

AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Marriages of convenience as a survival strategy

The following article is an adapted version of a paper given in March 2014 at the annual conference of the Gesellschaft für Exilforschung (Society for Exile Studies) in Vienna.

For those exposed to persecution in Nazi Germany, marriage to a foreign national presented a means of emigrating to another country, where they were protected by their new citizenship from being deported back to Germany or from being rendered stateless if they were stripped of their German citizenship by the Nazi authorities. The advantages offered by marriages of convenience were primarily of benefit to women; this was due to the patriarchal cast of legislation relating to citizenship at the time, under which a woman, as a mere 'appendage' of her husband, automatically assumed his nationality on marriage. These marriages, which often existed only on paper, have in retrospect come to be seen as a form of assistance rendered to those under threat in Nazi Germany and are now judged positively. A number of people also married in order to secure a visa more easily, as was, for example, the case with entry visas for Palestine, then administered by Britain under a League of Nations mandate.



Erika Mann, 1905-69, Thomas Mann's elder daughter

Until now, this strategy of escape and of resistance to the Nazis has not been the subject of any academic research, a gap that Irene Messinger, a political scientist working in Vienna, is seeking to fill. It is her intention to raise the profile of marriages of convenience in research into the Holocaust and emigration and to anchor them firmly in the mainstream of historical research. Messinger's research aims to present the women persecuted by the Nazi regime as active agents, capable of exploiting their networks of contacts in order to enter into marriages of convenience, and also to investigate their marital partners, whose motives would have ranged from friendship and kindness and social and political commitment to straightforward financial gain.

In the course of her research, Messinger has to date unearthed more than 60 marriages of convenience, in works of scholarship, autobiographies and eye-witness accounts (interviews). There are many more such marriages than might appear at first glance. It will never be possible to discover exactly how many women attempted to save themselves by contracting marriages of convenience as this is a deeply private subject and, in many cases, a matter of shame, which only very few have spoken about publicly. Many women concealed the fact of their fictitious marriages on returning to Austria after 1945, fearing possible legal consequences or the loss of pension rights and the like.

Who were the people who entered into marriages of convenience? To judge by those cases that are already known, they were Jewish women who came from the middle classes or sometimes from the social élites and/or were members of political organisations with international connections. Among other factors, this is due to the high proportion of artists, academics and other professional women among those who emigrated to Britain. The individuals discussed in this article are known to us from biographies, autobiographies and other records that have been preserved. However, Messinger

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SPECIAL EVENT

The Last Train to Tomorrow

Sunday 9 November 2014, 3 pm
at The Roundhouse, London NW1

We are delighted to announce that a VIP will be the guest of honour at the AJR's London premiere of *The Last Train to Tomorrow* at The Roundhouse on Sunday 9 November 2014 and that Natasha Kaplinsky, the newsreader and television presenter, and member of Prime Minister David Cameron's Holocaust Commission, will be introducing the event.

Commissioned by the Halle Orchestra and composed and conducted by the internationally acclaimed artist Carl Davis CBE, *The Last Train to Tomorrow* tells the extraordinary story of the Kindertransport through a series of songs written by the children's author Hiawyn Oram.

The music will be performed by the Finchley Children's Music Group and the concert programme will also feature *The Marriage of Figaro Overture* by Mozart and Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* performed by the City of London Sinfonia together with an outstanding young violin soloist from the Yehudi Menuhin School.

This special and historic one-off occasion will begin with a commemoration of the anniversary of Kristallnacht and, as the event takes place on a Sunday afternoon, we particularly encourage members to bring along their children and grandchildren. The symbolism that the Roundhouse was formerly a turning point for trains and is located near Swiss Cottage, where many of the escaping refugees settled, should help make the concert memorable and historic.

Further information is on the flyer enclosed with this month's Journal.

Tickets can be purchased strictly through The Roundhouse Box Office – visit www.roundhouse.org.uk or telephone 0300 6789 222.

↪ Marriages of convenience as a survival strategy *continued*

is especially interested in cases of marriages of convenience among the 'ordinary' émigrés, which have hitherto remained unresearched. Little is known, too, about those individuals, for example members of Jewish youth organisations in Nazi Germany, who contracted marriages of convenience in order to improve their chances of securing a visa for Palestine by applying jointly as a married couple.

The most prominent examples of marriages of convenience among the emigrants to Britain occurred within the circle of friends around Klaus and Erika Mann, the children of Thomas Mann, where such marriages proliferated. Erika Mann, writer, cabaret artist and founder of the anti-fascist political cabaret ensemble Die Pfeffermühle (The Peppermill), was stripped of her German citizenship in 1935. Klaus Mann and his circle of homosexual friends assisted her in her efforts to find a British husband. In June 1935 she married the gay British poet W. H. Auden, whom she had never met, thereby immediately acquiring British citizenship.

Erika Mann's close friend, the actress Therese Giehse, who had also been active in the Pfeffermühle ensemble, found refuge in Switzerland in 1933 but was not secure there. Marriage to the novelist John Hampson-Simpson secured a British passport for Giehse, who, however, remained in Switzerland. She later became famous for her performances in the plays of Bertolt Brecht; cinema fans will recall her last role, in Louis Malle's *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974). Sybille von Schoenebeck was another friend of Klaus and Erika Mann. After the German authorities had frozen her bank accounts, and with her German passport about to expire, emigration became an urgent necessity for her. In 1935 she entered into a marriage of convenience with Walter Bedford, an English homosexual, and retained his surname out of gratitude. As Sybil Bedford, she became famous as a novelist; her first novel, *A Legacy* (1956), was dramatised for television by the BBC

in 1975.

The radical left-wing Internationale Sozialistische Kampfbund (International Socialist Combat League, ISK), which had been banned by the Nazis in 1933, also brought a number of its female members to safety in Britain through marriages of convenience. One of them was Susanne Strasser, born in 1915 and brought up in Vienna, who was later to become a historian and a leading authority on the German Social Democratic Party. As a student, she had travelled frequently to London and, after the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938, she remained in London, where she rapidly came to play an active role among the women refugees. In order to remain permanently in Britain, she entered into a marriage of convenience with a British citizen, Horace Miller.

Viennese-born Hilde Meisel had joined the ISK at 15. From 1932 she had been a student in London, where, under the pseudonym Hilda Monte, she published a number of articles in magazines and books and made radio broadcasts calling for resistance to the Nazi regime. Through a marriage of convenience to John Olday, a gay artist, cartoonist and anarchist, she acquired British citizenship in 1938. She was killed in April 1945 attempting to cross the border to Austria from Switzerland, where she had been sent on a secret mission. Similar cases are those of the mathematician and philosopher Grete Hermann, who married Edward Henry, and of Maria Saran, the future women's secretary of the Socialist International. ISK member Liesel Mayer entered into a fictitious marriage with Charles Bruckner but this developed into a love relationship, from which four children were born. After 1933 the ISK continued its activities in Britain, publishing critical texts and news articles; this would not have been possible had its female members not been able to employ the option of a marriage of convenience.

Networks consisting of friends or politically like-minded people were not the only ones to play an important part here. Families and extended circles of relatives also exploited every means to bring endangered women to safety, including marriages of convenience. Rosl Ebner, a student of medicine in Vienna, was able to contract a fictitious marriage in 1938 through her brothers, who were living in Paris. Her brothers were members of the Communist Party and used its networks to arrange a husband for their sister. The husband, who was paid, was a French hatter of Polish descent. Her sister provided a bouquet of white lilies for the wedding so that it did not appear

ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES (AJR)

The Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at **11.00 am on Tuesday 18 November 2014 at Belsize Square Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX.**

Agenda: Annual Report, Financial Report, Discussion, Election of Trustees

The following have been nominated for re-election as Trustees: Eleanor Angel, Gaby Glassman, Frank Harding.

All questions for the chair should be submitted by **Monday 10 November 2014** to the Chief Executive at Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL.

suspicious. Ebner was thus able to emigrate on a French passport, arriving in 1939 in Britain, where she was active in the organisation Austrian Self Aid. The art collector Jenny Steiner, one of Vienna's wealthiest women, exploited her private networks to organise marriages for her twin daughters Anna and Clara, so that they were able to leave Austria without any difficulty in 1938, one with a British and one with a French husband. Anna married Charles Weinberg, a British subject, and escaped a few days later as a British national – but without her husband – via Paris to Brazil, where she was reunited with her mother.

These examples of women whose lives were saved by marriages of convenience underline the importance of pre-existing networks, whether of family members or politically like-minded people, in the acquisition of British citizenship, with all its attendant advantages. But marriage was not a quick and simple solution in every case. There were also husbands who sought to exploit their new status; for women dependent on their husbands, the consequences could be violence or rape or blackmail extending over years. A further danger was that of betrayal by a third party, of being forced to live a double life, as well as the general insecurity inherent in such marriages.

Irene Messinger is continuing to research this topic in Vienna and would be pleased to receive any information about further cases of fictitious marriage. Such information will be treated confidentially, if required, and should be sent to irene.messinger@univie.ac.at

Irene Messinger
(adapted and translated from the German by Anthony Grenville)

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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.

'Schmoozing, Noshing and Humming Along': The AJR Celebration Lunch 2014

Some 200 members and their families packed into this year's Lunch and Concert, at the Hilton Hotel, Watford.

They were welcomed by AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman to 'a wonderful afternoon of socialising, good food and this year's offering of operatic

entertainment – or, as I like to call it, schmoozing, noshing and humming along'. Andrew reviewed the organisation's past 12 months, paying tribute to members and staff and singling out Director and Head of Personnel Carol Rossen (see below), who was leaving the organisation after 33 years' service.

As on previous occasions, guests were regaled with an array of 'Songs with Strings' by Glenys Groves and Alexander Naoumenko, with Cormac Brown on violin and Diana Franklin on piano.

A vote of thanks was given by AJR Vice-Chairman and Treasurer David Rothenberg.



PHOTOS: JONATHAN GOLDBERG WWW.JONGOLDBERG.CO.UK

Reflections on Retirement

Carol Rossen

Thirty-three years ago I was introduced to the AJR by my friend Sylvia Matus, who asked if I could help out with secretarial duties for a few days. Eventually I was asked if I could make this permanent. I was interviewed by Ludwig Spiro, who became so very supportive to me for many years.

When I joined the AJR, things were very different.

First we didn't have the lovely offices, or the technology, we have today. I remember sitting at someone's kitchen table with a wooden chair I had to raise with telephone books so I could reach my tiny typewriter!

We also had a wonderful system for our membership: the green card system. Each member had a card and each month these cards were taken out, written on and a reminder sent out.

One of the other wonderful systems was the banging machine. Every member had a metal plate with their

name and address on it. Each month paper was put into the banging machine and the handle pulled down onto a piece of paper. The paper was then wrapped around the *AJR Information*, a stamp stuck on it, and mailed.

Another change is that on arriving at the AJR I was one of very few staff members not from a refugee background. Some of you may remember Trudi Ettinger, Margot Williams and Werner Rosenstock, who really did teach me so much about the refugee community.

In the 1980s the AJR concentrated on members in north-west London. Today, we cater for members nationwide.

There are not many departments in the AJR I haven't worked in. At first, I worked with a lady called Ruth Neushal on the Self Aid Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. This has now become the AJR Annual Lunch at the Hilton Hotel in Watford.

One of the most popular facilities the AJR has provided is the Day Centre in Cleve Road. This became a home from home for so many members. It also became the jewel in the AJR's crown.

I know I wasn't the only one to be saddened by its closure in 2011.

One thing that has never changed is the staff's dedication to our members.

Whilst I am looking forward to my retirement, I know I will miss the AJR. So many of the members have become friends and I know this will continue.

I will continue to arrange and take the AJR holidays, which have always been very popular, as well as arranging and attending the annual AJR Lunch.

I have been very fortunate with the staff with whom I have worked and would like to thank them as well as the Trustees, past and present, who have always been so supportive.

Thank you, AJR, for making my working life so pleasant and teaching me so much over the years. I will miss it all but will enjoy being able to spend more time with my husband, Adrian, who has made life easy for me so I can concentrate on my work at the AJR. It will also be lovely to have time to spend with my daughter, son-in-law, son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and my mother, plus other family and friends.

An assortment of émigré aunties

'The earth is enriched with the dust of the millions of knitters who have held wool and needles since the beginning of sheep. One likes to believe that there is memory in the fingers, memory undeveloped but still alive.'

*Elizabeth Zimmermann's
Knitter's Almanac*

Café klatsches with knitting were at the heart of my childhood. The assortment of émigré aunties from the old days in Berlin met regularly around our Formica kitchen table.

Aunties travelled across Leeds on the rattling maroon tram. They walked up the hill, puffing and panting in voluminous winter coats, hats, gloves, scarves, string shopping bags containing their knitting and handbags to hold their cigarettes, lighters and powder compacts. My mum filled the blue plastic electric coffee percolator with huge amounts of freshly ground coffee; the smell filled the house, welcoming the aunties as they came through the door. A home-baked cake was just out of the oven, still warm and crumbly when sliced.

These women were in their fifties and sixties, had lived their lives in Germany, working in shops, as book-keepers, as Montessori teachers. Some had never married, being the youngest, looking after an ageing parent, or they had loved and lost fiancés, husbands and even their adult children before their emigration. Their property was seized and belongings confiscated by the Nazis. They could leave with little more than the clothes on their backs. My aunties had smuggled their jewellery in their underwear, nailed into

the soles of their shoes, sewn into the linings of their coats and of course they always had some knitting to keep their hands busy as they waited for safer times.

They were granted an entry visa if they had a guarantor already living here. The only work permit they received was as a home help. They felt they had no right to ever speak about what had happened to them, because in their eyes nothing had happened to them, compared to the millions lost.

They were the lucky ones, saved by a twist of fate.

Their story of exile was like a piece of wobbly knitting with giant holes of dropped stitches, impossible to mend. They knitted two together but could never hide the gaps. The warp and weft of their lives was irrevocably damaged. I listened as they described shimmying down the 'Kurfurstendam', pretending they could buy the glittering jewellery and soft-clinging dresses that were in the brightly lit shop windows. They would tell tales of their early days in England, often working as domestic servants for English Jewish people. They laughed at their own terrible English and the mistakes they made. The conversation invariably turned to emigration. It's always the transition points where our lives change that remain etched in our memory.

They remembered the discussions about where they could go, who they could write to, which country would let them in. I sat watching them at the table in front of our coal fire, I was picking cake crumbs off the table with my finger. Names of loved ones left behind lingered on their lips, half-whispered in the air. Sometimes I would ask where they were now, or in which country they ended up. The answer would be the same. 'I don't know – *verschollen*, she just disappeared.' There would be a short silence, only the sound of the knitting needles, then a new conversation would start up again in German, noisy, bright laughter, jokes, casting on new stitches, always new stitches.

The women in my refugee family were calmed by the repetition of the knitting, the monotony of the pattern, the comforting

to and fro of the needles.

Granny's knitting was tight, even and confident. She used bright colours and plain patterns with multi-coloured trimming. When she had finished her sweaters, she would look at the collar and say 'Let's draw a thread through with pompoms on the end.'

My mum sculpted a garment, adapting the shape, combining and recombining sleeves, collar and darts, checking the decreasing or increasing lines of the pattern.

Aunty Frieda's hands were red from plunging into warm washing-up water. She knitted mittens that were attached to a tape through the sleeves of my coat. She also knitted socks, scarves and sleeveless striped pullovers to send to her sister's grandchildren in Israel. She caught the tram down to Marks and Spencer to buy pants and vests and little white short-sleeved shirts for those children. She begged a box from the grocer to wrap into a big parcel, then tied it up using bits of string she had squirreled away. She fastened the knot with sealing wax. Every Chanukah a small parcel arrived from Lucy in Israel with three pieces of crochet such as a handkerchief, a tray cloth or a small lacy doily for her siblings.

Aunty Beattie knitted shawls, in nobbles and bobbles. She wore one fastened with a long narrow marcasite brooch, inset with pearls which had belonged to her mother, she told me. It was the only thing she could bring with her.

Zerta Blumenkopf – Mrs Flowers on her Head She bent down and kissed me. I would inhale with half-closed eyes, breathing in the clean Imperial Leather smell of her arms. Sometimes I'd follow her upstairs and watch her adjust the substantial upholstery of her elasticated flesh-coloured undergarments, loosening them to be more comfortable. She would collapse on the sofa, squishing the plush velvety cushion next to her, and I would wriggle up like a puppy. She came from Vienna, had taken English lessons in preparation for emigration and was the only one able to construct recognisable English sentences.

Zerta always knitted fancy lacy patterns, mainly in creamy caramel coffee colours, often threaded through with a metallic gold thread. If her



Carry Gorney



Knitters' group



Knitter solo in hat



Granny knitting



Knitter standing

garment was reaching completion she would open her large carpet bag and pull out packets of sequins or gold stars or rickrack wavy braid in iridescent bronze, scarlet, gold or turquoise. Her pins were held carefully between her lips whilst she attached the embellishments as edging round the neckline, round the sleeves and sometimes on the welt. She'd sew random sequins or stars across the bosom of the sweater.

Zerta couldn't join in the conversation whilst she had pins in her mouth but nodded or shook her head vigorously so that the others would know she was listening. Sometimes silent tears would roll down her cheeks and she'd dab her eyes with her knitting until the yarn was sodden. Whenever she appeared wearing one of her beautiful jumpers I would think they were made of salt and sequins.

Leni Streuselhoffer was short and stumpy with wisps of grey hair escaping from a bun at the nape of her neck, a woollen headscarf knotted under one of her chins. She wore a tweed skirt and jacket with padded shoulders, her solid legs in thick wool stockings where the darning stitches were clearly visible. She wore sensible oxblood brogues; her feet turned out at 90 degrees when she walked.

'Verdamte fussen, damn feet,' she would complain, easing them out of her shoes before taking her knitting needles out of the bag. Sometimes her feet were puffy and swollen; she'd remove her stockings. Frieda brought an enamel bowl filled with hot water infused with ginger. Leni would slowly lower her feet into the bowl with a sigh of relief.

My father's **Aunty Martha** arrived late. She lived in London and worked in the refugee office that processed claims for restitution money. My father collected her from the station. She wore a straight, cotton dress in summer and a woollen one in winter with peep toe shoes or black over-galoshes from Berlin and a handbag to match. I could hear them laughing long before the knock on the door. I flew to open it, hug

her as she came through and waited to hear her comments on how I had grown, measuring me against her waist, elbow and, as time passed, her shoulder.

Martha sewed whilst the others knitted. I wanted my doll to wear a white bride's dress with a long veil. 'Easy,' said Aunty Martha. 'I'm staying for a week. We'll do it together.' We walked to the local haberdasher with

me explaining how I wanted the headdress fixed with flowers on either side with pearls. She didn't know the words in English for pearls, bits of white lace, tiny flowers, so I translated. She turned my doll into a princess, carefully pinning the dress together and showing me how to stitch it. I sewed, listening to the women all chattering together, their laughter, their jokes, clothes, nail varnish, the springtime pink blossom on the hawthorn tree outside the window.

My aunties' yearnings for the familiarity of the homeland which had betrayed them faded as the years unravelled, new homes and relationships replacing those left behind. Their faces changed but shadows and wrinkles never dimmed their bright smiles; their glittering eyes were helped along with a dab of powder and a slick of bright red lipstick. They refused to submit to clothes in subdued colours, the smell of boiled

cabbage and freezing winters with thick yellow smog, grime from the coal burning in the grate.

Tongues chattering, needles clattering, these émigré women warriors knitted and stitched a sequined path into my heart. Their foreign accents still travel with me.

Carry Gorney

Drawings by Carry Gorney.

*This article is an extract from **Send Me a Parcel – with a Hundred Lovely Things**, a memoir by Carry Gorney. The book is published in November 2014 at £11.99 plus £3.00 pp.*

To order a copy, please visit <http://www.carry-gorney.co.uk/sendmeaparcels/> Alternatively, please send a cheque to Carry Gorney at Ragged Clown Publishers, c/o 1 Ferdinand Place, London NW1 8EE.

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ARTS AND EVENTS NOVEMBER DIARY

Mon 3 Professor Michael Wildt (Humboldt University, Berlin): **'The Normality of Terror: the Heinrich and Margarete Himmler Correspondence'** Pears Annual Lecture. At Wiener Library, 6.30 – 9 pm. Admission free but please book in advance

Tue 4 **'My Story: (Kindertransportee) Elfriede Starer'** At Wiener Library, 11.30 – 12.30 pm. Admission free but please book in advance

Thur 6 Dr Emil Brix, Austrian Ambassador to the UK: **'Austria in Europe – the Jewish Contribution'**. First Evi Wohlgenuth Memorial Lecture. At Austrian Residence in London, 6.30 for 7.00 pm. Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex. By invitation only – please contact d.franklin@sussex.ac.uk

Tues 18 **Survivor Speaks: Henry Wermuth: 'The Man Who Tried To Kill Hitler'** At London Jewish Cultural Centre, Ivy House, 94-96 North End Road, London NW11 7SX, 8.00 pm. £10 (pre-booked), £12.50 on the day

Wed 26 Louise Steinman: **'The Crooked Mirror: A Memoir of Polish-Jewish Reconciliation'** At Wiener Library, 6.30-9.30 pm. Admission free but please book in advance

Wiener Library, 29 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DP, tel 020 7636 7247



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Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

KITCHENER CAMP REMEMBERED

Sir – I am prompted to write to you after reading Fritz Lustig's letter in your October issue. He refers to the photograph that appeared in the article about the Kitchener Camp in the previous issue of the journal. Two actual photographs taken at the Kitchener Camp and with members of the Pioneer Corps in Ilfracombe may also be of interest to members of the AJR.

The photograph below was taken at the Kitchener Camp (circa 1939) and is one of several photographs I shared with Clare Ungerson when she visited me during her extensive research for her recent book *Four Thousand Lives: The Rescue of German Jewish Men in Britain, 1939*. It shows my Uncle Max Strietzel (later Max Streat) serenading the refugees on the violin.

I believe it was my Uncle Max who brought together many talented musicians at the Kitchener Camp in order to form an orchestra for relaxation and pleasure. This orchestra later became the nucleus of the Pioneer Corps Orchestra that entertained the troops and the population of Ilfracombe and appeared in theatres and on the radio during the Second World War.

Above is a photograph taken with members of the Pioneer Corps Orchestra (Uncle Max holding the tenor saxophone) at a public show in Ilfracombe. It also shows Coco the Clown in the front row with, I believe, Phineas May, the camp's Welfare Officer, sitting next to him.

It may be possible that your readers can name some of the refugees seen in the photograph.



I myself lived in Ilfracombe for a short period during the early war years with my mother so that we were close to my father, Georg Strietzel (later George Streat), who served in the Pioneer Corps with my Uncle Max. I was born in Germany in 1937 and have little recollection of those times and only these and other family photographs remind me of my childhood years growing up as a refugee in England.

*Professor Michael Streat
Edgware, Middx*

JEWISH FILMMAKERS IN GERMANY

Sir – I was absolutely enthralled reading in your August issue Joel Finler's article on Jewish filmmakers in Germany in the 30s. Among the films discussed were *Der blaue Engel* (The Blue Angel), *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* and Fritz Lang's *M*. Could we not see one of the films at our annual film show at the Everyman?

Eric Newmann, Elstree, Herts

Esther Rinkoff, AJR Southern Region Co-ordinator: This is a marvellous idea. We already had in place a screening on 27 October at the Everyman but will endeavour to make Eric's suggestion happen in 2015.

BANAL PERCENTAGES

Sir – Robert Ehrenstein (September, Letters) raises the question of what the compensation rate of the Austrian National Fund actually was. The Fund's award to my family in 2009 was the banal amount of 10.56515 per cent in what it calls the 'claims-based procedure' and 17.161 per cent of what it calls the 'equity-based process' – as for all claimants. If I understand the arcane procedures, amounts awarded

were a percentage of the real losses and these were scaled down again in the light of the approximately 20,700 applicants. So there was a double scaling down, ending up with these banal percentages.

The original fund of 210,000 million US dollars was far too low for the number of claimants and the amount of claims. The Fund was notoriously slow in paying out and no interest was added to the overall amount available to claimants, thereby effectively reducing the value of payments. Extracting a waiver for the full value of the losses but paying only a tiny fraction means that the Fund obtained a bargain. Recipients are left with amounts that can be appreciated but which remain symbolic of the actual losses. The model for scaled-down compensation against a waiver from the recipient was the German settlement for thalidomide victims, whose compensation has been notoriously inadequate.

The lack of transparency as to how these amounts were arrived at is disturbing. In my family's case, the decision was made only in late February 2009, with just a few weeks for an appeal. In one case (the value of a hotel business owned by my grandfather), the appeal was sustained but the committee declined to change the value of the compensation. I suspect that would have upset a lot of calculations already made!

I would return to my original points: are there highly scaled-down awards not fully paid out and should not the Austrian National Fund have been more pro-active in its delivery of compensation?

Paul Weindling, Oxford

JEWES IN THE AUSTRIAN ARMY

Sir – Francis Steiner rightly states (September, Letters) that commissions in the Habsburg army were frequently available to suitably educated Jewish candidates. During the First World War, many army doctors were, of course, Jews.

My father joined up on medical graduation and was, without further experience, appointed *Regimentsarzt*. He spent almost the entire war on the front line, sustained two gunshot injuries, and attained the rank of major. In 1918, after demobilisation, he was placed in the small army of the republic as *Reserveoffizier* and, after the *Anschluss*, most bizarrely, in the same rank in the *Wehrmacht*!

This last appointment caused great difficulty before our family's *Ausreisebewilligung* in 1939. He had to appear before a panel of senior officers before finally being discharged with the boorish observation 'Gehn's schon, gehn's schon, mir wern's schone ohne Sie dermachen!' (Off you go, off you go – we'll manage without you!). He lived to enjoy the outcome! One of these officers was Adolf Eichmann, then in charge of emigration from Vienna.

Some years after the war, on a visit to Vienna, I tried to find father's full service record in the meticulously precise State Archives. To my disgust, I discovered that



the Nazis had completely expunged him and his service from all relevant records. Did any others experience this fate?

Dr H. L. Eirew, Manchester

THE PHENOMENON OF POSTMEMORY

Sir – I am a London University of Arts third-year student on a Documentary Photography course. I am interested in the history of the Jewish people and the Holocaust as I have Jewish origins as well.

I have decided to write my dissertation on the phenomenon of postmemory introduced by Columbia University Professor Marianne Hirsch in her work *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. She states that the second generation of Holocaust survivors has inherited the memories of their parents so deeply that they feel these memories are their own. One trace of this transmission of trauma is photography. I am interested in the connection between photography and psychology and even neurology.

If any readers can help me with any advice or information, I would be most grateful.

Ekaterina Anchevskaya, London SW5

'CONFESSIONS OF A GRAMMAR FREAK'

Sir – There's nothing wrong with being a grammar freak! I must admit that I hadn't given this topic much thought until I read Edith Argy's amusing article in your October issue. I was delighted to find an ally in the controversy between *who* and *whom* as I cringe whenever I read or hear someone omitting this small letter 'm' when it should be there.

It was also good that Edith quoted 'Bescheidenheit ist eine Zier, doch weiter kommst du ohne ihr' (Modesty is a virtue but you'll get further without it). This reminds me of my dear father, who had his own witty ways of communicating with his wife, son and daughter until Hitler put a stop to it. Please note: he was a journalist who loved language and used it correctly at all times!

One more thing: in German and other European languages there are four cases and in Latin there are six. We all had to learn English when we first arrived on these shores – do we appreciate how simple that was in comparison to the foregoing?

Susanne Medas, London W10

AJR LUNCH AND CONCERT

Sir – Thank you so much for arranging such a lovely day. My husband Philip and I really enjoyed both the delicious lunch and the very tuneful concert with the nostalgic melodies.

One of the ladies on our table was very touched as it reminded her so much of her childhood before the Holocaust.

My father, Hans Meyer, particularly enjoyed having the chance to catch up over the meal with friends he met in Eastbourne. He thought it a wonderful holiday and was full of praise for AJR staff for organising it.

Janet Weston, Westerham, Kent

Sir – I want to say how much I enjoyed the concert, the food and the company. It really was lovely. In fact, all of us thought it was the best event – musicians and singers – for many years.

Margit Laser, London N3

THE THREAT OF ISLAM

Sir – Were it not for the ongoing centuries-old interreligious wars of the Islamic nations, Israel would have a hard struggle to survive and Europe would need to unite to fight against forces superior in numbers and on many fronts. The writing is not just on the wall: the expressed aim of militant Islam is world domination. Israel is at present the only bastion in the way of achieving that aim.

The USA recognises the threat and has brought a number of countries together into a credible force to prevent Islamic State (IS) from encroaching further into war-torn countries. It is expected that more countries will join this alliance. The opposing forces will recognise that they are not only dealing with Islamic countries riven by internal wars but also an opposition to be reckoned with.

It is evident that Israel's foes are the same as those opposing IS. In all its wars Israel has beaten its foes and shown itself more than capable of staving them off, with their opponents recognising Israel's superiority. These facts must be expressed in no uncertain terms and whenever appropriate. As any form of anti-Semitism would weaken that alliance, it is essential that reporting by all the media relating to Israel be absolutely even-handed. Responses to complaints to the media regarding the recent confrontation continue to express double standards.

To put our case to the media and the country at large, the leading Jewish organisations in this country must be strengthened to take a positive stance at all times. They must show that anti-Semitism is not only a crime but provides a tool for our opponents to drive a wedge between us. Our own strength and determination will be appreciated by all fair-minded people and anti-Semitism will be eradicated in our time.

Fred Stern, Wembley

'WHAT DO YOU SAY TO OUR JEWS!'

Sir – Peter Phillips (October) demonstrates his good judgment in his article about the Israel taboo by quoting me approvingly, but then falls into a trap of his own making. He wants us to work on being loved again, as we were in the good old 1960s. And what produced that love? Overwhelming victory in the Six-Day War.

As my Berlin taxi driver put it admiringly: 'What do you say to our Jews!'

Victor Ross, London NW8

Sir – With regard to Peter Phillips's article, what is better – to exist and be disliked or to be liked and not exist? Israel will only be popular when – as so many of the Arab countries would like – it is wiped off the face

of the Earth. My preference is to be feared and disliked.

Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath, Herts

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE

Sir – In your August issue Robert Acker-Holt asked whether anyone had had a similar experience regarding an Honorary Membership Certificate issued by the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde. I too received this but didn't use it. However, I have a different story about the Kultusgemeinde.

A number of years ago I was approached by an organisation in Austria asking me to take part in a project to educate young people about the Holocaust. This involved writing to a group of 14-year-olds describing what happened to me and the horrendous suffering it caused. The project was called 'A Letter to the Stars' and I was more than happy to participate. The organisers wanted to connect with as many survivors as possible who would tell their stories to schools around the country.

I then received an invitation from the 'Letter to the Stars' organisers inviting my husband and me to spend a week in Vienna courtesy of the Austrian government. The same invitation was extended to about 200 other survivors. The main purpose of the visit was to speak at a number of schools. I felt this was a wonderful platform to meet the young people personally and tell them of our horrific experiences.

The organising body of this project was not connected to the Jewish community – it was seen as an educational project and was brilliantly organised.

All participants were taken to 'their' schools and spoke to 'their' students. For me, it was so satisfying that the youngsters took everything in. I read them a letter my father had written to me on my 14th birthday, the same age as these students. Many of them were in tears.

The next day I was asked to speak at a large gathering in the Volksgarten of students, teachers and other officials. This was extremely moving as I had never spoken about my life in public before. As I stood on the stage and looked down at all the faces I felt this was one of my greatest achievements.

'A Letter to the Stars' did a wonderful job of looking after all the elderly people and arranged everything, including a full programme of entertainment. Unfortunately all this was marred by one regrettable incident.

The group was invited to a function at Maccabi, where various dignitaries and others were present in a packed hall. Dr Ariel Muzicant, President of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, opened the proceedings by acknowledging various people in the hall and then went on to make a speech. Neither he nor the following speaker made any reference to the presence of the Viennese refugees. We were snubbed.

My husband, my son and I could not understand why we had been so

ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

The range of **Anselm Kiefer's** imagination is universal. In the **Royal Academy's** first major retrospective of his work (until 14 December 2014), nothing escapes the density and reach of this leading artist. With references to painters like Van Gogh, Joseph Beuys and Andy Warhol, and poets like Nazi labour-camp survivor Paul Celan, he delves into myth, philosophy, alchemy and cosmology to explore with every brushstroke the nature of the universe.

Given that he was born in Germany



Anselm Kiefer, *Ages of the World*, 2014. Private collection. Photo courtesy Royal Academy of Arts. Photography: Howard Sooley / © Anselm Kiefer

at the end of the Second World War, it is natural that Kiefer would question the nature of that war and perhaps launch his childhood desire to become an artist. History and the very nature of time generated ambitious themes whose meaning may be sensed beyond what appears on his canvas.

Allusions to the Third Reich appear in a self-portrait wearing his father's German uniform, giving the Nazi salute. Emblems of Nazism have been banned in Germany since 1945 and Kiefer has been wrongly identified as a Nazi sympathiser rather than a critic. He was, in fact, outraged by claims of Hitler as a great artist and the Nazi ban on leading German Expressionists.

In *To the Unknown Painter*, a neo-classical courtyard symbolises Hitler's command to architects to design buildings in stone so they will make beautiful ruins. Here the artist is represented as a solitary

palette at the centre. Closer to his German roots is his interest in the symbolism of Norse myths. He poses eternal questions about life and our purpose on earth. In recurring themes such as *Father, Son, Holy Ghost*, Kiefer represents the Holy Trinity by three chairs within heavenly flames.

The existential longing to explore the eternal cycle of time led him to more elemental themes, such as an exploration of physical elements. Lead pipes, TV circuitry, sunflower seeds and even diamonds symbolise the elemental return to earth and decay in works using a blend of acrylic, emulsion and oil shellac. He believes lead is the only material strong enough to carry the weight of human history. And so he becomes an alchemist, linking the earthly and the celestial in some universal oven in which spirit and matter continuously dissolve and recreate themselves.

The bricks and rubble of bomb-damaged buildings where he played as a child led to an interest in Mesopotamian civilisation, particularly cuneiform writing on clay tablets reflecting a link between clay and writing. Themes of death and rebirth are also reflected in his interest in Van Gogh's Sunflower paintings. He draws a different inspiration from that of the Dutch Impressionist. In *The Orders of the Night* Kiefer lies beneath monochromatic sunflowers tall as trees, their faces pointing down towards him – another emblem of the life-death cycle.

Kiefer's work is powerful, organic and devastating. Huge, densely painted barren and frozen landscapes symbolise the Holocaust, often referencing Paul Celan's poetry. They epitomise the deathly silence of Nazi Europe and seem more moving than his cosmic themes such as the RA-commissioned installation *Ages of the World*, a totemic funeral pyre in which all Kiefer's concepts on time, art and the cosmos coalesce.

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CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

An inspiring story

THE GREATEST ESCAPE: HOW ONE FRENCH COMMUNITY SAVED THOUSANDS OF LIVES FROM THE NAZIS

by Peter Grose

Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2014,
352 pp., £16.99 hardcover,
ISBN 978-1-85788-626-9

This book describes events during the Second World War on a small plateau lying between Haute Loire and Ardèche in the middle of France. The main village, situated 40 km south of St Etienne, is called Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. It is the centre for a group of hamlets. In former times its very remoteness made it a haven for Huguenots escaping persecution. That gave the later inhabitants some sympathy for people being pursued, first by the collaborationist French and then by the Nazis.

The area had been popular among Protestant families during their vacations; there were quite a few guest houses and small hotels. There was a number of remarkable people in those villages, including two dedicated clerics and the mayor. They were soon to be supplemented by skilled self-taught document forgers, redoubtable carriers and smugglers. Help was available from several established organisations including the YMCA, the Society of Friends and even the Boy Scouts.

Quite soon, the mayor gave over to his deputy and established himself and his family in Geneva, 140 km to the east, where as a YMCA official he was able to get help from what was subsequently to become the World Council of Churches. His Geneva contacts started to collect and furnish funds and the Le Chambon couriers, at great risk, smuggled suitcases of cash back to the plateau.

The people to be rescued selected themselves by turning up. It became common knowledge among Jews seeking refuge that if you made your way to the plateau you would not be turned away: a home and food would be supplied, as well as a false identity supported by perfectly forged documents. Your identity was chosen to explain your defective French or your foreign accent. There were four residences for children and schools for them too. The local police didn't look too carefully and the gendarmerie from outside didn't bother them much, though there are tales of people escaping inspection by hiding in the woods after receiving pre-arranged warnings.

There was another class of people who joined the Jews in the village. The authorities were rounding up young

people for deportation as slave workers in the East. Later in the war there were also Russian deserters who had joined the German forces as an alternative to being shot and who now needed to hide. The villagers accepted it as their duty to protect anyone who needed help.

It all worked very well until the *pétainiste* puppet regime collapsed at the end of 1942 and the Nazi occupiers took control of the whole of France. At that point, the searches became more efficient and the support machinery had to change gear to provide escape routes to Switzerland for some of those in hiding. It must be said that in spite of a generally unsympathetic attitude to Jewish refugees, there were enough good people in Switzerland to allow many of those escapees to survive among them until the danger was over.

After D-Day the *maquisards* (armed resistance fighters) are added to the people in the villages and the policy of passive resistance is abandoned. Even one of the priests becomes involved. A wonderful American heroine with a wooden leg wanders in and out of the story, ensuring parachute drops of weapons and ammunition from England.

The liberation and the return to normality are covered at the end of the book, as well as the subsequent destinies of many of the main protagonists. There is an estimate of the number of lives saved – difficult to guess but the writer finally settles on 3,500. It should be noted that some 78,000 Jews were sent to the East from France and most of them perished.

The book is a documented historical study, well written in a pleasant style and easy to read. It contains a lot of detail which the layman may find superfluous, like the names of dozens of people and

places. It helps to have a Michelin map at hand while reading it!

There is a lot of repetition of the political history of the period and of activities as far away as Africa, Russia and Japan. Most readers undoubtedly already have a general idea of this. It is, however, such a fascinating and inspiring story that it repays the work of filtering out the facts.

Frank Beck

Tour de force

VILLAGE OF SECRETS: DEFYING THE NAZIS IN VICHY FRANCE

by Caroline Moorehead

Chatto & Windus 2014, 374 pp., £20, ISBN 978-0-701-18641-8

During the Nazi occupation of France, the brave residents of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon and other remote villages of the Vivarais-Lignon plateau saved thousands of Jewish children from death. Many were orphans whose parents had perished in concentration camps or whose whereabouts were unknown or were themselves rescued from internment camps.

The children arrived at the hilltop village near Lyons by train and were given new identities, mixed in with local children, and lived with farmers, residents and religious sects. They went to school with the local villagers and were sometimes taught by escaping academics.

They originated from France, Germany, Poland and elsewhere. Desperate adult refugees too were hidden in the area. People often went hungry and relied on local produce for food. They hid in farm barns and lofts, in cupboards and in the forest when police came searching. The area's remoteness provided protection, as did long winter snows, when the region was inaccessible.

Caroline Moorehead's *Village of Secrets* tells the remarkable story of how parishioners unquestioningly risked their lives and there were no informers, no denunciations and no one broke rank. They were helped by Le Chambon's pacifist pastor André Trocmé and other priests, teachers and resistance workers, and not least by the silence of the locals. They worked against the terrifying backdrop of the deportation of trainloads of Jews and other persecuted people from France.

Usually there were tip-offs and advance warnings before searches, with police turning a blind eye. These were strange and dangerous times when nothing was quite what it seemed and 'safe houses' were anything but safe.

Trocmé himself was arrested in February 1943 together with the assistant pastor Edouard Theis and school teacher Roger Darcissac. They were interned, but miraculously released the following month. Why they were released has never been discovered.

Courageous resisters facilitated escapes over the border to safety in Switzerland and forgers worked night and day producing false papers. Inevitably there were tragedies. A dozen young men were lost following a Gestapo raid on the school La Maison des Roches run by Trocmé's cousin Daniel, who was deported and died in Poland.

The village GP Roger Le Forestier worked tirelessly for the cause, only to be killed by Klaus Barbie's men on 20 August 1944. He left a 23-year-old widow and two small children.

After the war Le Chambon became one of only two places in the world to be honoured by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.

Caroline Moorehead, leaving no stone unturned, travelled from country to country interviewing survivors and searching largely unseen archives. The book is gripping and meticulous as she unravels the complicated French political situation, examining the heroic but often ambiguous nature of those involved.

It is sometimes difficult to absorb all the details of the different threads on first reading, particularly towards the end of the book. There is such a wealth of material and the author cannot resist the challenge to examine it all. She describes colourful characters, including secret agent Virginia Hall with her wooden leg, and follows entire families through, touching on the sometimes difficult reunions of children and parents.

It is, of course, very hard to discover the truth after so long, although the benefits of perspective and hindsight are on the author's side. Moorehead is also to be congratulated on tying up so many loose ends and discovering what became of everyone after the war. This book is a real *tour de force*.

Janet Weston

Award for AJR volunteer



Wohl Jewish Volunteering Network award-winner Sarah Rose with Martyn Lewis CBE, renowned broadcaster and journalist and Chairman of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (right), and Andy Rich, Charity Partner at HW Fisher & Company.

Sarah, pictured holding her HW Fisher Young Adult Volunteering Award, has been a volunteer with the AJR for three years and is currently befriending an elderly person with dementia. Sarah also volunteers for Camp Simcha, where she is part of the Big Sister scheme, visiting a child with cancer, providing support for the family and taking the child on outings. The award ceremony took place at JW3 in September.

Memorial plaque to inventor Paul Eisler unveiled

A memorial plaque to Paul Eisler (1907-92), the 'father of the Printed Circuit', has been unveiled at his former residence in London.

Paul Eisler came to the UK in 1936 as a Jewish refugee from Vienna and was interned on the Isle of Man as an 'enemy alien' at the outbreak of the war. Among applications of the Printed Circuit were miniaturised walkie-talkies, telephone exchanges, radios, TVs and computers. The ceremony was attended by representatives of UK industry, officials of the Science Museum, the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Anglo-Austrian Society, and several of his distinguished colleagues.



Return of the Kinder

On Thursday 4 September 2014, the Mayor of Harwich, accompanied by numerous civic dignitaries as well as the Town Crier, welcomed a small group of former Kindertransport refugees at Harwich Parkeston Quay, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the conclusion of the Kindertransport.

The vast majority of the 10,000 or so Kindertransport children passed through Harwich and many were accommodated locally at Dovercourt and other holiday camps.

Peter Hedderly has been involved with organising train journeys for much of his working life. His first involvement in the Kindertransport story was when he helped plan and operate the 'Winton Train' from Prague to London in 2009. In planning the current journey, his aim was to honour both the unsung heroes of the 1930s and to help children threatened by war today.

The operation of the 4 September train was approved only in August. The lack of adequate notice resulted in the number of those participating being much smaller than such a splendid venture deserved. This special train, known as the 'Chadwick Train' from London to Harwich and the 'Warriner Train' from Harwich to London in honour of Trevor Chadwick and Doreen Warriner, who worked closely with Sir Nicholas Winton, left platform 10 at London's Liverpool Street Station at 10.37 am and arrived punctually at Harwich Parkeston Quay at 11.51 am.

As we stepped off the train the Town Crier read a special welcome to those returning to Harwich after 75 years. Two boys and two girls from the local All Saints' Church of England Primary School presented flowers to us. A very warm welcome!

An old red London double-decker bus took the entire party to St Nicholas Church near the sea front for a moving service of thanksgiving and remembrance.

The group then moved on to the Harwich Electric Palace Cinema, built in the early 20th century and today a Grade II* listed building. It has the ideal atmosphere in which to watch the short BBC film on Nicholas Winton: *Our World: Saving a Generation*.

At 4.20 pm the special train departed from Harwich Parkeston Quay, arriving at London's Liverpool Street at 5.44 pm.

Peter Hedderly put an incredible amount of work, of a totally voluntary nature, into organising this remarkable train journey. He was clearly well supported by the train company Abellio Greater Anglia and by onezulusevenzero Ltd. Those few of us who were there thank him and his colleagues for a splendid event.

Ernest Simon

I took part in the visit to Harwich organised by Peter Hedderly on the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport.

I have already expressed my gratitude to Peter for organising the event. Everything went extremely smoothly. It was heartwarming how we were received on arrival on the Harwich station platform by the Town Crier, the Mayor, various local guides, an odd councillor or two, and not forgetting the smartly dressed schoolchildren who presented each of us with a lovely white flower and enquired eagerly about how we had felt coming as children on the Kindertransport.

The tour that followed was very congenial. The local guides were highly communicative. I was accompanied by someone who took me to see the plaque on the promenade wall commemorating the arrival of Kindertransport children in Harwich and who then invited me to have lunch with him. He told me he was a great admirer of Israel and visited the country regularly. Pity there aren't more of his kind.

Michael Brown

We experienced this very special anniversary arranged by Peter Hedderly at very short notice.

We left Liverpool Street Station having first visited Frank Meisler's commemorative statue to the Kindertransport on the forecourt. There were only 20 of us, due in part to the short notice. Only four of us had been on the original transports to England.

On arrival in Harwich, we were greeted by a reception committee comprising the Mayor, the Town Crier, the headmaster of All Saints' School, Richard Hopkins, and one of his masters, Richard Spencer MBE, together with four pupils from the school. Each of the four of us who had travelled on the original trains in 1939 was presented with a beautiful gerbera.

We then travelled on a beautifully restored red London bus with the names of locations in Central Europe from which the Kindertransport children had fled clearly written round the upper deck. The tour took us round Harwich. Heritage Guides pointed out places of interest, in particular where Dovercourt had once stood and where so many Kinder had lived. Now it is a housing estate.

Later we attended a special thanksgiving and remembrance service at St Nicholas Church led by Rev. Peter Mann. We went to the Electric Palace Cinema, where we saw the BBC documentary *Our World: Saving a Generation*.

We thanked all the kind people who had made the visit so memorable for us. We would particularly like to thank Peter Hedderly for arranging such a memorable day.

Lia and Philip Lesser

KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE

AJR member Frank Bright told a gathering of pupils from schools in the Essex and Suffolk area of his efforts to keep alive the memory of his classmates, most of whom perished in the Holocaust.

He was speaking at the launch of a prize, offered each year by the University of Essex, in memory of Dora Love, a concentration camp survivor who received an honorary degree for her work educating the younger generation. The launch was ahead of January's Holocaust Memorial Week.

The children took part in workshops looking at the forgotten victims of the Holocaust, those who suffer discrimination today, and the best ways to engage audiences on the issues.

Frank, who knew Dora Love well, told the schoolchildren that 'The number of 6 million really tells us nothing. It is the fate of individuals with specific names that brings home the enormity and devastation of what we call the Holocaust.'

The day's proceedings were organised by Professor Rainer Schulze of the University of Essex. Among others who spoke were Nadine Rossol ('After Stutthof Concentration Camp: Exploring the Holocaust through the Poetry of Dora Love'), Kate Beckwith ('A Creative Approach to Exploring the Holocaust') and Jim Davies ('Modern Day Discrimination against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers').

Relief tinged with trauma: The story of Kitchener Camp

Following the publication of her book *Four Thousand Lives: The Rescue of German Jewish Men to Britain, 1939* (reviewed by Anthony Grenville in the *AJR Journal*, September 2014), Clare Ungerson explored the daily life of the approximately 4,000 men aged between 17 and 45 – refugees from Nazi-occupied Central Europe – who lived at Kitchener Camp from its opening in February 1939 to its closure in May 1940.

Clare Ungerson, Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at the University of Southampton, was speaking at a seminar held by the AJR and the London Jewish Cultural Society at the LJCC's north London premises.

Kitchener Camp, at Richborough, near Sandwich in Kent, was a transit camp: inmates were under obligation to leave within a year and were not permitted employment. The working day was hard – putting huts to rights, building drainage and the like. At the same time, there was no lack of recreational facilities, including a jazz

continued on page 14

Memories, Memories ...

It's June 1940. The German armies are storming through the Low Countries, are occupying France, and are now on the Channel coast, threatening to invade England. A very frightening time, not least for us refugees from the Nazis, the so-called 'friendly enemy aliens'. We are no longer allowed to stay close to the eastern coast of Britain and the men living there are interned. I am not affected as my former host, a professor in Cambridge, has arranged with an acquaintance, the headmaster of a public school in Derbyshire, that I should work at his school as a gardener's assistant in the mornings and give cello lessons to any interested boys in the afternoons.

I am expecting that internment of all male 'enemy aliens', whether 'friendly' or not, is bound to come before very long – there is a lot of pressure for it. After all, who can guarantee that no German agents have infiltrated the 60,000 refugees in this country? So I have packed my suitcase and have written a brief letter to my sister, who is still working as housekeeper at the Cambridge professor's house, informing her that I have been interned, leaving only the date open – to be posted when the day arrives

I don't have to wait for long. While doing my gardening job during the morning of 4 July, I am called to the headmaster's office, where two gentlemen in civilian clothes are waiting for me. They are police officers who have come to collect me for internment, in accordance with Churchill's order to 'Collar the lot!' I ask whether I can post the letter to my sister. No, certainly not – any letters I write from now on will have to go through the official censorship, like all letters from abroad. And when I want to go to the toilet before we leave the school, one of the detectives comes with me. This makes me smile inwardly - do they think I will try to abscond?

After a brief stay in a transit camp we find ourselves at York Racecourse, where we are housed in the stables. Just over three weeks there and on we go to the Isle of Man – by train to Liverpool, on a steamer across the Irish Sea to Douglas, and another train journey across the island to Peel on the west coast (the railway no longer exists: it was closed down in the 1960s).

Once in Peel, we enter the newly established Peveril Camp, where the British authorities have requisitioned a row of eight houses along the sea front and surrounded them with barbed wire. They are tall houses - four storeys, with

the kitchen in the basement. We are told that each house will cater for itself: from the 20-25 'residents', volunteers have to be found to do the cooking. At first, I join a group of three non-Jewish ex-trade unionists as an 'assistant',



Fritz Lustig in Peel, in front of the houses where he was interned

providing general help in the kitchen and serving at meal times and, after my cello arrives (surprisingly undamaged!) from the school in Derbyshire, I join a group of other musicians, some amateur, some professional, to provide entertainment for the other inmates of the camp.

After about two months and severe pressure in Parliament, the Home Office relaxes its rules for the continued detention of 'friendly enemy aliens', one of the categories for release from internment applying to me - to join the Pioneer Corps of the British Army as a volunteer.

All this is still very clear in my mind even though 74 years have passed. And suddenly my journalist son asks me whether I would like to revisit the Isle of Man and Peel to refresh my memories. He is engaged on a project 'to retrace the steps of his forebears' and this trip will form part of it. Of course I agree. He organises all of it and, after a short flight from City Airport, we are on the Isle of Man, where a half-hour taxi ride takes us from the airport to Peel. It's a blustery day and, when we find the sea, the tide is in and high waves are breaking against the sea walls and rocks, causing a lot of spray to fall onto the road. We reach the northern end of Peel Bay, where Peveril Camp was situated, and *there* is the row of eight tall houses in which we lived! Standing in front of them, I know we are at the right place. Yes, I remember the view south, where one can clearly see the ruins of Peel Castle (which I find out later was first built in the 11th century), but I'm not sure which was 'my house' – I only remember its approximate position. It's a very odd feeling, revisiting this place after so many years – I find myself wondering whether it's a dream

Peel is quite an attractive small town. Of course we never saw it as internees since we were allowed to leave the

barbed-wire enclosure of the camp only on the few occasions when we were permitted to bathe in the sea and were taken to the neighbouring beach. Even then a soldier with fixed bayonet was guarding us – were the authorities afraid we would try to swim across to Ireland?

Douglas has a large museum, which we visited. My son had a long and very interesting discussion with a senior archivist, who had assembled a lot of material about the internment camps for us to view. We learned that 'enemy aliens' were interned on the island in the First World War as well, but that many documents relating to the Second World War had been destroyed. However, quite a few have been recovered from

various sources and he showed us copies of instructions from the Home Office laying down exactly what food, and in what quantities, had to be given to the internees. Other instructions, issued by the Isle of Man authorities, specified which streets had to be closed, where the barbed wire fences had to be erected, etc. The sudden establishment of several internment camps meant that the owners of the requisitioned houses had to leave their homes with only a week's notice, leaving much of their furniture and all their kitchen utensils behind. Naturally this caused a lot of resentment.

Peveril Camp was used later in the war for the detention of British fascists, IRA suspects, and other 'undesirables'. It is probably for that reason that historical documents about the camp have not been released yet – much less is known about it than about the other camps on the island and the archivist we met was quite frustrated about that. The island authorities are obviously very keen to collect as much material as possible about the internment camps, which form a very important part of the history of the Isle of Man.

Fritz Lustig

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Edinburgh CF First AJR Meeting

I really enjoyed my first AJR meeting. Hearing members' stories brought many of our own stories back. And they must, of course, be repeated lest we forget what happened in those terrible years of the war and its aftermath. The rest of the meeting too was very enjoyable, discussing the imminent referendum over a sumptuous tea hosted by Eva Baer. Once again, thank you for allowing me to attend your meeting and making me so welcome. I have been hearing from my son Karl how much he enjoys meeting you and I can now see why.

Pamela Ogg-Rauchwerger

Brighton-Sarid (Sussex) London's Jews in 1814

David Barnett gave a researched talk about London Jewry in 1814. Their business acumen brought prosperity to the capital. The Jewish Board of Guardians helped the poor to set up small businesses in the markets of the East End, and Piccadilly was known as Rothschild Row.

Ceska Abrahams

Ealing A Fully Participatory Afternoon

Led by Hazel, we had a most interesting discussion on a range of issues from refugee weddings during and immediately after the war to current Jewish thinking on such diverse matters as orthodoxy, assimilation, circumcision and funerals. An enjoyable and fully participatory afternoon.

Leslie Sommer

Iford A Fascinating Slice of History

David Barnett gave us a fascinating slice of history: the story of Daniel Mendoza, the famous Jewish boxer who became Champion of all England. Mendoza won many fights and became rich but lost his wealth through gambling.

Meta Roseneil

Cheshire First Impressions

Wendy Bott, who had recently taken over from Susanne Green as AJR Groups Co-ordinator, invited all 22 people present to say who they were and from where they had originated. She then suggested we have a discussion on 'First Impressions?' Our interesting

discussion, at the home of Peter and Heather Kurer, was followed by a lovely afternoon tea.

Peter Kurer

Glasgow Book Club Enjoyable Book, Superb Tea

We enjoyed Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* as well as the superb tea hosted by Eva Szirmai. We meet every two months and new members are always welcome.

Agnes Isaacs

Pinner A Refugee Named Rudolf Schwab

Dr Shirli Gilbert told us about a German refugee named Rudolf (Ralph) Schwab, who found refuge in South Africa. Having read through the remarkable collection of some 2,500 letters he had written and received from the late 1930s onwards, Dr Gilbert was able to tell us a great deal about him. This will be the subject of her next book.

Robert Gellman

Sheffield CF Tracing Missing Loved Ones

We enjoyed a most interesting talk by WWI and WWII researcher Karen Holloway, who told us all about her work and how to trace missing loved ones. Following the meeting, she has already provided a great deal of information for one member regarding an uncle who perished in WWI, and several other members are now beginning their own research.

Wendy Bott

HGS Wills, Inheritance Tax and All That Jazz

We heard an extremely interesting, well-presented talk by Michael Anvoner about wills and inheritance. There was a big flow of questions afterwards, which Hazel had to stop as we were running out of time.

Kitty Balint-Kurti

Hull CF A Hearty Discussion and a Lovely Afternoon Tea

There was a full house at Olive Rosner's as members enjoyed a hearty discussion and a lovely afternoon tea sampling baking from the new kosher bakery in Leeds. We wished Olive a steady recovery following her recent illness.

Wendy Bott

Bromley CF Lots of Food Plus Excellent Banter

A lively gathering once again at the home of Liane Segal: lots of food and excellent banter. And thanks again to Liane for hosting these get-togethers.

Hazel Beiny

Leeds CF The Middle East Conflict and a Legendary Afternoon Tea

We listened to, and participated in, a most interesting talk given by expert Neil Solden on Israel and the Middle East

with particular reference to the Gaza conflict – all nicely finished off with one of host Barbara Cammerman's legendary afternoon teas.

Wendy Bott

Essex (Westcliff) Reflections on a Childhood in Hungary

A larger than usual audience heard Westcliff AJR member Andrew Roth give an enthralling talk about his childhood in Hungary. His pride in his enterprising father shone through: his father had clearly made sure the family were provided for. Despite many shortages, Andrew said that overall those were happy days.

Susie Barnett

Glasgow Yom Tov Nosh

Life begins at 80! What more can one say! It's wonderful to see everyone who has originated from different countries together and to hear the stories of their childhood and adult life. Had not Agnes Isaacs opened her home to us, this wouldn't have taken place. Many thanks to her for cooking us a wonderful lunch and her hospitality.

Hazel Beiny

St John's Wood A Rabbi's Wife in India

Jackie, the late Hugo Gryn's wife, gave us an enlightening talk on their lives in India. It was Hugo's first posting as a rabbi and an extraordinary experience for a newly wed and a newly born. An absolute delight and a terrific turnout.

Hazel Beiny

Wessex Legend of a Jewish Boxing Champion

A delicious deli lunch was followed by an entertaining talk by David Barnett on the Jewish boxer Daniel Mendoza. We were amazed to hear the fascinating details of this man, who in the 18th century rose to become the Champion of all England and whose legend lives on in today's boxing world.

Kathryn Prevezer

Prestwich CF Down Food Memory Lane

On our walk down Food Memory Lane, members recalled their family's favourite food and recipes such as Austrian fresh-made *lochshen*, *spetzels*, *shturchels*, fresh-baked *challas*, *matza torte* and potato *blintzes*. One member recalled his father selecting fish straight from the tank, while a Second Generation member recalled her father's favourite appetiser – herring and apple with fried onions and potatoes, a recipe from his childhood in a Polish *shtetl* he passed on to her.

Tania Nelson

Cardiff Inside Story of Parliamentary Grandees

We had a delightful, humorous and

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NOVEMBER GROUP EVENTS

Manchester	2 Nov	Musical Presentation
Marlow	3 Nov	Social Get-together
Ealing	4 Nov	Alf Keiles: 'Jewish Jazz'
Kingston upon Thames	4 Nov	Social Get-together (venue to be decided)
Liverpool	4 Nov	Michael Sverdlow: 'The Rescue of Liverpool Commemorative Plaques and Stones'
Ilford	5 Nov	King Solomon Computer Visit
Norfolk	6 Nov	Social Get-together
Pinner	6 Nov	Brad Ashton: 'A Life in the Media'
Glasgow CF	8 Nov	Opening Night of Jewish Film Festival: 'Magic Men'
Sheffield	9 Nov	tba
All Northern Groups	10 Nov	Kristallnacht Event at IWM
HGS	10 Nov	Jane Greenfield: 'Growing Up on a Farm'
Brighton-Sarid (Sussex)	17 Nov	Esther Rinkoff: 'My Long-Lost Family in Israel'
Prestwich	17 Nov	Social
Edgware	18 Nov	Alf Keiles: 'Jewish Jazz'
Essex (Westcliff) (a week later than normal)	18 Nov	Esther Rinkoff: 'My Trip to Israel to Find Long-Lost Family'
Radlett	19 Nov	Pat Clark: 'Leather Lane and Hatton Garden'
St John's Wood	19 Nov	Judith Hassan (Jewish Care)
Glasgow	23 Nov	Chanukah Lunch and Dance
North West London	24 Nov	Ruth Berman: 'Extend Exercises – Get Fit Sitting Down' (at Hendon)
Bromley	25 Nov	Social
Leeds	25 Nov	Film Showing at Donisthorpe Hall
Welwyn GC	25 Nov	Michael Anvoner: 'Wills, Inheritance Tax and All That Jazz'
Edinburgh	26 Nov	Social
Wembley	26 Nov	David Lawson: 'The ABC of Ostrava'
Glasgow Book Club	27 Nov	Social
North London	27 Nov	Paul Lang (British Aviation Tours): 'Women in Aviation'
Hull	30 Nov	Social
Newcastle	30 Nov	Chanukah Lunch

informative talk by Chris Moncrieff, former political editor of the Press Association, who had known and observed many of the grandees passing through Parliament including Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Harold Wilson and many other prime ministers, ministers and MPs.
Michael Millodot

Café Imperial A Sad Meeting

A sad meeting, in which we recalled Geoffrey Perry, who had recently passed away. He had been the commander of one of the crew present as well as one of the original band of merry men from Café Imperial. We also talked of the average wage back in 1948, when two and sixpence was a lot of money!

Hazel Beiny

North West London 'Awayday' Lunch Social

As our usual synagogue meeting place was unavailable, Esther arranged an 'Awayday' Lunch Social for us at the Café Toulous in Hampstead Garden Suburb. This had been built on an old putting green which had two loos – hence the name of the café. A good time was had by one and all.

David Lang

Liverpool First Impressions

This was our first social gathering with new Groups Co-ordinator Wendy Bott. The topic for discussion was aptly entitled 'First Impressions'. A lively debate was held by the 16 people present. We look forward to the interesting ideas Wendy

has for meetings and outings and wish her well in her new position.

Wendy Cohen

Radlett Reflections of a Political Cartoonist

Martha Richler is a journalist and artist who has spent several years working as a political cartoonist. This has enabled her to have close contact with all parties in the British establishment. The views she expressed about the system were pungent, witty and by no means favourable. Unfortunately Martha didn't bring any of her cartoons and we tried to persuade her to return with some of her drawings on a future occasion.

Fritz Starer

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KITCHENER CAMP
cont. from p.10

band, a theatre and a library.

While the overall balance sheet of Kitchener Camp was positive, Professor Ungerson stressed that many of the inmates were suffering from trauma, having since Kristallnacht been incarcerated in concentration camps and lost touch with their families.

Historian Dr Helen Fry discussed the subsequent enlistment of many of the Kitchener Camp residents in the Pioneer Corps, an unarmed unit of the British Army, and showed a fascinating promotional film of the Pioneer Corps volunteers made by the Ministry of Information in 1941. AJR member Stella Curzon added a first-hand account of life at Kitchener Camp, recalling visiting her father there.

'Singing Together'

Do you remember 'Singing Together'?

It was a BBC radio programme which taught children to sing during the war.

I am making a radio documentary about it and would like to speak to any former Kinder who remember singing along with the wireless at school. It went out at 11.00 am on Mondays and a Scottish presenter called Herbert Wiseman taught songs like 'Michael Finnegan' and 'The Skye Boat Song'.

If you remember it, please get in touch with Ruth Evans on 0161 335 6450 or at ruth.evans@bbc.co.uk



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Admittance free

Refreshments

Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies

University of London Senate House,
Malet Street, WC1

19 November 2014, 6.00 pm

Klaus Seidl will speak on "A Liberal with International 'Sympathies': Veit Valentin, Britain, and the Blessing of Exile"

FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS

Marion Collins In loving memory of my sweetheart Marion and our 56 years of never dull memories. I thank her for two wonderful, loving children and five even more wonderful grandchildren. Yours always and evermore, Peter.

Marion Collins It is with great sadness our darling Mummy passed away on 8 September. She was a wonderful, kind, caring mother and grandmother. Always glamorous, vivacious and full of life. Remembered with love always by her children Lauren and Adam, grandchildren Jacob, Jonathan, Morgan, Rebecca and Scarlett, and daughter-in-law Melanie.

WHY NOT TRY AJR'S MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE?

The AJR offers a kosher Meals on Wheels service delivered to your door once a week.

The meals are freshly cooked every week by Kosher to Go. They are then frozen prior to delivery.

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AJR GROUPS ANNUAL CHANUKAH PARTY

Thursday 11 December 2014

at North West Reform Synagogue,
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune,
London NW11 7EN

Cost £8.00 per person payable on the door (places must be booked in advance)

Starts at 11.30 am
Ends at 2.30 pm

'The Palace of Knightsbridge'

Morning talk by Richard Furnival Jones, who worked for Harrods for over 40 years and retired as manager of the Food Halls. He will tell us about the history of this famous store.

This will be followed by a delicious lunch.

After lunch we will have further entertainment by Bronwen Stephens, a professional opera singer, who will perform a selection of well-known songs from opera and theatre.

It is essential that we know exact numbers for catering. Please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk

Six Point Foundation



Are you, or is someone you know, a Jewish Holocaust survivor in financial difficulty?

Six Point Foundation gives grants to help with all kinds of one-off expenses such as home adaptations, medical bills, travel costs and temporary care.

We help UK-resident Jewish Holocaust survivors/refugees with less than £10k p.a. in income (excluding pensions/social security) and less than £32k in assets (excluding primary residence/car).

For information please contact The Association of Jewish Refugees on 020 8385 3070.

info@sixpointfoundation.org.uk
www.sixpointfoundation.org.uk

KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH

**12 November
at 12.30 pm**

Please join us for our next lunch at North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens, Finchley Road, London NW11 7EN

**Laurence Brass
'255 Years and Going Strong:
The Role of the Board of Deputies
in Modern Britain'**

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on 020 8385 3070

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OBITUARIES

Eric Bourne (formerly Ulrich Borchard, 'Ulli'), born Berlin 8 July 1924, died London 3 June 2014

Given that Ulli's mother was Jewish and his father (Robert Breuer) was active in Social Democratic politics and journalism, his life in Berlin was in double jeopardy. This is why his parents sent him to England as early as 1933. There he entered New Herrlingen School, which had been transferred in the same year from Ulm in southern Germany to Bunce Court on the North Downs of Kent by the farsighted headmistress Anna Essinger. Ulli's mother later succeeded in reaching the UK but his father, having first fled to Czechoslovakia and then to Paris, died in an internment camp in Martinique in 1943.

Ulli settled down happily in the co-educational boarding school, making many friends both among the staff and his fellow pupils, and did well academically. It was there that he and I became friends when I arrived via the Kindertransport in 1938. When the school was evacuated to Shropshire in 1940, Ulli worked on a nearby farm, milking cows among his other duties. In 1943, when he joined the Army, he was required to adopt an English name and thus he became Eric Bourne. In 1946, after he had served in Burma, the Army sent him to

Wilton Park, where his knowledge of German was put to good use through his acting as an interpreter for the courses in democracy run for German POWs.

Following his release in 1947 from the Army, by then a commissioned officer, he worked for some time as a switchboard operator at Zwemmers, the art bookshop, and, after taking a crash course in Latin, he qualified for Queen Mary College, where he read history and immersed himself in socialist student politics. (He remained a loyal member of the Labour Party for the rest of his life, albeit in recent years with great sadness at the direction of its leadership.)

After youth work in Essex and a spell as warden of the newly founded Pestalozzi Children's Village in Sussex, Eric became the senior county youth officer in Derbyshire, where he later settled. His most significant contribution to the education sector was earlier as inspector of further education for the London Education Authority, where he developed programmes for disadvantaged young people and others often ignored in education – including communication and



numeracy skills for apprentices and access courses for those desiring to go on to higher education. His work was greatly valued by the teachers, to whom he gave encouragement and practical support in developing these new approaches, and they had annual reunions until his death.

Eric's first wife was Margaret Reid, whom he had met as a student, and they had two daughters, Susan and Deborah. He later married Lois Graessle, an American who had settled in London, and, after his retirement in 1985, they lived in a cottage in rural Derbyshire, where he became a keen gardener and chairman of the local parish council.

Like many other Old Bunce Courtians, Eric kept in touch with some of the former teachers, especially Hans Meyer, whom he helped to organise the last of the Bunce Court reunions and to publish a delightful booklet of reminiscences by former pupils. He also published his own memoirs: *A European Life*. In recent years he was an occasional contributor to the *AJR Journal*.

Leslie Baruch Brent

'The man who shot Lord Haw-Haw'

Geoffrey Perry, born Berlin 11 April 1922, died London, 14 September 2014

Born Horst Pinschewer in Berlin in April 1922, Geoffrey was sent, together with his elder brother Peter, to Buxton College in Derbyshire in 1936 to escape Nazi persecution.

He took up work as a reporter for the *Mirror* newspaper but that changed with the outbreak of war, when he became an 'enemy alien' and lost his job. He was interned in the summer of 1940 and spent several months behind barbed wire before enlisting in the only unit open to him, the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. He served in 248 Company and changed his name to Geoffrey Perry, before being commissioned into 93 Company.

He landed in Normandy with his Pioneer Company in July 1944. In 1945 he was posted to the Psychological Warfare Division (Press Section) and crossed into Germany for the first time in nearly a decade, something he described as giving him 'a feeling of goose bumps'. With fellow soldiers, he entered Bergen-Belsen just days after its liberation. He never forgot the horrors he saw there. During his few hours of relief work at Belsen, he extended a helping hand to camp survivors, something he movingly described decades later in the



Geoffrey Perry broadcasts in May 1945 from the radio station in Hamburg in which the traitor James Joyce had been making his propaganda broadcasts, using a microphone used by Joyce two days previously

TV documentary *Churchill's German Army*.

Geoffrey was then assigned to 'T Force' in Hamburg and it was here that his war took an extraordinary turn. Having captured Radio Hamburg with his unit, he gave the first Allied broadcast to the German people from the very microphone on which two days earlier William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) had delivered his final address to Germany. Joyce was now on the run but events would take an even more bizarre turn when, on 28 May 1945, Geoffrey stumbled across

him in woods outside Flensburg on the Danish border. Geoffrey shot and arrested Britain's most notorious wartime traitor. As he would later reflect: 'How ironic it was that Joyce was arrested by a man who was essentially a German Jew, albeit in British army uniform.' Geoffrey thereafter became known as 'the man who shot Lord Haw-Haw' and brought him back for trial.

In civilian life, Geoffrey finally received British nationality and became a successful publisher as the first to introduce magazines into supermarkets, famed for his household publication *Family Circle*. In 2002 he published his memoirs, *When Life Becomes History*, on the encouragement of his wife Helen, who predeceased him. He is survived by his sons, Nick and Stephen, and four grandchildren: Joe, Hannah, Emma and Alice.

Geoffrey championed the cause of the refugees from Nazism who fought for Britain in the Second World War. He was intensely loyal to the country which had saved him and a regular attender of the AJR's monthly veteran coffee mornings at the Café Imperial in London's Golders Green, a gathering to which he always referred as the 'boy scouts'.

Helen Fry



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

The women of Machsom Watch

The organisation known as Machsom Watch has been in existence for over ten years. Since its first tentative steps as a small group of humanitarian feminists who wanted to protect the human and civil rights of Palestinians, it has grown in number and is less radically feminist but is still confined to women. Curious to see what they did, I joined a group of five women early one morning. They were all of a certain age and belonged to a specific (middle-class, Ashkenazi, secular) segment of the population. Since that is the category into which I too fall, I felt quite at home with them.

Our first stop that chilly morning was Checkpoint 300, also known as Rachel's Checkpoint due to its proximity to the site of Rachel's Tomb. We stood and watched as hundreds of Palestinian men filed through electronic barriers where their documents were checked. Soldiers, some of them still in their teens, checked the papers and made sure that everything went without a hitch.

Every Palestinian worker must have a green ID card, issued by the Palestinian Authority, as well as an electronic card and a work permit, issued at the behest of his employer. I did not sense any tension or antagonism in the process and everything appeared to be going smoothly. Once through the barrier, the men boarded buses provided by the employers or began

walking towards Jerusalem.

If you are a Palestinian man and want a permit to work in Israel you must be married and have at least one child. If you are the close relative of someone who has been arrested on suspicion of terrorist activity, nationalist sympathies or stone-throwing your work permit can be taken away from you, in which case you are 'blacklisted'. I was told of an instance in which three brothers who had been working in Israel for several years were blacklisted after their teenage brother was arrested for throwing stones.

This is an area in which the women of Machsom Watch have become proficient as there is a process of appeal against being blacklisted. The various procedures, including filling in forms and even appearing before a special administrative court at which the military authority is required to justify the blacklisting, are difficult if not impossible for the average Palestinian manual labourer to master. Some of the women I met can speak some Arabic and it was very touching to see the burly labourers come over to one of the women to ask for her help in solving some administrative problem or other. In many cases, they know the women by name and speak to them as friends. Some 70 per cent of those blacklisted get their work permits back following Machsom Watch's intervention.

After spending an hour at Checkpoint 300, we drove through the Etzion tunnel and

the hilly countryside to the Etzion Bloc, to the office of the District Coordinator Liaison. This is the administrative centre where youngsters wishing to start working come to get their initial permit. In order to work in one of the settlements, the requirements for obtaining a permit are less rigid and this is where many youngsters find employment. This is also where special permits are issued to Palestinians who need to enter Israel in order to attend hospital.

The building where the men wait is equipped with seating and even air-conditioning. Specific days are allocated to specific villages and, while the system seems to be working, it is laborious and time-consuming.

However, when I look back to my early days in Israel, I recall what seemed to me at the time to be complex and mistrustful bureaucratic procedures that often left me frustrated and tearful. If you are a foreigner it's not easy to get a work permit in any European country or the USA. All over the world bureaucracy is rampant but in Israel it is augmented by the need to maintain security and protect the civilian population.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *cont. from p.7*

comprehensively ignored. I was hurt. At the end of the session I spoke to people involved in the 'Letter to the Stars' project. Apparently, Dr Muzicant and the Kultusgemeinde did not agree with the 'Letter to the Stars' plan to bring survivors over to Vienna as they felt we were too frail to deal with the emotion.

I fail to understand how an organisation representing the entire Austrian-Jewish community could behave in this way. Why did they not support the ground-breaking work being carried out by 'A Letter to the Stars'? They more than anyone knew the horror we refugees had endured – surely they should have supported any effort by any organisation, Jewish or not, to get this

message across to today's young people.

After the trip I wrote to Dr Muzicant telling him how upset we all were. But he didn't give me the courtesy of a personal response. His office replied that they had felt it would be too much for us to travel to Vienna and take part in the proceedings. Surely had we felt we weren't capable of it we wouldn't have done so!

Due to this negative experience, I had no wish to be an honorary member of an organisation that refused to acknowledge the presence of such a brave and determined group of elderly people and therefore returned the Honorary Membership Certificate.

Sonja Arnold, Bushey Heath, Herts

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