

Opponents of Hitler

On 21 August 2011, BBC Two broadcast *The Man Who Crossed Hitler*, a TV film based on the story of Hans Litten, a left-wing lawyer of half-Jewish parentage who in 1931 had Hitler appear under subpoena in a Berlin court. At the trial of two SA men accused in connection with the violent Nazi attack on a Communist gathering at the Edenpalast Dance Hall, a particularly brutal incident in which three people were killed, Litten subjected Hitler to a hostile and humiliating cross-examination that left the Nazi leader struggling to maintain his political credibility and, in effect, reduced him to perjury. Hitler never forgot the experience and Litten paid for his courage after January 1933, when he was arrested and held for five years in several camps and prisons until, after constant brutal mistreatment, he committed suicide in Dachau. He was 34 years old.

The circle around Hans Litten included a number of notable enemies of Nazism, who have, like Litten himself, remained undeservedly little known. Foremost among them was his remarkable mother, Irmgard Litten, née Wüst. A non-Jew whose family had been Protestant pastors and academics from south-western Germany, she had married Fritz Litten, a converted Jew who had made a successful career as an academic at Königsberg University in East Prussia and was deeply conservative in his politics. Irmgard Litten did not share her husband's disapproval of their eldest son's choice of a career as a lawyer defending Communists and other left-wingers. Uninterested in politics until 1933, the arrest of her son and his detention without trial galvanised her, and she conducted an unremitting campaign for his release, or at least for an improvement in the conditions under which he was held, heedless of the danger to which she thus exposed herself.

After Hans Litten was found hanged in Dachau on 5 February 1938, his mother

and her second son, Heinz, realised they had to flee Germany. (The Nazi authorities feared that, once Hans Litten was dead, there would be nothing to hold his mother back from speaking out about his treatment in detention.) They left that same month for London, where Irmgard, now aged 58, embarked on an energetic and high-profile anti-Nazi campaign. As Marian Malet has described in an article in the 2011 volume of the *Yearbook of*



Hans Litten, 1903-38

the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, 'Beyond Dachau: Irmgard Litten in England', Irmgard started by recording her eldest son's experiences during the period of his imprisonment; she also had to provide for the subsistence of herself and her second son.

In 1940, she had arranged for her book *Die Hölle sieht dich an: Der Fall Litten* to be published by a small left-wing émigré publishing house in Paris, but the German invasion of France put paid to this. However, the project was rescued by the British publisher Stanley Unwin, of the leading publishing house Allen & Unwin, who had the book published in English in August 1940, under the striking title *A Mother Fights Hitler*. In Dr Malet's words, the book 'is a remarkable account of almost exactly five years of close oppositional engagement between

Irmgard Litten and the Nazi machine at all levels'. It appeared in the USA under the title *Beyond Tears* and in a Spanish edition in Mexico. Its author went on to broadcast frequently and effectively for the BBC's German-language service and played an active part in the German refugee community in London. After the war, she returned to Germany, but her treatment in the West led her to settle in East Berlin, where she died in 1953.

Heinz Litten, two years younger than Hans, had embarked on a career in the theatre and was working as stage director at the Städtisches Theater in Chemnitz in 1933, when he was dismissed. After fleeing with his mother to Britain, he enlisted in the Pioneer Corps of the British Army in 1940, serving until 1943. From 1943 until 1946, he directed theatrical productions for the Freier Deutscher Kulturbund (Free German League of Culture – FDKB) at its aptly named Kleine Bühne (Small Stage) in Upper Park Road, Belsize Park, and elsewhere. The FDKB, one of the most important refugee organisations founded by and for the refugees from Germany in Britain, was a left-leaning, Communist-influenced body that saw its task as the preservation of German culture in exile during the years of Nazi 'cultural barbarism'; it also encouraged its members to return to Germany after the war to help build a new, democratic Germany.

Heinz Litten duly returned to Berlin with his mother in 1946, residing first in the West but settling in East Berlin. Initially, his career in the theatre of the newly established German Democratic Republic flourished, and he became manager of the Berlin Volksbühne. But the onset of the Cold War soon caused serious problems for those who had returned to the GDR from the West, as their contacts with the West made them suspect to the ruling

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group around Walter Ulbricht, who had spent the war in Moscow. Litten's prospects of obtaining artistic work became increasingly restricted, and in August 1955 he committed suicide.

Also featuring prominently in *The Man Who Crossed Hitler* was the lawyer, journalist and author Rudolf Olden (family name Oppenheim). Born in 1885, Olden had, like Hans Litten, acted as defence lawyer in trials with political overtones, most notably those involving the celebrated pacifist and left-wing journalist Carl von Ossietzky. Ossietzky, like Litten, was a particular target of the Nazis; arrested immediately after the Reichstag fire of 28 February 1933, he was detained until his death in 1938, despite having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1935. Olden, who had fled Germany for Prague on the night of the Reichstag fire, orchestrated a vigorous campaign to have Ossietzky, gravely ill with tuberculosis, freed.

Olden settled in Britain, where he threw himself into anti-Nazi journalism. His elder brother Balder, also an author and journalist, was an anti-Nazi activist in France. Rudolf Olden became Hon. Secretary of the German PEN Club in London and wrote one of the first studies of Hitler, which appeared in English in 1936 as *Hitler, the Pawn*; it ranks alongside Konrad Heiden's pioneering *Hitler: A Biography*, which appeared in the same year. But in 1940 Olden was interned on the Isle of Man. He had been offered an appointment at the New School for Social Research in New York, and was released by the British authorities. He sailed for America on board the *City of Benares*, which was sunk by a German submarine on 17 September 1940. Olden and his wife Ika drowned. Balder Olden, who re-emigrated to Uruguay, committed suicide there in 1949.

Anthony Grenville

A scholar's autobiography

Professor Edward Timms is well known as the founding Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex and as the author of the much-lauded two-volume study *Karl Kraus – Apocalyptic Satirist*. Now he has published an autobiography, whose title, *Taking up*

the Torch, refers both to Kraus's journal *Die Fackel* (The Torch) and to Timms's resolve to take up the torch of learning in his career and to pass it on to scholars of the next generation. The book's subtitle, *English Institutions, German Dialectics and Multicultural Commitments*, aptly describes its author's wide-ranging concerns. It was published in 2011 by Sussex Academic Press in Brighton.

The book is an absorbing read, especially for those of an academic disposition. It traces Timms's life from his birth in 1937 through his childhood at a vicarage in Buckfastleigh in Devon, his schooldays at Christ's Hospital, Horsham, his studies in Modern Languages at Caius College, Cambridge, his appointment in 1963 to the position of Assistant Lecturer in German at the gleaming new University of Sussex, his years as a German don at Cambridge, and his return to Sussex, where in the 1990s he founded the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. The Centre has been generously supported by the AJR as well as by individual members, notably the late Max and Hilde Kochmann, and its programme of courses, public lectures and conferences has established it as a leading institution in its field.

Taking up the Torch is a fascinating intellectual odyssey, showing how Timms came to fall under the spell of German literature and culture, and how as a graduate student he decided to research the challenging figure of Karl Kraus. His description of the development of his ideas on Kraus positively crackles with intellectual energy: I could never imagine any supervisor of my doctoral dissertation finding the argument set out in my introduction so gripping that he read it standing up – especially if I had been supervised by as towering a figure as Professor J. P. Stern. Timms's account of the

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ANNIVERSARY OF KRISTALLNACHT

Please join us for a service to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of Kristallnacht

on Wednesday 9 November 2011
at 2 pm

at Belsize Square Synagogue

Guest speaker:

Ben Barkow,
Director, Wiener Library

Rabbi Stuart Altshuler will lead the memorial service and light refreshments will be served at the conclusion

For further details, please
telephone AJR Head Office on
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70th Anniversary Reception for the AJR Tuesday 20 December at 3 pm

To conclude the series of events commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the AJR, H.E. the German Ambassador, Georg Boomgaarden, is hosting a reception in our honour at the German Ambassador's Residence at 22 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PZ on Tuesday 20 December at 3 pm.

Dr Charlotte Knobloch, former President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and President of the Jewish Cultural Society in Munich, has kindly agreed to speak on 'Jewish Life in Germany Today'.

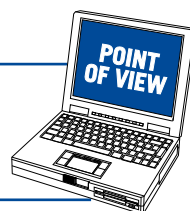
The event will include the lighting of the candles for the first night of Chanukah. Light refreshments will be served.

RSVP to membership@ajr.org.uk or telephone Karin Pereira at AJR Head Office on 020 8385 3070 if you would like to attend. Spaces are limited.

On acceptance, you will be issued with a postal invitation card. Admission will be restricted to those with an invitation card. The AJR will be providing, for a nominal charge, transport to and from the event for our members.

high intellectual optimism of Sussex in the 1960s and of the ferment that affected Cambridge in the 1970s and 1980s is also absorbing. All in all, a significant addition to the record of British university life over more than four decades.

Anthony Grenville



To provoke or not to provoke

At the AJR's 70th anniversary celebration at the Watford Hilton, I sat next to a lady member who was born in Holland. I introduced myself. 'Oh, are you the Peter Phillips that writes in the *AJR Journal*?', she asked. 'You are very provocative!' 'It is in my nature,' I replied, 'and I think it makes more interesting reading.' I'm not sure she agreed about the 'interesting reading' bit and I felt that sometimes she thought that what I had written was somewhat rude. So let me explain. There are some Jewish matters about which I feel very strongly. I don't believe in hypocrisy. I believe in saying it as I see it. The editor has allowed me to vent my feelings in the *Journal* – which is kind of him (though, secretly, I think he likes receiving the many letters that attack me!).

My biggest *bête noire* is the animosity of certain members of the sections of our religion towards each other. Why should an Ultra-Orthodox Jew (or even a Modern Orthodox one) not accept that Progressive Jews have a right to believe in their version of Judaism as much as they have in theirs? Why should an Orthodox rabbi not accept that a Progressive one is as much a rabbi as he is? Why did Orthodox Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sachs not go to the funeral of his Progressive friend Dr Hugo Gryn? Why is he called Chief Rabbi when he is not the Chief Rabbi of the Progressives – Reform, Liberal or Masorti? We need to get along with each other. We have enough enemies without fighting among ourselves.

Another pet hate is the subject of so-called faith schools. We are British. Our religion is Jewish. What is the point of a faith school? They are divisive institutions, invented, I think, to differentiate between Protestants and Catholics. Now, other religions have jumped on the bandwagon. I know the Jewish schools get good academic results, but the students would do well wherever they went. They miss out, however, on learning to be British. The state and independent schools offer so much more than academia, particularly when it comes to sport and extra-mural activities.

I also dislike the idea of Jewish golf clubs. Yes, I know how they started. Many golf clubs until the seventies didn't want Jews as members and so we started our own clubs. But now all this has changed. I am (or was) a golfer. I don't know of any club that today rejects Jews, so what's the point of joining a Jewish one? We need to

mix. We need to integrate.

Howard Jacobson's prize-winning book *The Finkler Question* takes me onto the subject of self-hating Jews. I understand why they are self-hating. I hate them too! There is one famous self-hating Jewish MP I would cross the road to avoid. These so-called Jews cause more anti-Semitism than any non-Jew does. 'Look,' my neighbours say, 'even X thinks you are wrong and he is one of you!' Of course, the subject is

usually Israel and I will defend X having his own opinions about this victimised country, but why can't he keep his opinions to himself? The same goes for all those who feel they should condemn Israel in the media. Why give ammunition to those who want to destroy Israel? They may not deny

the Holocaust as Ahmadinejad does – they may not say, as he does, that Israel should be wiped off the map – but they do considerable harm in their own way. Israel is our homeland. As a Holocaust survivor, I know how much we need one. Stop knocking the country, in public. I refer particularly to so-called celebrities because, foolishly, people take notice of them.

Please do not think, however, that I love Israel now as much as I did for the first 25 years of its existence. Israel was the brainchild of Theodor Herzl and the Zionists. They were not a religious group. They wanted a secular state. Thus we had the *kibbutzim* and the leadership and philosophy of David Ben-Gurion and the others, like Golda Meir, who took over soon after him. Remember the car stickers with 'We Support Israel' on them? Now, Israel has changed. Remember, Tzipi Livni won the last election but, because she didn't have the support of the religious parties and Benjamin Netanyahu did, he became prime minister and not her. Go to Jerusalem and the majority of the Israelis you see there are the 'frummers'. At the same time, the mostly American settlers on the West Bank who are causing most of the problems are religious fundamentalists. I do not like fundamentalists, Jewish or Islamic. Herzl must be turning in his grave!

Lastly, I must confess that I think our *kashrut* laws make no sense – that they are outdated and that *shechita* probably causes anti-Semitism.

I am not provocative for the sake of being provocative. I am Jewish and proud of it. I just think that some things need to be said.

Peter Phillips

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

The short life of Kurt Herbert Ikenberg

Kurt Herbert never stood a chance. He was born in Westerbork refugee camp at a time when the Netherlands had been occupied by the Germans for just over a year. When Kurt turned one year old in July 1942, the Germans started deportations to the extermination camps. A few months after he had turned three, he was shipped to Theresienstadt with his parents. One month later, in October 1944, his life came to an end in an Auschwitz gas chamber.

Kurt and I are both great-grandsons of Pauline Löwenhardt-Lennhoff, who had 12 children between 1873 and 1892. Had he lived, Kurt would have been 70 years old now, just six years older than I. But since his parents and almost all his other relatives died in the gas chambers, Kurt is never remembered. It is as if he never existed.

Less than a year ago I discovered Kurt. Klara Löwenhardt and her husband Ludwig Ikenberg fled Germany in April 1939, three months after their marriage. They found an unwelcoming refuge in Holland. For ten months they had to stay at various addresses. In February 1940 they were interned in the refugee camp the Dutch authorities had built (at the Jewish community's expense) in an isolated location near the German border. Less than three months later, the country was overrun by German forces. On 6 July 1941, Kurt Herbert was born. Three years and three months later, all three were dead.

To me, Kurt's life became a virtual reality. In the Netherlands Red Cross Archives, I discovered his personal record card, made by the Dutch authorities in the camp just after his birth. It listed his parents and (apparently 'just in case') his grandmother's address in Altenbeken, Germany. Most likely, his grandmother never knew that Kurt existed. But to me, the card was tangible proof that Kurt had been alive. It was all I had.

What was he like, this boy who was of the same age as my grandson now? He grew up in the transit camp through which many Dutch Jews passed on their way to their deaths. He was murdered before he reached an age at which he could ask his parents the simple question: Why?

What was Kurt like? I was resigned to the idea that his identity would remain limited to a registration card and two transportation lists. In Philip Mechanicus's Westerbork diary *In dépôt*, I had read about the children's playground opened at Westerbork on 31 August 1943, almost four years after the camp came into being. On 9 September two horizontal bars and three swings had been added. Kurt had had his second birthday two months before. On 9 September Mechanicus

writes: 'Tonight at half ten, a clear moon; children are still playing.'

Then I discovered Kurt's aunt Friedel – Friedericka Löwenhardt – had escaped from Germany after Kristallnacht. She was 29 when she fled. She found work with a Jewish family in London, never married, died in London long after the war, and left behind a stack of correspondence notes. When in July 2011 I met Mony, grandson of Friedel's brother Julius, he showed me the stack of notes, wondering if they would be of any use. A quick glance told me this was a correspondence between two sisters: Friedel in London and Kurt's mother Klara in Westerbork.



'Dear Friedel. Thank you so much for your letter. We are all in good health. Kurtchen is very sweet and laughing and talking all the time. We write every month. All our love. Don't worry. 2 January 1942. Claere, Ludwig, Kurtchen'

During the war, people could stay in touch with relatives in German-occupied Europe through the Red Cross. The notes I found were 28 Red Cross Message sheets. On the pre-printed front side, the 'ENQUIRER/Fragsteller' outside continental Europe would write a message to their relative in occupied territory. On the other side, the relative could write a reply. Messages were subject to censorship and limited to 25 words. But sometimes code words were used and genuine information conveyed. Here Klara – she consistently signed her messages as Claere or Cläre – reported in her own handwriting on the development of her son Kurt (Kurtchen). Her first report to her sister, on 11 December 1941 when Kurt is five months old: 'Kurtchen is coming along splendidly; he is a great joy.' Claere can never have imagined that 70 years later I would take such an interest

in these words.

I can now follow Kurt's development from when he was five months old to two years and two months old. The last message from Claere available to me in which he is mentioned is dated 23 September 1943, three weeks after the playground is opened.

When he is six months old, Claere describes her son as 'very sweet and laughing and talking all the time' (2 January 1942). Two months later, he not only 'is prospering and bringing a lot of joy' but also saying 'mama' (13 March 1942). Less than a month later, he 'is sitting and trying to stand up' (9 April 1942). And when he is almost one year old, on 30 June 1942, Claere reports that he 'will walk soon'. Seventeen days later, Kurtchen's first birthday has passed and he 'is walking in an amusing way'. On this day, the first cattle train from Westerbork, carrying 1,135 Jews, arrived in Auschwitz.

On 10 September, when Kurt is one year and two months old, his mother writes that he 'is walking without help', and a month later his father confirms that he 'has been walking since his birthday' (14 October 1942). In the hopeless misery of their camp existence, he is the sunshine of his parents.

It should be mentioned that the thousands of Jews at Westerbork knew no hunger. There were periods of acute food shortage but there was no famine. Camp commander SS-Obersturmführer Albert Gemmeker, who sent some 100,000 Jews to their deaths, had an interest in maintaining 'normal' living conditions in 'his' camp. From Berlin he received his weekly quota of Jews to deport to the East. If some were sick he had them treated in the camp hospital, then one of the best and biggest in Holland. Once cured, they would be put on the train to Auschwitz or Sobibor.

Unlike the Dutch-Jewish babies and toddlers, Kurt was not sent straight to the gas chambers. His refugee parents belonged to the involuntary camp 'elite', the 'old camp inmates'. Westerbork had been set up in 1939 by the Dutch authorities as a refugee camp for German and Austrian Jews. Large numbers of Dutch Jews poured in only from the summer of 1942. Thus, by the time it began functioning as a transit camp for the Jews of Holland, a social order in which many of the positions of (conditional) power and influence were taken by German Jews was in place. Kurt's parents belonged to this group.

In return for their help in maintaining order in the camp, 'Gemmeker's' German Jews received a stay of execution. Kurt was sent away with his parents and some 2,080 others on the very last deportation

A moving return to the city of my birth

Throughout the years since I came to England on the Kindertransport in 1938, I had never imagined that my life in Innsbruck following the Anschluss, or my subsequent life and struggles after my arrival in the UK, were of much interest to other people.

Round about 2007, I received an unexpected phone call from a Professor Albert Lichtblau. He introduced himself as a historian working at the University of Salzburg and researching for an Austrian national programme entitled *Erinnern*. This programme aimed to instil awareness in Austrian students of the personal experiences of Jewish nationals who had had to flee from their homes. To aid his research, Professor Lichtblau had examined ten testaments held in the library of the Shoah Centre in Los Angeles and noted that one of these was by a refugee from Innsbruck. This turned out to be the testimony that I, like 50,000 others, had recorded some years earlier. Professor Lichtblau was intrigued that my story began in the provincial city of Innsbruck, making it stand out from the others.

We arranged to meet in my home in London, where he spent the whole day interviewing me but, more importantly, making copies of photographs of my family and myself taken in Innsbruck – the first of the photographs was of me at the age of four. Professor Lichtblau was most impressed that I still retained my school satchel – which is still in almost mint condition. Other items in my possession that he found of great interest included my *Stammbuch*, an item treasured by schoolchildren in my time and containing

contributions from classmates and other friends. He was also intrigued by my *Fleisszetteln*, the equivalent of today's gold stars.

In the autumn of 2008, there having been no further contact for over a year, I was surprised to receive a telephone call from a Dr Werner Dreier. Dr Dreier,



deeply involved with the Innsbruck contribution to the *Erinnern* programme, invited me to Innsbruck for a few days, with a companion, to attend the official presentation of a DVD produced from the material and interview notes taken by Professor Lichtblau.

In January 2009, I travelled with my granddaughter Katy to Innsbruck, where I met Dr Dreier and others involved with the production of this DVD, including Frau Irmgard Bibernann and Herr Horst Schreiber. For the actual presentation, my son Michael joined us from London.

During this stay, I visited my old grammar school, the Innsbruck Gymnasium, where I gave a talk to about 40

17-18-year-old students about my life and experiences between the Anschluss and my emigration. Some of the students were moved to tears as a result of actually meeting a survivor who had lived as a Jew during the Nazi period in their own home town, about which they had read only in textbooks. The presentation was televised by the local TV station. I also gave a press conference and spoke to about 70 teachers from the whole of Tyrol who were to receive the DVD for use in their schools.

Early in 2010, Frau Bibernann and Herr Schreiber visited me in London seeking further information, this time particularly about my life in England when I first arrived as a stranger. Soon afterwards, Frau Bibernann telephoned me to say that they had written and produced a stage play based on my experiences. I was invited to attend the premiere performance of the play.

And so in May 2011 I returned to Innsbruck, this time both my sons and their wives accompanying me. The play was performed before a sell-out audience which included the mayor of Innsbruck, the director of education for Tyrol and other dignitaries. I was moved to tears by the accurate and touching way in which the cast were able to bring my story to life. My children, while not being able to understand all the German dialogue, were equally impressed and had a unique experience.

We all came home richer for the remarkable experience we had had and the hospitality we had received from the 21st-century Austrian people.

Dorli Neale

train that arrived in Theresienstadt from Westerbork on 6 September 1944.

By that time he had long learned to speak. When he was eight months old, his mother had reported to her sister that 'he says mama' (13 March 1942), and eight months later she had reported that he 'says grandma and granddad' (12 November 1942). Kurt's own grandparents were never in Westerbork but there were trainloads of elderly people, some of whom he will doubtless have spoken to. Soon after, 'he repeats everything said to him' (9 December 1942). On 7 January 1943, Claere proudly writes that he 'repeats everything that's said' and three weeks later he 'speaks a lot' (28 January 1943). On 27 February 1943, Kurtchen 'speaks and sings beautifully'. In a final report on his speech, one year before deportation, his father writes that 'he likes to speak and sing' (2 September 1943).

Kurt's aunt Friedel in London was most likely the only person outside Westerbork who knew of his existence. Friedel will

have had to imagine the way he looked for it is unlikely that she ever received a picture. She will have had to make do with the few words on his demeanour that his parents wrote towards the end of the known correspondence. On 9 July 1943, three days after Kurt's second birthday, his father wrote that 'he prefers to play outside' – presumably Kurt would have been thrilled by the opening of the playground two months later. For a boy of two there was little in the way of toys to play with inside barrack 15, where he lived with his parents. The day before, his father wrote that Kurt was 'a real boy' (8 July 1943).

On 23 September Claere wrote the last sentence on Kurt: 'Kurtchen is doing wonderfully; he is very lively, a little rascal who croaks like you.'

In this last sentence, Kurt's mother links her son to her sister for the first time, using the outdated German verb 'unken'. It is difficult to say what she was hinting at, if anything. 'Unke' is German for a toad. She may simply have meant that Kurt loved

telling silly little stories as two-year-olds do, and as her younger sister did when she was a child: Claere and Friedel were three years apart.

IN MEMORIAM

Klara (Claere, Cläre) Ikenberg-Löwenhardt Sterkrade 12.07.1906 – Auschwitz, October 1944

Ludwig Ikenberg Altenbeken 11.09.1907 – Auschwitz, October 1944

Kurt Herbert Ikenberg Hooghalen 06.07.1941 – Auschwitz, October 1944

Friedericka (Friedel) Löwenhardt Sterkrade 26.07.1909 – London?

The author wishes to thank Raymund Schütz of the Netherlands Red Cross Archives for his help and advice and Menachem Löwenhardt of Haifa for making available the correspondence between Friedel and Claere.

John Löwenhardt

This is an abridged version of an article that appeared on the website of the Amsterdam Museum of Jewish History: <http://www.communityjoodsmonument.nl/page/280769/nl>



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

HABSBURG TWILIGHT

Sir – An interesting ‘if’ question seems to me to arise out of Anthony Grenville’s splendid *aperçu* of Austrian history in your October issue.

If there had been no Sarajevo, and Franz Ferdinand had succeeded the old gentleman in the normal way in 1916 (I am assuming that a general European war would have come only a generation or so later), would the Karl/Otto line ever have ascended? Or would Franz Ferdinand, once he had become emperor, have succeeded in ‘de-morganaticising’ Sophie and would the way therefore have been paved for his Hohenberg son eventually?

Otto came to London under the auspices of the Anglo-Austrian Society about six years ago and gave a talk on current Central European issues in a committee room at the House of Lords. I went and was much impressed. At well over 90, he was – in excellent, if heavily accented, English – totally in command of the situation and did not falter for a second. His daughter, Countess Ilona Esterhazy, Mrs Mark Bignall, who lives in this country, sat next to him. He spoke for an hour.

Charles Regan, London NW6

Sir – I always enjoy Anthony Grenville’s articles, but this month ‘The Habsburg twilight’, and one paragraph in particular, brought memories flooding back. Yes, ‘The Radetzky March’!

My late father, born in 1908, originated in the town of Gnesen in the province of Posen, Germany. He told me that his father was brought up by his grandmother alone from an early age as her husband was a soldier and had been killed in some conflict (I have a picture of him in uniform dated 1840-ish). My father also spoke of one of his uncles who was a soldier as well and a knee dancer who used to perform in front of the troops as they marched. I recently discovered that Gnesen is where infantry and cavalry regiments had their fixed quarters.

As a boy aged six in 1950, I remember that every Sunday after lunch my late father would go into the front room and play the piano. He would run through a medley of tunes but always finish with ‘The Radetzky March’, which he would belt out at full blast. A very happy

memory, thank you!

*John Martins (formally Schmalz),
Manchester*

HISTORY OF THE KINDERTRANSPORTS

Sir – I am always keenly interested in the articles by Anthony Grenville and ‘A history of the Kindertransports’ in your September issue was no exception and held my particular attention.

The contribution made by Rabbi Dr Schonfeld in the name of Jewish children from the continent was touched upon. I well remember the instance of the youths whom he brought to England after the war as I was one of the pupils of the Avigdor High School who returned to London at the end of the evacuation from Shefford (Beds.).

Moreover, it seems that studies have been made of the Jewish children who came to England before and after the war. I wonder, however, whether any research has been done regarding Jewish children who escaped to this country *during* the war, as my mother, sister and I were fortunate to do, fleeing from France via Spain and Portugal and arriving in Bristol (by air) on 19 February 1942. I would be interested to learn about any other refugees/survivors.

(Mrs) Ira Brysh, Bournemouth

Sir – Re Anthony Grenville’s review of it in your September issue, Vera Fast’s *A History of the Kindertransport* is the most comprehensive statement I have so far read. And it is very readable by anyone. A full academic study, which – according to some – needs to be written, may not achieve the same.

Eva Hayman, MA, New Zealand

CHILDHOOD IN LETCHWORTH

Sir – I was very interested in the article ‘Jewish life in Letchworth’ in your October issue as I lived in Letchworth myself at one time.

My family had come from Germany in 1937. We lived in Highgate before the war and stayed there until the early weeks of the Blitz in 1940. Then, when a colleague was killed in an air raid, my father decided that we must leave London and we moved to Letchworth. My (somewhat patchy) recollection is that we all – father, mother and two children – lived in one room at

first and had to go through the kitchen to reach the only bathtub in the house. Somewhat better accommodation was found after a while. I believe, incidentally, that my parents knew the Kirsch family quite well.

I was still at school in 1940 (in the sixth form) and travelled to London every morning by the workman’s train, which left Letchworth at 6.33 and arrived at King’s Cross at 7.58 – then on to University College School in Hampstead (the school had big cellars serving as air raid shelters and had decided to stay in London). I also went rowing for the school and often didn’t return to Letchworth until 10 in the evening. My homework was done on the train.

Letchworth was, no doubt, a pleasant place in which to live but I found it boring, with many churches and no pubs. At any rate, we were spared the Blitz.

*Professor Ernst Sondheimer
London N6*

Sir – I remember my childhood as an evacuee in Letchworth during the Second World War. On his release from internment, my father regularly attended the Sephardi services with me in tow. I marvelled at the magnificently plated boxes containing the Torah scrolls and, at Chanukah, the no-candle oil-burning cruse tray. Many a time after we had put our coats on and were leaving, Rabbi Sassoon would send his Indian servant to fetch us back from beyond the gate for a sumptuous lunch – a *mitzvah* for which we were always very grateful. A lush affair in those days was a reception after the wedding of Flora Sassoon, which extended to the lawn at Sollershott West on a fine summer’s day, I recall.

My mother made me sing, resentfully, a Christmas carol in the cold, standing outside the door of a Quaker lady who had helped us earlier with gifts of clothes.

However, we were not safe from the Luftwaffe. One night, with the aid of a stirrup pump, my father helped the landlord extinguish an incendiary bomb which had glanced off the roof during an air raid. Next day, two more (unexploded) bombs were found in the grounds in Letchworth Lane: the Spirella corset factory, then making parachutes (I was told in hushed tones), may have been the target. *Cheder* for me was Ashkenazi and on the other side of town. I carried a torch to get me home in the black-out.

I still have my B’nai Akiva badge, but my Irish holiday with them after the war is another story.

*Leon Paget (born Pfingst),
Brighton*

A WONDERFUL CELEBRATION LUNCH

Sir – I have just come home from the most wonderful 70th Anniversary Lunch of the

AJR. It was outstanding and I would like to thank the organisers and all the volunteers for all their hard work. It certainly was appreciated by me.

Dorli Neale, Edgware, Middx

Sir – Having attended an AJR Lunch for the first time, I want to tell you that my wife and I enjoyed it hugely.

As a longstanding critic with the *Munich Opera Magazine* and as a trained amateur opera singer myself, I very much enjoyed your excellent quartet. The superb, powerful and technically faultless singing of Jonathan Fisher stood out on a level on its own. But each of the four artists gave of their best, which was very good indeed.

Finally, may I say how much I appreciated your chairman's interesting report, which indicated the fantastic amount of work which he is doing on our behalf.

*Dr Frederick Wolfgang Rosner,
Chigwell, Essex*

Sir – We attended the 70th Anniversary Celebration Lunch at the Hilton Hotel, Watford and wanted to tell you how much we enjoyed both the entertainment and the catering. Many thanks for all your efforts in making this Lunch a great success.

*Ben Godfrey, Lily Nelson,
Edgware, Middx*

Sir – I am writing to show my appreciation of the wonderful 70th Anniversary Lunch and concert at the Watford Hilton. My family and I loved the lunch and tea and the operatic concert was the best ever. All the artists taking part were excellent. It was a lovely choice of programme, a great violinist and pianist and very talented singers.

Thank you to all the staff at the AJR for giving us this memorable great occasion and for all the good work you have done during the past years for us since we came as refugees. Special thanks to Susie Kaufman and all the staff at Cleve Road Day Centre when it closes at the end of the year to relocate to Belsize Square Synagogue. We will always have fond memories of the Cleve Road Day Centre.

Josie Dutch, London NW2

ANNIVERSARY OF OCTOBER 4

Sir – October 4 is a significant anniversary which we should joyfully celebrate. Seventy-five years ago, October 4 was a cloudless, sunny Sunday and was pencilled in as the day that would prove beyond doubt the popularity and invincibility of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) in a march by them through London's Jewish quarter. Despite months of attempts to split the Jews from the Irish, and both from the poorest Londoners, and despite weeks of intimidatory attacks,

particularly on Jews, at Gardiner's Corner at Aldgate and round the corner in Cable Street, the 3,000 black-shirted bullies met the united might of the local residents. Happily, they got a very bloody nose and ultimately stumbled and staggered in retreat to Temple Tube Station.

We should also joyfully remember that the locals did not stand alone. Progressives and radicals of diverse hues banded round them and supported local organisations, especially the Jewish People's Council – perhaps a lesson for us when we read of the treatment of Travellers and asylum-seekers. Also, we need to recall that this failure caused or contributed to Italian money drying up and the BUF going into a gradual but steady decline. How many Kindertransportees owe their lives to the growing political irrelevance of organised Fascism in Britain?

*Francis Deutsch,
Saffron Walden*

CONFLICTING EMOTIONS

Sir – Recently my wife and I saw the film *Marga*, presented by Ludi Boeken (Jewish, born in Amsterdam just after the Second World War) and based on the book *Unter Bauern – Retter in der Nacht*. It is a splendid film on a Holocaust theme, showing how the former comrades of the Jewish horse dealer Menne Spiegel hid him in one of their stables and allowed his wife and little daughter to assume a new identity as refugees from a bombed city in Westphalia despite the initial opposition of their families. The film is closely based on the book by Menne's wife Marga, which is based on her diary. The mainly Jewish audience here in Brussels, fascinated, debated for a couple of hours the interplay of conflicting emotions – the peasants' fear of being found out and accused of treason; the Jews' parallel fears; Menne's loneliness leading to mental breakdown; and some surprises at the end of the war with the US army.

I think this film would be of interest to AJR members because there must be many survivors who experienced some of the happenings portrayed and because it highlights a few of the 450 'Just of the Nations' in Germany itself.

Eric Mark, Brussels

MICHAEL SANKIE MEMOIR

Sir – I was very interested to see this item in your August issue, although, since it is only an extract from a larger account, it is not clear how Michael came to Birmingham or what was his age at the time or the date. Since he was 19 in 1946, he must have been very young and it was perhaps about 1939?

Michael talks about 'Wolf Levy', whom I identify as Reverend Wolf Lewi, appointed as First Reader to Singers Hill Synagogue, Birmingham in 1933. As a child, I was

fascinated by Reverend Lewi's magnificent voice – he could have had a career as an opera singer – and, later in my life, I was privileged to have been the GP to Reverend Lewi and other members of his family. Reverend Lewi's only son, David, was for many years a Midlands-based solicitor and now lives in retirement in London. He does not see your Journal but I have sent him the relevant page and he has already made contact, and enjoyed a long reminiscence, with Michael.

What of 'the Chief Rabbi of Birmingham'? I had not realised my native town was so important as to have a chief rabbi! However, I identify this person as the Reverend Dr Abraham Cohen (1887-1957), Chief Minister at Singers Hill from 1913 to 1949 before he became President of the Board of Deputies (the only religious leader in the Board's entire history to have held such a position). My late first wife, Jane (née Mindelsohn, 1938-84), was a granddaughter of Dr Cohen and her family and the Lewi family were close friends. Dr Cohen never took *Semicha* and so was not a rabbi, but he was a most eminent Jewish scholar and editor of the *Soncino Chumash* (and many other books of theological significance). The only other time I have ever seen him described (incorrectly as mentioned) as a rabbi is on the marriage certificate of his eldest son, which document Dr Cohen probably never saw since he was most certainly *not* present at the wedding. Michael Cohen married in a Catholic ceremony on Shabbat and Dr Cohen never saw his son again (his wife was not so resolute in her disapproval and saw him occasionally, surreptitiously, when her husband was not around).

As to why Dr Cohen is described as a rabbi on his son's marriage certificate, we can only speculate and there is nobody around now who can give a definitive answer. It could have been Michael, in a continuing act of defiance, naming his father in such terms while knowing it was untrue; or it could have been simply the secular registrar, not knowing enough about the niceties of such intra-religious distinctions, giving him the label because it sounded right! The 'marriage out' cast a shadow over the Cohen family for two generations (my late wife was unaware she had this uncle until she was herself an adult), but such is one of the ironies of our people's history that father and son now lie buried within a few yards of each other in the Witton Jewish cemetery.

*Dr Anthony Joseph, President, Jewish
Genealogical Society of Great Britain,
Smethwick, West Midlands*

A SHARK BY ANY OTHER NAME

Sir – A note to correct the information in all the biographies of Robert Capa,

continued on page 16

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

He may seem inspired by young dancers *en pointe*, but the work of **Edgar Degas** is closely attuned to photography and movement. The very title of the **Royal Academy's** latest exhibition, **Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement** (until 11 December), gives the game away. The scientific influences of the new explorative photographers **Etienne-Jules Marey** and **Eadweard Muybridge** are evident in the movement of his dancers at the barre and in repose, in sketches



John Martin *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah* (1852)

and pastels (which Degas possibly never intended as more than working drawings), and in the disappointingly few oil paintings on show. Everything is illuminated by contemporary photography and early film.

Degas's closely observed dancers are often based on photographs. One has her foot on a piano; another rests on a cello. Some of his bronzes are particularly beautiful. Degas also photographed birds and seagulls, clearly seeing a metaphor in their grace and flawless style, for which even the most talented dancer would have to offer hours of pain and practice. It culminates in his most famous work, the sculpture of *The Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, with her static pose and insouciant gaze, the real material of her dress almost literally woven in the bronze.

It is arguable whether Degas was an Impressionist at all. Critics in 1874 considered him more a Realist or Naturalist, but his empathy is romantic,

making his genre less definable. As he studies their movement, he engages with their hard graft and reconciles it with his own. The strength and rigour of their pose, mannered or natural, their physical contortions, the firmly planted feet, all come from careful study of the models who posed in his studio. He recorded multiple positions of a limb. He would later define his work, which became increasingly muscular, as representing 'movement in its exact truth'. To reach this truth, speed was clearly of the essence.

Another 19th-century artist preferred to haunt his public with gothic images of the end of days. **John Martin – Apocalypse** at **Tate Britain** (until 15 January) – used biblical stories and the poetry of John Milton to convey his outlandish and often garish paintings of the fate awaiting

sinners – but also the ineffable joys of heaven for the good.

As though inviting some hostile force into his art, *The Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, a masterpiece of swirling colour and energy, was itself nearly destroyed by Thames flood water in 1928. Restored to near its former grandeur, it is on show for the first time in a century.

Biblical catastrophe was Martin's theme song, from *Belshazzar's Feast* to the *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*. He clearly fulfilled a public taste for the lurid and, while popular with Dickens and the Brontes, was shunned by Ruskin and Wordsworth. In works which virtually anticipate Hollywood's epics, you can sense Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker. Martin's work is beloved of science fiction writers and has found its way onto heavy metal album covers. Probably most exciting is the Tate's *son et lumière* version of his *Last Judgement* triptych.

REVIEWS

On the ruins of Jerusalem

ZEITSTRÖME. LEBENSLINIEN IM REALEN SOZIALISMUS DER DDR: MITWIRKUNG UND ANPASSUNG

Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2011, Schriftenreihe der Cajewitz-Stiftung, Band 3, 338 pp., ISBN 978-3-8305-1897-6

The Cajewitz Foundation runs a number of residences in Berlin for 'Senioren', the politically correct German term for old age pensioners. In addition, they have now published *Zeitströme*, a volume of penetrating interviews with their residents, mainly former East Germans, about their life in the 'realen Sozialismus' of the German Democratic Republic.

This reviewer, who as a broadcaster travelled repeatedly in the GDR, was astonished by their nostalgia for that world. I recall 1989, struggling to push my way through jubilant crowds as the Wall was breached and the regime collapsed. But the six witnesses in this volume retain a far more positive view of that other Germany. I will concentrate on the longest interview – and by far the most interesting. It is with a Jewish couple, Henny and Norbert Jacob, interviewed sensitively by their own son, a psychologist.

Both parents came from leftist families. Henny, a Berliner from a poor Polish-Jewish background, managed to escape as the Gestapo pounded on the door to arrest her family. The family perished at Auschwitz, but she found shelter with a succession of non-Jewish Communist Party members who hid her at great risk to themselves.

Henny's future husband, Norbert, came from an assimilated German-Jewish family of theatre directors/actors. They migrated to Palestine when he was a child. However, as he grew up, he decided to return to build a new Germany: 'I could never accept that the Nazis could deprive me of my homeland.' He disliked the attitude of many Jews in Palestine towards their Arab neighbours; to him, it resembled the Nazi attitude to Jews. He joined the Jewish Brigade of the British army. In 1945, stationed in Italy, he was on a course learning to use explosives for demolition. When neither he nor his mates displayed any interest (the war was virtually over), their officer bawled them out: 'You idiots! Hasn't it dawned on you that this is not for use in *this* war but for later – against Arabs and their houses!' This increased his alienation. When posted to Germany, he and several comrades from the Jewish Brigade deserted and went east.

Norbert and his future wife involved themselves with enthusiasm in what became the GDR. They wanted to ensure, they said, that nothing like the Nazi regime could ever arise again. Conditions were bad.

They lived on very meagre rations in bad accommodation but worked long hours. Both were offered an excellent education, which opened careers to them. Their spare time was employed with 'enttrümmern' – clearing the rubble of bombed buildings and recycling bricks. Holidays were spent helping with harvesting. They became Communist Party members and worked as educators and later as administrators. In old age, they became somewhat more critical of some of the failings of their state. They disliked the segregated and protected suburbs reserved for high Party officials. On the other hand, they found the Soviet suppression of popular protests in June 1953 fully justified. Similarly, they defend the later building of the Berlin Wall: 'One had to act to save the achievements of our state.'

In fact, there *were* considerable achievements: living standards did rise, though never remotely as high as in West Germany. But the West had benefited from American aid and investment. Nevertheless, the GDR performed better than other Warsaw Pact countries. As one of their Czech friends said jocularly: 'You know, Comrade Jacob, with you Prussians even the worst system will function somehow!'

Norbert and Henny, both obviously intelligent people, harboured private concerns about the suppression of free discussion within the Party. One example: Henny, as a young woman, had volunteered to go to Yugoslavia to help with the building of the Youth Railway, but overnight Tito and Yugoslav comrades (some of whom they had met) were declared criminals and fascists. No explanation was offered. As disciplined Party members, they confined their doubts to themselves.

The 20th Soviet Party Congress, which revealed Stalin's crimes, shocked them deeply: 'Yes, we found that difficult to digest.' However, in 1968, they justified the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia: 'We had to prevent the country breaking out of the Socialist camp.' Later, doubts occurred: had they been given true information about Dubcek's reformist aims?

They raised three children who all received an excellent education funded by the state. Henny had a major role in developing the deep sea fishing industry of East Germany. Later, she worked on coordinating food production between the GDR, Bulgaria and Poland. Norbert hoped to join the diplomatic service, but the years he had spent in the West made him suspect and thus ruled him out. He did, however, join the Ministry of Foreign Trade and helped to develop trade with India and the 'developing world'. Later, he became a university lecturer on international affairs.

Asked about their attitude to Judaism, Henny replied: 'I share a fate with many. It's that simple. I've had nothing to do with the religion. I've never belonged to a Jewish community. But instinctively I'm interested in Judaism. The problems of

Israel don't leave me cold. Whether I hear good or bad, I prick up my ears. If Jews accomplish something good, I'm proud as if one of my own family had done so. But I also see things that displease me. I've not become blind.'

Norbert added: 'I've never felt proud to be a Jew. I did nothing to become one. I was born into it. But being joined by a common fate does definitely play a role. When Jews achieve something positive I'm happy. It gives me joy when a magnificent pianist or violin virtuoso is called Zuckerman or Perlman or Barenboim ... Henny and I often laugh about it, but there it is. There has never been a period when we would have wished not to be Jewish.'

On the other hand, as the years passed, their attitude to the GDR became more disenchanting: 'Our rigid Party discipline was wrong. Decisions have to be debated and worked on.' Norbert, more than his wife, became critical of the Politburo – but, as he emphasises, never of a socialist society as such. When the collapse came, they said they felt they had lost their *Heimat* for a second time. 'When I heard that slogan "Deutschland – einig Vaterland" I knew that meant capitalist Germany. That's the end of our GDR ... We saw the past coming back. For 40 years we had worked to ensure we would never have it back ... I hate this world of accountants. The books have to balance. Don't you think it pains us that one of our sons, who has had a decent education, has to live off the dole? ... that people of 40, 45 or 50 can find no work? ... that they're discarded as scrap metal? I ask myself repeatedly: was all my life in vain? I had hoped to see a little more success from the things for which I gave my strength, my thoughts and my life ... Yes, we live here, but it is no longer *our* world. I speak my opinions only in the limited circle of others who, like us, sit on the ruins of Jerusalem and weep.'

Henny died in 2009. This reviewer, who spent an entire life in the opposite camp (I was responsible for BBC broadcasts to Eastern Europe), nevertheless found this testimony deeply moving.

Peter Fraenkel

Film

The day of the round-up

SARAH'S KEY

with Kristin Scott Thomas,
Mélusine Mayance, Niels Arestrup,
Frédéric Pierrot

directed by Gilles Paquet-Brenner;
screenplay by Gilles Paquet-Brenner
and Serge Joncour

July 1942. Ten-year-old Sarah Starzynski (Mélusine Mayance) is playing with her brother in the bedroom of their Parisian apartment when there is an ominous banging on the door. Telling him to stay there until she returns, Sarah hides him in a cupboard and takes the key with her.

The family are held for several days in the Vélodrome, with tens of thousands of other Jews, in baking hot heat without food, water or adequate toilet facilities, then taken to a holding camp. The young Mayance conveys Sarah's naivety as these terrible events unfold with the empathy of one well beyond her years.

Over 60 years later, Julia Jarmond, sympathetically underplayed by Kristin Scott Thomas, an American journalist married to a French architect, is doing a feature on this little spoken-of event in French history. Realising that her in-laws' apartment was acquired in August 1942, she becomes obsessed with finding out the fate of the children who lived there: Sarah and her brother.

Via scenes of Julia's trawls through archives and interviews with now ancient witnesses interwoven with flashbacks, we follow Sarah's journey. A cynical colleague asks why there is no photographic evidence of this event: 'The Germans were methodical in their record-keeping.' The chilling reality comes in Julia's response: 'It wasn't the Germans, it was the French police!' An elderly woman who lived near the Vélodrome tells Julia: 'We had to keep the windows closed day and night during the hottest days for years.' 'Why?', Julia asks, 'Because of the noise?' 'No, because of the stench!' Stunned, Julia retorts: 'And you did nothing?' 'What could we do – call the police?'

We watch the tragedy unfold as mothers must leave their children behind when they are transported to 'The East' – the frantic scramble for food when local women throw apples through the barbed wire to the starving youngsters, the police viciously forcing them back. Yet amidst this frenzied rule of the mob, one Frenchman finds the humanity to disobey his orders: he allows Sarah to keep her apple and helps her to escape. An elderly, gruff farmer (Niels Arestrup), initially too terrified to help, gives in to his wife and takes the child into their home. Here Sarah is nurtured throughout the war years.

In her obsession to trace the adult Sarah, Julia visits many countries. The sub-plot of Julia's marriage breakdown does come over as a bit contrived, but Scott Thomas is believable as a woman so traumatised by what she finds that she can no longer remain in a comfortable world tainted by its past. Finally, she finds Sarah's adult son living in Italy. He has no idea of his mother's history or even that she was a Jew.

Adapted from a novel by Tatiana de Rosnay, *Sarah's Key* is directed with a light touch by Gilles Paquet-Brenner. He pulls no punches with flashbacks of the day 13,000 Jews were rounded up. Simultaneously, he draws us into the reality of what were the consequences to ordinary Parisians of offering help, putting into Julia's mouth the question 'Well, what would you have done?'

continued overleaf

REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

Sarah's Key is beautifully filmed with vast landscapes of golden cornfields on one side of the barbed wire, contrasting with the stark reality of the camp on the other. The adult Sarah sits alone in her car in the pouring rain, the festering guilt inside her reflected back at her by a grey, unforgiving seascape.

Sarah may well be fictitious, but the event – 'la rafle' – is not. It was the first round-up of women and children in Paris. Children were left behind because, at the time, the Vichy government had an agreement that no French citizens would be deported, so that the French-born children of the foreign, mainly Polish, deportees were left behind while the red tape was sorted out.

In fact, in the summer of 1942, 74 trains carried 76,000 Jews to the camps in the East, including nearly 10,000 children. How do I know this? Because I was there. Had an anonymous French policeman not found his humanity to warn my Polish-born mother and helped us to escape, I would not be here writing this article.

Joan Salter

Exhibition

The story of 'The Boys'

FROM AUSCHWITZ TO AMBLESIDE

Manchester, 27 July-8 September 2011

Manchester Regional Group of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, in conjunction with Another Space, set up an exhibition at the United Synagogue, Manchester to tell the remarkable story of some 300 child Holocaust survivors who came to the Lake District in 1945. Their story was featured in the BBC One documentary 'The Orphans Who Survived the Concentration Camps'.

'The Boys', as they were known, were housed on the site of an aircraft factory and its environs. Short Brothers produced the famous Sunderland flying boats which played such an important part in the war against the deadly U-boats. The aircraft were first built in the south of the country, but the factory was vulnerable to German air attacks and it was moved to the shores of Lake Windermere. Accommodation and schools had to be found for the workers who had relocated to the area and it was here after the war, when production of the aircraft had ceased, that the youngsters rescued from the camps were lodged. The exhibition paid tribute to the local population who welcomed the youngsters.

On show were photographs of the site first as the factory producing the aircraft and then as home for the liberated youngsters. There were pictures of happy, smiling children who not long before had been part of the horrors of the Holocaust. At the official opening of the exhibition,

many of the visitors, now in their eighties, saw themselves and their friends and exchanged happy memories of their stay at Windermere. But there were also sad memories of those, seen as boys on the exhibited pictures, who had now passed on.

At the exhibition, there was also an excellent 30-minute video showing the sad and tragic road leading up to Windermere.

Werner Lachs

A forgotten genocide

THE KAISER'S HOLOCAUST: GERMANY'S FORGOTTEN GENOCIDE AND THE COLONIAL ROOTS OF NAZISM

by David Olusoga and
Casper W. Erichsen

Faber & Faber, 2011, 400 pp. paperback

This historical work reads like a gripping novel. I was periodically obliged to remind myself that all this was indeed the horrific reality of our European past. David Olusoga is an Anglo-Nigerian historian and TV/radio producer who studied the accounts of native South West Africans of the colonial period and compared them with the 'revised' history created and perpetuated by the Europeans. Casper Erichsen, his co-author, studied the genocide of the Herero and Nama at the University of Namibia.

The tragic drama begins with the brutal subjugation of native tribes by British, French, Dutch and Belgian 'masters' in their African colonies, labouring under the delusion – or deception – that they were bringing culture and civilisation to the backward native peoples. The Kaiser's Second Reich, reluctantly at first, joined the 'colonial club', not so much to exploit African resources as for 'Lebensraum' to expand into. The German colonial military, supported by propaganda in Germany based on 'Wild West' mythology of the 'American Frontier' and goaded by envy of the British Empire, developed this domination into a white-supremacy theory that deprived the so-called inferior races of Africa of any right to life unless they were of use to the furtherance of the 'superior Aryan race'. As they argued, the extermination of the Herero and Nama was necessary and inevitable. They also had no scruples in using native prisoners, in concentration camps such as Shark Island, for so-called medical experiments and shipping skulls and body parts to order for use in German universities, where some of them remain today. In particular, the medical museum of the Berlin Charité has so far refused to return its store of preserved body parts to Namibia for decent burial.

Olusoga and Erichsen demonstrate how this tragedy was the prelude to Hitler's seeking to colonise Eastern Europe as a replacement for the Kaiser's colonies in Africa that were, so to speak, unfairly stolen from

Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazis developed the white-supremacy theory into the 'pure blood of the Aryan master race', Jews and Gypsies being treated as Herero and Nama had been used in the German colonies. The clear message of this book is that failure to remember and take into account, in the Nuremberg trials, the annihilation of the Herero and Nama has led to widespread amnesia concerning the realities of the colonial period. Those alive today are not guilty of what our ancestors perpetrated but we are guilty of colluding with amnesia if we shrug this off as no concern of ours.

Not even in German is there any sizeable literature on these first two genocides of the 20th century. This is a timely and extremely important book for the general public, whether or not the reader has much background historical knowledge.

Ruth Barnett

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INTERNATIONAL TEREZIN MUSIC CONFERENCE

26-27 February 2012

Commemorating the centenary of
the birth of Eliska Kleinova

The Terezin Music Hub at Leeds College of Music would like to invite Holocaust survivors as honoured guests to its International Terezin Music Conference. Survivors will receive free passes for entry to all conference events and for all meals and refreshments. Unfortunately, the Hub is unable to pay for travel or accommodation.

The Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Michael Zantovksy, will open the conference, and the College is delighted to announce that he will be the Honorary Patron of the Hub. The event will commemorate the centenary of the birth of Eliska Kleinova (1912-1999), which falls on 27 February. She was the sister of the composer and pianist Gideon Klein, who played such a seminal role in Terezin's cultural life. Professor Kleinova, herself a Terezin prisoner and Auschwitz survivor, became a greatly respected Prague-based music pedagogue.

Michael Beckerman of New York University, and conductor Murry Sidlin, will be distinguished keynote speakers. Maestro Sidlin will conduct a performance of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* in Leeds on 29 February. Zdenka Fantlova, Terezin survivor and author of the biographical *The Tin Ring*, will talk about the cultural life of Terezin and her personal memories of Gideon and Eliska. Other conference events include the UK premiere of the documentary *Defiant Requiem*.

Anyone wishing to attend should send their name and contact details to terezinmusic@lcm.ac.uk stating whether they wish to attend the whole conference, or a part of it. Queries should also be directed to this email.

Dr David Fligg, Conference Director,
Principal Lecturer in Classical Music

'A very special occasion': The AJR's 70th Anniversary Celebration Lunch

Over 250 AJR members and guests enjoyed a sparkling '70th Anniversary Celebration Lunch with Song' at the Watford Hilton Hotel. Among guests from abroad was Michael Rosenstock, son of Werner Rosenstock, former editor of the *AJR Information* (now *AJR Journal*). There were warm messages of greeting from His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Prime Minister David Cameron.

Operatic entertainment was provided by Glenys Groves and colleagues, with music during lunch by the Franklin String Trio.

AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman, welcoming guests to 'this very special occasion', noted 'how incredibly active an organisation' the AJR was. AJR Vice Chairman David Rothenberg gave a vote of thanks.

PHOTOS: THAT PERSONAL TOUCH
CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ALAN EZEKIEL
www.alanezekiel.co.uk



Finance Director Gordon Greenfield retires in style

AJR staff, honorary officers and friends gathered for an emotional farewell party for Finance Director Gordon Greenfield hosted by the AJR Trustees in late September (see 'An era comes to an end: Finance Director Gordon Greenfield to retire' in last month's issue of the Journal). The event took place at Belsize Square Synagogue Hall.

Tribute was paid to Gordon by AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman, who described it as 'one of the more difficult and less enjoyable aspects of being Chairman: to say farewell to someone who has served us so loyally and professionally and always sought the best for the AJR.' He presented Gordon with a state-of-the-art Galaxy Samsung PC, expressing the wish that he enjoy it and keep in touch with it – 'if your granddaughter lets you



have a turn!'

AJR Director Michael Newman referred to the excellent working relationships and genuine friendships Gordon had forged

with colleagues, while Dr Colin Livingston, Chairman of the committees which distribute welfare funds to survivors and refugees, equally paid fulsome tribute to Gordon.

Responding, Gordon said that for him 'It has not just been an unsurpassed experience to have got to know many survivors and refugees, but it has been essential to the process of keeping in touch with the reality of what we do and why we do it.'

In a further message to AJR members, Gordon added: 'I would like to extend my grateful thanks to all the many members who have written wonderful letters and cards to me on my retirement. I will always treasure my years with the AJR and I hope to keep in touch and see you again at some time in the not too distant future.'

INSIDE the AJR

Glasgow Book Group

Our small but lively group gathered at the home of Marion Camrass to discuss Laurie Graham's novel *The Importance of Being Kennedy*. The discussion, led by Agnes Isaacs and Anthea Berg, was spirited. The tea was delicious. Our next hostess will be Judith Rosenberg.

Halina Moss

Kingston A double treat

We had a double treat. Darren Welstead of the Bank of England gave us a most enlightening talk about the Bank and its vaults of gold. This was followed by a sumptuous lunch prepared by Susan Zisman.

Jackie Cronheim

Pinner An interesting introduction to 19th-century political cartoons

Ros Adams gave us a most interesting introduction to 19th-century political cartoons, from *Punch* and similar magazines. These cartoons were very detailed, much more so than current ones.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 3 Nov. Dennis Hart, 'My Life as a Fleet Street Journalist'

Ealing AJR potpourri

We had a lively discussion on the future of the AJR, concentrating on the involvement of the second and third generations. We then debated other topical subjects in the latest *AJR Journal* and had a light-hearted look at the AJR book *Recipes Remembered*. Esther rounded off the afternoon with a general knowledge quiz.

Leslie Sommer

Next meeting: 1 Nov. Separated Child Foundation

Iford Do you believe in coincidences?

Bernard Ecker entertained, sharing some of the extraordinary coincidences he had experienced in the course of his life, with some members trying to match him. A very enjoyable morning.

Edith Poulsen

Next meeting: 2 Nov. David Wass, 'Shoplifting'

HGS The Bank of England

Darren Welstead returned three months after his first visit to inform and entertain us about the role of the Bank of England in providing our bank notes and looking after what's left of the UK's gold reserves.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 7 Nov. Julia Samuel from the Anglo-Jewish Association

Wessex 'Women of the Bible'

Over 30 members enjoyed a most interesting concert as well as the biblical painting display 'Women in the Bible', assembled and presented by Alan Cohen, at the Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation.

A very good lunch preceded the show, as usual arranged by Myrna Glass.

G. M. Ettinger

Essex (Westcliff) The financial crisis

Tim Pike, the Bank of England's Deputy Agent for the South East and East Anglia, gave a fascinating talk about the financial and economic crisis of the last three years. The ensuing lively exchange of views went on well beyond the allotted time for the meeting.

Sue Barnett

Next meeting: 8 Nov. Mitzvah Day Charities

ALSO MEETING IN NOVEMBER

Oxford 1 Nov. Details to follow

Norfolk 17 Nov. Lunchtime get-together

Nottingham 23 Nov. Lunchtime get-together

Harrogate 'Wishing The happiest of New Years!'

Edith, a new member of our gang who recently moved to the North from Kingston, was heartily welcomed by eight of the old stalwarts. We chatted about recent events several of us had attended and those of us still ignorant learned about Beth Shalom and its work. Susanne Green, our wonderful mentor, brought future events to our notice and we decided to meet again on 16 February next, wishing each other and distant friends the happiest of New Years.

Inge Little

West Midlands (Birmingham) 'Children of the Third Reich'

A Powerpoint presentation by Howard Falksohn, Archivist of the Wiener Library, on schoolchildren in Nazi Germany was followed by members speaking of their own experiences. We had with us 20 children brought by their teacher to learn a little about the Holocaust experienced by children of their age group.

Hanna Cooper

Glasgow 'Life of a playwright'

Playwright and producer David Ian Neville gave us a window on how wide and varied are his activities: producing works by leading Scottish writers, developing new dramatic talent, and helping groups to realise their dramatic undertakings. A satisfying start to the season's activities.

Halina Moss

Wembley The second and third generations

Having heard how the AJR groups had evolved in the last 14-15 years, members discussed attitudes of the second and third generations to their relatives' experiences. It was noted that even within families there were wide contrasts.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: 16 Nov. Social get-together

Edinburgh All under one roof

We enjoyed a bagel lunch as well as the best of Jewish talent at the Edinburgh Festival Open Day at Edinburgh synagogue.

Many Jewish Festival participants came along and performed extracts from, and discussed, their shows, introduced by producer and writer David Neville. All under one roof – the best way to sample the delights of the Fringe!

Agnes Isaacs

'A truly splendid event'

North London Regional Get-together

Some 30 of us met at the New North London Masorti Synagogue, where Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg gave an account of his 20-day walk, accompanied by his dog, from Frankfurt to Finchley. His journey was inspired by reading his grandfather's memoirs and the desire to explore his family roots.

Following an excellent lunch, Charlie and Freddie Draper treated us to a delightful musical interlude on the double bass and theremin, a little known early electronic instrument producing hauntingly beautiful sounds.

As ever, it was a joy to meet up with 'old' faces and meet new ones. Our thanks to the AJR organisers and the team of local volunteers for a truly splendid event.

Hanne R. Freedman

Temple Fortune

Separated Child Foundation

The SCF's Angela Gluck gave us an in-depth account of the role of this organisation in helping young adults who come to this country fleeing war and persecution.

Rosette Wolf

Next meeting: 10 Nov. Maurice Collins, 'The Antiques Road Show'

Welwyn Garden City

The world put to rights

A lovely afternoon spent at Monica's home. We welcomed a new member. The afternoon whizzed by with much talk on every subject and the world was put to rights.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 8 Nov. Discussion: Something that means a lot to you

Brighton and Hove Sarid

A tempestuous relationship

Rob Lowe gave us a presentation on Gilbert and Sullivan, delivered in his superb deep bass tone and illustrated by recordings and brief renditions. There was a tempestuous relationship: Gilbert had the idea, Sullivan supplied the music and Gilbert then wrote the dialogue.

Shirley Huberman

Next meeting: 21 Nov. Mitzvah Day Charities

Edgware The story of Thomas Cook

Joy Hooper presented the story of Thomas Cook in such a pleasant way that we had the feeling of being on a tour organised by Thomas Cook ourselves. He left school at the age of ten and built up a business which is still going strong after over 170 years.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: 15 Nov. Melville Faber, 'History of the Second World War'



Tea and cake with Edith

(From left) Edith Kaufmann; Rosemary Peters, AJR; Jacqueline Oppenheimer, friend of Edith; Martin Reichard, Austrian Embassy, Counsellor (Press and Information); Alfred Oppenheimer, friend of Edith and AJR member

Edith Kaufmann, 107, takes tea with friends at Hammerson House, Hampstead. Edith, an AJR member originally from Vienna, has had three letters from the Queen. Among her hobbies are art, scrabble and bridge.

Café Imperial An incredible day out

An incredible day out for our group of veterans! 12 men and 1 woman with only 2 members under the age of 90 left Golders Green by coach for the Jewish Military Museum. All our members wore their military insignia. From the Museum we went for lunch to Orli Café in Hendon and the whole day was a tremendous success.

Hazel Beiny

Radlett Norwood Children's Service

Karen Goodman spoke about the Norwood Children's Service and gave a vivid account of her work for unaccompanied asylum-seekers and trafficked children, many arriving in Dover. An exceptionally enlightening talk.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 16 Nov. Rob Lowe, 'Gilbert and Sullivan'

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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Norfolk (Norwich)
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South West Region Holocaust Memorial Book

The AJR groups in the South West Region – Bournemouth, Bath, Bristol and the South West – are collating registers of names of people in their area whose family members perished in the Holocaust.

The names, together with photographs (where possible) and brief histories, will be included in a Memorial Book which will be on permanent display (locations yet to be decided). Copies of the book will be distributed to members and used for educational purposes, ensuring that those who perished will be remembered by future generations.

The Imperial War Museum considers the AJR Memorial Books 'important historical records'. Yad Vashem and other museums and libraries have requested copies of the books for their archives.

We hope to publish the Memorial Book in this, the 70th Anniversary Year of the AJR.

If you would like more information or would like your family names (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins) to be included in the South West Region Memorial Book, please contact Myrna Glass on 020 8385 3070 or at myrna@ajr.org.uk

Inside the AJR continued on page 15

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Paul Balint AJR Centre
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AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 16 November 2011

Howard Falksohn
'The Wiener Library'

**PLEASE NOTE THAT SPEAKERS
START AT 12 NOON**

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

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special
interest group

Monday 7 November 2011

Clive Marks
'Music through the
Holocaust'

**KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH
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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**

November Entertainment

Tue 1	CLOSED
Wed 2	Paul Coleman
Thur 3	William Smith
Mon 7	KT LUNCH – Kards & Games Klub
Tue 8	CLOSED
Wed 9	Sheila Games
Thur 10	Madeleine Whiteson
Mon 14	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 15	CLOSED
Wed 16	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 17	Ronnie Goldberg
Mon 21	Kards & Games – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue 22	CLOSED
Wed 23	Top Hat Entertainer
Thur 24	Roy Blass
Mon 28	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 29	CLOSED
Wed 30	Michael Heaton & Lynn Radnedge

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

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

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

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

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

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The Society for Exile Studies

The Gesellschaft für Exilforschung (Society for Exile Studies) is the leading academic association devoted to the study of emigration and exile from Germany after 1933. Founded in 1984, it is the most important forum for scholars and researchers in its field in Europe. This article is intended to bring the GfE to the attention of British researchers, academics and students working on exile studies, who could draw considerable benefits from joining.

The GfE publishes a six-monthly newsletter, the *Neuer Nachrichtenbrief*, to keep its members informed about new publications, conferences and other developments in its field. It is also responsible for the international yearbook *Exilforschung*, one of the most highly respected journals devoted to the publication of research and the dissemination of knowledge about emigration from Germany. It holds an annual conference every spring, alternating between a German city and a city in another European country. Within the GfE is the section 'Frauen im Exil' (Women in Exile), consisting of women researchers and scholars; the section holds its annual conference every autumn and publishes the annual series *Frauen und Exil* (Women and Exile), which

HOOK OF HOLLAND FESTIVE UNVEILING OF SCULPTURE

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at Queen Emmaboulevard

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or at lisa.bechner@berlin.de

Applications by 11 November please

Please send recollections of your transit
through the Hook of Holland for
documentation purposes

Lisa Bechner (previously Schaefer),
Sir Erich Reich and sculptor
Frank Meisler are members of the
Initiative Berliner Kinderdenkmal
www.kindertransporte-1938-39.eu

AJR CENTRE AT BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

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(and not Mondays and Thursdays
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analyses exile studies from a gendered perspective. The conferences of the GfE include work-in-progress sessions specifically designed to assist younger scholars and research students to introduce their work to a wider audience.

The GfE numbers some 300 individual members spread over some 19 countries as well as some 20 distinguished academic institutions. The largest component of the membership is German, but there are active groups of members in Austria, Britain, France, the Netherlands and other countries. The GfE is also considering widening the focus of its activities to include other cases of exile and emigration in the later 20th and 21st centuries.

Those interested in joining the GfE can do so by registering on the home-page: www.exilforschung.de The annual subscription is fixed by the membership at the annual conference. Further information can be obtained from Dr Anthony Grenville at tony@ajr.org.uk.

JEWS IN INDIA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The BBC is working on a film about Jews who arrived in India during the Holocaust and spent time there.

We are specifically interested in getting in touch with people or relatives of those who spent time at the camp in Balachadi as guests of the Maharaja of Jamnagar, but we would be grateful for any related stories.

If you have any information, we would like to hear from you.

Please contact producer
Talya Tibbon on 0790 691 8959
or at talyati@gmail.com

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ARTS & EVENTS DIARY NOVEMBER

Thur 3 Dr Bernhard Rieger (University College London), 'From the Third Reich to Postmodernity: The Global History of the Volkswagen Beetle', Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, Arts A155, 4.00 pm. Booking not required. Tel 01273 678 771 or 020 8381 4721

Mon 7 Dr Fred Rosner, 'Robert Neumann and his Contemporaries, as Seen through Robert Neumann's Spectacles' Club 43

Mon 14 Edward Batley, 'Freemasonry and The Magic Flute: The Vexed Question of their Origins' Club 43

Wed 16 B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge. Julian Romain, 'The History of the Lord Mayors and Dignitaries of the City of London' At home of Tom Heinemann, 2.30 pm. Tel 020 8904 3568

Mon 21 Dr Hanne Castein, 'Renaissance Madonnas (with illustrations)' Club 43

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

OBITUARY

Martha Blend, 2 January 1930 – 24 May 2011

Martha grew up in Vienna's fifth district. Her parents were Orthodox Jewish Poles. Elias was 'lustig', a bookkeeper who resorted to handyman work when the Nazis banned Jews from civic employment. Paula was shy, a *Hausfrau* with a talent for languages. Following Kristallnacht, Elias was taken for interrogation by SS stormtroopers. Soon afterwards, nine-year-old Martha travelled to England on the Kindertransport.

Here, Martha began adjusting to English life, fostered in London by a childless couple. She balked at another separation when evacuation loomed; ultimately they moved together to Devon.

Martha's arrival at school drew a mixed response from peers: having encountered bullying over her accent, she resolved to learn English quickly. On returning to London, she settled at Dalston County School, where she became firm friends with Stella, who introduced her to her brother David, Martha's husband-to-be and later my father. Stella and another classmate, Doreen, remained Martha's confidantes throughout her life.

Martha won two university scholarships. A natural linguist, she loved the English language and was fascinated by English literature. She considered becoming a journalist, though early in her married life she opted to become David's assistant, running his medical practice. She taught English at night school, joined the Council for Christians and Jews, and wrote for *Encounter* magazine.

In the 1970s Martha became acquainted with ideas relating to sociology, psychology and feminism. Her experience of early loss left her feeling conflicted about the function of religion, though she



continued through her writings to challenge anti-Semitism. Later, she sought fairness for many who had experienced persecution – Israeli, Palestinian, Rwandan or Bosnian.

Martha remained devoted to her teaching. In her leisure time, however, she struggled for many years to enjoy herself and suffered considerable 'survivor guilt', aware that she alone of her family had survived.

Martha attended the Reunion of Kindertransportees in 1989 – a landmark event that inspired her to make a commemorative visit to Auschwitz. David, who had since become a psychotherapist, accompanied her. The experience was harrowing. Martha channeled her anger into her writing, producing the beautifully written autobiography *A Child Alone*, now in its third reprint.

In the 'noughties', Martha explored her continental Jewishness with renewed vigour. She edited the Holocaust Survivor Centre's newsletter, enlivened their writers' group and contributed regularly to the *AJR Journal*. She sought relaxation through singing and learning to play the flute. She remained surprisingly energetic, escorting David on trips to Eastern Europe, from where both their families originated. In 2010 my family

and I accompanied them to Martha's original home in Vienna, a difficult yet moving visit.

Martha gave many talks to schools in the UK and Austria. These were invariably well received. Retelling her story somehow helped her carry on shouldering her burden. She visited Vienna several times as guest of the mayor and reached some accommodation with Austria and her traumatic past. In later years, she attended two garden parties at Buckingham Palace in recognition of her work. She became an active member of the British Board of Deputies and a supporter of Beth Shalom.

Martha and David were married for 61 years. David (89) brought optimism, empathy, drive and warmth into their relationship. Sadly in recent years he developed Alzheimer's syndrome after losing his sight and hearing. The strain of caring for him proved exhausting for Martha. Her sudden demise, following the resurgence of an earlier cancer, came as a huge shock to her and to us all. She was relieved to learn that David was coping in a supportive nursing home. It was a comfort for us that she could end her days within a caring hospice environment.

Martha was a unique presence, lively, shrewd, kind. She could also be irascible, unbending, a force to be reckoned with. Her presence, wit and energy are sorely missed. Her legacy includes a substantial output of poetry and prose. She was a survivor, a wife, a mother of two sons, and a campaigner for social justice. May she rest in peace.

A longer version of the eulogy delivered at Martha's funeral can be obtained by contacting me at jon.blend335@gmail.com.

Jon Blend

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

Leeds CF

We watched, and had a lively discussion on, the DVD 'Remembering for the Future: "Question Time"', an event held at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds last year. Also Trudie Silman told us about the wonderful White Rose Charity Dinner she had attended, held to raise money for Beth Shalom and with Liza Minnelli as the star attraction. All washed down as usual with a good cup of Yorkshire tea and chat.

Barbara Cammerman

Next meeting: 13 Dec. Yorkshire Chanukah Party with David Apfel entertaining

North London

Learning about shoplifting

David Wass, a former policeman and store

detective, filled us in on the subject of shoplifting, though no practical training was offered. A most interesting morning.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 24 Nov. 'The CST: Why, When and How'

Hendon The anti-Israel boycott

Esther Rinkoff led a discussion about an article on the decision by the Edinburgh University Students' Association to boycott Israeli products. The article explained point by point how the anti-Israeli propaganda was factually wrong and totally misleading.

Shirley Rodwell

Next meeting: 28 Nov. Mark Davies, 'The Lewis Carroll Society'

Edinburgh Book Festival

We joined a packed audience to hear Julia Neuberger speak about her new book *Is That All There Is?* at the Edinburgh Book Festival, with Richard Holloway debating issues such as ethical wills and the meaning of friendships. A very pleasant and interesting day out.

Agnes Isaacs

Cleve Road The CST

Elliott Cohen from the Community Security Trust showed us a film of the Trust's work then described the organisation in further detail before answering questions.

David Lang

Next meeting: 29 Nov. Bernard Ecker, 'Call My Bluff'. 5th Anniversary



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Waking up to reality

So once again British hooligans managed to disrupt a concert given by Israeli musicians in London – this time one given by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra at the Proms in September. This follows a similar interruption of a performance by the Jerusalem Quartet at the Wigmore Hall earlier in the year.

It beats me how people think that disturbing a musical performance will somehow help the Palestinians. The Palestinians *can* be helped by getting them to see reality as it really is – rather than as some pie-in-the-sky situation in which Israel magically disappears from the scene. Israel is here to stay, and the sooner the Palestinians wake up to that fact the better it will be for all concerned, and the Palestinians first and foremost!

Another fact that seems to escape the disrupters is that being pro-Palestinian doesn't necessarily mean being anti-Israel. In fact, many people in Israel believe that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state would be a good thing, ultimately benefiting Israelis as well as Palestinians.

The events of the recent 'Arab Spring' have made it clear that all is not well with the Arab regimes, which have imposed repressive systems, published ever bigger lies and fostered anti-Israel propaganda

in a feeble attempt to maintain their hold on power and the immense resources of the Arab world. While the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state is generally accepted in Israel, differences of opinion about final borders, the return of refugees, and Jerusalem as the capital are the sticking points preventing a final agreement from being reached.

In what way do the disrupters of concerts by Israeli musicians differ from the rioters who laid waste to property in London and other cities of Fair Albion last summer? Not at all, to my mind. Both were practising mindless violence – destruction for destruction's sake – not achieving anything that wasn't negative and criminal. And to do such things in the name of a 'principle' doesn't make them any better. It just shows that principles are more often used for bad ends than for good.

However, there may be signs that someone out there in the Arab world is beginning to realise that reality is somewhat different from the misinformation and half-truths that they have been fed by their leaders all these years. Below are excerpts from recent articles by two Saudi journalists, whose texts constitute an unusual departure from the line generally adopted by the Arab press.

Khalaf Al-Harbi wrote in the Saudi daily *Okaz*: 'When we were young, the

teachers exhausted us by reiterating that Israel was, without question, a temporary and transient country. When we got old enough to read, newspapers and books filled our heads with reasons why Israel could not [continue to] exist in its Arab surroundings.'

Of course, no one can tell what the future holds, but to date those predictions have not been proved right.

Fawaz Al-'Ilmi wrote in *Al-Watan* about the Arabic-language website of Israel's Foreign Ministry: 'On 20 January the website published a report which revealed that the only registry in the world for Arab bone marrow donors was located in the Hadassah Medical Center, associated with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.'

Al-'Ilmi goes on to compare annual expenditure on education and scientific research in Israel and in several Arab countries, bemoaning the dismal results for the latter and blaming these figures for the failure of Arab countries to chalk up scientific achievements comparable to those of Israel.

Could these articles be perceived as an encouraging indication that the scales are beginning to fall from the eyes of Arabs and that at least some of them are finally beginning to wake up to reality?

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

whose photos feature prominently in the current exhibition of Hungarian photographers in the 20th century at the Royal Academy (reviewed by Gloria Tessler in your September issue).

They all claim that he and his girlfriend, Gerda Taro, invented the name Capa to help him get work with an equally invented career. The truth is

that Friedman, as he was known before, got the nickname Capa (pronounced something like Tsapa) at school in his native Budapest. Capa means shark in Hungarian. If one reads about his life, the nickname Shark is not altogether ill-fitting.

*Janos Fisher,
Bushey Heath*

Austrian pension legislation update

Owing to a legislative change, the second 'special' pension payment, which is usually remitted by the Austrian pension authority (Pensionsversicherung) in October, will in future be paid in November.

Recipients of an Austrian pension receive 14 payments per year, including two 'special' payments. The first 'special' payment will continue to be paid with the April pension.