

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts

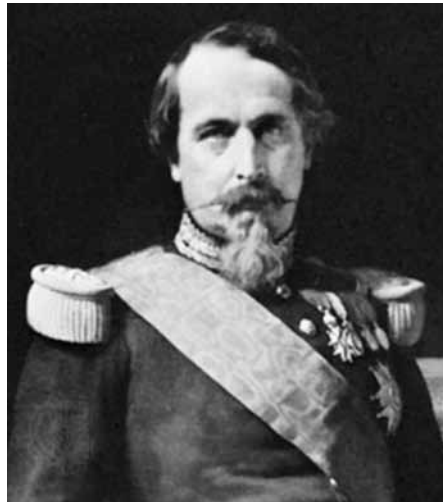
Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes' ('I fear Greeks even when bearing gifts'), warns the Trojan priest Laocoön in Virgil's *Aeneid*, in a vain attempt to deter the citizens of Troy from accepting the wooden horse that the besieging Greek forces have seemingly left as a gift, but which is in reality intended to bring about the destruction of the city. The ancient Greeks bequeathed the concept of democracy to the world, but their modern counterparts have recently helped to give currency to a more questionable popular (not to say populist) device, the plebiscite or referendum.

Forms of parliamentary self-government, in which the people entrust their elected representatives with the responsibility of government, have always sat uneasily alongside forms of more direct popular self-expression such as referenda. But what, one might ask, could possibly be more democratic than asking the people to express its democratic will directly on a given issue by means of a referendum? How can one deny the democratic legitimacy of the will of the people, directly expressed through a single-issue vote (and thereby dispensing with those grubby little parliamentarians and their fiddling of their expenses)?

The answer lies, obviously enough, in the potential that referenda offer governments, press barons, well-funded interest lobbies, nationalist tub-thumpers and other powerful, unscrupulous groups for manipulating the outcome of the vote. As any number of historical examples shows, the phrasing of the question, the timing of the ballot and all the other conditions determining the vote allow for a very considerable degree of inappropriate influence to be brought to bear on a single-issue plebiscite. The recent referendum on the alternative vote system in this country, where emotive and personalised arguments were allowed to obscure the real issues, demonstrated this with depressing clarity.

The fate of the short-lived proposal (October/November 2011) for a referendum in Greece on the bailout offered

to that country by the Eurozone states provided an object lesson in the undemocratic potential of referenda, unless employed in a manner properly defined by a democratic constitution. Greece had not had a referendum for 37 years, and then only in the wholly exceptional circumstances of the country's return to democracy after the collapse of the military regime of the 'Greek colonels' in 1974; the people were called on to vote on the future of



Napoleon III, Emperor of France 1852-1870

the Greek monarchy, which had been badly tainted by its association with the colonels, and decided to abolish it.

This was the kind of constitutional issue suitable for a referendum; it had precedents, notably in the Italian referendum of 1946 that resulted in the end of that country's monarchy, fatally identified with Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship. The referendum on the EU bailout, by contrast, was a piece of transparent political sleight-of-hand, conjured up out of nowhere by the then prime minister of Greece, George Papandreou, as a desperate measure to shore up his party's legitimacy, and dumped unceremoniously as soon as it became unviable. That cannot be done with parliamentary elections, especially under a system of fixed electoral terms. Parliamentary elections, involving a variety of parties and politicians, a system of constituencies and a large

number of political issues, are very much more difficult to manipulate and are in the longer term a far more reliable reflection of the democratic process.

The first political leader in modern times to rely on referenda was Emperor Napoleon III, whose French Second Empire (1852-70), in effect a form of plebiscitary dictatorship, was 'constitutionally' founded on referenda. Having been elected president of the Second Republic in 1848, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte carried out a *coup d'état* in December 1851 and seized dictatorial powers. He then had the *coup* approved by the French people in a referendum, in which his regime cynically exploited the nationalist-militarist aura surrounding the Bonaparte name. In December 1852, a second referendum was engineered to approve the abolition of the Second Republic and its replacement by the Second Empire, with Bonaparte ruling as Emperor Napoleon III. This exercise in political manipulation by means of referenda enabled Napoleon to strip the elected parliament of the Second Republic of its power and establish his own brand of authoritarian rule.

The German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) distinguished between three types of political leadership, each requiring its own legitimisation. Traditional forms of leadership like monarchies were legitimated by principles such as feudal concepts of heredity, while modern Western states were legitimated by the rule of law and by rational systems of administration and government (among which one may here include elective democracy). The third type was the rule of the charismatic leader, which scholars like Ian Kershaw have applied to the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. It is easy enough to see in Napoleon III an early prototype of the charismatic leader/dictator, since he had neither traditional nor democratic legitimacy; his legitimacy, such as it was, was provided by referenda, backed by coercion and manipulation, and underpinned by the skilfully propagated mystique of the Bonapartist myth.

continued overleaf

Beware of Greeks *cont. from p1*

It is no accident that both Hitler and Mussolini, Napoleon III's successors in this respect, employed referenda to legitimate their policies. In Italy, the one-party state was institutionalised by the electoral law of 1928 and parliamentary elections abolished; instead, the Grand Council of Fascism, now the supreme constitutional authority, selected a single list of candidates that was approved by plebiscite. Mussolini's example was followed by such unsavoury dictatorships as the regime of the Greek colonels, whose leader, Colonel George Papadopoulos, used a referendum in 1973 to legitimate his abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a presidential republic under which wide-ranging powers were vested in the president (himself); and the Chilean dictator, General Pinochet, employed the National Plebiscite of 1980 to give his bloodstained rule a fig-leaf of popular legitimacy.

Hitler held four plebiscites, all cynically manipulated to legitimate his regime and its policies. The second and most constitutionally significant of these took place following the death of President Hindenburg in August 1934. Hitler immediately promulgated a law whereby the office of president was combined with that of chancellor (an office he had assumed in January 1933) and the presidential powers transferred to 'the Führer and Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler'. The plebiscite of 19 August 1934 duly approved Hitler's assumption of absolute power, thus enabling him to claim that he ruled as dictator by the direct will of the people – the key feature of referenda. In stage-managed demonstrations of national enthusiasm, the Nazis also secured the ratification by plebiscite of Hitler's decision to withdraw from the League of Nations (1933), to send German military forces to occupy the Rhineland (1936), and to annex Austria to the Reich (1938).

But perhaps the most telling examples of the use of referenda to undermine a democratic state occurred in Germany before 1933, as part of the campaign by political extremists of both right and left to destroy the parliamentary democracy of the Weimar Republic, in power since Germany's defeat in the First World War. In 1926, the cynical agitation that accompanied the Communists' attempt to launch a referendum on the emotive issue of the expropriation of the former ruling houses in the various German states (the *Fürsteneignung*) had shown the potential that such votes held for destabilising the still fragile German democracy.

AJR Holocaust Memorial Day Service

Belsize Square Synagogue

Monday, 23 January 2012 at 2 pm

The AJR will be holding a service to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day at 2 pm on Monday 23 January 2012 at Belsize Square Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square, London NW3.

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg has kindly agreed to lead the service and will give an address on this year's Holocaust Memorial Day theme 'Speak Up, Speak Out'.

The service will also include an address by a representative from Action Reconciliation Service for Peace.

The service will be followed by refreshments. If you wish to attend, please call 020 8385 3070 or email membership@ajr.org.uk

Members may also wish to attend two further Holocaust Memorial Day events, for which admission will be strictly by ticket. These are:

A service at City Hall hosted by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, at 12 noon on Tuesday 24 January 2012 – please telephone Lydia Volans at City Hall for tickets on 020 7983 4067.

The **National Event**, organised by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, at Northumberland Place, London on Thursday 26 January 2012. The event will start at 4 pm. Transport can be arranged for members in the London area.

To reserve a place, please call AJR Head Office on 020 8385 3070 or email membership@ajr.org.uk

That weakening of republican democracy and its replacement by the Nazi regime was materially assisted by the referendum demanded in 1929 by the anti-republican right on the Young Plan, the successor to the Dawes Plan of 1924 that had regulated Germany's reparations payments to the Allied Powers. Both helped to integrate Germany into the wider economy of the Western world. But it was that process of the peaceful integration of Germany into the post-1918 framework of Europe that the German right so bitterly opposed. For it meant accepting the reality of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, imposed by the victorious Allies on defeated Germany in 1919, and the resulting strategy, pursued especially by Germany's outstanding Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, of ameliorating the Versailles conditions by a gradual process of renegotiation that aimed at defending German interests within the overall framework of friendly relations

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with other Western European states.

The leader of the German Nationalists (DNVP), Alfred Hugenberg, set up a committee to promote a plebiscite

The AJR Paul Balint Centre

Please note that as from Tuesday 3 January 2012, the AJR Paul Balint Centre will relocate to Belsize Square Synagogue, London NW3.

against the Young Plan, and invited Hitler to join it. The alliance with the conservative DNVP and the Stahlhelm, the war veterans' organisation, was a boon to the then electorally insignificant Nazi Party, legitimating Hitler's rabble-rousing tactics and giving free rein to just the kind of extreme nationalistic demagoguery that would turn voters towards his party. The Hugenberg committee's 'Liberty Law' ('*Freiheitsgesetz*') assailed the Young Plan in the wildest terms as it rested, they claimed, on the betrayal of Germany to foreign interests; they even demanded that German ministers who signed such treaties with foreign powers should be committed to prison as traitors. Though the referendum failed, the frenzy of nationalism it helped to unleash bore fruit in 1933, when Hitler comprehensively outmanoeuvred Hugenberg and the DNVP and assumed total power.

Anthony Grenville

'Double exposure' project in Vienna

The exhibition 'Double Exposure: Österreichische Emigration nach Großbritannien ab 1938' opened in Vienna on 17 November 2011 at the Literaturhaus (Seidengasse 13, Vienna 7), where the film of the same name was given its Austrian premiere in a shortened version. This followed their successful launch in London in June, under the title 'Double Exposure: Jewish Refugees from Austria in Britain'. The showing of the film and the opening of the exhibition, both created by Dr Bea

the former refugees whose story it tells had fled after 1938. The exhibition continues at the Literaturhaus until 13 January 2012.

The book *Stimmen der Flucht* ('Refugee Voices'), published by Czernin Verlag in Vienna, is as yet available only in German. It is the first study yet written that focuses specifically on the Austrian component of the Jewish emigration to Britain, covering in detail the period of their settlement in Britain in the post-war decades. Taking advantage of the



Dr Bea Lewkowicz (left) with Dr Ursula Seeber in front of 'Double Exposure' exhibition panel featuring the late Richard Grunberger

Lewkowicz, took place at the same time as the launch of the book *Stimmen der Flucht: Österreichische Emigration nach Großbritannien ab 1938*, written by Dr Anthony Grenville. All three form part of a project on Jewish refugees from Austria in Britain, based on material from the AJR's 'Refugee Voices' archive of filmed interviews with former victims of Nazi persecution, with additional material from the 'Continental Britons' exhibition (Jewish Museum, London 2002).

The launch concluded with a panel discussion in which the participants were two of the interviewees who appear in the film, Elly Miller and Otto Deutsch, and the former Austrian Ambassador in London, Dr Gabriele Matzner-Holzer, as well as Dr Lewkowicz and Dr Grenville. On 19 November, the full-length version of the film 'Double Exposure' was shown at the Admiral Kino in the Burggasse (Vienna 7), which had before 1938 been owned by the parents of Henry (Heinz) Ebner, an AJR member who appears in the film. This concluded the highly successful introduction of the project in the Austrian homeland from which

wealth of information to be found in the 25 interviews with former Austrians in the 'Refugee Voices' collection, the book provides a detailed and vivid picture of the life of the Jews of Austria before 1938, under the Nazis, and as refugees in Britain. By setting the life stories of the 25 interviewees in the overall context of the history of Austrian Jewry, the book interweaves the fate of individuals with that of the community to which they belonged. The book (261 pages, ISBN 978-3-7076-0395-8, hard cover) is available from Czernin Verlag, 4, Kupkagasse, 1080 Vienna, at €24.90, or on the internet from Amazon, or can be ordered through bookshops.

Thanks are due to the AJR, which funded 'Refugee Voices', to the Literaturhaus (Dr Ursula Seeber) and to the Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus, the Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich, the Kulturabteilung der Stadt Wien (MA7) and the Gesellschaft der Freunde der Österreichischen Exilbibliothek, which supported the project 'Double Exposure' in Austria.

Anthony Grenville

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Righteous Gentiles remembered

With another anniversary of the terrible events of Kristallnacht having just passed, it is appropriate that we remember, and honour, the many wonderful people who – in the short space of ten months before the start of the war – helped 10,000 children, and others, to escape to Britain. Our thanks are due also to the countless families who made the refugee children welcome, provided for them and arranged for their education.

My late brother Gerhard and I arrived at Victoria Station in London at 11 pm on Sunday 9 July 1939, an exhausting 36 hours after leaving the Westbahnhof in Vienna. We were met by the Reverend George Arthur Parry, a Baptist minister who was the General Secretary of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews.

He drove us to his house, at 62 Carolina Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, where we had our first taste of English food – cold sausages. It was well after midnight and we were starving, having survived on sandwiches and snacks since leaving Vienna.

The next morning at breakfast we were introduced to four other refugee boys, also looked after by 'Uncle', as the Reverend liked to be called. The choice of cereals, followed by egg and bacon, was a welcome surprise, especially as we were still hungry after our long journey.

The house was very crowded, with six boys in two bedrooms and Uncle occupying the third. He was unmarried and had no housekeeper so we were all allocated jobs in order to share the housework.

As far as the aim of the Society – the propagation of the Gospel among Jews – was concerned, no pressure was ever put on us to convert. We were expected to go to evening service on Sunday. I found the language in the sermon difficult to follow, but the singing was pleasant and some members of the congregation usually chatted to us at the end of the service.

Our parents, who had arranged to send us to England, would have been aware that we were going to be in a non-Jewish environment and had most sensibly and courageously decided to send us away, almost certainly saving our lives.

One week after we left Vienna, on our first Saturday in England, Uncle called us to the telephone, where our parents were waiting to speak to us. Bearing

in mind that we had no telephone in Vienna, Uncle must have gone to a lot of trouble to arrange the call. It was primarily to assure our anxious parents that all was well with us. Mother, of course, wanted to know what we ate for breakfast, if we had enough to eat, what our accommodation was like, all about the other boys, and lots more. If Uncle was paying for the call, we felt obliged



Photo taken in 1940 of me and four other boys looked after by 'Uncle', who gave some of us nicknames (I have no recollection of their actual names). (From left) A boy from Vienna named 'Sausage' – I have no idea why (I think his family name was Davids); 'Ginger' – I had red hair; Kenneth, the youngest – as he was German, this is unlikely to have been his real name; 'Moke', seldom used slang for Donkey; Günter, a German boy – I believe it was his real name

to keep the call short; if our parents were paying, we knew they couldn't afford it. So sadly we kept it short, not realising it would be the last time we would ever speak to our parents.

The war started exactly seven weeks after our arrival, by which time we had moved to a larger property at 64 Chestnut Road, West Norwood, London SE27. Strange as it was, my brother Gerhard had already been relocated to another property of the Society, only two or three weeks after our arrival.

Gerhard had a nice room in a much larger house at 43 St John's Villas, London N19, at the northern end of Holloway Road, near Archway. This property must have accommodated ten or more refugees, of both sexes, including two pensioners.

In charge at St John's Villas was a Belgian lady, Mrs Edith Lambotte, ably assisted by her companion Daisy. They were a remarkable pair, treating all their charges with affection and love. They in turn were greatly loved and often

referred to as 'the two angels'.

In September all the boys in our house, apart from me, went to school. I was left at home with shopping lists and instructions on how to prepare some of the food for supper. I spent my spare time reading the *Daily Telegraph* and quickly improved my English.

In April 1940 the war began in earnest with the German occupation of Denmark and Norway, followed in May by the invasion of Belgium, Holland and France.

Gerhard had been enrolled at the Northern Polytechnic in Holloway Road, a ten-minute walk from where he lived, to study Radio Communication. In April I was given the opportunity to join the same course, which I readily accepted. It had the great bonus of seeing my big brother every day.

By May 1940 the internment of German-speaking 'aliens' was in full swing. This included any refugees over the age of 16 with German passports. Fortunately I was overlooked, but Gerhard was sent to Canada.

On 18 September 1940 our house was made uninhabitable by a land mine dropped by the Luftwaffe which exploded two streets away. Mercifully nobody in our house was injured.

The boys had to be relocated. I had the good fortune to sample the wonderful care and attention of Mrs Lambotte and Daisy. A few weeks later, after Uncle had moved into a really nice new house at 28 Arterberry Road, Raines Park, all the boys were reunited. The 15-mile journey from the new house to the Polytechnic was often difficult, due mainly to the damage done to the roads and transport system by the German bombs.

Gerhard had been released in early 1941 and returned to England to resume his studies. He received a great welcome from Mrs Lambotte at the house in St John's Villas.

We both passed our Final Examination in May 1942 and were ready to look for employment. It is interesting to record how easy that was. I saw an advert in a trade paper, telephoned and requested an interview. They ascertained what qualifications I had and asked when I could start work. Encouraged, I mentioned that my brother had the same qualifications as I. They again only needed to know when he could start working for them!

As we now both had jobs, it was time for us to pay our own way. The Society

continued opposite

This morning I woke up in Vienna ...

The sun is shining and the city is buzzing with people going about their business, hurrying to work, taking the children to school. I want so much to hate this place, but find myself alarmingly comfortable and 'at home'. I look out of my window. Across the canal, I can see Taborstrasse. It's exactly as I had imagined from the stories my mother told me of the wonderful childhood she enjoyed in Vienna until it was taken from her.

It's the first time here for us – my sister Laureen, cousin Chantal and me. We are meeting Elisabeth Ben David Hindler to see the *Stolpersteine* of our uncle Eric Weiss's family – parents Adolph and Gisela, sister Lisl and baby brother Egon – in Leopoldsgasse and to arrange for the stones to be set outside our grandparents' home in Heinzelmangasse. The Weiss's electrical shop in Leopoldsgasse is now an internet café. We take a picture at the spot where his stolen youth is frozen in time on a beautiful black-and-white snap. Perhaps this was his last photograph before he escaped to France at the tender age of 18, the only member of his entire family to survive.



Eric Weiss with girlfriend in Leopoldsgasse c 1938

We arrived last night, on Erev Rosh Hashana, and went to the Stadttempel, which I had imagined would hold a few old men in a dreary synagogue – not the young, flourishing, beautiful congregation I discovered within. The lovingly restored temple, saved from destruction in order to keep archives of births, deaths and marriages intact, is once more a happy, vibrant tribute to the resilience of our people. Ironically, had it been destroyed

on Kristallnacht, the lives of many of the 'assimilated' might have been saved if their Jewish origins couldn't have been traced. After the service, we had a delicious dinner at the Alef Alef kosher restaurant.

This morning, we visit the Zigmann's



(From left) Elisabeth Ben David Hindler, Laureen Hart, Chantal Ghozland, Sue Rutherford

former home in Heinzelmangasse. We enter the building and my heart is in my mouth. It is undergoing restoration so we are able to view the interior's original splendour as it is stripped back in preparation. We climb the spiral staircase to the second-floor apartment. These are the steps my mother, Hilda Mazin (née Zigmann), described when telling me how she tripped on the stairs and broke her thumb hurrying home as a frightened teenager after going to the cinema to see *Phantom of the Opera*. I imagine my mother running up the winding staircase, opening the large oak doors and falling into the open arms of her 'mama'. She talked of the apartment building so often and with such fondness for her happy early childhood. I feel I have known this place all my life. What would it have been like to know our grandparents – Laura and Isador – and visit them at weekends or after school?

We have lunch in the Wallenstein Restaurant, savouring the Schnitzel, Kartoffelsalat and Gurkensalat before we visit Hilda's college in Staudingergasse. We are so proud that Elisabeth will be giving a power-point presentation to the children using Hilda's dress design sketch books to emphasise the effect on the shattered lives of the Jewish pupils who attended the school many years before

them. From her lecture, they will be able to see a 'real' person's experience and understand how a thriving community was wiped off the face of the earth. We take the tram to Blindengasse, where Hilda worked part-time during her studies for Meyers Store with her friend Finy. It was outside the store that she was made to scrub the street.

Our next stop is Brigittenauer Schule on Karajangasse, where Hilda's brother Hansi went to grammar school. We see the memorial in the basement and later discover the existence of Hansi's school reports, signed in our grandmother's beautiful Gothic script. We learn that school records for Hilda's younger sister Serina have probably been destroyed as they would have attended the junior school. We show them Serina's *Stammbuch*.

It is here that we keep our appointment with Lilly Axter, whom we met through search notices in the *AJR Journal* when we were both seeking people with a similar family name. Our relationship has grown through emails, but this is the first time we are face to face. Although our backgrounds are poles apart – I, the 'second-generation' survivor, she the grandchild of members of the Nazi Party – we have become very close friends. Lilly is still seeking the family who lived in her apartment before it was 'aryanised'. She becomes our guide for the rest of our visit and we see a more light-hearted side of present-day Vienna. She treats us with the utmost respect and our friendship is forged in spite of the madness of the past. We visit the Prater in the afternoon and, again, I remember my mother's stories of happy summer days spent in the park.

The final visit of our trip takes us to Grosse Sperlgasse, where our grandparents were herded together with our great-aunt Regina and her family (husband Willy and children Ernst, Edith and baby Rosie) to await deportation. The building is grey and grim. We can sense the horror and desperation oozing from the very walls. We step outside into the bright sunlight and notice an Orthodox family on their way to synagogue

Sue Rutherford

'Righteous Gentiles' continued

found splendid accommodation for us with the Denham family at 34 Highbury Place, near Highbury and Islington Station. We had two rooms with full board. The wife cleaned and did the washing and ironing. Her husband worked at the local baker, bringing home bread and cakes, a welcome bonus as food was strictly rationed. To

make sure we could manage, the Society generously paid the first week's rent for us, £1 10s each!

We had been kept, cared for and educated for two years ten months by the Society and their many wonderful helpers and officials.

Sadly, Uncle died a few years later of cancer. I visited him in hospital and was shocked to see how ill he was.

In conclusion, if anyone who reads the above tribute was also helped by the Society – or maybe their relatives were – could they possibly contact me via the Journal or at the email address below? Perhaps we could arrange some suitable commemoration to ensure these wonderful people are remembered.

Bruno Muller
brujanm@tiscali.co.uk



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

LUDWIG SPIRO, AN OUTSTANDING PERSON

Sir – Ludwig Spiro, and Anna before him, played important roles in our lives. I cannot remember when we first got to know them. A major step occurred after my mother's death in 1990. Ludwig saw in me a likely candidate to become a member of the Heinrich Stahl House Committee and he duly lassoed me into joining the group. Our friendship developed over the years, continuing after Ludwig stepped down from office. He continued to show great interest in the welfare of the residents. I found later that the concept of house committees was unique in the environment of residential care homes because we could draw our recruits from persons with similar backgrounds and experiences. The homes continued to function well until there was a change in the financial climate.

We remember Ludwig as an outstanding person, infinitely kind and interested in other people. We were honoured to be able to count him and Anna as our friends and we shall miss them both. We wish Ludwig's family a long life.

*Dr Victor and Mrs Rosalie Simons,
London NW3*

Sir – I met Ludwig Spiro when my mother was admitted to Heinrich Stahl House. She said that a nice gentleman had visited her and told her to tell him if there was anything she needed. This was typical of his hands-on approach, as was getting down on the floor to sort out the wiring in her room. I came into closer contact with him and Anna when I was asked to join the House Committee, which he chaired. These were not so much committee meetings as briefings, but one could forgive him as he was so concerned for the residents and committed to their welfare. He had many good ideas, e.g. giving each committee member a number of residents to chat to and listen to their concerns.

In later years, after Ludwig had moved to Northwood and Anna had died, I brought him from time to time to my house, where he enjoyed his conversations with my husband and arranged for him to give some lectures to AJR groups.

Stella Curzon, Ruislip

'THE SIN THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME'

Sir – In a recent letter, Henry Schragenheim described Tisha B'Av as 'a more tragic

event than all the other persecutions being commemorated. This is because the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the persecutions in Eastern Europe and the Holocaust would not have taken place had we not been exiled from our land.'

His argument is intriguing and I certainly accept his simple conclusion – that the Shoa could not have occurred in Europe had such a large population of Jewish people not been living there at the time. Yet sadly, that is not the real issue at all.

The difficulty with the earlier sequence of events which Mr Schragenheim posits is that the Diaspora triggered by the Roman destruction of the Temple and its aftermath was not as total as he implies. The event certainly directly affected Jews from Jerusalem and surrounding areas, but not so much those from wider Judea. For example, the dispersal he speaks of was probably on a smaller scale than that of the exile to Babylon, though both were undoubtedly major tragedies.

Moreover, the Jewish people had been spreading out from Israel and Judah long before the Diaspora – witness Alexandria, the largest of all Jewish cities and almost totally Greek-speaking. Many Jewish people had been traders since before the time of Christ. That in itself would have taken them, and their dependents, to foreign parts, resulting in their occupation of trading positions throughout the Roman Empire, and even beyond the Empire into Russia, and where Jewish and other traders in those areas were to a limited extent encouraged and frequently flourished.

Also, we have the no small matter of Jewish proselytisation, spreading from Israel and Judah and resulting in the creation of Jewish communities in other lands, right up to the time when the practice was banned by Emperor Constantine.

And then there were later events that also brought Jews into Europe, e.g. the conquest of Jerusalem and the Holy Land by Islam. And not forgetting those Jews who later fled pogroms in the Russian Empire, and the migration into Europe of 'oriental' Jews from North Africa and other Arab lands before and during the 19th century.

Thus, Jews came to Europe for a variety of reasons other than the so-called Diaspora which followed the Romans' sack of the Temple and Jerusalem. And, despite frequent persecution, there was always a significant non-Diaspora Jewish presence

in Europe right up to the time of the Shoa. And even the intensity of Jewish migration to the Americas prior to the Shoa did not alter the picture significantly.

The Shoa cannot therefore be said to be directly related to the Roman-driven Diaspora. Correspondence on the subject in the *AJR Journal* and other journals always ducks this question by blaming only the Nazis or seeming to blame the entire German nation – even today the presence of an additional underlying cause is treated by many with far too much 'delicacy'.

The godless Nazi Party and many, many Germans were most certainly guilty – but surely not they alone. Many guards in the death camps were of East European stock and nationals from Nazi-occupied countries frequently co-operated in securing the initial arrests and in the subsequent operation of the death transports. Had the history of those days been somewhat different, the entire evil process might, in part at least, just as possibly have happened in European countries other than Germany. The overwhelming difference between Germany and other possible culprits of that period was that Hitler alone had the immediate means.

The underlying reason for this tragedy is that much of Christian Europe – Catholic and post-Reformation Protestant – had been riddled with anti-Semitism for hundreds of years since the Middle Ages – the sin that even today 'dare not speak its name'. And the Holocaust became possible not just because of the wickedness of the Nazis, but also against this more precise historical background – anti-Semitism in varying degrees had become prevalent throughout most of Europe.

To my knowledge, the only Christian person of note to go some way towards public admittance of the problem was Pope John Paul II. But until this link is more widely acknowledged throughout Christianity and in our broader society, and even in our school history books, there can surely be no final reconciliation. I say this as a Christian, deeply aware that Jesus, his family, and most of his friends and acquaintances were undeniably Jewish. And Christianity surely owes the Jews and Judaism more than has ever been admitted.

Peter C. Landsborough, Woking, Surrey

Sir – In my local library there are four books in the children's section on the Holocaust and all four blame the Nazis for this great crime. There is no mention of centuries of persecution by the Christian church, without which the Holocaust could not have happened. Many people think the Nazis were a separate tribe. Children must be taught the whole truth.

*Mary Rogers, Wigston Magna,
Leicestershire*

TO PROVOKE OR NOT TO PROVOKE

Sir – Regarding Peter Phillip's November article 'To provoke or not to provoke':

1. Mr Phillips laments the fact that the Orthodox do not fraternise with those factions which openly question or attack authentic Judaism, but makes no secret of the fact that he hates the 'frummers', as he calls them. So he is just as divisive.

2. He hates 'so-called faith schools' for Jews, arguing that we are British and Jewish only by religion. Moreover, if, in his opinion, we are Jewish merely by reason of religion, how come he disbelieves in *kashrut* and *shechita* etc – all of them part and parcel of the Torah? If he chooses to discard those laws which do not appeal to him but retain those that do, then his Judaism can at best be defined as a 'Jewish-style' Judaism – just as some Americans describe the food they sell as 'kosher-style'.

However, Mr Phillips seems proud to be a Jew and to be part of the Jewish people, which means he regards it as a race. In that case, he can't argue that Jewish schools are bad as we are British, but Jewish only by religion.

It is arguable whether we are a 'pure' race since we do accept converts into our ranks and, with the Reform and Liberals, even more so. So, if we ditch most, or even some, of the basic tenets of the Torah, what are we left with? Neither a religion nor a race – and you don't need to be an Einstein to work that one out!

3. As for his type of Zionism, the loss of which he bemoans, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It has not withstood the test of time and many of its adherents have left the Land of Israel for greener pastures. At the same time, Orthodox Jews keep sending their sons and daughters to *yeshivot* and seminaries in ever-increasing numbers, and many an elderly couple goes on *aliyah* as theirs is a real and genuine love of our Promised Land. History has not stood still since Herzl's days. Communism, Zionism – all the various 'isms' – have changed their form over the decades.

As a young girl, I once attended a meeting with my parents at Zion House in north-west London, my mother having joined the Pioneer Women – she who had led a very assimilated lifestyle in Germany, with no Zionist leanings whatsoever. Hitler and the Nazis had made her aware of her Judaism. The people at that meeting came across as very anti-Orthodox. The refreshments served were obviously not kosher. One of the speakers attacked the Orthodox, accusing them of being anti-Zionist. I must have been the youngest person present and naturally very shy, but I spoke up as follows: 'It is solely through the Orthodox that the concept of Zion and a Jewish state have been kept alive through the ages. It is they who keep referring to it many times daily in their

prayers. If left to people like you, this whole concept would have been forgotten centuries ago.' My words were greeted with stunned silence.

The Liberals and Reformers in Germany deleted all references to Jerusalem and Zion from their prayer books. Israel was not the brainchild of Herzl and the Zionists, as Peter Phillips states.

(Mrs) Margarete Stern, London NW3

Sir – Peter Phillips asks why the Chief Rabbi did not attend Hugo Gryn's funeral. Interviewed in *The Times* some weeks ago, he said that it was like the effect of Diana's death on the Royal Family – they realised very late that they should be in London, which they caught up on after a few days. Sadly, the Chief Rabbi realised too late that he should have attended the funeral. Also in *The Times*, where he writes the occasional article, he is described only as the 'Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue'.

John Löwenhardt's article in the same issue of the Journal reminds me of my distant cousin Daniel Simon, who was murdered in Auschwitz at the age of four, together with his mother, father and grandfather. Fortunately, we have a grandson called Daniel. Rudi Leavor, Bradford

Sir – The reason the Chief Rabbi did not attend the funeral of Dr Hugo Gryn is that his presence there might have been misunderstood as recognition of the non-Orthodox as a valid, alternative brand of Judaism – which they are not. They pick and choose which commandments to observe and which to discard.

Mr Phillips also wrote: 'I think our *kashrut* laws make no sense – that they are outdated and that *shechita* probably causes anti-Semitism.' Does a Scotsman wearing his kilt cause anti-Scottish feeling?

Herbert Stanton, London N15

Peter Phillips replies:

Sir – In response to the 12 letters (11 printed, 1 sent to me privately) following my latest Point of View article, first let me congratulate Marianne Laszlo, B. Bow, Maureen Dreyfus and G. M. Dickson for agreeing with me and Marc Schatzberger for 'broadly' agreeing with me. What intelligent folk you are!

This means five for and seven against. David Harris defeats his own arguments. He claims that in his Jewish school pupils are educated to be aware of their dual roles as Jews and British citizens. However, his letter focuses on visits to Holocaust sites, Israel, the Gateshead Yeshivah (why?) and the Gateshead Seminary (again, why?). An example he gives of his pupils' roles as British is that they march with AJEX at the Remembrance Parade! 'They raise funds for Jewish homes in Ukraine,' he adds, and 'they compete in the Maccabiah Games'. Mr Harris, you have proved my point. To you, and to your pupils, Judaism obviously

comes before being British.

The first part of Betty Bloom's letter is true. The German Jews did try to integrate but were killed as readily as those who didn't. However, is this really an argument against integration? Also, I do not believe that if there were no laws of *kashrut* and *shechita* there would be no Jews. I do not believe in either but, of course, I am Jewish. Bob Norton questions what right I have to denigrate *kashrut* and Orthodoxy. Free speech, Mr Norton! Rubin Katz – please do not 'almost' agree with me. In an article in the *Jewish Chronicle*, Professor Arnon Soffer says he believes there will be a religious majority in Israel within 40 years. If so, Israel will be no different from its Muslim fundamentalist neighbours.

Margarete Stern has not understood anything I wrote! I do not believe in the Torah. It is as simple as that. Yes, I believe that Judaism is as much a race as a religion. Also, I cannot think of anything more alien to me than *yeshivot*. I want Israel to be a secular state, not a religious one. Furthermore, Mrs Stern, you are wrong yet again when you claim it was the Orthodox who kept alive the concept of a Jewish state. It was Zionism, however much you dislike 'isms'! And the excuses given by Rudi Leavor and Herbert Stanton for the absence of Rabbi Sacks from the funeral of Rabbi Gryn are pathetic. Your Chief Rabbi is very ready to go to churches but not to the synagogues or burial places of Progressive Jews. What humbug!

MINDLESS DESTRUCTION

Sir – Dorothea Shefer-Vanson rightly complains (November) of those who chose to disrupt concerts in London given by Israeli musicians and likens those disrupters to the August rioters in English cities. However, she misses one vital difference: why were none of the disrupters at the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) concert arrested for breach of public order?

Surely it is time Anglo-Jewry woke up to the fact that those who practise mindless vocal barracking deserve treatment no different from other forms of mindless destruction. As it is, on their recent tour the IPO visited about 20 other cities and nowhere was there any behaviour remotely as bad as that which greeted them in London. Hardly an acceptable precedent for how the Israeli Olympic team may be greeted in London this year.

Peter Simpson, Jerusalem

A VERY WITTY EMIGRANT

Sir – This happened in my 'second native country' – South Africa. One of the wholesale merchants there was trading in their joint company's name Weil (pronounced Veal) & Aschheim. A very witty emigrant promptly translated the name: Kalbfleisch und Tocheshausen.

Fred Jonas, Macclesfield, Cheshire

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Inscrutable, enigmatic, ethereal: these are the faces of **Leonardo da Vinci's** paintings. Hailed as a genius of invention – not only of art – he may have produced only 20 paintings in his lifetime, but each is an icon of time, formalism and spiritual beauty.

Nine paintings appear in the **National Gallery's** much lauded landmark exhibition **Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan** (until 5 February



Cecilia Gallerani – 'The Lady with an Ermine'

2012), sponsored by Credit Suisse, accompanying his many sketches and the works of students and contemporaries. This is the first time in 500 years that all nine paintings, garnered from galleries around the world, are seen together – an unrepeatably experience. All nine derive from his time as a court painter to the Milanese ruler Ludovico Maria Sforza in the late 15th century.

Leonardo was concerned with perfection, the ultimate symmetry of feature. He would tamper with his work to improve on the model. But some ineffable spirit began to move him to generate, not just mere beauty, but the soul qualities

that surpass it. Two paintings of society beauties have the instantly recognisable status of the *Mona Lisa*. Both are portraits of Ludovico's mistresses at different times. The two have aroused drooling remarks from art critics – one even mused how he would have thrown himself into the river (he can't swim) to save them! The exquisite semi-profile of the 16-year-old Cecilia Gallerani, better known as *The Lady with an Ermine* (metaphor for purity), reflects the beauty, wit, scholarship and poetry for which she was famed. Her perfect serenity conveys both youth and understanding; it is typical of the artist that he brings this spiritual dimension to his work, demonstrating how a painter can capture a beauty destined to be destroyed by time.

The other portrait – less surreal, more knowing – features the opposite semi-profile of an older mistress, *La Belle Ferronniere*, who might have been the Duchess Sforza herself. Studied closely, both share the Renaissance features of wide eyes, stern regard and small mouth. But this one, loaned by the Louvre, has a totally different expression. There is evidence here of Leonardo's rigid and mathematical view of beauty but he also absorbs the rhythms of nature and harmony into his work.

We see this in his two paintings of the *Virgin of the Rocks* – at both ends of one gallery. The one loaned by the Louvre (commissioned and paid for 25 years later by the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception after a dispute over fees) is darker, portentous,

while the second, recently restored and belonging to the National Gallery, is more luminous. Here Leonardo contrasts the murky depths of the cave with the blue light from sea and sky beyond, reflecting the Madonna's blue dress and etiolating her face and those of the child, John the Baptist and others.

A much restored painting of Christ as *Salvator Mundi* has an almost eerie power. A full-scale copy of his nearly destroyed wall-painting *The Last Supper* is in the Sunley Room with some of the 590 drawings connected to his paintings, including 33 sketches loaned by the Queen.

REVIEWS

Courage and soul-searching in reliving the past

WE REMEMBER: CHILD SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST SPEAK

published by the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain – AJR

Troubadour (www.troubadour.co.uk/matador) 2011, 224 pp. paperback, £9.99 ISBN 978 184 876 7874

For most members of the AJR, the terrible events of 1938-45 affected them or their families and are still a vivid memory. For their children and grandchildren, there is fortunately no direct experience, although many will know something of what happened to their families. Those survivors who still give talks in schools are always received with great courtesy and interest but they know that for the great majority of pupils, and even for their teachers, the events of those years are now a part of history.

Inevitably, within a few years there will no longer be any witnesses to tell of their experiences and, for that reason, this excellent compilation of personal testimonies is to be greatly welcomed. The book, published by the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain – AJR, which was formed about 20 years ago, has as one of its aims to provide a memorial for members who have died. It was decided that this should take the form of a book which was first published in 2005, mainly for members and their families. The importance of the project led to this new and enlarged publication, which includes the moving introductions to the original edition.

The 30 stories related in the book were collected by the Association and reflect the numerous ways in which children managed to survive in almost unbelievable conditions. In some cases, the survivors are able to rely on their own memories, while in the case of the youngest children the stories are based on what they learned from surviving relations and friends and on documentation. In all cases, it must have taken a great deal of courage and soul-searching to relive the past.

Although the basic theme of each account is survival, each account is unique in how this was achieved and the traumas experienced. The testimonies are varied in length and style, but each relates experiences such as no child should ever have suffered. These include existence in concentration camps, survival in hiding or with false papers, and

life in the ghettos – but all have the common factor of daily fear of death. In spite of this, the authors mostly manages to write in a factual and objective manner and are eager to pay tribute to those who helped them. Many of the writers cover not only the traumatic period of the Shoah, but also put this in perspective by describing their earlier childhood and also their postwar recovery. In a review it is not possible even to attempt to discuss all the individual stories, and it would be invidious to give the names of some writers while ignoring equally important others.

While the dominant theme is the unbelievable brutality of the Germans, it is sad to see that some people in the occupied countries could be equally vicious and only too happy to denounce escaped Jews to the Nazis. This was particularly evident in France, where the authorities often proved to be as dangerous to the Jews as were the Nazis. The behaviour of the Swiss authorities towards those who had managed to reach their borders does little credit to them. On the other hand, there were Germans who risked their lives to help and there were numerous acts of bravery in all the occupied countries.

A disturbing feature in some recollections relates to the time after liberation. Not all authorities were as helpful and generous to survivors as should have been expected, and there were cases, fortunately a minority, of sheer bureaucracy even in Jewish organisations.

The book shows the depths to which humans can sink in their behaviour but it also has a more encouraging side in bringing out the courage and goodness in many people even when suffering themselves. It is this latter aspect which is an important and uplifting part of the stories.

The book concludes with ZACHOR – REMEMBER, a section in which the authors remember and name the relatives who were victims of the Shoah.

Hopefully this book will help to keep alive the memories of individuals who suffered so much and contribute to ensuring that nothing similar could ever happen again to any group of people simply because they are 'different' in some way. It is not a book which can be read lightly, or at one sitting, but it is really worthwhile to do so and to pass it on to children and adult grandchildren. Tragically, the stories of one and a half million other Jewish children will never be known.

George Vulkan

Towards centrality in British history

POLITICAL EXILE AND EXILE POLITICS IN BRITAIN AFTER 1933

edited by Anthony Grenville and Andrea Reiter

Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, University of London: The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Vol. 12, 2011, 220 pp. paperback, ISBN 978-90-420-3377-1

Within exile studies in Germany, political exiles were the first group to be investigated post-war. British exile studies, which started out much later, could already build on established research regarding political exiles in Britain and thus perhaps never gave the field sufficient attention. This is one reason why we can still make significant discoveries in the field of political exile and exile politics. Another reason why those exiled to Britain have not been given the prominence they received in other countries is that none of them played a major part in East or West German government after 1945. Had there been among them a Walter Ulbricht – exiled to the Soviet Union – or a Willy Brandt – exiled to Norway and Sweden – things might have been different.

As Andrea Reiter points out in her introduction to this volume, we are looking not only at political groups and institutions, but also at the 'continuation of politics by other means'. This becomes clear as a number of articles focus on writers, scientists (Wolfgang L. Reiter) and journalists.

Several contributions are devoted to individual exiles. Charmian Brinson has investigated the activist and journalist Rita Hausdorff, outlining the role one politically active woman played in various exile organisations and making the important point that leading positions in these organisations were filled almost exclusively by men. Marian Malet investigates another female figure, Irmgard Litten, author of the widely reviewed and well received autobiographical account *A Mother Fights Hitler*. This article shows that the British media and public of the time were interested in developments on the Continent. Another case study, by Bernhard Kushey, focuses on Walter Wodak and outlines in great detail the complexities of Austrian left-wing refugee politics. These complexities are further illustrated by Günther Sandner, who quotes Otto Neurath's complaint that one 'cannot distinguish the various cows and calves' – certainly an impression the reader can identify with. Even

in internment, disagreements between various German and Austrian socialist groups did not cease, as shown by Jennifer Taylor. This certainly did not help convince the British government that the exiled German and Austrian socialists constituted a viable opposition. However, reading the volume in the 21st century, one has to remind oneself of the extraordinary pressure all refugees were under in the 1930s-40s.

The interrelationship between the British secret service and political exiles is another subject given attention in this volume. Again, operations were never straightforward: internal squabbles and prejudices against Jewish exiles (Peter Pirker) perhaps hindered progress. Richard Dove skilfully uses recently released MI5 files to illustrate the involvement of a number of refugees in political intelligence.

Susan Cohen and Tony Kushner investigate the subject from the British perspective. Cohen focuses on the work of Eleanor Rathbone and her tireless campaigning on refugee matters before and after the outbreak of the Second World War. In this extremely well-researched and detailed article, we learn, for instance, how Rathbone is misled by government officials who have no desire to set a precedent on immigration from Czechoslovakia and refuse her request for additional visas while writing letters permitting officials to use their discretion. This is clearly symptomatic of a certain attitude in the British government of the time. Kushner's article looks at 'refugee voices' – autobiographical writings by refugees – in their historical context and what this subject says about the nature of Englishness/Britishness. This is a complex question which clearly requires further attention if the subject area of this volume is to become less marginal and more central to British history. This volume successfully contributes to this process.

Andrea Hammel

A very remarkable woman

THE NAZI OFFICER'S WIFE: HOW ONE JEWISH WOMAN SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST

by Edith Hahn-Beer with Susan Dworkin
first published in New York by Harper Collins in 1999; published by Abacus 2001, reprinted 2008, ISBN 978-0-349-11379-1

I came across this book on the recommendation of an American friend whilst on holiday in the USA and subsequently met Angela, Edith Hahn's

continued on page 10

REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

daughter, who went to a great deal of trouble to piece together her mother's story. This is a very readable book and, at times, almost unbelievable. It is extremely well documented, the original documents having been deposited in the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. It is not surprising that it took Edith some 50 years before she was able to talk about the effect of the trauma in her life during the Nazi period.

The book tells the story of a young Jewish woman from Vienna who had just completed her law studies at the time of the Anschluss. While she had many Jewish and non-Jewish friends

and was deeply attached to Vienna (including a longstanding relationship with a boyfriend), she felt she had to get out. This was eventually made possible when a childhood friend offered her identity papers, endangering her own and her family's life. In fear of being recognised, Edith left Vienna for Munich and was able to live as a young single woman like many others. There she met Werner Vetter and was charmed by him although she knew he was an officer in the Nazi Party, which gave them certain privileges. Eventually she agreed to marry him. He overlooked the fact that she was Jewish and that she

had assumed a different identity.

When the war ended, Edith was able to confess to the then Russian authorities about her false papers. After much bureaucratic wrangling, she came to England with her daughter.

All through this book one feels Edith was a very remarkable woman, both highly courageous in what she tackled and ingenious in the way she overcame all her problems, all the time living in fear that she might be found out. She was very concerned not to forget the many people who helped her and very keen for her daughter to tell the whole story.

Eva Frea

Information – true or false?

The times when one could trust the media, official statistics, banks, police and the government are long gone. Can one have any confidence in organisations when they accuse each other publicly? Would you trust the figures emanating from official sources? How much credence can one give to forecasts from high-powered individuals? Are politicians trustworthy when they say one thing when they are in opposition and then say the precise opposite when they are in power – and vice versa? When given professional advice on money matters which turns out to be a disaster, would you repeat that mistake? It is all due to misinformation, disinformation or no information.

Would you hand your money freely to a robber? Of course not, but you chose a political system which allows your money to be taken from you without your permission! By this means the low-paid working class, which produces the goods we all need, is hardest hit by the systematic increase in prices of everything. The middle classes are struggling to pay ever more in taxes as well as for goods. In contrast, the income and wealth of the top fraction of society increases out of all proportion to their useful efforts to the public – a classic case of Robin Hood in reverse. The few at the top of the income ladder own most of what those on the lower rungs produce. Wrong information does not affect them – in fact, some of them own the means of disseminating it, keeping the rest in ignorance.

Pick your choice from the following. Our Chancellor of the Exchequer predicts

improvements, others prophecy doom, and the Governor of the Bank of England forecasts two more years of recession, which, he says, has reached bottom. His past visions of the future were worse than that of the weather forecasters. At least they are right 50 per cent of the time, but their antics, flailing their arms about, make me want to call Michael Fish, pleading 'Please come back, all is forgiven!' Can anyone believe the official rate of inflation, with or without including properties? And who buys a house every month anyway? From pots to potatoes, from insurance to income tax, it's all lies. To make up for this, we had an increase of 25 pence in our pensions!

The misinformation and the hidden truth on the disaster that is enveloping this nation will eventually sink in, but will the future generations ever forgive the present one: *The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon their sons.*

The country is now passing through a cloud in which much information is hidden from view. This phenomenon has given rise to endless enquiries – chat shows in fact. As very little is ever put to paper, it is necessary to quiz 'alleged' wrong-doers, which we all know they are. They just 'can't remember!' But the law, made by the worst culprits – still in power – must be satisfied! The enormous cost of these shows is borne by the tax-payers of course. The latest one deals with hackers, who have acted in the most despicable way to increase their own wealth and that of their newspapers, disseminating even more misinformation – in the most atrocious English.

The reason why our PM insists we are

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY JANUARY

To 2 March 2012 A is for Adolf: Teaching German Children Nazi Values The Wiener Library's first exhibition puts on public display for the first time some of its unique collection of children's books, games and toys to illustrate the depth and complexity of propaganda targeted at young children under the Nazi regime. Library opening times: Monday to Friday, 10 am to 5.15 pm Admission free. Tel 7636 7247

continuing to fight in Afghanistan is to protect this country from terrorists. That's disinformation. Were it not for the British presence in the Middle East, we would not have British terrorists here! When British and foreign bankers, being deliberately misinformed, sank fortunes into American bogus ventures, indebting them for \$18 trillion, the worldwide disaster erupted. Rather than repeatedly propping up bankers, the government should have supported stranded companies directly. Interestingly, all the countries that were affected are washed by the Mediterranean waters. But there is one country, which stands head and shoulders above all the others – Israel. It did not take part in that financial gamble. That's why its rate of exchange against other countries is more than 30 per cent higher! We don't hear anything about that!

Fred Stern

The writer, a Chartered Engineer, was involved in Information Technology at its inception (Ed.).

Marriage at Kitchener Camp: Further information sought

I obtained from Gisela Haber this photograph of her wedding to Josef Haber, which took place on 21 June 1939 at Kitchener Camp (the first marriage there, I am told).

Behind the groom is my father, Hermann Diamant. He and Josef Haber went to medical school in Vienna and the families remained friends until the deaths of Hermann and Josef in 2001. Gisela died in July last year at the age of 94.

Gisela told me: 'We married in the town, just outside Kitchener Camp, following which there was a big celebration in the camp. I picked my own bouquet from an adjacent field. Who had money for anything?'

If any readers have any further information at all in connection with this photograph, could they kindly contact me at PO Box 1234, Koloa HI 96756-1234, USA or at mdmd@hawaiian.net.

Michael Diamant MD

Clare Ungerson writes:

I have looked at the entries for June 1939 in the diary of Phineas May (the diary is held by the Wiener Library). Phineas, the



brother of Jonas May, the director of the Kitchener Camp, was the Entertainments and Welfare Officer and kept a daily diary of his time at the camp. The entry for this wedding reads as follows:

21 June ... We had a strange job to do this evening but my dept are always prepared to tackle the most difficult tasks. This was the 'grub' for a Wedding feast in one of the huts. A young Doctor had a visa to america and his Fiancee to whom he has been engaged to a long time also has a quota number to america but it is ever so far down the list. The only way she would be able to go sooner is as his Wife, so permission was given for the marriage at the Ramsgate Registry Office this afternoon

witnessed by J. and Banks. I must confess that though by far the simplest the Wedding 'feast' in the evening, with poems to the young couple, music, speeches including one by the Director and evening a Dance by the Bride and Bridegroom it was one of the nicest. I phoned London in the evening and asked Mr P. Goldberg (J. Sec. United Synagogue) if it would be in order to marry them again on Sunday in the Camp Synagogue by the Camp Rabbi so they can have the satisfaction of also being married according to Jewish Law. He was not certain and intended to phone the Secretary of the Chief Rabbi, for must have the Chief Rabbi Marriage certificate at a Jewish

English Wedding.

22 June. J and I were on to London and Margate synagogue and completed all arrangements so that the young couple can be married under the chuppah in our synagogue on Sunday afternoon

So there were two weddings – one in Ramsgate, one in the camp. And all the spelling and syntax mistakes are Phineas's very own – he was a hopeless speller!

Professor Clare Ungerson is writing a book on the Kitchener Camp and would very much like to hear from men who were there and/or their descendants. Please contact her at clareungerson@aol.com.

Arbitration Panel for 'in rem' restitution

Last February I suddenly received a letter asking me to come to Vienna in October and talk about my father, Professor Dr Karl Wahle. As my father died 40 years ago, this was totally unexpected. The writer of the letter was Professor Dr Josef Aicher, the Chairman of the Arbitration Panel for 'in rem' restitution. The General Settlement Fund of the Republic of Austria for the Victims of National Socialism would meet all my travel and accommodation expenses. Naturally I was very touched.

The occasion, as Professor Aicher explained, was to mark the tenth anniversary of the Panel's work and the publication of the fourth volume of its decisions. He felt it appropriate to link this with the Supreme Restitution Commission set up after 1945 as the final court of appeal for claims by Nazi victims for the return of property. My father was a member of this commission from 1949 to 1957.

I was made to feel extremely welcome, even being met at Vienna airport by members of the staff of the Arbitration Panel, who drove me to my hotel.

I was interviewed by Ms Alexia Weiss for the magazine of the Vienna Jewish



Father Francis Wahle at the podium

community and introduced to Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria, Sir Franklin Berman, Chairman of the Claims Committee, and several members of the Panel. Afterwards, I was invited to join them for lunch. I was particularly touched that Mrs Eisenberg, the wife of the Chief Rabbi, came too, although she could not eat anything as it was not a kosher restaurant (she works part-time on the Panel).

In the evening the commemorative meeting took place, chaired by Hannah

Lessing. I told the large audience how my parents sent my sister and me on a Kindertransport to England in January 1939 and how they themselves, as racially Jewish, were hunted by the Gestapo from May 1942 until the Russians fought their way into Vienna in April 1945. With God's help and their own resourcefulness, they managed to survive as so-called 'U-boats' in Vienna for three whole years.

My father at once resumed his work as a judge, presiding over the Commercial Court and eventually becoming first President of the Supreme Court.

From the other speeches it was clear how much effort members of the Panel made to treat claimants as individual persons and not just as 'cases', even when their claims had to be rejected.

On the way back to the airport, I took the opportunity to admire the memorial to the Kindertransports recently erected at the railway station from which the trains left Vienna. A young lad, the grandson of one of the 'Kinder', acted as model.

A memorable and wonderful visit! For further information on this event, please see www.en.nationalfonds.org.

Father Francis Wahle

INSIDE the AJR

Ealing Links between art and sound

Alan Cohen showed us paintings and sculptures of biblical scenes by artists from different eras, each with their own interpretation of the event, and followed this with music which provided a unified interpretation for each scene. A most enjoyable afternoon, rounded off with a discussion on links between art and sound.

Leslie Sommer

Next meeting: 10 Jan. Winter Warmer social get-together

Oxford Jews and the Regency period

The theme of Jews from all over Europe who came to London during the Regency period bringing their diverse trades with them was vividly brought to life for us by David Barnett – for which many thanks.

Anne Selinger

Next meeting: 24 Jan. Details to be sent out

ANNUAL LONDON TRIP

Tuesday 27 – Thursday 29 March 2012

We are pleased to announce our annual 3-day trip to London.

The trip will include visits to the Royal Courts of Justice; Westminster Synagogue Museum; the newly opened Wiener Library; a behind-the-scenes tour of the world's most famous department store, Harrods; a trip to the theatre; and a tour of the East End of London.

The trip will also include an opportunity to meet the Israeli Ambassador, His Excellency Daniel Taub.

Accommodation will be at a London hotel for members based outside London.

Members living in London can participate in the daily events.

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

Ilford A dream comes true

Guide Val Alliez gave us a marvellous resume of how Sam Wanamaker's dream of re-creating the Globe Theatre finally came true. We learned that only one modern crane was used in the building work and that the actors wear Elizabethan clothes which have to be held up by various means as there are no zips or velcro. A most enlightening morning.

Meta Roseneil

No meeting in January (bank holiday)

Hull 'The Idle Wind'

We discussed forthcoming AJR events, in particular next year's London visit. One of our members read the first chapter she is writing about her mother's life entitled 'The Idle Wind', prompting other members to speak about their parents and what had happened to them. A splendid afternoon tea followed.

Rose Abrahamson

Next meeting: 29 April. At home of Veronika

NORTHERN KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION



(Left to right) Back row Caroline Moher (3rd gen.), Tania Nelson (2nd gen.), Emma Harris (2nd gen.) *Barbara Price* (2nd gen.), Ron Ibbitson (2nd gen.), Hans Rose *Front row* Hannah Goldstone (3rd gen.), Ad Sterberg, Italo Calma, Sonja Sternberg, James Smith, Gisela Feldman, Susi Linton *Front* Sara Kraus

AJR Northern Groups commemorated Kristallnacht with an audience of over 80 at the War Museum North in Manchester. Guest of Honour Dr James Smith, co-founder and Chairman of the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, spoke about that organisation's efforts to educate youngsters about those terrible times. He referred in particular to *The Journey*, an exhibition in which children from nine upwards can feel for themselves through hands-on exhibits what it was like more than 70 years ago.

In a short, fascinating film of *My Journey*, Beth Shalom Director Helen Whitney related some of the heart-rending stories experienced by children separated from their parents, often never to see them again. The event was again excellently chaired by Joy Wolfe, herself not a Holocaust survivor but she felt a great affinity with those who had been through the trauma of the Holocaust. James expressed sincere thanks to the AJR for its continuing generous support for the Centre.

Werner Lachs

Pinner Friend of the famous

Dennis Hart, who spent a working lifetime as a photographer with both the *Evening News* and the *News Chronicle*, became a friend of many famous people – film stars, politicians, society, nobility. A highly entertaining afternoon.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 12 Jan. Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen, 'Genesis in Poetry'

Glasgow Pre-Chanukah Lunch

Over 30 members gathered for a delicious lunch at the Glasgow Reform Synagogue, with entertainment by our local celebrity soprano Lynne Harvey-Allan (aka Lynne Lewis), who sang a mainly classical programme for us beautifully, but included some specifically Jewish numbers. She was accompanied on the piano by Alastair Sim. The success of the afternoon was due entirely to the meticulous preparation, including a raffle, by Agnes Isaacs.

Halina Moss

HGS The Anglo-Jewish Society

The aim of the Anglo-Jewish Society is to offer financial help to Jewish university students. Julia Samuel, the AJR's only paid employee, gave a light-hearted talk about the delights and pitfalls of dealing each year with 80-100 applicants from all

walks of life, trying to establish in as PC a way as possible their Jewish background.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 9 Jan. Winter Warmer social get-together

Essex (Westcliff)

A small group of ladies

Just a small group of ladies. Esther Rinkoff told us about a young lady from Germany who came to work at the AJR in her gap year, which led to us talking about our lives before coming to England.

Linda Fisher

Next meeting: 10 Jan. Winter Warmer social get-together

Welwyn Garden City

A thought-provoking morning

Each of us talked about a person who has had an influence on our lives. A deep and thought-provoking morning.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 19 Jan. Social get-together at home of Monica Rosenbaum

Temple Fortune Mesmerised with gadgets from the past

Master of Victoriana Maurice Collins mesmerised us with gadgets from the past. A skirt lifter, nail buffer and glasses

to wear when lying down – these were just a few of the items that kept us guessing. A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 31 Jan. Winter Warmer social get-together

Edgware Serving in the British army

Mel Faber gave us a very interesting account of his experiences while serving in the British army in WWII, including his involvement in the D-Day landings. He also told us about the three service medals he was wearing.

Ernie Goldman

Next meeting: 17 Jan. David Lawson, 'Eve Erben's Holocaust story'

Reliving history: Café Imperial outing to RAF Museum

Our band of merry men went to see 'Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines'. Our lovely guide, Sylvia Briggs, took us through the history of the aeroplane, during both world wars in particular. An enjoyable morning reliving history.

Susan Harrod

Birmingham 'It's a Wonderful World'

A Desert Island Discs-style afternoon, with Philip Lesser playing the role of Roy Plomley interviewing Fred Austin. A most memorable account of Fred's life interspersed with beautiful classical pieces and finishing with Louis Armstrong's 'It's a Wonderful World'.

Esther Rinkoff

HOLIDAY DIARY DATES

**Cumberland Hotel, Bournemouth
Sunday 20 May to Sunday 27 May**

**Lansdowne Hotel, Eastbourne
Sunday 22 July to Sunday 20 July**

Radlett A fraught relationship

Rob Lowe gave an account of the lives of Gilbert and Sullivan with an assessment of their achievements in writing musical comedy. Bearing in mind the fraught relationship between librettist and composer, it's a wonder they wrote so many delightful works. This amusing lecture was illustrated by musical examples.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 18 Jan. Winter Warmer social get-together

Wembley Refreshing memories

Myrna updated us on changes in the AJR and explained the rearrangement of premises and meeting dates. We then proceeded to introduce ourselves and, though this has been done in the past, it was useful to refresh our memories. Interestingly, there were 3 Berliners, 1 or 2 Austrians, 1 from Poland, 1 Czech and 1 Upper Silesian ... and Myrna, British-born.

Irene Stanton

Next meeting: 25 Jan. Social get-together

Newcastle

'The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling'
Our guest speaker, Mark S. Smith, currently Deputy Business Editor of *The*

Herald newspaper, told us about his book 'Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling'. Hershl survived five concentration camps but took his own life 50 years later: Mark traced his footsteps from Klobuck to Treblinka to Glasgow.

Agnes Isaacs

Sheffield The Holocaust Exhibition at the IWM

The Imperial War Museum's Suzanne Bardgett gave us a riveting talk on the Holocaust Exhibition she and her team created between 1995 and 2000. Some 700 visitors a day still come to see it and all are overwhelmed by the graphic reminders of the terrible events of the 1930s-40s. The meeting, a moving occasion, took place in the comfortable lounge of Kingfield Lodge, a new venue for us, courtesy of one of our members, Rachel Hunter.

Inga Joseph

Brighton & Hove Sarid The shopping centre of the world

David Barnett gave us insight into the economy of the Regency period, showing that London was regarded as the shopping centre of the world. The numerous shops created wealth and employment for a large part of the population.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 16 Jan. Winter Warmer social get-together

A privilege and a pleasure – a visit to the Royal Courts of Justice

Our visit was a privilege and a pleasure – we learned so much. The magnificent buildings were built on a 5.5 acre slum site bought from Middlesex County Council for £1.4 million in 1840. The work was not completed until 1882 – by imported foreign labourers. Our excellent guide Brian Grover's talk was interspersed with humorous anecdotes. Lord Neuberger, Master of the Rolls, resplendent in wig and gown, explained how his family had come to the UK from Germany. He had qualified as a chemist, become a banker then finally joined the legal profession. We were encouraged to sit in on appeals in any court of our choosing. Our group – 35 in all – were so well looked after. Thanks to Hazel and Esther for their efforts – we do so appreciate them!

Hanne R. Freedman

East Midlands (Nottingham)

A convivial lunch and chat

We met at a member's house for a convivial lunch and chat. Being a small but diverse group, we always enjoy each other's company. One of our members, Reni Chapman, recounted the story of her early life as a refugee from Germany, in Iraq and, ultimately, Israel. As usual, we were delighted to see Esther Rinkoff, who brought us news from head office and kept us in order with her lovely smile.

Bob Norton

North London 'The CST: Why, When, How?'

Mark Gardener gave a most interesting talk on the Community Security Trust, a body of volunteers that protects

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**The AJR
Paul Balint Centre at
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AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Thursday 19 January 2012

Professor Eric Moonman OBE

'The Health Service'

**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**

Tuesday 10 January 2012

Robert Feather

'The Dead Sea Scrolls'

**PLEASE NOTE THAT LUNCH
WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 PM**

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

JANUARY ACTIVITIES

Thurs 5	BOOK CLUB facilitated by Ruth Sands. Book to be discussed: Graham Greene's 'Twenty One Stories'
Thur 19	ART APPRECIATION CLUB facilitated by Lauren Rotenberg
Thur 26	CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION GROUP facilitated by Joanne Feldman

The COMPUTER CLUB, facilitated by Lilli Meinck, will take place every Tuesday

JANUARY ENTERTAINMENT

Tue 3	Mike Marandi
Thur 5	William Smith
Tue 10	KT LUNCH
Thur 12	Ronnie Goldberg Launch Party
Tue 17	Douglas Poster
Thur 19	LUNCHEON CLUB
Tue 24	tba
Thur 26	Jen Gould
Tue 31	Margaret Opdahl

community functions and property, if necessary in co-operation with the police. The CST's work is universally appreciated.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 26 Jan. Howard Lanning, '80 Years in the Film Industry'

Hendon The origin of Alice

Mark Davies, who has researched the

Inside the AJR continued on page 16

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Death

Gummers, George Died peacefully on 29 November aged 76. He will be sadly missed by his wife Hannah, sons Eric and David, daughter-in-law Marie-Noelle, grandson Julien, family and friends. Any donations to St Mary's Hospital, Ulverston, Cumbria.

CLASSIFIED

A chiropodist will be at the AJR Paul Balint Centre at Belsize Square Synagogue on Tuesday 17 January.

Book Club
Book of the Month: 'Alice in Wonderland'
 An opportunity to read/re-read this classic novel, following which the Lewis Carroll Society welcomes your views.
 In the summer there will be a trip to the Oxford waterways where Lewis Carroll found his inspiration for 'Alice'.
 For further information, please contact Esther or Hazel on 020 8385 3077

The Wiener Library
 for the study of the Holocaust and genocide
 The Library is still actively collecting archives of organisations and collections of personal papers which document Jewish life in Europe up to and including the Nazi era. So if you have any original correspondence, photographs or other documentation which fits this description we would love to hear from you. If you are not prepared to part with the originals we are happy to take digital scans of material. You can contact the archivist, Howard Falksohn, by email or phone:
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Kindertransport statue unveiled in Hook of Holland

A statue dedicated to the Kindertransport was unveiled at a moving ceremony in the Hook of Holland at the end of November. Designed by the internationally acclaimed sculptor Frank Meisler, 'Channel Crossing to Life' commemorates the role played by Dutch people in helping to rescue Jewish children fleeing Nazi oppression.



Kinder who now live in Germany, Switzerland, the USA and Israel, as well as a group of 15 AJR members from the UK, joined schoolchildren from the Hook of Holland, who carried lanterns lighting the path to the statue and presented Kinder with roses.

Following speeches by Frank Meisler and the Mayor of Rotterdam, Ahmed Aboutaleb, Sir Erich Reich, Chairman of the AJR's Kindertransport Committee, gave thanks to the Dutch people who helped ensure the safe passage of the children to Britain. Speaking ahead of the unveiling of the statue, which is supported by the

AJR, Sir Erich said: 'This statue is a fitting memorial to all who perished at the hands of the Nazis and will be a permanent reminder of the continuing need to fight intolerance, racism and anti-Semitism.'

Guests at the unveiling included the Vice-President of the Bundestag, Petra Pau, and the families of Kinder, including their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The date of the unveiling was symbolic, marking the eve of the 73rd anniversary of the first Kindertransport to leave Continental Europe.

Frank Meisler has also created statues commemorating the Kindertransport at Liverpool Street Station in London, Gdansk in Poland, and Berlin's Friedrichstrasse Station.


AJR member Professor Leslie Baruch Brent, who attended the unveiling, also gave an address at the opening of the plenary of the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, which was meeting in The Hague in the same week.

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OBITUARIES

Richard Burnett, 17 January 1910 – 23 April 2011

Richard Burnett, who died peacefully this year, was born in Berlin in 1910, the second of three sons of the Berlin furrier Hugo Behrendt and Augusta (née Mayer). He was educated at the Werner-von-Siemens Gymnasium, Berlin, and developed a love of literature (from Goethe to Thomas Mann). He was once reprimanded by a hospital doctor for reading Hašek's *The Good Soldier Schwejk*, then considered subversive and anti-German. He also loved classical music, especially Bach, Beethoven and Mozart, and could talk knowledgeably and entertainingly about them well into old age.

Richard later described Berlin as a 'backwater' compared to other capital cities, but 'a good place to live and

grow up in'. He appreciated its vibrant cultural life, especially theatre and opera, and the high level of public debate. He enjoyed rowing, hiking and swimming. He left Germany with his family soon after the Nazi takeover and later commented that he missed the countryside, the lakes and pine forests, but otherwise felt little nostalgia.

After leaving Berlin, Richard's family spent some time in France, but managed



to reach England before war broke out. He was interned on the Isle of Man and later served in the Pioneer Corps. He worked as a translator for the British Military Government in Germany before returning to England. After some time in his father's business, he decided to become an accountant. He was naturalised in 1947 soon after marrying Erna (Hahn), whom he met at a Fabian Society dance. They lived happily in Kenton for the next four decades, attending Middlesex New Synagogue. In old age, they moved into Hammerson House in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Erna died in 2006.

Richard loved nature (he was a passionate bird-watcher) as well as culture. He devised and presented a series of carefully researched and illustrated music lectures for fellow residents in Hammerson House. It was a sign of his passion for art that he undertook a bus journey from there to Trafalgar Square to see the National Gallery's Goya exhibition. He also kept abreast of current ideas, debates and controversies to an astonishing degree. At the age of 98, he learned to use the internet and exchanged emails with his family in Australia and Israel. He continued to read avidly for as long as he could (he had a subscription to *The Spectator*). His interests were broad, ranging from Louis XIV to the work of the psychologist Steven Pinker. Proust was a perennial favourite. If you asked him tentatively about a new book, he would reply, as likely as not, that he had 'heard about it but it hasn't been well reviewed.'

Richard was a gentle, humane and cultured person who will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Robert Knight

William Chadwick, 6 April 1934 – 13 August 2011

Dr William Chadwick, son of Trevor Chadwick (see April and August 2011 issues of the Journal), has died after a long illness, which he bore with a positive insouciance. His book *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees, 1938-9* was the latest on this subject and will be of particular interest to readers of this journal.

William was born in Swanage, Dorset, and, on leaving Sherborne School, emigrated to Canada, permanently returning to England only in his later years. In Canada he completed his education, taught English and drama at the Universities of Saskatchewan and Waterloo, published books on the dramatist William Wycherly and on the town of Berlin, Ontario, renamed Kitchener, and had two plays professionally produced. He also published a number of delightful poems.

His elder brother, the novelist Charles Chadwick CBE (himself a poet), said the following at William's memorial service:

'His subject was the theatre, which he loved ... He was also a very accomplished and versatile writer. First and foremost, I think he would want me to say he was a poet. He wrote two wonderful sequences, *Dwarf* and *A Canadian Bestiary*, and, most recently, a lovely set of poems about the Somerset levels ... And, finally, [he wrote] a book about the rescue of the refugees from Prague ... The story of Sir Nicholas Winton's part in the evacuation of 669 Jewish children is well enough known, but William, with his customary thoroughness, put events into their full

and accurate context: the part played by others such as Doreen Warriner ... and not least by our father, Trevor Chadwick, who ran the Winton operation at the Prague end ... staying on after the Nazi invasion on 15 March. Much to Sir Nicholas's delight, William was able to set the record straight once and for all ...'

In fact, William's book contains a chapter on each person involved in the rescue, with the exception of the Reverend B. Walmer and the Reverend Davidson of the Barbican Mission, who predated even Nicholas Winton.

Shortly after war was declared, William's father Trevor Chadwick joined the Royal Navy Reserve and later the RAF. He survived the war but was never to return to his family (although his sons mattered to him greatly). He was to marry twice more and lived a varied life, not always in the best of health.

William Chadwick saw his father again briefly when he was around six. His reunion with Trevor Chadwick after 30 years is one of the most attractive passages in *The Rescue*.

I myself never met William Chadwick as a man. I knew him from his excellent poems, his letters and, of course, his last book, *The Rescue*. He was only four or five when I spent my own first few months in



England with his mother, his brother and him, while Trevor Chadwick was still busy looking after the rescue of the children at the Prague end.

There we are on the Dorset beach: William then still 4, Charles 6, I the refugee child (sponsored by Trevor Chadwick's mother) 11. Nanny, herself a delightful 16, dispenses a picnic of marmite or banana sandwiches. We try our footsteps out on the wet sand. My delight at finding seashells, observing which, Charles and William begin to gather them too, running up to me with their offerings.

William Chadwick is survived by his wife Jacqueline (Jackie) and five children (three from his first marriage).

Gerda Mayer



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



15 seconds of fame (or A tale of two cats)

Last Independence Day a ginger cat scampered along the gangway in front of the stage at the special concert given in the Jerusalem Theatre by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. The young soloist, who was playing Rachmaninoff's very demanding Third Piano Concerto, didn't seem to notice, though the audience did. One of the young lady ushers stood up as if to apprehend the offender, which of course took not the slightest bit of notice. Wisely, the young lady then sat down again, as she would only have made matters worse by trying to catch the creature.

The cat climbed the five steps at the side of the stage and the orchestra played on. The cat then had second thoughts, scampered back the way it had come and disappeared through a hole in a side wall. The orchestra didn't miss a beat.

This reminded me of a similar incident I witnessed a few years earlier. We were at a concert given by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in Tel Aviv's Mann Auditorium. We had bought tickets because the concert included a performance of Mahler's 6th Symphony (a rare treat), not realising

that the occasion would be graced by various dignitaries, including the mayor of Tel Aviv, the Speaker of the Knesset and visitors from the US Congress, including the then Speaker, Nancy Pelosi. The mayor of Tel Aviv was in the middle of addressing the audience when a tabby cat wandered in and began climbing a wooden balustrade or bannister dividing the seats at the side of the auditorium from those at the centre. I should have mentioned earlier that because of the presence of the foreign dignitaries the event was being televised.

The poor cat, frightened out of its wits, started to ascend the banister, passing right by where we were sitting. Everyone turned to look, and a titter went around the auditorium. When an intrepid member of the audience tried to stop its progress the animal turned tail, scurried back down the wooden railing and dashed out of the side door to the street.

The Mann Auditorium, which was inaugurated in 1957, was considered at the time to be an architectural gem and one of the most sophisticated cultural facilities in the world. The hall, which

was built primarily as a home for the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, is notable for its size and good acoustics. Since its establishment many top musicians have played there, as have many renowned orchestras from all over the world. It is currently undergoing extensive renovation – but that's another story.

Its internal structure is somewhat strange, however. One can enter from the side, between the box office and the artists' entrance, where there is virtually nothing separating the street from the auditorium. Tel Aviv, like many of Israel's cities, abounds in stray cats, which are useful for keeping down vermin. Hence the proximity of the street to the auditorium appears to allow for the possibility that uninvited guests might find their way in. There are, of course, attendants at the doors who check tickets, but a cat (and, I imagine, even a stray mouse) could easily sneak in unnoticed.

And that, it seems, is what happened at the gala concert. We were amused by the incident, and relieved that it had occurred 'only' during the speeches and not while the music was being played. The cat (and we) gained international renown and we had our 15 seconds of fame when the international news services picked up the footage from Israel television and we found ourselves featuring alongside the cat on CNN, Sky and the BBC news services. At last, some positive news coverage of Israel!

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

background of *Alice in Wonderland*, kept us captivated with his anecdotes. On 4 July 1862 Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), a maths lecturer, took a friend and the three daughters of the Dean of Christ Church (Lorina, Alice and Edith Liddell) on a rowing trip and picnic on the river at Oxford. To occupy the children, he told them the tale which little Alice later asked him to write down. *Shirley Rodwell*

Next meeting: 30 Jan. William Kaczynski, 'Fleeing from the Führer'

Recharging batteries in Norfolk

A most successful meeting, with nine members – the maximum possible – turning up. Having recharged our batteries with goodies shlepped all the way from the Jewish settlement of Wembley by Myrna, and by the baked potatoes carried

all the way from Ormesby by Eva, we are looking forward to more of the same at the next gathering of the clan in spring.

Frank Bright

St John's Wood (formerly Cleve Road) Tittle and Tansy

Having celebrated our 5th anniversary with a beautiful cake and delicious refreshments, we played 'Call My Bluff', led by Bernard Ecker with his wife Shirley and Myrna on the panel. We learned the meaning of many new words such as Tittle and Tansy. *David Lang*

Next meeting: 11 Jan. Evelyn Friedlander, 'The Synagogues of Germany'

Death and the Maiden A powerful and gripping story

Our groups' outing to the Harold Pinter Theatre had a particular resonance for

Jewish refugees the world over. *Death and the Maiden* is a powerful and gripping story of a victim of torture and rape at the hands of a South American dictatorship who finds she has the opportunity of revenge against her principal tormentor. Thandie Newton is brilliant as the vengeful yet vulnerable victim. *David Barnett*

Bradford CF

An interesting afternoon. Stephen Tendlow discussed his current researches into the history of the German-Jewish bourgeoisie up to WWII, especially that of his own family, who in 1635 built the first *mikveh* in Wiesbaden, now a spa town. Later Rudi Leavor described presenting his family's own bespoke Torah Scroll to the Berlin Jewish Museum. *Anna Greenwood*

Next meeting: 13 March