

## The culture of Viennese Jewry at the *fin de siècle*

The wealth of culture that the Jewish community of Vienna developed in the short period of its flourishing – between the middle of the nineteenth century and its destruction by the Nazis – is more astonishing as Vienna had no Jewish community of any size before the mid-nineteenth century. Jews were banned from what was then the imperial capital until the revolution of 1848 and were not fully emancipated from all restrictions of residence until 1867, as part of the reforms that followed Austria's defeat by Prussia in the war of 1866.

Viennese Jewry was a cultural centre of European-wide significance in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the very concept of '*fin-de-siècle* Vienna', with its avant-garde association with the dislocations and dissonances of Modernism, was in very large measure dependent on Viennese Jewry. For it was that community which was responsible for producing much of the city's culture, in the form of its artists, composers, writers, theatre and film directors, as well as providing a large part of the audiences, readers, visitors to exhibitions and other consumers of culture, not to mention the producers, impresarios, gallery owners and art dealers who were the facilitators of the cultural scene.

The Jewish contribution to the culture of Vienna in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries extended across the range of cultural and intellectual activity. It encompassed a large number of famous names, as in the field of literature, to take just one example: Arthur Schnitzler, Karl Kraus, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Felix Salten, Hermann Broch, Franz Werfel, Elias Canetti, Friedrich Torberg, Hilde Spiel, Hugo Bettauer, Joseph Roth, Peter Altenberg, Stefan Zweig, Vicki Baum and Richard Beer Hoffmann. No list of Vienna's Jews can omit the composers Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg, the conductor Bruno Walter, the director Max Reinhardt, the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Popper, the lawyer

Hans Kelsen, Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism, and Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis. Then there are the cabaret artists and university professors, the journalists (not least Moritz Benedikt of the *Neue Freie Presse*), the feminists and photographers, the *salonnières* and sociologists ...

This cultural flowering took place under historical and cultural conditions that were particular to Vienna. At the



Arthur Schnitzler, Vienna's greatest playwright

time of the full emancipation of the Jews of Austria in 1867, Vienna was still very much a city marked by the triumph of the Counter-Reformation in the seventeenth century and the Baroque culture that it produced there. This was most obviously true of the dominance of Catholicism and the Catholic Church, the religion of the Habsburg establishment, whose buildings and monuments occupied a prominent place on the city's skyline, as it was of the influence of Catholicism on Vienna's popular and high culture. Yet in the sixteenth century Vienna had been very receptive to the Reformation and a significant proportion of its citizens had been Protestants.

The triumph of the Counter-Reformation in the seventeenth century also saw the triumph of the Catholic house of Habsburg, which, apart from its hereditary rule over its Austrian lands, also held the office of Holy Roman Emperor and thus

assumed the leading role in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. In 1521, the Austrian Duchies had come under the rule of Ferdinand I, a staunch Catholic from Spain. Ferdinand and his successors proceeded against religious dissenters with severe measures, aiming to squeeze Protestantism out of Viennese public life. That process was largely completed by the time of the second siege of Vienna by the Turks in 1683.

This had serious consequences for the character and quality of the civic life of Vienna. The city, like other European cities in the later Middle Ages, had begun to develop an autonomous urban civic and political life, centred on its burghers, merchants and traders. This segment of Viennese society, independent economically and in its politics, was also independent-minded in its welcome of the reformed Protestant religion and of the new ideas of humanism and rationalism that spread with the Renaissance. It was that entire spectrum of independence that was repressed by the forces of the Counter-Reformation and by Habsburg power.

Protestantism disappeared, and with it went Viennese municipal self-government and the budding free Viennese *Bürgertum*, bearer of the values of sturdy independence, free-thinking self-reliance and political autonomy. Instead, Vienna was to become the seat of the imperial court, where the high aristocracy held sway alongside the Catholic Church, with its overriding hostility to modern trends of thought. Vienna only regained its civic self-government in the mid-nineteenth century.

The resurgence of Catholicism had negative consequences for the Jews. The Jews of Vienna had experienced periodic bouts of persecution and expulsion over the centuries: the city's great Catholic preachers, from Johannes Capistranus in the fifteenth century to Abraham a Sancta Clara in the seventeenth, had been notably hostile to Jews. In 1669, Emperor Leopold I set about expelling

## The culture of Viennese Jewry *continued*

the Jews from Vienna, a prohibition that was not formally overturned for nearly 200 years. The Habsburgs needed Jews to finance their wars but treated them with scant respect once they had outlived their usefulness. Samuel Oppenheimer, Leopold I's court banker from 1680 to 1703, acted as both financier and military contractor, making possible the war that saved Christendom from the infidel Turk in 1683. But when he died, the regime cancelled its debts to him and declared his bank bankrupt.

The culture into which the Jewish community of Vienna developed after 1867 still contained defining elements from the Baroque. The lavish ostentation of Baroque Catholic religious architecture and decoration helped to create a highly visual culture that appealed strongly to the senses, unlike the modest austerity that marked Protestant, and in its way also Jewish culture. The sensuous aspect of Vienna was noted by all observers, with its visual pageantry, its artistic pretensions and its sheer love of enjoyment and self-indulgence, which was assisted not a little by the city's centuries-old association with its vineyards and their products.

But this pleasure-loving front concealed a profound awareness of the transitory and illusory nature of existence, which found expression in the Baroque metaphor of life as a dream. The Viennese were famed for their light-hearted charm, but that apparent frivolity contained an underlying element of fatalism, deriving from a sense of the unreality and impermanent insubstantiality of life, as well as an alarming propensity for brutality. It was, appropriately, in Vienna that Sigmund Freud conceived his project of the interpretation of dreams and his exploration of the influence of instinctive drives on the human mind.

After the defeat of the Turks in 1683, Vienna emerged as the capital of a great empire. However, Austria remained a disparate agglomeration of territories held together solely by the fact that they were ruled by the house of Habsburg, which relied for its legitimacy on the dynastic tradition whereby rule over its territories passed from one emperor to the next. Habsburg Austria was, first and foremost, a dynastic unit and for the Habsburgs dynastic interests took priority. The dynasty supplied the unifying factor binding together its many subject nationalities; consequently, when Habsburg rule collapsed in 1918, the Empire vanished from the map.

The Habsburgs derived unrivalled

prestige from their position at the head of the Holy Roman Empire. But dynastic tradition and religious sanction could not supply the efficiency and cohesion required of a modern state. Austria never succeeded in meeting the challenges of the modern era. In the late eighteenth century, the reforms of Emperor Joseph II, which included the first declaration of tolerance for Jews, ended in failure. After 1789, the French Revolution confronted the Habsburg Empire with demands for popular democracy and for autonomous self-government for national groups; but the Habsburg autocracy never conceded the first demand, while the second would have spelt the break-up of the multi-ethnic Empire. The defeat of Napoleon in 1815 was followed by a long period of reaction under the chancellorship of Metternich, broken only by the revolution of 1848.

But that revolution failed. Its suppression was followed by another decade of absolute rule under the new emperor, Francis Joseph, until defeat in the Italian war of 1859 forced the start of constitutional reform, a process that culminated in the instalment of a liberal parliamentary regime after Austria's defeat by Prussia in 1866. Even that, however, proved to be a false dawn. After the economic crash of 1873, the liberals were forced into retreat; in the 1890s, they lost control of Vienna, their stronghold, to the avowedly anti-liberal and anti-Semitic Christian Socials. The growth of radical nationalism and the failure of liberalism formed the background to the development of Viennese Jewry in the decades before 1914; along with the glittering prospects opened up to Jews by the modern metropolis, these factors created the matrix from which Viennese Jewish culture emerged.

*This article is an abridged version of a lecture given at the London Jewish Cultural Centre on 12 September 2012. Part 2 will follow next month (Ed.).*

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

## **AJR HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**

**'Communities Together:  
Build a Bridge'**

**Thursday 24 January 2013  
2.00 pm**

**at Belsize Square Synagogue,  
51 Belsize Square,  
London, NW3 4HX**

**Guest Speaker:  
Sir Andrew Burns, UK Envoy  
for Post-Holocaust Issues**

Rabbi Stuart Altshuler will lead the service, during which AJR members will light memorial candles and Kaddish will be recited. The Akiva School Choir will participate.

Please bring your children and grandchildren, who will be very welcome.

Light Refreshments will be provided after the service.

For catering purposes, please reserve a seat by contacting Karin Pereira on 020 8385 3070 or at [karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karin@ajr.org.uk)

## **NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**

**Monday 28 January 2012  
3.30 pm**

**at The Queen Elizabeth II  
Conference Centre,  
Broad Sanctuary, Westminster**

There is a strictly limited number of places, offered on a first-come-first-served basis, on coaches from locations in North-West London and Ilford for refugees and survivors.

Please contact Karin Pereira on 020 8385 3070 or at [karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karin@ajr.org.uk) if you would like to attend and/or would like a seat on a coach.

## **Reception at the Austrian Embassy**

**To commemorate the 75th  
Anniversary of the Anschluss  
Wednesday 13 March 2013 at 6.30 pm**

**His Excellency Ambassador  
Emil Brix will host a  
reception for AJR members**

Refreshments will be provided. For catering and security purposes, places must be reserved. The AJR will be providing transport. Pick-up points and timings will be confirmed once all applications are received.

Please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3078 or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

## Return to the city of endless nightmares

Recently I was invited to Vienna by the Austrian Gedenkdienst, along with four other Jewish refugees, to relate our experiences of the Holocaust at a number of schools.

For one of my talks, I returned to the high school from which in March 1938 I was expelled for being Jewish – I was then just 15 years old. Strangely, I found the return visit both traumatic and joyful for not only did it dredge up the old feelings of rejection and hatred but it also provided me with a degree of closure: instead of being jeered and taunted, I was now welcomed as an honoured guest by staff and students alike. I vividly remembered the day I had left Austria and written in my diary with venom 'I am leaving my beautiful Vienna, the city I used to love so much but now loathe so fiercely. I shall never, ever return.' Thus it was with a huge sense of relief that I could see the positive changes that had occurred in Austria over the subsequent years and the Austrians' ongoing attempt to eradicate anti-Semitism.

As I recounted my escape, I found the years slipping away and I was reliving a time I had spent so long trying to forget – the fear of someone hammering on the front door, listening out for the signal to run and hide, the endless nightmares,

the queuing to try to get exit visas and the constant disappointment of being turned down again and again and again. I had experienced a sense of hope only when I approached the Albanian embassy: the large 'J' on my passport didn't make them recoil in disgust – they treated me with kindness and respect.

I hadn't known at that time that Albanians have their own traditional code of conduct – *besa* – in accordance with which strangers are made welcome and offered help regardless of their colour, religion or status in society. However, I was soon to learn what a difference *besa* would make to our lives. During my five months' stay in the country I was met by people who, instead of persecuting me, made me feel valued. I became a tutor to two young girls and subsequently was asked to teach the Italian ambassador German. This was to prove hugely fortuitous as, once again, my life was saved through the intervention of another.

Finally arriving in England, I knew my running was over. I worked as a machinist sewing soldiers' uniforms, undertook numerous roles and over the years was fortunate enough to be awarded scholarships which enabled me ultimately to become a university professor. However, I have never forgotten the

bravery and benevolence the Albanians displayed towards us all. I learned that they had risked their lives sheltering over 3,000 Jewish refugees – and not a single one had been handed to the Germans even during the Nazi occupation.

*Besa* continues even today, successfully demonstrating how multi-faith communities can live in peace and harmony. I wonder if there is a lesson here from which we could all learn?

T. Scarlett Epstein

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## A new dawn for the AJR

Following the Special General Meeting (SGM) on 15 November last year, the AJR has, with effect from 1 January 2013, been reorganised and is now constituted as a charitable company limited by guarantee. The formal name is The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR).

The SGM was called to ask members to vote on specific resolutions, all of which were passed unanimously, that proposed to bring together the activities and services of The Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain Friendly Society (the membership Society) and the AJR Charitable Trust (the Trust that finances our activities) into one modern and streamlined organisation.

As I explained at the meeting, the law and regulation of charities had changed significantly since the Society and then the Trust were created and it was now necessary to ensure that the AJR was best constituted to conform with current legislation and to meet our objectives.

As part of the reorganisation, members of the Society will become associate members of the charitable company and,

as previously announced, will have the right to nominate future Directors and to vote upon their appointment. There will be no change to the delivery or quality of any of the organisation's social welfare and care services or your access or entitlement to the financial assistance we provide. There will be a complete continuity of all of our services.

I am also delighted that colleagues who so capably served on the Board of Management of the Society and as Trustees of the Charitable Trust will join me in forming the charitable company's first Board of Directors, namely: Eleanor Angel, Gaby Glassman, Frank Harding, Joanna Millan, Sir Erich Reich, David Rothenberg, Anthony Spiro and Philippa Strauss. Their skills, experience and familiarity with our members as well as their commitment to our aims and philosophy will stand the organisation in good stead for the future.

As ever, my colleagues greatly look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming events and join me in wishing you all the best for 2013.

Andrew Kaufman

# Jewish film-makers in Germany during the silent era: The untold story

by Joel Finler

It is a well-known fact that for a brief period during the 1920s Germany stood out as the leading film-producing country in Europe. Both in terms of the quality of its pictures and the sheer quantity of films produced, Germany was the only country which presented a serious challenge to the worldwide domination by the Americans. It was the UFA (Universum Film Aktien Gesellschaft), the conglomerate formed in December 1917, which led the way. It organised film production, distribution and exhibition in Germany on a large scale and thus was able to compete with the giant American film studios.

What is less well known is the leading role played by a remarkable group of talented Jewish film-makers, especially writers, directors and producers.

From the early 1910s onwards, one can already observe a notable Jewish presence. During the following years many Jews who had gained their first experience in the flourishing German theatre were newly attracted to the cinema. And the new arrivals included many talented individuals from countries such as Austria and Hungary, which could not offer the kind of opportunities and creative freedom to be found in Berlin. The directors Fritz Lang, Wilhelm Thiele and Carl Grune were Austrian, along with the writers Carl Mayer and Billy Wilder and the actor Anton Walbrook; from Hungary came the director Paul Czinner, the writer Emeric Pressburger and the actor Peter Lorre; while the brilliant Czech-born cameraman Karl Freund came from Bohemia.

The earliest Jewish film pioneers, from about 1911, were producer-director Joe May (Joseph Mandel), a former director of theatre and operetta, the Galicia-born actor Henrik Galeen (Heinrich Wiesenberg), who soon graduated to scriptwriting and then directing, and Paul Davidson. Starting out as a film distributor and owner of a chain of cinemas, Davidson was especially successful in attracting talented figures

from the theatre when he first began producing films too through his Union Film, which soon developed into the most prestigious production company in Germany.

The first really important breakthrough was in 1914-16, when an especially interesting group from the theatre included many who would soon become established figures. In 1914 alone Richard Oswald and Robert Wiene, along with Galeen, began directing their first films, while the

artist Paul Leni gained his initial experience as an art director before graduating to directing in 1916. But most important of all was the first appearance on screen of Ernst Lubitsch. He played a supporting role in one of his first pictures, *Die Firma Hierat* (The Hierat Company), filmed in 1913, then again played a Jewish comic character as the star of the sequel, *Der Stolz der Firma* (The Pride of the Company, 1914). And soon after he began directing his films too.

In the following years Lubitsch made his name as a Jewish actor-director in such inventive and entertaining short features as *Schuhpalast Pinkus* (The Pinkus Shoe Palace, 1916), his first big success as a director and in which he appeared as an ambitious but likeable young shoe shop employee, and *Meyer aus Berlin* (Meyer from Berlin, 1918). These films also marked the beginning of a ten-year relationship with producer Paul Davidson as Lubitsch emerged as the leading director in Germany. Lubitsch himself noted at the time that 'Jewish humour, wherever it appears, is sympathetic and artistic and plays such a big role everywhere that it would be ridiculous not to include it in cinema.'

The other outstanding new arrival on the scene at this time (1915) was the producer Erich Pommer. A few years younger than Davidson, he would soon emerge as a leading force in the industry, hiring and promoting many of the new Jewish writers and directors, including Robert Wiene, E. A. Dupont, Fritz Lang, the Romanian-born Lupu Pick and Carl Mayer. Both the half-Jewish Lang (Jewish mother, Catholic father) and Dupont started out as scriptwriters but soon graduated to directing. Karl Grune and Pick came from the theatre, as did Fritz Kortner, best known as a brilliant actor who occasionally directed as well.

The formation of the giant UFA combine in 1917, incorporating Davidson's Union Film and Pommer's Decla Co., further set the scene for the explosion of talent which took place beginning in the immediate post-war years, with many of the Jewish film-makers prominent. There was quite a range of different types of films too.

Lang, for example, had his first major success as a writer-director with the elaborate two-part thriller *Die Spinnen* (The Spiders) in 1918-19, produced by Pommer and photographed by Freund, while *Mme. DuBarry* (also 1919) was an elaborate historical drama from Lubitsch and Davidson which starred Pola Negri and Emil Jannings. There were also a few films with Jewish themes. Writer-director Richard Oswald (born Ornstein) brought a number of Jewish subjects to the screen in 1914-18, including two films starring Rudolf Schildkraut: *Dämon und Mensch* (Devil and Man, 1915) and *Schlemihl. Ein Lebensbild* (Schlemihl: A Biography, 1916). And he then produced a highly original and controversial feature on the subject of homosexuality in *Anders als die Andern* (Different from the Others) in 1919.

Davidson produced two memorable Jewish films: *Der Gelbe Schein* (The Yellow Passport) in 1918 starring Pola Negri as a young Jewess in Tsarist Russia forced to take a 'yellow passport' classifying her as a prostitute so as to travel to St Petersburg, and a remarkable film version of the classic Jewish folk drama *Der Golem* (The Golem) in 1920. Set in the 16th century, this film made use of some extraordinary stylised sets depicting the Prague ghetto, while Karl Freund once again played an essential role behind the camera providing atmospheric lighting. However, the most celebrated title of these years was *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari* (The Cabinet of Dr Caligari), a horror-fantasy-drama produced by Pommer and directed by Robert Wiene in 1919. Best remembered for its extraordinary distorted and stylised sets and the powerful performances of Conrad Veidt

*Freund's remarkable run of films continued in 1925-26 with Metropolis, the largest, most ambitious (and costly) production of the decade. This imaginative, futuristic fantasy-drama was produced by Erich Pommer and directed by Fritz Lang, with elaborate sets, mass action sequences and innovative special effects devised by cameraman Eugen Schüfftan.*

*continued opposite* ➔



*Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang in 1925-26, starred (from left) Alfred Abel, Rudolf Klein-Rogge and Brigitte Helm (the robot)



Paul Wegener directed and starred in *Der Golem* (1920)



Conrad Veidt played the tortured hero of *Der Student von Prag* (directed by Henrik Galeen, 1926)

and Werner Krauss in the leading roles, the nightmarish story and script were provided by two Jewish writers, Carl Mayer and Hans Janowitz.

One of the most brilliant figures of the German silent cinema, Mayer went on to script two of the most important films of the burgeoning *Kammerspielfilm* movement of realistic contemporary social dramas in 1921: *Scherben* (Shattered), directed by Lupu Pick, and *Hintertreppe* (Backstairs), directed by Paul Leni with sets designed by Alfred Junge. Mayer also provided the original story for Karl Grune's *Die Strasse* (The Street, 1923), a key film in the related genre of urban street films or *Strassenfilm*.

Joe May directed an exotic action-adventure movie in two parts: *Das indische Grabmal* (The Indian Tomb) in 1921, co-scripted by the prolific Fritz Lang, who demonstrated his mastery of low-key drama and elaborate thrillers with *Der müde Tod* (Destiny), also in 1921, followed by *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (Dr Mabuse the Gambler, 1922). And in 1921 Lubitsch contributed one last, brilliant costume drama for producer Davidson: *Das Weib des Pharaos* (The Loves of Pharaoh).



Conrad Veidt as Cesare, the scary somnambulist and murderer in *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari* (1919)



Ernst Lubitsch plays a Jewish comic character in one of his earliest films (1915)

Two years later Ludwig Berger made a successful venture into lightweight fantasy with an entertaining adaptation of the Cinderella story, produced by Pommer and appropriately retitled *Der verlorene Schuh* (The Lost Shoe). Filmed at around the same time, E. A. Dupont's *Das Alte Gesetz* (The Ancient Law) is of special interest as it presents a fully realised depiction of life in a Jewish *shtetl* in Eastern Europe – a relative rarity within the German silent cinema. In a plot which anticipates that of *The Jazz Singer* four years later, the young, aspiring actor hero, the son of a rabbi, played by Ernst Deutsch, rejects his Jewish heritage to travel to Vienna to appear on stage at the Burgtheater, but is reconciled with his father at the end.

In 1924 Paul Leni directed his most remarkable and darkest film, *Das Wachsfigurenkabinett* (Waxworks), reflecting his strong visual background as a leading production designer. The script was by Henrik Galeen, who had also co-scripted *Der Golem* four years earlier and then gone on to direct and co-script a similarly dark and mysterious drama, *Der Student von Prag* (The Student of Prague, 1926) starring Conrad Veidt.

At around this time (1924) a young Alfred Hitchcock was employed as the art director of German/British joint productions, co-produced by Pommer and the young British-Jewish producer

Michael Balcon and filmed at the UFA studios in Babelsberg. As he recalled in the 1970s, 'Those were the great days of the German pictures ... The studio where I worked was tremendous, bigger than Universal is today.'

With major assistance from cameraman Karl Freund, Dupont in turn had his biggest international success with the circus and trapeze drama *Variété* (Variety), starring Emil Jannings and produced by Pommer. Fresh from *Der Letzte Mann* (The Last Man) the previous year (scripted by Carl Mayer), Freund's remarkable run of films continued in 1925-26 with *Metropolis*, the largest, most ambitious (and costly) production of the decade. This imaginative, futuristic fantasy-drama was produced by Pommer and directed by Fritz Lang, with elaborate sets, mass action sequences and innovative special effects devised by cameraman Eugen Schufftan.

Unfortunately, UFA's growing financial problems emerged more clearly in 1925 when *Metropolis* was in production. Unfairly blamed for the crisis, Pommer resigned as production chief in January 1926. He was immediately attracted to Hollywood along with a number of the Jewish directors, including Paul Leni, Ludwig Berger, Lothar Mendes, Paul Stein and E. A. Dupont, as well as the writer Carl Mayer and the director F. W. Murnau. Nevertheless, the Jewish contribution to the late German silent cinema continued to be exceptional.

While this brief survey has drawn attention to the many leading Jewish film-makers and a number of key films, it is difficult to do more than hint at the large number of pictures turned out year after year, with the participation of many of the less well known Jewish writers, directors, producers, technicians and actors. (The appendix to Professor S. S. Praver's book *Between Two Worlds: Jewish Presences in German and Austrian Film, 1910-1933* (2005) provides a check list of, among others, over 30 Jewish directors, 40 writers, 20 cameramen and 20 producers.)

For example, Marlene Dietrich starred in a number of films in 1926-29, working with such Jewish directors as Willi Wolff, Robert Land, Alexander Korda and Kurt Bernhardt. Bernhardt's *Die Frau nach der Mann sich sehnt* (The Women Men Yearn For, 1929) co-starred Fritz Kortner and benefited from a typically Jewish production team, including scriptwriter Ladislaus Vajda, art director Robert Neppach, and Curt Courant behind the cameras.

After a relatively unsuccessful stint

*continued on page 10* ➔



# Letters to the Editor

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

## THANK-YOU BRITAIN FUND

Sir – Whenever the Thank-You Britain Fund is mentioned in your pages I feel a pang of discomfort. This is due to the subtle shift in emphasis when it comes to the Fund's origin and history, with the AJR moving centre stage and I appearing among the extras.

In his appeal for funds in the November issue, Anthony Grenville refers to an earlier article which did indeed make more of the part I played, but always a little grudgingly and historically unbalanced.

The Thank-You Britain Fund (including its name) was my idea, and mine alone, brought into being by my letter to the *Observer* suggesting its creation as a grateful acknowledgement of how we refugees had benefited. There was an immediate and gratifying private and public response and I set the ball rolling by seeking the advice of Professor (later Lord) Robbins and Isaiah Berlin, both my teachers and later my friends. I will remember our 'founding luncheon' at the Athenaeum, at which time I was not even aware of the existence of the AJR.

Soon afterwards, I was approached by AJR Vice-Chairman Werner Behr, who said that similar ideas had been mooted within the AJR but conceded that I was the one who had pulled the trigger. I welcomed his approach, realising that as a private individual I neither commanded the machinery to launch a fund nor had access to names of refugees to whom the appeal could be addressed. (The appeal was written by me, characterised by Isaiah Berlin as the best begging letter he had ever read. Mr Grenville's appeal letter, written jointly with the British Academy, goes even further than his article in claiming sole credit for the AJR.) Mr Behr became my contact with the AJR – and very helpful he was too, crowning his work with a mega contribution. Dr Rosenstock came in later, when the selection committee was formed by the British Academy. I cannot remember him ever making a significant contribution to our discussions in committee; I was the principal spokesman for the donors and the source of ideas for candidates and speakers, among them Roy Jenkins, Arthur Koestler and Jonathan Miller, all recruited by me.

My part shrank in importance as non-AJR notables with substantial academic credentials predominated on

the Committee, but my colleagues never failed to acknowledge my role as the 'onlie begetter'.

Perhaps I should be above minding at this late stage – the more so as I don't regard the Thank-You Britain Fund as my major contribution to British public life and my sense of gratitude is becoming as misty as Mr Grenville's grasp of the history of the Fund. It may be of interest that I proposed to Lord Robbins that he approach the Honours Committee with a view to getting a gong for Mr Behr. He duly obliged and Mr Behr got his OBE.

*Victor Ross, London NW8*

*Anthony Grenville: My article was intended as background to a fund-raising appeal, not as a detailed historical account of the Thank-You Britain Fund. For reasons of space alone, the latter was not possible. Readers are referred to my study Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970, pp. 254ff.*

## A PHOTO FROM RICHARD TAUBER

Sir – My stepfather, Paul Engel, worked for Tobis Sascha, a film importer in Vienna. Quite often he and my mother had to go to formal dinners, where they met other people in the film industry.

On one occasion, my mother sat next to Richard Tauber. She said to him during dinner: 'Herr Kammersänger, I wonder if I can ask you for your photograph?' He replied that of course he would give her a photograph and that he would inscribe it to 'Frau Engel, my charming dinner companion, from Richard Tauber'. But she answered that her husband was very jealous and asked if he could just sign his name, which he did.

The next day my mother went to her favourite hat shop and asked the owner what he would give her for this photograph. She was told she could choose any hat she wanted. She chose a green hat and the photograph went into the shop window. *Henry Rado, Harrow*

## TEREZIN REQUIEM

Sir – I am the son of Josef Bor, author of the book *The Terezin Requiem*. I refer to Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's 'Defiant Requiem' published in your November issue in the 'Letter from Israel' column).

I write to tell you that it pleased me that the memory of the Terezin events is still

alive, now in the 'third generation'. Just as Dorothea Shefer-Vanson remembers her father listening to Verdi's *Requiem*, I remember my father doing the same. He played it again and again and, after some time, during one summer wrote the book.

*Petr Bor, Prague, Czech Republic*

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Sir – The Wiener Library is looking for volunteers to help sort and index our Press Archive on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. If you can commit to either of those days on a regular basis for the next year and are able to read German, please contact me on 020 7636 7247 or at [khubschmann@wienerlibrary.co.uk](mailto:khubschmann@wienerlibrary.co.uk).

*Kat Hubschmann, Senior Librarian, Wiener Library, London WC1*

## INFORMATION WANTED

Sir – I am studying for a Masters degree in Jewish History and Culture at Southampton University and am preparing a dissertation on the ways in which Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe were received and treated by the Jewish community in Britain.

I would be glad to hear from anyone with personal experience or from members of the Second Generation who might preserve family memories.

*Lesley Urbach, London N3, lcurbach@aol.com*

## SEARCH NOTICE SUCCESS

Sir – In response to the search notice about the Krausz/Prochownik family which I placed in your journal, I am delighted to say that a few days ago I got a very cordial email from the twin granddaughters of Gertrud and Leo Prochownik. Their mother, the daughter of Leo and Gertrud, is 93 years old and still lives in London. She found the search notice in the *AJR Journal* and informed her daughters. They are very interested in what I've found out so far and will give me further information.

So the publication of the search notice in the *AJR Journal* was very successful and I have to thank you a thousand times for it. Let me say that it made me very happy. I'll send you a copy of the book I am writing about the artist Leo Prochownik as soon as it is available.

*Hans-Theo Wagner, Berlin*

## INSIGNIA VOLUME

Sir – I noticed in your December issue a request from Peter Fraenkel to identify the student fraternities to which his father belonged.

We at the Wiener Library have a volume which lists all the Jewish student fraternities along with their respective insignia and flag/ sash colour/ designs entitled *Studentischer Antisemitismus und jüdische Studentenverbindungen, 1880-1933*, Thomas Schindler copy number 14218.

*Howard Falksohn, Archivist Wiener Library, London WC1*

**GUIDE FOR THE DISADVANTAGED**

Sir – I picked up a guide to Frankfurt am Main written specially for people with disadvantages of all kinds – movement, hearing, sight, etc. It is 280 pages and free of charge. I thought that with our ageing membership, this guide might be very helpful and probably unknown to them. I presume it would be available from the German tourist office.

*Peter C. Rickenback, London NW3*

**SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

Sir – My apologies for not attending the recent AJR Special General Meeting (see page 3). Unfortunately I live too far away now and need help with transport due to my age.

I hope the meeting went well and I thank Andrew Kaufman and his fellow Trustees for all the hard work they do. Also, the Journal is very informative every month.

*Ruth Young, Sidcup, Kent*

**'LAW OF THE JUNGLE'**

Before we shed too many tears for the Germans expelled after the war (review by Leslie Baruch Brent in your December issue), it might be as well to remind ourselves who these unfortunate Germans actually were.

In Poland the expulsion of Germans centred on what, in pre-war days, was the Polish Corridor. This area had become, under German control, the Reichsgau Warthegau and Danzig-Westpreussen. Both Gaue were administered by two of the most brutal Nazi Gauleiter – Greiser in Warthegau and Forster in Danzig-Westpreussen – who proceeded by inhuman means to Germanise their Gaue, murdering or deporting the Polish population, especially the farming population, and replacing them with Germans (part of the *Drang nach Osten*). It was these Germans in particular whom the Poles expelled back to Germany by, no doubt, very violent means.

The expulsions from Czechoslovakia were of a different order. The Sudeten Germans, having deliriously welcomed the Wehrmacht in 1939, fully participated in the vicious administration of the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, culminating in the appointment of Heydrich as Reich Protector. Following his assassination the village of Lidice was razed to the ground, its menfolk shot and the women and children deported to concentration camps, where they were probably murdered. It was obvious that after this atrocity there neither could, nor should, be a place for any German in the restored Czechoslovak Republic. The expulsions were conducted mercilessly and ferociously but it is as well to know why they happened and what their justification was.

*Eric Bourne, Milldale, Ashbourne, Derbyshire*

Sir – Hatred of the once all-conquering, arrogant Germans was, of course, justified. A Dutch friend born at the end of the war told me about the after-effects of the utter desolation, starvation and famine besetting the Netherlands at that time. (There were no Jews left, with the possible exception of a few who had been hidden.)

This, of course, applied to many occupied countries. 'There's no such person as a good German!' was the saying. It took some courage to say you came from Germany, even as a Jew. The attitude of some members of Anglo-Jewry towards Continentals survives even to this day.

It is unfortunate that in many instances the brutalities endured by the ethnic Germans affected many innocent people, including defenceless children. Wasn't it always thus?

Many years ago I accompanied my husband to the German embassy for his annual *Lebensbestätigung* (life certificate). A woman started talking to us in a certain German dialect, complaining how long she was having to wait for her German passport. Luckily we had no problem and were soon on our way. But just as we were leaving, a gentleman in orthodox Jewish garb entered. I saw the woman look at him with utter disdain. Then I heard 'Zyklon gas once again!' My husband missed it as did everyone else. Outside I told him what she had said and he explained that she was *Volksdeutsch* – with all that implied.

*Laura Selo, London NW11*

**WEST BANK 'OCCUPATION'**

Sir – I was very disturbed by Dorothea Shelter-Vanson's recent 'Letter from Israel'.

I would agree with her that anti-Semitism has been indirectly supported by some of the media, especially Channel 4 and the BBC. They report the sufferings of the Arabs, but the recent rocket attacks from Gaza on Israel were ignored. The press in the UK invariably highlights the alleged wrong-doings of Israel and so the multitude will, of course, indulge in slogans like 'Free Palestine' and disrupt any performances by Israeli orchestras. And the 'occupation' of the West Bank is sufficient reason for further anti-Israel/anti-Jewish demonstrations.

I keep on asking why after the Second World War the occupation of the former German East Prussia by the Russians and the forceful removal of all German inhabitants did not attract protests. The Germans were made to walk to the rump of Germany. Poland also occupied the eastern part of Germany, but at least provided transport for the displaced Germans. The explanation was that territories captured as a result of war belonged to the captors. And this was accepted. The West Bank was the last territory which remained in Israeli hands after the Six-Day War – other

territories occupied were returned to the Arabs. Protests all round. Why?

*Alex Lawrence, Marlow*

**DEPLORABLE STATE OF WEISSENSEE**

Sir – I refer to Gordon Spencer's letter in a recent issue of the Journal about the deplorable state of Weissensee cemetery. In 1987 I visited the cemetery for the first time and was horrified to see its neglected state. I did indeed start a fund to help clear it up and collected several thousand pounds. This cleared four 'Felder' and they put up a plaque commemorating this at one of the junctions of the main paths.

When I visited in 2011 it didn't look too bad but I agree we may not have seen the same areas.

One can write to Herr Kohls, manager, at Friedhof Weissensee, Herbert Baum Str. 45, 13088 Berlin. *Rudi Leavor, Bradford*

**A BRIT FIRST AND FOREMOST**

Sir – What a misguided letter from Bea Green (December), who feels I have 'missed out' by not having any other identity except that of being British! I would refer her to Norman Tebbit, who, quite correctly, challenged Indians and Pakistanis, whether born here or immigrants, to show their allegiance by backing England at cricket rather than the countries whence they came.

Ms Green is not a 'Bavarian-Jewish Brit', as she claims. She is a Brit first and foremost, and also Jewish. I assume she is naturalised, so how can she be Bavarian? I am also very surprised that she indeed wants to be Bavarian. Did the Bavarians not throw her out of Germany? As with Eric Bourne, her 'Heimat' is in Great Britain, the country that saved both their lives – and mine. I like Vienna, its food and its music. In no way am I still an Austrian nor would I want to be.

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

**ANNUAL AJR LONDON TRIP**

Tuesday 12 March – Thursday 14 March 2013



The trip will include a visit to Kensington Palace; a relaxing evening and dinner at an award-winning kosher Chinese restaurant; a tour of the Houses of Parliament, followed by lunch with an MP; a matinee performance of *The Audience* with Helen Mirren – it is hoped Dame Helen will speak to our members after the performance; a visit to the RAF Museum; lunch at the London Jewish Cultural Centre, where we will be joined by Eve Pollard, former editor of the *Sunday Mirror*; and the opportunity to meet friends old and new.

Members will also have the opportunity to attend a reception at the Austrian Embassy hosted by the Austrian Ambassador.

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

Members living in London can participate in the daily events.

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

# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

It's hard to imagine anything equalling the outpouring of public grief over the death of Princess Diana. But in November 1612, when 18-year-old Prince Henry Stuart, elder son of James I, died of typhus, thousands lined the streets as his sumptuous cortege passed by. In his short life, the young crown prince had brought chivalry, learning, naval exploration and a surge of Renaissance art to the Jacobean court. British history might have looked very



Henry, Prince of Wales by Isaac Oliver, c. 1610-12  
The Royal Collection Photo: Supplied by Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2012

different had he, instead of the ill-fated Charles I, ascended to the throne. There might have been no royal conflict with Parliament or civil war and Charles might have kept his head.

In its first artistic tribute to Henry, **The Lost Prince: The Life and Death of Henry Stuart**, the **National Portrait Gallery** (until 13 January) captures in 80 paintings, miniatures and manuscripts something of the legend of the young prince, who espoused military, cultural

and moral virtues and built the largest ship in the British fleet.

Henry's court was a burgeoning creative community whose provenance was astonishing – the largest library, the first Italian Renaissance bronzes, the first antique coins and medals collection in England ....

In formal royal portraits by **Holbein, Rubens, Inigo Jones, Ben Jonson** and **Robert Peak**, and in two cameo works by the famous miniaturist **Nicholas Hilliard**, the handsome face of the auburn-haired prince as child and teenager stares out as visitors probe his unfamiliar story and study his hand-written manuscripts.

The works portray him and his family and noblemen in the brocaded finery of the era. **Isaac Oliver** depicts him as the Prince of Wales in blue sash, white ruff and gilded, inlaid armour typical of the 17th century. **Robert Peake the Elder** paints him in sumptuous royal robes. He is shown as a child, holding cherries, symbolising innocence and virtue. In later examples, you can trace his resemblance both to Charles, as Duke of York and Albany, and his father. They enable you to gauge something of the man he might have become.

Henry studied French and Italian, Latin quatrains and maths, Homer's Iliad, and perspective drawing – influenced by his father's love of the liberal arts and sciences. While James's pretensions earned him the nickname 'the wisest fool in Christendom', his son's character was revered. In his teens he became focused on wider political and religious issues, but the greatest influence on him was David Murray, whose name Henry desperately called out on his deathbed.

The touching quality of the paintings reaches out across the centuries. The Queen in black, his sister, Princess Elizabeth, wearing a black armband. King James, we learn, cried out his name in the midst of policy meetings. So much was lost in the death of Henry, who was the transformative hope of Britain and Protestant Europe.

The way great art has influenced photography is explored at the **National Gallery: Seduced by Art: Photography Past and Present** (until 20 January). Fronting the National Gallery's own catalogue is Israeli artist **Ori Gersht's** *Blow Up: Untitled*, a video and still life featuring a bouquet of flowers iced and then detonated on camera. Not an allegory for Middle East politics, one hopes.

## REVIEWS

### Xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Hungary – time to despair?

**HUNGARY: BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM**

by Paul Lendvai

Trans. Keith Chester

London: Hurst, 2012, 288 pp.

hardback, ISBN: 978-1849041966, £25

Numerous statues and memorial plaques are being unveiled and prominent squares and avenues renamed up and down Hungary in honour of Admiral Miklós Horthy, the country's wartime regent and the politician most responsible for the murder of close to 600,000 Jews during the Holocaust.

Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate, recently returned a prestigious decoration bestowed on him by the Hungarian government in protest against its rehabilitation of two minor, deceased writers whose only claim to fame was their anti-Semitism. The latest International Religious Freedom report issued by the American State Department criticised the rise of anti-Semitism in Hungary and the failure of the authorities to prosecute the disseminators of racist statements.

Much of the blame for all this must lie with Viktor Orbán, the authoritarian, populist, ultra-conservative Hungarian prime minister. But in this timely and brilliant new political analysis, Paul Lendvai, the doyen of European foreign correspondents, carefully and rightly refrains from calling him an anti-Semite.

In his unbridled lust for personal power, Orbán has foolishly released the long suppressed, xenophobic hatreds festering in the collective consciousness of this much-abused society. Those demons are now poised to destroy him and capture his people.

Lendvai and many others well disposed towards Hungary fear that, in the absence of a credible, coherent, democratic-minded parliamentary opposition, the rising discontent of the electorate may one day force Orbán's Fidesz administration to share power with the relentlessly growing far-right Jobbik party, a creature of his own making.

Lendvai has been based in neighbouring Vienna since the failed anti-Soviet Hungarian revolution of 1956, in which he participated as a freedom fighter. He is a Jew who lost many of his family in the Holocaust and witnessed as a young adolescent in Budapest the gratuitous murder of tens of thousands of civilian captives by the Nazi rabble of the Hungarian Arrow Cross – the role models of the Jobbik party today – during the final

The Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies at the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London requests the pleasure of your company at the 2nd Martin Miller and Hannah Norbert-Miller Memorial Lecture

#### The Hitler Emigrés Revisited

to be given by **Daniel Snowman** (writer and broadcaster) on Thursday, 21 February 2013, at 6 p.m. Reception afterwards. Venue: The Court Room, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

RSVP by Friday, 8 February 2013 to [jane.lewin@sas.ac.uk](mailto:jane.lewin@sas.ac.uk) (tel: 020 7862 8966)

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phase of the Second World War.

His sympathetic coverage of Hungary's now floundering efforts to build a liberal democracy after the painful decades of Soviet tyranny, which ended nearly a quarter-century ago, has won this country many friends abroad.

I worked with Lendvai for years when he was Central Europe correspondent of *The Financial Times* newspaper of London, where I often prepared his copy for publication, and I learned to respect the insightful, reliable, sober accuracy of his reportage. Now aged 81 and the editor-in-chief of the Viennese journal *Europäische Rundschau*, Lendvai is often quoted and consulted by the English- and German-language press and academia.

But his name is constantly being smeared by the rightist Hungarian mass communication media, linking him, without any verifiable evidence, to the bygone Communist secret police. His book launches in the German-speaking world are occasionally marred by threats of physical violence posed by the vociferous expatriate Hungarian far right. His new book is essential reading for diplomats, politicians and investors as well as the informed public concerned with the phenomenal current rise of anti-Semitism in this region.

The book has been impressively endorsed by the Hungarian political and intellectual elite in their own way. The first prospective publisher of an earlier, Hungarian version of this book backed out from the project under government pressure, but the book was eventually published by another publisher and immediately became a best-seller.

The analysis describes Orbán as a 'master tactician', 'a gifted populist', a 'radical and consummate opportunist', a 'ruthless power politician who believes not in ideas but in maximizing his power without any compunction', and an irresponsible manipulator 'giving vent to Hungarian nationalism' and 'tapping into fear and prejudice at a moment of crisis'.

Orbán hails from a family of semi-skilled workers who prospered under the Communist regime and acquired great wealth afterwards during his two stints at the helm of power. His second period of rule was secured by a landslide election victory in April 2010 following a sustained campaign of violent street demonstrators.

The violence was fuelled by the frustration and insecurity sparked by the global recession in a post-Communist electorate totally unprepared for the boom/bust cycles of Western capitalism. That was the opportunity seized by Hungary's neo-Nazis to emerge as the nastiest and best organised of their ilk within the 27 member countries of the European Union.

Xenophobia here feeds on fertile soil. Some seven decades after the Holocaust, Hungary still doggedly declines to

confront its murderous past. As the generations march on, their inherited sense of suppressed guilt periodically surfaces in aggressive denial.

For example, the Hungarian history atlas prescribed for secondary school use in 2009 did not even mention the wartime anti-Jewish racial laws, the deportations to Auschwitz – or indeed the Holocaust. And the war-time propaganda trash promoting popular racial hatred against the Jews is still in circulation.

Lendvai quotes a long list of depressing educational and social data. Only four per cent of the present generation of Hungarians aged 18-30 know the meaning of the word 'Holocaust'; only 13 per cent can give a figure for the number of its victims; two-thirds of the adult population believe that the Jews of Hungary are too powerful; half squarely blame the Jews for the world economic crisis.

Jobbik won 47 of the 386 seats in the single-chamber Hungarian parliament in the last elections, capturing 23 per cent of the vote. Its supporters are mostly young men and their numbers are dramatically swelling at the expense of Orbán's Fidesz party. This lures Orbán further into the mire of radical-rightist politics as he courts the young racists in the hope of reversing the trend.

So the police stand idly by as Jobbik's uniformed paramilitary wing, outlawed by the courts under a previous administration, marches again, displaying the regalia of the defunct Arrow Cross, spreading fear in the targeted Jewish and Roma communities. There have been numerous recent attacks in the Old Ghetto district of Budapest on unaccompanied elderly Jews, including a widely loved and respected retired chief rabbi aged 90.

Lendvai notes that 'the genies Orbán has conjured up in his thirst for power have spun out of control ... [Yet] I still believe that the real danger comes not from the neo-Nazis or those who seek solutions in violence but rather from the fine silence of the political Right around Orbán and, with a very few exceptions, the Catholic and Protestant churches.'

Orbán's popularity is significantly waning. His administration could face defeat in the 2014 elections if the fractured democratic opposition manages to form a single platform.

Paradoxically, the substantial current decline of Orbán's approval rates stems from his astonishing success. He has built a political establishment totally subject to his personal control and reduced the legislature to a reliable rubber stamp.

Fidesz won 53 per cent of the vote in the last elections, cast in a 64 per cent turnout. By means of a quirk of the electoral law, this gave the party a two-thirds parliamentary majority. All the deputies of his party and even the state president and the chairman of the legislature have been chosen personally

by Orbán. Consequently, they owe their loyalty to him rather than to the electorate.

In just over two years, this parliament has managed in a frenzy of legislation to disable the essential checks and balances of democratic control. No aspect of Orbán's radical reform programme had been disclosed, let alone debated, before the elections. The centre-piece of the reform is a new constitution passed without cross-party consensus and already modified six times.

It shirks Hungary's enduring culpability for the Holocaust and trivialises its significance by equating that crime against all humanity with the subsequent Soviet occupation. The constitution also drops the word 'Republic' from the official name of this country, leaving the door open for Orbán to crown himself king!

A long series of new laws and decrees exposes the press to prohibitive fines potentially issued at will at the hands of a committee of political appointees, emasculates the judiciary by replacing independent-minded judges by party hacks, and redraws the constituency boundaries to favour Fidesz. The administration has also challenged or undermined the independence and effectiveness of such essential institutions as the central bank and the office of the parliamentary ombudsman.

This is how the *Financial Times* has summed up the effect of the legislative and electoral reforms: 'Together they bestow inordinate power on the ruling party. The prime minister can claim to have won the last election fairly. Now he is deploying a two-thirds majority in parliament to deny opponents the same possibility.'

But there is more. An effective change of administration under the new rules would be nearly impossible to establish because, even if another party were to win the elections, the existing Fidesz office-holders in charge of the key national institutions would continue to run the country. The reason: these executives have been appointed for terms ranging from six to nine years by law stipulating that they could be removed from office only by subsequent legislation requiring another two-thirds parliamentary majority.

Outside these institutions, Orbán's extra-parliamentary power extends through cliental networks embracing the mass media, business, industry, agriculture, diaspora organisations, art and education funding, regional administration and, of course, the civil service.

Many of the key relationships in this informal maze of dependence were forged in the dying days of Soviet power. Its dominant participants then were among the brightest Communist cadres who learned how to secure for themselves and each other the choicest pieces from the disintegrating state structure. Today, they are the Hungarian oligarchs.

## JEWISH FILM-MAKERS IN GERMANY *cont. from page 5*

in Hollywood, Pommer returned to Germany and produced four last silent films with a number of his favourite Jewish collaborators. (According to Pommer biographer Ursula Hardt, his productions 'all made the 1928-29 list of Germany's most popular films'.) Director Hanns Schwarz teamed up with writer Hans Szekeley on two features, including *The Wonderful Lie*, starring Franz Lederer and referred to by Prawer as 'the last of UFA's lavishly mounted prestige films of the silent era'. At the same time, the veteran director Joe May turned out two last notable films in the Social Realist vein: *Homecoming (Heimkehr)* and *Asphalt*, with Jewish actresses Dita Parlo and Betty Amann in the leading roles.

At around the same time, Paul Czinner directed his last silent film starring his wife Elizabeth Bergner – an adaptation of a classic Arthur Schnitzler story, *Fräulein Else*, with Karl Freund on hand behind the camera to give the film a visual style lacking in Czinner's stolid approach.

Finally, the German silent cinema was brought to a close by *Menschen am Sonntag* (People on Sunday), a surprisingly original production filmed entirely on the streets and nearby lakeside (Wannsee and Nikolassee) of Berlin in 1929. The filming of this modest little contemporary story brought together a group of aspiring new young talents all of whom would go on to have impressive careers in the cinema, mainly

in the USA. The co-directors were Robert Siodmak and Edgar G. Ulmer, the co-writers Curt Siodmak (brother of Robert) and Billy Wilder, the camera assistant Fred Zinnemann, and the experienced Eugen Schüfftan as cameraman, with production assistance provided by Moriz Seeler and Seymour Nebenzahl.

Clearly, the remarkable quality and scope of the Jewish involvement in the early German cinema is one of the most interesting, and neglected, stories of the silent cinema.

*Joel Finler is a film historian with a special interest in US and Jewish cinema. He is the author of, among other books, the award-winning The Hollywood Story (1989).*

## REVIEW *cont. from page 9*

To survive, an autocratic, populist regime must focus the hostility of its outraged electorate on real or imagined enemies abroad. Orbán has thus declared a national 'freedom struggle', in the idealised spirit of the 1956 revolution, against such safe targets as the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and, of course, foreign correspondents – especially Lendvai.

All this has frightened away foreign investors. The three principal global credit rating agencies have responded by downgrading Hungary's public debt to junk status. As a result, the state is now exposed to the mercies of the short-term commercial money markets to service its relentlessly mounting debt burden from loans carrying wildly unsustainable interest rates in the region of ten per cent.

Cheaper money may or may not be forthcoming from the IMF, which does not want to see Hungary go bankrupt for fear of fresh riots possibly fanned and exploited by the volatile neo-Nazis. But even then, the far right alone could never muster political control.

Charles Gati, the distinguished Hungarian-born American academic, is quoted by Lendvai as saying: 'This country is no longer a Western-style democracy. It is an illiberal, or managed, democracy in the sense that all the important decisions are made by Orbán.' George Kondád, the sociologist and best-selling novelist and Lendvai's lifelong comrade in the struggle to build a liberal democracy here, shrugs that despite all the efforts since the collapse of Communism, Hungary, to him, has remained 'a junk country with a junk administration and a junk prime minister'. Lendvai grimly states: 'In my view, there is nothing to suggest that the Orbán regime could be seriously threatened [at the polls] by the Left in the foreseeable future.'

Lendvai despairs, but I do not. For the tyrants of the modern world tend

to survive for any significant length of time only when protected by mighty domestic industrial infrastructures or by foreign interests – and Orbán enjoys no such support. He is in charge of a weak European economy surrounded by neighbours committed to integration with the mature Western democracies.

The Hungarian prime minister is a lonely, frail man driven by a fatal attraction to power and plagued by its attendant paranoia. His command structure is based on the unquestioning obedience of professional managers prepared to serve any cause or master. When Orbán inevitably succumbs to the intolerable, dual pressure exerted by the democratic opposition and the paranoia generated by his own style of administration, his painfully constructed edifice of control must collapse with him.

### Thomas Ország-Land

*Thomas Ország-Land is a poet and award-winning foreign correspondent who writes from London and his native Budapest. His next book will be The Survivors: Holocaust Poetry for Our Time (Smokestack/England, 2014).*

## ARTS AND EVENTS JANUARY DIARY

**Thur 10 'Faces in the Void: Czech Survivors of the Holocaust'** 'Faces in the Void' is an original collection of poetry and documentary photography by poet Jane Liddell-King and photographer Marion Davies. At Wiener Library, 6.30 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247. Admission free

**Wed 16 Joanna Michlic (Hadassah-Brandeis Institute), 'Stories of Rescue in the Letters of Jewish Survivors about Polish Rescuers'** At Wiener Library, 6.30 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247. Admission free

**Wed 16 B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge.** Sheila Kennedy, 'High Times at Heathrow', 2.30 pm at the Harts. Tel 020 8954 6502

**Wed 23 Prof Yehuda Bauer, world renowned scholar and historian, 'Why Did World War II Break Out?'** In association with Yad Vashem-UK Foundation. At LJCC, 8.00 pm. Tel 020 8457 5000

## VISIT TO SANDY'S ROW SYNAGOGUE AND THE JEWISH EAST END MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2013

Sandy's Row Synagogue is the oldest Ashkenazi synagogue in London and the last remaining synagogue in Spitalfields.

We will have a guided tour of the Synagogue and the exhibition of photographs of C. A. Mathew, a selection of photographs of Spitalfields taken on 20 April 1912. It is the first time that many of these images have been put on public display.

We will also have the opportunity to see a film made by the Open University on the history of the Synagogue, together with another short film, *The Tenth Man*, which was filmed at Sandy's Row.



A coach will go from Stanmore, stopping at Finchley Road. We will be joined on the coach by Rachel Kolsky, a prize-winning Blue Badge Guide, whose passion is the East End of London, in particular areas of Jewish interest. Her first book, *Jewish London*, is published this year. Rachel will tell us the history behind the buildings, in particular the 'human stories'.

Lunch will be provided at the Synagogue.

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

## The forgotten victims of Nazism

My parents never spoke to me about their past in Germany. My mother's sister, I was told, died of liver failure when young. Yet her absence was always present. Suspicious, I started to delve. It took me the better part of 50 years to find her.

When I finally acquired my mother's papers, I 'discovered' that Anna, as I shall call her, had been in a mental hospital in the 1930s and, in about 1940, had been sent to Poznan in Poland, where she had 'unfortunately died'. This, I was to discover, was the lie that the authorities at the Brandenburg euthanasia centre told most victims' families and, significantly, the presiding court authorities. Actually, Anna was gassed at the Brandenburg killing centre in July 1940.

The 70,000 victims of the Nazi euthanasia programme – T4 Aktion in Nazi-speak – and the programme itself have received relatively little publicity either in Germany or Britain (see Anthony Grenville, '(Mis)understanding the Holocaust', *AJR Journal*, May 2011). The programme, an extension of the sterilisation programme, itself a product of the German medical profession's longstanding interest in genetics, was intended to 'purify German blood'. Ninety-nine per cent of the T4 victims were deemed mentally subnormal. (One example was of a woman considered a touch slovenly over her housework.) The T4 programme was the first to gas its victims.

These are some of the forgotten victims of

Nazi barbarism. There are many reasons for this. Few have chosen to campaign for the T4 victims, in comparison, for example, with the murdered Jews. Many families still prefer not to (or even no longer do) remember what happened to their long-ago, 'not-quite-right' relatives. Moreover, almost none of the doctors and nurses who had administered and taken part in the T4 programme were sacked post-Nazism: they in turn appointed people in their own ideological mould to succeed them.

There is another reason. Finally, in 2011 there was a memorial for the 7,000 murdered at Brandenburg and, for the first time in Germany, a book of the dead has been published. For this purpose, Astrid Ley and others had to go to court to win permission to release names held under the so-called rules of patient and doctor confidentiality. It is a crucial precedent.

I attended the commemoration in Brandenburg in September. I stood close to the ground where Anna was gassed. As I crunched over the gravel and dust where the prison and killing unit had stood, I thought: Here lie Anna's ashes. The good citizens of Brandenburg had protested at all the smoke emanating from that long chimney, which worried the administrators of the T4 programme, who wanted their activities well concealed. So, some time after Anna's incineration the corpses were burnt elsewhere.

At the beginning of the T4 programme, it

was ability to work which determined whether you lived or died. But between April and July 1940 the criteria changed to whether or not the patient was 'Jewish'. The medical profession (who had the highest membership of the Nazi Party of any occupational group) had, during the Weimar Republic, increasingly defined the Jews as a threat to the German race. Of those murdered at Brandenburg, 10 per cent were Jewish. (In the Reich as a whole, the percentage of Jews was 0.8, and in Berlin 3.8. Thus the 10 per cent figure both reveals not only the disproportionate number of Jews killed but also the fact that, as opposed to common mythology, most of the T4 victims were not Jewish.) It has not been established who took the decision to 'prioritise' the Jewish patients but it marks one of the first instances of systematised murder on the basis of being Jewish.

For anybody interested in the euthanasia programme, in particular in Brandenburg, the first and one of the key killing centres, I strongly recommend *The 'Euthanasia Institution' at Brandenburg an der Havel: Murder of the Ill and Handicapped during National Socialism* (edited by Astrid Ley and Annette Hinz-Wessels, Metropol Verlag, 2012, in English and German), which accompanies the Brandenburg memorial exhibition and from which I have drawn some of the above data. I would also like to thank Dr Ley for helping me to find my aunt.

Merilyn Moos

## Kindertransport 75th Anniversary

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. Please see the notice below in connection with this exhibition.

The day after the reunion, on Monday 24 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

### Kindertransport Exhibition

Can you help The Wiener Library?

#### Call for Memorabilia for an Exhibition on the Kindertransport

The Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide is one of the world's leading and most extensive archives on the Holocaust and Nazi era.

The Wiener Library is developing a new temporary exhibition to mark the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport and we are looking for original artefacts and materials to use in the exhibition.



If you or someone you know has materials related to the Kindertransport, we want to hear about it.

We are looking for original documents, photographs or artefacts that can be loaned to the Library for the duration of the exhibition run in Summer 2013.

Contact Katy Jackson at [kjackson@wienerlibrary.co.uk](mailto:kjackson@wienerlibrary.co.uk) or on 020 7636 7247 if you have materials you think may be of interest.

For more information about the Library and our current exhibitions, visit our website at [www.wienerlibrary.co.uk](http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk). The Wiener Library is always interested in acquiring new material. If you do not have anything for this exhibition but have other documents, artefacts or books related to the Holocaust, please contact us.

The Wiener Library  
for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide

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through the Heritage Lottery Fund



# INSIDE the AJR

## **Bradford CF A Time for Goodbyes**

We started with Rudi Leavor and Stephen Tendlow discussing their recent visits to Germany. Though the meeting ended on a happy note with a party for Lorle Michaelis's 99th birthday, it was also sadly a time for goodbyes, this being our last meeting at Mornington Hall in Shipley. In addition, it was the last meeting chaired by our caring and efficient organiser Susanne Green, whom we will miss very much.

*Anna Greenwood*

## **Pinner Becoming British Citizens**

Members were invited to share some part of their life stories. We heard about everything ranging from life in Nigeria in the 1950s to schooling in England in the 1940s to finding new relatives. These were fascinating tales, illustrating many aspects of settling down and becoming British citizens.

*Robert Gellman*

## **Ealing Excellent Talk**

AJR Journal Consultant Editor Anthony Grenville talked about his new book – a unique historical study of the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria who settled in Britain after 1933. This excellent talk enthralled the sizeable audience.

*Leslie Sommer*

## **Café Imperial**

### **Full House with Much Chatter**

A full house with much chatter from all quarters. We heard from Peter Wayne about Kaunitz camp, where he liberated some Hungarian girls in May 1945. There ensued a discussion on Budapest and personal experiences there as well as a rendition of a Paprika love song! *Esther Rinkoff*

## **Kingston upon Thames**

### **An Inspiring Story**

At last a local meeting for David Lawson to tell the story of Eva Urban! We were inspired by her wonderful story. Once again, a delicious tea at Susan's usual excellent standard. *Hazel Beiny*

## **Ilford WIZO Thumbnail History**

WIZO UK trustee Mrs Andy Epstein gave a thumbnail history of her organisation. It was started in 1918 by Rebekah Sieff, after seeing the hardship suffered by women in Palestine. They began a fundraising campaign and the proceeds helped to provide better jobs and homes for their children.

*Meta Roseneil*

## **Wembley Comfortable Meeting**

Eight of us gathered in our usual comfortable lounge to hear from Myrna on forthcoming Chanukah events and for lively conversation with a cup of tea.

*Ruth Pearson*

## **Hull A Sad Farewell**

Following a discussion on the question of reparations – it was felt that other countries lagged behind Germany in this respect – we watched *Watermarks*, the film about the pre-war Vienna women's swimming team. We are all sad Susanne will no longer be our co-ordinator – we thank her for her enthusiasm and wish her the very best for the future.

*Rose Abrahamson*

## **New Member for Norfolk**

Not only were there eight for Myrna's lunch get-together but one of us was a complete newcomer, hailing from Koblenz, who had been in Norwich all his adult life and had only just heard of the AJR. As a 13-year-old, impatient to get on a Kindertransport, he had tried to reach England by himself, without any papers, by crossing the Dutch frontier after a long walk.

*Frank Bright*

## **Kent Enjoyable Social Meeting**

We had an excellent buffet lunch and listened to John Izbicki, one of our members, talk about his autobiography *Between the Lines*. We enjoyed this social meeting and would like such meetings.

*Josephine Singer*

## **HGS Smiling Faces**

A very different Monday morning with light entertainment in the person of Ros Nagler, who read us some of her jolly, observational poems. We were also delighted that one of our members, Patricia Tausz, read some of her recently printed poems. Our group left with huge smiles on their faces. *Hazel Beiny*

## **Essex (Westcliff)**

### **Recollections of Kristallnacht**

Members discussed various topics of interest. Otto Deutsch, who came on a Kindertransport from Vienna, recalled the destruction on Kristallnacht and how he and his family were betrayed by their 'friendly' neighbour. *Leslie Kleinman*

## **St John's Wood Living Memorial**

Laurence Stein told us about Boys Town Jerusalem. Founded in 1948 by Rabbi Linchner as a living memorial to the one and a half million children who perished in the Holocaust, it now houses over 900 Jewish boys aged 12 to 18 from difficult backgrounds in Israel and other countries, turning them into young men with limitless futures. *David Lang*

## **Leeds CF Recalling Difficult Times**

Liesel Carter (née Meier), who had carried out research to find her father's grave, discussed her recent visit to Hildesheim (her father was the first Jew in the town to die following a beating by Nazi thugs in 1937). Invited by the mayor

as guest of honour at the Kristallnacht commemoration, she had also finally visited her father's grave.

Liesel had inspired other members to recall those difficult times, including Berta Klipstein, who told us about her return to Bielsko, Poland, as a teenager after being deported to Russia. In 1946 Rabbi Schonfeld helped Bertha and other children to get out of Communist Poland. Other members related stories of return visits to their birthplaces.

We also remembered with sadness the recent deaths of members Charles Sinclair Morris and Bernard Lewis. Finally, we congratulated Gilli Rawson on her daughter Sandi Firth's becoming 'Jewish Mother of the Year'!

*Barbara Cammerman*

## **Brighton-Sarid (Sussex)**

### **Born in a Nazi Hospital**

Angela Schluter was born in a Nazi hospital – her Jewish mother had survived many ordeals before marrying Angela's father, a Nazi. At the age of four, Angela came to the UK with her mother. She later went back to Germany, where she married, returning to England after 25 years.

*Shirley Huberman*

## **Edgware From Glaxo to GlaxoSmithKline**

David Barnett presented the fascinating story of Joseph Nathan, who in 1852 at the age of 17, left London to join his brother-in-law's trading business in New Zealand. On returning to London, he formed Glaxo to import NZ dried milk for babies. Glaxo was to evolve into pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline. *Michael Spiro*

## **Radlett Involving Get-together**

Members brought and talked about objects associated with a significant event or memory in their lives. The stories varied from the merely strange to the truly poignant but added up to a get-together that was fully involving for all present. *Fritz Starer*

## **Hendon How the Ear Works**

Hearing specialist Chris Carr came to the meeting with an array of new and old hearing aids. A full explanation of how the ear works was followed by a Q&A session and an almost free consultation for our members. A very informative and productive meeting. *Hazel Beiny*

## **Temple Fortune Pre-Chanukah Party**

We began with hot drinks and pre-Chanukah doughnuts before enjoying Esther's 'AJR Eggheads' quiz as we noshed chocolate Chanukah *gelt*. Our regular helper Gillian described, using photos, her daughter's recent Sephardi Henna Party and Wedding. This was the last afternoon meeting for our group: from January we will have lunch meetings from 12 to 2 pm alternating with the Hendon Group. *David Lang*

## **Glasgow Book Club**

### **A Comfortable Read**

Discussing Alexander McCall Smith's novel *Friends, Lovers, Chocolate*, we found its leisurely pace, the many observational asides and, above all, the detailed references

## 'A hard act to follow': Social Worker Ruth Finestone to retire

When in  
1980  
Ruth

Finestone first began work at the AJR, the working environment was very different. Almost all the staff were themselves refugees and a number of languages were spoken around the office. At the same time, the accommodation was sparse and makeshift. There were few telephones and no modern office equipment.



In the intervening years, despite the numerous physical, procedural and administrative changes the Social Services Department has experienced, Ruth's resolute advocacy on behalf of members has never waned.

Ruth has served the AJR with distinction – including her days at the Otto Schiff Home, the annual St Anne's, Eastbourne and Bournemouth holidays, the day outings, the visits to members in residential care and nursing homes, the offer of support to members at the Day Centre, and visits to members' homes.

Ruth has established longstanding relationships with, and helped support, countless members and their families. Her retirement will come as a surprise to many – she has always been there! She will be a hard act to follow.

AJR members and staff thank her for a lifetime of dedicated work and wish her a happy, healthy and enjoyable retirement in which to spend more time with her family, not least her nine grandchildren.

**Carol Rossen, Director**  
**Sue Kurlander**  
**Head of Social Services**

## JANUARY GROUP MEETINGS

<b>Pinner</b>	3 Jan	Games Makers: The Story behind the 2012 Olympics
<b>Surrey</b>	6 Jan	Social Get-together
<b>Cafe Imperial</b>	8 Jan	Social Get-together
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	8 Jan	Winter Warmer Social Get-together
<b>St John's Wood</b>	9 Jan	Dr Lionel Kopelowitz: 'Life as a GP'
<b>Glasgow</b>	10 Jan	Book Club
<b>HGS</b>	14 Jan	Evelyn Friedlander: 'Germany Today'
<b>Edgware</b>	15 Jan	Tanya Byron, Child Psychologist
<b>Radlett</b>	16 Jan	David Barnett: 'The Story of Joseph Nathan and GlaxoSmithKline'
<b>Holocaust lecture at Glasgow University</b>	17 Jan	Details to be sent separately
<b>Brighton-Sarid (Sussex)</b>	21 Jan	Film Morning - 'The Story of Alice Sommer Hertz'
<b>Harrogate/York</b>	23 Jan	Social Get-together
<b>Visit to Glasgow City Chambers</b>	28 Jan	Details to be sent separately
<b>North West London</b>	29 Jan	(Tuesday at Alyth Gardens) Monica Gubbay: 'The Grodzinski Family Bakers'
<b>Wembley</b>	30 Jan	Social Get-together
<b>North London</b>	31 Jan	Visit to JCOSS. Details to be sent separately

## CONTACTS

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

**Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator**  
0151 291 5734

**Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator**  
020 8385 3070

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

**Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator**  
020 8385 3077

**KT-AJR (Kindertransport)**  
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

**Child Survivors Association-AJR**  
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

## New pastures for 'Musketeer' Eileen

Eileen Brady joined the AJR in 2006, immediately making a colourful impression on members and colleagues alike. Her bubbly, caring character enhanced the AJR's Social Services Department.



Anthony Fagan and I are the colleagues who worked most closely with her – she called us 'The Three Musketeers'!

Eileen has a thorough knowledge of social work practice and disaster management. She has lectured on the latter subject at Northumbria University and travelled widely in challenging parts of the world assisting in

developing programmes in support of needy and traumatised families. We wish her well in her new post in Newcastle establishing Safe Families for Children in Tyne and Wear, as well as in the international work to which this is expected to lead. She will be sorely missed.

**Barbara Dresner**  
**Northern Region Social Worker**

In the four years that I have been her manager, Eileen has been an inspiration to the Social Services Department and to me. I have always found her most caring towards all AJR members with whom she came into contact. I wish her well in her future career.

**Sue Kurlander, Head of Social Services**

to Edinburgh locations, a comfortable read. Our hostess was Erna Grace. Our 'discussion guide' was our co-ordinator Agnes Isaacs.  
*Halina Moss*

### North London Inspirational Talk

A truly inspirational talk by Angela Gluck about the Separated Child Foundation, which deals with child refugees from war-torn countries. The Foundation does an enormous amount to help these children despite tremendous difficulties, not least linguistic problems and the lack of documentation. As a group, we were happy to send a donation to this worthwhile charity.  
*Hanne Freedmann*

### Trip to Bank of England Museum

We were taken to the Bank by coach in comfort. We were left to our devices in the Museum for a while to look at the many interesting exhibits, after which

followed a very interesting talk by Tim Pike on his long experience at the Bank. Then we were treated to a sumptuous tea in a nearby hotel. Another AJR enjoyable and successful outing.  
*Edgar H. Ring*

### Edinburgh An Audio Treat

David Ian Neville's 'Pictures in the Mind' enthralled us. David, a BBC Scotland radio producer, gave us an audio treat as we listened to excerpts from some of his productions laced with personal stories. A wonderful tea provided by hostess Vivienne Anderson rounded off a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.  
*Agnes Isaacs*

### Glasgow Pre-Chanukah Lunch

Agnes Isaacs, our co-ordinator, introduced the programme. It was mainly a concert, with the participation of an ensemble of lady singers, the KEFLI Singers, conducted by Ingrid Levin, who sang Scottish, Hebrew

and popular songs, accompanied by Alistair Thom on the piano. We also heard Eric Levin on the violin and Marie Connell on the cello in a classical programme. Agnes interviewed one of our members, a veteran who came resplendent with a chestful of medals. The splendid lunch included latkes.  
*Halina Moss*

## COMPUTER HELP?

If you are not sure how to call family over the internet, send an email to a friend or play Bridge on the computer, AJR's Volunteer Services Department is starting a new programme aimed at helping members to learn how to work with computers and surf the internet.

To find out more, please contact Jonathan on 020 8385 3070 or at [jonathan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:jonathan@ajr.org.uk)

# 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 January 2013

*Lunch is served at 12.30 unless otherwise stated*

### Tuesday 1 January

Centre closed

### Thursday 3 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.45 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 13.45 Entertainer – Ronnie Goldberg (Singer)

### Tuesday 8 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition – please book
- 10.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group with John
- 11.30 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 12.30 KT LUNCH Speaker Ruth Barnett, 'Wilfrid Israel'

### Thursday 10 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 13.45 'In Grandmother's Footsteps' – an afternoon of poetry with Shirley Jaffe

### Tuesday 15 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition – please book
- 10.45 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.45 Entertainer – Geoff Strum (Operatic Arias)

### Thursday 17 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.45 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 12 pm LUNCHEON CLUB Speaker Alan Bilgora, 'Jewish Opera'
- 12.45 pm LUNCH

### Tuesday 22 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition – please book
- 10.30 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 11.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group with Judy
- 13.45 Entertainer – Christine Ryan (Music from the Shows)

### Thursday 24 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games

## THE AJR PAUL BALINT CENTRE – LUNCHESES FRESHLY PREPARED

Please note that lunches at the Centre are freshly prepared on the premises by our in-house chef Cassie

## MEALS-ON-WHEELS

To order Meals-on-Wheels please telephone 020 8385 3075

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

## Current Affairs Discussion Group

Every Second and Fourth Tuesday of the Month  
11.30 at the AJR Centre

*Why not join us for lunch after the session?*

## Chiropodist at the Centre

The chiropodist will next be visiting us on Tuesday 15 January at 9.30 – 12.30

*For an appointment please telephone 020 7431 2744*

- 11.00 Entertainer – Mike Marandi (Singer)
- 2 pm Holocaust Memorial Day Service at Belsize Square Synagogue

### Tuesday 29 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition – please book
- 11-12 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.30 Afternoon Concert with The Broadside Barbershop Quartet and Dr Richard Tennenbaum

### Thursday 31 January

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.45 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 13.45 Entertainer – Roy Blass (Keyboard and Vocalist)

## FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS

### Death

Mrs Helga Lossos passed away on 8 September 2012, having been seriously ill for two years. She was the Chair of the Association of Baltic Jews in Great Britain, taking over from our father, Mr Jacha Lossos, in 1991, when he passed away (David Lossos).

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## OBITUARIES

### Lieselotte Montague, 1923 – 2012

Lieselotte Montague fled Germany and came to Britain in 1939 at the age of 16 with her parents and her twin brother. She completed her education to university level in the UK and then joined the Women's Voluntary Service. After the war she worked in the German Service of the BBC and, when she married, she joined her husband to work in his company.

They were married for ten years before any children came along – and then two sons and a daughter arrived within five years. Tragically, Lieselotte's husband died when the eldest was only eight and she was left to bring them up alone and to continue her husband's business. Her great strength of character is borne out by the fact that the business

thrived and all three children have made successes of their lives; in fact, her daughter followed her to the BBC, albeit in television (she is a producer with BBC World News).

Never one to sit idle, Lieselotte joined the Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC) of World Jewish Relief as a volunteer once she was able to retire from earning a living. She assisted with the caseload of the JRC, which included large numbers of Holocaust survivors as well as later refugees from Egypt, Hungary, Iran, Iraq and Bosnia. Lieselotte was at the forefront of efforts to have properties



and possessions in Austria and Germany returned to their rightful owners, working with lawyers here and abroad to this end.

She also worked on the Jewish Refugees Committee archive (1933-45) as it was being compiled by Dr Amy Gottlieb. Until well into her eighties, Lieselotte continued to research the archival material, giving valuable information to former refugees for restitution purposes, for family reunifications and for genealogical or academic research (W. G. Sebald consulted her about the organisation of the Kindertransport in order to write his book *Austerlitz*).

She had a very sharp mind and a vast breadth of knowledge, a wonderful command of several languages and a great compassion for the individuals who made up the JRC caseload.

Lieselotte died peacefully a few months before her ninetieth birthday and had the enormous gratification, on the day before her death, of learning from one of her grandsons that he had been offered a place at Oxford University.

**Lilian Levy**

### Dame Simone Prendergast, 1930 – 2012

Simone Ruth Prendergast (née Laski) was born in Manchester on 2 July 1930. When she was three, the family moved to London. Until the outbreak of the war, she attended Queen's College in Harley Street; it was later evacuated to Northamptonshire. Subsequently she and her sister Ann were sent to Cheltenham Ladies' College.

After Cheltenham, she attended the La Châteline finishing school in Switzerland. Later she worked for the furrier Herbert Duncan, then for Digby Morton, a major couturier of the time, and she then became a director of the London School of Department, where she trained BOAC and BEA stewardesses.

Her mother Elaine being the youngest daughter of Michael Marks, founder of Marks and Spencer, Dame Simone unsurprisingly ended up working, like others in the family, for M&S.

Although her late husband, Anthony, was then the youngest Lord Mayor of Westminster (1968-9), she always felt responsible for his attempt to become an MP being thwarted by her dress sense. Appearing with him in Croydon before a Tory selection committee in 1969, she decided she should be appropriately dressed – with hat and white gloves. But a member of the committee told her 'We don't wear gloves down here!'

However, she continued her own involvement in constituency politics. At the same time, she threw herself into charity work for various organisations.

Foremost among these was the



Blond-McIndoe Research Trust in East Grinstead, set up to honour the eminent plastic surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe. Following the death of

her mother, Elaine Blond, Dame Simone took over the chairmanship of the Trust (1986-2003).

Her first marriage, to Albert Kaplan, a Canadian doctor living in London who invested heavily in West End theatrical productions, ended in divorce. While finalising her divorce, Dame Simone met her second husband, Anthony, who worked in the London solicitor's office that was drawing up the papers. They married in 1959.

Her passion for politics was ignited when Anthony was Lord Mayor of Westminster and she proved to be an elegant and capable Mayoress.

Her commitment to Tory politics nearly cost her her life in the Grand Hotel during the 1984 Brighton bombing. She survived unscathed, though deeply shocked.

In a public clash with Dame Shirley Porter, former Conservative leader of Westminster City Council, Dame Simone spoke for ordinary Tory supporters when she said 'You know, it's the hearts of the people that matter. They are well meaning people who hand out leaflets and make chocolate fudge for jolly fund-raising events. They are just people who want to be good Conservatives and help

the Conservative government.'

Lady Thatcher made her a DBE for her political and public work in 1986.

She was a part-time Commissioner for Racial Equality, was made a Justice of the Peace and appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London. She was also a retired member of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

She had considerable style – and enjoyed walking, particularly through the streets of Westminster, where she lived. On one hand, she was seen with narrow fitting Ferragamos and, on the other, M&S 'sturdies'. She recounted at her leaving party after stepping down as a JP that she was either referred to in court as 'Your Royal Highness' or 'You silly old tart!'

She worked tirelessly for the Central British Fund (now World Jewish Relief), raising resources to assist those who would have been in dire circumstances, was Patron and Joint Chairman of the Finance Committee for WIZO, the Women's International Zionist Organisation, Commandant of the UK Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, and a member of the Court of Patrons of the Royal College of Surgeons.

She is survived by her son.

**Michael Kallenbach**



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson



### The Image of Abraham Project

The Bible Lands Museum, situated opposite the Israel Museum, houses a broad range of archeological artefacts from all over the ancient Near East. In accordance with the vision of its founder, the late Eli Borovsky, it refers to the various cultures of the ancient Near East, each of which contributed to modern history and culture.

The Museum also seeks to foster co-operation and understanding between the cultures of the region, focusing particularly on promoting interaction between Jewish and Muslim cultures. To this end it has established a number of educational projects, some of them funded by Israel's administrative institutions, others by outside donors, but all of them with the same objective.

One fine September morning I met with the Museum's spokesperson, Anat Sella, together with Ragheda Kashkush, the energetic young lady from East Jerusalem who heads the Image of Abraham project, to learn about the Museum's educational work.

'Abraham, whom the Muslims know as Ibrahim, is the common ancestor of both peoples,' Ragheda explained. 'This is the aspect we try to emphasise when we bring classes of ten-year-olds from both religions together for the joint activities

that the programme involves.'

The programme, which has been running for 16 years, combines a class from a school in East Jerusalem with one from West Jerusalem once a week for a four-hour session of learning about the ancient cultures of the region, interacting with one another, and working together on projects involving games, study and handicrafts. Each class undergoes several preparatory sessions in which facilitators from the Museum go to the schools and, in co-operation with the class teachers, prepare the children in their own language for participation in the project. Part of the preparatory activity involves providing each child with a bilingual Arabic-Hebrew phrasebook, thereby enabling some elementary communication.

Each week the children are divided into three groups comprising both Arabs and Jews, with two facilitators in each group, in addition to the class teacher and an accompanying parent, to ensure that the activities are conducted in both languages. Despite initial hesitancy, the children learn to co-operate as they tour the galleries, build models, prepare projects and undertake tasks. When the children have a break to eat the food they have brought from home they are encouraged to share with children from the other

group. One of the meetings involves baking *pittot*, the traditional round bread that is widespread throughout the Middle East today.

With 60 children per project, at four projects a year, approximately 240 children participate in the project annually. Over the course of 16 years, almost 4,000 children have taken part at some point, and many of them are now adults. That is a tremendous achievement and constitutes a bold step towards building mutual respect and understanding between the two nations. The programme stresses the shared heritage and similarities as well as the differences between Judaism and Islam.

At the end of the course a joint meeting is held, together with all the parents from both sides. Everyone is given a tour of the Museum, and the participants in the programme prepare models or projects that can be displayed in their schools, as well as putting on performances for the parents. Refreshments are served, and entertainment is provided, often involving joint sing-alongs or drumming groups.

A new project, aimed at providing a similar programme for slightly older children, is currently being prepared, and it is hoped that this will be launched later this year.

Although no statistics are available, the organisers of the programme are convinced that the attitudes of both sets of children, as well as of their teachers and parents, are vastly improved as a result of their participation. In addition, many of the children are able to learn about the history of their own culture and experience a museum in a positive and constructive way.



Tuesday 29 January 2013  
1.30 at the AJR Centre

Join us for lunch at 12.30 then  
enjoy a wonderful concert with

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Compere

**Dr Richard Tennenbaum, who will  
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Thursday 10 January 2013  
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