

## A Jewish intellectual

The historian Tony Judt, who died in August aged 62, was an academic who was also an influential intellectual, one of those widely recognised figures who set the agenda for public discourse and debate, helping to determine the course of ideas far beyond the groves of academe. His towering achievement was his history of Europe since 1945, *Postwar*, which was first published by Penguin in the USA in 2005 and has since received widespread acclaim.

The book provides a compelling and coherent analysis of the development of the continent of Europe, East and West, starting with its emergence from the destruction of the Second World War, proceeding through the reconstruction of the 1950s, the turbulence of the 1960s and the disillusionment of the 1970s, and taking us on to its reunification in the wake of the fall of Communism. It concludes with an acute analysis of Europe's current uncertain state, with national entities and identities persisting beneath transnational structures. Its epilogue has the striking title 'From the House of the Dead' (taken from Dostoyevsky's account of life in a Siberian prison) and deals with the half-submerged role of the Holocaust in modern European memory.

Tony Judt was born in 1948 to Jewish parents in the East End of London, though he grew up in Putney. He studied at Cambridge, and taught there, at Berkeley in California and at Oxford, before moving in 1988 to New York University, where he founded the Remarque Institute, dedicated to European studies, whose director he remained until his death. From his early studies of French left-wing politics and thought, his prodigious range of knowledge enabled him to broaden out into the history and culture of the entire



Tony Judt, 1948-2010

continent of Europe.

Judt had in his youth been an ardent left-wing Zionist but, after serving as a volunteer driver and interpreter for the Israeli army in 1967, he became disillusioned. Falling prey to the temptation to indulge in political commentary, an occupational hazard of the public intellectual, he pronounced with some trenchancy on the subject of Israel and was not a little put out by the vehemence of the reaction his writings provoked. Fortunately, his scholarship on modern European history was unaffected by these partisan diversions.

Judt wrote copiously for *The New York Review of Books*, and continued to do so even when smitten by a particularly vicious form of motor neurone disease, which paralysed him from the neck down and obliged him to live encased in a metal tube, entirely dependent on external assistance. His courage in the face of this affliction came across in the series of reflections and recollections that he dictated from his metal tomb and that

were published in *The New York Review of Books*, the last appearing only a fortnight or so before his death. An interview with him was broadcast in June by BBC Radio 4, in the occasional series *No Triumph, No Tragedy*; it made for compelling listening.

Though he worked in New York, Judt can still be considered a British intellectual, thanks to his British birth and education and to the international nature of modern scholarship, which has made his writings as influential in Britain as they are in America. While Jews have long been prominent in the American intellectual landscape, they have been less of a permanent feature among the leaders of thought in Britain. And while Jewish intellectuals have retained their leading position in America, they seem to be on the wane in Britain.

Where are today's equivalents of Sir Isaiah Berlin and Jacob Bronowski, the giants of earlier decades? Tony Judt has some claim to be regarded as their successor, but other candidates are hard to find. Jonathan Miller, for all his achievements in both science and the performing arts, is not primarily a man of ideas. Simon Schama, a brilliant historian, is a public figure thanks to his TV programmes, but his status has veered towards that of a celebrity, at least since he has taken to popping up at general election night parties on BBC TV and even on his own cookery programme.

Jews are, of course, very well established in British academic and cultural life, but these days they mostly remain limited to their own particular professional specialities. Jewish academics in Britain no longer reach out, in the manner of the classic intellectual, to a wider public: the difference is that between Bronowski, whose TV series and book *The Ascent of Man* attracted a huge audience, and his

*continued overleaf*

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daughter Lisa Jardine, an academic whose work is highly respected in scholarly circles, but not well known beyond them.

Judt's *Postwar* is a veritable goldmine of insights, both in its analysis of the underlying long-term trends in European history since 1945 and in its often arrestingly innovative treatment of individual events, people, products, trends, institutions and crises. Judt seems to know about everything. He covers every country in Europe, from the damage inflicted by the war on Norway's industrial output, set in the context of an illuminating account of the rapid economic recovery of the Western European countries after 1945, to the 1949 show trials of 'Titoist' leaders in Bulgaria, graphically illustrating the ruthlessness of Stalinist repression in Eastern Europe.

The book contains a wealth of detailed information, but always deployed in the framework of a lucid and original structure of argument. Judt is your man if you want to know about the politics of the punk rock bands of the 1970s ('as one-dimensional as their musical range'); or about the failure of the economies of the Communist states of Eastern Europe (in 1989 East Germany was producing one-fiftieth of the number of computers manufactured in Austria); or the complexities of postmodernist thought ('a level of expressive opacity that proved irresistibly appealing to a new generation of students and their teachers'); or how, in the years 1945-48, France 'abruptly negated' 300 years of history and resolved its German problem by Europeanising it within the framework of common European economic institutions.

Judt's analysis of Britain after 1945, to take just one example, is engrossing. He begins with the stark fact that Britain emerged from the war insolvent, having lost one quarter of its national wealth and burdened itself with crippling dollar-denominated debts that it struggled for decades to repay. But, as Judt shows, the British people were utterly ignorant of the extent of their national bankruptcy, accepting as normal levels of austerity where the queues, rationing and shortages were almost reminiscent of conditions in the Soviet bloc.

Apparently the British government shared this ignorance for, in its eagerness to

preserve Britain's (largely imaginary) 'place at the top table', it budgeted £209 million on military expenditure for 1947, as compared to the £6 million spent on all military and diplomatic expenditure in the years 1934-38. Quite what maintaining full naval fleets in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean as well as the Atlantic, plus a full 'China station', a raft of 120 RAF squadrons worldwide and military forces from Hong Kong to Trieste, was supposed to achieve for a bankrupt, middle-sized European nation remains obscure. As a result, Britain was unique in devoting hardly any of the Marshall Plan aid it received to industrial investment or modernisation; 97 per cent of the funds it received went on repaying the country's debts.

This had predictably dire consequences. In a revealing section entitled 'A Tale of Two Economies', Judt shows how the shoddy, unreliable and overpriced goods produced by Britain's inefficient, strike-ridden industries were unable to compete with the products of West German industry, whose costs were kept down and whose quality was kept up by sustained investment in new and efficient production methods. Britain thus lost the peace almost as comprehensively as it won the war.

But Judt's analysis goes deeper. He pinpoints demographics as the key factor underpinning the spectacular economic growth that characterised the immediate post-war decades in Western Europe. For what transformed European industrial productivity was a vast new workforce that flooded in millions from low-productivity sectors like agriculture into the new, high-productivity industrial sector; the classic example was the extraordinary transformation of Italian industry through the influx of workers from the agricultural

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south into the factories of the north.

Here Britain was at a disadvantage. For though it shared in the remarkable increase in the birth rate that occurred from 1945, providing Europe's industries with new consumers as well as new workers, it no longer had a large agricultural sector to provide a pool of cheap labour. This is a significant and frequently ignored factor in the economic decline of areas like Britain and south-eastern Belgium, which had industrialised early and had no agricultural labour surplus left on which to draw. However, as Judt shows, Britain's baby-boom generation went on to pioneer the explosion of new trends, fashions and attitudes that made the 1960s the era of so-called 'youth revolution', fuelled by the consumer prosperity that put money into teenagers' pockets and by the expansion of higher education that put radical ideas into their heads.

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## A Call to the Third Generation

**3**G is not just a mobile network! I am a member of 3G - by which I mean I am a member of the Third Generation of those born after the Holocaust. My late grandfather was a survivor; neither of my parents experienced the Holocaust. Although I have not chosen this identity, it is one I am now beginning to embrace more than ever. This is a label I wear with mixed feelings:



Hannah Goldstone, with Mischa Annie, Fourth Generation, named after Hannah's grandfather Martin Wertheim

pride, anxiety, guilt and a sense of duty. It is this last category that I wish to expand on - this consciousness that I am in some way, together with other 3G members, bound to continue the work of the First and Second Generations. They have built for us the foundations we need to develop. They depend upon our generation to continue their important work in the fields of Holocaust testimony, education and the fight against racism, as well as providing a support network for those directly or indirectly affected by the Holocaust.

With the demise of the first generation of Holocaust survivors, it is now even more important for the next generations to show their commitment to continuing the memory of what these men and women experienced. Compared to our parents and grandparents, we, the Third Generation, have an easy task. They spent hours collecting and recording testimonies, gathering evidence and writing memoirs. All we have to do is to continue to tell these testimonies.

My grandfather, who came to England on the Kindertransport, did not share his own experiences with the family, which is not uncommon. When he died suddenly three years ago, my interest in the Holocaust deepened. Having always attended the Yom Hashoah event in Manchester and knowing many of the survivors in the local community, I wanted to learn more about this time in history from an academic as opposed to a purely emotional perspective. I enrolled in the Masters in Holocaust Studies course at Manchester University. Living in Manchester, a community with many Holocaust survivors, it is easy to forget how important their stories are.

Their faces are known to many yet, as the saying goes, familiarity breeds contempt. And yet for many, knowledge of the Holocaust remains limited. With a wide mix of students - from Polish Studies, Politics, Russian Studies and History - and with passionate and knowledgeable tutors, the course was eye-opening (I urge anyone interested to investigate it on the University website). I am not preaching that

it is necessary for everyone to undertake academic research into this area, but to show a concern.

What became very apparent as the academic year progressed was the importance of memory. While this may sound obvious, it is vital that memory and testimony be preserved. Yet who is responsible for this preservation? Survivors who have felt able and have recorded their own testimony in various formats have fulfilled their own duty. It is now vital that the legacy of the survivors is continued and it is time that the Third Generation shows its commitment to their grandparents while there is still the time for the First Generation to appreciate that we care. We must now demonstrate to our grandparents that we are committed to continuing their work, and that of the Second Generation, with dedication and enthusiasm. As adults ourselves, we can no longer rely on our parents to preserve and educate: we must now share this responsibility and do so with a sense of pride.

Another vital issue is the need for a 3G support network for those who require help and advice, as the psychological issues that have plagued some members of the Second Generation have unfortunately been passed on to some members of the Third Generation.

What I am suggesting therefore is an official Third Generation group linked to, yet remaining independent of, the First and Second Generations. As for the specifics, they depend on what other Third Generation members believe is necessary. But, like all groups, we need a starting point and I am hoping that this could be it. This is my call to all

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Third Generation members, regardless of age, knowledge of the Holocaust, and previous attendance at Holocaust-related events – it is now time that we organise some form of collective to ensure the future of Holocaust remembrance.

**I urge all who are interested to contact me at [third.generation@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:third.generation@hotmail.co.uk)** While there are still survivors, let us demonstrate to them that we are not only prepared but privileged to be able to continue their legacy.

**Hannah Goldstone**

## MIXED EMOTIONS: A RETURN TO HAMBURG

A new member of the AJR, Sue Barnett recently attended a talk in Westcliff by Renée Tyack, who mentioned she had been invited back to Leipzig by the city authorities as a former citizen. Several members of the audience also said they had paid similar visits to their former home towns in Germany. The following is an edited version of an article which appeared in the Woodford Liberal Synagogue newsletter 'Bimah' in 2004.

In September 2003, I set off from Stansted somewhat reluctantly for a visit to Hamburg, the city where I was born. I was travelling with my surviving sister, Inge, who is 14 years older than I. She was accompanied by her granddaughter, who says she will never forget the experience - a view shared by myself and others in the party, who had travelled from Israel, Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, Australia and the USA. Everyone had been invited to bring a companion. Their trip, like ours, was paid for by the Senate of Hamburg, which had invited us as 'former citizens' to revisit the city of our birth and see for ourselves how it had changed since we had been forced to leave a lifetime ago.

There were 15 'Hamburgers' and with our 'companions' we stayed at a five-star hotel with all trips paid for. The generosity was unbelievable. Our companions were there because they recognise that the experience can be very stressful. On the first morning we all recounted our family stories and from that emotional moment on, we bonded and became family-like. Two of our members had been in concentration camps and all had family who had. The stories are all commonplace but it is a draining experience to hear over and over again chilling phrases such as 'I never saw my father (or mother, or brother, or sister) after that ...' There were tears as we listened, but laughter and applause too as one or two people included jokes to lighten the mood.

We were then taken around the old Jewish area of the city. It was really nice to be in the area but dreadful to imagine the horrors that happened around those fine houses. My imagination went mad! There were round advertising boards where previously there had been posters showing Jews in a mocking light - in my mind's eye I could see people laughing and mocking my parents. But I felt how lovely that the boards were now there for real advertising purposes and there was no threat.

Our hosts hired a boat to take us down the Elbe. I kept thinking of my parents, who must have done this trip

and known all the sights. This is where the great freighters, the traditional source of Hamburg's wealth, are to be seen. It was lovely sitting in the fresh air chatting to my sister, who remembered her childhood here. They also hired a canal boat which took us down the Alster, providing us with beautiful views as well as refreshments.

The Jewish/Christian Society of Hamburg together with WIZO gave us a warm reception and supper in the synagogue hall. The synagogue has a permanent police guard. It was strange to see German police providing Jews with security. On the Friday evening several of



Sue Barnett (left), Mayor Ole von Beust, Sue's sister Inge in the Kaisersaal in Hamburg

us went to synagogue. My father would have been so pleased to have known I was there. Two men in our group wore skull caps knitted by someone in their family before they fled Hamburg. I thought they were knitted when my family were in Hamburg - a strange emotion. The entire synagogue visit had a very special feeling attached to it: 'Look, Hitler we're back, and you aren't!' I said a little prayer for those who had perished. There are few German Jews in Hamburg - our prayer book was in Hebrew and Russian.

Some of us went to family graves as well as visiting people they knew there. The Senate also treated us to an evening of ballet.

I saw the shop where my father had been a buyer although it has changed its name. So many strange feelings. Odd to think that one of our group had also fled to Shanghai like my father and had been in the typhoid hospital where he worked.

As guests of the Mayor of Hamburg, Ole von Beust, and the Senate, we were

taken to the beautiful town hall for a splendid lunch in the Kaisersaal. Inge and I were invited to sit on either side of the Mayor, who was charming. He told us how seriously Hamburg took these visits of 'former citizens'. My sister, who has never given a speech in her life, was asked to give the thank-you speech at the end of the lunch and couldn't resist saying how proud our parents would have been. An understatement! We were photographed and an article with our photo appeared in the national newspaper *Die Welt*.

There were magic moments when I could only just control my feelings.

The visit to my sister's school, her face, her memories - words cannot describe what we felt. It is now an institute for Jewish studies. Children come there for history lessons. They see a film which doesn't show the worst horrors, although they are described. Today's children see Jewish children of the 1930s made to stand with their backs to a blackboard while the others in the class make fun of them and signs above their heads ram home the message that Jews are the enemies of Germans.

There is an exhibition of photos of the time and one of our group recognised her class. She pointed to one girl and told me her name, adding that after putting her on the Kindertransport train, her parents had gone home and committed suicide. My sister pointed to a building outside and asked if it had been the gym. It had. She could remember it as well as some of her teachers' names even though she is now 79. They have preserved the science room as it was and imagine how everyone felt when Inge sat in the place she had occupied all those years ago! Photos of that moment are now all over the world.

After that we went to the Talmud Torah school. It had been a boys' school. The Jewish community are holding on to it in the hope they can raise enough money to reopen it as a Jewish school. They don't have the money to renovate it. A member of the Jewish community opened the building up for us and said 'I don't know anything about the school

*continued opposite*

## A unique wedding in Hamburg

**H**ans Radziewski, a year older than myself, was my friend in pre-war Berlin. He had at that time two younger sisters, Rosemarie and Helga, and a brother, Gideon, who was born after I emigrated in 1937. As the train slowly drew out of the Lehrter Bahnhof, the family had stood right at the end of the platform so that they would be the last people we would see as we left.

In the early 1940s Hans worked and slept on the Weissensee Cemetery (which in 1988-90 I helped in a relatively small way to restore). One day he received a message that Jews, including his family, were being rounded up and that he should come at once. He saw his family on a Lastwagen (open lorry) with many others. He dared not approach too closely for fear of being caught himself, but managed to exchange a few words with them. His parting words were: 'Lasst mir die Rosemarie hier, ich kann auf sie aufpassen' (Leave Rosemarie with me, I can look after her). These words have haunted him, and me, ever since. But his father refused his request and the lorry set off for one of the railway stations from which they were transported, probably in indescribable conditions, to Riga. There the train stopped in the Rumbula forest near a village called Bikernieki. They were ordered 'Raus!', shot on the spot and fell into prepared pits. Hans was eventually caught and taken to Auschwitz, where he survived by the skin of his teeth.

Hans eventually recovered partially, studied to become a social worker, and married a non-Jewish girl. They had two children: Alexander (Alex) and Claudia.



The plaque opposite the former synagogue of Friedrichstadt reads: 'Opposite this spot once stood the Synagogue (Am Binnenhafen 17), the Jewish School (Am Binnenhafen 18), and the offices of the Rabbinate (Westermarktstrasse 24) of the Jewish Community of Friedrichstadt. The inside of the Synagogue, the foundation stone of which was laid in the year 1845 – in the year 5606 according to the Jewish calendar – was destroyed by the National Socialists on the morning of 10 November 1938. Those alive [today] be tolerant and ever vigilant!'

Alex too married a non-Jewish girl and, living near Hamburg, they had two lovely girls, the elder of whom is an exact replica of her grandmother. Last year, Alex, who plays percussion in the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra, and his wife divorced. He later found a Jewish academic girl and in 2009 they undertook a civil marriage in the USA, where she lived. They decided, however, that they wanted a Jewish marriage, for which he would have to be officially converted. They contacted two rabbis, one in Amsterdam and one in Berlin, but neither fitted into the conditions and timescale they envisaged. So it was that I volunteered to officiate for them, having as a layman had

experience in taking services and funerals, delivering sermons and being able to sing.

A date was arranged this May. Being non-orthodox, they wanted to change several of the prescribed prayers, especially as books they had consulted all gave slightly different versions. I conducted the wedding service in Hebrew, German and English and sang the various prayers and *Sheva Brachot* in the setting by Sholom Secunda, arranged by myself accompanied by an excellent professional musician. I was the only person present who knew the groom's grandparents, aunts and uncle, the last mentioned being only children when they were murdered.

It was a unique occasion for a Jewish wedding to take place in Germany among non-Russian Jews. There were present many non-Jews who had never attended a Jewish wedding and their, and everybody's, comments were most complimentary.

I also took the opportunity to visit my cousin Wolfgang and his wife Marlis in Friedrichstadt. This small town, founded in the sixteenth century under Dutch influence only a few kilometres from Hamburg, eventually contained up to 3,000 inhabitants. Of these, 400 were Jews and the old synagogue proved too small for them. A new one was built but, as can be seen on the photograph above, the inside was destroyed in 1938. It has since been refurbished with its Jewish heritage in mind and is now used for cultural events. There are also two cemeteries. There are no Jews in Friedrichstadt today.

**Rudi Leavor**

### *continued*

but I think we are standing in what was the hall' - whereupon one of our group said he had gone to the school and we were standing in what had been the gym. He went on to talk about the school and said that when things got very difficult the director of the school had opened a class for girls, an unheard-of thing! Ellen, from Jerusalem, said she had been a member of that class. She paid tribute to the head and I thought it very touching that all these years later a former pupil should be so glowing in her praise of him. What better tribute!

I was much moved also by the fact that my sister had often spoken of her visits to our maternal grandmother's old people's home and suddenly there it was in front of us. She pointed out the exact room. I felt as though I was living her previous life in Hamburg. It had been the subject of my childhood nightmares, although I

was only 11 months old when my mother escaped with me to England. By a miracle, my parents and all my siblings survived and so my sister and I consented to be interviewed by students of Hamburg University. The recording will be used for educational purposes. Young Germans cannot understand how it all happened and there is remorse. These are not the perpetrators of those hideous crimes.

And so the sights went on. I even saw the road where I was born. The hospital itself is still standing and still in use. For a fleeting moment, I wondered if the people who had been there in 1938 would come out to greet us.

One of our party, a lady from Uruguay, said to another, Mr Kauffman, now an American citizen, that she could name the dogs he had owned nearly 70 years ago and proceeded to do so. He couldn't believe it because she had been his next-

door neighbour. What made her choose this trip at the same time as he had? There are four trips a year and they have been going on for years.

At the end, I collected money for flowers for the organisers and an elderly man asked if he could give a short speech. He said he had been to Hamburg twice before and had hated it, but now he realised that the Holocaust was slipping into history and he found people in Hamburg now very friendly. This frail old man had travelled from St Louis to make his peace with the city of his birth, a 'closure' of the most touching kind. That alone made the trip worthwhile. I had declined invitations for years and had not really wanted to go this time, indeed had gone only for my sister's sake. I still have mixed emotions, but it was an experience I'm glad I've had.

**Sue Barnett (née Frankenberg)**



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### 'VOTE, VOTE, VOTE FOR CLEMENT ATTLEE?'

Sir – Having been away for much of the summer, I have only just caught up with your July edition. I would like to add a comment on Anthony Grenville's excellent article 'Vote, vote, vote for Clement Attlee?'

I didn't vote for him because, like other refugees, I didn't have the vote in 1945. But whilst I had the highest regard for Winston Churchill as an indispensable war leader, Attlee certainly would have had my vote. I was an officer in the Worcester Regiment in Germany at the time and one of my more challenging duties was to give ABCA (Army Bureau of Current Affairs) talks to the soldiers under my command. In discussing the political situation and the forthcoming election, it became clear that many of the conscripts had never even entertained the idea of voting anything other than Conservative as their working class parents had traditionally done. Like very many other non-professional officers, I explained to them that they had another option, which at that time seemed to me to be far preferable for the rebuilding of war-torn Britain. It was the vote of the armed forces that swung the election to the Labour Party and so I claim to have played a bit part in what transpired in 1945.

Attlee was indeed a self-effacing man who served under Churchill with total loyalty, whatever Churchill may have thought of him. It was thanks to his managerial skills and steely resolve that he inaugurated the welfare state, on which life in Britain is still largely based. I well remember listening to his election speech in the old Bull Ring in Birmingham in the 1950 general election: it was heart-warming to see the thousand-odd men and women, mainly men in flat caps, warmly applauding the man who had transformed their lives.

Whilst I have your ear, may I take the opportunity of thanking Gloria Tessler for the many telling contributions she has made over the years in her Art Notes - always lucidly written and enticing the reader to visit this or that exhibition which might otherwise have remained obscure. She is a very great asset to the Journal and long may she continue.

*Professor Leslie Baruch Brent, London N19*

### 'GHETTO MENTALITY'

Sir – I am offended by Annette Saville's letter (September) contrasting the bravery and

determination of the early Zionist pioneers in Palestine with what she calls the 'ghetto mentality'.

The Jews of the diaspora formed well organised communities which can in no way be described as cowardly or helpless. In all these communities there were strong political parties and religious, social, cultural and self-help organisations which fought for the rights of Jews in often very anti-Semitic environments.

These organisations continued clandestinely in the ghettos under the murderous German occupation. The Jews, thrown into ghettos, concentration camps and even extermination camps, showed heroic passive as well as, when possible, armed resistance against impossible odds. There were organised revolts in almost all the ghettos and camps. All this is well documented. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising lasted five weeks. The Jewish resistance fought the then victorious German army trying to defend the Jewish population and was annihilated in the end. I owe my life to the organised Jewish resistance fighters, first in the Warsaw Ghetto and later 'on the Aryan side', and have known many Jewish men and women who sacrificed their lives for others. I am proud of the 'ghetto mentality'.

*Wlodka Blit-Robertson, London SE26*

### 'HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR'

Sir - So Peter Phillips (October) agrees that 'If you were Jewish and in Nazi-occupied territory on Kristallnacht you are a genuine "Holocaust survivor".' What am I and the likes of me to make of that definition? I am Jewish. I can prove that with a certificate giving details about my *brith mila*, signed by an 'Orthodox' *mohel*. At the time of Kristallnacht, I hadn't yet been born. At birth, I was Austrian, but did not live in Nazi-occupied Austria. Having been born, I had to wait one month for the Nazi invasion to occur. As a result, I came to live in a Nazi-occupied territory. Am I therefore not a *genuine* 'Holocaust survivor'? I and the likes of me are used to being overlooked. We don't like it very much.

*Henri Obstfeld, Stanmore, Middx*

### THE BIRDMAN OF FRANKFURT

Sir – Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, in her October Letter from Israel, refers in a throw-away manner to Ludwig Koch. Readers of the *AJR Journal* have reason to be interested in him.

Born in 1881 in Frankfurt-am-Main, Ludwig Koch was musical enough to sing and play the violin professionally. He was fluent in French and consequently during the First World War was in German military intelligence, making a number of investigative trips behind the French lines.

He became interested in recording the sounds of birds and animals and became a pioneer in this art, having, as Ms Shefer-Vanson writes, to carry the very heavy equipment of that pre-transistor age around the countryside. He also wrote books on nature and in the mid-1930s the foreword of one of his books was written by Hermann Göring, who signed himself 'Reichsoberförster' in one of his 'Ich bestimme, wer hier Jude ist' phases.

Ludwig Koch fled Germany in 1936 and after the start of the war was briefly interned on the Isle of Man.

He was very popular with listeners to the BBC, both for his fascinating recordings and his heavy accent, which his friends suspected was to a certain extent nurtured, since it made him so distinctive. (Koch's style and accent are gently but brilliantly mocked by Peter Sellers on his 1958 record 'The Best of Sellers' in the last item on it, 'Suddenly It's Folk Song'.)

Koch was invited at least once by the Royal Family to play some of his recordings to them privately and he was awarded an MBE. He died in 1974. One feels privileged to have known him.

*Ernest H. Simon, Merstham, Surrey*

### 'THE PIONEERING SPIRIT'

Sir – Victor Ross's article 'The pioneering spirit' (October) reminded me that my late father, Frederick Masserick, was also in the Pioneer Corps. He spoke of his time digging trenches around Cheltenham, which had been identified as a possible reserve seat of government in the event of an invasion. My father's job was to fill a wheelbarrow and Arthur Koestler's job was to wheel it away. Koestler would protest that the barrow was too full. My father's response was that with half-full barrows the war would never be won! So Koestler's reputation as a man in search of a cushy billet appears justified! My father was eventually transferred to the airborne divisions gliding in to the 'Bridge too far' foul-up in Holland.

*Francis Masserick, Isle of Man*

### THE OPHTHALMIC SPECIALIST AND THE SERB

Sir – I read Margarete Stern's article (October) with great interest. I am Professor Oscar Fehr's daughter and would like to make two corrections. My father did unpaid, voluntary work in Moorfields Eye Hospital, taking some clinics. He did get paid by his patients in Harley Street, where, however, he treated poor people, mostly refugees, free.

Before he could practise in this country he had to become a medical student (at

Edinburgh University), where he passed after three years' study aged 72. I sent his sketches and account of his internment to the Manx Museum on the Isle of Man at their request. After the war, a road in Braunschweig, his birthplace, was named Oscar Fehr Weg.

*Inge Samson (née Fehr),  
Bishop's Stortford, Herts*

#### A WONDERFUL TEA PARTY

Sir – Once again we all enjoyed a wonderful concert and delicious Tea on the occasion of the AJR annual event. I went with my younger family members who also enjoyed this special occasion. The choice of songs from various operettas was good and the singers performed excellently.

Thank you AJR for all your good work throughout the year looking after the ex-refugee community, enhancing our lives in our old age. Thank you also for the good meals and entertainment at the AJR Centre, which I much appreciate. The staff are always friendly. Also special thanks to Susie Kaufman.

*Josie Dutch, London NW2*

Sir – My friend Stanley Birne and I want to place on record how much we enjoyed the annual AJR Party at the Watford Hilton. The refreshments were of a high standard, tea was served promptly and - by no means least - the fruit platter was so artistic it should have been photographed for *House and Garden*.

Of course, the music was, as always, very nostalgic and it was a joy to see the people around us nodding their heads and tapping their feet in enthusiasm. Our thanks to everyone who helped to make this afternoon such a pleasurable event for everyone.

*(Mrs) Meta Roseneil, Buckhurst Hill*

Sir – We have just returned from a very entertaining and enjoyable afternoon tea and song at the Watford Hilton together with AJR members.

The only disturbing factor was the mentioned presence of the member of the Austrian embassy (although he was not there), which we deem to have been very unnecessary, in view of the part that country played in supporting the Holocaust.

*George and Helga Lazarus, London N3*

#### THE NOT-SO-GOOD OLD DAYS

Sir – To accompany Francis Steiner's tale in your August issue ('*Matura* 70 years on'), I have a somewhat similar story to tell concerning my home town, Stuttgart. I have known my best friend there since our days at primary school, before 1930, and I attended with him and other school friends the Reformrealgymnasium from 1933 to 1936, when I was sent to school in England. My German non-Jewish friends, none of them Nazis, have been meeting ever since then, except for the war years, at their monthly *Stammtisch* and in recent times I have joined

them once a year, and still do, although our numbers are now diminishing. Stuttgart is not what it was, but our meetings, marked by reminiscences of the 'not-so-good' old days, are always moving occasions.

*Professor Ernst Sondheimer, London N6*

#### 'ULU' NAMIER

Sir – In 'Letters to the Editor' (September), Lionel Blumenthal mentions the historian Lewis Namier. He was my father's first cousin. We knew him as 'Ulu' – that's what our family called him.

*(Mrs) Anne Selinger, Reading*

#### SEELOW, SEELÖWE

Sir – I was interested in David Harris's article on visiting Seelow in your April issue, which I recently acquired. I visit a gymnasium there roughly once a year to speak on Judaism. Seelow is also the site of one of the last major battles of the war and part-way down the hill into the 'Oderbruch' flat valley are a memorial and museum as well as mass graves - thousands of Germans and Russians fell in this Red Army attempt to break through the last natural barrier before Berlin.

How ironic that Hitler's plan to invade Britain was Operation 'Seelöwe' – Sealion – and that the last campaign which led to the defeat of the Third Reich was at Seelow. I know the two words are not connected but they sound so similar.

*Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild, Berlin*

#### A MATTER OF JUDGEMENT

Sir – Evidently, an Oxford degree and *seichel* do not necessarily go together.

*Seichel* is not something one can acquire through study: you are either born with it or not. The exact definition of the Yiddish term is difficult to define. It can be loosely translated as a mixture of tact, sound judgment, *shtetl* wisdom and a lot more. Anyone lacking in *seichel* has a tendency to put his foot where his mouth is! For instance, for one Jew to tell another to go to Israel demonstrates a distinct lack of *seichel*, especially if he is himself a refugee from Austria.

To back up his dislike of the religious, Peter Philips (October) quotes Howard Jacobson but fails to see his own mirror-image in Finkler, the ashamed Jew who is the character Jacobson created in his novel *The Finkler Question*. Like Mr Philips, Finkler is anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, abhors religious Jews and feels comfortable in his outrage. His article is all polemics and devoid of facts. For instance, he queries the difference between Sharia and the laws governing Israel. Some of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's gaffes are indeed objectionable but rabbis don't promulgate laws in modern-day Israel and a curse or two never broke anyone's bones. Only marriage and divorce are the domain of the Beth Din, which is the legacy of his idol, David Ben-Gurion. The courts are subject to the Israeli judiciary, who are fiercely independent and

secular. These very laws are based on British laws which he so admires.

*Rubin Katz, London NW11*

Sir – Mr Phillips appears to think he is the only one in step. He writes that Herzl, Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir envisaged a secular state, but in 1948 Ben-Gurion agreed that those studying at *yeshivot* and *koleils* be deferred or exempted from military service. In England only a judge can rule on crimes or civil disputes so why in Israel should not *dayanim*, who have studied Jewish law for years, be the only ones to decide on divorce and who is a Jew? If Arabs are members of the Knesset, why should not Israelis who are strictly Orthodox be members of the cabinet?

Mr Phillips appears to have overlooked the fact that strictly Orthodox Jews lived in Jerusalem long before Herzl envisaged a Jewish state. He also overlooks the fact that 3,000 years ago Jewish kings ruled the people. And they were not atheists: the king read from the Torah in the temple on the festival of Succot.

*Henry Schragenheim, London N15*

#### 'WICKEDNESS, MALICE'

Sir – In reply to Peter Fraenkel's query (October) regarding the origin of the German-Jewish word *risches*, meaning anti-Semitism, it is simply the Hebrew word *rish'ut*, meaning wickedness or malice, according to the Ashkenazi pronunciation. It is clearly a word current in Jüdisch-Deutsch, the western dialect of Yiddish that died out at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and was not used in the Eastern dialects. That would explain why the Yiddish speakers he consulted didn't know the word.

There are several other such words current among Jews of Western Europe that differ from the Eastern usage. For example, a prayer book was called a *tefillah* rather than a *siddur* and the loaves eaten on Shabbat were known as *baerches* or *tatche* rather than *challah*, all words that would almost certainly not be recognised by Yiddish speakers.

As regards George Schlesinger's query regarding the sentence 'Rachmones (the patient) entered Beth ganev (the ... Hospital). Amhoretz (the chief surgeon) ...': *rachmones* is the Hebrew word *rachamanut* meaning 'mercy' and is used to describe a person for whom everything goes wrong, otherwise known as a *nebbich*. *Beth ganev* means literally 'the house of a thief', though I have no idea to what the allusion is in this case. *Amhoretz* means 'an ignorant person', as Schlesinger wrote, from the Hebrew *am ha'arets*, meaning literally 'a peasant'.

*Martin D. Stern, Salford, Lancs*

Sir – Peter Fraenkel is acquainted with *risches*, signifying anti-Semitism in Yiddish; he will also remember *rosche*, a word used to describe an anti-Semite. The two words are

*continued on page 16*

# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

**P**aul Gauguin liked to regard himself as an *artiste-sauvage*, a painter who preferred the South Sea islands to the salons of Paris. He loved myth, despised the church, but often painted himself as a red- or green-haired Christ figure, an artist reviled and misunderstood by his peers. In one work, his body is held up by three Tahitian women wearing Breton hats – a clear symbol of freedom versus restraint. He also portrayed himself as a fox, implying wisdom in Maori lore. A proto-hippy, his rounded and squat portraits of women are filled with symbolism; his Breton landscapes contain the wistful glimpse of



Paul Gauguin, *Teha'amana Has Many Parents*, 1893. Oil on canvas. Art Institute of Chicago, USA. ©Art Institute of Chicago, USA

a ship ready to take him away, back to the South Seas.

**Gauguin: Maker of Myth at Tate Modern** until 16 January, the first major London exhibition of his work in half a century, offers a lush and colourful perspective of the Post-Impressionist who helped launch Modernism and clearly inspired Picasso in the sensuality and symbolism of his subjects.

Rejecting Impressionism and European culture by his self-imposed exile in Tahiti, Gauguin failed to notice that the old life of the South Sea islands was itself being overtaken by modernity. Though

he travelled widely, leaving his wife and children in Europe and spending two long periods in Tahiti with various lovers, in one sense he barely moved from his original exploration of religion, tradition and myth which began in Brittany.

Gauguin started out as a banker, a stockbroker, before gaining notoriety as a journalist, editing *Le Sourire*, a satirical journal, before his transition to self-conceived bohemian savage, painter and author of *Noa Noa*, a Tahitian memoir. He desperately sought a return to nature, to the South Sea islanders, with their solid, robust beauty. He was a careful, reflective painter, slowly applying his brushstrokes, painting a field pink or orange rather than green. If he saw a piece of red glass on a beach it might inspire him to paint the whole meadow red. His work cut through the distinctions between civilisation and the primitive. Contrast his paintings of Breton women with the physicality of his tribal subjects among whose mysterious peace he sought his nirvana: he painted them in the style of Polynesian carvings, accentuating their primitivism. What is exciting in his work is that, in the stillness of his female subjects in particular, there is a sense of becoming, of change.

The vast panoply of European history is present in over 200 works from Budapest's **Museum of Fine Arts** partnered by the **Hungarian National Gallery** in **The Royal Academy's Treasures from Budapest: European Masterpieces from Leonardo to Schiele**, until December. Religion and myth in portraits, sculptures, still lifes and landscapes from the Italian Renaissance to the High Baroque include British artists like **Reynolds** and **Constable** and Hungarians like **Ferenczy** and **Rippl-Ronai**. Some works are from the Esterhazy collection, acquired by the Museum in 1871. There are popes, peasants and a bucolic wedding scene alongside works by **Schiele** and **Picasso**. It is a generous show but one or two more contemporary works would also have been welcome.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING  
AND SCULPTURE

## REVIEWS

### Bringing war criminals to justice

**HITLER'S WILL**

by Herman Rothman

edited by Helen Fry

*The History Press* (tel 01453 883 300; [www.thehistorypress.co.uk](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk)), 2009, 192 pp. hardback, £18.99

**T**he title of this book doesn't really do justice to a fascinating autobiography. Herman Rothman grew up in a middle class, modern Orthodox Jewish family in Berlin and the early part of the book describes his family background. His father was born in Austrian Poland and had had a very adventurous life as an officer in the Austrian cavalry during the Great War. After the war he moved to Berlin, where the author was born in 1924. The family relationships in Berlin were warm and caring and young Herman led a sheltered, happy childhood.

In 1933, with Hitler's rise to power, life changed but, until 1938, this was surprisingly perceived more as a very unpleasant experience than an actual threat to one's existence. Herman continued to go to school and synagogue and in 1937 celebrated his barmitzva in style. In 1938, however, it became obvious that the Nazis were becoming more aggressive, culminating in Kristallnacht. Herman's father had a friend in the police, Inspector Belgart, and it is probably due to him that the family was able to escape the worst excesses of Nazism. The book is dedicated to him.

Events forced the family to conclude that Herman should take advantage of the Kindertransport escape route, and the 14-year old moved to a new life in England. Here, the youngster had to get used to doing manual agricultural work, poor living conditions and, most important of all, losing contact with his parents and brother. Fortunately, he was a strong, athletic young man and good at making lasting friendships.

Towards the end of the war, he was able to join the British army and, although he saw no active service, was able to use his language skills in dealing with German POWs and gathering intelligence. At one stage, he was put in charge of moving large numbers of Germans to the rear even though he was still only a private.

Herman Rothman's full contribution to bringing to justice those responsible for war crimes began after the war. Initially, he acted mainly as interpreter for senior investigators, but later became one himself, when not only his knowledge of German but his ability to interview and assess potential criminals came to the fore.

The title of the book relates to the most dramatic event in his intelligence work. During a routine search, a corporal became

suspicious of bulging shoulder pads worn by one of the prisoners, ripped them open, and discovered documents which turned out to be copies of Hitler's personal and political wills and an addendum by Goebbels. Interrogations revealed that the prisoner was Heinz Lorenz, who had been Goebbels's press attaché. The author describes not only his own role in translating and assessing the documents, but the dramatic story of how they had been entrusted to Lorenz in Hitler's bunker and his escape to the West. The most interesting aspect of the wills relates to Hitler's reaction to the betrayal, as he saw it, by Göring and Himmler. The wills and Goebbels's addendum are, in my view unnecessarily, given in three appendices.

Although this was clearly the highlight of Mr Rothman's work in this field, there are many other descriptions of encounters with suspected Nazi criminals. One was with a shady character with an English name who has a separate chapter relating to him.

A very interesting chapter recounts the remarkable stories of how the author's mother and brother, and separately his father, survived the war. He discovered these only in detailed letters written by his brother which he partly quotes.

There are many interesting photographs in this very readable book. It is to be commended for demonstrating yet again how individual refugees used their talents in fighting the Nazis and helping to bring at least some of them to justice.

George Vulkan

## The ever-present dilemmas of Jewish life

### THE FINKLER QUESTION

by Howard Jacobson

Bloomsbury (tel 020 7494 2111), 2010, 320 pp. hardback

It is said that Howard Jacobson – winner of the prestigious Man Booker Prize for Fiction this year – is incapable of writing a boring sentence. Certainly the reader is regaled with puns ('the real McGoy', for instance), Yiddish expressions, and all kinds of verbal wit that contribute to the flavour of his latest book. Its narrative moves slowly and has to be savoured without haste.

The main characters are three men who have enjoyed a long friendship: Sam Finkler, a television personality, Julian Treslove, a former BBC radio producer, and Libor Sevvick, their former teacher.

Treslove is the only non-Jew of the trio. At the outset of the story, he is mugged by a woman while gazing into a music shop. He is convinced she called him a Jew and this sets in trail much speculation about the vulnerability of Jews to anti-Semitic attack. Consulting the internet, Treslove is horrified to find news of dozens of such incidents in many countries.

As they meet at Sevvick's apartment, both Sevvick and Finkler have recently lost their partners. Sevvick, bereft of

his beautiful pianist wife, is the only uxorious one; Finkler has had extra-marital relationships from time to time; Treslove has never stayed long with one partner and manages to have an affair with Finkler's wife which is described in some erotic detail. What Treslove really wants is to have a share in the mysterious bond that binds Jewish people together. Meeting Finkler's relatives at a *seuder*, however, leaves him dissatisfied and ambivalent.

Into this mix Jacobson puts a good deal of discussion of the Jewish position *vis-à-vis* Israel. Finkler is a member of an organisation called 'ASHamed Jews' (*pace* Jews for Justice to Palestinians). Treslove is puzzled: 'How can you be ashamed about

a country that isn't yours?' 'It's because they're Jewish,' comes the reply.

Finkler's wife, a convert to Judaism, had found the whole debate tiresome: 'Jews ... endlessly falling out about how Jewish to be ... whether they're practising or not, whether to wear fringes or eat bacon, whether the world hates them or doesn't.'

The question also comes up as to why Israel should be expected to behave better than any other country.

At the end of the book Sevvick dies in mysterious circumstances, adding to the cycle of loss in the narrative.

All in all, this book is a rich tapestry whose threads are the ever-present dilemmas of Jewish life.

Martha Blend

## A limited life-span: The Arbeitskreis der deutschen Emigration

Anthony Grenville's account of the British-based Free German League of Culture (FGLC) in the September issue of the Journal is a timely reminder of comparable developments in France, where the *Arbeitskreis der deutschen Emigration* pre-dated the FGLC by two years. Founded in 1937, the *Arbeitskreis* undoubtedly mirrored Léon Blum's Popular Front government, being the creation of both Social Democrats and Communists, but predominantly of Jewish emigrants.

The inaugural meeting of the *Arbeitskreis* on 8 March 1937 was chaired by the Social Democrat Rudolf Breitscheid, a former member of the Reichstag and one-time Prussian minister of the interior. He was partnered by the Communist Willi Münzenberg, first chair of the Young Communist International, who had, however, broken with Stalin in early 1937 and founded the Paris-based anti-Nazi and anti-Stalinist journal *Die Zukunft*, which he edited together with Arthur Koestler. This first meeting was attended by five Communists and five Social Democrats who, following the withdrawal of Breitscheid and Münzenberg, elected from among themselves two co-chairmen, August Hartmann (Communist) and Robert Breuer (Social Democrat). Little is known about Hartmann but Breuer was a well-known writer and journalist in the Weimar years and a confidant of President Ebert. In 1932 he reputedly advised President Hindenburg that Hitler should be arrested.

The objectives of the *Arbeitskreis* were, in many respects, similar to

those of the FGLC. First and foremost was the question of making economic support available for emigrants, linked to a proposal to provide for them an employment exchange under the auspices of the French trade unions. A second objective was the maintenance of the emigrants' cultural life, involving the establishment of a cultural centre, the founding of a newspaper and the increased involvement of non-political emigrants. Particular attention was also to be given to the organisation of public events. The third objective, which did not seem to rank so highly among the stated intentions of the FGLC, was the need to develop and maintain cordial relations with the host community. Underlying all these purposes was the issue of a united left-wing front which was eventually deferred to be resolved in a future non-Nazi Germany, while the immediate concern remained the emigrants' political interests.

Following the meeting establishing the *Arbeitskreis*, it was agreed that a public event be held on 20 March 1937 at which, it was hoped, Heinrich Mann could be persuaded to speak. The artistic structure of this event was to be left in the hands of Erwin Piscator, a renowned German theatre director and producer and a colleague of Bertolt Brecht.

Inevitably, the life-span of the *Arbeitskreis* was limited. With the outbreak of war in 1939, most Germans living in France were interned, though the relatively speedy release of political emigrants and Jews stood in marked contrast to the dilatory approach

continued overleaf

## A nice Jewish refugee boy

**B**ookish, left-wing and fervently agnostic, the Feiths, my mother's family, more than anyone else shaped my future attitudes.

My aunt Ida, the oldest of the four siblings, was also the most forceful and the family's mouthpiece. The second, Rosa, my mother, sadly died when I was a small child. Siegi (short for Siegfried) was generally considered a *Sonderling* (an eccentric) mainly because he never wore an overcoat, even on the coldest days. He was said to speak 12 languages including Esperanto.

The youngest, Arthur, 13 years Ida's junior, was born in Dresden and went to school in Berlin and Vienna, where the family finally settled. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Arthur, a bright lad of 20, was working in Manchester and had no desire at all to fight for Kaiser and country. He preferred to be interned on the Isle of Man and remained an anglophile for the rest of his life. Eventually he returned to Vienna and married in his thirties. After the Anschluss he and his wife Lily emigrated to Melbourne with their only child, eight-year-old Herbert.

Throughout his scholastic career Herbert, or Herb, as he preferred to be called, was an outstanding student. He read politics at the University of Melbourne and, on graduation in 1951, went to Indonesia as a volunteer for two years to work for the civil service on local pay and conditions, and Indonesia was to become his main interest and his passion. He met his future wife, Betty Evans, while

still at university. Between 1957 and 1960 he completed his doctorate at Cornell University in the United States, where their second child, Annie, was born.

I saw Herb briefly at the beginning of 1939 in London, where the family spent a few days on their way to Australia, and then not until 1950 in Sydney, where, at the time, I lived with my new husband. Herb charmed us both with his warmth and modesty.

Herb started his academic career as a lecturer at Monash University in Melbourne in 1962 and in 1968 was promoted to the chair of politics. However, he didn't at all enjoy being a professor, and in 1974 demoted himself to reader. When I asked him years later if he had ever regretted that decision, he said the only thing he regretted was that he had not taken it earlier.

Status and material possessions meant nothing to him. When some Asian refugees needed chairs he gave them all his, or rather the family's - by that time he and Betty had three children. 'We've got garden chairs,' he told my uncle, who wanted to know what they were going to sit on. Arthur wisely bought each of his three grandchildren a house before he died and arranged for the rest of his estate to be held in a trust to which Herb had only limited access.

Herb and Betty devoted any time they could spare of their busy lives, as teachers and parents, to campaigning tirelessly for

peace and human rights.

My cousin's unworldliness had its downside. Anecdotes about his missing flights and appointments abound. On one occasion, three of us were awaiting him eagerly at Heathrow. When he finally arrived, before we had time to greet him a woman from Amnesty International had seized him. 'Ah, Dr Feith!', she beamed. He had forgotten to tell us he had committed himself to going to Oxford first.

After his retirement in 1990, he and Betty spent part of each year as volunteer teachers in Indonesia. Throughout the nineties I went to Melbourne fairly

frequently and got to know Herb better. His self-effacement and genuine concern for others never failed to impress me.

On 3 November 2001, his 71st birthday, I tried to talk to him on the phone but Betty told me he was in Indonesia and wasn't expected back for another few days.

Twelve days later, on 15 November, while cycling home (he had given up his car for ecological reasons), he was hit by a train at a level crossing and killed instantly. Over 600 people from across the world attended his funeral.

His is the story of a nice Jewish refugee boy who not only *made* good but also *did* good. I miss him very much and will be thinking of him on 3 November of this year, which would have been his 80th birthday.

Edith Argy

*His is the story of a nice Jewish refugee boy who not only made good but also did good. I miss him very much and will be thinking of him on 3 November of this year, which would have been his 80th birthday.'*

### A limited life-span: The Arbeitskreis der deutschen Emigration

*continued from previous page*

adopted by the UK. Many, though not all, of the emigrants were thus able to escape the Germans. Some, like Piscator, managed to reach the US, while others, like Breitscheid, were arrested by the Gestapo and confined in Buchenwald, where he was probably murdered. Münzenberg, who had fled to southern France, became a victim of the Vichy regime, whereas Breuer managed to reach Vichy-controlled Morocco; from here he moved to the French island of Martinique, where he died, largely due to the effects of the allied blockade of the island.

Eric Bourne

### ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY – NOVEMBER

**Mon 1** David Simmons, 'Inside - Outside: My Aunt's Little Book' Club 43

**Mon 8** Geoffrey Ben-Nathan, 'Observations on Jewish, Irish and Other Humour' Club 43

**Wed 10 Book launch: Chronicle of a Downfall: Germany 1929-1939** Andreas Wesemann brings the launch of his new English-language edition of Leopold Schwarzschild's writings to the Wiener Library, 7.00 pm, tel 020 7636 7247

**Mon 15** Robin Hanau, 'Nuclear Weapons since 1945' Club 43

**Tues 23** Dr Anthony Grenville, 'Jewish Refugees from Hitler in Britain, 1933-1970', Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, Meeting Room Arts B127, 4.30 pm (tea 4.00 pm). All welcome, booking not required, tel 01273 678771

**Mon 22** Hall not available Club 43

**Mon 29** Jim Betts, 'The Quakers in Britain' Club 43

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

# With a Song in my Heart

Some 250 members and guests packed the Hertford Suite in the Hilton Hotel, Watford for the AJR's 2010 annual Celebration Tea – 'one of the best teas we have ever held,' AJR Director Carol Rossen said. Operatic entertainment was provided by Glenys Groves, Jonathan Fisher and Alexandre Naoumenko, accompanied at the piano by Diana Franklin, a member of

the AJR's Management Committee.

Welcoming guests, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman stated that 'The AJR operates at a considerable deficit, with our expenditure almost £1.5m greater than our income.' 'This shortfall,' Andrew added, 'is met through the receipt of legacies and we cannot overstate our gratitude to those members who have

included the AJR in their wills. Their forethought and generosity are enabling us to continue to provide our much-needed services.'

Photos by Alan Ezekiel  
of That Personal Touch  
07773 444 335



## An unforgettable piano duo: Rawicz and Landauer

Who can remember this famous piano duo? As a matter of fact, who can forget them?

In 1937, when I was 13 years old, I attended the wedding of my second cousin, Annie Wiesel, to Bertold Landauer, the brother of Walter Landauer. The Rawicz and Landauer duo were sitting back-to-back at two pianos, on a specially constructed piano stool. They were already well established, earning lots of money and lifelong friends.

In March 1938 Hitler's troops marched into Austria. Annie was very lucky indeed. Walter Landauer helped no fewer than six people to come to the UK – Annie and her

husband, Annie's parents, and his own parents. He guaranteed their upkeep and had to give so much money to the government that his bank account was cleared out (though he soon recouped the money). He installed Annie and her husband in a flat in Streatham, in south London.

When war broke out, all 'enemy aliens' had to face a tribunal. Annie, who was the wife of an engineer, was put into 'B' category.

In 1940 all the men, and Annie, were interned on the Isle of Man. Rawicz was the first one to be released and he carried on playing alone until Landauer too was released and rejoined him.

In 1946 I stayed with cousin Annie on sick leave. She told me that Walter Landauer's mother had escorted him to the conservatoire every time to make sure he wasn't skipping his piano lessons. She

was the driving force behind her sons' success. Annie also told me that Walter married a Blackpool chorus girl but the marriage failed – not surprising as they had nothing in common! I don't know whether he ever married again.

Many years later, when I lived in Catford in south-east London, Landauer appeared alone at the local town hall. Rawicz, the older of the two, had died and Landauer could never bring himself to enter into another partnership and had carried on alone. In fact, I possess a record on which he had recorded both parts on top of each other – it's called 'Landauer and Landauer'. I introduced myself to him and he was pleased to tell the people there that I was his only remaining relative. He must have been over 80 years old. How pathetic – but that is the story of us displaced people!

Annette Saville

# INSIDE the AJR

## **Manchester 'False Holocaust Testimony'**

The delightful Professor Sue Vice of Sheffield University addressed us on 'False Holocaust Testimony'. Fingments of imagination, guilt complex, 'psychobabble', or just plain deceitfulness - it all comes into play. A most interesting and pleasant afternoon.

*Werner Lachs*

**Next meeting: 10 Nov. At War Museum North. Speaker: Anthony Grenville**  
**5 Dec. Chanukah Social at Nicky Alliance Centre**

## **Ilford Holocaust Exhibition 'essential viewing'**

Suzanne Bardgett spoke to us about the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition: how the idea arose in the first instance, how the artifacts were collected, the grand opening in June 2000, and how it has grown since. The Exhibition attracts many people from all walks of life, confirms the existence of the Holocaust, and is therefore essential viewing for everybody.

*Meta Roseneil*

**Next meeting: 3 Nov. Howard Falksohn of the Wiener Library, 'Children of the Third Reich', tbc**

## **Sheffield CF 'Connections'**

We again enjoyed Dorothy Fleming's kind hospitality and her suggested topic of discussion: 'Connections'. Being a group of camp survivors, Kindertransport refugees and Second Generation members, there was no shortage of connections and coincidences - some poignant and some humorous.

*Susanne Pearson*

**Next meeting: 28 Nov**

## **Pinner 'Music and the Visual Arts'**

Alan Cohen gave a most interesting talk on 'Music and the Visual Arts', explaining that images often initiate musical themes as well as the reverse - how music often brings images to our minds. Alan's talk was illustrated with recordings and pictures. All an interesting experience for us.

*Paul Samet*

**Next meeting: 4 Nov. Suzanne Lewis of the Ben Uri Gallery**

## **Bradford CF Life as a peripatetic rabbi in Berlin**

Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild from Berlin talked to us about his work as a peripatetic rabbi to numerous Reform congregations in Germany, assisted by Dr Ulrike Offenberg, a historian of postwar Jewish life there. Later we joined Walter and his family in a meal celebrating the birthday of his father, Edgar, who is a member of our group.

*Anna Greenwood*

## **Surrey meeting overshadowed by sad news**

Fifteen of us (some were on holiday, others not well enough to attend) met for a coffee morning at my home. It was a small but pleasant meeting, though very much overshadowed by the news from Jutta Saunders that Vernon was not doing well and there was no hope of recovery. Vernon was the pillar of our group and will be missed very much. *Edmée Barta*  
**Next meeting: 7 Nov. Social Get-together**

## **'Remembering for the Future' An Intergenerational Event**

Our second 'Question Time'-style event in the North, at Leeds Royal Armouries on this occasion, brought members together in lively discussions forgoing the wonderful weather outside.

Panel members were Arek Hersh, camp survivor; Sue Pearson, Kindertransport refugee (replacing Dorothy Fleming, who was unwell); Trude Silman, former child refugee; Deanna Van der Velde, Second Generation; and Hannah George, Third Generation. The meeting was ably chaired by AJR Director Michael Newman.

Questions echoed those discussed in Manchester in February. What is the best way to take the story of the Holocaust forward to the younger generation, both Jewish and non-Jewish? Did we ever over-protect our children?

Many found they had delayed telling their children. As in Manchester, many recognised their wish to protect their children from knowledge that could distress them - just as many of the Second Generation avoided asking their parents questions for the same reason.

Most panel members were involved in Holocaust education but were rarely asked to speak in Jewish establishments. It appeared that members of the British-Jewish community had initially not wanted to know - and some still didn't want to know - of the refugees' and survivors' experiences.

The AJR's future was envisaged thus: in addition to its welfare work, investing in various forms of Holocaust education; some members of succeeding generations would wish to be (or continue to be) involved in the latter. Third Generation panel members at both events are linking to form a nationwide group. Hannah George said: 'I feel a responsibility to be a vessel for the stories told to me by my grandparents.'

Susanne Green, Northern Groups' Co-ordinator, organised this most interesting event.

*Barbara Dresner Dorrity*

## **Essex 'London's First Hotels'**

David Barnett, our very own Hotel Inspector, took us through the history of the hotel from the 1760s onwards as tourism in London began to take off following the Industrial Revolution. It wasn't surprising to hear that two Jewish gentlemen, Louis Benjamin and Moses Hart, established hotels in the 1800s. A factual and interesting talk.

*Esther Rinkoff*

**Next meeting: 9 Nov. Tba**

## **Edinburgh 'British And/Or Jewish?'**

We enjoyed a very lively discussion on the theme 'British And/Or Jewish?' The variety of personal backgrounds inevitably led to spontaneous diversions into any number of relevant - and irrelevant - areas. Our thanks to organiser Agnes Isaac and Dorothea Brander, our hostess, for the delicious afters.

*Jonathan Kish*

## **Radlett 'The Kibbutz in Crisis'**

David Merron spoke of the early days of Jewish settlement in Palestine and then of the young State of Israel and the important role kibbutzim played at that time. Recent political and social changes have reduced the number of kibbutzim and altered their status, he said. An outstandingly thought-provoking lecture - one hopes David will come back soon to deal with the many questions his talk raised.

*Fritz Starer*

**Next meeting: 17 Nov. Ladislaus Löb, 'Rezsö Kasztner's Daring Rescue Mission'**

## **Brighton & Hove Sarid The Jews of Ostrava**

The gift to Kingston Synagogue of a Torah scroll from the Czech town of Ostrava in 1965 triggered David Lawson's research into the town's Jewish history. From insignificant beginnings, Ostrava grew from banking into a coal and steel centre, resulting in a vibrant Jewish population with 5 synagogues. Most of the Jewish population ended up in Terezin and Auschwitz.

*Shirley Huberman*

**Next meeting: 15 Nov. Renée Tyack, 'They Called Her Cassandra'**

## **Hull Memories of Kristallnacht**

We had a lively discussion about Kristallnacht. One member remembered seeing a Viennese synagogue go up in flames; another was locked into a room with her family while the local Nazis smashed up their business premises. Some of course were too young to remember details. It wasn't all gloom though: we enjoyed one another's company as well as a delicious afternoon tea and it was also great to meet a member of the Liverpool group who had come along with Susanne.

*Rose Abrahamson*

## **Cafe Imperial Life on the Dunera**

Sitting outside in the glorious sunshine was a first for this meeting - a lovely way to welcome in the New Year! A full morning was spent discussing naval pursuits and life on the *Dunera*. Some excellent Pope jokes too, as told by Bill Howard.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### European Association of Survivors Annual Conference, 13-16 August 2010 at Roehampton University, London

Saturday was the big day. We heard Trudy Gold of the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC) deliver a powerful talk on 'The Future of Education: Developments and Trends'. This was most interesting as the LJCC works in countries as far apart as Belarus and China, where Holocaust education is much appreciated.

Joanna Millan then spoke about Jewish costume through the ages. Her talk was well presented and provoked a deluge of questions.

After lunch, Martin Stern's theme was 'What determined behaviour during the Holocaust? Why would ordinary people, given the right conditions, turn into monsters?' Yet there were always some who refused, which at least gave us hope.

Following dinner there were speeches by our Chair, Joanna, and the President of the European Association, Max Arpels Lezer. Later we were entertained by Margaret Watson on the harp.

On the Sunday we proceeded to the Bevis Marks Synagogue in the City and then on to the newly refurbished Jewish Museum at Camden Town. On the Monday morning we said our farewells.

Many thanks to Joanna and her team who worked out a truly interesting programme.

Steven Frank

### Edgware 'Discs to our liking'

Judy Kelner gave us a wonderful 'Desert Island Discs'-style presentation. Her choice of discs was very much to our liking and, as usual, it was a very pleasant afternoon.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: 16 Nov. Howard Falksohn, 'Children of The Third Reich'

### London attractions: A lovely day out

Hendon, North London and Pinner Group members enjoyed a lovely day out. Following a visit to the London Eye, which included a 3D film, we had a tour of the Globe Theatre and this was followed by a visit to the Globe Museum. A walk on the Millennium Bridge for the more energetic of us completed the trip. Myrna Glass

### Child Survivors 'Why is Hebrew Written Backwards?'

Dr Martin Stern answered the question 'Why do you write Hebrew backwards?' and was assisted by members of the audience. Diversions led also to the roots of a number of English-language words – neither Latin nor Greek but Phoenician/Hebrew. Dorothy's cakes were a delight for the palate. Henri Obstfeld

Next meeting: 21 Nov. 'Visiting Antarctica'

### ALSO MEETING IN NOVEMBER

**Outing 1 Nov. To Luton Hoo.** Call Head Office for details

**Ealing 2 Nov.** David Lawson, 'The Jews of Ostrava'

**Cardiff 4 Nov.** The Dep. Israeli Ambassador Kingston CF 4 Nov. Helen Fry, 'Enemy Aliens'

**HGS 8 Nov.** Charles Emanuel, 'Israel and the Peace Negotiations'

**Wembley CF 10 Nov.** Social Get-together

**Temple Fortune 11 Nov.** Rosette Wolf

**Outing 18 Nov.** To Jewish Museum. Call Head Office for details

**North London 25 Nov.** Blanche Benedick, 'The Jews of Denmark'

**Hendon 29 Nov.** Helen Fry, 'Harriet Cohen: Music and Men'

**Cleve Road 30 Nov.** 4th anniversary and Jane Rosenberg

**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

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Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

**Newcastle**  
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

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

**AJR LUNCHEON CLUB**  
Wednesday 17 November 2010  
**Lynne Gould JP**  
**'The Work of Magistrates'**

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 1 November 2010

**Sir Erich Reich**  
**'The Investiture Experience'**

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### November Afternoon Entertainment

Mon	1	KT LUNCH – Kards & Games Klub
Wed	3	Margaret Opdahl
Thur	4	Ronnie Goldberg
Mon	8	Kards & Games Klub
Wed	10	Roy Blass
Thur	11	Chris Sausmann
Mon	15	Kards & Games Klub
Wed	17	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	18	Geoffrey Strum
Mon	22	Kards & Games Klub
Wed	24	Douglas Poster
Thur	25	Michael Heaton
Mon	29	Kards & Games Klub

**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

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Wedding**

Congratulations to Susie and Andrew Kaufman on the wedding of their daughter Nicole to David Feldman, son of Michelle and Richard Feldman.

**Deaths**

**Murray, Ilse (née Perl)**, 19 March 1921–22 September 2010, mother of the late Claus Nicholas Perl, passed away peacefully. Remembered with love by family and friends.

**Saunders, Vernon** Jutta, David and Jessica are very sad to announce that Vernon Saunders passed away peacefully on Sunday 19 September at Sam Beare Hospice in Weybridge. He was much loved, admired and respected by all who knew him and will be very greatly missed by his family and friends.

**St Lucian sunshine at the AJR Centre**



For 10 years Theresa Alexis has brought her St Lucian sunshine into the AJR Centre. She has had a long association with the AJR – almost 30 years. In late September we gave a lunch in her honour with AJR members, staff and personal friends. We wish her well in her retirement and will miss her greatly.  
**Susie Kaufman**

**THE QUAKERS: A GET-TOGETHER**

**Friends Meeting Hall  
23 November**

The Quakers in Welwyn Garden City were critically instrumental in the rescue of children from Nazi Germany at the time of Kristallnacht. The Synagogue in Welwyn Garden City was founded by those children and the evacuees from London during the Blitz.

It is now over 70 years since those days and thanks is long overdue to the Quakers from the community.

As part of National Inter-Faith Week, we are holding a get-together in Friends Meeting Hall when survivors from both sides can retell their experiences. The proceedings will be recorded for posterity by the Welwyn Garden City Heritage Society.

For further details, please contact Welwyn Garden City Hebrew Congregation on 01707 322443.

**MITZVAH DAY 2010  
THE SEPARATED  
CHILD FOUNDATION**

The AJR is collecting basic essentials for an arrival pack. Further information is available at the AJR Centre (telephone 020 7328 0208), at Regional Group meetings, and at [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)

**'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE**

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

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## OBITUARY

### Lilian Renée Furst, 1931-2009

**L**ilian was born in Vienna on 29 June 1931. Her parents, both dentists, were exact contemporaries of my mother, who was a student at the Vienna medical school. The Fursts (Fürst at that time) lived around the corner from us. Both Lilian and her parents emigrated to England. Only her father practised dentistry here (in Manchester). All three became members of the AJR.

Lilian was educated in Manchester, reading French and German at the university, followed by a PhD at Girton College, Cambridge in 1955. Her first academic post, in the same year, was in Belfast. She told me that on her first day she was asked whether she was a Protestant or a Catholic - to which she answered 'I am a Jew.' The next question was 'Are you a Protestant Jew or a Catholic Jew?' After a few years in Belfast she obtained a post in Manchester, setting up a



'Sub-Department' of Comparative Literature, which had become her speciality.

Some years later, while on an exchange visit to the USA, Lilian was offered the post of Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon. As Manchester was still considering whether she was ready for possible promotion to a senior lectureship, she accepted the Oregon post. A succession of senior posts in the USA followed, including an invitation to set up a department at the University of Texas, where her first task would be the appointment of

ten other professors. Several other posts followed but she eventually settled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. At the time of her death, on 11 September 2009, she was Marcel Bataillon Professor of Comparative Literature, emerita, at that university.

Lilian published mainly on nineteenth-century European literature. Her books included *Romanticism in Perspective*, *Fictions of Romantic Irony* and *All is True: The Claims and Strategies of Realist Fiction* as well as several works on literature and medicine. She also published *Home is Somewhere Else: An Autobiography in Two Voices*, which combined her childhood memories of emigration with a manuscript left by her father. The autobiography and *Random Destinations*, a study of the Holocaust in literature, were reviewed in the *AJR Journal*.

Paul Samet

## Search Notices

**David, Clara**, originally from Dresden, Durerstrasse 3, last known address 270 Heathfield Road, Ainsdale, Southport, is the niece of Aliza Ben Yosef (b Leipzig), who lives at Retirement Home Bayit Bekfar Hadarim, 77 Ben Yehuda St, Kfar Saba, Israel. If you have any info about Clara's current whereabouts, please write to Aliza or contact Ruby Davis at [rubyd@intercall.co.il](mailto:rubyd@intercall.co.il)

I am searching for **Dunera Boys** who were part of the Kindertransport. Please tel +61 8 6488 2049 or write to [alexandra.ludewig@uwa.edu.au](mailto:alexandra.ludewig@uwa.edu.au)

My father did 2 years' hard labour during WWII in Christianstadt for **Dynamit Atklien Gesellschaft**. Have any readers knowledge of this hard labour? Harry Breman, Timorstraat 70, 8022NE Zwolle, Holland; [harmkarstjohannesbreman@hotmail.com](mailto:harmkarstjohannesbreman@hotmail.com)

**Hecht, Otto**, b around 1900 in Przemysl (?), fled Vienna at time of Anschluss, probably to France. He owned a business in Hüttelsdorferstrasse, Vienna 15. We later heard (unconfirmed) he was deported but survived and after liberation worked in publishing in an English-speaking country. Any info please to [ken.keller77@gmail.com](mailto:ken.keller77@gmail.com)

Descendants of **Ignaz (Isak Maier) Haas and Clara (Klara Debora) Haas (née Plahner)**, formerly of Vienna. Ignaz (b Jaslo) died in Buenos Aires in 1947, Clara, b Tarnopol 16.2.1879, died in Vienna 24.3.1967. Clara was the sister of Samuel Plahner, d Vienna 12.1.1936. Clara, Samuel and their parents Mina and Simon Beer Plahner are buried at Vienna's Zentralfriedhof. Clara's memorial inscription mentions children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Any info about Ignaz and Clara's descendants please to Prof Robert Shaw, Brettargh Holt, Camden Way, Kent BR7 5HT, UK or to [Brettargh.holt@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:Brettargh.holt@dsl.pipex.com)

**Herz, Erika**, my mother, b 2.5.1926 in Krefeld, went via KT from Berlin to UK in May 1939. She was in an Orthodox orphanage in London, then in a boarding school with German teachers (Bunce Court?), then in a boarding school in northern England. In 1941 they emigrated to Brazil, where I was born in 1947. My mother died in 2002. With her on the KT were her sister Hannelore Herz, b 21.12.23, and cousins Margot and Ellen Herz. Any info please to Renato Fraenkel, Spinnerstr 35, Whg 50, 38114 Braunschweig, tel +49 531 886 3936 or [rhfraenkel@gmail.com](mailto:rhfraenkel@gmail.com)

My grandmother, **Ili Jakubovic**, now living in New Jersey as Ellen Hersh, was born in Ungvar, Czechoslovakia on 26.1.1924. She went with her friend, Fitzy Klein, to the Hebrew Gymnasium. Any info on Fitzy or schoolmates please to Bex Shapiro at [bex87@brandeis.edu](mailto:bex87@brandeis.edu)

I am working on a project on **Jewish memory and trauma** and looking for volunteers of Italian or any other nationality willing to tell me their story of the period of anti-Semitic persecutions. Please contact me at [R.Piazza@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:R.Piazza@sussex.ac.uk) or call me on 07780995386 (Roberta Piazza)

**Mayer, Ilse Charlotte née Fabisch**, b Breslau 12.9.1915, emigrated to London and had 3 children (b 1939, 1944, 1946). In the 1960s she lived at 181 Goldhurst Terrace, London NW6. Her brother, Hans Fabisch, was murdered in Auschwitz. In the 1960s she searched for him and his wife, Valerie Fabisch (b Scheftel). Any news about this family would be welcome. Please contact Sarah Wildman at [swildman@gmail.com](mailto:swildman@gmail.com)

I am a Portuguese journalist wishing to contact **refugees in Portugal in WWII** for a book project. If you have any stories, memories, documents, pictures etc, please

contact Carlos Guerreiro at Urb. Vista Elite, Rua da plameira, Lt 89, 8700-207 Olhao, Portugal or at [carlosj\\_guerreiro@sapo.pt](mailto:carlosj_guerreiro@sapo.pt)

My mother, **Renate**, from Teplitz, was a pupil at Upper Chine School, Isle of Wight, until 1939 then lived in London until 1947. If you have any info on her or on the life led by young girls in similar circumstances please contact Hugh Wilson at [mcharg-wilson@telus.net](mailto:mcharg-wilson@telus.net)

I am researching a book about a boy interned on the Isle of Man in 1940. I would like to trace people interned in **Rushen camp, Port Erin and Port St Mary's**. Please contact me at [robertbullock721@btinternet.com](mailto:robertbullock721@btinternet.com)

**Seidmann, Gertrud** no longer has any recollection of leaving Vienna in 1937 (?), settling in Belfast or her father, Ludwig (Louis), who was interned on the Isle of Man. Does anybody remember them? Please contact [megan.price@arch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:megan.price@arch.ox.ac.uk)

**Stolenberg, Alice Gerda**, my mother, left Berlin after the war for Norway then left for the USA in 1947 (?). She was in a DP camp in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. She told me she lost most of her family except her mother and sister. She had a friend, Siegfried Einhorn. If you have any info on my mother or Siegfried, please write to [rferrary@earthlink.net](mailto:rferrary@earthlink.net)

**Weiss, Richard** (b 5.4.1880) and **Regine** (b 22.7.1882), my parents, lived in Castellezgasse, Vienna 2, from where they were evicted to Staudingergasse, 20. They were deported to Theresienstadt in 1942; last news was their deportation to Auschwitz on 28.10.44. My mother was a mezzo soprano who sang in St Gallen before WWI. Her stage name was Grete Strauss. Can anyone remember her singing in Theresienstadt? Please contact Edith Kronenberger at 52 Hartley Avenue, Whitley Bay NE26 3NT, UK or tel 0191 252 0013



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL



### Self-defence comes at a price

The Punic Wars, the Roman Empire, the migrations and conquests of the Germanic tribes, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Barbarians, the split between the Roman and Byzantine churches, the Islamic conquest of Spain, Charlemagne, the Wars of the Three Brothers, which ended with the treaty of Verdun in 843, the Magyar pillages, the Norman conquest (1066 and all that), the Crusades, the Hundred Years' War between England and France in the 14th and 15th centuries, the Wars of the Roses in England, the *Reconquista* in Spain, the Mongol-Tatar invasions of Poland of 1241, the Fall of Constantinople, the defeat of the Crusader Kingdom in the 13th century, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, alliances and unions that changed the borders of Turkey, Spain, Portugal, France, Poland, all the countries of Eastern Europe, Russia, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and Italy (the latter two not actually existing as sovereign states until the 19th century), the conquest of the Low Countries by Spain, the War of the Spanish Succession, the battle of Lepanto in 1571, when the combined forces of Spain, Genoa and Venice crushed the Turkish invaders, the Wars of Religion (*cuius regio, eius*

*religio*), the Huguenots, the War of Jenkins' Ear, the British defeat of the Spanish Armada, the first Schmalkaldic war in 1547, when Duke Maurice of Saxony assisted Charles V, the second Schmalkaldic war in 1552, when the French secured bases in Alsace, the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, Henry of Navarre's blood-soaked path to the throne of France, the Thirty Years' War, the Cromwellian Revolution and the execution of King Charles I, the French Revolution and the guillotining of King Louis XVI, the Napoleonic Wars, the Franco-Prussian War, the First World War, the Second World War, occasional Balkan wars.

Thus, from a historical perspective, the idea of peace in Europe is a startling innovation.

What does this mean for Israel? Is it destined to endure 1,000 years of fighting before someone out there finally accepts the idea that peace, however unsatisfactory, is still better than incessant bloodshed?

Has any Israeli leader ever opened a history book and tried to learn its lessons? Has any Arab leader?

In the 2,000 years after the Romans exiled the Jews from their country, the Jews were persecuted, or at best tolerated and

harassed, throughout Europe. This process culminated in the Holocaust, though some 50 years beforehand the Dreyfus Affair and the rampant anti-Semitism it revealed led Theodor Herzl to suggest that the Jews deserved a homeland. *L'Affaire Dreyfus* also caused some Jews to espouse socialism and the Russian Revolution, others to abandon their Jewish identity and seek to assimilate in the Gentile world. Hitler would have none of that, however: as far as he was concerned, birth determined identity.

Israel has been attacked since its inception, whether by regular armies or guerrilla groups (the polite term for terrorists). Israel is anathema to radical Muslims, who are gaining an ever greater say in world events. Muslim countries dominate the UN and control some of the world's most valuable natural resources. Large groups of Muslims are to be found throughout Europe. They are represented in the parliaments of those countries, determine national spending and are able to influence non-Muslim representatives.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that governments condemn Israel for building a wall to keep out those who would blow up buses, cafés and shopping malls. Nor that a flotilla organised by people who are openly hostile to Israel is prevented from breaking the blockade intended to prevent arms entering Gaza. Those arms would be directed against Israel - not any other country. Israel is not in a comfortable position, but self-defence comes at a price.

**Dorothea Shefer-Vanson**

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

closely related, having the same Hebrew root.

In the Passover *Haggadah*, the second of the four sons is given the moniker 'a wicked one', translated from the Hebrew רָשָׁע (wicked, evil). German, Central and East European Ashkenazis pronounce this as *roscho*. In Yiddish, it becomes *rosche*. Similarly, the Hebrew word for wickedness is רָשָׁעוּת with an Ashkenazi pronunciation of *rischüs* rendered as *risches* in Yiddish. Thus, the connection of both words with anti-Semitism is only associative.

*Harold Saunders, Manchester*

Sir – The word *risches* may come from the Hebrew *rish'ut*, meaning evil, wickedness.

*Bernd Koschland, London NW4*

Sir – *Risches* is cognate with the Yiddish-Hebrew word *rosche*, meaning 'Evil does.' The 'evil' it pillories is anti-Semitism.

*S. S. Prawer, Queen's College, Oxford*

Sir – On Google Yiddish-to-English translation, *risches* means 'evil'.

*Eran Elijah Ben Joseph, Association of Israelis of Central European Origin, Tel Aviv*

Sir – Peter Fraenkel asks about the origin of the German-Jewish word *risches*, meaning anti-Semitism. It is the Ashkenazi (Yiddish) pronunciation of the Hebrew word *rish'ut*, meaning wickedness. The word *rasha* means a wicked person (see the name of one of the four sons in the *Haggadah*), which is pronounced *roscho* in Ashkenazi or Yiddish.

*Esther Rosenfeld, Jerusalem*

Sir – The German-Jewish word *risches* is no doubt a corruption of the Hebrew word רָשָׁע meaning wickedness or villainy.

*Ruth Tuckman, Ashkelon, Israel*

Sir – I had assumed that this expression was of Yiddish origin. As a child, I heard it continuously and, here in England, fellow refugees often included it in conversation. Just a week or two ago, to my surprise, a Continental acquaintance in my age group had never heard of the saying. It would be interesting to know how many of our members have similar responses. I was born in Berlin and only remember *tsores* and *risches*. Otherwise, German was our language.

*Laura Selo, London NW11*