

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The sixty-fifth anniversary of our journal

What would the founding editors of *AJR Information*, the predecessor of this journal, have said if they had been told in January 1946 that it would still be going strong in 2011, 65 years after it first saw the light of day? The first issue stated that the journal's primary aim was 'to keep its readers informed about the position of Jewries on the Continent and about the work for their relief and rehabilitation', while also dealing extensively with 'the problems of refugees in this country and the legal, economic and social questions and all the factors which add up to their status', and reporting on the activities of the AJR. The editors were Werner Rosenstock, who continued in that capacity until 1982, Herbert Freeden (Friedenthal), who left for Israel in 1950, and Ernst Lowenthal, who left for Germany in 1946 to take up a senior appointment in the field of Jewish relief.

The yellowing pages of the early issues of *AJR Information* transport one back to a world that is barely recognisable today. The cheap paper and smudged print of those distant volumes act as a reminder that the journal was launched amidst the austerity of the post-war years, when male refugees, often highly qualified, were reduced to seeking employment as packers, bookkeepers or storekeepers, and female refugees offered their services as typists, cutters or machinists, ready, as one of the journal's many advertisements put it, to do 'linen repairs of any kind (except shirt collars)'. Ladies residing in Priory Road, in London's West Hampstead, have not been taking in other people's clothes for mending for a good 50 years. And the days when elderly refugees advertised desperately for accommodation in single rooms in boarding-houses are mercifully long past.



Werner Rosenstock, General Secretary of the AJR, 1941-82, and Editor of *AJR Information*, 1946-82

But conditions in Britain were vastly better than those obtaining in much of Europe, where people were often without adequate food, clothing or heating. The cataclysm of the war had left large groups of people adrift in foreign countries as 'Displaced Persons', homeless, stateless and lacking almost all amenities. The very first page of *AJR Information* carried a prominent notice appealing for 12,000 garments a month for the Jews of Europe, who were suffering great privation in the first post-war winter, in the towns and villages where they lived as survivors or in DP camps. Few people now remember that the AJR had its own clothing depot at 1, Broadhurst Gardens, behind Finchley Road Tube Station, where thousands of garments were collected to be sent on to Jews in need on the Continent.

In those days of slow communications still recovering from wartime disruption – the second issue of the journal announced that it had again become possible to send letters not more than 1 ounce in weight to Austria – the organisations of the Jewish refugees in London, the AJR and the Council of Jews from Germany

prominent among them, formed the crucial bridgehead between the Jewish donor organisations overseas and the desperate recipients in Europe. The plight of the Jewish refugees extended beyond Europe to Shanghai, as an article in the journal entitled 'How 15,000 refugees survived Japanese ghetto' showed; Shanghai had been a refuge of last resort for Jews from Germany and Austria before its occupation by Japan in 1941, and the destitute survivors of Japanese brutality were yet another concern for their fellow Jews in Britain and the USA.

But the principal focus of the journal's concern was Germany, where the 'emaciated and half-starved' remnants of German Jewry were eking out an existence amidst the physical ruins of their cities and the moral ruin of Germany after Hitler. These articles were to develop into the extensive coverage of German and Austrian matters that was such a feature of *AJR Information* from the 1950s. If anything, the Jews in the large DP camps like Deggendorf and Foehrenwald in Bavaria fared better than those in the cities. Reports from the camps by leading Jewish figures like Norman Bentwich and Miriam Warburg portray a better situation than that in Berlin, where, according to a visiting AJR official, some Jews were still wearing their concentration camp outfits and the chairman of the Jewish community possessed one suit and no underwear. Conditions in Vienna were as bad – 'The Viennese live mostly on bread, potatoes and peas. Sugar, fats and meat are not available, even for those who hold ration-cards for these foodstuffs' – and they were exacerbated by persistent anti-Semitism.

The shadow of the Holocaust fell

continued overleaf

THE SIXTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR JOURNAL *cont. from page 1*

heavily over the first issues of the journal. It still comes as a shock to read 'Baby outfits for Belsen camp urgently required' on the front page of the March 1946 issue, though Belsen was by then the largest camp for displaced Jews in the British zone of occupation in Germany. It was some years before the classified ads of *AJR Information* ceased to be dominated by the 'Missing Persons' columns, where lists of forlorn enquiries appeared from relatives and friends of Jews who had been deported, uprooted or had otherwise disappeared during the Nazi years.

Reports of the fate of entire Jewish communities also came in from Germany. They make sombre reading, like that from Gelsenkirchen: 'Two transports left for Riga, the first one in January, 1942, a few survivors of which eventually reached Sweden in April, 1945. The second transport, departed on 30th March, never arrived. Nothing was ever heard of what happened to these deportees.' Or from Worms, the oldest Jewish settlement in Germany: 'All remaining Jews were sent to Piaski, near Lublin, in 1942. Until November, 1942, one of the deportees managed to write to her father who for some reason had been left behind. After that, there was complete silence ...'

It was against this background that AJR members sought to build new lives for themselves and their families in post-war Britain, and the AJR set out to help them. Its journal provided plentiful information about such matters as naturalisation, a key concern for stateless refugees seeking to acquire British nationality, or the employment prospects for demobilised refugee members of the armed forces, who numbered several thousand, or the first steps in the complex process of restitution, which were detailed in an article of January 1946 by Walter Breslauer, a lawyer and leading figure in the AJR. The AJR was instrumental in establishing the United Restitution Organisation (which for a time shared the AJR's offices at 8 Fairfax Mansions, London NW3), the most important institution engaged in the struggle to secure *Wiedergutmachung* for the Jews of Germany and Austria.

The AJR acted to assist the integration of its members into British society. The *AJR Information* had a regular column called 'Law and Life', which gave advice on problems like starting a limited company or eligibility for the new Family Allowance. It also had a column called 'In Parliament', and another that reported on events in Anglo-Jewry, later entitled 'Anglo-Judaica'. Part of the journal's remit was to publicise the AJR's own services to its members: its Social Services Department, founded in 1941 with Dr Adelheid Levy as its lone social worker, its Employment Agency, which found jobs for members until it was itself overtaken by redundancy in the 1960s, and the many meetings, lectures and other events that 'Head Office' organised in London or that the network of local groups arranged across the country.

As early as February 1946, the journal reported that the AJR's Executive was planning to establish a 'Home for Aged People', 'a task which the AJR must try to accomplish with all their strength'; not many years later, with the help of restitution money channelled through the Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation, the first of the Old Age Homes, Otto Schiff House, was opened in Netherhall Gardens. These were places where the unique social culture of the German-speaking Jews from Central Europe could be preserved. The pages of *AJR Information* are full of reminders of that rich cultural heritage and its rebirth in the changed conditions of post-war Britain. The high cultural level of the journal reflects the admiration for the arts and sciences, culture and education that the Jewish refugees brought with them

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

LONDON TRIP

**TUESDAY 22 MARCH TO
THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2011**

The trip will include a visit to the Jewish Museum; a Theatre outing; a visit to the House of Commons with a talk by the Speaker, the Rt Hon John Berkow; a Guided Tour of London Attractions; a visit to the Olympic site; accommodation at a London hotel; a dinner with London members (see below).

Open to all members
For further details, please call
Susan Harrod at Head Office
on 020 8385 3070

LONDON DINNER

WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2011

On Wednesday 23 March there will be a dinner at Belsize Square Synagogue to coincide with the London Trip. A guest speaker will be announced shortly.

If you live in the London area
and wish to attend, please call
Susan Harrod at Head Office
on 020 8385 3070

from their native lands.

The first issue of the journal found space in its eight pages for a long article on the theatre director Fritz Wisten, entitled 'Max Reinhardt's successor', which combined a review of Wisten's recent production of G. E. Lessing's celebrated philo-Semitic drama *Nathan the Wise* with memories of his production of the same play for the Jüdischer Kulturbund, the Jewish cultural organisation under the Nazis, in the very different conditions of summer 1933. Books of interest to the readership listed in the same issue included the actor Alexander Granach's autobiography, a volume of poems by the (non-Jewish) refugee poet Max Hermann-Neisse and the refugee author Egon Jameson's study *10, Downing Street*. Soon *AJR Information* was to have its own cultural commentator, the inimitable PEM, whose column 'Old Acquaintances' first appeared in January 1948, and its resident reviewer, the wonderfully erudite Lutz Weltmann.

Anthony Grenville

Stones of Remembrance

The founder of the Stones of Remembrance (*Steine der Erinnerung*) project in Vienna is my niece, Dr Elisabeth Ben David-Hindler, with whose devoted work many AJR members are familiar. On International Women's Day in March last year, in recognition of this unique work, Elisabeth, known as Liesl, was awarded the honour 'Woman of the Year 2010' by the Greens of Leopoldstadt, Vienna's 2nd District, once inhabited by 40 per cent of the city's Jews. Later in the year, she was awarded the Karl-Renner-Preis, a prize shared with two other Jews, in Vienna's magnificent town



Vienna's Councillor for Cultural Affairs Andreas Mailath-Pokorny presents the Karl-Renner-Preis to Elisabeth Ben David-Hindler

hall. The prize is awarded every three years in commemoration of Austria's former president and was presented by Vienna's Councillor for Cultural Affairs Andreas Mailath-Pokorny. He stated that the aim of the award was to ensure that those who had been forced from their homes, enduring one of the worst-ever experiences suffered by mankind, should never be forgotten.

Liesl was inspired by her uncle to commemorate victims of the Holocaust at their former homes. She undertook this *mitzvah* with great zest, not expecting it would blossom and grow to such large proportions. At first, she contacted a number of organisations seeking permission to place the 'stones' in front of people's houses, their occupants having refused to place them on the walls of the houses themselves. It should be remembered that many of these houses had been 'aryanised' by the present occupants or their ancestors. The designation 'stones' derives from the paving stones (*Pflastersteine*) which abound in Vienna and are the Viennese equivalents of the German *Stolpersteine*. They are, in fact, brass plaques, affixed to the paving stones and bearing the names of victims and their birthdays, places of birth and final resting places, where known. Adjacent to each set of four stones is a brief description of the bearer's activities and their immediate environment.

An arrow points in the direction of the next stone, thus constituting the Path of Remembrance (*Weg der Erinnerung*).

The idea of Stones of Remembrance has expanded from the 2nd District to other districts of Vienna. Members of my family and friends from England and abroad attended last year's prize-giving, as did Austrian members of parliament and other institutions. The atmosphere was awe-inspiring, with a band playing appropriate music under beautiful Strass chandeliers and the ceremony enhanced by coffee, sandwiches and, of course, *Apfelstrudel*, wine and other drinks. Who would

have thought that some 70 years from the start of the Holocaust, such honours would be granted to a Jewess in Vienna at such an inspiring ceremony and in the city's impressive town hall? How proud Liesl's parents would have been of her achievement!

I have attended four stone-setting ceremonies in as many years, beginning with the first stones for my parents, Leo and Otilie Hindler. A picture of these stones, as well as one of my brothers and me arriving in Britain in 1939, was shown on Austrian television. Liesl has had numerous offers from non-Jews to clean and look after the stones. Generally speaking, members of the younger generation to whom I have spoken are ashamed of what took place in those years. A large plaque was placed on the wall of a 2nd District church expressing regret that hardly anything was done by the Austrians to prevent the massacre of Jews.

It is evident that Liesl's devotion to her chosen task has contributed to a change in the population's perception of its past. Her work can never be finished as long as successive generations remember the Holocaust victims. In the words of a Jewish proverb: 'It is only those who are really dead that nobody remembers.'

Further information may be found at www.steinedererinnerung.net and info@steinedererinnerung.net.

Hetty Jacoby, assisted by Fred Stern

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Return to Munich

Don't tell anybody I'm Jewish. *Was Jewish!*, he corrects himself. 'Why not?'

'Just don't – you never know!' And he fastens the seat belt ready for landing at Munich airport.

For over 40 years my husband, Theo, has talked about bringing me to Munich, the place of his birth. He wants to show me the fountains and buildings of this famous German city; he wants to eat sausages in a *Biergarten*; and he wants to find his grandmother's grave.

In the taxi he's like a child as he twists round shouting: 'Look, look at the trams – they still run down the middle of the street!'

When the driver comments on his excellent accent, Theo explains that he left Munich in 1939 at the age of 16. The driver then asks if he left with his family and Theo says: 'I left alone, mein Herr.' When we reach the hotel the taxi driver opens the door, shakes Theo's hand and says: 'Willkommen, mein Herr, willkommen.'

Munich's main square is crowded with jugglers and Japanese tourists as I push through to the information centre to enquire about the Jewish cemetery.

'No,' Theo says angrily, 'You are not to ask, and in any case they won't know.'

I come out with a map. 'Here it is,' I tell him, pointing to the spot marked on the map. 'She marked the place – here's the graveyard.'

'Well, we're not going there.'

'You said you wanted to find grandma's grave.'

'I've changed my mind,' he snaps. This man is always either angry or charming – there's no halfway.

Lunch at an open-air cafe in the Odeonsplatz. Waiters in white jackets, violin player, Art Nouveau chairs. Wars come and go, good eating places stay. He's joking with the waiter now and flirting with a woman nearby. Soon other tables join in the fun, calling across the tables. I think the topic is apple strudel. In these surroundings, he looks years younger than 74 – pink shirt, bright dark eyes, a *mensch*. Perhaps people are only truly relaxed with their own language, in their own country. Under the cloth he reaches for my hand.

'Look,' he whispers, 'Look over there!' Across the boulevard is a flat-roofed building. Steps lead up to three arches with a statue on horseback beneath each one. Massive stone lions guard the entrance.

'That's the famous Feldherrnhalle,' he

explains, 'A shrine to Nazism. Everything connected with the movement started in Munich. In 1923 Hitler tried to take over the government. Sixteen Nazis were killed on those steps in a battle with the police. Grandma heard the noise on her way back from the dentist.'

'Perhaps she'd like us to find her grave,' I say.

'There'll be no grave – take it from me!'

'How do you know?'

'Smashed up in the war. Graffiti. Why keep on about it? Why do you spoil everything? What do you know about life, in your safe little village?'

Dinner that evening in another outdoor cafe. Waiting to be served with something called 'Brathuhn', we watch the *culturati* high-heeling up the steps to the Opera House, a monumental building in the classical style with a magnificent gold frieze. Questions about his past are not always welcome so I wait till the food arrives before asking 'Did your family go here, to the Opera?'

'Of course.'

'Did you go with them?'

'Of course.' And I picture them there, in evening dress, standing on the steps, by the huge columns – mother, father, two boys.

'Why do you ask?', he says.

'England must have been a terrible comedown for you.'

'England,' he laughs, pouring the Niersteiner. 'England, I love it!'

The last day comes and in the park, after the brass band and the dancing and the chatter in the *Biergarten* we stroll by the lake, hand in hand.

'You know,' I begin, 'The North cemetery's not far away – just one stop on the underground. I know exactly how to get there.'

'It's too hot.'

'The underground's cool.'

'You never give in, do you?' And he strides off angrily.

'Hey,' I yell after him, to the surprise of a Japanese tourist. 'You married me! She's my grandma as well! I want to go!'

The graves are in endless rows, a miniature garden beneath each carved headstone.

'Let's go,' he grumbles, 'This is not the right place – Jewish graves don't have crosses and flowers.'

It's the hottest time of day and the sun is relentless, no shade and my feet sliding in thin sandals. Even the bees are resting. Everywhere is silent, then the clip-clip of shears. An old man nearby

is trimming a grave. And I tell Theo I'm going to ask about the Jewish graves.

'Don't blame me if you get a nasty reply,' he says, 'Keep me out of it.'

Apologising for his poor English, the man says the Jewish graves are three kilometres up the road near a little park. I tell Theo it's too far and our best plan is to go back to the hotel.

'Oh, no,' he says, squatting on a grave and fanning himself with the street map. 'Let's find the damn place. You made me come this far.'

The burning pavement is deserted as traffic speeds by out of the city. I feel terrible. What are we doing here in this heat? We should have stayed by the lake under the trees.

At last we reach the park but there's no sign of a cemetery. Coming towards us is a woman with a dog. I ask Theo to speak to her.

'Oh no,' he says, 'You're the expert. You ask her.'

Smiling and friendly, she walks back to show us the way, the Labrador bouncing alongside. Everywhere we go everyone we speak to is helpful.

Yew trees surround the cemetery and a wall surrounds the yew trees. One push and the tall gates swing open.

Slabbed close together are rows of ancient gravestones, heavy, sombre, all with Hebrew writing. Clipped hedges border the paths. At the entrance to the gatekeeper's house the tiles are cool and inviting. Inside, the man tells us to help ourselves to water while he fetches the register.

'Is he Jewish?' I whisper and Theo nods.

At home I can be watching television when perhaps a blue-eyed blonde is speaking. He'll glance up from reading and say 'Jewish.' He always knows. Says it's the best club in the world.

The office is cluttered with letters and cards, many with foreign stamps. On a table is a box of satin skullcaps in bright colours. Carrying a heavy book made of leather, the man returns and, pushing papers aside, he sets it down, dusts the cover and opens the stiff pages. While Theo looks over his shoulder he moves his finger up and down the columns of faded handwriting searching for a name. Please let it be there!

'Here. Bertha. 1936.'

'That's her. That's my grandma.'

'You would like to see the grave?' he asks.

'You mean it's still here?'

The man nods and gestures towards

continued opposite

From Berlin to London: Werner M. Behr OBE

Further to the reference to him in Anthony Grenville's recent article 'Wilfrid Israel and the AJR', Werner Meyer Behr was born in Weissenfels, Germany, on New Year's Eve 1902, the son of the owner of a small general store. As a teenager, he caught rheumatic fever, which caused him to be bedridden for almost a year. Following high school he did an apprenticeship at the Berlin branch of the Société Générale bank, where his photographic memory for numbers became apparent. Having been unable to make an account balance at work, he ran the numbers through his head at home and found the error.

Werner later obtained a job as a cashier at the century-old Jewish department store N. Israel. As a junior cashier, he told the son of the owner, Wilfrid Israel, that the company's cash processing was wasteful, whereupon Wilfrid suggested he submit a reorganisation plan. In fairly short order and not yet in his thirties, Werner became Prokurist (financial director of the firm).

Once Hitler became Reichskanzler



Werner Behr with his first grandchild Dawn, summer 1965. Dawn is now a consultant neuroradiologist with four children

(Werner's wedding day was 31 January 1933) the consequences were very clear to Werner and Wilfrid. On the one hand, they maintained accounts (never settled) for prominent Nazis, who were not supposed to trade with Jews; on the other, they used this leverage to get all their Jewish employees out of Germany. As late as 22 August 1939, Werner was in Basel helping to get Jews over the border. Despite repeated questioning, he kept the details of this work to himself all his life. On the night of the Anschluss he sent his wife Salka

and son (the author of this article) to London, following himself in April 1939 after being sheltered in the British embassy in Berlin due to having been arrested and imprisoned for a while (he was a British subject).

In London he set up as a financial consultant and a member of the Stocks and Shares Dealers' Association. He was also involved in the creation of Zion House in Eton Avenue, north-west London, of which he was chairman for a while. According to Salka, he was there every Tuesday night for years. He was also deeply involved in the Thank-Offering to Britain Fund, given to the British Academy to support a scholar each year 'for the benefit of the people of Britain'. The basis of the appeal to refugees from Europe who found haven in Britain was 'Give now what you would have paid then for the visa which you got for free.' It was for this work that he was made an OBE. Werner passed away on 22 August 1976, the same day on which he had again risked his life rescuing his fellow Jews 37 years previously.

Omri Behr

Reminders of the N. Israel store

Wilfrid Israel was my employer in Berlin. I worked in his store, N. Israel, after leaving school. The store – a mixture of John Lewis and Harrods perhaps – was in the centre of Berlin and I worked in the import-export office.

When the Nazi louts arrived one late afternoon in 1938 and threw furniture, light fittings and anything they could get hold of from the first and second floors into the atrium, you took your life in your hands trying to avoid being hit by those missiles in order to reach the basement where the staff cupboards were located.

Shortly after Kristallnacht, emigration had to be seriously pursued. I left my employment with Mr Israel's blessing and started classes in English conversation, Viennese cookery, shorthand and typing, dress-making and window-dressing, the last given by one of the store's window-dressers.

The cookery course came in very useful when I eventually managed to get a permit to enter this country as a domestic servant, arranged for me by my student boyfriend (he later became my husband) in London.

My mother had always been a good customer of N. Israel and, with her three daughters about to emigrate, she was determined to provide each of us with a trousseau. My trunk was dispatched to Victoria Station, London, before I even knew for certain I was

going to London. I am sure the expense of moving that trunk plus my other luggage kept me at my first domestic job all nine months before moving on to the next one.

After three years in domestic service, I answered an advertisement by a fashion firm seeking a window-dresser and, having dressed a trial window, was offered the job and obtained the necessary permission from the police to work for the firm. The firm had branches all over England and soon I was sent to their various shops to do the window-dressing and teach young assistants, which enabled me to see many cities.

It wasn't until we purchased our first house (in Leeds) that the trunk containing all the linen was finally opened and unpacked. The many table cloths, sheets, beautifully embroidered duvet covers and pillowcases to match – all with my initials on – had survived the various storage places during the war. I still have plenty of linen serviettes and table cloths left. But what I also still have and use daily are the innumerable tea cloths, all bearing my initials, plus, woven around the four sides in large letters in German, TEA TOWEL, SAUCEPAN TOWEL, CUP TOWEL, PLATE TOWEL, KNIFE TOWEL, WIPE TOWEL. All daily reminders of the N. Israel store in Berlin!

Lillian Heyman

[Return to Munich](#) *continued from page 4*

the box of satin caps. 'For you,' he says.

This is an awkward moment for Theo as he tries to explain about not being 'in the faith' any more. But the man insists: 'Please – wear it for respect.'

Wearing the hats, the two men set off down the path, between the Hebrew headstones, chatting. At first

I follow, then, feeling like an intruder, I wait outside on a bench in the park, which, by now, is deserted. Time to write postcards and time to study the map for a better way back. A breeze has tempered the heat of the August afternoon.

Later, from behind, somebody taps my shoulder.

'Excuse me, miss. Any chance of a

kiss?'

On the bench he takes my hand and we sit in silence for a long time. With the back of the other hand, he brushes his lips and stares into the distance – a dear, familiar gesture, signifying thought.

At last he speaks: 'Well, at least somebody in my family has a proper damn grave!'

Mary Rogers



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

PENSION PERSEVERANCE

Sir – I thought this success story might encourage AJR members.

In June 2008 I met an Austrian survivor who subsequently became a member of the AJR. It was ascertained that this lady was not in receipt of an Austrian pension and she began a monumental effort to obtain one. This involved numerous letters; a visit to the Austrian embassy in London together with AJR social workers; a visit to Vienna; the involvement of Austrian social workers; several applications; and many home visits to go through the documentation, which was in German.

The situation was complicated by the fact that the lady had been in hiding for four years during the war and was thus unable to provide the Austrian pension authorities with details of her employment during that time. She also became distressed when having to recall her experience.

I visited her recently and she was delighted to say she had finally heard from Austria that her pension was to be granted and back paid to the 1990s. For the first time in many years, her nightmares have ceased. Her parting comment to me was: 'It was never about the money. The nightmare was to do with them not believing me – now my experience is validated!'

I am delighted this case has had a positive outcome but feel sad and angry that the process has been so damaging to this client.

*Eileen M. Brady, AJR Social Worker
(North East and Scotland)*

CALL TO THE THIRD GENERATION

Sir – I was thrilled to read Hannah Goldstone's call (November) to the Third Generation to come together to ensure the future of Holocaust remembrance. This is an important proposal. Many of us who are members of the First Generation and speak regularly at schools and synagogues and to civic groups in the UK and on the Continent are increasingly concerned about carrying on our legacy as our numbers dwindle. May the numbers of concerned members of the Third Generation ready to pick up our legacy grow and grow.

Eve Kugler, London N3

Sir – The experiences of refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia are often distressing but, by and large, they vary only in the details.

My own experience of the Nazis dates from the boycott of Jewish shops in April 1933 when I was almost seven years old. I learned quickly enough what anti-Semitism was all about.

It is unlikely that younger children will have much of a memory as to the details of what happened between then and their emigration to the UK and elsewhere.

When the last person who has actual experiences of those times sheds his or her earthly coil, there will not be a 'Jewish refugee' left anywhere and the title and content of the *AJR Journal* and organisation will become obsolete.

To perpetuate this particular past by enlisting a first, second and even third generation is absurd. The time is fast approaching – and is already too late in some instances – when the memory of those times needs to be properly safeguarded, perhaps by a section of the Wiener Library.

The bell tolls for all of us remnants of the 10,000 who found asylum here.

Ernest G. Kolman, Greenford, Middx

'WITNESSES IN UNIFORM'

Sir – I was interested to read Jeremy M. Cohn's piece 'Witnesses in uniform' in the December issue. I can identify with his impression of his Berlin visit, as can any insightful Holocaust survivor and refugee, as well as their progeny.

I too visited Grunewald station and, on my way there, passing typical suburban middle-class villas, I remember thinking that in these villas lived typical middle-class families, probably standing in their windows, watching columns of Jews being marched to the station. What, I wondered, were they thinking? Were they thinking that they should not have voted in this government, which was so cruelly and openly discriminating against their friends and trusted professionals, and, if so, could or would they have done anything about it?

Could or would we in similar circumstances? Could it have happened in any cultured and cultivated society in a similar confluence of circumstances? Was it a manifestation of the potential of evil that lies in the human condition, and happened

to emerge in Germany and be released in Europe? Does anyone have answers?

Emil Landes, London N6

RETURN TO HAMBURG

Sir – I was very interested to read Sue Barnett's article (November) about her visit to Hamburg.

Like her I was born in Hamburg and her description of her visit was very illuminating for me. I would like to comment on her visit to the Talmud-Thora School, which has a very distinguished history and which I was privileged to attend before the war. In fact, in the 1970s it became a library of the University of Hamburg and some 12 years ago it returned to its original function as a boy's school. It is a beautiful building, next to the wonderful synagogue which was tragically destroyed in November 1938.

Herman Scott, Brentford, Middx

Sir – It is easy enough for students in Hamburg to find out for themselves what became of the goods and chattels of those deported. They just have to ask their parents or grandparents such simple questions as: Where did you get the piano, the picture on the wall, the display cabinet, the antique furniture? The book *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der Hamburger Juden 1933-1945* by Beate Meyer is on the internet. If I can find it in seconds, so can they! All that is needed is a computer, an internet provider and an honest search for the truth of what was perpetrated on their doorstep.

Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk

CHARLOTTE WOLFF

Sir – I live in Berlin and, when visiting my aunt, a former Jewish refugee, in London, I often read your magazine. I know the visitors' programme of the city of Berlin very well (my own brother and sister were here) and I am interested in the articles people write about their visits.

I have a question. We are a small group of women researching the life of the well-known doctor and psychotherapist Charlotte Wolff, who was born in Germany in 1897, emigrated to England, and died in London in 1986. We would like to find out where she was buried. Can any of your readers help?

Ruth Nube, Berlin

A TRUE TORAH PERSPECTIVE

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

It is refreshing to see this true Torah perspective expressed in your pages. We should eschew vindictiveness towards members of nations that have persecuted us – which, though understandable in the circumstances, is really unfair to those who were not even born at the time – and also regret what was done in a previous generation, ostensibly in their nation's name.

Mr Schragenheim's letter contrasts with the frequent anti-religious diatribes that we have to endure from Peter Phillips, who, in his contribution in December, abuses both Mr Schragenheim and other Orthodox correspondents, as he seems to do in almost every issue of your journal.

Martin D. Stern, Salford

'PRETENTIOUS INVESTMENT'

Sir – I was interested to read Martha Blend's review of Howard Jacobson's *The Finkler Question* in your November issue. I was, however, surprised to read of 'verbal wit' and 'a rich tapestry whose threads are the ever-present dilemmas of Jewish life'.

I took this book on holiday as it was promoted as being humorous but I struggled as far as page 126 for some humour – or even satire – but in vain. I was bombarded with the words 'Jew' and 'a Finkler' page after page, which became quite irritating. I began to wonder who on earth would care about 'The Question' and I lost interest with regard to 'The Answer' – if ever there was to be one.

Assuming that some of the Jewish readership may find the book thought-provoking, I cannot see why our non-Jewish neighbours would be prepared to invest the time or £18.99 on such a pretentious investment.

I have every respect for Martha Blend's judgment but I would suggest a much more satisfying read would be Natasha Solomon's *Mr Rosenblum's List* – which has a Jewish refugee as the central character and is unlikely to irritate the reader.

Marcel Ladenheim, Surbiton, Surrey

ISRAEL AND ZIONISM

Sir – It is futile arguing with the likes of Peter Phillips (December). I find his mish-mash efforts too frustrating to comment on, so I'm giving up on him – this being my last attempt. The well-known adage springs to mind: 'The great obstacle is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge.'

Israel, he says, was set up as a secular state. It was declared the re-born Jewish State, a home for all Jews without distinction. You cannot separate Jews from their religion: this is what sustained them during their two millennia of wanderings and dream of return. Mr Phillips denies hating the religious yet he suggests their vote be taken away for refusing army service. It all depends on what he means by 'religious'; the highest percentage of motivated soldiers and officers also hail from these ranks. In fact, the biggest draft

dodgers on a par with the 'black hats' are the liberal left. Would he advocate that their vote be taken away too?

Mr Phillips denies any affinity to Howard Jacobson's 'ashamed-Jew' Finkler and insists on calling himself a Zionist and not anti-Israel. But in the same breath he labels Israel a fundamentalist state (December); compares it to its Arab neighbours (October); and decries Israeli laws as no different from Sharia. I thought Israel gave up stoning adulteresses almost two millennia before England ceased burning witches! In fact, women were never stoned in ancient Israel – it was there as a deterrent.

The 'fellow Jew' Mr Phillips told to go to Israel is none other than me. How ironic – this takes me back to my boyhood in Poland where I learned to give as good as I got, when Polish bullies would set about me screaming 'Jew to Palestine!'

Rubin Katz, London NW11

Sir – In the December issue, replying to his many critics, Peter Phillips wrote: 'Henry Schragenheim ... spoils a good letter with his second paragraph. What on earth has the fact that 3,000 years ago Jewish kings ruled the people and that the King (which king?) read from the Torah in the temple on the festival of Succot, got to do with anything that is happening today? Anyhow, how does he know this? Was he there?'

Mr Phillips may not know that the American Civil War occurred or that the Greeks as well as the Romans invaded the Holy Land – because he was not there. But I and other readers know it because it is history and can be found in history books.

I wrote about the Jewish king ruling over Jews in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago because Mr Phillips had asserted that the Jews were intruders and settled in an Arab country. In fact, no Arab state ever existed in Palestine – although they could have had a state from 1948 to 1967 when the Jordanians were in occupation of the West Bank and the Egyptians occupied Gaza.

With regard to the Jewish king, this can be found in Deuteronomy 17-15: it was King Solomon. And the procedure of the king reading from the Torah is explained in Talmud Sotah 41a.

Henry Schragenheim, London N15

Sir – I wish to express my appreciation of Anthony Grenville's courageous article 'In defence of doves' (December) on the need for a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestine standoff. Judging by past correspondence in your esteemed journal, there will be considerable hostility towards open-minded negotiations.

Palestinians have no allies. They have been hung out to dry by their Middle Eastern brothers and they know it. Unlikely as it may sound to your readers, the majority of Palestinians want nothing better than to

reach a settlement with Israel so that they can get steady employment, develop their environment and lead normal lives.

Israel has to create the conditions for a successful outcome: treat Palestinians as equals, no more land grabs, no more uprooting of olive trees, no more harassment at checkpoints, no more physical assaults from settlers. We could have peace now.

Then, in a few years, a thriving Palestine alongside a thriving Israel would be an example to the world of how to go about building real security and prosperity. Yesterday's barbarities will become history lessons.

Heinz Grünewald, Pinner, Middx

Sir – Just read Anthony Grenville's essay about Israel. Beautifully stated, and very important!

Tom Freudenheim, New York

Sir – It's hard not to be depressed by the situation in Israel. One wonders whether the original Zionists were naive to think they could return to a country after 2,000 years and not have trouble with the neighbours. These days, a talented and vibrant community seems to be in hock to an illiberal and fanatical minority. Will someone give me a reason for optimism about the future of the country we all love and admire? *Martha Blend, London N10*

Sir – Amnon Needham (Letters, October) means well, but his arguments won't work in practice. His one and only God gave His people the whole of Judea and Samaria. On that, and on that alone, Mr Needham rests his claim to modern Israel and presumably encourages the ongoing annexation of adjoining, non-Israeli, lands within the area of historic Judea and Samaria.

Sadly, the majority of the world's population believe that God had a Son who claims sovereignty over all the world. He gave an abstract interpretation to the term 'His People', which excludes Mr Needham (and me). However, if Jews cease to be God's select people, that is the end of their claim to 'the Holy Land' on Mr Needham's chosen ground.

Judaism, Christianity, Islam – the three faiths derived from one God – are incompatible. Hence the reliance on faith-based arguments will not suffice to ensure Israel's right to exist – never mind its right to enjoy a peaceful existence.

No, the only really reliable answer is reliance on man's law, which in this case lies in the United Nations. Its binding resolution brought Israel into existence and is the guarantee of that country's continuing existence. Implicit in that is that Israel exists within the borders laid down by the UN and not the territory it has occupied or over which it has assumed extra-territorial rights.

Francis Deutsch, Saffron Walden

continued on page 16

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Hunting scenes by Heywood Hardy, Arthur Wardle or John Frederick Herring may have graced many an Englishman's castle. But **David Chancellor's** portrait of a teenage hunter is a surprising winner of this year's **National Portrait Gallery's Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize** – particularly with teenagers and social awareness high among entries.

Huntress with Buck is bathed in russet tones; the girl mounted on her horse is an ethereal red-head, and the even more beautiful fallen buck lying across her saddle is the same carnelian red, a



Elizabeth Farren, Later Countess of Derby by Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1790. Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Edward S. Harkness, 1940 (50.135.5)

gentle metaphor for blood against the background of gathering clouds. The 14-year old hunter, aptly named Josie Slaughter, from Alabama, was on her first hunting trip to South Africa and Chancellor took the moment's opportunity to catch the 'almost unreal light'.

Other compelling entries include child prisoners in Burundi with huge, hopeless eyes and three young identically clad Bangladeshi girls with their proud dad. **Felix Carpio** was captivated by the 'daring looks' of a young Syrian girl in a green headscarf, contrasting modesty with female sagacity. There were attrac-

tive Cossack girl cadets in fatigues and a young deaf footballer with a taut, inward expression in old sepia. **Ben Wisely** presented a Rwandan street teenager, while **Hadas Mualem's** portrait of the pensive and forlorn Yasra, who moved from her native Moldova to Israel, reveals with great sensitivity the isolation of the new émigré. **David Knight** was so captivated by Catherine, his red-haired assignment model, that he stayed to render this pallid, teary-eyed version of her as his entry to the competition. Its candour says much about the ephemeral world of modelling.

They weren't all young. Ann Widdecombe – presumably before the *Strictly Come Dancing* fiasco – is photographed by **Thomas Butler** standing on a pedestal next to an awkward-looking Jon Snow. Other political portraits include **Kalpesh Lathigra's** view of Tony Blair with his now familiar glazed look.

Marcia Michaels's artful black-and-white study captures the light on the spine of a young girl. The exhibition runs until 20 February 2011.

The National Portrait Gallery also presents **Thomas Lawrence: Regency Power and Brilliance**. Lawrence was Regency Britain's leading portrait painter, who made his artistic debut at 21. The looming backdrop to this lavish era was the French Revolution and the consequent Franco-British wars. After peace, Lawrence painted the European sovereigns and generals who helped defeat Napoleon. His graphite and red-and-black chalk paintings of women in impossible bonnets and winsome girls with clear-eyed intelligence became lush and bolder towards the mid-eighteenth century, with the European aristocracy in crimson velvets and small boys in Little Lord Fauntleroy lace-edged suits. Lawrence's gift for detail can be seen in his 1790 full-length portrait of the beautiful Elizabeth Farren, later Countess of Derby, in a fur-draped, crisp white satin dress with the wind

in her hair, as she half turns towards us with a simpering, yet audacious smile. It took Lawrence 13 years to paint his muse, Isabella Wolff, whose classical pose references Michaelangelo, in contrast to the dashing, colourful portraits of his archdukes, baronets and countesses. Until 23 January.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

A labour of love

ZUR ERINNERUNG UND ZUM GEDENKEN. DIE EINSTIGEN JUEDISCHEN GEMEINDEN WESTPREUSSENS (IN REMEMBRANCE AND IN MEMORIAM: THE FORMER JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN WEST PRUSSIA) by Gerhard Salinger

Published by the author, 2009, paperback, 3 vols., 760 pp., ISBN 978-3-00-026168-8; for further information contact Dr Rita Scheller, Husarenstr. 26, 30163 Hannover, Germany

Gerhard Salinger, an elderly Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, has lived in the USA much of his life and has worked there as an accountant. I am in no position to judge his worth as an accountant but, when perusing his now numerous books on the Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe – many of these communities long forgotten – I have formed the impression that he has missed his vocation. He is, without doubt, a devoted, meticulous and unquenchable historian who is utterly determined that the Jewish communities that he has so lovingly researched should not be forgotten. Not only has he devoted many years of his life to this task but he has also been largely self-financed. His studies have involved travelling with a driver thousands of miles by car through the areas under study, looking up ancient records, visiting synagogues and cemeteries (or what is left of them), and bringing to life the names of those who lived (and died) there, together with as much personal information as he could uncover. This intense preoccupation is a labour of love and he is to be greatly admired for his efforts, which will be of huge importance as a resource to scholars researching European-Jewish history. It will also enable individuals to trace their families and provide them with valuable information. Salinger dislikes modern technology and, extraordinary as it may seem, his data are collected, analysed and written up without the use of a computer.

This book, the publication of which was greatly facilitated by Dr Rita Scheller, a practising Christian who was born in Pomerania and who has made a significant contribution to reconciliation between Germans and Jews, appears in three parts and deals with former Jewish communities in what used to be

West Prussia – an area south of Danzig (Gdansk) – which has a chequered history. West Prussia was not established until 1772, after the first partition of Poland, when Frederick II of Prussia took it over. Before then Jews had led very restricted lives and were required to live in rural areas. Frederick II changed all that: poor Jews were expelled and only those who possessed at least 1,000 Taler were allowed to stay, although they were required to live in the towns, despite some resistance by the local populations. Radical improvements for the Jewish populations came about only after Napoleon's victory over the Prussians in 1807, when Frederick III had to flee: under Karl August Hardenberg's chancellorship, some reforms were made and the proclamation of 1812 conferred citizenship on most Jews living in the area. However, equal rights were not achieved until 1871, when Bismarck established the German Reich. Following the First World War, most of West Prussia was incorporated into the new Poland (1920). In the introduction to Part I, Salinger provides a scholarly history of this turbulent area going back to the Middle Ages.

In his Foreword, Salinger explains that he had a personal motive in selecting West Prussia for study: evidently members of his maternal family had lived there until 1830. They later moved to Pomerania (Hinterpommern), which likewise became entirely Polish in 1945. Only the smaller part of Pomerania called Vorpommern remained German, and Salinger has already published similar studies of these two areas. He explains that after extensive correspondence with the Polish authorities in many towns and villages he visited all sites in which it was possible to trace a Jewish past. On his trip, which took place in 2005, he took numerous photographs which enliven his text, and he has included many detailed maps which provide the reader with essential points of reference.

So how has he set about his seemingly overwhelming task? Take the town of Preussisch Stargard (now Starogard Gdanskie) as an example (see Part I). What can the reader expect to find here? Apart from a brief potted history, Salinger notes that two Jews, Mendel Salomon and Alex Baruch, were permitted to settle there in 1774 because they possessed more than 1,000 Taler. By 1812 there were 112 Jewish households, and individual names – both original and adopted later – are listed. The population had grown to 597 by 1840, to 688 by 1849, and to its highest number (802, 13.7 per cent of the population) by 1870. There was a synagogue, a rabbi and a

school. Salinger goes on to list all those Jews who paid taxes in 1883, stating their names, occupations and places of residence. There is also a list of taxpayers in 1911. The names of two men who lost their lives in action during the First World War are given, as are extracts from the Secret State Archives in Berlin concerning the election of Jewish officials and other matters. There is a list of deaths, giving names and age, going back to 1848, and a long list of deaths from 1857 until the community ceased to exist. It is striking that many died at a relatively young age. There is no information on where and how they died, but it is nonetheless an extraordinarily detailed survey.

On his visit to the town, Salinger discovered that the synagogue is now used as a shopping centre and that the greatly neglected cemetery has a number of gravestones, many severely damaged but five still standing upright, with the names of Mendelsohn and Wohlgemuth recognisable. Photographs of the former synagogue and the cemetery are provided.

I don't expect that many readers of the Journal will want to rush to purchase a copy of this book, of which only a limited number has been printed. Only someone with a very personal interest in West Prussia, or scholars of Jewish history, would want to do that. But I intend to present my copy to the Wiener Library in London, where it will be accessible to anyone wishing to look up his or her family and I hope that some will find that helpful.

Gerhard Salinger is to be congratulated on single-handedly providing us with such a scholarly resource. I am greatly indebted to Dr Rita Scheller for some factual corrections.

Leslie Baruch Brent

A treasure house of information

ANNE FRANK: THE BOOK, THE LIFE, THE AFTERLIFE
by Francine Prose

Harper, 2009, 336 pp. hardcover

I first heard of the diary of Anne Frank in 1954 when a non-Jewish friend described it to me. I didn't read it myself at the time because I thought it would be too painful. Many years later I discovered it wasn't a horror story but a delightful account of a unique experience by a lively and talented writer.

In fact, there are not one but several versions of the diary, the published ones containing the revision by the 15-year-old Anne of the childish entries of her

13-year-old self. She seems confident of her judgment in improving the text: 'I am the sharpest critic of my work.'

Francine Prose is at pains to stress that the diary as revised is the work of a young but conscious artist. Anne's father, the sole survivor of the families who had hidden in the attic, became convinced she had wanted it to be published. Therefore he prepared a version that combined passages from the first draft and the later versions, omitting needless details but preserving the essence of the diary. Since then, there have been other versions, some omitting the descriptions of Anne's sexual development, others omitting references to the Franks' lukewarm marriage.

Anne wrote the last entries a few days before the family were betrayed, possibly by a warehouse worker named Willem van Maaren, who would have received the bounty offered by the Germans for revealing the whereabouts of Jews. The arrest was made by SS officer Karl Silberbauer. He was traced after the war by the Nazi-hunter Wiesenthal, but Otto Frank refused to testify against him, saying he was 'only doing his job'! What followed in reality for the Frank family was much darker than the amusing entries of the diary: deportation to Westerbork, the transit camp for Jews en route to Auschwitz. Finally, Anne and her sister Margot, by then starving and sick, met their end in Belsen shortly before the camp was liberated.

Before taking the family to Gestapo headquarters, Silberbauer needed a receptacle for the money and valuables he had been asked to collect. Seeing a holdall, he emptied it of its contents and used it for that purpose. The contents were the diary, the pages of which lay scattered on the floor until the Franks' faithful helper, Miep Gies, collected them to give to Otto in the event of his return.

The story of the publication is an intriguing one. At first, it was rejected by many publishers because the subject was too sad and who would want to read the outpourings of a teenage girl?

Fortunately, Judith Jones, an assistant at Doubleday publishers, found the manuscript among a pile of rejects. Eventually the tide turned and, from a modest print-run by Doubleday, the diary became a best-seller. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote an introduction to one version and plays and films on the subject of the secret annexe followed. There were several plays, each with its own agenda. One minimised the

continued overleaf

REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

Jewish element, transforming it into an 'everyman story'; another gave it a sentimental twist by stressing Anne's belief in human kindness.

'In spite of everything I still believe that people are good at heart,' Anne wrote, ignoring darker comments she makes at times when she writes 'I don't believe the politicians alone are guilty of the war ... the little man is just as guilty.'

It is a mark of Anne Frank's intelligence that she can embrace conflicting views of mankind. Suffice it to say, the various versions have been read, performed and discussed in classrooms, while the Frank Foundation arranges exhibitions of related material in many venues.

This book is a treasure house of information about an amazing project which could have saved the lives of eight people but for the treachery of one man. There is an excellent index.

Martha Blend

Fiddling while Vienna burns

THE VIENNA JAZZ TRIO

by **Tomas Böhm**

Pitchstone Publishing, 2010, 272 pp. paperback, \$17.95/£11.25

Musicians, journalists, doctors and psychoanalysts cram the pages of this dense novel about a group of young Viennese jazz performers caught up the events leading up to the Anschluss. It begins with a flashback to that time as the now ageing pianist-writer Nathan Menzel tells their story to a Canadian journalist in San Diego, who turns out to be the son of their late bassist, Peter Gross. Nathan's parents had fled the pogroms in Poland and settled in Vienna.

Despite anti-Semitism and the city's innate intellectual snobbism, these young intellectuals enjoy a good life: music, climbing and hiking in the Vienna Woods. Yet the setting is already worryingly predictive: according to Nathan, 'huge pompous houses that care nothing for what happens to people who move in and out of them, equestrian statues, snooty head waiters, horse-drawn wagons, anti-Semites and the opera.' There were 200,000 Jews in Vienna at this time. But by the time Nathan completes his bitter-sweet jazz odyssey, spanning Europe and America over the latter part of the twentieth century, the Nazis had murdered 60,000 of them.

At 17 the rather dry and serious Nathan is accepted into Vienna's Music Conservatory. Oscar, his handsome medical student brother, urges him

to go out and meet girls. But it is Gerhard Rosenblum, a fellow medical student and budding saxophonist, who perceives that Nathan's true potential is as a jazz pianist. While 'everyone in Vienna thought they were Mozart or Beethoven', the jazz trio, whose work is derided as 'Negro music' by the snooty Conservatory, see themselves as a link between African-American jazz, rooted in slavery, and the growing oppression of the Jews. With fascism on the rise, many of the academics confront them through the young socialist movement. The radicalised young Nathan writes a scathing newspaper column under a pseudonym condemning the coming Nazi takeover and increasing his venom against 'Shitler' and his henchmen.

Three elements – the youthful energy which symbolises Vienna's putative cultural revival, the Nazi advance and the growing danger to the trio and their partners posed by Nathan's subversive column – underpin the story. And the story, though fictitious, offers cameo roles to many famous names, not least Sigmund Freud and his daughter Anna plus a crop of internationally renowned jazz musicians – Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Tatum, Dave Brubeck, Benny Goodman and others. Despite the author's disclaimer that the use of these celebrities is 'not intended to change the entirely fictional character of the work', some of them, like Freud, take on pivotal roles themselves! Nathan becomes his patient and describes the great man's firm gaze, neat beard, papers and books everywhere. But it is Freud who declares him cured when he becomes a jazzman!

This is a discursive novel in which the author manages to build a head of steam out of the political and moral turbulence of the time, including details of the Gestapo's brutality and the courage of those in their grasp. All the patterns of persecution and survivor guilt are laid bare: the prescient Jews who left Vienna in time and those who did not. The Swedish-born author is a medical doctor and psychoanalyst with an impressive knowledge of jazz. There is no mention of a translator, but the narrative and dialogue can occasionally be stilted and needed a good editor. The style may lack literary elegance but the author does manage to weave the many threads of his tale into a believable and moving novel of social history.

Call me a prude but I could have done without the graphic details of Gerhardt's priapic problems leading to an emergency circumcision (his unconventional parents had chosen to ignore this part

of the Covenant) as well as the author's crudely physiological descriptions of women in labour. The novel's value lies in the sense of creative optimism the trio represents as a counterbalance to Austria's darkest era.

Gloria Tessler

A novel intended for publication?

ANY SURVIVORS? A LOST NOVEL OF WORLD WAR II

by **Martin Freud**

edited by **Helen Fry**

The History Press (tel 01453 883 300; www.thehistorypress.co.uk), 2010, 240 pp. paperback, £9.99

This previously unpublished novel was recently discovered in a suitcase in the attic of one of Martin Freud's grandchildren. It was typed in German and has now been translated into English and then edited by Helen Fry.

The eldest son of Sigmund Freud, Martin Freud came to England in 1938 and was interned as an 'enemy alien' in 1940. Later, however, he joined the Pioneer Corps for a few months, before being invalidated out. From its context, it is likely the book was written in the very early stages of the Second World War.

The theme of the novel is that of a German refugee who is recruited by an anti-Nazi organisation 'Geheime Macht' (Secret Power) in rather dramatic circumstances. He is infiltrated into Germany in the role of a rich Danish Nazi with the purpose of rescuing an anti-Nazi petty officer in a German U-boat. He ends up assuming the identity of the sailor and miraculously being accepted as such by the crew despite knowing nothing about U-boats or the navy. He is even awarded the Iron Cross due to the real petty officer, and one of the rewards is a meeting in Berchtesgaden with the Führer. The latter turns out to be his uncle acting as a substitute!

The novel includes a variety of strange characters, including a glamorous Gestapo agent, who falls in love with him before his change of identity and is supposed to trail him as a suspect in his new one. There are numerous unbelievable coincidences and situations.

It seems very unlikely that the novel was ever intended to be a serious war story, and it would disappoint a reader expecting this. If indeed it was intended for publication, it would have been as a satirical spoof and as such it is quite amusing.

George Vulkan

Claims Conference scam uncovered

Last November, 17 people were arrested in New York in connection with an alleged fraud involving thousands of bogus applications for compensation made to the Claims Conference and paid by the German government, which had been defrauded of \$42.5m.

The alleged fraud, thought to have been perpetrated by an organised criminal gang operating in Brooklyn in conjunction with Claims Conference employees, who were subsequently dismissed, involved the submission of false application forms and forged documents to two programmes operated by the Claims Conference: the Article II Fund, which pays the equivalent of a monthly pension of around £250 to

Holocaust survivors who were interned in concentration camps and ghettos, and the Hardship Fund, a one-off payment of £2,000 to survivors who fled from Eastern Europe as the Nazis invaded.

Altogether, it is understood that some 4,957 Hardship Fund applications and 658 Article II Fund claims from 2000 to 2009 appear to be fraudulent.

The scam involved submitting claims with forged identifications and false details of persecution to meet the strict eligibility criteria for the funds. In some cases, people born after the Second World War made applications, while others altered places and dates of events.

The bogus claims were then signed off by a senior member of staff at the Claims

Conference enabling gang members to take a large cut of the money paid to the applicant.

On discovering the fraudulent applications, the Claims Conference called in the FBI to investigate and make arrests. The Claims Conference is now taking steps to try to recover some of the money paid out.

The AJR would like to reassure recipients of the Article II Fund that they will continue to receive their regular compensation payments despite recent events and that applicants to both the Article II and Hardship Funds will continue to have their claims processed without delay.

Michael Newman

Lifetime Achievement Award for AJR member

Dr Herbert Loebel OBE has been given the Lifetime Achievement Award at the North East Businessman of the Year Awards in Newcastle.

Born in Bamberg, Germany, the son of a manufacturer, Herbert fled to England with his family at the age of 16. With Robert Joyce, the son of an unemployed Jarrow shipyard worker, he created a group of companies: Joyce-Loebel was a byword for manufacturing excellence in the North East. He also founded Britain's first voluntary support agency, Enterprise

North, which helped 200 business start-ups before government agencies took over the job.

Now, Herbert Loebel is 'bringing together again elements of the corporate and the academic disciplines to create an academy in exporting, advising North East businesses wishing to break in to this area,' said Paul Williamson, Senior Partner of Deloitte, Newcastle, who gave the address.

Dr Herbert Loebel OBE (pictured right) with his award surrounded by his family: (from left) Eve Loble, Monica Stern née Loble, Miriam Grabiner née Loebel, Mona, Herbert's friend, Naomi Baker née Loebel, Gerald Stern, George Loble, his cousin (also from Bamberg)



A heartening story

This heartening story recently came to my notice. In 2001 children in a school in the small town of Neuenkirchen in Westphalia chose to carry out research into the town's Jews. They found there had been a Jewish presence in the town from 1788 until 1938, when the last family had been forced to leave. The children proposed that a new street be named after them, to which the town council agreed.

I cherish this photograph of Familie-Hoffmann-Strasse as the only survivors were my late husband, Walter Hoffman, and his sister Hilde, who escaped on the Kindertransport. Their entire family was deported and killed.

Shoshanah Hoffman



ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY JANUARY

Mon 10 Ralph Blumenau, 'A Brief History of Anglo-German Relations since the 16th Century' Club 43

Mon 17 Dr Hanne Castein, 'Self-portraits by Women Artists (with slides), Part I' Club 43

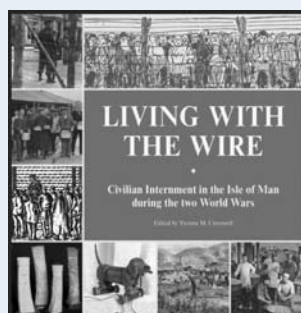
Thur 27 Professor Christian Wiese (University of Frankfurt), 'The Demonic Face of Nationalism: Zionism in Germany during the Nazi Period and the Dilemmas of Jewish Nationalism' At University of Sussex, Arts A155, 4.00 pm (booking not required)

Thur 3 February Heinz Wolff (Emeritus Professor of Bioengineering, Brunel University), 'The Making of a Refugee Scientist' The Inaugural Martin Miller and Hannah Norbert-Miller Memorial Lecture. At Chancellor's Hall, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1, 6.00 pm

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

Edited by Yvonne Cresswell, revised edition. Douglas: Manx National Heritage, 2010
SBN 978-0-901106-63-6, price £10.00

During the two World Wars many 'enemy aliens' were interned. This well illustrated book helps readers understand what happened to them and how they kept themselves occupied. It includes the WW1 Jewish camp in Douglas and WW2 Jewish refugees, including women and children, in the Rushen Camp.



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INSIDE the AJR

Manchester Prestigious meeting at Imperial War Museum North

Along with visitors from Liverpool and Sheffield, we commemorated Kristallnacht with a prestigious meeting hosted by the Imperial War Museum North. A full house heard Dr Anthony Grenville deliver a most erudite address on '9 November 1938, Britain and the Jews of Germany and Austria'. There was lively audience participation, with members speaking about their experiences at the time.

Werner Lachs

'War Horse': Horrors of the First World War

Some 20 of us were among a full house for 'War Horse' at the New London Theatre. We were overwhelmed by a powerful and harrowing, and sometimes funny, view of the horrors of the First World War.

David Barnett

Ealing The Jews of Ostrava

David Lawson told us that up to the invasion in March 1939, Ostrava had never encountered anti-Semitism. We were honoured to have many Ostravians in the audience, especially Bertie Goldberg, who, with his wife Hannah, has created a dynasty of 101, including children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 4 January

Ilford An inspiring morning

Due to the Tube strike, our speaker couldn't be with us but, resourceful as ever, Myrna suggested we recall a person or incident that had inspired us in the past. Many wonderful stories emerged, some sad, some in a happier vein.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 5 Jan. Postponed Chanukah Party and Quiz

Kingston CF Helen Fry and James Hamilton

Helen Fry spoke to our meeting, at the home of Susan Zisman, about her various books on refugees from Nazism. Her fascinating talk was followed by James Hamilton on his fictional collaboration with Helen.

Edith Jayne

Next meeting: 17 Jan. Social Get-together

Cardiff Israeli Embassy update

We were joined for lunch by Deputy Israeli Ambassador Alon Roth Snir, Israel Consul in Wales Philip Kaye, and Israeli Embassy Public Affairs Department representative Carly Maisel. Alon Roth Snir spoke about how the Embassy wants to educate students and others on the need for Israel's continued existence and how Israel supports other states in the Middle East and Africa.

Myrna Glass

A most convivial meeting



Braving the Liverpool weather, we gathered at the home of Inge and Eric Goldrein for our annual Chanukah meeting. We enjoyed splendid hospitality from Inge and Eric plus the musical talents of Tamar, daughter of our member Kay Fyne. A most convivial meeting.

Guido Alis

Next meeting: 17 Feb. At home of Susanne

'Childhood during the Third Reich'

A group of Year 12 and 13 students from Henrietta Barnett School attended a lecture in HGS on 'Childhood during the Third Reich' by the Wiener Library's Archivist Howard Falksohn. Also, former refugees from Nazi Germany told us their stories.

The chance to talk to people who have lived through such a tumultuous period of history is an experience I will never forget. As a group of school girls, we had been quite well informed on the Holocaust. The lecture, however, provided greater insight into the effects of the Nazi regime both on German children who were part of Hitler's youth club out of camaraderie or social pressure, as well as on the exclusion of Jewish children. Talking to survivors of the Holocaust was an invaluable experience: most intriguing was that many of them had been brought to England by Kindertransport not even knowing a word of English. Thank you to Howard Falksohn for giving us this invaluable opportunity to take part in the event.

Anna-Maria Alexandrou

Pinner 'Jewish Trades in Regency London'

Around 1800, David Barnett told us, London was the largest city in the world with a population of over 1 million and about 20,000 Jews, who accounted for some 10 per cent of the traders. There was much profitable trade in clothing as well as furniture, retail stores and jewellery.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 6 Jan. John Maitlin, 'How to Get Rid of an American President'

Surrey Catching up on news and events

A large, lively group once again enjoyed Edmée's warm hospitality, ably assisted by Edith. It was a nice opportunity to catch up on news and events.

Eva Gold-Young

HGS Mid East overview

Rabbi Charles Emanuel gave us a most interesting overview of the reasons why the current round of peace negotiations may not succeed and looked at President

Obama's two years in office from a Jewish/Israeli perspective.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 10 Jan. Manuel Morenzo, 'Basque Children'

Essex On the anniversary of Kristallnacht

Carrie Sherman told us that following the German invasion of Holland in May 1940, she managed to get out on the last cargo ship before the harbour town of IJmuiden capitulated to the German invasion, arriving in Liverpool 5 days later. The talk was even more poignant as it was held on the 72nd anniversary of Kristallnacht.

Larry Lisner

Welwyn Garden City Memories of Kristallnacht

Due to bad weather, a small, intimate group had coffee at Monica's. It being the anniversary of Kristallnacht, we discussed our personal memories. A most interesting and enjoyable morning.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 13 Jan. Social Get-together

Wembley Warm glow

At a meeting hosted by Myrna Glass, we chatted about many things, enjoying each other's company (not to mention the refreshments). When it was time to go home, we did so with the warm glow one often has after having had a happy time.

Ingrid Morland

Next meeting: 12 Jan. Social Get-together

Temple Fortune 'My Life as a Social Worker'

Our speaker Rosette Wolf was born in Antwerp shortly before the war; during the war she lived in the Belgian town of Spa, where her father joined the Resistance. They returned to Antwerp in 1945. Aged 18, she began working for the American 'Joint', rehabilitating Jewish children who had lived with non-Jewish families during the war.

David Lang

Next meeting: 20 Jan. Tu B'Shevat Seder - New Year for Trees

Brighton and Hove Sarid Escape from Leipzig

Renée Tyzack read us extracts from her book *They Called Her Cassandra*, the

story of her family's escape from Leipzig in 1939. In the final chapter, she tells how she and her brother returned to Leipzig, where the house in which her mother was born was still standing.

Shirley Huberman

Next meeting: 17 Jan. 'Churchill's German Army'

Café Imperial A lovely morning

Our merry band of men met on a foggy morning in good spirits and discussed the recent viewing of 'Churchill's German Army' in Pinner. A hearty breakfast was eaten by some along with non-stop chatter. A lovely morning.

Hazel Beiny

Edgware Immigrants to Argentina

The Wiener Library's Howard Falksohn gave us a history of immigration to Argentina in the last 100 years. The good intentions of Baron Hirsch, who helped Jews who had fled from Eastern Europe, were not fully realised.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: 18 Jan. Val Alliez, 'Southwark and the Globe Theatre'

North London Escape from Denmark

Blanche Benedick gave a most enlightening account of her escape from Denmark to Sweden. At least there was one nation in Europe where the population went out of its way to help Jews escape the fate set out by the occupiers of their country.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 27 Jan. Ronald Channing, 'Holocaust Memorial Day'

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Pinner knight in shining armour

Looking back on the events of 21 October, I felt I had surreally taken part in an episode of *The Apprentice* and would get called into the boardroom to be hired or fired!

Fifty people had arrived at Pinner Synagogue for a screening of 'Churchill's German Army', which stars six AJR war veterans. We were fortunate to have five of them with us that afternoon: Colin Anson, Willy Field, Bill Howard, Geoffrey Parry and Harry Rossney.

Everyone was comfortably seated when I arrived and I was proud I had thought to bring along the DVD. I knew Helen Fry, who was due to introduce the film, had a copy but it's always good to have a spare.

But having the DVD was only half the problem – the main problem was I could see no DVD player!

Where was the DVD player??? No, the synagogue didn't have one. Helen hadn't brought one (why would she?). Vera, who runs the group, had assumed the AJR would bring one. Help!

I ran over to the library – 'Sorry, can't help, try the newly refurbished office block across the road!' I crashed into reception: 'Please do you have a room and a DVD player on which I can show a film to 50 people?' A door opened and out came a guy, who I could tell was of the Jewish persuasion. Like a knight in shining armour, he said 'Yes no problem. We have a suite with a fixed screen and a DVD player.'

'Operation Churchill's German Army' began as we led all the members over to Evans Easyspace.

Finally, 15 minutes late, the screening took place. It was like being in a real cinema. Once all were entrenched in the documentary, they had forgotten the drama of getting to view it.

Now I could breathe and thank my luck and chutzpah, the amazing team of Pinner volunteers and, of course, the AJR members who were so stoical and wonderful.

A final mention for the man at Evans Easyspace, who was reluctant to give me his name. I promised to plug the building so, if ever you need to screen a film, it's perfect!

Esther Rinkoff

continued on page 15

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West Midlands (Birmingham)
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Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6
Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB
Wednesday 19 January 2011

James Smith
from The Holocaust Centre,
Nottinghamshire

**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 10 January 2011

Nicki Faith
'Making Honey'

**KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH
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January Afternoon Entertainment

Mon	3	CLOSED
Tue	4	CLOSED
Wed	5	William Smith
Thur	6	Robert Wright
Mon	10	KT LUNCH – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	11	CLOSED
Wed	12	Madeleine Whiteson
Thur	13	Margaret Opdahl
Mon	17	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	18	CLOSED
Wed	19	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	20	David Peace
Mon	24	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue	25	CLOSED
Wed	26	TOP HAT ENTERTAINMENT
Thur	27	Paul Coleman
Mon	31	Kards & Games

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KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

Congratulations to Gaby and David Glassman on the birth of their grandchild Mia Rebekka.

Deaths

Goldsmith, Ruth (née Baum) Born Frankfurt 08.03.1916, passed away peacefully 20.11.2010. A lady of great beauty, generosity of spirit and dignity, sadly missed by her children (Ann Stanton and John Goldsmith), her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Hirschhorn, Robert Born Vienna 24.07.1924. His family and friends are very sad to announce that Robert passed away peacefully on 18.11.2010 at his home in Reading. He was much loved and respected by all who knew him and will be very greatly missed by his family and friends.

Searching for Kinder
 who were pupils at the Stoalety Rough School in Haslemere, Surrey 1938-1939 and knew Maria Mercedes.
 Please contact
 erich@classictours.co.uk.

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE
 Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on
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 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

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OBITUARY

Samuel (Sigi) Faith, 1928-2010

We mourn the passing of our friend, colleague and inspirational supporter of the history and continued life of the Kindertransport story. Sigi was himself a *Kind* and a brilliant example of the social/commercial achievements of many of those whose lives were saved by that extraordinary act of rescue in 1938-39, when the storm clouds gathered over Europe in anticipation of what became total nightfall for our brothers and sisters, the Jewish population of the Continent.

Sigi was one of those rare people who fully appreciated what transpired in our times of tragedy and survival. He understood how people felt. He spoke with great respect, dignity and clarity and not with anger or confrontation; he always had the bearing of a gentleman. His actions were in the same vein. He was enormously generous both in spirit and materially and always modest and humble, often acting without the recipient's knowledge in accordance with the Jewish principle that the highest form of charity is that donated anonymously.

Sigi was a member for nearly nine years of the Kindertransport/AJR Special Planning Group, where he unstintingly gave help and advice. His contributions were those of a mature and cultured mind; his regular attendance and punctuality set a welcome example.

Sigi was born in Hamburg in 1928, an only child. His father, a businessman who dealt in fabrics and cloth materials, was of Polish nationality, as was Sigi when he came to England in December 1938 with one of the first Kindertransports. He was taken to Butlins Holiday Camp at Lowestoft. There he contracted scarlet fever and had to spend several weeks in Colchester Isolation Hospital. He was subsequently billeted at Barham House, Claydon, near Ipswich.

In September 1939 Sigi had the good fortune to be introduced to the head teacher of Oswestry School in Shropshire. He was given a free place at this prestigious school, where he



was treated, on the head's instructions, in exactly the same manner as every other pupil. This was one of the happiest periods of his life. He swiftly learned English, was numbered among the elite pupils, and had a good and comfortable home. At holiday times he was invited to stay at the homes of school friends.

Sigi stayed at the school for six years, becoming the captain of the cricket team, president of the aero-modelling club and, in his final year, head boy.

In 1945, at the age of 17, he was transferred to a refugee hostel in Handsworth, Birmingham. He studied part time and attended evening classes at Birmingham University while simultaneously starting work. He became an audit clerk and qualified as a certified accountant.

Meantime, his father had managed to escape from a concentration camp in Germany in June 1940 and, in that year, with Sigi's mother, had somehow left Germany and found asylum in Shanghai. In 1948 Sigi's parents came to England and there was a happy reunion at Southampton docks after ten years of separation. His father died in 1960; his mother lived to be 100.

Sigi met his future wife, Terry, and they married in 1951 at the New West End Synagogue in St Petersburg Place, Bayswater. They had two children and were blessed with six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The marriage brought out the entrepreneurial talent in Sigi and the artistic talent in Terry. They bought a shop and created a shoe business. Sigi's business acumen and Terry's

extraordinary design ability meant that the enterprise grew and, eventually, their 16 shops became a household name. Their son Jonathan qualified as a chartered accountant and joined the management of the company in 1978. Further expansion meant more and more shops nationwide and several hundred outlets existed until no shopping centre in the country was without a branch of Faith Shoes. The further expansion meant that the company employed 2,500 people, with Sigi its managing director at head office in Park Royal, west London.

This tremendous success changed neither Sigi's modesty nor his dignity. It was on the fiftieth anniversary of the Kindertransport in 1988 that his attention was drawn to his early refugee status and our survival during those tragic years. When the Kindertransport movement, initiated by Bertha Leverton with such courage, prospered and joined up with the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), Sigi was closely involved and continued this work until his final days.

In 1996 he suffered a serious stroke. The leadership of the business was taken on by his son and Sigi devoted many months to getting back to health. In this struggle, the practical and devoted Terry showed great strength and determination. Sigi, characteristically, was equally determined and courageous.

Sigi contributed massively to the work of the Kindertransport Committee, in which he was a tower of strength. For the past three years, up to his untimely departure, he regularly organised a speaker for the monthly Kindertransport lunch.

Like many who have great accomplishments to their name, Sigi's method was not self-aggrandisement – it was not so much words as actions and deeds. He was a shining example – one impossible to replace. Our memory of Sigi will remain that of a great friend.

Hermann Hirschberger

Hermann Hirschberger is the former chairman of the AJR's Kindertransport Special Interest Group.

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

Radlett The 'Kastner affair'

Rudolf Kastner rescued almost 1,700 Hungarian Jews from the Nazis by sending them by train to Switzerland. Among the passengers was Ladislaus Löb, who, 66 years later, spoke to us about the 'Kastner affair'. I suspect few who were present will ever forget this talk.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 19 Jan. Bruno Mueller, 'Poland in 2010'

Hendon Helen and Harriet

Helen Fry discussed three of her recent books, in particular her biography of the pianist Harriet Cohen. We look forward to the film coming out in the next couple of years. A very pleasant afternoon, as always in Helen's company.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 31 Jan. Tashia Scott, 'Refugee Nurses'

Cleve Road Fourth anniversary – a warm, friendly atmosphere

On a cold snowy day, we celebrated our fourth anniversary. Entertained by the lovely singing of Jane Rosenberg, we enjoyed the delicious birthday cake baked by Cassie and the warm friendly atmosphere.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: 25 January



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Plus ça change ...

I never know whether to laugh or cry when I read those perennial complaints that things are getting worse, the country (no matter which) is going to the dogs and 'Fings ain't wot they used to be.' The trouble is that change happens, it is inevitable, we are all changing all the time and have been since time immemorial. Archaeologists have discovered clay tablets from ancient Babylon complaining about the behaviour of the younger generation. 'Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells' and other old codgers have been moaning about the decline of standards ever since I first saw the light of day in Hampstead's New End Hospital in October 1942 (which makes me a bit of an old codger myself).

I also don't know whether to laugh or cry when presumably well-meaning Jews point an accusing finger at Israel from wherever they happen to live in order to rant and rave about the way everything there was once fine and dandy and now it is unspeakably awful, with a rabidly right-wing government, Orthodox Jews controlling every facet of life and – oh

horror! – capitalism rearing its ugly head. The sad fact is that even in Israel there is change – some of it for the better, some for the worse – and money made the world go round long before Israel was founded on socialist principles, which have since become somewhat diluted.

I suppose it is futile to point out that every Jew who criticises Israel from afar has it in his or her power to try to influence the course of events by going to live there. Israel is a democracy and the Law of Return, one of the first laws passed by the Knesset, gives any Jew who chooses to live in Israel full civil rights. About one million Jews from the former Soviet Union have taken advantage of that privilege and immigrated to Israel. Their views have had a definite impact on the composition of the Knesset and the government. Many Orthodox and right-wing Jews from the US, albeit in smaller numbers, have made the same choice, further strengthening the forces on the right of the political stratum.

Any Jew who opts not to live in Israel, and thereby not to influence the course

of events here, is making a perfectly legitimate choice, although I personally take issue with that choice. I have chosen to implement my Zionist ideology, despite having benefited from the excellent education system that existed in England when I was of school and university age and which, I gather, is no longer the case. I also understand that the British health system is far from perfect and, as I can see for myself on my occasional forays to England, the decline of the British media, with their reality-show nonentity-celebrity culture, is tantamount to a national tragedy (Israel's media are not much better, but that's a different story).

While no one expects each and every English person to be fully in accord with the course their government takes, for some unaccountable reason this is not assumed to be the case for Israelis. It seems to escape notice that those of us who do not agree with our government are fully entitled to voice our criticism and take action of various kinds to try and change the situation. However, we do not simply leave the country because we aren't happy with the political scene, though somehow that seems to be what is expected.

So, to all the old codgers out there who complain about change, all I can say is that it's still not too late to start accepting the facts of life.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

Sir – Amnon Needham asserts that we should 'not give a monkey's what [our] gentile friends think ... we can do without their Holocaust memorials, their sympathy' etc. As from time to time Mr Needham visits the UK he probably knows that we have here a Holocaust Day and other events too. Shall we ignore them because they are organised by 'gentiles'?

Nicholas Marton, Bromley

'VOTE, VOTE, VOTE FOR CLEMENT ATTLEE?'

Sir – I must reply briefly to Edgar Ring's outrageous (and outraged) letter in the December issue, in response to mine, in which he sets down his opposition to the creation of the welfare state. He makes it very clear where he comes from politically! Clearly he has never been a pre-National

Health 'panel patient', nor does he show the slightest compassion for those millions who even now cannot afford private medicine.

To quote the editor of the current number of *Clinical Medicine*, the journal of the Royal College of Physicians – an organisation not exactly noted for its leftwing sympathies: 'A toast was raised to the NHS in last year's December issue ... to salute a service where everyone, regardless of income, can obtain medical care free at the point of entry – a remarkable achievement for any healthcare system.' I rest my case.

Leslie Baruch Brent, London N19

Sir – Edgar Ring offers sweeping – indeed, breathtaking – assertions about Britain's political and economic history during two-thirds of the last 100 years. Will he

now follow through by offering us an explanation of the failure of Conservative governments, in power for long periods at a time, to put matters right?

*Alan S. Kaye,
Marlow, Bucks*

'ASIATISCHE STEPPENHENGSTE'

Sir – During his arrest on Kristallnacht in Vienna, my late father recalled being deposited by his guards in a disused school building in the Kenyongasse. There was much shouting, pushing and cursing and one of the guard's favourite expressions was 'Asiatische Steppenhengste' – 'Asiatic steppe-stallions'.

My father could never find out what this expression meant in relation to the prisoners. Does anyone know?

*Robert Fraser, Perth
Western Australia*