

# AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

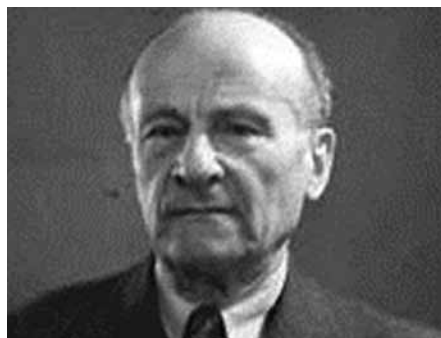
## Hermann Sinsheimer, a German Jew

The beautiful little town of Freinsheim in the state of Rheinland-Pfalz (Rhineland-Palatinate) nestles like a gem among the abundant vineyards and orchards of this sunlit, fertile area of south-western Germany. It lies just off the Deutsche Weinstrasse (German Wine Route), which may help to explain the humorous, humane, tolerant temperament of its citizens, including its most famous son, the Jewish writer, journalist and theatre critic Hermann Sinsheimer, who was born there in 1883 and died in London in 1950. Sinsheimer was one of the many literary and cultural figures who adorned the community of the Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain in general and *AJR Information* in particular.

Sinsheimer studied law, but his great love was the theatre, and he soon abandoned the legal profession to become a theatre critic in Mannheim. In 1916 he moved to Munich, spending two years in charge of a major theatre, the *Münchner Kammerspiele*. He then wrote literary and theatrical reviews for Munich's leading newspaper, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, demonstrating a rare talent for his vocation. However, in 1923 the Bavarian government expelled Jews from Eastern Europe, even those long settled in Munich, if they had not been naturalised; among them were two families of Sinsheimer's acquaintance whose sons had died fighting for Germany in the First World War. When the newspaper refused to protest against this blatant injustice, Sinsheimer, a man of principle, resigned and became editor-in-chief of the celebrated satirical weekly magazine *Simplicissimus*.

In 1929 he moved with Anny Balder, his first wife, to Berlin, to the liberal *Berliner Tageblatt*, one of the capital's great dailies. Sinsheimer's articles graced the *Feuilleton* (arts section) of the paper, though, as

the renowned theatre critic Alfred Kerr (father of the writer Judith Kerr) was already on the paper's staff, Sinsheimer concentrated instead on film reviews and articles on literary and other matters, in-



Hermann Sinsheimer, 1883-1950 (courtesy of Fred Kolm, Fort Lauderdale, Florida)

cluding an attack on Dr Goebbels in April 1931. His articles and his numerous longer publications brim with wit and erudition, with clarity and originality of thought and elegance of style. In March 1933, when Alfred Kerr fled Germany, Sinsheimer took over the position of leading theatre critic at the *Berliner Tageblatt*, but in September 1933 himself fell victim to a *Berufsverbot* (ban on exercising his profession) as a result of his defiant gesture in publishing a sixtieth birthday tribute to the great theatre director Max Reinhardt, a Jew.

Proud of both sides of his German-Jewish heritage and deeply rooted in German culture, Sinsheimer stayed on in Germany until 1938, when it became clear that he had to leave. He went first to Palestine, which did not suit him; in a lecture delivered at the Hebrew University, he declared that he had not come to Jerusalem to stand at the Wailing Wall but to sit in the lecture theatres of the university. He moved on to London, which was to become his home for the remaining 12 years of his life. Already 55 years of age in 1938, he felt something of an outsider in England, a country whose

customs he found hard to fathom and where he became an 'enemy alien' on the outbreak of war.

Though profoundly aware of his Jewish heritage, Sinsheimer retained throughout his life his love for his native Freinsheim and for his native region, the Palatinate. He began his short autobiographical piece *An den Wassern von Babylon* (*By the Waters of Babylon*, 1920) with the evocative words 'The town of Freinsheim in the Palatinate, where I was born, overflows with history, wine and fruit.' And he ended it with a defiant declaration that he was 'a German and a Jew.' This defined his relationship to Germany even after the Nazi period. Writing to a German acquaintance in 1946, he declared that whereas the German people had betrayed and defiled the best values of Germany after 1933, those values had been preserved by the German-Jewish émigrés, who had become the true representatives of what had been best in German culture. The title of his posthumously published autobiographical volume, *Gelebt im Paradies* (*Dwelt in Paradise*, 1953), aptly conveys his image of the town in which he had grown up.

On balance, Sinsheimer adapted well to life in Britain, taking on a formidable workload in the post-war years. For German publications, he reviewed German books ranging from Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* to the memoirs of Rudolf Pechel and Hans Bernd Gisevius, members of the resistance to Hitler, and the diaries of Ulrich von Hassell, who had been executed by the Nazis in the wake of the failed attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944. Sinsheimer was also a reviewer for very distinguished British publications: the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *New Statesman* and the *Political Quarterly*, founded in 1930 by Leonard Woolf, Virginia Woolf's

 **Hermann Sinsheimer** *continued*

husband. One of Sinsheimer's most important books, a study of Shakespeare's Shylock, was first published in English by Victor Gollancz in 1947, as *Shylock: The History of a Character or the Myth of the Jew*. An appreciative review of the book by Lutz Weltmann appeared in *AJR Information* of July 1947. It had a foreword by John Middleton Murry, who had been married to the writer Katherine Mansfield and was himself a leading figure in London literary life, an indication of how well connected Sinsheimer was in British cultural and intellectual circles.

Sinsheimer's second wife helped him enormously in settling more or less contentedly in Britain. Christobel May Fowler was born in Lancashire in 1897 and attended Girton College, Cambridge, where she studied Modern Languages. She spoke excellent German. She became a Quaker, worked as a teacher, then became active in charitable work; after visiting Germany in 1936, she concentrated on relief work for the refugees from Nazism. Sinsheimer had met Christobel in 1938, and in 1940, when she came to work in London, she nursed him through a bout of shingles. They married in 1947 and moved into a flat at 135A, High Street Kensington – an address to which Sinsheimer became reconciled once he had discovered the joys of walking through Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park on his way to the University of London Library in Bloomsbury. Though he had many contacts with fellow refugees from Germany, Sinsheimer never lived in those districts of north-west London where the Jews from Germany and Austria congregated, and he did not join the literary and cultural organisations that they founded.

Christobel Fowler belonged to that cultured, liberal stratum of British middle-class society which made refugees like Sinsheimer welcome. Her young nieces, unable to pronounce the German name, simply called her new husband 'Dr Sunshine'. Through people like the Fowlers, Sinsheimer came to admire British pragmatism and tolerance, though he could never come to terms with the culture of a nation that did not grow wine and he declared that, as an orderly German, he despaired of a country where heat waves

in February were followed by rain and fog in June. Nevertheless, he came to act as an important intermediary between Britain and Germany through the many lectures that he gave between 1946 and 1948, at the invitation of the Control Office for Germany and Austria, to German prisoners of war. In August 1948, he travelled long distances to speak at six PoW camps in ten days, receiving an enthusiastic reception for his talks on German culture and history. On another occasion, when visiting Island Farm Camp in Bridgend, Glamorgan, where high-ranking officers were held, he delivered a stinging rebuke to Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, who had attempted a clumsy defence of Germany's history. He did his able best to convert his audiences to the values of democracy, international reconciliation and a political culture founded on individual morality and responsibility.

Sinsheimer published a major front-page article in *AJR Information* of August 1947, a thought-provoking piece entitled 'Twice a Jew', on the identity and responsibilities of the German Jews who had survived the Nazis. The journal reported Sinsheimer's death in 1950, and in October 1955 it published a review by Otto Zarek of *Gelebt im Paradies*, which included an affectionate appreciation of Sinsheimer's life and work. Nor has Sinsheimer been neglected by his home town, which in 1983, the centenary of his birth, instituted a prize in his name, the Hermann-Sinsheimer-Preis für Literatur und Publizistik, supplemented since 2000 by a medal, the Hermann-Sinsheimer-Plakette.

In 2012, in an admirable example of dedicated local research, an edition of Hermann and Christobel Sinsheimer's letters from London to Sinsheimer's

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

## 'JOURNEYS DOWN MY STREET'

**On Monday 22 April at 11.00 am**, in the series 'Journeys Down My Street', BBC Radio 4 will be broadcasting a programme on the Austrian-Jewish refugees who settled around the Finchley Road in the Swiss Cottage area of north-west London.

Several AJR members can be heard in the programme. Dr Anthony Grenville and Dr Bea Lewkowicz will provide expert commentaries.



## THE HOLOCAUST CENTRE

**The Holocaust Centre Museum in Nottinghamshire is seeking items from survivors of the Holocaust and their families to tell the personal stories that need to be told.**

These items will be a tangible link to the Holocaust and used as a core part of the education and Museum programme at the Centre.

If you have any photographs, documents, personal items and would consider donating these to the Museum, please give **Aneesa** a call on **(01623) 836627** or email: **aneesa.riffat@holocaustcentre.net**



**YOM HASHOAH**  
Sunday 7 April 2013  
**THE DELL – HYDE PARK**  
A coach will be leaving the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon at 9.45 am.  
There is a very short walk; the coach will park as close as possible to the Memorial.  
The Service commences 11.00 am and will last no more than an hour.  
Seating is under cover.  
**Please call 0208 385 3070 to book a place.**  
**Refreshments at the HSC on return.**

former classmate Frida Schaffner-Reibold in Freinsheim was published by the Stiftung zur Förderung der pfälzischen Geschichtsforschung, the institution that conducts research into the history of the Palatinate. Edited to the highest scholarly standards by Hans-Helmut Görtz and Gabriele and Erik Giersberg, the volume, *Briefe aus England in die Pfalz* (Neustadt an der Weinstraße, ISBN 978-3-942189-12-5), contains in its 768 pages a mine of information about every aspect of Sinsheimer's life. At €49, it offers the reader an invaluable insight into the mind of a major cultural figure from Germany as he adapted to life in post-war Britain.

**Anthony Grenville**

## Claims Conference Late Applicants' Fund

The Claims Conference has established a Late Applicants' Fund of €50 million to accept applications from certain heirs of former owners of Jewish property/assets located in the former East Germany for which the Claims Conference received proceeds. Applications must be submitted before 31 December 2014.

Following the demise of Communism in 1989 and the formal re-uniting of East and West Germany in 1990, the unified German government introduced the national German restitution law, allowing owners, or their heirs, of properties in the former East Germany to submit claims for the return of their properties.

With the expiry of the timeframe to file claims to the national restitution law in 1992, the Claims Conference filed a blanket claim for properties that were once owned by Jewish victims of the Holocaust who lived in that part of Germany that came under the Communist sphere of influence at the end of the Second World War.

In 1996, the Claims Conference created the Goodwill Fund, through which properties were returned to their rightful owners with 20 per cent of the value being kept by the Claims Conference for allocation to worldwide social and welfare programmes, including the Emergency Fund disbursed by the AJR.

In September 2003, the Claims Conference published a list of Jewish owners of properties in the former East Germany with a final deadline to submit claims by the end of March 2004. The

full value of any unclaimed properties has since ceded to the Successor Organisation department of the Claims Conference.

In April 2009, the Claims Conference announced changes to the Goodwill Fund that afforded the right to receive reparations for properties they or their families owned in the former East Germany to certain claimants, where (a) the claim was submitted by an original owner of the property or spouse of the original owner or (b) the claim was submitted by a child, grandchild or great-grandchild of the original owner who can prove through medical documentation that they were, for medical reasons, unable to file an application in the period immediately before the deadline of 31 March 2004.

A list of former owners, properties and assets can be viewed at <http://forms.claimscon.org/LAF/LAF-Liste.pdf> and the Claims Conference has pointed out that no successful applicant to the Late Applicants' Fund will receive more than they would have received had they made a timely claim under the German Property Law 1990. For full details of the Late Applicants' Fund, including who is entitled to make an application, visit <http://www.claimscon.org/?url=LAF>

All communications regarding the Late Applicants' Fund should be submitted to: Claims Conference Successor Organisation, Sophienstrasse 26, D-60487 Frankfurt am Main, Germany, fax 0049-69-97-07-08-11, email [claims-conference-laf@claimscon.org](mailto:claims-conference-laf@claimscon.org)

Michael Newman

## Brighton-Sarid (Sussex) Group: 'Towards a Greater Sussex Council?'



(from left) Hazel Beiny, Esther Rinkoff, Dr T. Scarlett Epstein OBE, Mayor Bill Randall, Ceska Abrahams, Leon Pagett, Shirley Huberman

PHOTOGRAPH: SOPHIE SHEINWALD

The Mayor of Brighton, Hove and Portslade, Cllr Bill Randall, explained the workings of the various Council departments such as planning, finance, employment, tourism, and help for the

ageing population. He said they had considered extending into a Greater Sussex Council for the savings and benefits it would bring.

Ceska Abrahams

## A MORNING AT THE MOVIES Tuesday 30 April 2013

10.30 am for 11.00 am start (prompt)

### 'Song for Marion' At the Everyman Cinema, Belsize Park



Starring Terence Stamp and Vanessa Redgrave and directed by Ken Marshall, the thrust of 'Song for Marion' is that the joy of life is to truly live it. This sentiment is underscored by terrific performances from the entire cast and deliciously undercut by Stamp's piercing gaze, which gives nothing and everything away.

This is an exclusive showing for the AJR. The Everyman is a state-of-the-art cinema, with luxurious seating. We are delighted to be able to offer seats at £5 per person. The cinema is opposite Belsize Park Tube Station.

For further details, please contact Susan Harrod at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk) or on 020 8385 3070

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## Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia – the facts

Reading the interesting article 'Anglo-Jewry and the Jewish refugees from Nazism' (December 2012), I was amazed that there was not the slightest mention of the refugees from Czechoslovakia – there were quite a number of us. I have been a member of the AJR for some 20 years and, reading the *AJR Journal* regularly all those years, I cannot recall one article about the Jews of Czechoslovakia.

I arrived in the UK at Tilbury on 26 May 1939 with my mother on the crowded ship *Warszawa* from Gdynia, Poland, with a badly broken arm in heavy plaster, a large trunk and a small suitcase. I was seven years old and can recall it all very clearly. We passed through a rather surly immigration and search and then were taken by bus to a hastily arranged reception centre in Bayswater, a former school in which hundreds of beds had been set up in all the classrooms.

My father joined us about ten days later as we had only two tickets for the ship. Dad had managed to bribe his way on to a rather small postal package boat with just eight passenger seats going to Stockholm;

I don't know how he managed to complete the rest of his journey to Tilbury. Then, together, we were sent with around 50 other Czech refugees to a hostel in Clacton-on-Sea and we stayed there until just after war was declared. After some months I and another boy my age were sent to school in Holland-on-Sea by bus, with the bus conductor putting us off at the school. We knew no English except two words – yes and no – and we had to put up our hand if we needed to go to the loo, and we were surrounded by a crowd of the schoolchildren staring at us in our 'funny' clothes. For me life became one great adventure of ups and downs and new experiences.

After several months we were all moved to another hostel in a large old mansion in Dorking. Finally, after about eight months, my parents and I were allowed to leave as we were classified as 'friendly aliens'. We moved to Taunton in Somerset, where my father was offered

a new career at the age of 41 as a school cleaner. This was a town with only two other English-Jewish families. Life started to improve for my parents when, around a year later, they were able to start a small business on a shoestrung and then I was able to leave home to study a profession.

In 1939 the Jewish population of Czechoslovakia was 360,000, all of whom considered themselves Czech first and Jewish second. I am one of the last few survivors of a huge family which can trace its roots, mostly in the Bohumin and Ostrava area, back to around the



First group of Czech refugees arrives in Clacton-on-Sea, 1939

1870s. About 70 members of my close extended family were murdered in the Holocaust, including three grandparents and my mother's brother as well as around 32 great-uncles and great-aunts. All my great-grandparents came from Galicia in what is now just a few miles over the border from the Czech Republic, but before 1918 Galicia and Czechoslovakia were part of Austria-Hungary so they did not cross any borders.

All members of my family born before 1918, including my parents, were citizens of Austria-Hungary and that is why we were all bilingual in German and Czech. Most of them became Czech citizens in 1918, while just a very few who lived in Cracow by then became Polish. At home in Ostrava, I can remember my grandparents very well indeed: they spoke German, Czech, Yiddish and Polish all mixed up without ever completing a sentence in one tongue!

My mother was sent to a Jewish ladies' finishing school in Hanover as a young girl and my father and his brother were sent to Frankfurt, where they both obtained doctorates in law and political economy in the 1920s. My father returned to Czechoslovakia in 1924 and studied for another doctorate in Czech law, eventually becoming a partner in a prominent law office in Ostrava.

In nearby Bohumin, my father's family owned a number of businesses in the main street – Simon Kassler Warenhaus, Kassler Möbel store, Ferdinand Kassler Ironmonger & Tool store – and their sister, my grandmother Auguste and her husband, my grandfather Leopold Lobl Wiener, were owners of the Grand Hotel from around 1880. Another sister, Josefina, was co-owner of a ready-made garment factory with her husband and two sons in Prostějov. Another branch of Kasslers owned even more businesses in Ostrava-Privoz and Frydek. My mother's family, the Hupperts, were mainly in the food business. Five of my great-uncles were butchers, each with their own shop, and three of them – Otto, Hugo and Fritz – had a meat-

processing business employing about 40 staff as well as a delicatessen shop in the main street in Ostrava which they sold to their sister Anka. My great-grandfather, Abraham Huppert, owned a grocery shop in Mariánské Hory Ostrava and a *Gasthaus* in Ostrava-Svinov from the 1880s, before disposing of the *Gasthaus*, the Hotel Post, to his eldest daughter Resi and her husband Julius (Julek) Farber. He then bought a large hotel in Las Cyganski, Bielski-Biala (Zigeunerwald, Bielitz), which he left to my youngest great-uncle, Josef Huppert, in 1934. The Farber's Hotel Post opposite the Ostrava-Svinov railway, which after 1912 was owned by my grandparents Resi and Julius Farber, became enormously prosperous as the railway station was used by thousands of workers travelling to the largest iron and steel foundry in Europe in nearby Vitkovice and Ostrava's industrial area. This explains why the Hotel Post was reputed to sell 20,000 litres of beer

## Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia *cont.*

weekly and was open dawn to dusk.

The basic facts about the Czech-Jewish refugees can be found on the websites 'CAST – Czech and Slovak Things' and 'Jewish Virtual Library – Czechoslovakia'. There were, in fact, about 20,000 refugees who came to the UK in 1938-39; most but not all of them were Jewish. Most of the 14,000 names of the Jewish refugees are listed on 'CAST'. Some 5,000 Czech refugees also arrived from France. During the Second World War there were Czech RAF squadrons and a Czech Army Brigade. In 1938 the Czech Refugee

*When after the War several survivors of my family returned to Czechoslovakia, some from concentration camps, it did not take long before they learned that all the properties belonging to the family, including their own homes, had been seized by the Czech authorities.*

Committee started with offices at 5 Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1 and later had a number of branches, including the former Palace Hotel in Bloomsbury Street. Subsequently this became the Czech Refugee Trust Fund, employing some 200 people in its various branches.

When after the War several survivors of my family returned to Czechoslovakia, some from concentration camps, it did not take long before they learned that all the properties belonging to the family, including their own homes, had been seized by the Czech authorities. At first, they

were deluded into hoping that these could be regained by court proceedings, which started

in 1948 (the last such proceeding was in 2002), but even now not a single property which belonged to my family has been returned or restituted to the rightful owners and heirs. This is the main reason why we never returned permanently to the country of our birth.

The Jews of Czechoslovakia made a huge contribution to the prosperity and culture of the country. There were, and are, numerous notable Jews who were born in what is now the Czech Republic and Slovakia whose names are famous. Here are just a few of them: Sigmund Freud, born Příbor 1856; Gustav Mahler, born Kaliste 1860; Franz Kafka, born Prague 1883; Max Brod, born Prague 1884; Franz Werfel, born Prague 1890; Erich Korngold, born Brno 1897; Louis Kentner, born Karvina 1905; Jaroslav Seifert, born Prague 1901; Professor Stefan Körner, born Ostrava 1913; Herbert Lom, born Prague 1917; Karel Reisz, born Ostrava 1926; Rabbi Hugo Gryn, born Berehovo 1930; Madeleine Albright, born Prague 1937; Tom Stoppard, born Zlín 1937; and Walter Susskind, born Prague 1913.

**Leopold Wiener**  
(born Ostrava-Svinov)

### Kindertransport 75th Anniversary

In addition to the reception at St James's Palace on **Monday 24 June** (see page 1), the AJR is delighted to announce a series of events that we are organising this year to mark the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport.

The central event will be the Kinder reunion on **Sunday 23 June** at the JFS. We will shortly be sending out invitations with details of the day, which will include contributions from Kinder, JFS pupils and guest speakers. We very much encourage the participation of the Second and Third Generations of Kinder. The reunion will also incorporate a new exhibition to be curated by the Wiener Library which will be on display at the Library from May.

On **Tuesday 25 June**, the Leo Baeck Institute London, together with the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, will be holding a symposium at the German Historical Institute in London. The conference will focus on the experiences of Kinder after their arrival in Britain and will be a great opportunity for scholars and Kinder to exchange thoughts and ideas. As with the reunion, it is hoped that younger generations will come along as well as Kinder from out of town and overseas who hope to come to JFS.

Later in the year, on **Wednesday 20 November**, we are organising, with the help of Lord (Alf) Dubs, a special Tea in the Houses of Parliament to mark the debate held there on 21 November 1938 which paved the way for the arrival of the Kindertransport.

To round off the year, World Jewish Relief, in conjunction with the AJR, will be organising a memorial service at Liverpool Street Station on **Sunday 1 December**, which recalls the arrival 75 years to the day of the first transport of children.

We look forward to welcoming Kinder and their families at these historic events as well as of course to the monthly Kinder lunches at the Belsize Square Synagogue.

**Sir Erich Reich**

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### ARTS AND EVENTS APRIL

**Until 10 April 'A Wandering Artist ... Who Settled in Cambridge'** Commemorative exhibition of 300 paintings by 'Kind' **Lore Burgess (née Freudenthal)** at Clare Hall College, Cambridge (6-8 April at artists' former home in Cambridge). For further details, contact Gina Burgess Winning on 07505 083913 or at johnandgina@ausum.co.uk

**Fri 12 Dr Martin Dean** (Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)) **'Documenting Nazi Camps and Ghettos: The USHMM Encyclopedia'** Wiener Library, 1.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247. Admission free

**Fri 26 Dr Kate Vigurs 'Landscapes of Memory: A Study of Holocaust Memorials across Europe'** Wiener Library, 1.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247. Admission free

### PRESENTATION BY THE AGENCY FOR THE BANK OF ENGLAND

**THURSDAY 23 MAY 2013**  
at **ALYTH GARDENS SYNAGOGUE,**  
**LONDON NW11 7EN**  
**2.30 – 3.30 pm**



The Bank has 12 Agencies based around the UK. Their primary role is to assess economic conditions affecting businesses in their area.

The Agency has spoken at a number of AJR groups around the country and now they are asking for help from our members.

They want your opinions on new bank notes, coins and security issues. Come along and have a chat with the Agency with a cup of tea and a piece of cake included!

**No charge – to book your place, just contact Susan Harrod**  
on 020 8385 3078 or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)



# Letters to the Editor

*The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication*

## SCHOOL FOR 'HIGH FLYERS'

Sir – In the second of his excellent articles on Viennese Jewry (February 2013), Anthony Grenville names several schools which were popular with Jewish families. However, he omits one school which was highly regarded, particularly by more traditional families, and which deserves to be mentioned: the Chajes Gymnasium. It was situated in the Leopoldstadt and named after an esteemed chief rabbi of Vienna. The school admitted only Jewish pupils. It taught all the usual subjects, like any other secondary school, but in addition there was strong emphasis on all Jewish matters. Its educational standards were exceptionally high and there was a belief in the Jewish community that it was exceedingly good at producing 'high flyers'.

There may have been some truth in this. My own short period at the school was roughly contemporary with that of Norbert Brainin, who became the leader of the great Amadeus Quartet for its entire existence, and Walter Kohn, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1998. Professor Kohn has written warmly about the excellent teaching there, particularly in physics and mathematics, and regarded this as important for his later outstanding scientific achievements. A history of the alumni of the Chajes Gymnasium might be quite interesting.

The Chajes Gymnasium was closed by the Nazis during the war. I believe a new school with the same or similar name has now been established but I know little about it. Can anyone fill me in on this?

*Fritz Starer, Watford, Herts*

## JEWS AT VIENNA SCHOOLS

Sir – Once again your readers must pay tribute to Dr Grenville's learning and ability to unearth statistics on such recondite subjects as the percentage of Jewish pupils at individual grammar schools. But even Homer nods and there are two points in this learned article where the facts need correcting.

First, the picture shown on page 1 of your February issue is not that of the 'Burgtheater on Vienna's Ringstrasse, built 1888' but that of the Altes Burgtheater on the Michaelerplatz, which was demolished when the Neue Burg was extended about that time. There is a memorial plaque on

the site of the original Burgtheater – really inside the Hofburg, hence the name.

Second, it is not true that the Benedictine-run Schottengymnasium in 'K.k.' times excluded Jews – the proportion was reasonably high and included such luminaries as the future Dr Victor Adler. It was only in about 1928 that the Benedictines in all Austrian and Bavarian monastic schools were ordered from on high to confine future recruitment to Catholic boys, not affecting Protestant, Jewish and other non-Catholic pupils already in the school, the last of whom finished their courses in 1936. As for the Theresianum, there was probably no specific ban on Jews, but clearly there would have been little interest from any others in a military academy-type boarding school specialising in young nobles preparing almost exclusively for a military career.

All this changed after 1918, when the Theresianum became a conventional *Realgymnasium*, albeit still with boarding facilities, and I know of at least one family who made sure their son in the *Internat* got kosher food. The family was that of the distinguished ENT surgeon H. Oppenheim, who treated the Duke of Windsor when he stayed with the Rothschilds in Lower Austria in the winter of 1936-37. This should demolish the slur that Edward VIII had Nazi sympathies, as should Dr Oppenheim's boast that his patient had assured him that he did not like Hitler.

*F. M. M. Steiner, Deddington, Oxfordshire*

## JEWS EXCLUDED FROM DEDICATION

Sir – The front-page photo in your February issue is, I think, the Vienna Burgtheater shortly before the 1888 reconstruction. The 'final' part of the Hofburg on the Inner City side already towers over the theatre to its left, ending in the archway linking the stables to the Spanish Riding School to keep the horses dry! Its building dates to a much earlier period.

I have a picture of the Burgtheater on the Ringstrasse as it appears today. The building has just been cleaned and so looks now as my grandparents would have enjoyed it. The signs forming the right-hand edge of the printed photo were replaced around the turn of the 20th century by one of Adolf Loos's major

creations – today a bank.

Just outside the photo, on the left, is St Michael's Church. The saint stands over the portico with sword and shield. The latter, gilded, has the name of G-d inscribed in Hebrew. I recall it pre-war and the Jewish invocation of G-d survived, unaltered, the Nazi period. Inside is a chapel dedicated to the victims of Nazism, which I find utterly unsympathetic. Without judging whether it is intentional or not, I feel we are excluded. The dedication is to 'Austrians' who died in KZ Dachau (only!) for 'Freedom, Right and Humanity'. Despite the reference to freedom, there is a head-and-shoulders bust of Chancellor Dr E. Dollfuss, the christo-fascist, although he was, of course, killed by the Austrian Nazis.

*Francis Deutsch, Saffron Walden*

## ECHTER WIENER ODER SCHLAWINER?

Sir – Anthony Grenville's recent erudite articles on Vienna interested me greatly. The role that city, with its vast number of Jews of varied backgrounds, used to play was indeed unique.

It used to be common, if somewhat derogatory, to enquire of a person 'Ist er ein echter Wiener oder ein Schlawiner?' – a made-up word meaning someone from one of the surrounding Slav countries which made up the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose Jews were held to be somewhat less cultured than those born and bred in Vienna. *Margarete Stern, London NW3*

## DAYS OF THE DORICE

Sir – Lauren Collins's article 'Days of the Dorice' in your March issue brought back some quite emotional and poignant memories to me and probably to many other readers.

Before it was the Dorice, where so many of us enjoyed 'Kaffee und Kuchen', the restaurant was called Balsam. Here at the weekend one could dine by candlelight – and it had a small dance floor! By the Finchley Road Station side of John Barnes was a delicatessen shop named Assan, which was open all hours, including evenings and weekends, quite a rarity in those days. It was filled with delicious Continental foods, which we hadn't seen in a long time.

John Barnes himself had a restaurant where many of our parents (I am Second Generation) were able to sit for hours, sometimes with just a single cup of tea or coffee. On the other side of Finchley Road, opposite the Cosmo Restaurant, was the Peter Herz Revue, a small theatre group staging operettas, plays and suchlike, and at Swiss Cottage in Eton Avenue was the Laterndl. Both, I believe, were of Austrian origin, often bringing some light-heartedness into our sometimes sad or lonely lives!

Thankfully, we have all moved on and at times relish our memories.

*Ursula Trafford (Mayer), Wembley Park, Middx*

Sir – We were very interested to read Lauren Collins's article as my husband's aunt was named Elsa Rosenbaum and I think she must be the lodger written about in this article. Her brother, my father-in-law, was Edward Rosenbaum and my mother-in-law was Helen. They came to England from Hamburg in 1935-6. They lived in Finchley and had two children: Michael, my husband, and Gudula, my sister-in-law. I wonder if Lauren's grandparents knew Edward, Helen and the children?

Sadly, Michael died in 2004 but Gudula Rosenbaum, who is 93, is still living in Chalk Farm.

We would be very interested to hear more about Lauren's memories of Elsa.

*Ruth Rosenbaum  
(address not supplied)*

Sir – I spent many happy hours with my parents at both the Cosmo and the Dorice, often bringing my children along for a special afternoon treat in the mid-1960s. Reading your excellent article, I felt as if I myself was being transported back to a very special era.

Maybe the Second and Third Generations can find a special place to meet and shmooze?

*Sarah Fabian-Baddiel  
(b. Königsberg), Harrow*

#### GOOD OLD AJR

Sir – Following the publication of my letter ('The day I kissed Richard Tauber') in your February issue, thank you so much for putting me in touch with Mrs Gerti Baruch. She, her mother and sister were very old family friends with whom we had lost touch. My sisters – both older and living abroad – will be equally thrilled to have news. Good old AJR does it again! What would we all do without you ...?

*Mary (Putzi) Brainin Huttner,  
London N3*

#### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A VIDEO DOCUMENTARY

Sir – As a university student with a Master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from the European Peace University in Austria, and currently a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Vienna, I would like to share with you my film documentary project, which, I hope, will contribute towards peace and understanding in our society. It is a documentary about those who escaped or survived the Holocaust.

As one of the editors and producers of this documentary, I live in Vienna, where I was born, and from where also my great-grandmother (Mathilde Brosam) was deported and died in Theresienstadt. My great-aunt (Anna Brosam) was also murdered by the Nazis in Hartheim, a euthanasia killing facility.

I would like to interview readers who escaped/survived the Holocaust personally if you are in or near Vienna and, if you are far away, via a hired camera person.

I am flexible and can accommodate you according to your time schedule. I am hoping that perhaps you can also recommend to me others who escaped or survived the Holocaust and are still able and willing to be interviewed.

*Nina Grubeck,  
Vienna, nina\_grubeck@hotmail.com*

#### EXPULSION OF ETHNIC GERMANS FROM EASTERN EUROPE

Sir – It is gratifying that my review of the book on the expulsion of the ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe (December) elicited letters from four of your readers (January and March), if only because it is good to know that my reviews are read.

However, two of those readers (Eric Bourne and Frank Bright) clearly didn't get the message. Neither the author of the book nor I attempted to exonerate the Germans who had lived, and often behaved badly, in Poland, Czechoslovakia and other East European countries. The author of the book described and deplored the barbaric treatment meted out to these people as the War ended – measures that were akin to those used by the Nazis against Jews as well against their political opponents - and I entirely agree with him, as do the other two of your correspondents.

*Leslie Baruch Brent, London N19*

Sir – Frank Bright's letter (March) expressed the sentiments of most Sudetenland Jews regarding the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans by the Czechs after the war. I was born in Teplitz-Schönau and spent my early years in the town, as did my family, who had lived in and around Teplitz for over 250 years. Mr Henlein and his Nazis agitated to leave the democratic state of Czechoslovakia and join the dictatorship of Nazi Germany. Within days of the German occupation I was told to leave school, my father's business was confiscated, my gentle friends refused to play with me, and my parent's lifetime friends shunned them. Within weeks we left for Prague and our flat, and most of its contents, was occupied by our erstwhile neighbours. Eventually we finished up in England.

Many years later I took my family, children and grandchildren, back to visit Teplitz. As my family stood and looked at my grandfather's house while I was photographing them, I heard German spoken just behind me. It was two couples discussing where they had lived round the corner. They asked if I had come from the area. I said yes. Their next question was 'And when did they throw you out?' I answered 'In 1938.' They looked at me in astonishment and asked 'Why then?' When I replied 'Because I am a Jew,' the expression on their faces was something I will never forget. Yes, Mr Bright, they got what they wanted and the misery they deserved.

*Bob Norton, Nottingham*

#### COMPLEX LIVES, COMPLEX IDENTITIES

Sir – A sociologist or a psychiatrist could have a field day with your correspondence regarding identity. Your latest contributor, Margarete Stern (March), is a valuable addition in that she expands on this topic – even though she finds it pointless – and concludes with 'I am just so different!'

Yes, we *all* are – from the chap who, feeling British, supports his local football team, to Mrs Stern, the Franconian-born Jewess who does not feel British. She left Nazi Germany in 1933 and wound up in Britain with her parents.

The 10,000 Kindertransport children came without their parents. They present 10,000 different stories. I was one of them. My guardian taught me how to dry-fly fish on the river Itchen and how to train gun dogs. He was 'Uncle' and his Scottish aristocratic wife 'Auntie'. They sent me to boarding school. Other 'Kinder' wound up being badly treated servants. Complex lives, complex identities. And aren't we all lucky to have survived! I, happily, as a Bavarian-Jewish Brit.

*Bea Green, London SW13*

Sir – Margarete Stern's interesting article reminds me of a train journey to my native Vienna some time in the late 1950s.

Passport control at the Austrian border carefully examined my British passport and, handing it back with a smile, said 'So an schönen Pass hat er und is eh a Österreicher!' (He's got such a nice passport and he's an Austrian for all that!). I looked at him and shook my head. 'Not any more,' I said, 'Jetzt nicht mehr!'

Lord Tebbit would be pleased: I have switched my allegiance from FC Austria to Manchester United!

*Tom Winter, York*

Sir – If Margarete Stern thinks a discussion about whether refugees feel or don't feel British is a pointless exercise, why does she write a long blog about it? Perhaps it is because she feels guilty that she doesn't even 'pretend to feel British'. I suggest to her that maybe she should return to Germany. Evidently she feels more at home there.

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

#### LETTER ABOUT ISRAEL?

Sir – I was most disappointed that the February 'Letter from Israel' by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson had nothing whatsoever to do with Israel. I was under the impression that the intention of the 'Letter' was to inform us of aspects of life in that country. Clearly this is not the case. Several previous 'Letters from Israel' tended to be trivial and did not deal with any of the many serious issues there which I am sure most readers would like to read about.

*Felix Sturm, London NW4*

# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

A portraitist during the era of Realism, an artist who pre-figured Impressionism, Edouard Manet was born on the cusp of photography and in the **Royal Academy's** first major UK portrait exhibition, **Manet: Portraying Life** (until 14 April), you can sense his tentative steps in both directions.

His Realism taught him the formalism of dark colours, when painting subjects like Antonin Proust or the two faces of Berthe Morisot, first in the charm of youth and later in the widowhood which ravaged



Edouard Manet *Berthe Morisot with a Bouquet of Violets* (1872), Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Photo copyright RMN (Musée d'Orsay) / Herve Lewandowski

her. Yet it feels as though the advent of photography almost cramped his style. The serious men in top hats, or seated bookishly like Emile Zola, are a nod to the Old Masters of a century earlier. Was the artist afraid to experiment? Manet's much loved *Bar at the Folies-Bergère* in the neighbouring Courtauld Institute would have been a welcome addition to the show ....

But Manet is master of mystery. In *The Railway*, painted in 1873, a woman in a hat with a book and a tiny puppy sits facing us against the figure of a child in a white dress and a big blue sash, with her back to us, staring out at the steam from an invisible passing train. The painting prompted Jacques de Biez to comment in

1884 'Where the devil is the railway in this picture of a railway?'

In fact, the Gare Saint-Lazare, which captivated Paris with the coming of industrialisation, was only two blocks away from the artist's studio, but of course its message is the story of a world about to change, far from the experience of the elegant woman and child. Manet tells us that he too must embrace change and perhaps the Impressionists would power his artistic transformation – even though he refused to exhibit with them.

There are hints of Impressionism in *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, where a large crowd gathers to discuss Wagner. The composition is oddly bisected by a tree, perhaps an allusion to Wotan in his Ring cycle who breaks off the world ash tree's holiest branch to make his divine spear.

Manet painted his two brothers, Eugène and Gustave, but even in *Boy Blowing Bubbles* there is no sense of playfulness at all. Often in his narrative works featuring two or more people, there is no relationship between them. In *The Luncheon* only the bearded artist Auguste Rousselin, barely glimpsed in the background, sits at the table, while the main character, Léon, in a cream boater and black jacket, stands staring dreamily into space, the maid behind him with a jug. In this oddly disturbing piece he uses the symbol of the black cat in homage to the dead poet Baudelaire yet, if this suggests the past, many of the works verge on Modernism, even though Manet himself had few artistic pretensions. He seems to have flooded only one painting with colour – a lavish study of Emilie Ambre as *Carmen*, with a red rose and white mantilla.

But in *The Street Singer*, a woman holds a bunch of grapes to her lips in guilty shock. Has she stolen them? Has someone accosted her? The mystery of Manet again.

## REVIEWS

### Devastating depiction of post-war German society

**LANDGERICHT (State Justice)**

by Ursula Krechel

Salzburg: *Jung und Jung*, 2012, 480 pp., ISBN 978 3 99027 024 0

Some 400,000 so-called non-Aryans emigrated from Germany and Austria during the Nazi period. A mere 5 per cent returned after the war. This is the story of one of this 'minority within a minority'.

The book, published in German, is described as a *Roman* – a novel. But is it? It alternates between studiously researched, detailed documentary evidence and imaginative fiction. The author herself has revealed that her story is 'not invented but found'. Indeed, one AJR member, Ruth Barnett, has identified the central character as based on her own father, Robert Michaelis. In this book, however, the central character is called Dr Richard Kornitzer.

Richard Kornitzer is described as an up-and-coming Berlin jurist, alienated from traditional Judaism, married to a non-Jewish advertising executive. They have two children. Immediately after the Nazis come to power he is dismissed from his post as a judge. The fact that he has converted to Protestantism, apparently to be closer to his wife, gives him no advantages. To the Nazis he is a *Volljude*. For a while he ekes out a living in Berlin but in 1939 he emigrates to one of the few places still open to him – Cuba. However, he fails in his efforts to bring his wife out before the outbreak of war. The children had earlier been sent to England on a Kindertransport. For 12 years the family is dispersed but in 1947, after great efforts, Kornitzer returns to Germany to rejoin his wife, to reclaim his post as a judge, and to reassemble the family.

End of agony? No, not at all! Reclaiming his job and getting compensation for financial losses turns out to be difficult, unpleasant and time-consuming in the hostile environment of post-war Germany. He is regarded as one of the lucky ones. He has never had to huddle in overcrowded shelters during air raids. Nobody appears to be aware of the fate that would have awaited him had he not managed to get out of Germany in time.

In his old-new post Kornitzer finds himself surrounded by former Nazis or others who collaborated too closely for

**Wednesday 22 May 2013 at 12.00 noon**

The AJR in association with the London Jewish Cultural Centre is pleased to announce a talk by

**Anthony Penrose**

**'Lee Miller and Roland Penrose – Peace, Freedom, Justice and Two Surrealists'**

at **LJCC, Ivy House, 94-96 North End Road, London NW11 7SX**

Anthony Penrose is the son of the American photographer Lee Miller and of Roland Penrose, the surrealist artist and poet. He is most notable for his book *The Lives of Lee Miller* (Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1985).

£5.00 including a light lunch

**For booking details, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**

comfort. For them the proximity of a colleague who has no guilt to hide is an embarrassment. When Kornitzer becomes responsible for 'denazification' cases, he is shunted off to examine the personal histories of abattoir workers and piano teachers but kept far from cases involving fellow officials. Such cases are left to judges with far more opaque personal histories. Similarly, he is excluded from compensation cases because, he is told, he might be considered partisan. Former Nazi judges are, apparently, not suspected of being partisan.

There are long flashbacks about Kornitzer's years in Cuba, the hair-raising corruption of the Batista regime, and Kornitzer's relations with an attractive Cuban woman by whom he has a daughter.

Reuniting the family in Germany after long separation turns out to be painful. The daughter would much rather remain with her English foster mother than join a German mother whose language she no longer understands.

Post-war German financial compensation legislation is described, analysed – and found wanting. A Social Democrat parliamentarian is quoted as describing it as legally and morally so bad that he, once again, feels ashamed to be German.

Kornitzer pursues his rights with what some might consider obsessive determination. The author herself hints at the parallel with Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas*. The stress of working in this environment takes its toll on Kornitzer's health and when, after years of battle, he is offered an enhanced pension – apparently to encourage his premature retirement – he accepts. His awkward colleagues will have been relieved.

This is a long book and an important one. It won the Deutsche Buch Preis but, in this reviewer's view, it would have packed far more punch if numerous long tangents, often with little relevance to the main theme, had been pruned. Why pages about the different varieties of apple grown near Lake Constance, where Kornitzer's wife Claire has found refuge? Why the detailed description of the room in an English farmhouse where she meets her estranged daughter after years of separation? Why a long diversion about the architect Mendelsohn's elegant buildings in far-flung lands? Why pages about the *Grundbuch* – the German official record of landed property?

But this is certainly an important book and its highly critical depiction of post-war German society is devastating.

**Peter Fraenkel**

## Poles, Jews and Germans in WWII: A horror story

### INFERNO OF CHOICES: POLES AND THE HOLOCAUST

edited by Sebastian Rejak & Elzbieta Frister

*Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, 2012, 414 pp. paperback, translated from Polish by Elzbieta Galabjowska, ISBN 978-83-7399-514-7*

(NB: This is a limited edition and not easily obtainable. However, the book is readily available online at [www.london.polemb.net](http://www.london.polemb.net))

This book was published under the auspices of the Polish Foreign Office and sceptics might therefore think that it is to be taken with a pinch of salt. However, it contains reports, memoranda, bulletins and edicts, either whole or in part and written at the time, with precise dates and locations, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted. There are also a number of lengthy articles written by Polish historians that attempt to analyse various facets of what was, during the war, a chaotic, deeply traumatic and confusing situation and for which there may never be a definitive resolution. The book shows clearly enough that the German occupiers were beastly to Poles and Jews alike, that the Polish population on the whole behaved badly towards their Jewish compatriots but not infrequently also behaved with great courage in hiding or assisting Jews, and that the suffering of the Jews was indescribable – they were between the hammer and the anvil.

The editors make it clear from the start that their book differs from others written about that period: (a) it reveals many authentic Polish and German documents; (b) the writings of Polish historians (one of them one of the 'Righteous among the Nations' at Yad Vashem) are made available to Anglophone readers for the first time; and (c) it illustrates the awful realities prevailing in Poland during the war. Thus, noble and ignoble attitudes co-existed, sometimes curiously intertwined. Evidently the Holocaust has become a major field for study in Poland since 1989 and the Poles are still trying to come to terms with what transpired in the war years. Readers who believe that Polish anti-Semitism has a lot to answer for will find their views confirmed, but those who feel that nothing was black-and-white in those terrible years and that many Poles showed compassion, often risking their lives, likewise can derive support for their point of view. As the title implies, Poland was indeed an inferno and the choices citizens often had to make were dire in the extreme.

The documents vary from an announcement in 1939 by the Executive

Authority of the Jewish Religious Community on the time limit for the enforced move into the Warsaw ghetto, a circular from a senior SS Commander in November 1939 on the resettlement of Jews and Poles, to the minutes of a meeting, on 16 December 1941, of the cabinet of the General Government on Jewish policy 'towards their total elimination', and a bulletin, published underground, sternly banning Poles from joining an auxiliary force to guard barracks in labour camps. Underground publications frequently warned Poles not to collaborate with the Germans: 'Whoever is silent in the face of murder becomes an accomplice in it. Whoever does not condemn – condones ... Let us, Polish Catholics, speak up' (August 1942). Other underground publications speak of the Jews as 'the enemy' whilst at the same time calling for compassion.

The historical articles are detailed and varied. One deals with the life of Jews 'on the Aryan side', i.e. living in hiding outside the ghetto and therefore largely dependent on assistance from Poles. This assistance was sometimes given altruistically but, in the majority of cases, by payment. Another article gives details of denunciatory letters written by Poles, their motives very often being greed or the settling of scores rather than anti-Semitism *per se* (70 per cent of such letters concerned non-Jewish citizens). Others still discussed the problem of anti-Semitism and collaboration with the Germans, the problems of Jews hiding in the countryside, the help given to Jews in one particular area (Rzeszow), and the question of payments and extortions (and sometimes denunciations) on the part of 'helpers'. In July 1943 the Foreign Affairs Section of the Government Delegation of Poland acknowledged that there continued to be strong resentment towards the Jewish population and called for the resettlement of its survivors in a 'national centre' (location unspecified)!

The final section deals with 'szaber frenzy' (the word 'szaber' stems from the Hebrew 'szdbar' (to break) that erupted in the Polish population near the end and in the first two years after the war – a frenzy of indiscriminate looting and pillaging on a grand scale by people who were by then totally demoralised by the dreadful and chaotic conditions in which they had had to eke out their lives for six long years.

This is a book I commend to anyone who wants to know what happened in that tragic country during the war years, in which as many as three million Poles are estimated to have died in dire circumstances. It may not give us a definitive picture but it is an important step towards that objective.

**Leslie Baruch Brent**

*Reviews continued overleaf* ➔

## In search of an identity

### THE BALANCING GAME: A CHILD BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, A SOCIETY APPROACHING WAR by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

*Houston TX: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co., 2013, 258 pp. paperback, ISBN 978-1-62212-846-4; available from Amazon.UK*

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, the contributor of the 'Letter from Israel' column to this magazine, has written what appears to be a deeply autobiographical novel. In a sense, she has written two novels, in parallel sections. The first chronicles the life of the schoolgirl Naomi, who lives with her German-Jewish refugee family in a shabby suburb in post-war London; the second relates to Naomi's adult incarnation Felicity, who is living in Jerusalem at the time of the 1967 Six-Day War.

The bookish Naomi, the oldest of three daughters, is in a permanent state of rebellion against her parents, a religiously

observant couple. She is embarrassed by them – not least their 'alien' accents – and passionately seeks integration into the wider English culture, even while having to put up with snide anti-Semitic remarks by some of her teachers. She eventually takes a degree in psychology, albeit not from Oxbridge, which to her parents would have represented the pinnacle of acceptance by English society.

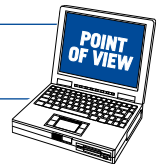
Fast-forward to 1967 and Naomi, having at the age of 11 changed her name to the 'non-Jewish-sounding' Felicity (any opposition to this by her parents is not mentioned), is living in – of all places – Jerusalem. Having, in effect, abandoned her London family, she exists in a state of tedium with her husband, an academic, whose parents she also finds tiresome, though she enjoys her job preparing fundraising publications at the Hebrew University. Her pregnancy coincides with the build-up to the Six-Day War, not unnaturally a deeply anxious time for Israeli citizens, evoking comparisons with the recent Holocaust period. An odd, epilogue-like final section of the

book presents the one-year-old Naomi as resentful of her traumatic evacuation from war-torn London.

Full of rich, nostalgic detail, and much humour, and fluently told, this is not really a story about individuals as such – with the exception of Naomi/Felicity, few characters are rounded – but about the search for an identity one can be comfortable with. Yet, while there are elements of reconciliation towards the end of the novel, it's difficult to imagine the protagonist being happy in any environment, including the secular Jewish life of Israel she has adopted. It seems that the 'balance' in the novel's rather unwieldy title is not necessarily that of the 'two worlds' we are led to believe, but her inability to fit in to any world. Naomi's/Felicity's parents may well not be to her liking, but they do seem, with all their shortcomings, to have her best interests at heart – as do her husband and his family. It's difficult to feel much sympathy for her somewhat patronising approach to those around her. Perhaps a future novel will continue her journey.

Howard Spier

## Israel has not aged well



It was my Barmitzva in 1948 and what a wonderful present was sent from the Middle East! My family, all Holocaust survivors, had always wanted it and here it was – the foundation of the State of Israel. My father had been a Zionist in Vienna and a devout follower of Theodore Herzl. His prayers had been granted.

Israel's pregnancy period had not been an easy one. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, was, almost certainly, an anti-Semite and the impatient Jews in Palestine were not helping the Jewish cause by blowing up the King David Hotel and hanging those two British sergeants. But in May 1948 David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, delivered us the State of Israel. It was a bonny baby but it was born with horrid cousins. Right from the beginning, these cousins were jealous and wanted to kill the new-born baby. Sadly, 65 years later, this is still the situation.

At first, the parents of the new child, particularly Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin, knew how to deal with its problems. But then the family started to fight among itself. Some, like Menachem Begin, decided the baby, now a teenager, was not being looked after properly and took a much harder stance against the enemy – now clearly defined as the majority of the Arab states. Being strict with your child sometimes does work, and it did for Begin. In 1978 Israel, thanks to Begin, made friends with one of its neighbours, Egypt, and with its president, Anwar Sadat. (Sadly, some of Sadat's people did not like this new friendship and so killed him.)

But after Israel started to become an adult, there was a rebellion against this new strictness. Israel sought comfort from some of its gentler friends, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres. Rabin even made friends in 1993 with Enemy No. 1, Yassir Arafat of the PLO, and then with King Hussein of Jordan in 1994. Inevitably, the strict ones felt they had lost control, so Rabin was assassinated. Very soon afterwards, Shimon Peres started to show that, though kind, he was weak. So it was time for change again – Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert came and went in quick succession. Much more significantly, Ariel Sharon arrived, a hawk until now. On becoming prime minister, Sharon realised, cleverly, that he had to be more conciliatory and so disengaged Israel from Gaza. Unluckily for him, and for Israel, he became ill not long afterwards, thus allowing Netanyahu to take control again.

Netanyahu was determined not to lose his newly found power and immediately aligned himself with all sorts of well-meaning but entirely selfish people. They saw things in only one light – theirs. Netanyahu gave too much credence to the religious parties so that they became very much the dominant ones. He started to turn Israel from a secular and democratic state into a fundamentalist one. The rabbis dictated home policy, the Hasidim were excused military service, the ultra-religious settlers, mainly from the United States, were allowed to build their settlements. At the same time, Israel had an influx of Russian Jews who, having seen what Putin and the oligarchs

had done in Russia, tried to take control in Israel in the same way – by force. Avigdor Liberman and his Yisrael Beitenu group became powerful. They wanted to fight everyone. Netanyahu needed them to keep power and, inevitably, befriended them. His allies were now the ultra-religious Hasidim, the ultra-religious settlers, the ultra-religious Shas party, and the militant Yisrael Beitenu – a strange and frightening mixture.

Israel was no longer the baby everyone had once admired, that worked and played in the kibbutzim and made flowers and vegetables grow in the sand. They were now seen by many as an aggressive influence in the Middle East. It was not just anti-Zionism that they created but anti-Semitism too, because so few are able to differentiate between the two.

However, perhaps now – optimistically – Yair Lapid and his new secular party, Yesh Atid, can come to Israel's, and our, rescue. (Even Naftali Bennett and his scary Jewish Home conglomerate are better partners in a coalition than what we have had before.) Lapid does not want the religious parties in the Israeli government. This is great news because I am terrified that, if Israel were to continue with them in positions of power, Jerusalem would turn into Mea Shearim and Israel would become a fundamentalist Jewish state, with no difference between it and its fundamentalist Islamic neighbours. At the moment, Israel is not ageing well. Let's just hope Lapid can rejuvenate it.

Peter Phillips

## To all AJR members – looking forward to welcoming you

On a recent AJR outing to Sandy's Row Synagogue, we met a number of new members. When we say 'new', these were, in fact, longstanding members of the AJR, who over the last few years had escaped our radar.

It is apparent that outings – for instance a trip to Kew Gardens, a visit to the theatre or to the Houses of Parliament, or the recent tour of the East End and Sandy's Row – can appeal right across the board of the AJR membership.

However, while we meet many new faces on our outings, it has also come to light that some members don't think they are eligible to attend group meetings, where we meet mornings or afternoons throughout the South East area mainly on a monthly basis with guest speakers and refreshments.

Whether you are a spouse of a member who has passed away, or a member of the

Child Survivors' Association, or Second or Third Generation, you have an open invitation to attend any group meeting.

By the same token, if you live in South London and see that there is an interesting speaker at a St John's Wood group meeting, why not hop on a train or bus and join us? We have plenty of members who visit more than one group per month.

If you're not able to hop on a train or a bus, the AJR can help with the costs of travel. No one should miss out on any opportunity to attend a group meeting or take part in an outing due to lack of the ability to get there.

The outings have grown into a regular feast of events in the AJR calendar and we want as many members as possible to benefit from seeing some fantastic places and – more importantly – the opportunity to come across old or new acquaintances.

Last month saw our annual London

Visit, when Northern group members come to the capital for three days, staying at the Holiday Inn in Finchley Road, to enjoy a full diary of events.

London members are able to join in wherever possible on a first-come-first-served basis and we welcome the camaraderie that arises when the 'North-South divide' is breached.

Please see page 13 for a list of forthcoming events and how to get in touch with us if you require further details. Alternatively, call our Groups Administrator, Susan Harrod, on 0208 385 3070. If you have access to a computer, all schedules are listed on our website at <http://www.ajr.org.uk/groupmeetings/location/south>

We look forward to welcoming you somewhere soon.

**Hazel Beiny, Myrna Glass,  
Esther Rinkoff**  
AJR Group Co-ordinators

### SEARCH NOTICES

**Max Auszenberg**, b. 29 April 1928, left Holland for Liverpool on the *SS Bodegraven* on 14 May 1940. Any info on him please to Dirk Veenhuizen at [dirkjeewee@wxs.nl](mailto:dirkjeewee@wxs.nl)

My late parents, **Louis and Renee Crossley (Louis Plofsky and Renee Shenker)**, who lived in Clapton, east London, sponsored a KT child jointly or individually. For purpose of my family tree, could that KT refugee please contact David W. Crossley at [crobat@dircon.co.uk](mailto:crobat@dircon.co.uk)

I was on the last KT from **Danzig**, one or two months before war broke out. The late Ernest Jaffe was in the small group which travelled via Hilversum. Can anyone else who was on that KT please contact me, Manya Igel (née Dobkin), at [nisraf@compuchange.co.uk](mailto:nisraf@compuchange.co.uk)

I wish to trace ex-KT companion **Les Hillman (Lothar Himmelstaub)**, last living in Queensland, Australia. He and I lived in Birkenward Hostel in Skelmorlie, Scotland, during the war with some 40 girls and boys mainly from Austria and Germany (project financed by Gertrude Jacobson Foundation). Lothar apparently had a relative in London, Henry Diamond. Please contact Henry Herner, Pompano Beach, Florida, at [hherner@hotmail.com](mailto:hherner@hotmail.com)

The Dutch Stichting (Foundation) Wolff are anxious to contact **Judith Lipton-Trijtel**, who lives/lived in England. Please write to [arensnicole@hotmail.com](mailto:arensnicole@hotmail.com)

If you have info about the **Michelson** family, who lived in Königsberg, East Prussia, in the 1930s (on Lindenstrasse, next to Jewish Orphanage), please phone Max Ziemann on 0208 205 0028

**Erna Ella Rahel Moser** was born in Berlin on 21 June 1905 and deported from Berlin to Auschwitz on 3 March 1943 (last known address Hohenfriedbergstr. 5, Berlin). For purpose of *Stolpersteine*, please contact [hennings.schmitz@yahoo.de](mailto:hennings.schmitz@yahoo.de) with any info you may have about her

### Pinner Synagogue Yom Hashoah Memorial Evening 'Resistance and Rescue: 70th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising' Sunday 7 April 2013, 8-10 pm

This year's Memorial Service will highlight how some brave people participated in resistance movements despite overwhelming odds and how others managed to show humanity and rescue people where they could.

Graphic artist **Arthur Paunzen** (Vienna 1890-Isle of Man 1940) and wife **Cornelia Westreich-Paunzen** arrived in the UK on or around 13 June 1938. Any info on them please to Dr Gregory Hahn at [gregoryhahn@docsanddocs.com](mailto:gregoryhahn@docsanddocs.com)

My father, Peter Hinchcliffe (parents Thomas and Muriel), remembers **Tommy Serebrenik** and his mother living with him and family in Yorkshire after fleeing from Europe early in WWII. Tommy possibly became a lawyer and later lived in Bristol. Can anyone put Tommy and my father in touch again? Please write to [jane@simpsonw.plus.com](mailto:jane@simpsonw.plus.com)

**Marion Stossel**, b. Vienna approx 1923, refugee in Lincolnshire/London 1938-39 with father and mother, emigrated to Palestine post-1945. Father joined Pioneer Corps, mother worked at jewellers in London. Am seeking info for Marion's former pen-friend Theo Parker. Please write to [alisonfgolding@btinternet.com](mailto:alisonfgolding@btinternet.com)

The Historical Society in **Wolfratshausen** (Germany), whose members include many professional historians, is planning to restore a *mikveh* in Wolfratshausen-Waldram in memory of the Jewish population of the region and to use it for contemporary exhibitions and events. We would be grateful for any info from readers – please contact Gabriele Fyjis-Walker at [fyjis.walker@virgin.net](mailto:fyjis.walker@virgin.net)

We extend a warm welcome to **His Excellency Witold Sobkow, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland**, who will give a short address, and to our guest speakers **Lili Stern-Pohlmann** and **Janine Webber**. During the candle-lighting ceremony, we will highlight **Mordechai Anielewicz**, 23-year-old leader of the Warsaw Ghetto resistance.

**Lili Stern-Pohlmann**, born in Lvov in 1932 and brought up in Cracow, lived under Soviet and Nazi occupation in the Lvov Ghetto but escaped in November 1942. Among others, she was hidden and protected by a Frau Wieth, who in the 1960s received the Medal of the Righteous in Israel. In 2003 Lili met and befriended **Irena Sendler** (see below).

**Janine Webber**, also born in Lvov in 1932, was nine when she and her family were sent to the Ghetto, which she describes as 'a living hell'. She and her brother were taken into hiding but were betrayed. She was released but later learned that her brother had been buried alive. During the War Janine was surprisingly reunited with her aunt when hiding in an underground hole.

**Irena Sendler** (1910-2008), a Polish Catholic nurse and social worker who, as a member of an underground resistance organisation, smuggled 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto, providing them with false identity documents and housing.

**Pinner Synagogue, 1 Cecil Park, Pinner HA5 5HJ, 8.00 pm (doors open 7.30 pm). Admission free. All welcome.**

**Brian Eisenberg**

# INSIDE the AJR

## **Manchester** **Committed to Holocaust Education**

Joanna Millan, Secretary of the Child Survivors' Association (CSA) and newly elected AJR Director, spoke to a packed house, including camp survivors, hidden children, former refugees and Kinder, about the need for the CSA. She told us her most moving and inspirational story of survival in Theresienstadt from the age of 11 months to the age of 3 and her experience on liberation of being flown to Windermere to start a new life in the UK. Joanna, committed to Holocaust education, is involved in a project facilitated through the London Jewish Cultural Centre of training the children of survivors to speak about their parents' survival experience.

*Susanne Green*

## **Ealing Catching Up on News and Views**

Our closely knit group enjoyed a nice social get-together, providing an opportunity to catch up on each other's news and views. Esther gave us an account of an inspiring AJR visit to Sandy's Road Synagogue and we saw the video *The Tenth Man*, produced by that synagogue. We also discussed some topical issues, including members' reactions to Holocaust Memorial Day.

*Leslie Sommer*

## **Café Imperial** **Memories of Early Learning**

What an interesting morning spent learning Sütterlin – Harry Rossney crafted the words 'Suttering Gymnasium' in old German script, evoking memories of early learning. We also had a brief rendition of some Suisse/Deutsch.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## **Leeds CF Making a Difference**

A full house at Wendy Bott's (Yorkshire Groups Co-ordinator) first Leeds meeting. The topic for discussion was 'A person you met who made a difference to your life'. Almost everyone had something to say on this subject. Among others, a couple of stories were told about teachers who had caused people to make decisions or encouraged them as pupils to be studious at a time when most members were living with foster families and had no support from their immediate families.

*Phil Cammerman*

## **Iford Shops and Shopping in Georgian London**

David Barnett gave us a well researched talk on shops and shopping in Georgian London. Oxford Street was then even more

hectic than today; Fortnum & Mason came onstream in 1707 and started it all off; and Harrods arrived as grocers in 1868. A very informative and enjoyable look back into the past.

*Meta Roseneil*

## **Pinner A Family Film Dynasty**

A most interesting afternoon with Howard Lanning, who is part of a family dynasty in the cinema and TV industry whose third generation are now in many aspects of that world, including cinematography and production.

*Robert Gellman*

## **HGS Penicillin: The Untold Story**

Ask anyone 'Who discovered penicillin?' and they will no doubt answer Alexander Fleming. But, in fact, others, including a Jewish refugee chemist from Germany, contributed more to penicillin's amazing force for good. Emeritus Professor Michael Spiro gave us illuminating insight into how penicillin was brought from a discarded Petri dish to be one of the most important drugs ever developed.

*Toni Levi*

## **Essex (Westcliff)**

### **Long Live the Library!**

Sharon Wheeler, Strategy and Planning Manager at Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, spoke about recent consultations regarding the Library Service. We were all delighted to hear that this September will see the newly refurbished main Library, renamed The Forum, with a proposed outdoor flat screen to enable films and sporting events to be shown. Long live the Library!

*Esther Rinkoff*

## **West Midlands (Birmingham)**

### **A Feast of Musical Delight**

Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* in D minor and *Double Concerto for Violin and Piano*, culminating in Josef Suk's *Serenade for Strings* – a feast of musical delight performed magnificently by the Orchestra of the Swan. Thank you, Eva, for organising such a special afternoon!

*Esther Rinkoff*

## **St John's Wood**

### **An Incredibly Special Meeting**

Edwina Mileham of the Wallace Collection not only informed us of how the Collection was started – down to who has visited, including Van Gogh – but amazingly we were shown paintings we were able to see close up; the Laughing Cavalier was explained in depth along with simulated samples of his tunic. We were treated to a tour sitting in our seats and with an excellent guide. An incredibly special meeting!

*Hazel Beiny*

## **Welwyn Garden City What's Wrong with a Light-hearted Subject?**

Most AJR meetings deal with serious matters and therefore tend to be serious affairs. On this occasion, Ros Nagler read us some light-hearted poetry. The poems were based on personal events and experiences and were indeed funny and witty and read in a suitably light-hearted manner. The morning provided good

entertainment and what's wrong with that!

*Fritz Starer*

## **Glasgow CF A Real Eye-opener**

A superb turn-out for a talk by consultant ophthalmologist Harold Hammer on latest developments in eye surgery. His presentation was a real eye-opener! Conditions previously untreatable or requiring lengthy operations can now be attended to with procedures requiring only a local anaesthetic. We concluded with a beautiful afternoon tea.

*Agnes Isaacs*

## **Edinburgh CF**

### **An Afternoon of Poetry Reading**

We enjoyed an afternoon of poetry reading with special guest Joyce Caplan from Edinburgh University, who shared her Holocaust-inspired poems and provided inspiration to members present. We took turns reading our own favourite poems, including one in Hungarian. The afternoon was rounded off with a mouth-watering tea generously hosted by Maria Chamberlain.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### **Edgware Accounts of Experiences**

Having been given details of forthcoming events, we gave accounts of our experiences illustrated with an object. The talks were interesting, varied and well received, ranging from our careers and how we escaped to our holiday experiences. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon.

*Edgar Ring*

## **Kent Inspirational Film**

We watched an inspirational film of Alice Herz-Sommer, a Czech Jew, survivor of Theresienstadt and noted pianist. Aged 98 at the time of the recording, she still played the piano for 2.5 hours per day, declaring that music feeds the soul and helped her survive. We then talked about what Alice's story meant for us.

*Josephine Singer*

## **Newcastle Bringing Back Memories**

*Watermarks* brought back memories for some of the Viennese AJR members. In discussing the film, we discovered that, unknown to anyone else apart from themselves, two of our regular members were, in fact, brother and sister.

*Agnes Isaacs*

## **Oxford 'Jewish Mother, Nazi Father'**

Angela Schluter presented her family's story in her talk 'Jewish Mother, Nazi Father' to an interested audience.

*Anne Selinger*

## **Liverpool**

### **Members' Family Experiences**

Jack Bennett described how he had managed to trace his extended family as far apart as Israel and Australia, while Faye Healey told us about her journey from Danzig to the UK on the Kindertransport, her life in Liverpool and her emotional return to Danzig with her husband Frank and family as part of her golden wedding celebrations. Susanne reported on events connected with Holocaust Memorial Day



**Royal College  
of Physicians**

**VISIT TO THE ROYAL  
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS  
Monday 22 April 2013**

Our visit will begin with a guided tour of the medicinal herb garden by the Head Gardener. We will then have a guided tour and history of the Museum.

William Harvey (1578-1657), discoverer of the circulation of blood, donated his own library and collections to the College in 1656, creating the Musaeum Harveianum – possibly the earliest named ‘museum’ in England.

The portraits, silver and medical instrument collections are displayed throughout the Museum, based in Regent’s Park.

The RCP holds nearly 300 oil and sculptural portraits and over 5,000 prints and drawings.

We will be arranging transport and the cost of this half-day visit, including refreshments and transport, will be £10.00 per person.

**For further details, please contact  
Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070  
or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**

(HMD) in which many members had taken part. A lively debate on whether HMD should include other genocides took place.

*Guido Alis*

**Radlett An Unusual and  
Wonderful Personality**

We watched an interview with the then 98-year-old Alice Herz-Sommer, an outstanding pianist born into a highly cultured Jewish family in Bohemia. During the war she and her family were imprisoned in Theresienstadt, where she continued to give concerts. Alice claims that her and her son’s survival were due to her optimism, forgiving outlook and her music. No one can fail to be captivated by her radiant personality. An unusual and wonderful personality.

*Fritz Starer*

**Cambridge The Joseph Nathan Story**

David Barnett gave us a wonderful talk on the success of Joseph Nathan and his family, culminating in the formation of the GlaxoSmithKline pharmaceutical group. He gave us an insight into Jewish life in the 19th century, coupled with Nathan’s initial business exploits in New Zealand. We were delighted to welcome two new members, Sara Kirby and James Foreman.

*Keith Lawson*

**North West London ‘The Way to Get Fit’**

The combined groups of Hendon and Alyth Gardens met at Hendon Reform Synagogue, where, sitting on our comfortable chairs, we were instructed by Ruth Berman in the Extend Exercises

**APRIL GROUP MEETINGS**

<b>Café Imperial</b>	3 April	Social Get-together
<b>Pinner</b>	4 April	Phillipa Bernard, ‘Jewish Life in Victorian England’
<b>Liverpool</b>	7 April	Yom HaShoah at KD Campus
<b>HGS</b>	8 April	Andrea Cameron, ‘The History of Syon Park’
<b>Manchester</b>	8 April	Yom HaShoah at Hilton Suite
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	9 April	Sir Teddy Taylor, former MP for Southend
<b>Liverpool</b>	9 April	Tbc
<b>Welwyn Garden City</b>	9 April	Details to follow
<b>St John’s Wood</b>	10 April	Rob Lowe, ‘The Music of Gilbert and Sullivan’
<b>Surrey</b>	14 April	Social at home of Edmee Barta
<b>Brighton-Sarid (Sussex)</b>	15 April	Alf Keiles, ‘The Jewish Contribution to Jazz’
<b>Broughton/Crumpsall</b>	15 April	Social Get-together
<b>Leeds HSFA</b>	15 April	Social Get-together
<b>Edgware</b>	16 April	Andrea Cameron, ‘The History of Syon Park’
<b>Leeds CF</b>	16 April	Social Get-together
<b>Midlands W (Birmingham)</b>	16 April	Social Get-together
<b>Oxford</b>	16 April	Yom Ha’atzmaut
<b>Radlett</b>	17 April	Jenny Manson, ‘The Public Sector on the Brink’
<b>Wessex</b>	17 April	Meeting at Wootton Gardens, 2 pm
<b>Cambridge</b>	18 April	Details to follow
<b>Kent</b>	23 April	Ian Beavis (Tunbridge Wells Museum), ‘The Life and Times of Sir David Salomon, Inventor and Motoring Pioneer’, lunchtime meeting
<b>Newcastle</b>	23 April	Visit to BBC
<b>Book Club</b>	24 April	Social
<b>Wembley</b>	24 April	Social Get-together
<b>Midlands E (Nottingham)</b>	25 April	Social Get-together at Country Cottage Hotel
<b>North London</b>	25 April	David Barnett, ‘London’s First Hotels’
<b>North West London</b>	29 April	at Hendon
		Laurence Stein, ‘Boys Town Jerusalem’

**CONTACTS**

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**Child Survivors Association-AJR**  
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298  
[H.obstfeld@talk21.com](mailto:H.obstfeld@talk21.com)

– ‘the way to get fit’. We stretched/bent and wriggled our fingers, arms, legs and necks to music, which was enjoyable and would do us a lot of good if only we did this regularly! A very successful meeting.

*Steffi Lachmann*

**Hull Events Still Alive in Our Memories**

We were very happy to meet Wendy Bott, our new co-ordinator, whom we found to be a young woman full of energy and enthusiasm. We gave her some information about our early days. We

heard about ‘Kinder’ from Austria; families being hidden in Hungary and surviving thanks to the care of local residents; the 1934 referendum in Germany; and Kristallnacht. These events are still alive in the memories of some of us.

*Rose Abrahamson*

**Bristol and Bath An Educational and Moving Experience**

Hosted by Bristol and West congregation, we watched the film *Watermarks*, about

*continued on p.16* ➔

# The AJR Paul Balint Centre

at Belsize Square Synagogue  
51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX  
Telephone 020 7431 2744

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays – 9.30 am to 3.30 pm

## Activities April 2013

Lunch is served at 12.30 unless otherwise stated

### Tuesday 2 April

**8TH DAY OF PESACH – CENTRE CLOSED**

### Thursday 4 April

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 13.45 Entertainer – Christine Ryan (singer)**

### Tuesday 9 April

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-To-One Computer Tuition
- 10.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group
- 11.30 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 12.30 KT LUNCH Speaker: Daniel Wildmann, Leo Baeck Institute**

### Thursday 11 April

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.30 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.00 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 13.45 Entertainer Roy Blass (singer with keyboard)**

### Tuesday 16 April

**Yom Ha'atzmaut – Israel Independence Day**

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-To-One Computer Tuition
- 10.45 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.45 Entertainment by Israeli Dance Institute**

### Thursday 18 April

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 12.00 LUNCHEON CLUB Speakers from The Council of Christians and Jews**
- 12.45 Lunch**

### Tuesday 23 April

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-To-One Computer Tuition
- 10.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group
- 11.30 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.45 Entertainment by Lynne & Michael (celebrating St George's Day)**

### Thursday 25 April

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.45 Let's Read and Discuss

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(this number is manned on Wednesdays only) or 020 8385 3070



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at the Paul Balint Centre

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11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie

**13.45 Entertainer – Mike Marandi (crooner)**

### Tuesday 30 April

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-To-One Computer Tuition
- 11.00 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.45 Entertainer – Ronnie Goldberg (singer with guitar)**

## FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS



### Death

**Hertzman, Isabelle** passed away peacefully aged 95 on 29 January 2013 at Sunridge Court Retirement Home, London NW11 cared for by the dedicated staff. She was the widow of Otto Hertzman, who predeceased her in 1976, and was a long-term active member of the AJR. She will be sadly missed by her sons Ronnie and Eugene and daughter-in-law Anne-Mary and will remain forever in our thoughts.



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## OBITUARIES

### Trude Levi, 23 April 1924 – 5 December 2012

The passing of Trude Levi marks the end of an era. It reminds us that there will shortly be no one left to bear direct witness to the crimes of the Holocaust. Few survivors can have born more eloquent and powerful witness than Trude. Classrooms full of restive 13-year-olds were reduced to awed and attentive silence when she spoke. Her understated manner and quiet dignity provided inspiration for Sir Anthony Sher's great stage impersonation of Primo Levi and the self-portrait of the actor in this role which he presented to Trude was among her most treasured possessions.

Gertrud Mosonyi was born on 23 April 1924 in the small Hungarian town of Szombathely. Her family were assimilated Jews and, though she was entirely secular in outlook, she remained proud of her Jewish identity. Her father, Dr Dezsö Mosonyi, was a noted gynaecologist and musician and her Viennese mother Dora

Ullmann taught languages. In her autobiography *A Cat Called Adolf* Trude characterised herself as a rather truculent child, inclined to clash with her family and with authority figures but with a highly developed sense of moral justice that stayed with her for the rest of her life.

When the Nazis occupied Hungary in March 1944 with one aim being to liquidate the last remaining pocket of Middle European Jewry, Trude had just completed her training as a nursery assistant in Budapest. She returned to her home town and was briefly reunited with her parents



©Trude Levi/Portraits for Posterity 2009

for the terrible journey in a cattle truck to Auschwitz-Birkenau. From there she was sent to Hessisch-Lichtenau, a satellite camp of Buchenwald, where she worked as a slave labourer in the Dynamit Nobel factory. Trude narrowly escaped death on many occasions, most luckily during a 'death march' in early 1945 when she collapsed with exhaustion and her guards decided she was not worth a final bullet.

Trude's survival was not in itself a happy ending. Surviving survival brought its own problems and tragedies and years of statelessness and poverty. Trude's first marriage to violist Stefan Deak ended in divorce. Her second marriage to the architect Franz Levi lasted until the latter's death. After a 22-year career as archivist and librarian at the Wiener Library in London, Trude began a new career as a speaker on the Holocaust in British and German schools. Her plentiful correspondence with the children she spoke to provided her with the material for a second book, *Did You Ever Meet Hitler, Miss?* Her contact with young Germans gave her particular satisfaction and she always emphasised that the lesson to be learned from her experiences was that one should never stereotype or demonise any people or group.

Despite declining health in her last two years, Trude remained in her own home, visited by her many and devoted friends. She retained her appetite for experience and knowledge to the end and continued to attend lectures at the London Jewish Cultural Centre until days before she died.

Trude's only son Ilan killed himself on the threshold of a brilliant scientific career. She is survived by two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

### Sofie Landau, 9 December 1923 – 30 January 2013

Sofie Landau, who has died at the age of 89, was born Sofie Marx in Neufen, a village near Stuttgart, where her father ran a weaving factory. In 1937 she was sent to England for her education, returning to Germany in the school holidays. She was in England when the war broke out and remained here. Her parents and two brothers managed to emigrate to the United States (amazingly as late as 1940 and 1941). They wanted her to join them there but, when a ship in which an acquaintance was travelling was torpedoed, they decided that she should stay in England until the war was over. But by then she was married, though briefly, to Tom Landau. He was a member of the Communist-run Free German Youth and, for some years, she could not get a visa for the United States.

From 1953 to 1980 she worked as a secretary, first to my father and then to my brother, directors of the foundation and swimwear company Silhouette, and became the firm's export manager. From 1980 to her retirement in 1990 she worked for Dushinsky, a company making costume jewellery.

Sofie's most creative period came after her retirement. From 1990 to 2002 she worked as a volunteer at the Day Centre of

the Association of Jewish Refugees and joined the Management Committee of the AJR in 1995. But above all, she joined, also in 1990, the University of the Third Age (U3A) in London, where she worked in the office in her quiet and efficient way. She was soon elected to the Executive Committee and in 2000 she became the Chair and held that office for nearly ten years.

Sofie was among the foremost of the many people who have helped to shape and maintain the particular spirit of the London U3A – collegiate, friendly, unhierarchical, unbureaucratic. She was unfailingly helpful – nothing was ever too much trouble for her.

She had a highly developed sense of duty but one never felt that she was being 'dutiful': it all came so naturally to her. Many are the hospital visits she made when she knew that someone in U3A was ill and many were the funerals of U3A members she attended.



She had wide intellectual interests and was a passionate lover of music. She attended classes herself, and after, at the age of 86, she had stepped down from the Chair, she ran a class herself on Politics and Current Affairs. At the same time, she continued to turn up and help at the office almost as regularly as she had done for all these many years – the last time less than a week before she suddenly fell ill, took herself to hospital and died two days later. Sofie will be sorely missed.

**Ralph Blumenau**



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### Sic transit gloria mundi ...

What was formerly known as the Israel National and University Library has been situated on the Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus (now known as the Edmund Safra Campus) since its construction in the early 1960s. I remember the imposing yet welcoming building in which I spent many happy hours, studying and occasionally also catching up on journals and magazines from England during the 1960s when I was a graduate student in the nearby Kaplan building for the Social Sciences. In those days, the air-conditioning in the library was so powerful that one had to take a woolly jumper even in the heat of summer. The Ardon windows with their message of the universality of learning dominated the upper lobby with vibrant colours. It was difficult to resist the temptation just to sit and gaze at them, drinking in their beauty.

The origins of the library lie in the mists of time, in 1892, when the B'nai B'rith library was founded in Jerusalem, constituting the first public library for the Jewish community in British Mandatory Palestine. In 1925 the collection formed the core of the library on Mount Scopus, the original site of the newly inaugurated Hebrew University.

In 1948, when access to the university



campus on Mount Scopus was blocked, most of the books were moved to the university's temporary quarters in the Terra Sancta building in Rehavia. By that time, the university collection included over one million books. For lack of space, some of the books were placed in storerooms around the city. In 1960 they were moved to the new JNUL (Jewish National and University Library) building in Givat Ram. I recall being informed in confidence in 1965 by a friend who was off to do military service on Mount Scopus that he had been instructed to surreptitiously bring as many books as possible back from the Mount Scopus campus.

In the late 1970s, when the new university complex on Mount Scopus was inaugurated and the faculties of law, the humanities and social science returned there, departmental libraries opened on that campus and the number of visitors to the Givat Ram library dropped.

Nevertheless, the library continued to exhibit parts of its remarkable collection of texts.

The library holds some of the world's most important documents, among them ancient Hebrew texts, Albert Einstein's correspondence, Isaac Newton's Bible-based musings and calculations regarding the 'End of Days', unique exemplars of ancient maps, both those of the world and those referring specifically to Palestine, recordings and musical notation of Jewish and ethnic music, Franz Kafka's manuscripts, the writings of Maimonides, Stefan Zweig, Martin Buber and many others.

But despite its impressive architecture, the building is beginning to show signs of old age and a new site has been designated for it, a stone's throw from the university campus, on the outer edge of the area containing the government ministries, the Prime Minister's Office and the Bank of Israel, and facing the area where the Knesset, the Israel Museum, the Bible Lands Museum and the Science Museum are to be found. According to the sign that has gone up at the site, the new building will be financed jointly by the government of Israel and Yad Hanadiv (the Rothschild Foundation), which funded the construction of the Knesset and the Supreme Court building. A competition has been held and architects have been chosen, so that the new building is expected to be completed by July 2017.

Although I haven't needed to use the library for many years, it still holds a warm place in my heart.

### INSIDE THE AJR *cont. from p.13*

the Viennese Hakoah women swimming team of the 1930s and their present-day lives. An educational and moving experience  
*Hazel Rank Broadley*

#### North London

##### A Resoundingly Successful Visit

On our visit to Sandy's Row Synagogue we were joined by Rachel Kolsky, an absolutely dedicated tour guide of Jewish east London, whose commentary enlivened us on our coach trip as we passed through various London boroughs. Our thanks to Myrna, Hazel, Esther and members of the Synagogue for making this visit such a resounding success.

*Herbert Haberberg*

#### Marlow Enthusiastic Travellers

Assembling at Alan's lovely house in Marlow, we – enthusiastic travellers all of us – exchanged recollections of our visits to Europe, the Far East, Australia and New Zealand. If anyone lives in the Marlow catchment area and would like to join, please get in touch with Hazel.

*Alex Lawrence*

#### Book Club A Fabulous Event

We had an extremely animated discussion about the last book, Maria Duenas's *The Seamstress*. Most decided it was excellent and all agreed it would make a brilliant film. We decided to choose three different books on this occasion:

*Landscapes of Memory* by Ruth Kluger, *The Innocents* by Francesca Segal, and *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachael Joyce. So, if anyone decides to join us for the next meeting, please make your own choice.

*Hazel Beiny*

#### Wembley CF Linguistic Matters

Topics for discussion included languages members speak, and how Yiddish/German words are now part of the English language. In addition, 'words of wisdom' from family friends and work colleagues were shared.

*Myrna Glass*

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