

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

From tiny acorns ... The 70th anniversary of the AJR

What would the AJR's founders think if they could see it now? The fledgling organisation they set up in July 1941 to represent the struggling and embattled Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain survived the war, retained its loyal membership through the lean years of post-war austerity and the fat years of prosperity that followed, and has now reached its seventieth anniversary in rude good health. While its sister organisations in other countries, in particular the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe and the Irgun Oley Merkas Europa in Israel, have discontinued most of their activities or ceased to exist entirely, the AJR continues to flourish and to perform valuable functions for its members.

The AJR was, one must remember, founded under extremely inauspicious circumstances. Only a year earlier, in May/June 1940, many thousands of Jewish refugees had been caught up in the British government's ill-advised decision to detain all German nationals and to intern them in camps on the Isle of Man. The obsession with security that caused the British to detain, or even deport overseas, Jewish refugees as potential Nazi spies and fifth columnists – 'Collar the lot!' – reduced the refugee community to its lowest ebb. Those interned had been deprived of the most elementary human right of freedom and had been tainted by the unjust and wholly unfounded suspicion that they, of all people, might be covert Nazis.

The internees' family members left at liberty had in many cases lost their breadwinner and were often reduced to surviving on handouts from the welfare organisations at Bloomsbury House.



Typical AJR members of the early years

To these material hardships was added concern for the security of loved ones: those detained feared for their families, who were exposed to the bombing raids that had been unleashed on Britain's cities, while their families in turn feared for the fate of husbands, fathers, sons and brothers arrested under emergency wartime regulations and taken away to an uncertain fate. It should not be forgotten that several hundred innocent detainees lost their lives when the *Arandora Star*, the Blue Star liner that was transporting them to Canada, was sunk by a German submarine off Ireland on 2 July 1941.

Even when, by mid-1941, almost all the refugee internees had been released, the community was in an unenviable position. The great majority of the refugees had arrived in Britain in 1938/39 and were still struggling to establish some form of settled life when the outbreak of war in September 1939 thrust them back into a situation of painful uncertainty. Those who had found employment, for example as domestic servants, frequently lost their jobs, while those who were self-employed or ran their own businesses often found it impossible to continue under wartime conditions. Most refugees were thoroughly impoverished, living on the income from whatever employment they could find or from welfare handouts; their accommodation consisted mostly of rented rooms, bedsits, cheap rented flats

or rooms in boarding houses.

The outbreak of war also brought about a serious deterioration in the status of the refugees, who became, in the chillingly dehumanised official phrase, 'enemy aliens'. A number of restrictions were imposed on them: they were subject to a curfew and to restrictions on their movements and they were forbidden to own items like radios, maps and cameras. In addition to facing the same dangers as the British civilian population during the Blitz, they were exposed to strong currents of hostility, firstly as Jews and secondly as Germans. Even after their release from internment, refugees were at first unable to join any branch of the armed forces except the humble Pioneer Corps, responsible for felling trees and digging ditches. Their situation in Britain as stateless 'aliens' was precarious and they were cut off from their loved ones left behind in Nazi-held territory.

From this account it will be clear that the AJR was founded to represent and protect a beleaguered and vulnerable group of Jews at a time of supreme national crisis. It is not surprising that hardly any records of its foundation have survived, as the founding members had any number of other urgent calls on their time and energy. The wonder is that the AJR was founded in a viable form at all. Before 1941, the organisations set up to assist the Jewish refugees had with one small exception all been established under the aegis of Anglo-Jewry or by friendly British interests; the most important were the Council for German Jewry and the Jewish Refugees Committee (German Jewish Aid Committee), one of the many organisations located in Bloomsbury House (the former Palace Hotel in

continued overleaf

FROM TINY ACORNS ... cont. from page 1

Bloomsbury Street).

In February 1938, a group of German Jews had founded a small body called Self-Aid for Refugees (Deutsche Selbsthilfe), which raised funds for refugees in need, often academics, in the UK and in other European countries. Self-Aid, which is today remembered principally for its annual fundraising concerts, was absorbed into the AJR after the war. More significant at the time were the politically-orientated organisations set up to assist all refugees irrespective of race, the Free German League of Culture (FGLC) and the Austrian Centre; heavily influenced by Communist activists, these organisations were not suited to represent the largely unpolitical Jewish refugees, whose race, far from being a secondary matter, had been the reason for their forced emigration. The FGLC and the Austrian Centre, important organisations during the war, ceased to exist when their principal adherents returned to their native lands after 1945.

It was against this background that a group of refugees began in the internment camps to plan for an organisation specifically designed to represent the Jewish refugees from the German-speaking lands in Britain. By late June 1941, preparations for the launch of the Association of Jewish Refugees had progressed to the stage where a founding meeting could be held. On 27 June 1941, a circular signed by eight prominent refugees and Wilfrid Israel, an Anglo-German Jew, was sent to a few dozen potential members of 'the newly formed Association of Jewish Refugees', inviting them to attend its first meeting on 6 July 1941 at 26 Belsize Park. On 20 July 1941, a meeting attended by 20 invited people elected an Executive of nine people, consisting of three Liberal, three Orthodox and three Zionist Jews.

The composition of the Executive itself thus reflected the AJR's basic aim of representing the whole of the Jewish refugee community, stated at the very outset: 'The Association aims at representing all those Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria for whom Judaism is a determining factor in their outlook on life.'

The AJR's circular to its members of summer 1941 listed the names of

its Committee of Management, by then numbering eight: Adolf Schoyer (Chairman), Adolf Michaelis (Vice-Chairman), Kurt Alexander (Treasurer), Salomon Adler-Rudel, Rudolf Bienenfeld, Walter Breslauer, Ernst Lowenthal and Eugen Mittwoch. Of these, only Breslauer and Bienenfeld (the sole Austrian) were to settle permanently in Britain. Schoyer, who was later made Life President, returned to Germany after the war, as did Lowenthal, who went to work for a Jewish relief unit; Michaelis and Adler-Rudel emigrated to Israel; Alexander went to the USA; and Professor Mittwoch died during the war.

The essential administrative framework was provided by the AJR's first paid official, Werner Rosenstock, who, apart from one break during the 1940s, was to act as its General Secretary for over 40 years, from 1941 until 1982, and, as Editor of its journal, *AJR Information*, from 1946 until 1982. Also listed in the circular of summer 1941 was Dr Adelheid Levy, who founded the Social Services Department that has provided invaluable assistance and support to AJR members over many decades. The AJR's first premises, cramped and spartan, were at 279A Finchley Road, before it moved the short distance to its long-term home at 8 Fairfax Mansions, off Fairfax Road and just behind Finchley Road.

Already at this early stage, the AJR proved remarkably successful in providing the services its members required, from social welfare to advice on employment, legal matters and a whole array of issues arising from the members' status as recently arrived immigrants. It also regularly issued detailed repudiations of anti-Semitic or xenophobic attacks on the Jewish refugees. At a time of war, it was concerned to demonstrate the loyalty of its members to their country of refuge

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

AJR 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS Reception at Austrian Ambassador's Residence

**18 Belgrave Square, London SW1
Wednesday 20 July 2011
at 6.30 pm**

As part of our 70th anniversary celebrations, the AJR is delighted to accept an invitation from His Excellency Dr Emil Brix, the Austrian Ambassador, to host a reception at his Residence.

The reception is open to all AJR members, staff and honorary officers. Places, however, are limited.

Should you wish to attend, please contact Beatrix Steinlechner on 020 7344 3272 or at beatrix.steinlechner@bmeia.gov.at



AJR 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION LUNCH WITH LIGHT OPERA

**Sunday 18 September 2011
12 noon to 4.30 pm**

Hilton Hotel, Watford

Further details will appear in our August issue

and their eagerness to support Britain in its fight against Nazi Germany; until 1943, refugees were barred from most branches of the forces, while in civilian life too refugees were subject to restrictions over and above those which affected the civilian population in general.

The AJR campaigned for the lifting of these restrictions and for the integration of the Jewish refugees into the war effort. This far-sighted strategy recognised that the great majority of the refugees would never wish to return to their native lands, and thus prepared the way for their permanent settlement in Britain and their post-war naturalisation as British citizens.

Anthony Grenville

A fuller history of the AJR's early years will be available at the Anniversary Lunch to be held on 18 September 2011.

AJR Centre to relocate to Belsize Square Synagogue

The AJR wishes to announce that the Paul Balint AJR Centre at Cleve Road, West Hampstead is to relocate to the Belsize Square Synagogue in January 2012. The move follows the decision of the AJR Charitable Trust to sell the premises at Cleve Road and to re-accommodate the three tenants who live in the purpose-built flats above the Centre.

As at Cleve Road, the AJR Centre at Belsize Square Synagogue will offer a wide range of activities for AJR members, including the Music and Movement, Keep Fit and Tai Chi classes, as well as a card club and an art class. Visitors to the Centre can also play bridge and chess and the Centre will arrange for the services of a chiropodist and a manicurist.

The Centre, which will open on Mondays and Thursdays, will continue to host the monthly Kindertransport and Luncheon Club gatherings, combining lunch with guest speakers and musical performances, and will arrange Chanukah parties and a Model Seder. The Centre will also continue to arrange for transportation for AJR members to and from the Synagogue.

As part of the decision to relocate the AJR Centre, AJR Meals-on-Wheels will be replaced by kosher Hermolis meals. Members will be able to order from an excellent, wide-ranging menu and the AJR will continue to deliver to the north west London area. Hermolis will also provide the non-meat catering for the Centre's lunches at Belsize Square.

Inspirationally led by AJR President and former Honorary Treasurer Ludwig Spiro, the first steps to establish a centre began in 1984 with a wide consultation with AJR members about the need and desirability for a dedicated AJR Centre.

Having identified and bought the site at Cleve Road, thanks in part to a generous donation from the Paul Balint Charitable Trust, work to adapt the premises to the new requirements, including the creation of eight flats for AJR members, began in November 1985.

The Cleve Road Centre opened its doors to members for the first time in June 1987 (the official opening was on 15 September 1987) and,

as visitors will testify, it has continuously provided a warm and friendly setting for Holocaust refugees and survivors to meet and socialise, enjoy entertainment and hear from guest speakers.

The relocation to Belsize Square Synagogue sees the Centre return to the place from which it briefly operated between January 1986 and April 1987. Our gratitude to the Synagogue at that time for hosting our Centre is matched by our appreciation for its accommodating our members' needs today.

Announcing the move, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman said: 'After almost a quarter of a century, it is with a heavy heart that we leave our wonderful home at Cleve Road, where our members enjoyed so many good times and built enduring friendships with each other and our dedicated staff. Through the extremely generous support of the Paul Balint Charitable Trust and the endeavours of Ludwig Spiro, we were able to create a bespoke atmosphere for AJR members that reflected the culture and heritage of the refugees. By moving to Belsize Square Synagogue, we will be able to preserve the unique refugee spirit and continue to offer our members their own distinctive setting and place to meet and enjoy each other's company.'

Details of a farewell party at Cleve Road will be provided in due course.

Michael Newman

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

A proud Slovak, a proud Briton, a proud Jew

This is an edited version of an address given at the Slovak Embassy, London, in January this year on the occasion of Holocaust Memorial Day.

Thank you for your kind invitation to speak to you tonight about my father, Otto Wasserberg. I am supported tonight by my mother Helen, my sister Suzanna, my brother Victor, my son Theo, and my father's brother William and his wife Vera.

My father's earliest memory is of taking the train to Poprad in the High Tatra Mountains to escape the summer heat in Kosice. As a young boy living in Kosice, he had an idyllic life. His father had a furrier's shop on the main street. The synagogue on Puskinova Street was always bustling and friendly. The food at home was wonderful and his mother, Blanca, always had a bowl of soup ready for her three boys. No one ever went hungry in the Wasserberg household. There was a large family of aunts and cousins.

At school Otto learned Slovak; at home he spoke Yiddish; in the street he spoke Hungarian. Most of the Jewish children learned Hungarian at school and would tease him – he was the only one learning Slovak because his parents wanted him to. Life was good and he was blissfully unaware of the difficulties that were to face him and his family in the coming years.

In 1937 Otto had his barmitzvah and over the next two years did his best at school. In March 1939, however, the Czechoslovak government was left with no choice but to watch the dissolution of the country. The Nazis occupied Prague and the Hungarians took Kosice and the east of Slovakia.

Soon after, my grandfather Marcus received a visitor in his shop – a man he knew now dressed in the uniform of a Hungarian fascist. The man told him he wanted the keys to the shop immediately. My grandfather refused. There was a heated exchange. My father was present. Soon after, my grandfather travelled to London on business, still uncertain of what was going to happen next.

Back in Kosice, my grandmother received a warning from the local police commander, a friend: she must get out of Kosice or face arrest and the seizure of her property under the new anti-Jewish laws enacted by the Hungarian government. She would need a transit visa if she were to cross Germany by train to get to London.

The German consul in Kosice, a Nazi officer, told her that as a Jew she could expect nothing from him and he stamped her passport with a J for 'Jude'. Gathering her three boys, the youngest of whom, William, is with us here tonight, she took the train to Budapest. There the

German consul threw her out. Someone suggested she fly to London as she would not need a transit visa. She bought tickets on a KLM flight to London via Vienna.



Otto Wasserberg

It was a Sunday morning and the airport was deserted. The customs official demanded documents: exit visas, tax certificates. She, of course, had none of these and looked through her bags desperately. The KLM captain took William in his arms and walked him to the plane. William is today a proud father and the grandfather of two girls, Chloe and Sasha. Then the captain walked back and took Robert by the hand. My uncle Robert died some years ago and was the proud father of three children and had eight grandchildren. Then the quiet Dutchman returned as my father stood next to my grandmother, who was still pretending she had the documents. 'Here they are,' she exclaimed. The pilot berated the official: 'The flight is late, she's only going on a vacation, you can examine her papers on her return!' – and whisked them off to the plane. This desperate woman, Blanca Wasserberg, and her three boys, Otto, Robert and William, were the only passengers.

During the flight there was a stopover in Vienna. There the Jews were already being rounded up and expelled. When we land, the captain said, they will want to search the plane for Jews. You must lie on the floor and not make a sound. My father peeked out of the window for a second; he saw a huge banner with a swastika. They were all terrified. The Dutch captain, calm and relaxed, met the Gestapo at the steps. 'The flight is empty,' he said. The Germans nodded and moved on. Then ten Jewish families who could afford the bribes boarded in tears for the flight to Croydon, near London.

London was a shock to the family. They spoke no English and had no money. But they were reunited as a family and were safe. During the next three years they endured the Blitz.

In 1943 my father called at this embassy and volunteered to fight for the Czechoslovak Army. He was turned down then but, in the spring of 1944, he was summoned. He joined the First Czechoslovak Brigade of the Czechoslovak Army and crossed to France after D-Day. The Czechoslovak Army, tasked by General Montgomery with laying siege to the German garrison at Dunkirk, took up this duty in September 1944. It was cold and wet:

the Germans had opened the sea locks and flooded the area. Otto saw comrades killed and witnessed the surrender of the German garrison in May 1945.

Following this, the Czechoslovak Army transferred to Pilsen, where he remembered the street celebrations. Eventually he returned to his beloved Kosice.

On returning home, my father Otto discovered the terrible truth that many of his relatives had been taken to Auschwitz. His mother's sister, Sara, had died at Auschwitz on 1 June 1944, very soon after the trains had begun leaving Kosice. Her husband, Ichak Weil, had died in October 1944. Their daughter, Rose, 10, had died there too. Their son, Alexander, survived a labour camp. Sara had another son, my father's cousin Marton. He survived the war in Kosice hidden in a cellar for months – he survived due to the bravery of a non-Jewish lady who had worked in his father's factory. Marton later emigrated to Melbourne. I learned this story a few days ago when I spoke to Marton's son Robert Weil in Australia. Marton Weil was one of the 'hidden children' who owed their lives to residents of Kosice who were prepared to take huge risks to save these children. They are truly remarkable people and I hope they will be recognised for what they did. Another of Blanca's sisters, Tilly, survived Auschwitz and returned to Kosice. She came to live in London in 1947. She was a quiet, gentle person who was always kind to us three children, my sister Suzanna, my brother Victor and myself.

Although my grandmother wanted to return to Kosice and tried for a while to live there, she was forced to return to London. Within a month of her leaving a second time, the Communists had taken over and again the route of escape was closed. Back in London she joked to her husband: 'I'm a lucky woman – I have escaped twice from Kosice!'

When I was a little boy she would take my hand. Tears would well up in her eyes and she would say 'Hitler, Hitler did this to us!'

My father Otto was a proud man, a proud Slovak, a proud Briton, a proud Jew, a proud father and a proud soldier.

When in 1993 the Slovak Embassy in London honoured him for his military service by promoting him from a private to a lieutenant and awarded him a medal for service to the Slovak state, I know he had a deep sense of pride and satisfaction. It was a gesture of thanks from a grateful nation and I think he felt his life's work was complete.

My father's story is the story of a Europe none of us here tonight wishes to see

continued opposite

My grandfather: A kind and modest man

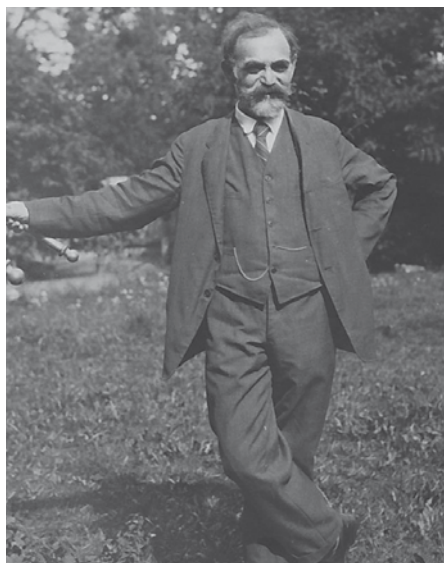
My grandfather on my mother's side was Friedrich Weleminsky, a *Dozent* (senior lecturer – Jews were almost never given chairs) in Medicine and Microbiology at the German University in Prague. The family tree goes back to his great-grandfather, Isaak Welleminsky, who was born in 1760 in Cerhenitz in Bohemia. Isaak was a *Schutzjude*, a 'protected Jew', of the ladies of nobility and was therefore allowed to live and work in the little town. He ran a tobacconist's shop.

His middle son, Michael, was born in 1795 and lived to the age of 85. Michael's third and youngest son, Jacob, was born in 1834 and became a general practitioner. He moved from Golcuv Jenikov, a small town in Bohemia, to Dresden and then to Prague.

My grandfather was Michael's middle child and was born in Golcuv Jenikov in 1868. He studied medicine and worked as a physician and scientist in the tradition of Pasteur, Koch and Ehrlich, late-19th century physicians who made enormous strides in medicine. He married my formidable grandmother, 14 years his junior, in 1905 and she became his helpmeet, typist and mother of four children.

During the First World War, Fritz was conscripted into the Austrian army as a doctor and stationed in the small town of Kleinreifling in Upper Austria. When he arrived there, a typhoid epidemic was raging. Like John Snow, in London's Soho, my grandfather traced the source of the infection to the water supply. John Snow famously removed the handle of the Broad Street pump when the locals refused to stop using its water – and the cholera epidemic ended. Fritz similarly had to fight local opinion, but prevailed and was given the freedom of the small town, an honour of which he was very proud. I think he was the first Jew to be so honoured in the Habsburg Empire.

After the war, Fritz returned to Prague University and continued his studies into tuberculosis. After years of meticulous research, he perfected a treatment for the disease. The first guinea pig to be cured was, I think, number 4,226! He then tried it on rabbits, cows and people and obtained excellent results. In all, over 1,000 patients were treated successfully in Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany. Many scientific papers were published in the German scientific press, but there was



Grandfather . . .

only one mention in the USA (in 1934), which was not followed up.

In 1939 a large, reputable Belgian pharmaceutical firm was going to manufacture and distribute tuberculomucin in Western Europe, but the Second World War put an end to that.

When I moved to my new house (in



. . . and granddaughter

Monmouth, South Wales) four years ago, I found some of the literature and hope I have at last found some academics who will re-evaluate it. A new treatment for TB is needed now, with the disease becoming more prevalent due to resistance to antibiotics and other therapies.

Along with my mother, my uncle and myself, my grandparents found sanctuary in Britain in January 1939, but Fritz was not allowed to use his medical or scientific skills.

In March 1939, he left the safety of London to return to Prague to examine his students because he knew that the professor, a Nazi, would fail all Jewish students: he hoped that as qualified doctors they would fare better.

My grandmother was so vehemently against his returning to Prague that she hid his trousers – but his determination won. He completed his mission and returned to London two days before Hitler invaded Prague.

Like many refugees, my grandparents started off by living in a boarding house, but all the rest soon moved into bedsits or flats and the wives kept house and cooked congenial Central European food. Not so my grandmother – she was proud of never having boiled an egg or used a duster! Instead, as an ardent Esperantist, she translated books into Esperanto, wrote poetry and taught English to other refugees. So my poor grandfather lived on kippers and tapioca puddings and bubble and squeak, all very poorly cooked in dingy boarding houses. He never complained.

In 1944 he developed an enlarged prostate. Modern prostatectomies had not yet been invented and he developed renal failure. My grandmother fumed at the lack of effective treatment: 'Can't they take the blood out of the body, purify it and re-infuse it?' – this decades before dialysis was invented!

Fritz developed pneumonia, 'the old man's friend', and died peacefully in London's Fulham Hospital, an ex-workhouse with poor standards of nursing and medical care, on 1 January 1945 aged 76. He was sure we would win the war and that Europe would be liberated.

Fulham Hospital is now the Marsden, a centre of excellence in cancer care and where his great-granddaughter was treated with much kindness and expertise.

I feel privileged to have known my grandfather. He was a kind and modest man, who took life's knocks with a humble acceptance. I wonder whether any of his students survived and if they, or their children, know this story. If so, I would love to hear from them.

Charlotte Jones

'A proud Slovak' continued

again. Of division, hatred, fear and discrimination. The fact that this ceremony is a European-sponsored Holocaust Remembrance Day shows how far we have come. But racism, anti-Semitism and fascism still lurk in the political shadows of all our countries. I very much hope that today's politicians can fashion a Europe

where none of us will ever need to hide between aeroplane seats, where no capital city will be a place of fear and dread.

I have been able to tell this story tonight only because our family survived. For nearly all Slovakia's Jews, no one is left to bear witness – only silent synagogues and broken gravestones. By surviving, I

hope our family has helped to keep their memory alive. The memory of the millions of Jews who did not get the chance the Czechoslovak Army gave my father: to fight back, to feel proud, to have the honour of helping restore decency and humanity to Europe.

Jonathan Wasserberg



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

'DON'T LET'S BE BEASTLY TO THE GERMANS!'

Sir – Don't let's be beastly to the Germans! The history of city air bombardments shows clearly that it was the Germans that started it. The old city of Warsaw was totally erased in September 1939. Rotterdam's turn came in May 1940 – and what about London, Coventry, Liverpool, Bristol and other British cities? Not one word about this in Anthony Grenville's article 'Bombs and ethics' in your June edition.

I had the privilege of friendship with an East German who served in Dresden at the material time, February 1945, with a penal unit (*Strafbataillon*). In February 1945 Dresden was the sole usable rail junction providing logistical support to both eastern and western fronts. The River Elbe had the so-called Weisse Flotte, a collection of pleasure steamers forced into the same purpose. Within a radius of three kilometres of the Zwinger Palace, one of the leading tourist attractions in the city, there were over 40 workshops providing logistical support to the German forces. On the other side of the Elbe, within sight of the city centre, was the Heinkel Flugzeugwerft, providing maintenance for the remainder of the Luftwaffe.

Apart from the penal unit, inmates of which were kept on half rations and had to work 17-18 hours per day, there was also a detachment of over 100 Jewish inmates from Buchenwald KZ, who were not expected to survive.

Mr Grenville also mentions two other cities. I have to admit that I know little of Würzburg, but Pforzheim had the largest precious metal-smelting facility and it was known that most of the gold and silver taken from the victims of concentration camps ended up there, where it was converted into bullion, this – in turn – ending up mainly in Switzerland, the source of most German foreign currency requirements.

Might one recommend that Dr Grenville acquires at least some of the salient facts before giving us the benefit of his moralistic claptrap?

Herbert Haberberg, Barnet

Anthony Grenville: We fought the war to show that our standards were superior to those of the Nazis, not to compete with them in bombarding cities. Surely it was the Nazis who always dismissed concerns about civilian casualties as 'moralistic claptrap'.

'BECAUSE OF OUR SINS'

Sir – I fail to see the relevance of Holocaust commemoration to Tisha B'Av as referred to in Henry Schragenheim's letter in your June edition.

My father was a deeply religious man who kept all the laws between man and G-d and between man and man, and fasted and attended synagogue on Tisha B'Av as on all other fast days, Shabbat and festivals. He was deported from Berlin to Poland with the first transport of Polish Jews on 28 October 1938 and perished in Belsen in January 1945.

I do not know the actual date of his *Yahrzeit* and, like many other child survivors, I light a memorial candle for my father, for the other members of my immediate family, and for the 6 million victims of the Holocaust on every possible occasion – Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom HaShoah and Tisha B'Av – which I too observe in order to keep their memory alive.

Betty Bloom, London NW3

'IT MUST NOT HAPPEN AGAIN'

Sir – I was interested to read in Ernest Simon's article 'A moving week in Vienna' (June) about a young couple who had never heard of the Holocaust and wondered why their visitors had left Vienna.

About ten years ago, my brother and I and our spouses were invited by the mayor of Berlin to visit the city we had left before the war. The four of us were taken in a mini-bus on a tour of Berlin by a young lady. On one of the first stops, she pointed out 'That is where the Gestapo headquarters used to be. We want people to see it – to make sure it doesn't happen again!'

Tom Tait, London, SW15

RESTITUTION IN AUSTRIA

Sir – Victor Ross mentions in his letter in your May edition that, while attending the recent event on restitution in Austria at the Austrian Ambassador's residence, he 'could not help wondering if any of [the paintings and artefacts he saw there] had once had Jewish owners.'

We certainly hope that the presentations that evening made it clear that stolen property in the ownership of the Republic of Austria is routinely returned as a matter of law. Moreover, outstanding ownership questions for many remaining objects are actively and continuously being researched. This is one of many steps taken by Austria on its road to dealing with this troublesome period in its past.

As for those microphones, point taken – we will get them!
*Martin Reichard
Press Attaché, Austrian Embassy, London*

'OBSESSION WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA'

Sir – Margarete Stern (June, Letters) wrote about Jan Masaryk on the assumption that he was the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic. No doubt other people will have written or told her by now that Jan Masaryk was the son of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, the remarkable and much loved president who died in 1937. My father, a journalist, was fortunate enough to have a good view of the funeral cortege from the ramp of the National Gallery at the head of Wenceslas Square and he gave us a full account of this momentous occasion.

In summer 1937, two years before my arrival in Britain as a 'Winton child', there was an international youth camp at Peacehaven near Brighton organised by the Woodcraft Folk. I was one of 250 children from Czechoslovakia, members of the 'Rote Falken', who had been invited, along with children from France, Belgium, Holland and other countries – a first experience of life in Britain. Whereas we slept in large circular tents and cooked communal meals and were all teenagers, the 'Folk' were in family groups of all ages, from babies to grandparents, each with their small tents and cooking arrangements so different from our own.

We had travelled from Prague by coach, stopping off in Antwerp for the 'Workers' Olympiad', spending the night in the homes of Belgian Red Falcons before crossing the Channel and arriving in southern England. One day we were told we would have an outing to London. My strongest memory of this day is of the beautiful building in Grosvenor Place and the gracious welcome in the Czechoslovak embassy by none other than Ambassador Jan Masaryk. We were given triangular sandwiches of white bread, minus crust and filled with what seemed to me to be grass, but, as I later learned, was mustard and cress. I wrote home about this and about the small 'mattresses' we had for breakfast in the camp – later to become very familiar as shredded wheat!

Altogether it was a wonderful experience and possibly the reason why the final departure from Prague in June 1939 in the company of many Red Falcon friends held no threats for me – we looked forward to this new adventure. We were welcomed once more by members of the Woodcraft Folk and, in particular, their leader Henry Fair, who had organised the camp in 1937 and had found 20 Woodcraft working-class families to offer us their homes.

Jan Masaryk returned to Prague in 1945 together with Dr Benes, the country's second president. He died tragically in 1948, the victim of the new regime.

Susanne Medas, London W10

Sir – As one who managed to escape from Czechoslovakia at the age of 11 with my parents, I found Margarete Stern's letter very touching. I too remember the great esteem in which President Masaryk was held and have numerous books about him in my bookcase. However, to set the record straight: the president was Tomas Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937).

Jan Masaryk, his son, served as foreign minister in the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile in London and returned to Czechoslovakia after its liberation in 1945. Two weeks after the Communist coup, he was found dead, having fallen from his window in Hradcany Castle in Prague. In 2004 a Prague police report concluded that his death was indeed murder.

Heinz Vogel, Weybridge, Surrey

A LOST GENERATION

Sir – My friend Eric Bourne writes in your June edition that I did not tell the whole story concerning the closure of Bunce Court School after the war in my article two months earlier. He is right, of course, but my short review was about the *Kent Messenger* article and not *per se* about the school and its history; shorthand was therefore the order of the day. The school might indeed have continued had Anna Essinger placed her trust in Dr Friedmann, who to me seemed eminently qualified to carry on.

But the situation was even more complex than that. Following the departure of quite a few refugee teachers who had taught in the school for a pittance, it became increasingly difficult to recruit new teachers, especially to a location as isolated as Bunce Court. Whether the school could have continued for long, its financial resources stretched to the limit, is anyone's guess.

*Leslie Baruch Brent, Emeritus Professor
London N19*

SOUTH WALES EXHIBITION

Sir – The West Glamorgan Archive Service, Swansea, is researching an exhibition on the history of Jewish refugees in South Wales, 1939-45. Our intention is to complete the exhibition by January 2012 to coincide with Holocaust Memorial Day.

I am writing to ask if any of your readers have digital copies of photographs showing the Kindertransport children who came to South Wales. We are also hoping to find some early photographs which show the German/Austrian factory owners who established businesses on the Treforest Industrial Estate near Cardiff in 1933-39.

If you would like to know more about our exhibition, please do not hesitate to contact us for more information.

*Dr David Morris, Archivist, West Glamorgan Archive Service, County Hall, Swansea, tel 01792 636589
westglam.archives@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk/
westglamorganarchives*

BOMBAY SEDER, 1944

Sir – Referring to Peter Roland's letter in the June issue, Alfred Rosenfeld was indeed well known in Bombay for his untiring efforts in organising help for refugees, my family included. He was also keen to improve the standing of the refugee community – not an easy thing to do in the circumstances prevailing at the time. I think he was the moving spirit behind the seder arrangements.

Walter Bergwerk, Bedford

ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

Sir – Reading Edith Argy's amusing article in your June issue, I was reminded that in 2007 we clashed over her article 'On being Jewish'. This time, I fully agree with her sentiments – organised games have no interest for her or for me.

She does, however, retain her enjoyment for swimming and brisk walking. So do I, in a different way. Edith and I were born in German-speaking lands and came to England, which we grew to love. I enjoyed my swimming in summer in Highgate Men's Pond, but had to mind the swans. I also enjoyed walking or rather rambling.

Now, for the second time in my long life, I have moved to another country – namely Israel – as my dear wife passed away and my children, who had gone to Israel many years ago, suggested that I join them.

When we came to England, I must have picked up English easily as we all did and now I am struggling with modern Hebrew. Then I was eight and now I am 80-plus and it is more difficult, or perhaps impossible. However, I am making the best of it and enjoy my children and grandchildren.

Max Sulzbacher, Jerusalem

ZELTWEG GARRISON

Sir – Mention of Zeltweg in Richard Dove's review in your May issue reminds me that the dental centre in which I worked as a National Service dentist in 1952-53 at the Zeltweg British army garrison (previously an airfield) was located on the top floor of the control tower as it had all-round windows for 'light'. Incidentally, the nearby town was called Judenburg, though I could find no reason for the name.

Rudi Leavor, Bradford

QUAKER BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL DELUDED

Sir – With immense sadness I read in a recent issue of the *Jewish Chronicle* that 'British Quakers have voted to boycott goods from "illegal" Israeli settlements in the West Bank.' The stated motive of the representatives of the Quakers – 'to give hope to Palestinians and those working for peace in Israel' – is noble indeed but deluded. It makes my heart sink, as it probably does with many others.

A boycott cannot be other than an aggressive act as it is intended to do harm to someone, in this case to producers and exporters of Israeli goods. It is equivalent

to firing a missile in so far as you cannot know at the time of firing whom it will hit. Boycotts, like missiles and all forms of violence, often do unintended damage. The illusion of 'doing good' is often created, as 'doing a boycott' makes the doer feel better in the face of other people's suffering they can't prevent.

I have immense respect for Quakers for their philosophy of eschewing violence: never initiating violence and refraining from retaliation. I have always admired the Quaker way of devoting all available energy and resources to rescue work and alleviating suffering. The Quakers sponsored a large number of the children rescued from the Nazis on the Kindertransports to Britain, including my brother and me. Not only did our sponsors save our lives: they were alert to our unhappiness through the ill-treatment by our foster parents and sent us to a Quaker boarding school in Essex which saved our sanity. It is deeply distressing to learn that a majority of Quakers are now wasting their resources on a passive-aggressive boycott instead of actively promoting peace, for example by supporting the many already existing initiatives that get Arabs and Jews talking to each other and creating more such projects.

Ruth Barnett, London NW6

A CASE OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Sir – The dissonance barely troubling Dorothea Shefer-Vanson in your June edition glaringly omits, in her list of the protests all round the Middle East and North Africa, the situations in the West Bank and Gaza. Why does not the hatred fomented among Palestinians there and worldwide cause her discomfort when it more acutely threatens her peace? The opportunity of trading land for peace has, wilfully it seems, been missed.

More than anything in the politics of today, I wish for Israel's peace. My sister is a kibbutznic married to a sabra. For years I couldn't understand why borders changed by war – particularly by that war – should not remain so as in bygone times. The call for land for peace seemed unfair after 1967, but now it is clearly the one hope – only to be thrown away in the name of a Good Book of dubious accuracy.

Dr Basil Lee, London SW15

RULE OF LAW MERCHANTS

Sir – A recent BBC 'Question Time' programme was predominantly about the assassination of Osama bin Laden. Surprisingly, Paddy Ashdown, supported by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, strongly argued that the US acted illegally in killing the al-Qaeda chief. He cited the rule of law as the basis for his views. Tirades by the two were rewarded by applause from some mindless members of the audience. This absurd and puerile attitude, no doubt shared by human rights lawyers and others, will not

continued on page 16

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

How genuine is the surrealist soul of **Joan Miró**? Many Freudian images float through his work, but somehow you feel he was more comfortable with the lovingly painted images of his family farm in Barcelona such as *The Tilled Field*, when he first put brush to paper. **Tate Modern's** latest show, **Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape** (until 11 September), features over 150 works, but the wall descriptions imply that the turbulent events which threw Spain into civil war in the early-to-mid-20th century, and spawned great works like Picasso's *Guernica*, worked equally with Miró's sensibility. Not so. He offers few political references.



Joan Miró *The Escape Ladder* 1940 Museum of Modern Art, New York © Successió Miró/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2011

His early representational work was influenced by Impressionists like Van Gogh, and introduce recurring animal symbols such as the donkey. But his pared-down Barcelona landscapes grew increasingly experimental as he dotted huge swathes of colourful background with small images which recall the donkey's earlier innocence: a cock, a unicorn, a rabbit and, later still, monsters, and the growing imprint of sexual symbolism. These carefully rendered landscapes represent the artist's visual *cri de coeur* – powerful, early graphic forms which hint at German Expressionism – but

I couldn't read any patriotic fervour, pain or anxiety into them.

Miró is known for his languid pen lines dissecting or encircling the tempora colours, like graffiti. His paintings may be sparse blobs of colour against a flat black or blue background. You start to learn the map of his mind: little round discs for eyes, red stripe for the Catalan flag. By the late 1920s, two elements enter the equation: his blue meditative background colour and his wit and humour, such as a dog barking at the moon, or the ladder and the moon, with their shades of William Blake.

Miró's work looks innocent enough to decorate a child's bedroom but, on another level, his battle-ground is not the civil war in Spain, but the state of his own mind. These are the bare bones on which his canvasses change and develop, some influenced by Salvador Dali.

In 1934 the Spanish government turned to the right, sparking protests. The fall of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship launched the republic, but again it is Freud and the unconscious to which Miró turned during the 1936 mutiny against the Spanish Republic. In late 1936 he chose exile to France, but commercial interests eventually led him towards closer harmony in his composition. However, by now the pulse and the energy of the early works have gone. By the 1960s the student protests all over Europe lent his work a final urgency. *His Majesty the King* are three totemic tribal sculptures which stand out as a gaunt and disturbed view of the shallow refinement of the modern world.

Bonhams in London have held their inaugural sale of Israeli art and Judaica presented by the **Ben Uri**. Works by ten significant artists raised half a million pounds. The annual **Summer Exhibition** has been launched at the **Royal Academy** and runs until mid-August. More next month.

REVIEWS

Kindertransport epic

THE ENGLISH GERMAN GIRL

by Jake Wallis Simons

Polygon, 2011 (www.polygonbooks.co.uk), 340 pp. paperback, £12.99

This novel covers well-trodden ground. But there is a difference between this work and many others, fiction or otherwise: it is exceptionally well written.

The early chapters tell the tale of a German (substitute Austrian) Jewish family against the backdrop of the rising fortunes of the Nazi Party. The Kleins are a model family (perhaps too model in some respects!). The head of the family, Otto, is a successful surgeon. His wife, Inga, looks after their three children: Rosa, the nine-year-old heroine of this story, her older brother Heinrich and her little sister Hedi.

The family considers itself well assimilated into German society – more German than the Germans almost. But the initial mood – that all will be well again soon, once the Nazis disappear from the scene – gradually disperses, giving way to a realisation that there can be no future for the Jews in Germany. The family's agreeable lifestyle falls apart in the face of intensifying persecution, leading inexorably to emigration for those fortunate enough to escape and to annihilation for those left behind.

In the latter half of the novel we follow Rosa's experiences in Britain. Having arrived at Liverpool Street Station, she is taken into the care of the Kremers, cousins of the Kleins but insensitive to her predicament. Already traumatised by the separation from her family, Rosa is taken aback by what she sees as the alien quality of life in England, one major problem of course being her poor knowledge of English. It is a very painful adjustment, her alienation and loneliness assuaged only by a developing romantic relationship with the Kremers' rebellious son Samuel.

Rosa's desperate attempts to obtain entry permits for her parents and her brother and sister come to nothing. When war breaks out, the Kremer household is evacuated from London to Norfolk. Following a tragic intervention in their lives by the Kremers, Rosa and Samuel are driven apart. Rosa trains to be a nurse, anglicises her name and claims she is from Holland. In later years Samuel comes back into her life, Hollywood-style, as a hospital patient.

The novel is written in the present tense, with occasional flashbacks. We rest on the wave of a stream-of-consciousness narrative: events/speech/thoughts are compressed into lengthy sections as the nightmare plays itself out.

What strikes the reader of this novel is the enormous amount of research carried out by the author. Jake Wallis Simons has constructed a work of art, peopled with real characters portrayed in a real context. You will not put down this book easily.

Howard Spier

Exhibition

From Prague to London: In memory of the Kindertransport

WINTONOVY VLAKY/
WINTON'S TRAINS

Liverpool Street Station, London, May 2011

The majority of children who arrived in England on the Kindertransport came from Berlin and Vienna, but nearly 700 started their journey in Prague. Their escape was due primarily to the initiative of a remarkable gentleman, Sir Nicholas Winton.



On 21 May a photographic exhibition was opened outside Liverpool Street Station in London to commemorate not only the 72nd anniversary of the project but also the 102nd birthday of Sir Nicholas himself. A similar exhibition/commemoration was opened simultaneously at the Prague station from which the children departed.

The London ceremony was attended by about 200 people, including a number of the surviving 'children' and their families. It was held on the terrace in front of Caffé Nero – full marks to them for their generosity and co-operation. The speakers included the Czech Ambassador and Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines, who was the organiser of the London exhibition and one of those saved.

But the main attraction was Sir Nicholas, who, despite his age, spoke briefly of the importance of the rescue and then chatted to many of those attending, including children. Radio contact was made with the Prague event and the assembled crowd sang 'Happy Birthday' before presenting Sir Nicholas with a huge chocolate cake in the shape of a steam engine. The cake was afterwards shared by those present and was most enjoyable!

The exhibition, produced in Prague, uses photographs to outline the events of 1939, and what became of

Claims Conference obtains increase in Homecare funding

Following their annual negotiations with the German government, the Claims Conference has announced a substantial increase in funding for Homecare, a programme assisting with the costs of home-based care and enabling Holocaust survivors and refugees to live in dignity in their own homes for as long as possible.

The Claims Conference obtained a multi-year commitment for Homecare and medical funding. For 2012, the German government will provide €126.7 million (\$177 million); in 2013, €136.7 million (\$191 million); and in 2014, €140 million (\$196 million) for vital Homecare and medical services for Jewish Holocaust victims living around the world. This totals €403 million (approximately \$564 million). The amount for 2012 is a 15 per cent increase over the €110 million negotiated for 2011.

This long-term agreement is vital to addressing the growing social welfare needs of ageing Holocaust victims and will provide them and the agencies which care for them with the certainty that funding will be available to meet the anticipated growing demand over the next few years.

In addition to the new arrangements for Homecare, the Claims Conference obtained an increase – from €291 to €300 – in the monthly payments from

the Article II Fund, a programme which provides compensation to some 51,400 Holocaust survivors who were in concentration camps or ghettos or lived under a false identity. In total, the Claims Conference obtained an additional €8.3 million (approximately \$11.7 million) in annual pension payments.

The criteria for Article II payments currently stipulate that incarceration in a ghetto had to have been for at least 18 months in order to meet eligibility requirements for payment. In a further significant development, the German government agreed to review on a case-by-case basis the claims from survivors who were in a ghetto for less than 18 months to determine if, when reviewing the totality of their persecution and other factors, they represent cases of special hardship.

Speaking at the conclusion of the discussions, Claims Conference Vice-President Greg Schneider said: 'With these increased funds, the Claims Conference can provide more hours of Homecare, addressing the most basic needs of these ageing and frail victims of Nazism. We can enable more survivors to remain in their own homes, living in familiar surroundings while getting the services they need and deserve.'

Michael Newman

List of personal belongings of concentration camp prisoners published

In May this year, the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen, Germany published an online list of personal belongings in their archives taken from prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. 'It is our aim to return as many effects as possible to the survivors of Nazi persecution and their relatives,' says Jean-Luc Blondel, Director of the ITS. The list of the personal effects appears on the ITS's website at <http://www.its-arolsen.org/en/archives/effects/index.html>

In its search for relatives, the ITS is being supported by partner organisations, victims' associations, memorial centres, researchers and journalists. 'This is because we are often unable to tell which countries the families live in today,' Blondel explains.

Most of the personal belongings are from the Neuengamme (2,400) and Dachau (330) concentration camps and include items which belonged to a small number of prisoners from the Gestapo prison at Hamburg (50). Possessions of

victims in the Natzweiler and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps, as well as the Amersfoort and Compiègne transit camps, are also on the list.

Following a comprehensive research project, 476 effects have been correlated with the names of former detainees for the first time. The items in question are personal belongings taken from concentration camp inmates upon their arrival and include wallets, identification papers, photographs and letters. 'The personal items have little material value but a high sentimental value,' says Blondel. 'In our view, the mementoes are in the best hands with the families.'

The ITS serves victims of Nazi persecution and their families by documenting their fate through the archives it manages. It preserves these historical records and makes them available for research. The UK is one of the 11 member states of the International Commission which governs the ITS.

Michael Newman

those fortunate enough to escape as well as those left behind. There were many photos of survivors and of the remarkable train journey in 2009 which retraced the route of 70 years previously and included many passengers who had been on the earlier trains. This no doubt brought back sad memories of

the traumatic separation from parents at that time.

The exhibition was due to continue until 29 June but was badly damaged by freak weather conditions and will be relocated after being repaired. Later it is due to travel to Germany and Israel.

George Vulkan

Below the tip of the iceberg: Dealing with disasters

I recently attended the annual 'Dealing with Disasters' conference at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne. This international three-day conference was entitled 'Linking Disasters with Development: The Next Ten Years' and covered a very wide range of topics.

I spoke on the future of the social care agenda, particularly with regard to supporting people who have experienced war/persecution and natural disasters and the impact this has on their lives. The audience was asked to consider: whose responsibility is it to respond long after the media lights have dimmed and the humanitarian response has moved on to another all too frequent disaster elsewhere? Who is there to support the individuals who are left without any assistance once the event has occurred and there are no longer proper resources to support individuals and families who are still suffering?

When talking of disasters, I often use the analogy of an iceberg: the bit that gets noticed is the part which everyone can see above the water, yet the greater part is

below the surface. Disaster responses are often targeted to the part everyone can see, yet the much greater part receives little attention. I used examples from my work in the earthquake-affected area in Pakistan, where children continue to play in the rubble on which their houses once stood and families live in tents even years later since no rebuilding is allowed. Armenia is in a similar position, having experienced a huge earthquake in the 1980s, yet families live in railway freight containers because the government will not provide alternative housing.

I also spoke of the work of the AJR in continuing to support our membership 70 years on and of some of the issues faced by our survivors. Indeed, we are unique in the provision of social work support to Holocaust survivors and their families within the UK and in meeting the needs of an ageing population at a time when local authority budgets are being reduced.

There were at the Northumbria University conference 75 presentations in total and the organiser noted that my presentation was one of only three which

focused on the survivors and had a more 'human agency' to it rather than the economic/political face of disasters.

Following my presentation, two delegates approached me. They said they were refugees from African countries and had been moved by my talk. They recalled their own experiences of flight and trauma following genocide and mentioned how these memories remained with them, ready to invade their thoughts at random moments every day. Many of our readers will identify with this as something they regularly live with.

Within such a large international forum, I was proud to be a part of the AJR and to be able to highlight to people who deal with disasters on a regular basis that it is possible to build an organisation which is sustainable and effective and will not diminish over time, but will respond to the ever-changing needs of its members.

Eileen M. Brady
AJR Social Worker (North East and Scotland)/ Disaster Management Consultant

Closed hearts and Gypsies

Many British Jews have been in this country for less than three generations – maybe four – and we have done very well since coming as refugees. The main reason we came? All the gates and hearts of Europe were closed against us! Even in Britain there was a lot of racism against us, and only recently has anti-Semitism become illegal. But most of us have been able to live reasonably good lives. Therefore it saddens me greatly that so many Jews I meet have absorbed a negative image of Roma/Gypsy Travellers (RGT), an image not too dissimilar to the negative image the Nazis propagated about Jews, and so many people in the whole of Europe absorbed it in ignorance and fed their racism on it.

There are roughly the same number of RGT as Jews in this country. Approximately two-thirds of these live assimilated in the community but largely unnoticed because they hide their identity to protect themselves from being shamed, ridiculed and attacked. Anti-Gypsyism, like anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, is a hate crime and the perpetrators can be arrested and brought to court. But, unlike anti-Semitism, the last bastion of culturally accepted racism is against RGT. Unbelievably – and hopefully out of sheer ignorance only – many Jews support this 'culturally acceptable' racism.

This is the third year that has included the month of June as RGT History Month to promote learning about Gypsies. Although many people don't recognise

them as such, Gypsies have been part of our British community for several hundred years. They have a most interesting history, originating from northern India. Because of the dark skin of many of the earlier Gypsies they were erroneously thought to come from Egypt – hence the name 'Gypsies'. Up to the mid-20th century they were as important a part of the rural economy as, for instance, itinerant tinkers, crop-pickers, blacksmiths and jewellers. Now these trades have been superseded by manufacturing industry and prejudiced employers have marginalised the RGT. Enclosure of the 'common land' that served their nomadic culture made them 'homeless'. Instead of understanding their history and needs, communities drove them away, evicted them and regarded them as a nuisance. Any person willing to research RGT history will realise that the nuisance lies within the communities that deprive, marginalise, isolate, vilify and persecute them.

Most of the current myths about Gypsies are just that – myths. Those who can earn pay income tax; those who are supplied with utilities pay council tax. Those who break the law do so mostly because the current laws on provision for Gypsies are patently biased against them. They do want education, but many parents will not send their children to school when they get attacked and beaten on the way there and back. Unlike our average life expectancy of 75-79 years, theirs is 50 years. Why? Because they do not have the

confidence or know-how to access our health services. Far from the 'filthy' image, their chalet caravans are immaculate and comfortable. Contrary to the 'feckless' image, they are family-oriented, not unlike Jewish families. The core of the 'nuisance problem' is that RGT are refused planning permission on land they have bought, evicted from it into nowhere and then repeatedly evicted from wherever they camp. With this sort of unfair treatment and no rubbish collection provided, how can we be surprised when they leave rubbish behind?

For the one-third of RGT who still want to 'live on wheels' and travel, there is a shortage of approximately 3,000 legal pitches. To provide these, the government has made money available to local authorities, but much of the money has not been claimed. Many local authorities (particularly Basildon in Essex) prefer to spend a much larger sum, out of their general budget, on evicting and re-evicting RGT. Why? Because their prejudiced voters want this. Why does the government not insist on proper provision for RGT? The government too seems to put votes before humanity on this issue.

Remember, the ethical value of a community can be assessed by how it treats its most vulnerable members! Anyone interested in further details is welcome to contact me at rutheclb@gmail.com.

Ruth Barnett

ESRA: An instructive visit

On a recent visit to Vienna, I was able to visit the ESRA (Hebrew: help) organisation. In some ways, ESRA provides services similar to those of the AJR – which is why I was interested in visiting. But there are also significant differences. ESRA was established as a Centre for Psychosocial Care in 1994 jointly by the Jewish community and the City of Vienna. It is housed on the site of the former Great Leopoldstadt

Synagogue.

The clientele is about 3,000 people. Social services and assistance with regard to several kinds of problems are much as the AJR provides. There is a restaurant and there are social activities. The big difference is that ESRA runs an 'in-house' medical centre, covering a wide range of conditions and treatments – from minor injuries, psychological problems and dental services to more major conditions.

As with the AJR, there is financial help when needed, largely funded by the Claims Conference. I had the impression that this was more limited than the help the AJR is able to give, but this may be a matter of misinterpretation. Certainly, I was told that such financial help was mainly for items that are very expensive, such as specialised surgical shoes. A worthwhile and instructive visit.

Paul Samet

AJR volunteer speaks at Kent school

When Martyn Prince, history master of the New Line Learning Academy near Maidstone, Kent, wanted someone to come and tell his students about the Nazi Holocaust, the AJR was quick to help. John Izbicki, a resident of Horsmonden, a village near Tunbridge Wells in Kent, volunteered to speak at the school.

John, who was born in Berlin 80 years ago and lived through the horrors of Kristallnacht – the day after his eighth birthday – was able to provide the 40-strong audience of teenage boys and girls with a first-hand account. He said he had been one of the lucky ones to escape, not by Kindertransport but together with his parents, leaving Berlin on 1 September 1939 – the day Hitler invaded Poland – and arriving in England just six hours before Mr Chamberlain declared war on Germany on 3 September. He described in graphic detail the smashing of shop windows and the burning of synagogues and how his father hid in their ruins. His grandmother died of starvation at Theresienstadt concentration camp, while all except two of his close relations met their ends in the gas chambers and crematoria

of Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and Dachau.

Mr Izbicki, the former distinguished education correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* and, later, head of its Paris office, said afterwards: 'I have spoken at many schools in my life but this was the first time I have ever told an audience about so gruesome and personal a subject. There were times when I found it emotionally difficult

to revive some of those memories. The children were fantastic. They listened in absolute silence – and no one fell asleep. They also asked intelligent questions without having to be prompted by Mr Prince. One young lady (I thought she was a sixth-former but she turned out to be a teacher) was moved to tears.'

John's own memoirs, *Life Between the Lines*, are shortly to be published. Watch this space.



AJR Centre does its bit for the Royal Wedding

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY JULY

3-6 Fourth International Conference on Jewish Enlightenment: Haskalah and Religion (in co-operation with the Martin Buber Chair in Jewish Thought and Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt and Bar Ilan University). The conference will take place in the Casino-Building on the Westend-Campus at the Goethe-University, Frankfurt. www.sussex.ac.uk/cgjs

6-10 The third annual Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School for PhD students in Jewish History, Culture and Thought will take place at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt. 20 students from Europe, Israel and the USA will be given the opportunity to discuss their research projects with Professors Christian Wiese, Stephanie Schüler-Springorum (Berlin) and Andreas Gotzmann (Erfurt). www.sussex.ac.uk/cgjs

Sun 17 B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge President's Garden Party at home of Tom Heinemann. From 3.00 pm. Charitable donation £5.00 per person. Tel 020 8904 3568

Club 43 Meetings will resume on Monday 12 September

AJR girls 'MoonWalk' around City of London



(from left) Lorna Moss, Rosemary Peters, Ruth Finestone, Susan Harrod (Susan unfortunately was unable to be present), Sue Kurlander, Sarah Shulton and supporter Linda Joseph

Inspired by colleagues who have recently been fighting breast cancer so valiantly, the AJR Girls Team set off on their 'MoonWalk' at midnight on a cold May night. On a 13-mile walk around the City of London, they raised

over £5,000 for Walk the Walk, a charity involved in breast cancer research and projects. Thanks to everyone for their tremendous support. If you would like to donate, please go to www.walkthewalkfundraising.org/AJRGIRLS

INSIDE the AJR

Members out in force for Glasgow commemoration

AJR members turned out in force for the annual commemoration of the Second World War, an event sponsored by the Russian Cultural Centre, which is based in the Café Kossachok. We heard reminiscences by three Scottish sailors who had served on the Arctic convoys which delivered supplies to the Russians in 1941-45. A Russian wartime concert followed and we then enjoyed a concert by the brilliant violinist Lev Atlas and his ensemble and by the glorious young Armenian soprano Anush Hovhannissyan.

Halina Moss

A totally enjoyable visit to Luton Hoo

Such a splendid visit and such a wonderful day! The house and gardens were stunning, our guide excellent and the tea delicious and most welcome. Thanks to everyone (including our coach driver) who had a hand in making the arrangements for the afternoon, which was totally enjoyable.

Hanne and Leslie Freedman

Ealing discussion on topical issues

We had a lively discussion on topical issues facilitated by Esther. In particular, we discussed the royal wedding, the demise of bin Laden and related moral matters. We also looked briefly at some Jewish issues of current concern.

Leslie Sommer

Next meeting: 5 July. Patricia Fielding: 21 Aldgate

Welwyn GC Too difficult to decipher

We all enjoyed Monica's hospitality. A big talking point was a collection of 1939 letters from Vienna. They were no doubt of great interest but, written in Sütterlin script, they were difficult to decipher – even for the few oldies who had learned that script.

Alfred Simms

Next meeting: 7 July. Social get-together

Ifford Yet another moving tale of the Holocaust

Renée Tyack read from her book *They Called Her Cassandra*, about her parents' journey from Leipzig. Here was yet another tale of the Holocaust – its sad and happy moments. It is wonderful how much diversity one finds in the many anecdotes we hear. A moving story.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 6 July. Details to follow

A most enjoyable afternoon for Bromley CF members

We met in Liane Segal's home. A long afternoon's discussion on the royal wedding and the death of Osama bin Laden was followed by a lovely tea. A most enjoyable afternoon.

Hazel Beiny

Pinner A tour of opera houses

Ruth Beckman took us on a world tour of opera houses, recounting the history of many of the buildings and the part they played in their local communities – they are far more than mere houses for performances! In all, we visited 18 sites, including one far up the Amazon in Brazil.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 7 July. Myra Sampson, 'My Son the Artist'

Recently departed Surrey friends missed

Some 20 of us enjoyed Edmée Barta's warm hospitality in her delightful home. The conversation was animated, the refreshments delicious and the sun shining. We did, however, miss the company of our recently departed friends Vernon Saunders and Harry Stadler.

Bronia Snow

HGS Jewish trades in Regency London

On our 7th anniversary we heard a well researched presentation by David Bernet, beginning with the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290. Thanks and farewell to Rosemary Lewis, who initiated this group.

Carmen Stevens

Next meeting: 11 July. Roger Sanders

Essex (Westcliff) lunch a resounding success

The annual lunch we hosted for members from other groups was a resounding success. There was a splendid buffet lunch. Everyone got on as if they had known each other for years. Otto Deutsch welcomed the visitors and said a little about the history of Southend as an appetiser for the coach tour after lunch.

Sue Barnett

Next meeting: 12 July

Wembley A friendly group

A congenial afternoon. As usual, the conversation flowed among our friendly

group. Myrna provided delicious refreshments as always. Looking forward to meeting again next month.

Ingrid Morland

Next meeting: 20 July. Social get-together

'RECIPES REMEMBERED'

Do you have childhood memories of recipes or dishes you enjoyed?

If so, would you like to contribute to a recipe book?

Continental Friends groups in the North have so far collected over 40 recipes from AJR members for their 'Recipes Remembered' project.

We are collecting recipes and dishes from AJR members, where possible together with memories and/or photographs. Anything that reminds you of your childhood kitchen – of special times or festivals. Perhaps dishes your mother or grandmother made and you still make today. Second Generation could tell us about recipes from their parents etc.

We are interested in anything you can remember about the food. At what time of the day you ate it – perhaps you ate it in the winter or on a picnic or at a festival time. If you don't know the exact ingredients or method, perhaps you can tell us stories about the dish – who used to cook it or what the dish smelled like or looked like.

'Recipes Remembered' is going to print in August 2011.

For more information or if you would like to send in a recipe before 31 July 2011, please contact AJR volunteer Pippa Landey (Leeds) on 0113 2893144 or at pnlandey1@googlemail.com or contact Susanne Green, AJR Northern Co-ordinator, on 0151 291 5734 or at susanne@ajr.org.uk

Temple Fortune An extraordinary man

Lady Aurelia Young, daughter of the renowned sculptor Oscar Nemon, gave us a most informed talk on the life of this

Liverpool: Third Generation guest of honour



(from left) Professor Eric Moonman OBE; Judge Globe; AJR members Inge Goldrein, Eric Cohen, Dr J. Goldsmith

Over 30 of us sat down to an excellent lunch prepared by our member Sabine Brown and then heard from our guest of honour, Judge Henry Globe, Recorder

of Liverpool. He gave a highly interesting account of his and his wife's family's immigration history – both are members of the Third Generation.

Guido Alis

extraordinary man. Among his sitters were Winston Churchill, Sigmund Freud, The Queen, and Lady Thatcher.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 21 July. Julie Brutnell, Alzheimer's Society. Social workers to attend. All groups invited

Edgware From Finchley to Suez

Ronnie Green gave us an incredible account of his time in the Israeli army during the Suez crisis. His spellbinding report opened up a discussion on present-day Israel and the future strategy of the Israeli army.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 12 July. Rob Lowe, 'Gilbert and Sullivan'

Café Imperial

Putting the world to rights

There were birthday congratulations for Peter Wayne, following which the state of traffic and parking meters was discussed at length, there was another brilliant joke from Bill Howard, and the world was put to rights over breakfast yet again.

Hazel Beiny

Radlett Questioning everything

In his thoughtful lecture, Prof Gerald Curzon pointed out that Jews have a high level of literacy and, like all outsiders, are wont to question everything. This led, he said, to the disproportionate number of Nobel Prizes awarded to Jews.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 20 July. Patricia Fielding: 21 Aldgate

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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Hendon A story of survival

Renée Tyack read from her book *They Called Her Cassandra*, about her family's story of survival – their escape from Leipzig via Holland to the UK.

Shirley Rodwell

Next meeting: 25 July. Howard Lanning, '80 Years in the Film Industry'

ALSO MEETING IN JULY

Cardiff Monday 4 July

West Midlands (Birmingham) Sunday 24 July. Annual Garden Party (details being sent out)

North London A 50-year relationship

A most interesting talk by Prof Gerald Curzon on Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger. She was a Jewish teenager many years his junior; he was a fervent Nazi. Both were German philosophers, whose relationship lasted 50 years.

Hanne H. Freedman

Next meeting: 28 July. Maurice Collins, 'My booba had one of those but she threw it away!'

Cleve Road demand for 'AJR's Got Talent' competition

A large crowd heard Jane Rosenberg discuss Jewish humour and play recorded examples. Group members then told their own favourite Jewish jokes. It was suggested there should be an 'AJR's Got Talent' competition.

David Lang

Next meeting: 26 July. Patricia Fielding: 21 Aldgate

Glasgow-Edinburgh-Newcastle get-together

A full day's get-together at Edinburgh Synagogue for 50 old and new friends. Following a briefing by the AJR's Sue Kurlander and Eileen Brady, we split into three lively groups: What legacy should we leave? Whose responsibility is it to safeguard Holocaust education? Where to for the Second and Third Generations? Having had a delicious lunch, we heard a stimulating presentation by Heather Boyce, Scotland manager of the Anne Frank Trust. An excellent day's 'work' and enjoyment.

Henry Wuga

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Ruth Jacobs 020 8445 3366

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Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
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Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Fred Austin 01384 252310

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

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 4 July 2011

Daniel Bacall
(Israel Embassy)
'Israel Update'

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

Reservations required
Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am – 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

July Entertainment

Mon	4	KT Lunch – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	5	CLOSED
Wed	6	William Smith
Thur	7	Geoffrey Strum
Mon	11	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	12	CLOSED
Wed	13	Michael Heaton
Thur	14	Paul Coleman
Mon	18	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue	19	CLOSED
Wed	20	Douglas Poster
Thur	21	Top Hat Entertainer
Mon	25	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	26	CLOSED
Wed	27	Madeleine Whiteson
Thur	28	Robert Wright

Brighton and Hove Sarid A poignant story

Bridget McGing spoke movingly about the book *My Father's Roses*, showing at the same time photos and letters from a by-gone era. This poignant story of her family brought to life two world wars and a journey to a new beginning in the UK.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 18 July. Patricia Fielding: 21 Aldgate

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Myrna Glass, London South and Midlands Groups Co-ordinator
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Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
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Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

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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

Diamond Wedding

Congratulations to Marion and Manfred Durst on the occasion of their Diamond Wedding on 28 June 2011.

CLASSIFIED

For rent in July and August: large, comfortable house near Jerusalem, kosher kitchen, all mod cons. Phone: 972-25345910.

'THE KING'S SPEECH'

This Oscar-winning film will be showing at the AJR Centre on Monday 11 July 2011 after lunch

To reserve your place, please call the AJR Centre on 020 7328 0208

REGIONAL 'GET-TOGETHER' IN KINGSTON (SOUTH LONDON) Wednesday 13 July 2011

We are delighted to be joined by Peter Suchet, who will be talking about his famous family

Peter is the brother of David, the actor of Poirot fame, and John, former ITN newsreader and campaigner to raise awareness about Alzheimer's Disease All-day event including lunch and transport

Be sure to book early!
To reserve a place, please call Susan Harrod at Head Office on 020 8385 3070

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Telephone: 020 8455 2286

'THE BEGGAR'S OPERA'

John Gay's satirical masterpiece
at **REGENT'S PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE**
Thursday 14 July
Matinee performance at 2.15 pm

'Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage'

Deep in London's underworld, this musical comedy of highwaymen, hangmen and harlots is an uncompromising exposure of moral and financial corruption

Transport available from Stanmore Station and Finchley Road Station
Tickets £19.00 pp – Transport £6.00 pp

For further details, please call Susan Harrod at Head Office on 020 8385 3070

OUTING TO OLYMPIC PARK

Wednesday 27 July 2011

Coach will leave Cleve Road at 9.30 am prompt for Olympic Park, where we will meet guide Joanna Hoad for a tour of one-and-a-half hours

Lunch at Formans, with Lance Forman giving a talk about his family's famous smoked salmon business

Leave at about 4.00 pm following a drive around the Park
£8.00 pp (outing sponsored)

Coach will return to Cleve Road at approximately 6.00 pm
Tel 020 8385 3070

HOLIDAY IN EASTBOURNE

The AJR are doing another holiday at the Lansdowne Hotel
Monday 11 July to Monday 18 July
£520 per week dinner, bed and breakfast plus £40 per week single room supplement

to include transport from Cleve Road, lunch on outward journey

Please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070

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'WATERMARKS'

Special screening on
Tuesday 26 July at 2.30 pm

at
North Western Reform Synagogue
Alyth Gardens, Finchley Road
London NW11

Yaron Zilberman's heart-warming film – an uplifting tale of survival and friendship among the women swimmers of the legendary Vienna Sports Club Hakoah

Tea to follow
£2.00 pp

To reserve your place, please call Hazel Beiny or Esther Rinkoff at Head Office on 020 8385 3070

TRIP TO ISRAEL

We are hoping to arrange a trip to Israel from 29 November to 8 December 2011 staying half-board at the King Solomon Hotel in Netanya.

£1,300 pp in twin/double room, £200 supplement for single room

Price includes El Al flights from Heathrow, transfers to and from hotel, sightseeing most days, entrance fees where necessary.

We have been able to book the excellent guide we had on our last trip.

For further details, please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070.

This will be a fairly full itinerary which will involve some walking.

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OBITUARIES

Gertrude Black, 13 December 1912–27 April 2011

Gertrude (Trudi) packed a great deal into her 98 years. She was brought up in Elbing, East Prussia, but spent summers with her brother Walter and sister Maili in their holiday house at the Baltic Sea. A move to Düsseldorf followed.

After schooling, au pair and nanny posts saw her become fluent in French and understandable in English. A university course in Berlin was discontinued when Hitler proclaimed a boycott of Jews in 1936. The following year she met and married Julius.

Trudi worked in the well-established Swartz grocery and food store business. Hannah, their first daughter, arrived in September 1938. Julius did not return home on Kristallnacht: he had been taken to Dachau. A non-Jewish income tax official contrived an excuse to have him released several weeks later. They were advised to leave the country as soon as possible. Trudi and Julius each learned subsequently that they had lost a brother in the Holocaust.

Thanks to Quakers in Munich, the family, virtually penniless, was taken in by

a minister's family in Edinburgh. The Moncriefs' later generosity allowed them to buy their first house in Glasgow. That kindness was reciprocated years later, when Trudi and Julius helped the Moncrief grandchildren similarly. For 18 months Julius was interned on the Isle of Man. On his release, he lived in digs while working in Glasgow when his wife and child were evacuated to Lenzie for safety during the Blitz. Reunited, Trudi took an office job with a furrier. Marion arrived in January 1945.

Redundancies forced the family to seek alternative employment and Trudi helped her husband in a business making up and selling pet foods. A further change saw Julius take up agency work. The ever-resourceful Trudi kept the pet food concern going.

Joy returned when Hannah became engaged to George, another refugee, but the joy was tempered by Julius's first



heart attack. Trudi nursed him at home while managing the business. George and Hannah married in June 1958. When the business ultimately prospered, the Swartzes, now renamed Black, relocated to the south of Glasgow, where Marion met Neville and they married in January 1967. Trudi doted on her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Julius died in April 1979 and, through an AJR introduction, Trudi met Martin Lux and moved to Highgate in London to be his companion for nearly 11 years. She lost him in 1998 and returned to Glasgow to be close to her circle of Jewish refugee friends, one of whom, Lore Lucas, acted as a guardian angel.

Trudi was a wonderful story-teller. Her children's stories were entrancing and her poems moving. She was a lady with firm views and, while she would often seek advice, she usually did her own thing. As the family matriarch and a friend, she was loving and generous. She will be deeply missed by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**Hannah Gummers
and Marion Krasner**

Anneliese Lindsay (née Narai), 7 March 1924–25 March 2011

Anneliese, or Anna, was born in Vienna. Her mother was Lucie Friedmann and her father Geza Narai. We know little about her parents as they separated when Anna was young and she was brought up by relatives and in boarding schools. Her father perished in Auschwitz and her mother was taken to Izbica. In December 1938 she came to England on one of the first Kindertransports. She was delighted to have reached Harwich and her first English meal of porridge and Lowestoft kippers was one of her most memorable.

Anna stayed at Dovercourt and went to Bunce Court briefly. She continued her education at Wittingehame School in Scotland. There she learned horticulture with a view to going to Palestine. This wasn't to be and she tried domestic science in Cambridge, followed by a period in a garden nursery. The head gardener soon noticed her nurturing skills and told her they were wasted on plants. This was a turning point in her life and she trained as a nurse at Guy's Hospital, London followed by psychiatric training

at the Maudsley. She spent the war years at Mile End Hospital and witnessed many harrowing scenes. Although it was tough and hard work, she had found her true vocation and her caring personality was evident for all to see.

She met her future husband at the end of the war. He was from Northern Ireland and had recently left the Navy. They married in 1952. Anna gave up working with the arrival of the first of three children in 1954 and devoted the next 20 years to bringing them up. They lived in Portsmouth, Pinner, Bath, Plymouth, Singapore and then Bath again, where they settled.

In 1974 Anna returned to nursing and was sister-in-charge of the psychiatric unit at Bath's Royal United Hospital and then a psychiatric annexe, Weston Lodge. She loved her job and was



devastated to have to retire from the NHS. However, she continued working in private nursing homes in the Bath area well into her 70s.

Anna was immensely cultured. She was well read and loved music, particularly Beethoven and Schubert. She loved beautiful things and collecting antiques was one of her pleasures. Gardening was an abiding passion, and she was an exceptional cook. She was addicted to knitting and Scrabble. She had many friends and it was impossible to walk down a street in Bath without her bumping into someone she knew. She spent the last five years caring for her husband. She was diagnosed with lung cancer in January after never having smoked.

She leaves a husband, a son, two daughters and five grandsons.

If anyone remembers Anna or knows anything about her family, we would be immensely grateful if you could make contact with her daughter Mary Allen: Tel 020 8675 7766 or 07879 645520 or email marylindsay.editor@gmail.com.

Mary Allen



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



An encounter with IMPACT

A chance encounter led me to the offices of IMPACT, the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education, where I was able to learn about their work and see for myself the fruits of their labour from their acting director, educational counsellor Shelley Elkayam.

Situated in a building on the Hebrew University's leafy Givat Ram campus, the Institute, which is apolitical and funded entirely by donations, was set up by a group of experts in 1998 after the signing of the Oslo Accords, as a result of the growing awareness among scholars and intellectuals in Israel and abroad that more than paper agreements was needed to alter the hearts and minds of the peoples of the region.

The process of obtaining textbooks from Arab countries is not always easy but, once these reach the Institute, they are subjected to a rigorous process of analysis. This is undertaken by scholars from various disciplines who are fluent in Arabic. The analysis involves identifying passages in the books according to their compliance (or rather non-compliance) with UNESCO recommendations regarding tolerance, understanding and respect for 'the other' in the school curriculum.

Most of the textbooks, such as those from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Turkey and Lebanon, vilify non-Muslims in general and Israel and the Jewish people in particular. The one ray of hope in recent years has been from pre-revolutionary Tunisia, where a forward-looking minister of education, a former member of the opposition who was taken into the government by President Ben Ali, introduced a progressive curriculum which promoted tolerance and acceptance of 'the other'. Possibly the youngsters who were educated in that system were instrumental in removing the dictatorship, which was not in accord with the principles they had absorbed at school. But, again, while many of those who were active in the recent revolutions and demonstrations in other Arab countries were young people, they did not all have a similar educational background.

Particularly telling is the Hamas web magazine for children, *Al-Fateh*, which mirrors the Hamas movement's ideology, preaching hatred and condemnation of 'the other', while indoctrinating its young readers in Jihad, annihilation and self-destruction by advocating the cult of martyrdom. The Holocaust is castigated as a Jewish lie propagated in order to

evoke sympathy for Zionism and, of course, the Jews are decried as usurpers who have no place in Palestine.

The textbooks of the Palestinian Authority delegitimise the Jewish and Israeli 'other' by denying the historical and religious presence of Jews in Palestine and opposing recognition of the State of Israel. They demonise the 'other' by ascribing dubious and nefarious characteristics to Jews (never portrayed as individuals) and the State of Israel. In addition, they present a biased view of the Middle East conflict by assigning exclusive blame to Israel and absolving the Palestinians of any responsibility for it, as well as stressing the ideal of a violent struggle of liberation rather than advocating a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The West and Western civilisation are anathema according to the curriculum of textbooks from Iran, where America is defined as 'the Great Satan' and Israel is demonised as a usurper and the killer of Palestinian children. In Egypt, in the wake of that country's peace agreement with Israel, there was a shift towards approbation of peace as a positive value and this was reflected in textbooks, where a move towards greater acceptance of 'the other' was promoted. Attention was also focused on the need to maintain good relations between Egypt's Muslim majority and the Coptic Christian community. It is too soon to tell whether this will continue to be the trend in Egypt – let alone what will happen in the other Arab countries.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

stand up to logical analysis.

Nobody will deny that a state of war existed between the US and al-Qaeda. Thus it is not the rule of law, but the rules of war that apply. In this, the killing of the enemy is considered not only acceptable, but indeed desirable. The assassination of Hitler was attempted by his own people and seriously considered by Churchill. No one in his right mind would, during the Second World War, have considered this to be unlawful.

Douglas Murray, a member of the panel, expressed elation at the killing of bin Laden. While gloating is ill placed at the death of any human being, the jubilation of Americans is understandable and the majority

will share Murray's sentiments.

Quite apart from the logistical problems in taking bin Laden prisoner, there is a compelling argument in favour of killing him on the spot, which the carping, hand-wringing and strident minority have overlooked. Recent history has taught us that to put bin Laden on trial in the US would have led to a spate of hijacking and hostage-taking by al-Qaeda disciples in an effort to force his release.

To quote just one example of many: during the Munich Olympiad in 1972, terrorists demanded the release and safe passage to Egypt of 234 Palestinians. In the ensuing exchange of fire, all Israelis and most of the terrorists were killed.

The three survivors were incarcerated, but later released when members of the Black September organisation hijacked a Lufthansa plane and used the lives of the passengers as a bargaining counter. Hostage-taking and kidnapping have become a standard weapon of terrorists.

The United States government, as well as the UK and the Israelis, will not negotiate with terrorists, and it is inconceivable that the US would have released bin Laden. As a result, dozens if not hundreds of innocent people would have lost their lives. Is this the outcome which the rule of law merchants would have preferred?

Erwin Brecher PhD, London NWS

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