself but it seems to have been well received as appropriate to give thanks in a house of God, there being no synagogue in Harwich of course.

It's still something of a work in progress due to the schools being preoccupied with SATs and Ofsted reports, but we hope to raise between £20k and £40k for child refugee causes relating to the current crisis and thereby not only teach the next generation about the history of the Kindertransport but also make a positive difference to those less fortunate than ourselves.

I'm not quite sure what will come next but I don't think this will be the end of it. There is much to be learnt from the story of the Kindertransport.

Peter Hedderly

Leo Baeck High School in Haifa launches Kindertransport project

Last year, Yaffa De Goede, a volunteer in the Leo Baeck High School Library in Haifa, suggested that the book *I Came Alone*, which contains over 100 testimonies of Kindertransport children and was published in 1990, should be translated into Hebrew.

Ruthie Almog, an English teacher and translator, and Dr Ruth Ash, Director of the Library, asked school students to tackle the task under their guidance. To their delight, 27 students took it upon themselves to translate 3-10 testimonies each. The project was blessed by the family of Bertha Leverton, the editor of the original English compilation.

This year, Holocaust Memorial Day at the school was dedicated to the children of the Holocaust, in particular members of the Kindertransport.

The school won the Yad Vashem Prize

for Excellence in Holocaust Education for its Kindertransport project. Four of the student translators, together with Ruthie Almog, Ruth Ash and others, travelled to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem to receive the prize.

Leo Baeck High School is keen to collaborate with teachers abroad who would like to partner with a teacher in Israel to learn more about this subject.

We would like to find relatives of the children whose stories were translated by our students and add updated information and photographs where possible.

Students are now building a website in both Hebrew and English. To contact us, please email ashruth3@leobaeck.net or rutia@leobaeck.net

Ruth Ash-Argyle

Director, Leo Baeck Community Library and Resource Center, Haifa

Wiener Library Wall of Honour

The Wiener Library's Wall of Honour offers an opportunity to commemorate a friend or loved one through a plaque on the wall outside the Wolfson Reading Room. The etched plaques, prominently situated, are designed with restrained dignity by Gary Egleton (cost £2,000).

For further information please contact Jane Biro, Development Coordinator at the Wiener Library, tel 020 7636 7247 or email development@wienerlibrary.co.uk



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

LABOUR AND ANTISEMITISM

Sir – You published a somewhat misleading letter from Heinz Grünewald in your August edition.

If I understand him correctly, he seeks to argue that because he has found no antisemitism in the Labour Party there therefore can be none. For this purpose, he redefines 'antisemitism' as 'the kind of aggressive and fanatical hostility ... of the Reich', clearly unaware that such antisemitism itself built on what may have seemed 'lesser' forms of the disease.

Of course, Mr Grünewald's letter may well have been out of date before the ink was dry on it since we now have the report of Shami Chakrabarti's commission, which shows, for those not already aware of it, clear instances of antisemitism within the Labour Party.

Not content with trying our credulity on these grounds, Mr Grünewald next argues that 'Labour and antisemitism don't mix. Jews have always been prominent and welcome on the left.' Clearly this is untrue of the Soviet Union, with its notorious antisemitic policies. And what does Mr Grünewald make of Karl Marx's 'What is the worldly religion of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly God? Money.'

It avails him not at all to seek to deflect attention to the Conservatives as, historically, it was precisely because of the traditional prejudices of the right that Jews tended to the left. Mr Grünewald simply refuses to face up to the huge disappointment among Jews that the left has fallen prey anew to antisemitism and the moral problem that that poses for the left itself.

Or does he? In his last paragraph – perhaps the least creditable part of the whole letter – having denied any antisemitism on the left, he now attempts to find an excuse for what he has just denied. As might be expected, he alights on Israel's actions *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians. And with breathtaking *chutzpah* he does so in his reference to the identification of 'Israel with Judaism'. No, Mr Grünewald, 'Judaism' has *not* been the main target of the Jews' antagonists since somewhere around

the time of the mediaeval disputations! Today's targets are, and have been for centuries, real living Jewish people themselves – like me and perhaps also like Mr Grünewald himself.

He may think it perfectly proper that ordinary Jews should suffer because of what he identifies as 'illegal activities perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinians' – for which read Israel's attempt to defend itself against genocide. This is morally outrageous and a denial of everything the left should stand for.

Mark Victor Schuck, London N12

Sir – I am afraid Heinz Grünewald may be slightly out of date. There may have been a time, some decades ago, when Jews were primarily attracted to the Labour Party. This has changed radically and very many of us are now supporters and members of the Tory Party. My experience in that party is similar to Mr Grünewald's in Labour, i.e. no overt manifestation of antisemitism.

I am, however, realistic enough to recognise that this does not mean an absence of antisemitism. Regrettably antisemitism exists and, even more regrettably, it is rife in the Labour Party, where a perfunctory – but well rewarded – enquiry only seems to have made matters worse.

To blame Israel for antisemitism in this country is nothing short of disingenuous and to quote the Holocaust into the bargain is something worse. Laurence Freeman (in the same issue) dealt with Israel's position much better than I could. Suffice it to add that if the Palestinians were just to accept the inescapable fact of the existence of Israel and deal with the country in good faith, peace might be achieved. But until that happens Israel must have the right – indeed the duty – to deal with the people who threaten it as a nation, and repeatedly try to assassinate its citizens, in the way it sees best. This is not only for the defence of Israel but for the protection of worldwide Jewry – including Mr Grünewald whether he likes it or not – and enables us to hold our heads high rejoicing in the achievements of the country we can call our own.

George Donath, London SW1

Sir – Heinz Grünewald's letter is too outrageous to ignore. He denies antisemitism in the Labour Party and British trade unions because the hostility is not 'in the same league' as that meted out by the Nazis. So does Mr Grünewald only recognise antisemitism when violence and killings are involved? He continues by criticising John Mann – the first senior Labour Party member to attack Ken Livingstone's recent outrageous antisemitic outburst – and by claiming, oddly, that Labour and antisemitism don't mix. Tell that to Ken Livingstone and the hard left!

He then blames the Tories for Ed Miliband's photograph with a bacon sandwich. Why? And he goes on to call Tory sympathisers 'demagogues and fascists'. Perhaps Mr Grünewald needs reminding that Mrs Thatcher had four Jews in her Cabinet. Are they the Tory demagogues and fascists to whom he refers?

Lastly, like all good socialists, Mr Grünewald blames Israel for any antisemitism that may exist in the UK. He doesn't like identifying Israel with Judaism and is angry about Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. Mr Grünewald, Jeremy Corbyn should be proud of you and will have room for you in his Shadow Cabinet! However, with a name like Grünewald

Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

Sir – Heinz Grünewald seems to have blinkers on. 'Labour and antisemitism don't mix', he writes. But Labour and antisemitism has a distinguished history. I refer to the notoriously antisemitic Ernest Bevin for example. Can Mr Grünewald read up on him maybe?

As for the present, I need not supply examples – the media have had so many recently. The appointment of Shami Chakrabarti to report on antisemitism in Labour was a bit of a joke. A well-known critic of Israel, she produced a lukewarm report with half-hearted suggestions. I doubt that even these will be followed. Mr Grünewald, please listen to the news or at least read some of the newspapers!

Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath, Herts

Sir – If Heinz Grünewald has never come across a single instance of antisemitism in the Labour Party and a trade union then we don't live on the same planet. On the planet on which I live there was an Ernest Bevin, Labour Foreign Secretary, a hyper-active antisemite who continued to persecute the *nebbich* remnant by ordering the Royal Navy to board all ships on their way to mandated Palestine and a new life and return forcibly those who had survived concentration camps in Germany to DP camps in Germany.

I too was a member of the Labour Party – treasurer of the Tokyngton Ward in Brent no less. That was at a time when Ken Livingstone had Reg Freeson, the Jewish sitting MP, de-selected by appealing to the

endemic antisemitism of the Southern Irish in Brent who, by a quirk of past British Empire politics, have a vote here. All *kosher* and within the Labour Party's rule book, but it was the use of antisemitism as a means to a *treife* end.

I suppose Heinz has never heard of the shenanigans at the Oxford University Labour Club and the peerage bestowed on a new member of the Labour Party who made a whitewash of an inquiry when that of Baroness Royall had to be leaked, the NEC having suppressed what were inconvenient truths

*Frank Bright,
Martlesham Heath, Suffolk*

'FORBIDDEN ZONE'

Sir – I have just read Anthony Grenville's article in your June issue, in which he movingly describes the inability – from which so many of our parents/grandparents suffered – to talk to our generation (I was born in 1933) about the horror of the Holocaust.

What he writes speaks to me directly, as it will to countless others. It set me thinking yet again about this well intentioned corrosive silence which extended to all areas of their lives under the Nazi tyranny. I have further thoughts, which again I am sure your readers will recognise. One is that the unspoken, but acutely felt, barrier to what Anthony Grenville describes as a 'forbidden zone' also stemmed from survivor guilt – in the case of my parents, the intolerable feeling they had that they had not done all they might have done to save their parents. Typically I too rarely asked questions, even on neutral topics, for fear of where an innocent question might lead.

But there is a hurtful twist to this, which I was only made aware of after my parents' deaths. My parents attributed my dearth of questions to a lack of interest. It was a situation in which each side reinforced the other. Much of what I now know comes from family archival material. I was very happy to share what I could with my young grandson Micha Cooper when he was making his film *My Dearest ...*, which was shown at the AJR Scottish Regional meeting in June. I'm afraid that my embarrassment at the little I could offer shows through painfully!

Francesca Loening, Edinburgh

KINDERTRANSPORT ARRIVALS IN HULL

Sir – In her article 'Celebrating 250 Years of Jewish Life in Hull' (August), Fran Horwich referred to my lecture at the recent Hull conference, quoting that the Hull community welcomed 22 children into people's homes.

I would like to clarify this figure. I explained that the Hull Jewish Archive had contained a list of the first 22 Kindertransport children to come to Hull in December 1938 (I showed the list to the audience) and that there was a further list in the Archive which

I showed of another 10 children arriving in late June-early July 1939.

Since then, I have researched the Archives further and found that in March 1939, after the first 22 children had come to Hull, the Hull Jewish Committee for Refugees reported that homes and funding had been found to place a further 20 children when they were allowed to come over on the next transports. The list of the 10 children in the Archive that I showed was part of these additional placements.

Elsewhere in the Archive I have now found further lists of the additional children who had been guaranteed and whose arrival was awaited in 1939. Handwritten notes indicate that 18 of an additional 22 actually arrived on various transports in summer 1939, and the other 4 were expected in the month before war broke out, although there was no note of the dates of their arrival.

Accordingly, it can be calculated that the Hull Jewish community definitely welcomed into their homes at least 50 of the Kindertransport children (the initial 22+10+18 on the lists), and perhaps the final 4, which would bring the total to 54, an astonishingly high contribution from such a relatively small community.

If any of your readers can throw further light on the history of these children I would be pleased to hear from them.

*Ian Vellins, email vellins@ntlworld.com
tel 0113 268 5747*

AJR EASTBOURNE HOLIDAY

Sir – Forty AJR members just spent a week's holiday in Eastbourne, without a bucket or spade – nor did any of us, as far as I am aware, ride on a donkey. Even so, we had a wonderful week of relaxation, companionship and new friendships established and old ones renewed.

The hotel bent over backwards (do hotels bend over backwards?) to make us comfortable and see to our personal and gastronomic needs. Some of us went to Brighton – alas not a dirty weekend – and we were also royally entertained by the Women's Institute with a splendid afternoon tea.

The week went by too quickly and we went home refreshed and relaxed due to the usual efficiency of Carol Rossen and our other 'minders' – Lorna Moss, Dean Lloyd-Graham, Florina Harapcea and Christine Brazier – who by and large succeeded in keeping us out of mischief. I was the only one from north of Watford but was almost accepted as a 'native'!

Well done, AJR, may you arrange many more such holidays!

Heinz Skyte, Leeds

A VISIT TO BLOOMSBURY HOUSE

Sir – Does anyone have memories of Bloomsbury House before 1947? The headquarters of the JRC, CBF, RCM and many other refugee organisations, the building is now the home of the Arts Council of England. I have been trying to reconstruct

its internal geography with the help of an article written by Ernst Lowenthal, who worked there from 1939. My friend Kathrin Peters has kindly translated his memoir into English.

The current users of the building are willing to let me bring a small group of visitors to have a look round. So, if you did work there or have good memories of the building, its committees and some of the personalities who worked there (Otto Schiff, Joan Siebel etc), do contact me if you would like to come with me on a (free) tour.

*Mike Levy, PhD student (mature)
tel 01223 514148
email mike.levy82@gmail.com*

'SAINSBURY BOYS'

Sir – I am the son of one of the Kindertransport children, John Altmann (now 86), and am keen to put together a little of the history of the 'Sainsbury boys' residence in Putney, south London. I wonder if any of your records or readers' recollections can help, including information on any of the following:

- address of the hostel
- basis for allocation of the children to different residences on arrival
- daily routine, meals, education and staff at the hostel
- extent of impact by the Blitz.

Many thanks for your help.

*Professor Daniel Altmann
danielaltmann@gmail.com*

'LETTER FROM ISRAEL'

Sir – It has happened a number of times, over the years, that on receiving my copy of the *AJR Journal* the first article I read in it was Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's 'Letter from Israel'. This is only remarkable because the 'Letter' is always on the last page of the *Journal*. It tells me just what I want to know about Israel: the life experience of a cultured middle-class person in that country.

The byzantine complications of Israel's politics would not be a suitable subject for such a personal letter. One of the greatest problems of the country – the undue influence of religious bodies in the life of citizens when they marry or divorce – has become clear to me from the 'Letters'.

Dorothea's view of Paris as the cultural capital of the universe is shared by many people the world over. A small number of people think this view of Paris is old-fashioned.

Dorothea has the eye of a novelist for the telling details of the texture of life of her characters – real or imaginary.

Nicholas Pal, London NW6

Sir – I'm writing with reference to Freddie Ingram's letter about 'Letter from Israel' (August) in which he points out that the writer of this feature – inevitably – writes from her personal experience.

Given the well-known saying 'two Jews

ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

So once again we have the prestigious BP Portrait Awards at the National Portrait Gallery and once again I find myself scratching my head wondering whether or not I agree with the winners.

So the £30,000 first prize goes to ... *Girl in a Liberty Dress* by third-time-lucky British painter **Clara Drummond**. And what made this delicate portrait of the shy girl with the light brown hair and hand over her mouth the best in show? Was it the Liberty print, reflecting cornflower fields, William Morris fabrics, Laura Ashley dresses, old-fashioned rural values? The subject, fellow



Jamie Coreth *Dad Sculpting Me* 2016

artist Kirsty Buchanan, had, in fact, worked with Drummond on an exhibition with the William Morris Society Archive.

The second prize, £10,000, was awarded to Chinese artist **Bo Wang** for *Silence*, depicting his dying grandmother on her hospital bed. It looks death in the eye but is really reflecting, with great poignancy, all aspects of life. Third prize went to **Benjamin Sullivan**'s soulful oil painting of the poet *Hugo* (Hugo Williams, clasping his hands).

The Young Artist Award was won by 26-year-old **Jamie Coreth** for a monumental, neo-classical painting of his father, sculptor Mark Coreth, *Dad Sculpting Me*. The classical edge is provided by an assortment of figurines and statuettes on the wooden tables.

But then there are other equally deserving works: a photo-realism study of Poet Laureate *Andrew Motion* by **Fiona Graham-Mackay** is so faithful to the model that you are not convinced it is not a photograph. Another

The Pianist of Willesden Lane

The story of Kindertransportee Lisa Jura returns to London's West End:

St. James Theatre,
7 September to 16 October 2016

tel 0844 264 2140

example of this technique is a portrait of former Labour deputy leader *Harriet Harman MP* by **Charles Moxon**. I particularly liked *Laura in Black* by **Joshua Larock**, which expresses a milky, pre-Raphaelite feeling.

David Hockney RA: 82 Portraits and 1 Still-Life is the sum of a two-and-a-half years' output by Hockney on show at the **Royal Academy**. Each subject poses in the same chair painted on the same size canvas.

They are all striking and colourful images: from the *gung ho Barry Humphries* (of Dame Edna Everage fame), in trilby hat, red tie and pink trousers, to Rita Pynoos in brilliant red taffeta skirt. What stands out?

Larry Gagosian's penetrating eyes, Hockney's sister Margaret's sedate composure, and a studious young boy clutching a book. *Helen Hockney's* face betrays a worldly knowledge while *Dominique Deroche* looks slightly out of proportion in an uncomfortable pose.

Hockney captures some innate quality of each sitter with apparently swift, Impressionistic brushstrokes. Sometimes there is no face at all, such as his portrait of *J-P Gonçalves de Lima*, portrayed head in hands. The hands of the sitters sometimes convey more than the face – relaxed, tense or strong, as in the case

of Sir Norman Rosenthal. But many of them suffer from a lack of muscular awareness. For instance, a leg draped over a chair indicates nothing of its physical substance and sometimes the feet are disproportionately small. It wouldn't be fair to suggest there is a caricature element here but many portraits lack the intensity and attention to detail of Hockney's earlier work.

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CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

'The other side of the coin'

WHO BETRAYED THE JEWS? THE REALITIES OF NAZI PERSECUTION IN THE HOLOCAUST

by Agnes Grunwald-Spier

Stroud, UK: *The History Press*, 2016,
639 pp. hardcover, £30

I must confess that when I received this massive tome from the editor of the *AJR Journal* my heart sank. Surely not another book about the causes of the Holocaust! Is it not pretty well known by now who was responsible?

The author was born in Budapest in 1944 and, with her mother, survived relatively short periods first in Auschwitz and then in the Budapest ghetto. In her previously published book *The Other Schindlers: Why Some People Chose to Save Jews in the Holocaust* (2010), she

paid tribute to those brave people who went out of their way, often at great risk to themselves, to hide and protect Jews who had gone 'underground'. Here, she describes in great detail the other side of the coin: those who, out of avarice or hatred or even fear for their own lives, betrayed Jews who might otherwise have survived.

This book, with its 40 pages of notes and references, is a detailed account of the many ways in which European Jews were betrayed by friends, neighbours and even fellow Jews. The author does not claim to be a historian but she has assembled a huge resource of written and verbal accounts of the experiences of a large number of people who have recounted their dreadful experiences in great detail. The book is therefore unquestionably of historical importance. Inevitably it also gives a rough outline of the course of the Holocaust and this will be well known to most readers of the *Journal*.

The perpetrators came from a wide range of backgrounds and included friends, neighbours, officials, Auschwitz guards, and even Jewish girls roaming the streets of Rome with the intention of identifying Jews who were at that time still free and unmolested. The best known case is, of course, that of Anne Frank and her family in Amsterdam. This aspect of the Holocaust makes for especially painful reading yet it needs to be told alongside the heroic efforts of those who helped Jews to survive.

As the author points out in her Foreword, betrayal can take many forms – from financial gain (rewards were frequently paid) to opportunism in filling the professional places of deported Jews and even, in the case of Jewish



Agnes
Grunwald-Spier

collaborators, desperate attempts to save their own skin. She describes not only betrayal by individuals but also 'collective' betrayals, such as the conduct of camp doctors and employees of the German railway network. She writes that '[A]t 71, I am content that, with all its flaws, I have made my own small contribution to recounting what I have heard and read and have, to the best of my ability, recorded it all.'

Chapter 2 deals with betrayal at all kinds of levels: from those who could have hidden their Jewish friends at little risk to themselves to the mysterious disappearance of valuables left with non-Jewish friends for safekeeping. In Chapter 3 there are detailed descriptions of business partners who turned in their Jewish associates for their own benefit, of jealous boyfriends betraying their rivals, and of concierges and neighbours who denounced Jews well known to them. Particularly distressing are the accounts of Jews betraying other Jews (Chapter 4). For example, a Jewish Italian girl, known as 'the black panther', having become involved with a fascist, walked the streets of Rome identifying some 50 people of her acquaintance. This was done at least in part for financial reward: the going rate was 5,000 lire per Jew ... In 1947 she was tried and sentenced to 12 years in prison. It is, however, thought that most cases of Jewish complicity were engendered by attempts at self-preservation.

In Berlin, 3,000-4,000 Jews were in hiding in the summer of 1943. Their number was diminished partly through the establishment of the *Judenpolizei* (Jewish Police), who were exempt from wearing the yellow star and provided with special papers. Other Jews were recruited into a 'Search Service', with the potential reward of help for their families and their own survival. Jews in hiding called them *Greifer* (grabbers) and they were greatly feared. Among them was Stella Kübler, one of the most notorious *Greifer*, who roamed the streets together with her husband Rolf Isaaksohn to hunt down Jews for financial reward. In 1945 Kübler applied for recognition as a 'victim of Fascism' but was exposed by the Jewish community and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

The many stories of Jews collaborating with the Nazis are especially distasteful. They are less well known than the not infrequent acts of mercy and solidarity but it is right that we should learn about them. They underline the frailty of human nature with a vengeance.

The author also considers the role played by public bodies such as the German, French and Hungarian railways, which were clearly complicit in the mass deportations, as well as that of the police. The Channel Islands too are, rightly, not left off the hook.

The looting and plunder of Jewish homes and shops also receive detailed attention. It is perhaps less well known

that the Nazis had a very efficient system for dealing with these goods: many were systematically auctioned. A long chapter is devoted to conditions in the numerous camps and ghettos, as are many other aspects of the Holocaust – from the 'aryanisation' of Jewish businesses to the experiences of sports people.

In her 'concluding reflections' the author writes 'I want people to understand what the Holocaust was really like and I hope I have achieved that.' Through her detailed reading of the literature, her numerous interviews with survivors, her exhaustive research, and her passionate desire to let the world know the truth, she has certainly achieved her objective.

However, this book is not suitable for casual perusal or for the faint-hearted. It is decidedly not bedside reading.

Leslie Baruch Brent

German university honours 'Nightingale of Königs Wusterhausen'

In July this year, celebrating its 25th birthday, the Fachhochschule für Finanzen Brandenburg (University of Applied Sciences for Finances) in Königs Wusterhausen, near Berlin, named a student residence after Edith Bach, mother of AJR member William Kaczynski. Campus buildings were also named after three other victims of the Nazis: Rolf Grabower, Lothar Kreysing and Marta Mosse.

Edith Bach (1896-1975), whose singing career was terminated by the Nazis in 1934, was known as the 'Nightingale of Königs Wusterhausen'.

Both William's parents, his brother Edward and himself were fortunately able to make their way to England in July 1939. They were interned on the Isle of Man – where Edith gave singing lessons – as 'enemy aliens'. 'Singing was her whole life', William says.

Edith's story was included among those of other internees at an exhibition in Port Erin earlier this year.



Berlin singing star Edith Bach

KT LUNCH

Monday 19 September, 12.30 pm at New North London Synagogue, Finchley

We are delighted to be joined by Miriam Halahmy, author of *The Emergency Zoo*.

It's late August 1939. Preparations are under way to evacuate London's children to the countryside. When Tilly and her friend Rosy find out they can't take their beloved dog and cat with them they hide them in a derelict hut in the woods and, when other children find out and start bringing their own pets, their secret den turns into an emergency zoo.

We also hope to be joined by Year 6 children from Akiva School as well as AJR members Ann and Bob Kirk. In the book, the Kindertransport girl reads out extracts from Anne's mother's letters. Bob helped Miriam with background information, in particular concerning the burning of the books which features in the novel.

For details and booking, please contact Susan Harrod at AJR on 020 8385 3070 or email susan@ajr.org.uk

Places must be booked by 13 September. No bookings will be taken after this date.

We look forward to seeing you

AJR FILM CLUB

Please join us at our next Film Club.

Our film showing will be at Sha'arei Tzedek North London Reform Synagogue 120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone N20 9EZ

on **Thursday 8 September 2016 at 12.30 pm**

A lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be served first.

We will be joined by Maurice Kanareck, who will give a short talk before showing the film

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AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB

Please join us at our new Card and Games Club on Monday 26 September 2016 at 1.00 pm

at North Western Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN

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We offer Card games, Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble – you decide.

Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient – the more the merrier!

A sandwich lunch with tea, coffee and Danish pastries will be served on arrival.

£7.00 per person

Booking is essential – when you book please let us know your choice of game.

Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email susan@ajr.org.uk



The boy from Eisenstadt

At midnight on 11 January 1939 he was put on a train at the Wiener Westbahnhof bound for England, Ernest Simon told an AJR staff meeting. His parents had no idea whether they would ever see him again.

Ernest was born in May 1930 in Eisenstadt, capital of the Austrian province of Burgenland. He spoke of his journey through Germany, through the Netherlands to the Hook of Holland, then by ship to Harwich, and by train to Liverpool Street Station. His records show he spent the night at a hostel in London's East End but he had absolutely no recollection of this. Nor could he recall anything of his journey to Leeds. He did, however,

remember Mr and Mrs Morris, the kind Jewish family there who gave him a foster home for several months. He has a clear picture of his first day at Cowper Street School in January 1939, wearing Austrian-style



plus fours and not speaking a word of English (see photo).

Ernest realises how lucky he was that his parents were able to follow him some weeks later as domestics in a home not far from Leeds. He and his younger brother, who had stayed behind with his parents, quickly developed into typical English schoolboys, passed through the English education system reasonably well, and went on to Leeds University, he studying for a degree in commerce and his younger brother going into medicine.

In the last three years of his 33-year career with ICI, from 1987 to 1990, Ernest was General Manager of the ICI office in Budapest. Shopping visits to Austria were a regular event, including visits to the supermarket in Eisenstadt, which is close to the Hungarian border. Whenever they were there, he recalls, he couldn't help wondering what would have become of him had there been no Kindertransport.

CLASSIFIED

Joseph Pereira (ex-AJR caretaker over 22 years) is now available for DIY repairs and general maintenance.

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MEETING OF DESCENDANTS OF THE ST. PÖLTEN JEWISH COMMUNITY

A year ago I received a letter from the Institute for the Jewish History of Austria (Institut für Geschichte der Juden in Österreich). It was an invitation to a gathering of descendants of the 400 Jews from the Austrian town of St. Pölten and its environs who were expelled or murdered in the Holocaust. My family group consisted of me, my partner, two of my sons, my granddaughter, my 92-year-old Austrian cousin, and two Swiss cousins. The meeting took place over four days in June 2016.

I left Austria when I was four after my mother had managed to bribe the guards at Dachau to release my father. My Austrian cousin survived Auschwitz and my Swiss cousins' mother was aged 15 when she escaped from Austria by being sent to Palestine by her parents, who were later murdered.

Other attendees came from the USA, Argentina, Mexico, Israel, Switzerland and Austria. It reminded me of the ending of the film *Schindler's List*, when the descendants of those saved by Schindler gathered to place a stone on his grave, as we were also sharing the same history.

The visit was put together by a wonderful and devoted group of non-Jewish historians, who have dedicated themselves to studying the history of the Jews from this area of Austria. The lead historian was Martha Keil. She was supported by several others, including Wolfgang Gasser, Christof Lind and Sabine Hodl.

The base for the meeting was the former synagogue of St. Pölten, where our parents and grandparents had gathered, were barmitzvah and had married. This has been lovingly restored following the desecration on Kristallnacht and, despite there now being only two elderly Jews living in St. Pölten. We visited the Jewish cemetery, which has also been carefully renovated, and we were able to say



(from left) Front row Cousin Walter Fanti (aged 92), partner Helen Bocarro; Back row Granddaughter Serena Brent, son Ian Brent, cousin Nina Moldauer, cousin Karin Rivollet, Peter Brent

Kaddish at our ancestors' graves and memorial stones.

We were taken to the homes and shops which had belonged to our ancestors. My Swiss cousins told of how their mother had recalled being made to scrub the streets outside their shop with a toothbrush in front of jeering crowds.

We were entertained to lunch in St. Pölten town hall while we looked out onto the beautiful square, formerly Adolf-Hitler-Platz and the site of a massive Nazi rally. We saw the window of the hotel from which Hitler had greeted the crowds of well-wishers and we were told that the dedicated Nazi owner of the hotel had cut out and kept the footprints Hitler had left on the carpet.

We attended the first service to be held in the synagogue for 20 years. This was conducted by the Chief Rabbi-designate of Austria and Cantor Paul Heller from Belsize Park Synagogue.

We also had guided tours of former Jewish Vienna and visited the very flats (*Sammlungswohnungen*) to which our ancestors were moved before, in most cases, being sent on to concentration camps.

The organising group had received generous sponsorship and as a result we were hosted by Landeshauptmann Dr Edwin Proll and the Government of Lower Austria, Mayor Mag. Matthias Stadler and the city of St. Pölten, the Jewish Welcome Service and the City of Vienna, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, and the Future Fund of the Republic of Austria.

The trip was educational, emotional and uplifting all at the same time, with the group gelling, forming friendships and even discovering new relations. Our ancestors would have been very proud.

There are early planning moves to continue this work and a steering committee has been formed.

(Dr) Peter Brent

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In memory of Eleanor Rathbone, 'MP for Refugees'

The conference 'Welcome to Britain? Refugees Then and Now', which took place on Monday 20 June at King's College, London, was an enlightening, informative and memorable occasion. Held to pay tribute to the MP Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946), the event, attended by some 90 people, was one of many organised by Lesley Urbach and Susan Cohen, co-founders of the Remembering Eleanor Rathbone Group, established to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the MP's death.

The day was a forum for discussion on both the historical and the current debate about Britain's response to refugee crises, with each speaker demonstrating how obstacles were put in the way of rescue and how so much of the current discourse surrounding refugees resonates with that of the 1930s-40s.

Stephen Wordsworth, Executive Director of the Council for at-Risk Academics (CARA), launched the proceedings, with Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg providing an erudite introduction, and gave us the opportunity to pay our respects to the late MP Jo Cox.

Providing an overview of Eleanor Rathbone's background, Susan Cohen described how the MP presciently warned in 1933 of the dangers Nazism posed and of her increasing concern for the victims of the regime. We heard how Rathbone campaigned relentlessly on behalf of refugees, challenging the government to adopt a more humane response to the refugee crisis, pressuring them to relax the entry criteria and allow more endangered souls into the country. Eleanor Rathbone's Parliamentary Committee on Refugees and her National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror became powerful vehicles for her campaigning, helping to keep the refugee issue in the public domain. She persisted in her activism against the odds – even when she was dubbed 'the perishing Miss Rathbone' by officials – and maintained until the end that the government had not done enough to help rescue victims of Nazism.

Diana Packer spoke of how the arrival in this country of some 120,000 Russian Jews between 1880 and 1905 had an impact on the reception of the Jews fleeing from Hitler in the 1930s. The 1905 Aliens Act resulted in entry into Britain being strictly controlled and in the introduction of the term 'Alien', which emerged during the Second World War in the use of the term 'enemy aliens' to describe refugees from German-controlled territories.

Peter Anderson spoke of Eleanor's activism on behalf of thousands of refugees from Fascist Spain who were abandoned by British consular officials in 1937 and 1939, resulting in many being executed or imprisoned. Rachel Pistol

spoke about the response of the general public and professions to refugees before the Second World War and the change in public opinion after the fall of France and the Low Countries in spring 1940. She argued that prevailing popular myths about refugees affected their chance of entry into Britain and that similar myths were being disseminated today.

Lesley Urbach's paper concerned the campaign led by Eleanor Rathbone to persuade the government to allow refugees into Britain on humanitarian rather than merely utilitarian grounds. Focusing on the period between September 1942 and December 1943, Lesley outlined the government's reasons for rejecting campaigners' requests, agreeing with the sentiment of Conservative MP Colonel Victor Cazalet during a parliamentary debate on refugees in May 1943: 'I get a little tired, however, of being told time and time again how wonderful this country has been. We may have a good record – quite true – but what does that mean?' Reflecting on Nicholas Winton's words 'Remembering is not enough – it has to be the right sort of remembering', she called for a more nuanced view of British policy, balancing what Britain *did do* against what the government *did not do* – but could have done – to help European Jews.

This was the theme of Joanna Newman's talk about the Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica, which was established after the Bermuda Conference of April 1943 to provide refuge to Jews from Gibraltar. The camp was never filled to capacity and Joanna concluded that, despite the difficulties, more might have been done to rescue some Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe. She also provided insight into contemporary arguments about how much could and should be done.

Before lunch, we heard a personal testimony from Ahmad al-Rashid about his harrowing tale of escape from Syria, a stark reminder of the risk people take to be safe and free.

Post-lunch, keynote speaker Baroness Helena Kennedy cast a clear and cold eye on present-day attitudes to refugees, declaring 'I want to force cynical politicians and journalists to sit in a room with an asylum seeker, as I have done, and then decide what the policy should be.'

Jennifer Craig-Norton questioned the recent suggestion that Britain should be recreating the much applauded Kindertransport of the late 1930s. She argued that the Kindertransport was not an unambiguously celebratory narrative: children were separated from



their parents and, in many cases, from siblings, who were left behind and all of whom are left out of the narrative. Jennifer stressed that such separations were traumatic and had far-reaching consequences.

The issue of policy was addressed by Cinead de Canntun, who scrutinised the process of determining asylum status, and by Pierre Makhlouf, who looked at the

detention of migrants in the UK.

The day ended with Maurice Wren, Chief Executive of the Refugee Council, striking an optimistic chord about the upsurge in public concern towards refugees, and with Barbara Winton, whose father, Sir Nicholas Winton, was instrumental in saving the lives of 669 Czech children, most of them Jewish, in 1939. What her father had done, she said, represented 'the power of compassion as a driver for action' – a sentiment with which Eleanor Rathbone would undoubtedly have agreed.

Lesley Urbach and Susan Cohen

An inspiring afternoon: Remembering Eleanor Rathbone

On Sunday 17 July we attended a well supported event at the Jewish Free School (JFS) in north London on the subject 'Eleanor Rathbone, a Woman of Worth'. The afternoon was organised by Susan Cohen and Lesley Urbach and featured a talk by Dr Cohen on the life of Eleanor Rathbone, who played a key role in promoting women's rights and the rights of refugees in the period up to the end of the Second World War.

Dr Cohen's talk was followed by delightful presentations by drama students from JFS and Yavneh College, who acted out key phases in Eleanor Rathbone's public life. The students followed this by relaying some of her key speeches to the House of Commons, where she was MP for a Liverpool constituency, on the plight of refugees. All the students spoke very clearly, had obviously rehearsed well, and were fully engaged with the subject matter.

We were then shown a film about the circumstances of refugee internees during the war, centred on the awful position at the Huyton camp in Liverpool and the role of Eleanor Rathbone in trying to look after the needs of individuals as well as the wider position.

At the conclusion of the formal presentations the Head Teacher of JFS gave a vote of thanks to all involved with

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INSIDE the AJR

NORTH WEST LONDON

Righteous Gentile

Aristides de Sousa Mendes

Aristides de Sousa Mendes, Diane Barnett told us, performed the greatest rescue operation conducted by one person during the Holocaust. He was also the first of over 40 diplomats to be accorded the status of Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem.

Sousa Mendes was the Portuguese Consul in Bordeaux in 1939 when tens of thousands of refugees were pouring into France to get to the port of Lisbon. Salazar, the Portuguese Prime Minister, forbade the issue of transit visas through Spain to Portugal specifically to 'Jews expelled from the countries of their nationality or from those they came from'. Sousa Mendes was thus in no position to help any of the thousands of Jewish and other refugees who were crowding into his consulate.

In June 1940 he made a decision to issue illegal transit visas to any who required them in Bordeaux and Hendaye, thus enabling the thousands of recipients to cross through Spain to Portugal and escape almost certain death. He and his family were severely punished by the fascist Portuguese regime.

Notwithstanding that he saved some 12,000 Jews and thousands of others, Sousa Mendes is relatively unknown. In Portugal it took over 40 years for him to be recognised as a saviour of refugees and in most other countries, including the UK, hardly anyone has heard of him. Diane Barnett would like to contact anyone who received a Mendes Transit Visa or members of their families. Please contact the Editor of the *AJR Journal*, who will pass on any relevant information.

David Lang



she was the driving force behind the introduction of the child benefits system and she fought for the rights of Jewish internees during the war as well as drawing attention to the desperate situation in Europe. *Leslie Sommer*

OXFORD A Meeting with Local

Author Marcus Ferrar

Local author Marcus Ferrar discussed two of his books. *A Foot in Both Camps: A German Past for Better and for Worse* is the story of his own upbringing: he has a German mother and a British father. *The Budapest House: A Life Re-Discovered* is the story of a Hungarian-Jewish woman who now lives in London. Both books resonated with the audience.

Kathryn Prevezer

GLASGOW

A Full and Perfect Day: Outing to Dumfries House

We were transported to this beautiful 18th-Century stately home set in 2,000 acres of landscape gardens. We enjoyed a guided tour through private apartments of treasures including Chippendale furniture, Robert Adam architecture, Murano glass lighting, and 300-year-old tapestries. A full and perfect day. Thank you Agnes once again.

Ruth Ramsay

BROMLEY Whoopee!

A fascinating talk by David Barnett about the amazing Lady Judith Montefiore was followed by a Rinkoff Lunch of equally astounding quality!!! Whoopee!

Lore Robinson

EDINBURGH Changes in the Political Arena

With our outing to the Falkirk Wheel called off through bad weather, we spent a pleasant afternoon at the home of Vivian Anderson reminiscing and considering the changes taking place in the political arena around us.

Agnes Isaacs

GLASGOW BOOK CLUB Ladies Without Rights

We had a lively discussion on this month's book: *The Sealed Letter* by Emma Donoghue. How difficult it must have been for married ladies in Victorian times to hand over all their assets to their husband on marriage and later having no rights over their children!

Anthea Berg

ILFORD Synagogues Past and Present

David Tomback gave us an illustrated talk on synagogues past and present. We saw some beautiful buildings in all parts of the world. Some sadly were destroyed by the Nazis but quite a few synagogues have been recently built too. A most enjoyable morning.

Meta Roseneil

ESSEX (WESTCLIFF)

Happy Birthday, Otto!

Our Chairman Otto Deutsch celebrated his 88th birthday at our July meeting in the Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation Synagogue Hall. Many congregants, including President Derek Silverstone and his wife Rosalyn, came to share this special day.

Otto recalled his life in Vienna – including when his mum bought him his first long trousers on his seventh birthday! – and paid tribute to all the Jewish mothers who had sent their children away to freedom. Referring to the July 2016 trip to Harwich, which had taken place on the 77th anniversary of the original journey, he played to us Sophie Tucker's *My Yiddish Momme* and showed us a photo of his sister Adele, who had been seven weeks too old to go on the Kindertransport.



Aged eleven Otto had celebrated his first birthday in England with a Christian family in Morpeth, near Newcastle. His first cousin, Alex Kessler, 87, here in Westcliff to join in the celebrations, was also given a home by this family but was more fortunate than Otto as his mother came to collect him after a year.

Six years ago, Otto told us, he had visited Mali Trostinec in Belarus and said *Kaddish* for his parents and sister who had been shot in a clearing in the woods.

A tour guide for 18 years until the age of 72, Otto had taken his passengers to Austria to hear Tyrolean folk music. Now, he played us the *Radetzky March*, claiming there was in Vienna a statue of him on his horse with Radetzky facing one way and the horse the other! He would, he said, be moving to London in a few years' time when his health failed – he'd put an ad in the paper saying 'Not so young man looking for not so young lady who must be able to make chicken soup.'

Larry Lisner

DIDSBURY CF W. G. Sebald – Prolific Writer on Jewish Refugees

Peter Jordan spoke about his old friend W. G. Sebald, who became one of the foremost post-war authors specialising in writing about the Jewish refugees in Britain. We thank Peter for his fascinating insight into the life of an extremely prolific author.

Wendy Bott

PINNER 'Elstree: British Hollywood'

Bob Redman gave us a history of the Elstree film studios from their inception in the silent era through to modern times.

EALING The Life of Eleanor Rathbone

Dr Susan Cohen gave an inspiring talk on the life of Eleanor Rathbone, a tireless campaigner for refugees' and women's rights from the 1920s to the end of WWII. Among her many achievements,

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SEPTEMBER GROUP EVENTS

Edinburgh	1 Sept	tba
Pinner	1 Sept	Julian Romain: 'History of Words and Phrases'
Ealing	6 Sept	David Barnett
Book Club	7 Sept	Social
Ilford	7 Sept	Peter Hedderley: 'The Winton Train 2009'
Hull	11 Sept	Lunch at East End Pavilion Café
Newcastle	11 Sept	Film: 'The Forgotten Hero – Karl Lutz'
Cardiff	12 Sept	Michael Newman: 'An Update on the AJR'
Essex (Westcliff)	13 Sept	Peter Jones: 'How to Do Everything and Stay Happy'
Harrogate/York	13 Sept	Social
Kingston/Surrey	14 Sept	Meeting at home of Susan Zisman
Bradford	15 Sept	Social Get-together
Bromley	15 Sept	David Barnett: 'The Story of Joseph Nathan'
Wessex	15 Sept	Colin Davey: 'Stories of the Law'
Dundee/Edinburgh/ Glasgow	18 Sept	A Day in St Andrews
Brighton	19 Sept	Laurence Collins: 'Don't Write Me Off Just Yet – Jewish Nonagenarians'
Edgware	20 Sept	Harvey Bratt, UJIA
Radlett	21 Sept	Godfrey Gould
Glasgow Book Club	22 Sept	Social
Liverpool	22 Sept	Dr Susan Cohen: 'The Life of Eleanor Rathbone'
Glasgow	28 Sept	Yom Tov Nosh
Wembley	28 Sept	Peter Hedderley: 'The Winton Train 2009'
North London	29 Sept	Henry Cohn: 'The Jews of Jamaica'
Pinner	6 October	Sue Kurlander, Head of AJR Social Services

The years have seen buildings going up, being demolished and replaced with new facilities as film production companies have come and gone. *Robert Gelman*

YORK/HARROGATE Sweet Basil

The Sweet Basil Chinese restaurant was the venue for our summertime get-together meal out. We were joined by several delightful members of Marc and Rosl's Viennese family, who were visiting the UK to celebrate Marc's recent big birthday. *Wendy Bott*

AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB The More the Merrier!

We all enjoyed a deli lunch and games of Bridge, Scrabble, Kalooki and Rummikub followed. The number attending the AJR Games Afternoons is steadily increasing. The more the merrier! We hope this event will become a regular feature in the AJR calendar. *Kathryn Prevezer*

BRADFORD CF The Jews of Shanghai

Hanneke Dye gave us a most fascinating talk on her recent trip to China, concentrating on the Jews of Shanghai and their long history up to the present day. Her talk was illustrated by photographs, which brought everything even 'more to life'. *Wendy Bott*

EAST MIDLANDS (NOTTINGHAM) Meeting in Rural Leicestershire

Some 15 of us, meeting at the lovely home of Ruth and Jurgen Schwiening in rural Leicestershire, were given a delicious lunch and entertained by a small group of musicians who played and sang Jewish, Israeli and other music.

We all appreciated the trouble our hosts had gone to. As usual, we were delighted to welcome the AJR's Esther Rinkoff and Kathryn Williams. *Bob Norton*

LAVENDER FARM A Sea of Purple

Another very resourceful trip by the AJR to Hitchin Lavender Farm on a lovely July day was a great success. After a delayed start (caused by the coach company), Catherine and Eva led us to lunch on arrival. We then gathered to hear an interesting talk about the lavender farming, followed by the opportunity to collect as much lavender as we could cram in to a brown paper carrier. A glorious sunny day in a sea of purple.

Helen Grunberg and Sue Arnold

NEWCASTLE

Beth Shalom – An Excellent Educational Facility

Twelve of us, first and second generation, went on a trip to the National Holocaust Centre at Beth Shalom. After a quick lunch we heard an excellent talk by a Kindertransportee who revealed he was an Anglican vicar. We then saw the wonderful exhibition which contained memorabilia and photographs on the Holocaust. Finally we experienced what it would have been like for 'Leo', a boy living in Germany just before the Holocaust: we were invited into his home and his father's tailor shop, where we

discovered the hiding place in which Anne Frank and family had attempted to survive the war. We all agreed Beth Shalom was an excellent educational facility for young and old wishing to learn about the Holocaust. *Marta Josephs*

BRISTOL 'Forced Walks: Honouring Esther'

We met for a convivial lunch. Artists Lorna Brunstein and Richard White showed slides on 'Forced Walks: Honouring Esther'. The walks commemorate the death march to Belsen, which Lorna's mother survived, but the memory is still very powerful. *Hazel Rank-Broadley*

EDGWARE The Life of Primo Levi

Biographer Carole Angier spoke about Primo Levi, an author of non-fiction and factual journalism but primarily a chemist who survived Auschwitz. He presented himself as very boring, introverted and a lifelong depressive. *Joan Kalb*

SHEFFIELD CF Get-Together and Catch-Up

We enjoyed afternoon tea at the Botanical Gardens. Conversation was accompanied by the sound of rain pounding on the roof above ... It was wonderful to get-together and have a good catch-up. *Wendy Bott*

KENSINGTON Garden Party

We met in Judy and David de Haas's idyllic garden in the heart of Holland Park. While the setting was the picture

continued on page 14 ➔

INSIDE THE AJR
continued from page 13

of a perfect English summer tea party, the conversation at times transported us to far-away places and to another era as members exchanged stories about their youth and how they came to be in England.
Eva Stellman

NORTH LONDON Questioning 'Progress'

Paul Lang's talk on photography proved most interesting as his presentation covered the evolution from the old, revered box camera to the current digital equipment. It left some of us wondering whether progress is always welcome. Once again, this was a most interesting morning.
Herbert Haberberg

WEMBLEY E. Moses & Sons

David Barnett spoke about E. Moses & Sons, the forerunner of the department and chain store. His 12 shops in the Minorities were the first to sell electric lighting, sports equipment and tropical wear.
Ruth Pearson

RADLETT The Life of Sir Isaac Shoenberg

Meeting at the home of Alf Keiles, where we were treated to his wonderful hospitality, Lesley Urbach gave a most interesting presentation on the life of Sir Isaac Shoenberg and his enormous contribution to the invention of television. Lesley also showed us a short film about Eleanor Rathbone MP and discussed the work she did for refugees and, in particular, those held in the Huyton internment camp in Liverpool.
Susan Harrod

Eleanor Rathbone
continued from pg 11

the afternoon and commented on the continuing need to learn lessons given the ongoing plight of refugees today.

Attendees were then served an excellent tea, during which we were able to view a most impressive exhibition on the life and work of Eleanor Rathbone which had been put together with key input from the students.

This was an inspiring afternoon dedicated to perpetuating the memory of a remarkable woman. Congratulations to all concerned.

Leslie and Evelyn Sommer,
Ruth Pearson
(members of Ealing AJR)

The Huyton Suite, a piece for two violins and flute composed by Hans Gal, an internee in the camp, was premiered earlier this year as part of 'Amongst the Wildflowers: The Lost Stories of the Refugees', created by Liverpool John Moores University drama students (see short film at <https://vimeo.com/176496174>).

INTERN BODIL LEAVES THE AJR

I am 19 years old and come from Berlin. At the time of writing, I have been working at AJR Head Office for almost 11 months. It has been a remarkable experience.

My tasks at the office: processing applications from potential volunteers and answering the phone at reception.

I've also taken part in the Individual Befriending Project, visiting four AJR members every week or fortnight. From the beginning, the members warmly welcomed me into their homes, offered me a cup of tea, and told me about their past – how they survived or fled Nazi persecution. That has been the greatest experience of my voluntary service. I am extremely grateful that I have been able to listen to these unique stories even 70 years after the war has ended and feel very honoured that the ladies I am visiting shared their experiences with me, especially as I am German.

Apart from that, I help at four of the AJR group meetings. It's always very interesting to hear members' opinions on current topics we discuss in the group.

I also go to the Sobell Centre in Golders Green to assist AJR members with their lunch, to play Rummikub, and to keep them company.

A few days ago Carol Hart, Head of Volunteer and Community Services at the AJR, asked me if I had encountered any hostility due to my nationality throughout this year. That question really made me think because I would say that it rather helped me connect with the members I have met. For instance, one of the ladies I visit enjoys talking to me in German as everyone else in her life speaks English with her.

As for the future, I have applied to do a degree in Linguistic and Social Studies at the University of Berlin.

Carol Hart adds: 'Bodil has been a tremendous asset to the Volunteers' Department and will be greatly missed. We wish her every success in the future.'



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OBITUARIES

Henry Aron, born Lodz 1 August 1921, died Birmingham 4 March 2016

Henry was born in Lodz in August 1921 to Solomon Aron and Emma Wolpert. He had two older sisters, Ira and Lydia. Six months after he was born the family moved to Sopot, a German-speaking seaside resort on the Baltic coast. In 1927 the family left for Berlin, where his father started a plumbing business.

Henry had his barmitzva in 1934 at Berlin's Prinzregentenstrasse Synagogue, which was burnt down by the Nazis in 1938. He attended the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. In 1937 he left the German capital and came to Herne Bay in Kent to attend boarding school.

After leaving Herne Bay College Henry moved to north west London to rejoin his parents. In 1942 he married Lily Ruth Sobersky, a German-Jewish refugee from Berlin. He met her at Bloomsbury House, where she was working at the time. They moved in with Henry's parents and eventually relocated to Birmingham, where Henry had been offered work. He worked there for Prodorite and, due to his knowledge of the language, visited Germany in 1948 on their behalf to find out about new developments in corrosion resistant plastics. In 1952 he set up his own company, Plastic Constructions, which was floated on the Stock Exchange

in 1972. In 1986 it was sold to Glynwed, a large Midlands conglomerate.

Henry was always a very popular man, generous with family and friends, giving to both Jewish and non-Jewish charities. He lived his life to the full. He ran a very successful business starting from scratch. He was admired for his business acumen, so much so that people came to him for advice. He inspired loyalty throughout his life. His late wife Lily was a pillar of the Jewish community in Birmingham. She became president of the local B'nai B'rith in the 1970s and enjoyed working for the Birmingham Hillel House students' hostel, organising a vast summer fundraising fair every year in its grounds. At the age of 50 she was one of the first students to graduate with honours from the Open University, fulfilling her ambition to study humanities at degree level. She died prematurely from cancer on 15 November 1987.

Henry was an enthusiastic sportsman, playing tennis and skiing until he was almost 80. He never missed his weekly skat game with fellow émigrés and lifelong friends, Dr Martin Deutschkron, Kurt Rose and Werner

Abraham.

He enjoyed eating out, going to the cinema and art galleries – he was an avid collector of modern art. He loved comedy and enjoyed British humour. He had a great sense of fun and a very dry wit.

He always knew the right thing to say. His sartorial elegance did not go unnoticed. He had very loving care 24 hours round the clock in his own home in Birmingham, secure in familiar and warm surroundings. The last few years of his life were difficult with the loss of his mobility and, with it, his independence.

Henry has three grandchildren, Jacob, Isabelle and Remy, and was three months off being a great-grandfather. He is among the final few survivors of Jews displaced by the rise of Nazism. The family that was dispersed is now mainly in the UK and Israel. His life was long and eventful. He was a born survivor.

He died peacefully with dignity in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham with his children David and Susan at his bedside. He will be very much missed by us all.

David Aron and Susan Aron



Max Rubinsohn, born Stettin 30 May 1921, died London 13 May 2016

Max Rubinsohn was born in the East German port of Stettin in May 1921, the first son of Abraham and Bronya. His brother Kurt followed four years later. He had a happy childhood and, like so many other boys, loved his sport, frequently recalling the games of handball he played as well as the rowing and cycling, which included a 100-mile trip to Berlin at the time of the 1936 Olympics.

By the time Max reached his teens the clouds were darkening across the country and, following Kristallnacht, during which he saw his own synagogue being burnt to the ground, Max was fortunate to be allowed to leave Germany on the Kindertransport. Sadly his brother was not so lucky: a few years later, Kurt and his parents were to perish in Sobibor concentration camp.

The journey Max took to Britain is a



now familiar one and, like many other Jewish refugees, the first place he stayed at on arriving in the country was Dovercourt. Because he had distant relatives in Stamford Hill, he was able to move in with them and even work as a furrier until it was decided that all German refugees should be treated as 'enemy aliens'. Following on from this, he was sent to an internment camp on the Isle of Man.

After a short stay on the Isle of Man came the lengthy trip on the *Dunera* and 19 months in a camp in Hay, New South Wales. At this point, he was able to join the Australian army, where he remained for the next three years, going by the nickname 'Pifke'. With the war over, Max decided to return to London and start life as a civilian working for a business involved in furnishing fabrics.

He settled initially in Hendon, then moved to the Dollis Hill area just before meeting his first wife, Rachel, whom he

married in 1957. Rachel was nine years his junior and originally from Calcutta. They enjoyed nine happy years together, seeing the birth of a son, Simon, and daughter, Bronya, before Rachel contracted leukaemia and very sadly died in 1966. Two years later, he met Rita, who was to become his second wife. Unfortunately she too was to die prematurely.

Max then met Josi and, though they maintained their separate homes, this partnership was to form the basis of 35 years of happiness, which extended until his death. She shared his love of dancing, travelling and bridge. In the latter part of this period, he was to get particular pleasure from his four beautiful grandchildren: Charlotte, Alexandra, Rachel and Esther. Even as his health deteriorated, a visit from any one of them would be sufficient to bring a smile to his face. He will be greatly missed by all of us as well as by his many friends and family around the world.

Simon Rubinsohn



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Jerusalem - again

So now the Palestinians are saying that the concept of any historical connection between the Jews and Jerusalem, and the Temple Mount in particular, is pure myth and they are trying to get UNESCO to adopt a resolution to that effect.

I wonder what would happen if they tried to claim that there's no connection between Christianity and Jerusalem. Their ability to totally deny proven historical facts and create a fictional reality simply beggars belief. Admittedly, Christianity's association with Jerusalem is not entirely lacking in violence, murder and mayhem yet it cannot be denied that it existed and continues to exist. Understandably enough, the inhabitants of Rome don't seem to be anxious to proclaim their connection with Jerusalem, though I believe the Pope is not averse to asserting Catholicism's association with the city. But when all is said and done, the Vatican is an independent political entity and cannot be linked to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Jews should not need to be reminded that most of what Jesus preached was based on Jewish ethics and teachings. His presence in Jerusalem prior to his death served as the culmination of a life lived as a Jew in the Holy Land, where pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Temple for one of the three 'foot festivals' formed just one aspect of Jewish

observance and he obviously participated in this custom (although that particular pilgrimage ended badly).

The Crusaders who conquered Jerusalem in the eleventh century and remained there for several centuries until they were defeated by Saladin and his army left their physical mark in the form of churches, fortresses and other mementos. Jerusalem is mentioned in numerous Christian texts and prayers, as it is of course in Jewish ones. To give just one example, anyone who attends a performance of Fauré's touching *Requiem* cannot fail to be moved by the final chorus about 'Paradise', which ends with the tender repetition of the word Jerusalem by the choir.

Of course, the Christian references are primarily to celestial Jerusalem, perceived as a metaphor for heaven, a place of love and peace. That seems to be the vision perceived by the nineteenth-century English poet William Blake, whose poem *Jerusalem*, set to music by Hubert Parry, is tantamount to a second national anthem for England.

On a personal note, Handel's oratorio *Messiah* contains several references to Jerusalem, all taken from the Torah. The beautiful aria 'O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain, O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem ...' refers quite clearly to physical Jerusalem, as do innumerable verses in the Bible. For me,

hearing that particular passage is always a special delight because the far more concise Hebrew text reads *Mevasseret Ziyon* and *Mevasseret Yerushalayim*, which are the names of the place just outside Jerusalem where I live. To be sitting in the church of the neighbouring Arab village of Abu Ghosh and hear this performed is an incomparable experience.

And, of course, the funniest thing of all is that the *Quran* doesn't have a single reference to Jerusalem. The Muslims say that a verse mentioning 'the far place' is, in fact, about Jerusalem but that contention is flimsy in the extreme. Granted, Muslims or Ottomans did rule Jerusalem for several hundred years, as they did most of the area of the Middle East, and Suleiman the Magnificent built an impressive wall around Jerusalem in the fifteenth century, but Jerusalem is considered only the third most sacred site for Muslims. The original version of the Al-Aqsa Mosque was built on the Temple Mount in the eighth century CE (and rebuilt and extended several times after being destroyed by earthquakes and used as a palace by the Crusaders).

Perhaps most telling of all is the fact that Jews traditionally turn towards Jerusalem when praying, whereas Muslims turn towards Mecca, which means in essence that they turn their backs and behinds to Jerusalem (just visualise their position while praying). Nevertheless, as Goebbels remarked, the more outrageous the lie, the greater the chances it will be believed. Fortunately, Goebbels is no longer with us but it seems that those who lie as well as those who give credence to untruths remain.

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

= three opinions', would you consider permitting more than one resident of Israel to contribute on a regular basis?

I suggest this, having relatives who live there ranging from former refugees from the Nazis who helped found kibbutzim and their families to, more recently, a young US-born cousin who not long ago made *aliya*. His family moved from Crakow to the US long before Nazism.

They have all had a range of experiences and have differing views of life in Israel – as no doubt many readers of the *AJR Journal* have!

Barbara Dresner,
Stockport, Greater Manchester

REALITY SITUATION

Sir – Why on earth doesn't little Amelia

Sweeney (July) extend her own olive branch and invite the children of Hamas and Hezbollah over to Weybridge for Passover, then maybe Granny Jenny can sort out the dire Middle East situation with them over her delicious dish of chicken, baked potato and beans?

I doubt my co-letter-writer Lionel Blumenthal and I will ever discover who Jenny Manson is affiliated with and whether she's ever heard of Yad Vashem. She obviously lives in a world of her own and has never tackled a reality situation head-on.

Yvonne Klempere, London NW6

'A COUNTRY CALLED EUROPE'

Sir – Rabbi Rothschild ('Land of hope and worry', August) fears that the UK's Brexit vote may have been an 'historic error'.

There are, however, some – perhaps many – who hold that it may be the first step in remedying the historic error Britain made in 1972 when it joined the then European Economic Community.

Those of us who had taken the trouble to study the history of the so-called European Movement – and read the Treaty of Rome – were all too aware that the ultimate objective was the lunatic creation of a country called Europe.

David Kernek, Bath, Somerset

Sir – Rabbi Walter Rothschild's article was most fascinating. He writes as a true pan-European. Do please ask him to contribute more regularly on the international scene and on his work.

Hans K. Eirew, Manchester

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