

In defence of doves

The following article does not reflect the views of the AJR. It attempts to give expression to a historical position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to relate it to present conditions – Anthony Grenville.

The Association of Jewish Refugees has, it goes without saying, always been a strong supporter of the Jewish state. In 1948, the *AJR Information* welcomed the founding of Israel as an event of unique and incomparable significance for Jews the world over. In 1956, it shared in the elation brought about by the Israeli army's victories in Sinai. In 1967, the journal greeted Israel's victory in the Six-Day War with jubilant relief: 'There has never been a time when we followed the news from hour to hour with such intensity and feelings of personal involvement as we did during the past weeks. The speed and thoroughness with which the Israelis achieved a military victory on three fronts against an overwhelming majority exceeded all expectations. Words cannot adequately express the tribute due to the courage, morale and strategic ability displayed by the people of Israel in those memorable days.' And in 1973, during the anxious days of the Yom Kippur War, the AJR helped to channel donations to Israel.

But the *AJR Information* inclined towards the view that the best way of safeguarding the future of the Jewish state lay in concluding a peace settlement with the Arabs. If there were no enemies – a big 'if', admittedly – there would be no threat. Inspired by leading Israeli figures of German-Jewish descent like Georg Landauer and Werner Senator, it tended to advocate engaging with the Palestinians, insofar as was consistent with Israel's security, in the hope of reaching a negotiated settlement.



Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck, 1873-1956

In March 1946, the journal reported the submission that Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck, the spiritual leader of the Jews from Germany, flanked by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the AJR, made in London to the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry on Palestine. Baeck believed in the possibility of peaceful coexistence between Jews and Palestinian Arabs: 'There may not be friendship between Arab committees and Zionist committees but there is friendship between Arab villages and Jewish villages, and in the end villages are more important than committees.' Leo Baeck had been President of the Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden, the organisation of the German Jews under Nazi rule. He had refused to emigrate and abandon the Jews in his charge, and survived two years in Theresienstadt.

History, as we know, did not conform to Leo Baeck's expectations. The State of Israel came into being and passed its first years under constant threat from its Arab neighbours. But the victories of 1967 and 1973 brought about a fundamental shift in that balance of power. One of the *AJR Information's* most distinguished correspondents, Robert Weltsch, who also wrote for the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, believed that the key problem arising out of victory was that of finding

a new form of coexistence with the Arabs. In August 1967, in the immediate wake of the Six-Day War, he wrote: 'This relationship – and the foundation of the future – cannot rely on military victories nor on the subjugation of a hostile population ... To conquer the hatred and to remove the feeling of humiliation of the enemy is more important, and possibly even more difficult, than military action.'

Weltsch had been the editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau* in Germany, and he, too, stayed on after 1933. In April 1933, he penned the famous headline of proud defiance to the first Nazi measures against the Jews: 'Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck' ('Wear it with pride, the yellow badge'). (The compulsory wearing of the star was introduced only in 1941.) Yet Weltsch claimed the authority of the founder of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, for the strategy of treating the Palestinians with humanity: 'It was also fundamental to Herzl's thought that the implementation of Zionism would have to be carried out in accordance with the principles of humanity. Nothing was more remote from his mind than the expulsion of native peasants from their ancestral soil.'

Some will dismiss as naïve the idea that Israel should treat the Palestinians humanely, as people with rights and dignity, when it is under attack from them; yet Jews are proud, and rightly so, that Israeli Arabs enjoy civil rights and freedoms while the Arab states long ago expelled their Jewish minorities. More difficult to dismiss is the contention that the Palestinians should be treated as *a* people. Yet it is plain that, like Jewish national consciousness, Palestinian national feeling has also developed during the long period of conflict between the

IN DEFENCE OF DOVES *cont. from page 1*

two, if more slowly. Beyond question, the spread of nationalism across the Middle East in general after the First World War and the immigration of Jews into Palestine in particular accelerated the development of national feeling among the Palestinians. The Arab Revolt of 1936-39 bore testimony to its beginnings, and the first *intifada* of the late 1980s to its maturing.

The crucial point, though, is that the Palestinians came to see themselves as a national entity; what matters is their perception of themselves as a nationality, which, once established, cannot be erased from their consciousness. This matters, because Israel's choice of strategy depends on its correct understanding of the Palestinians with whom it is in conflict. Only if you know your enemy can you deal with him successfully. If the Palestinians perceive themselves as a nation, no amount of decades of military occupation will cause them to desist from their demands for a state of their own – and a state implies a coherent block of territory. The strategy of relying primarily on Israel's overwhelming military superiority over the Palestinians, on the other hand, looks misguided: military measures like those taken against the Gaza Strip appear to have done little to improve the prospects for Israel's long-term security.

On this analysis, the conclusion proposed by United Nations Resolution 242 after the Six-Day War, which essentially rests on the principle of 'land for peace', is the correct strategy for Israel to embrace. The alternative is to condemn Israel's young men and women indefinitely to military service in face of a potentially insurrectionary Arab populace, to condemn Israelis to live indefinitely in fear of bombs and rockets, and to condemn the State of Israel itself to a vicious cycle of violence, reprisals and war. Far from representing a betrayal of Israel, as its enemies like to portray it, the principle of land for peace would be Israel's best hope of achieving a settlement that combines both peace and security in acceptable measure. That means, in return for the recognition of Israel by the Palestinians and reliable security guarantees, the creation of a Palestinian state.

The argument mounted against this is that the Palestinians are part of a greater

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Arab front dedicated to the destruction of Israel. This flies in the face of the evident willingness of Egypt, Jordan and almost all other Arab states bar Syria to strike a deal with Israel once their own interests, principally territorial, have been accommodated; it is no coincidence that Syria is both the most hardline rejectionist state and the only one that still has an unresolved territorial dispute with Israel, over the Golan Heights.

It is also no secret that ever since the Israeli War of Independence in 1948 the Arab states have accorded scant regard to the interests of the Palestinians and that since 1973 the notion of a monolithic Arab front against Israel has been confined to the realms of rhetoric. When the Palestinians attempted to set up a government of their own in 1948, it was systematically undermined by its Arab allies. Egypt's decisions to launch and then withdraw its forces against Israel in 1948 were dictated entirely by Egyptian interests, principally that of preserving its leading role in the Arab world against King Abdullah of Jordan, who in turn was quite willing to do a deal with the Jewish Agency in return for Jordanian control

of the West Bank. Abdullah's acquisition of Arab Palestine in 1948 occurred in flat contradiction of Palestinian national aspirations. Since 1973, Arab governments have arguably supported the Palestinians only to the extent necessary to placate Arab popular opinion.

Why, it is often asked, did the Arab states not absorb the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians languishing in refugee camps, as post-war Germany absorbed the millions of Germans expelled from Eastern Europe after 1944/45? The usual answer is that keeping the refugees in the camps was politically convenient for the Arab states in their confrontation with Israel, and that is doubtless true. But there is a deeper reason: whereas the German refugees could integrate into a German state, East or West, within the borders of 1945, the Palestinians, retaining a sense of their own nationhood, did not wish to become Jordanians, Egyptians or Lebanese. And whereas no German refugee with any sense of reality dreamed of a new German state in East Prussia or the Sudetenland, Palestinians continued to believe in their right to a state on part of the land they formerly inhabited.

Anthony Grenville

AJR Directors

Gordon Greenfield
Michael Newman
Carol Rossen

AJR Heads of Department

Susie Kaufman Organiser, AJR Centre
Sue Kurlander Social Services

AJR Journal

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

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KRISTALLNACHT MEMORIAL SERVICE, 2010

Around 100 members and guests were present at this year's AJR's Kristallnacht memorial service at Belsize Square Synagogue in London.

The moving service, during which members lit memorial candles and Kaddish was recited, was conducted by Rabbi Rodney Mariner and the guest speaker was the Rev Bernd Koschland. The Austrian Ambassador, Emil Brix, and representatives from the German Embassy were among the many guests.



The memorial candles are lit by, among others, Klaus Neuberger and Zdenka Husserl



(from left) Thomas Schneider, Counsellor, German Embassy, Rev Bernd Koschland, Dr Eckhard Lübckemeier, Deputy German Ambassador

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Witnesses in uniform

I visited Berlin for three days at the beginning of June 2010. I had been to Berlin before, in 2000, with my father, my late mother, and my two elder children but this visit was special in another way: I was there in the uniform of the Israel Defence Forces.

The Israeli army regularly sends groups of officers and under-officers on educational visits to Poland which include Warsaw, Lublin, Crakow, Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz. Often, reserve officers are invited to join these groups, called 'Witnesses in Uniform'. I have been invited on a number of occasions, but have always felt that the place would be put to better use if occupied by a young officer who did not grow up living and breathing the *Shoah* and could benefit from the lessons to be learned. This time, however, the trip was to be preceded by three days in Berlin, the city in which both my parents were born and which I grew up knowing in song, story and reminiscence. Before emigrating to Israel in my early twenties, I grew up in London, in a community of German-Jewish refugees. We spoke German with the one set of grandparents Hitler had left us. We had the works of Goethe and Schiller at home long before we acquired a one-volume compendium of Shakespeare. And here I was, a reserve officer of ZAHAL, invited to be in Berlin as a guest of the Bundeswehr. How could I refuse?

We saw the Reichstag and the Holocaust Memorial, went to Sachsenhausen and Villa Wannsee, and visited the Weissensee cemetery, where we had a joint ceremony with the Bundeswehr, commemorating the Jewish fallen of what is now known as the First World War (and where I have more relatives buried than in any other cemetery in the world). We also had fascinating discussions with serving German officers. I personally had the pleasure of a number of friendly and informative chats with a representative of the Protokoll department of the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung.

In the turmoil of emotions the visit created, through tiredness and tears, two events stick out in my memory and one impression remains in my mind.

On the way to Grunewald station,



The author's *Sefer Torah* leading the march into Birkenau

where Gleis 17 has been made into a memorial for all those deported 'to the East', I showed a bus full of Israeli and German soldiers the medal awarded in 1933, and again in 1934 (I have both citations, including the one in the name of the 'Führer und Reichskanzler'), to my paternal grandfather, Karl Cohn, for his service in the First World War. Having established my credentials as a real German, I asked the bus to stop outside 34a Koenigsallee. In almost flawless Hebrew, and in less good German, I spoke about the family that used to live in that house. I spoke about the Konditoreien they used to own, about founding the synagogue in the neighbourhood, and about how they sent their 12-year-old daughter on a Kindertransport to England in April 1939. I believe that, just for a moment, I brought them back to life. But then we moved on to the station and I led my colleagues to the plaque marking the deportation of 12 January 1943 to Auschwitz. There I showed them the Gestapo index cards allocating the couple a place on that transport as guests of the Reichsbahn.

That day in June was the day that anybody learning the Bible as part of the regular cycle learned Chapter 56 of Isaiah, where we read: 'I will give them in my house and within my walls a place and a name ['Yad Vashem' in Hebrew] better than sons and daughters; I shall give him an eternal name that shall not be erased.' I never knew the couple of whom I spoke. I don't even know if they made it alive to Auschwitz – though, if they did, they would apparently have been gassed on arrival – but I am quite

sure that nothing they suffered, no indignity and no pain, came close to the agony of knowing, as they stood on the platform in Grunewald station, as they doubtless had so many times before, that their only child was being left alone in the world, among strangers, in a foreign country that was at war with her country of birth. No, I was deprived of the pleasure of knowing that couple, but they were my grandparents, Isidor and Rosa Dobrin, and their daughter, Miriam, was my mother; and I know that she would have looked at a delegation of Israel's defenders in Berlin and

called us an 'eternal name that shall not be erased'.

My second memory is actually from the last day of the tour, in Auschwitz – where, unlike my grandparents, I marched proudly in, and out – but it is connected to Berlin. At the head of the column as we marched in was a Hungarian-born Israeli, a 79-year-old survivor who has participated in every war Israel has fought and who still voluntarily does reserve duty in the Israeli army. This was not the first time he had been in Auschwitz in uniform – that was in 1944 and his uniform then was striped pyjamas. Next to him was an army rabbi carrying a *Sefer Torah*. Now, we only have three pictures of my grandfather Isidor and in one of them he is completing the writing of a *Sefer Torah* that was donated to the Synagoge Grunewald. We know what happened to the synagogue (my father lived right opposite and is still waiting for the fire brigade to respond to his father's call); and we know, more or less (see above), what happened to my grandfather. We also know that the caretaker rescued all the scrolls on Kristallnacht and brought them to my grandparents' house. We have no idea what happened to them after 1939. So, when my son became Barmitzva, we had a *Sefer Torah* written to replace the one my grandfather had had written some 70 years earlier. My son finished writing the last words at the Western Wall, the last remnant of our holy temple in Jerusalem, and half an hour later read from it for the first time. I read from this Torah scroll, seven years to the day later, in Berlin,

continued opposite

Does anyone remember Elly Rothwein?

For all of us, the overwhelming feeling about having been refugees is profound gratitude that we found safety here in Britain. Having said that, in the early days more often than not this emotion was tinged with regret at being cut off from our language and culture, accompanied by an acute awareness of our reduced material circumstances. This did not imply any lack of appreciation since our exile was caused not by our British hosts but by Hitler's henchmen.

For myself, being young, this didn't bother me very much. I adapted fairly easily and nostalgia kicked in only occasionally. When it did, for some reason I would focus on what in our family had been known as 'going to Elly Rothwein's', which in hindsight seemed to me to have epitomised that lost world.

Elly Rothwein was an enterprising lady who organised entertainment for children in Vienna and summer holidays in the Austrian countryside. This group picture was taken (I have been told) for a brochure to advertise these holidays. The reason it features in my family album is that I was that overweight little cherub in the centre of the first row. The picture's precise provenance is authenticated by the caption in my mother's handwriting: 'Wienerbrück August 1935'. At the age of four years and four months, I was clearly the youngest child present. I don't know for a fact that Elly's events were meant only for Jewish children but the photograph does appear to support that impression. Possibly they were open to all but only the fairly well-heeled Jewish



parents sent their children along.

I now have only the haziest recollection of what actually went on there though I still retain the impression of having been treated as rather special. I think we were there for a large part of the summer because we all had labels sewn into our clothes. We were identified not by names but by numbers allocated by the Rothwein organisation. The strange thing is that 75 years later I still know that my number was 28 and my older brother's was 27. How weird is that? I was also there the following summer in 1936.

Now, thanks to the internet, I have found out quite a lot more about Elly. Although I can't actually remember what she looked like, since I see that she was born in 1899 I think it is extremely likely that she is the self-assured woman standing at the left of the picture. I now also know that having originally trained as a teacher, she later qualified as a child psychologist. She belonged to the school of neither Freud nor Jung but was

a disciple of Alfred Adler, that third Central European guru of the mind. In time, she became a prominent member of the Adlerian movement.

In the 1920s-30s Elly was writing learned articles about her subject. I am unclear as to whether her enterprise was a commercial sideline or conducted for research purposes. Quite possibly both reasons were equally valid. It amuses me to think that what I did there might have been studied. Perhaps I appear as 'child x' in some academic dissertation.

The internet sources do not give a reason for her emigration to Chicago but to us the cause is obvious. She would have found a

welcome in the Adlerian community there and she was able to continue her career in her new country. She ran a private kindergarten in that city. Having changed her name to Eleanor Redwin, she trained newcomers in her profession and resumed her regular output of learned papers in 1945 (this time in English) and again ran summer camps. She died aged 84 in 1983.

Whenever I look at the photograph reproduced here, I wonder how many of those appearing on it were as fortunate as Elly (and I) in escaping the fate that overtook so many. Looking carefully at my image in the picture, I see that my small podgy right hand is being held by the motherly and only slightly bigger little girl who is standing immediately behind me. I regret to say that with an all too characteristic lack of gallantry I have no recollection of this childhood friendship. Even so, I like to think of her today as a grandmother in, perhaps, Wyoming, Valparaiso – or even Hendon.

Erwin Schneider

Witnesses in uniform *continued*

and it accompanied us from Berlin to Auschwitz, and from there back to Jerusalem.

The impression I would like to share is the following: I speak, of course, only for myself, but I feel more than a little uncomfortable with the culture of commemoration. It is difficult to see anything in Berlin without some sort of reminder of what once happened there. I also detected a remarkable openness among the young German officers I met to address past events. However, both elements appear to be a little clouded in euphemism. I do not consider all Germans guilty of any crime. I certainly do not believe that any post-war generation bears any personal

shame, let alone guilt. But I cannot escape the impression that to blame everything on 'National Socialists', as every plaque and every person seems to do, is to evade the simple truth that the atrocities were committed, or abetted, or approved, or even just allowed, by Germans, in the name of Germany. Not today's Germans, not all Germans, but Germans nonetheless. The Nazis did not arrive from outer space in 1933, they did not 'seize' power, and they did not disappear into thin air in 1945 – and to pretend otherwise is dishonest. The record, however, must go to Grunewald station, where it wasn't even real live Nazis who did the job but Nazi trains, for the plaque there reads: 'Zum

Gedenken an die 1941-1945 durch Zuege der Deutschen Reichsbahn in die Todeslager Deportierten' (In memory of those deported to the death camps between 1941 and 1945 by trains of the German National Railway). I do not believe for a moment that if my grandparents had had to contend only with a train, rather than with the Gestapo, the SS and their myriad admirers and supporters, that the train would have won.

I thank the Berlin police, the Bundeswehr and the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung for their hospitality and friendship.

**Jeremy M. Cohn,
Jerusalem**



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

RETURN TO NEUBAUGASSE

Sir – Whenever the *AJR Journal* arrives at my house, I scan it then put it aside until I can give it my full attention. But not this time!

The article '21 Neubaugasse' by Judith Gordon in your October issue caught my attention big-time and I couldn't wait to read it! For I too was a child of the Neubaugasse – born and raised at number 70, just a short distance from where the Gelber family once lived.

My dad had a small shop in our third-floor apartment, selling and repairing radios. Further up the street were some large, fancy radio shops. But my dad had his long-time, loyal customers who didn't mind climbing the stairs.

Our apartment house was large, consisting of two buildings connected by a courtyard. There were many tenants and we always had a cordial relationship with our neighbours. It came as a shock when neighbours and friends turned against us overnight once the Nazis marched in.

I was the only survivor in my family. A few months too 'old' for the Kindertransport, I managed to get to England on a domestic permit. I lived with a family, doing housework and caring for their young child. In 1941 I joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service and served until the end of the war.

Some 50 years later, I finally returned to Vienna with my daughter Heidi. We stood outside Neubaugasse 70 and looked upward to where I used to live. All around us streetcars clanged, cars blew their horns and people hurried along the busy thoroughfare. Did anybody remember? Did anybody know? Heidi and I climbed three stories to the apartment and stood before the closed door. The door of the neighbouring apartment opened and a Turkish lady came out. We chatted and she invited us in. She made coffee and served pastries. She had lived in Vienna for 15 years. No, she knew nothing of the Holocaust.

We thanked her and left. Going downstairs, I paused for a moment. I thought of the Stormtroopers who, 50 years earlier, had rushed up these steps to fetch my mother to her death. 'Are you OK, mum?', my daughter asked. 'I'm fine,' I said.

And we left Neubaugasse 70 to return to our busy lives.
*Frances Nunnally
Richmond, Virginia, USA*

Sir – 'Fame' at last! I was born at Neubaugasse 36, as were my brother and sister. It was a really beautiful flat.

What a happy childhood I spent there, opposite the corner of Westbahnstrasse and Neubaugasse! Der Puppenpfeifer – how I loved that shop, the lovely windows and the various themes depending on the time of year!

I phoned my old schoolfriend, who lives in Leeds now. We started school together in the Volksschule Zollergasse. She too lived in the Neubaugasse. We had a lovely time reminiscing about places there.

I am 87 now. Then I was known as Mimi Blumenfeld. If anyone remembers me, I would like to hear from them (via the Journal).

Unfortunately, I couldn't keep my promise to my daughter to show her the Puppenpfeifer – after the war, it was gone.

I would dearly love to go to Vienna once more as I still love the city but my health restricts me. But I still have happy memories even though my father came to England and died here at the age of 58 from ill-treatment in Dachau and Buchenwald. I am always looking forward to your journal every month and still miss the meetings we had at Prentis Road, Streatham.

Marianne Gregory, Sutton, Surrey

TODAY'S AUSTRIANS

Sir – I was both saddened and shocked by the letter from George and Helga Lazarus (November). I fully share their views about the atrocities committed by many Austrians during the war and this can neither be forgotten nor forgiven.

But the present generation of Austrians, and indeed their parents, are not guilty of these crimes and cannot be held responsible for them. Rather belatedly the Austrian government has done much to make amends as far as that is possible, and the embassy in London has fully reflected this. Many ex-Austrians have been warmly and generously welcomed back on visits to their home towns. The very successful 'Letter to the Stars' programme a few years ago showed that many Austrians, especially young people, wanted to express their disgust concerning what happened in the past and to work for reconciliation with the survivors. My wife

and I are happy to have many Austrian friends, including the family now living in what used to be my home in Vienna.

George Vulkan, Harrow

Sir – I refer to the letter from George and Helga Lazarus. They enjoyed the *AJR's* annual Tea but were disturbed that a member of the Austrian embassy was to be present, in view of the part that country played in supporting the Holocaust. In the event, the Austrian representative was not present.

Today's Germans and Austrians are like *baalei teshuva* (those who repent) and deeply regret what happened in their countries in the Nazi era. One must warmly welcome those who repent and not remind them of their former lifestyle. Most likely the member of the Austrian embassy who was to have been present was not even born so many years ago. And he would have come to express friendship.

When I was invited by my father's hometown near Bremen, a local lady aged 86 came to all the meetings and outings. Her husband, a Christian clergyman, had spoken out against Hitler and had been taken away, leaving her with six children. Whoever in history heard of a country that persecuted Jews later paying compensation! These payments enable survivors to live in their old age without financial worries.

Henry Schragenheim, London N15

'VOTE, VOTE, VOTE FOR CLEMMENT ATTLEE?'

Sir – Professor Brent in his letter in the November issue seems to have overlooked several very important points in his enthusiasm for Clement Attlee.

First, with Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr Attlee very nearly bankrupted this country and caused the worst devaluation of Sterling, from which we have never been able to fully recover.

It is true that life in Britain is still largely based on his welfare system, which is now one of the major problems that has thereby been created.

The NHS has served this country very well up to now, but it is questionable whether future generations can continue to afford the luxury, with an ever-growing elderly population and the rising cost of new equipment, drugs and expanding methods of treatment.

The benefit system created by the Attlee government is the big problem that has now to be tackled. It has created a generation of spongers. There are perfectly healthy people who have never earned a living and are entirely supported at taxpayers' expense, and it is certainly not because of a lack of jobs (why can others come from afar and obtain jobs?).

Also, we now have four out of ten of the working population whose salary/

wages are paid by the state, whereby each taxpayer in private industry is having to support 40 per cent of a state employee. With ever-increasing automation, that is just not sustainable, so the public sector must be shrunk.

Finally, the unfunded pension system created by the Attlee government is producing an ever-increasing burden on future generations as current taxpayers are having to pay the pensions of yesterday's employees.

Edgar H. Ring, Edgware, Middx

THE FUTURE OF THE AJR

Sir – As a Second Generation member, I read with interest both Michael Newman's article in the September issue and Andrew Kaufman's message in the August edition.

I myself was not aware until these articles appeared that the AJR was operating with such a deficit. Furthermore, in the present economic climate, this deficit is likely to worsen. At the same time, considering the demography of the membership, there is likely to be an increased demand on the AJR's Social Services department.

I myself have been involved with the AJR for more than nine years but it was only the recent articles which suggested to me the desirability, and indeed necessity, of leaving a legacy to the AJR if it is to continue performing its valuable function. I have now done so.

For those members who wish to leave a legacy but already have a will, I can assure them as a retired solicitor that a simple codicil would suffice without going to the expense of drafting a new will.

Anthony Portner, Chertsey, Surrey

A FATEFUL FLIGHT

Sir – We are twice blessed in the October issue with Dr Grenville's customary informative and intelligent contributions.

With regard to his article on Wilfrid Israel, some of us will recall the front page of our newspaper that reported the loss of BOAC Flight 777 – in the case of the *News Chronicle* accompanied by a photograph of the actor Leslie Howard in *Romeo and Juliet*.

I was surprised then and remain so by the realisation that civilian flights took place in or anywhere near war-battered Europe. Most people would not have dared to venture this, but it was suggested that Howard himself was engaged in undercover intelligence work for his country but that the plane was destroyed because the Germans thought Winston Churchill himself was on board.

As for Dr Grenville's article 'Lost cities of the Mediterranean', is it not wonderful that, in the absence of national boundaries, Jews and countless others can live, work and express themselves culturally without fearing, or even insulting, each other?

Alan S. Kaye, Marlow, Bucks

Sir – In the summer of 1943 I was secretary to David Blickenstaff in Madrid, having fled from occupied France.

David was director of the American Quakers and of the American Joint Distribution Committee, which looked after mainly Jewish refugees in Spain, as mentioned in Anthony Grenville's article in your October issue.

Wilfrid Israel came to our office to see David. He also saw me to give me a message from Dr Bell, the then Bishop of Chichester, who was instrumental in getting me to Britain in the middle of the war.

A few days later, Wilfrid left for Portugal to board that fateful plane to London. It was a terrible shock for all of us when David was informed of it. The British embassy told us the Germans were convinced Churchill would be on board.

Peter Hart, London NW2

'A NICE JEWISH REFUGEE BOY'

Sir – Edith Argy (November) was inspired by her cousin Herb Feith. So was I. He and I became friends at Melbourne High School. In the late 1940s, influenced by a Victor Gollancz book, Herb persuaded a girl and shy, reluctant little me to join him in collecting money, door to door, for starving Germans. I think they were displaced Sudeten Germans, to my parents' horror. 'Civilised people don't even leave their enemies to starve, let alone their defeated former enemies,' Herb said.

George Landers, Chania, Crete

A PLEASURE TO READ

Sir – I'm writing to say how much I enjoy the *AJR Journal*. My father, Manfred Vanson, got it through the years until he passed away. Then my sister, Dorothea Shefer-Vanson – yes, the one who writes the 'Letter from Israel' – continued the subscription and she passes it to her sisters to read, and we all enjoy it. It is interesting and the English is of a very high standard. My profession is that of proof-reader and editor and I can assure you it is a pleasure to read a publication which has been edited and proof-read to a high level.

*Esther (Vanson) Rosenfeld
Jerusalem*

A WORD TO MY CRITICS

Sir – Thank you to Amnon Needham (October) for making it so clear why there is so much antipathy towards Israel. Arrogant, uncaring, self-centred – that's how I would describe his views. And naïve! He didn't like being David fighting Goliath. I should remind him that David won. We, the 'liberal, enlightened and educated', did not look on 'with pity' at the 'inevitable destruction' of Israel. With so many supporters in the USA and Europe, Israel was always going to win any war against its Arab neighbours, culminating, indeed, in its great victory in the Six-Day War. Israel did survive but

in recent years has become weaker – not 'stronger', as he maintained. It has lost most of its allies.

Furthermore, where did I say that what cannot be seen (God) does not exist? Or that religious Jews should not have the vote? (Come to think of it, if the religious Jews refuse to do military service, it might be a good idea if they didn't have the vote!) Also, nowhere did I argue that parts of Israel should be *judenrein*.

I also do not believe, as he does, that God gave Israel to us, and I am horrified by his saying that, if it were not for that one reason, we would have very little claim to it. Has he not heard of the Balfour Declaration and the 1947 UN vote? Why does he want to 'spill the other guy's blood before he gets at our kids'? Is that what his 'religious types' are teaching Israeli children?

Lastly, why is he so arrogant as 'not [to] give a monkey's' what gentiles think? Why not be grateful for what the majority have done since the Holocaust? Israel needs friends – but, perhaps, not friends like him!

Now to Rubin Katz (November), who accuses me of having no *seichel*. The reason he gives is that I suggested to a fellow Jew that he go and live in Israel, something Mr Katz felt I had no right to do as I was a refugee from Austria! I can't follow this logic. With regard to *The Finkler Question*, I don't see myself as Finkler. I am neither 'anti-Israel' nor 'anti-Zionist'. And I do not 'abhor' religious Jews. I simply do not feel I have anything in common with them, and I am upset that they now seem to be running Israel. Israel was set up as a secular state not a religious fundamentalist one. Mr Katz defends Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's 'gaffes' by saying that 'a curse or two never broke anyone's bones'. That is pathetic. Lastly, he says that only 'marriage and divorce' are in the domain of the Beth Din. What about conversion? What about the fact that they dictate Mr Netanyahu's policies – because he knows he is in power only thanks to them? Stop kidding yourself, Mr Katz. Look around Israel and see what is really going on there.

Henry Schragenheim (November) spoils a good letter with his second paragraph. What on earth has the fact that 3,000 years ago Jewish kings ruled the people and that the king (which king?) read from the Torah in the temple on the festival of Succot, got to do with anything that is happening today? Anyway, how does he know this? Was he there?

Henri Obstfeld (November) has my sympathy. I posed the question as to who is a genuine Holocaust survivor because of people like him. Reading his history, I personally would say he is a genuine Holocaust survivor and so, I believe, would most people.

*Peter Phillips
Loudwater, Herts*

continued on page 16

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

You could call **Eadweard Muybridge** the bad boy of Anglo-American photography. He shot his wife's lover in San Francisco, but was acquitted of murder on grounds of justifiable homicide. On his wife's death that same year, Muybridge sent their two-year-old son to an orphanage, believing him to be the son of the lover. The stuff of fiction, perhaps, but this artist's work was among the first to herald the moving image. In fact, you could call him one of the fathers of the cinematic arts.

Tate Britain pays tribute to his ground-



Eadweard Muybridge *Leland Stanford, Jr. on his Pony "Gypsy" – Phases of a Stride by a Pony While Cantering* 1879
Wilson Centre for Photography

breaking photography in a major retrospective of 150 works. Muybridge began looking at landscapes in quite a new way with his three-dimensional images of Alaska on albumen silver print. At a time when photography was in its infancy, his panoramic landscapes, his geographic images of the Yosemite Valley, Alaska, Guatemala and San Francisco, and the magnificent sweep of his landscapes became history in the making, a kind of cartography of land mass as never seen before. Alaskan labourers were employed in constructing vineyards as well as the Eastward-bound Railroad through California, Nevada and Utah, which he documented. His light-houses on the Pacific coast blended brown sky with brown land and, to capture these images, Muybridge would walk miles, carrying heavy equipment.

With the industrial dawn of the late-nineteenth century, Muybridge became ever more inventive. He tried to prove that a racehorse in motion had all four feet in

the air. Poor light made proof difficult, but he invented and patented a shutter mechanism for his camera which could speed up the image. In 1879 he modified a projector to operate in conjunction with a shutter and glass disc in order to capture the 1000th of a second. By repetition of the same image with a slightly different perspective, the view became a three-dimensional moving image – heralding the birth of film. The horse in motion spawned other 'moving' animal images – elephants, baboons, buffalo and eagles. Finally he turned to the human form and his dancing figures, his athletes, and a child with infant paralysis walking on hands and feet, or a hemiplegic walking with a stick. In the centre of one room a dancing woman in a floating blue dress reflected on a glass zoopraxiscope disc.

His broken-down images are claimed to have influenced artists like Marcel Duchamp, Jasper Johns, Cy Twombly, Douglas Gordon and Francis Bacon, whose portraits suggest cinematic facial fragments themselves. The exhibition runs until 16 January 2011.

Nothing is too small to capture **Rachel Whiteread's** imagination – especially if it's oblong or rectangular. Also at **Tate Britain** until 16 January is **Rachel Whiteread: Drawings**, which she describes as a 'diary of her work'. She is noted for many prestigious

commissions, such as the Holocaust Memorial 2000 in Vienna, an inverted concrete library described by a passer-by as 'harrowing', and her 2005 Embankment installation in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, which was a mass of white polystyrene boxes. But, while the massive scale sculptures can look impressive, these works on paper, which she describes as 'doodles to aid [her] thought processes', suggest absence, loss, voids and hidden presences. They also imply fluidity, uncertainty, a sense of incompleteness. But essentially they are drawings of boxes and, much as they may be a useful artistic diary, they give little intimation of her thought processes on their own.

Annely Juda Fine Art

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

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

Triumph over adversity

WE WERE EUROPEANS: A PERSONAL HISTORY OF A TURBULENT CENTURY
by Werner M. Loyal

Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2010
(orders@gefenpublishing.com); hard cover (large format) 520 pp., \$39.95

This is a kaleidoscopically presented and richly illustrated book, dedicated to the author's 12 grandchildren. It is not merely an autobiography but also a history of a large Jewish middle class family in Bohemia (going back to the eighteenth century), an account of the Jewish community in Bamberg, and a scholarly and well researched commentary on the rise of Nazism, the Holocaust, and the creation and development of the State of Israel. Furthermore, Loyal gives historical descriptions of the countries in which he has lived at one time or another (Germany, England, Guatemala, the USA and Israel) and provides vignettes of a great many people who have crossed his path, both famous and unknown, as well as of members of his extended family. Because the book is not always written in chronological order, and because it is partly based on the diaries of four people close to him as well as on his own, it is not always easy to keep track of the narrative.

Loyal was born in 1926 as Werner Löbl, the son of a well-to-do Jewish family. His own diaries began in his childhood and consisted largely of events and dates that helped him piece together that part of his life. His sister Erika (later Erica) kept detailed and well written diaries at various stages of her life, beginning in her German childhood and continuing when she (and her brother) were pupils at Bunce Court School, the German-Jewish progressive boarding school transplanted in 1933 by a farsighted headmistress from southern Germany to the North Downs of Kent. Another diary was that of his uncle Robert, describing life before, during and after trench warfare in the First World War; and his maternal cousin, Ludwig Regensteiger, provided details of Werner's mother's birthplace. Finally, there was the diary of Dr Morgenroth, the head of the Jewish community in Bamberg, who chronicled the events of the Nazi period. Thus eyewitness accounts are dovetailed with Loyal's own narrative, to which they impart a high degree of verisimilitude. Because

so many members of his family survived, Loyal was able to illustrate his text with numerous photographs and documents relating to his family's history.

The author does not claim to have written a reference book or a source of data, but 'a non-objective account of my life, my times, and events as I saw and experienced them'. Although he does not provide a bibliography the reader will nonetheless find much information about the cataclysmic events of the twentieth century. For example, this reviewer had been unaware of the fate of the old cattle barge *Struma*, which in December 1941 attempted to reach Palestine with 770 Romanian Jews on board, more than 100 of them children. The British authorities were once again callous in refusing the ship entry and no other country was willing to accept it. Its clapped-out engine having failed, a Turkish tug towed the barge to Istanbul, where it remained off-shore for two months whilst the authorities were engaged in futile negotiations and conditions on board deteriorated catastrophically. The Turks were eventually pressurised by the Germans to tow the barge into the Black Sea, where it was promptly torpedoed by a Russian submarine. There was only one survivor – a truly horrendous episode.

The third and very substantial part of the book deals with Loyal's move in 1953 from New York to Israel, having already worked in the Israeli embassy for several years. There he remained and soon married Pamela; they had four children. Loyal worked for many years in a senior capacity for the foreign ministry, mainly in the Department of Public Relations, where he had the opportunity of mixing with 'the good and the true'. (The list of wedding guests in the King David Hotel included a large number of VIPs, the Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Moshe Dayan, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and several ambassadors.) Loyal, who provides a well written potted history of Zionism and the creation of the State of Israel, was fortunate to have been able to play a significant role in the development of his adopted country, until he became a major player in real estate, having formed the 'Anglo-Saxon Housing Cooperative', which later developed a major branch in Cyprus. As well as being a highly profitable business, it also had a political basis as its aim was to attract well-off families from Western countries, primarily the USA and the UK, to Israel and especially to Jerusalem.

Werner Loyal therefore had a highly

successful career in more than one sphere, and he contributed substantially to the economic and cultural development of Israel. This was later recognised in various ways, in particular when he was made an honorary citizen of Jerusalem in 2000.

This book will be of particular interest to those wishing to extend their knowledge of Judaism in Germany and the development of Israel. (Loyal was a prominent exponent and founder member of the religious 'Reform Movement' in the country.) I have, however, a few minor caveats, such as the occasional gratuitous name-dropping. For example, the author had to look after the Duke and Duchess of Argyll when they were invited to Israel, but was it really necessary to burden the reader with the sordid details of their scandalous relationship? His description of Bunce Court School, an avant-garde German-Jewish boarding school and prime example of German 'Reform Pädagogik' as 'an English High School with its own prep school' is fanciful to say the least! But my more serious criticism is that although half of this substantial book deals with Israel, Loyal fails to address the problem of the Palestinians and how successive Israeli governments have signally failed to resolve a burning issue that threatens to engulf the whole of the Middle East and even further afield.

Leslie Baruch Brent

An insider's view of Nazi-dominated Berlin

ALONE IN BERLIN

by Hans Fallada

translated by Michael Hofmann

Penguin Modern Classics 2009, 588 pp., £9.99 paperback

This gripping but deeply depressing novel, an English version of the 1947 publication *Jeder stirbt für sich allein* (Everyone Dies for Himself Alone), is based on a true story. Hans Fallada depicts life in Berlin under the Nazis. The society he describes is a grim one. This is no happy, healthy nation, grateful for full employment and hero-worshipping its Führer. Rather, it lives under a cloud of fear and suspicion.

The story deals with several families living in an apartment block in a working class area of Berlin. There are three 'villains': a scrounger, a drunkard and a spy. All hope to profit from the Nazi regime without having to work. A Jewish woman, whose husband has been

A GIFT FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970:

Their Image in 'AJR Information'

by Anthony Grenville

published by Vallentine Mitchell, 2010

ISBN 9780853038528

£19.95 from bookshops and amazon.uk

arrested, is a target for their burglary.

Otto Quangel is a conscientious, hard-working foreman in a carpentry firm, now manufacturing coffins. He refuses to join the Nazi Party because being miserly, he resents having to pay the subscription. He keeps his head down. It is interesting to contrast this novel with *The Book Thief*, whose author, Marcus Zusak, depicts numerous compassionate Germans. However, he didn't live in Germany, whereas Fallada did!

Otto's life changes completely when his only son is killed in the war. He now hates Hitler for sending young men to their deaths in a senseless war. He and his wife Anna devise a plan to promote dissent: they write postcards containing anti-Hitler slogans, leaving them in places where, they hope, they will cause a backlash to the regime. The plot becomes their obsession and even when they fear capture, they cannot stop.

Fallada's view of human nature is deeply pessimistic. A son beats up his father for money; another son confines his drunkard father to a rehabilitation centre for life; a husband seeks to steal his wife's savings. Even the novel's central character, Quangel, is reluctant to help a Jewish woman. The one decent character in the block is a retired judge, Fromm (a Jewish-sounding name). He is like an angel from an old morality play. Inevitably the Quangels' plot is doomed. People are too cowed even to hold the postcards in their hands for any length of time before handing them over to the authorities.

The ending is unconvincing: not wanting to end on such a bleak note, Fallada has tacked on a Victorian-style happy conclusion. Nonetheless, this is an engrossing, superbly written book which gives an insider's view of Nazi-dominated Berlin.

Thea Valman

Unsere Kinder

Children everywhere in the world are our legacy for the future of humanity. So it is commendable that there is an increasing body of research focusing on the experiences of children caught up in persecution, war and genocide and the effects of their experiences at the time and later as adults. Some universities, such as Reading and Wolverhampton in Britain and Salzburg in Austria, have 'War Child' departments devoted to these studies.

Wolverhampton and Salzburg Universities jointly organised a conference in Salzburg University on 30 September-2 October 2010 under the title 'Children and War: Past and Present'. This was an excellent, truly international and interdisciplinary gathering with participants literally from all corners of the world, including researchers, historians, social scientists, practitioners and live witnesses. Among the issues covered were Holocaust survivors, the Kindertransport, evacuees from various countries, children of the Armenian genocide, child soldiers in Africa, and legal issues. The setting of

Salzburg University in the Old City right on the river Salzach was idyllic.

In three full days there were seven sessions of simultaneous panels. This comprised 39 panels, each including two to four presentations, making a total of 123 presentations, of which the maximum one could hear was 28. All those I attended were of an extremely high quality and we were told that approximately 80 papers would subsequently be published in an anthology. Refreshments were more than adequate and enabled maximum opportunity for networking.

On the first evening, we were treated to a reception with a cheerful and melodic 'boys' choir'. On the second evening, we were shown a moving 1946 film in Yiddish (with subtitles) about orphaned child survivors entitled *Undzere Kinder*; it was introduced by a man who was one of the survivors in the film. My own contribution was to show a 30-minute DVD about Julia, a Gypsy child survivor of Auschwitz, and my paper related this to Gypsy children today.

Ruth Barnett

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY – DECEMBER

Mon 6 Philippa Bernard, 'Roderigo Lopez, Jewish Doctor to Queen Elizabeth I' Club 43

Wed 8 'Holocaust Studies in the 21st Century' Workshop co-organised by Prof Christian Wiese, University of Sussex, and Prof Andreas Gestrich, German Historical Institute, London. Devoted to topics addressed in the publication *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination: Saul Friedlaender and the Future of Holocaust Studies*, ed. by Christian Wiese and Paul Betts (Continuum 2010). At German Historical Institute, 17 Bloomsbury

Square, London WC1, 4.00 pm tbc. Tel 01273 678771

Mon 13 Ken Baldry, 'Love into Music, Music into Love: Robert and Clara Schumann' Club 43

Thur 16 Dr Paul Betts (Fraenkel Prize Category A Winner), 'Private Life in the German Democratic Republic' At Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Ernst Flesch on 020 7624 7740 or Leni Ehrenberg on 020 7286 9698

NEXT YEAR IN VIENNA



Lisl Bohea, 2009

Earlier this year, I received an email from Gretel Fleischer, who lives in Israel and has been trying for years to contact her cousin Lisl Bohea. Lisl had been volunteering for us as a befriender in Hampshire and I had mentioned her name in a volunteer newsletter a couple of years back. The newsletters are reproduced on our website so, when Gretel 'googled' Lisl's name, it appeared in the newsletter.

The two cousins have now spoken on the phone. Previously each had believed she was the only surviving member of the family. Gretel, who will be 90 this year, has been back to Vienna a couple of times. Lisl says that up to now she has not felt able to return to Vienna (though her daughters have). Now, there is a strong possibility the two cousins will have their first reunion in Vienna next spring.

There are many benefits of volunteering for the AJR, but now I can add finding lost relatives to the list!

Carol Hart
Head of Volunteers Department
AJR

Bust of Sir Nicholas unveiled

The Rev Bernd Koschland and AJR Director Gordon Greenfield were among those who attended the unveiling of a bust of Sir Nicholas Winton at the Jewish Museum.

Sir Nicholas, approaching 102, unfortunately was unable to attend due to health reasons.

Ann Cowan, Chairman of the Friends of the Jewish Museum, said the bust was beautiful and especially evocative of Sir Nicholas. She hoped it would be a constant



reminder of the story of Sir Nicholas and the Kindertransport.

Vera Schaufeld thanked Sir Nicholas on behalf of the 669 Kinder he had rescued. To her, the bust expressed his humanity.

Oliver Bloom, the sculptor, said that, as a friend of Sir Nicholas, he had come to create the bust more by chance than intent.

Bernd Koschland referred to the totality of the Kindertransport – irrespective of who were the agents of rescue.

An unbelievable miracle happened to me

After the war lists of survivors were published. I kept studying them, thinking that being one of six children, one other child might have survived. I wrote to the Red Cross but without any result. I couldn't find anybody. Suffering from tuberculosis, I didn't pursue it.

One day, when I was recovering in the Grosvenor Sanatorium, Ashford, I came across a copy in Sam Dresner's room of the Yiddish newspaper *Undzer Shtime*, which was published in Paris. Knowing several members of my family had settled in France before the war, I hoped some of them had survived.

Sister Maria called me out in the middle of an English lesson given by Mr Englehart and showed me a telegram.

You will understand my feelings at finding a sister I had last seen in Poland in 1942 and who was now in France, just as I was thinking I was quite alone in the world. It was purely by chance that a member of my family had attended the funeral of someone from my home town of Pulawy. In conversation it was mentioned that someone who originated from my home town was looking for lost relatives. My Aunt Sarah heard about it, visited my sister Idisa, who was the oldest (my big sister!), and asked if she had won the lottery. Idisa said she hadn't. My aunt told her she had won something more precious.

Now we'd found each other, we began writing letters on a daily basis. In her first letter, my sister said: 'Today something extraordinary happened to me. I could only dream about it, never believing it would happen. My head is spinning and I am in turmoil. People envy me.' She continued: 'I want to see photographs of you and see how you look.' I have some of those letters and still find it difficult to read them as they are so emotional, containing phrases like 'my newly born little brother' and wondering how I had ended up in England, who was looking after me, doing my washing etc, if I would be able to earn a living, if I was healthy, and if I had the right to remain in England.

My sister had married six weeks before we found each other. Although she and her husband were just establishing their home, she asked if I would like to go to France. I also received letters from my Aunt Sarah, who referred to me as 'mine



Alfred Huberman and his sister Idisa

tyer kinnd'. She said my mother (her sister) had left her a precious legacy.

I suddenly found myself with a family who were as overjoyed to find me as I was to find them. Letters and photographs followed containing familiar names and faces, many of people who had not survived.

Once I had received the necessary travel document, I was able to go to France, where I discovered more photographs of the Polish families who no longer existed. I felt guilty and not really able to talk to the other boys with me in Ashford who had lost everyone and had no photographs.

As a child, I had heard that two of my mother's uncles were living somewhere in England. I knew only their first names: Uncle Shlomo and Uncle Perez. They had settled here many years before the war. An uncle in France had visited them before the war – he hadn't survived but his daughter had been able to give my sister the addresses. I found out that they lived in Brighton and wrote to them in Yiddish. They visited me in Ashford and invited me to visit them.

On being discharged from the sanatorium, I visited them for longer periods and was asked if I would like to live with them. I was hesitant as I missed being with the boys, with whom I had so much in common. As I had been in England for only a short time, it was difficult to obtain permission to travel. As my sister was married to a Frenchman, she was able to visit me. The first time we met our reunion was happy and very tearful.

The last time I had seen her she had been my big sister. Four and a half years later, we were the same height! On our journey from the airport, we recounted the happenings of those years. My sister suggested that as I was living in England and she in France, 'Let's imagine that our parents and four sisters are somewhere.'

Eventually I settled in Brighton and learned to be a tailor. I married 53 years ago and have three children. Now we have six grandchildren.

Although we live in Hove, I have always stayed in touch with the boys, attending each and every reunion together with the family and any other gatherings we can get to. My wife feels she is one of the boys.

Sadly, my sister died young but she left two lovely daughters, who have become very close to us and consider us surrogate parents. We have six grand-nieces and nephews and seven great-grand-nieces and nephews in France and we are always included in their celebrations.

It was well worth surviving!

Alfred Huberman

'Churchill's German Army'



(from left) Colin Anson, Willie Field, Geoffrey Perry, Harry Rossney, Bill Howard

Dr Helen Fry introduced the film to some 60 AJR members, mainly from the Pinner group. 'Churchill's German Army', produced in 2009 and shown to great acclaim in many countries, tells of the wartime experiences of six refugees from Germany or Austria who managed to get to England before the outbreak of war and joined up. They are Willy Field, born in Bonn and a survivor of Dachau; William Ashley Howard, who served in the Pioneer Corps and then in the Royal Navy; Sir Ken Adam, the only known German fighter pilot in the RAF; Colin Anson, who joined the Pioneer Corps in December 1940 and in 1942 was accepted for 'special forces' duties, i.e. the commandos; Harry Rossney, a sign-writer and craftsman at Kitchener Camp; and Geoffrey Perry, who read the first Allied broadcast from the same microphone at Radio Hamburg as had been used two days previously by William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) and who captured Joyce in a forest nearby.

All these men, with the exception of Sir Ken Adam, were present at the screening and enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the audience, their *Landsleute*.

Ernest Simon

INSIDE the AJR

Leeds CF Memories of Kristallnacht

We had a lively discussion about Kristallnacht. Some members had vivid memories of that terrible night and could recall every detail; for others, the memory was too disturbing to discuss. But by the time tea and delicious cakes were served, everyone was smiling again.

Barbara Cammerman

Next meeting: 7 Dec. Yorkshire Chanukah Party

Oxford Refugees in WWII

The wide-ranging activities of German and Austrian refugees during the Second World War were recounted by authors Helen Fry and James Hamilton. As always, we learned a lot.

Anne Selinger

Next meeting: 7 Dec. Chanukah Party and Quiz

Ealing 'Jews and the Mind'

Why, among many other questions, Prof Gerald Curzon asked, do Jewish men suffer more from depression than Jewish women and why do Jewish men drink less? Much to discuss here.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 7 Dec. Helen Fry, 'Goodnight Vienna'

Bromley CF A discussion on past, present and future

A very interesting and well-attended afternoon on which we had a lively discussion on everything concerning the past, present and future, though no decisions were made.

Eva Byk

Next meeting: 2 Dec. Social Get-together at home of Eva Byk

Ilford World Jewish Relief

Harry Heber gave us a very informative talk about this highly important charity, which operates worldwide. A most enjoyable meeting.

Ivor Perl

Next meeting: 1 Dec. Chanukah Party and Quiz

Pinner Towards an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict

Abbi Ben Ari looked at current efforts towards a two-state solution in the Middle East. This eloquent lecturer left us not without hope for an eventual end to the conflict.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: 2 Dec. Chanukah Party and 13th Birthday Celebration

Harrogate/York CF

A new account of survival

Meeting in Skelton, York, we welcomed new member Otto Greenfield, who told us of his survival in four concentration camps and a forced labour camp. We also talked about our experiences after immigration to Britain, a topic we hope to explore further.

Marc Schatzberger

Next meeting: 9 Feb. At the Littles' home in Harrogate

HGS A lovely discussion

The Wiener Library's Howard Falksohn description of how the Nazis' rise to power affected the lives of children, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, was followed by a lovely discussion between our members and pupils from Henrietta Barnett School, who were invited to the meeting.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 13 Dec. Myra Sampson, 'The Story of Jack the Ripper'

GLASGOW The Targu Mures community



Following a dinner served on tartan-laid tables in true Scottish style, Ethne Woldman, former Chief Executive of Jewish Care Scotland, spoke about her work with the tiny Romanian-Jewish community of Targu Mures. Mostly survivors of Auschwitz and Dachau, they are living in appalling poverty.

Agnes Isaacs

Norfolk Sampling the delights

We young-in-spirit members met once again for lunch, eager to sample the delights of kosher goodies brought all the way from the Jewish settlements in NW London by Myrna. We heard about, and saw pictures of, a visit to the Isle of Man, retracing where members had been interned.

Frank Bright

Edgware The Bank of England

Mark Menory spoke to us about the activities of the Bank of England. We the public are also very much impressed with the monumental building in the City of London. What an interesting talk!

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: 6 Dec. Joint Groups Chanukah Party with Hendon, North London and Radlett. Naomi Hyamson entertaining

North London 50 years in catering

Bernard Ecker gave us a most amusing talk on his 50 years in the catering industry, both as a chef and as a waiter in leading hotels.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 6 Dec. See Edgware

Wessex 'The Jews in Regency London'

Following our annual lunch, David Barnett, who has done research in the Guildhall (City of London) archives and in synagogue records, told us about the return of the Jews to England under Oliver Cromwell and the setting up of Jewish businesses in London.

George Ettinger

Next meeting: 14 Dec. Subject tbc

Wembley CF Social Get-together

We met having missed September. We heard about each other's trips and activities

and sent good wishes to members unable to join us due to ill health.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: 8 Dec. Chanukah Party

TEMPLE FORTUNE Improving our wellbeing



Experienced yoga teacher Judy Smith taught us simple movements for improving our wellbeing, then demonstrated some yoga poses too advanced for us, which Esther photographed. The poses were followed by breathing and relaxation exercises, which we did. A very enjoyable afternoon.

David Lang

Next meeting: 9 Dec. Social Get-together and Quiz

Welwyn Berlin from 1714

Speaking about the history of Berlin, Alfred Simms went as far back as 1714, when the first synagogue was built and there were only around 100 Jews in the city, making it the fourth largest Jewish community in the world.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 9 Dec. Judy Kelner, 'Desert Island Discs'

Cafe Imperial Young and cheerful presence needed

This was the best attended of all the meetings in my experience and, as always, highly enjoyable. Esther and Hazel's presence is greatly appreciated by all of us too. We old men need your young and cheerful presence! Thank you for the effort and care you put into it.

Henry Myer

Newcastle 'Written by Candlelight'

Liesbeth Langford related some of the dreadful things that happened to friends and neighbours during the Nazi occupation of Holland and told stories about her mother's exploits, which included harbouring a young Jewish girl. She read extracts from her mother's diary, on which her own book, 'Written by Candlelight', is based.

Agnes Isaacs

Radlett Readings from 'They Called Her Cassandra'

Renée Tyack read to us vivid extracts from her book 'They Called Her Cassandra' about her and her family's escape in 1938 from Leipzig. Her readings were followed by a lively discussion. A thoughtful occasion for the audience.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: See Edgware

Hendon The life of a tour guide

Helga Bellinger and Sima Ginsburg hold Blue Badges for escorting tourists round London, for which they had to pass stiff examinations. The job involves dealing with all kinds of people and is very satisfying.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: See Edgware

Cleve Road What makes Jews tick?

Prof Gerald Curzen had been interested since the age of four in what makes Jews tick. The 'people of the book' developed their powers of memory and intelligence over the centuries by studying Talmud. But from about 1700 they began applying their minds to secular subjects, resulting in the golden age of Jewish intellectual achievement.

David Lang

Next meeting: 21 (not 28) Dec. Belated Chanukah Party and Quiz

Bristol/Bath A controversial deal

Prof Ladislaus Löb told us about the highly controversial deal between Rezső Kaszner and the SS whereby some 1,700 Hungarian Jews were permitted to travel to Switzerland in exchange for trucks.

David Hackel

Weald of Kent The history of World Jewish Relief

Harry Heber told us about WJR and how it started with Hitler's rise to power. It is comforting to know that it is there to help in crises which continue to arise.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: 21 Dec. Anthony Gimpel, 'Jewish Roots'

Book Club

Meeting in Costa Coffee in Temple Fortune, we agreed that *The Help* was an excellent, easy-to-read book. The choice for our next meeting is *Rosenblum's List* by Natasha Solomons. We'll be meeting at Joseph's

A WONDERFUL AFTERNOON AT LUTON HOO

Nineteen lucky members enjoyed a wonderful afternoon at Luton Hoo, including a talk, a guided tour and a splendid afternoon tea. Zena Dickinson, who has worked there for 25 years, fascinated us with



its history from the seventeenth century through its years as a home to the Wernher family, who remodelled it to look like the Ritz; its use as a film set, including *Four Weddings and a Funeral*; and its rebirth as a five-star hotel. Perhaps best of all, we visited the bedroom used by the Queen on her honeymoon!

Susie Barnett

Just to say thank you for the wonderful outing to Luton Hoo. Most interesting and very well arranged. Wonderful tea and, as a bonus, the weather was perfect, so the view from the house couldn't have been better!

Dorli Neale

Bookstore on 22 December at 3.00 pm if you'd like to join us.

Hazel Beiny

Cambridge Sharing memories

Our scheduled speaker having been forced to cancel her talk at short notice, we spent a most pleasant morning recalling the person who had been the greatest influence in our own lives and sharing these memories with the group.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: 16 Dec. Tba

Bradford Surprise at Salts Mill

We had our annual lunch at Salts Diner, being joined for the first time by visitors from Hull CF. As always, everyone enjoyed the outing but the real surprise came at the

continued on page 15

Norfolk (Norwich)

Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

North London

Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

Oxford

Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)

Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Radlett

Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Sheffield

Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London

Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)

Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Surrey

Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Temple Fortune

Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Weald of Kent

Janet Weston 01959 564 520

Wembley

Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)

Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)

Fred Austin 01384 252310

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

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB
Wednesday 15 December 2010

Glenys Groves
from The Garden Party

PLEASE NOTE THAT SPEAKERS START AT 12 NOON

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

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 6 December 2010

CHANUKAH PARTY

KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 PM ON MONDAYS

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am – 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

December Afternoon Entertainment

Wed 1	William Smith
Thur 2	Harvey Manning
Mon 6	KT Chanukah Party
Tue 7	CLOSED
Wed 8	Chanukah Party
Thur 9	Sheila Games
Mon 13	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 14	CLOSED
Wed 15	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 16	Michael Heaton
Mon 20	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue 21	CLOSED
Wed 22	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 23	Ann Shirley & Colby
Mon 27	CLOSED
Tue 28	CLOSED
Wed 29	CLOSED
Thur 30	CLOSED

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

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

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

Agnes Isaacs, Scotland and Newcastle Co-ordinator
0755 1968 593

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

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

Bristol/Bath
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

Cambridge
Anne Bender 01223 276 999

Cardiff
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Cleve Road, AJR Centre
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Dundee
Agnes Isaacs 0755 1968 593

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edgware
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3077

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

Glasgow
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

Harrogate
Inge Little 01423 886254

Hendon
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Hertfordshire
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

HGS
Gerda Torrence 020 8883 9425

Hull
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Ilford
Meta Rosenell 020 8505 0063

Leeds HSFA
Trude Silman 0113 2251628

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Baginsky, Erna (née Goldenberg), born 20 September 1918, passed away peacefully 26 October 2010. Remembered with much love by her sons Sidney and William, family and friends.

Elting, John 6 January 1921-20 October 2010. Steve and Judy are very sad to announce that their father, John Elting, passed away peacefully at home after spending several weeks in hospital. Often referred to by others as a true gentleman, he was loved, admired and respected by all who knew him. He will be greatly missed by all his family and friends.

Heinemann, Lore (née Benjamin) passed away peacefully in her sleep on 8 November 2010. She will be remembered by Julian and Tom, family and many friends for her energy, enthusiasm and the patience in her long illness. She may now experience real happiness at last.

Kenward, Ernest. Born Klinger in Austria, died peacefully 23 October 2010 aged 96. Deeply mourned by his wife and her family. He will be sadly missed.

'IDENTITY': A SECOND GENERATION WORKSHOP WITH RUTH BARNETT

Tuesday 7 December, 7.00 pm at the Wiener Library

Ruth Barnett recently published her autobiography, *Person of No Nationality*, which portrays the struggles of a displaced person growing up in England in the 1940s-50s. She is a former teacher and psychotherapist.

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COPY DATE 5 weeks prior to publication

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8 DECEMBER 2010

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Please book by 1 December 2010



KINDERTRANSPORT CHANUKAH PARTY

6 DECEMBER 2010

£6 payable in advance

Please book by 1 December 2010

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Tea and sympathy: The Free German Youth

In his interesting article on the Free German League of Culture in the September 2010 issue of the Journal, Dr Anthony Grenville mentions its youth movement, the Free German Youth (FGY), to which several hundred of us belonged.

The FGY had branches throughout London and in the provinces where refugees lived. It was an organisation aiming to send young people to build a Communist Germany after the war. We didn't object to Communism because at that time the Red Army was the only army which seemed to be fighting Hitler. We certainly had no intention to return to Germany but that was still years ahead. The Liberal Synagogue, under the direction of the Hon. Lily Montague, tried its best to wean us away from the FGY and involve us in discussion groups on such topics as 'Has the blackout increased immorality among young people?', while the FGY discussed 'Is free love important?'

I belonged to the Willesden (north-west London) branch. Every Tuesday we had group evenings. The evening started with a German workers' song such as 'Volk ans Gewehr'. Then there

was a reading from a Communist author like Brecht on racial theory entitled 'Longheads and Roundheads'. This piece struck a note with me because I remembered a biology lesson at the Grunewald Gymnasium in Berlin in which the teacher had measured my head to show it was 'shorter' than those of Aryans and I was therefore inferior. The evening always finished with the 'Soviet Fatherland' song, which ended with the refrain 'There is no country in the entire world where the heart beats so free.'

A turning point came in February 1943. Fieldmarshal Paulus and General Seidlitz were taken prisoner by the Russians at Stalingrad and, together with Moscow émigrés, formed the Free German Committee, the nucleus of a future German government. The Central Committee of the FGY sent a telegram to Moscow affiliating to the Moscow Committee and calling on the German people to rise against the Nazis. We ordinary members were aghast. We thought it was laughable that German Jews were asking the Germans to revolt. What notice would they take of us! We protested. The

Central Committee members became worried. Horst Brasch, the General Secretary (he had come to England on a Kindertransport and later became Minister of Culture in the DDR), descended on Willesden to explain the importance of the move. It did satisfy some members. After all, the FGY provided a haven with tea and sympathy for lonely youngsters. But about 20 of us left. I saw Dr Werner Rosenstock, General Secretary of the AJR, who was very pleased about our leaving this organisation: he didn't like refugees belonging to a Communist movement. We decided to form our own Jewish Youth Group and the AJR was willing to pay one month's rent at 1 Broadhurst Gardens for us to meet.

Finally, Horst Brasch wrote me a letter saying 'We are sorry to note that you have abandoned the fight against fascism.' This ended my experience with the Free German Youth.

Peter Prager

This is a shortened version of a chapter from Peter Prager's autobiography From Berlin to England and Back.

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

end of the meal when we discovered we had all been the guests of Maggie Silver, the owner of Salts Mill, as a diamond wedding present to our members Lilly and Albert Waxman. Thank you to all concerned!

Anna Greenwood

Next meeting: 8 February

Brighton and Hove Sarid Rescue in Albania

With Dr Scarlett Epstein as our guest speaker, we watched a DVD produced by Joanna Newman, who had interviewed survivors welcomed in Albania while fleeing the Nazis. All those interviewed

praised the hospitality they had received from this Muslim country and thanked the Albanian citizens for saving their lives.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 20 Dec. Social Get-together

Essex Hitler Youth

The Wiener Library's Howard Falksohn gave a very interesting and thought-provoking talk on young people who joined the Hitler Youth. Those children, like Kindertransport children, are now in their late 70s and 80s and so, hopefully,

their mindsets have changed. Denial of the Holocaust in Germany and Austria can lead to a jail sentence, Howard said.

Larry Lisner

Next meeting: 14 Dec. Social Get-together

Ilford A pleasant day at Geffrye Museum

A small number of AJR stalwarts spent a very pleasant day at the Geffrye Museum in Shoreditch. An informative lecture, followed by lunch and a walk through the Elizabethan herb garden, completed the enjoyable outing.

Herman Rothman

CONTINENTAL RECIPES REMEMBERED

Continental Friends groups in the North have so far collected over 40 recipes from AJR members for their Recipes Remembered project. We are hoping to print the recipe book early in 2011.

We are collecting recipes and dishes from AJR members nationwide, where possible together with memories and/or photographs. Anything that reminds you

of your childhood kitchen – of special times or festivals or dishes your mother or grandmother made and perhaps you still make today. Second Generation could tell us about recipes from their parents etc.

We are interested in anything you can remember about the food – at what time of day you ate it, or perhaps you ate it in the winter or on a picnic or at festival times. If you don't know the exact ingre-

dients or method, perhaps you can tell us stories about the dish – who used to cook it or what it smelt like or looked like.

For more information, or if you would like to send a recipe, please contact AJR volunteer Pippa Landey (Leeds) on 01332 893 144 or at pmlandey1@googlemail.com Alternatively, contact Susanne Green, AJR Northern Co-ordinator, on 0151 291 5734 or at susanne@ajr.org.uk



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



My granddaughter, the officer

I've never been to a passing-out parade at Sandhurst or West Point, and am not likely ever to go to one, but I have a sneaking suspicion that the ceremony at which my granddaughter was made an officer in Israel's Air Force (no, she's not a pilot!) was nothing like those events.

Several hundred soldiers were due to receive their officer's insignia that day. Each and every one of them had demonstrated his or her excellence and was without doubt their family's pride and joy. They were all entitled to invite parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts and close friends to share that day. Our little family gathering numbered about 20 people. Multiply that by the number of soldiers and it's quite a crowd.

As befits such occasions, we began with nourishment. Each family brought its own food, while plastic tables and chairs were provided by the Officers' Training School under the trees which shaded the spacious lawns. All around us hampers were being opened, shopping bags emptied and drinks poured. Ravenous youngsters fell upon the food their families had brought them, glad of the opportunity to enjoy a little home cooking as well as relax and benefit from the festive atmosphere.

After the food came the ceremony. The new officers left to go to their appointed positions while the families proceeded to the stands surrounding the parade ground on three sides. Each family found a place to sit, whereupon some of them brought out balloons, others produced posters bearing slogans such as 'Assaf, we're proud of you,' while yet others donned specially printed hats or T-shirts in bright colours bearing the name of the soldier they had come to honour. All the families were justifiably proud of their offspring, who had undergone a rigorous selection procedure and completed a series of tests and exercises to reach this moment. Not all who had embarked on the course had been allowed to complete it.

The IDF band played and, to the cheers of the families, the cadets marched out onto the parade ground and stood to attention, forming a square. The youngsters, each one carrying a rifle, were drawn from all three forces and included both men and



women. The Commander of the Navy, representing the IDF, congratulated the young recruits, complimented their families and encouraged the youngsters to 'Go out and lead.' There were more speeches by military personnel, outstanding cadets were decorated, and meanwhile the sun shone down. Some of the young officers were overcome by the heat and were swiftly removed from the scene by stretcher-bearers. As the band played some more marches, the newly-appointed officers strode past and each family watched proudly, many of us with tears of pride and joy in our eyes. My granddaughter told me later that she also shed a tear or two of joy and pride at having reached that point.

I know it sounds corny, but I believed the Commander of the Officers' Training School when he said it was not only a duty but a privilege to lead soldiers who were ready to defend Israel.

The ceremony ended and the newly-appointed officers all gave a mighty yell and threw their hats into the air. We parted from our young officer, who looked so impressive in her Air Force uniform, and raced to the car to beat the inevitable traffic jam, while she proceeded to yet another course, this time a specialised Air Force one, to prepare her for the next two years of her military service.

Two of her great-grandfathers served in the German army in the First World War and perished in the Holocaust. I'm sure they would have been happy at the path their descendant has chosen to take.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

'A POPULAR JEWISH MYTH'

Sir – I refer to Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's Letter from Israel in your November edition. She expertly displays her knowledge of world history but is quite wrong on one point.

She reiterates the popular Jewish myth that the Romans exiled the Jews from their country! I studied the history of that period in detail for my London University MA so I am qualified to state that all the Romans did in this regard in CE 70 was to take captive (as slaves) inhabitants of Judea, which was just a small area around Jerusalem. Jews remained (in large numbers) in the rest of Palestine. In subsequent decades, there was gradual migration to Galilee and in the following centuries migration from the Holy Land,

principally because of deteriorating economic conditions. It is noteworthy that the hereditary Jewish Patriarchate (the office of Nasi) remained in place in Palestine until the early fifth century.

Michael Busse, Welwyn Garden City

A FULL LIFE: CLAIRE RAYNER

Sir – Some 15 years ago I indulged in a one-off luxury – a taxi to a theatre matinee. The play wasn't my cup of tea but my encounter with the taxi-driver made it worthwhile.

He was a middle-aged Sephardi Jew and his hobby was research into genealogy. He told me his favourite book was *The Running Years* by Claire Rayner. 'How I wish she would jump into my taxi!', he said.

I told him I couldn't promise that but that I had met Claire Rayner in connection

with my many years' participation in voluntary activities with Women's Cancer Control. Mr Fernandez gladly gave me his address.

No sooner said than done. Claire was delighted to hear my tale. She got in touch with the gentleman and was delighted to sign his copy of her book. To my joy, she presented me with a further signed copy of her book. I have treasured her marvellously researched saga of the history of our people going back to 70 AD.

Being Claire Rayner, her vivid portrayal of the misery of poverty, snobbery and class distinction among our Jews in the so-called Good Old Days is all-pervasive.

Claire certainly lived a full life. With affection and admiration!

Laura Selo, London NW11