

## Schisms on the left

The surprise election of the left-winger Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party threatens to exacerbate the disputes over ideology and political strategy that have long bedevilled relations between the right and left wings of the party. These disagreements burst into open conflict in the early 1980s, with the foundation of the Social Democratic Party and the secession to it of 28 Labour MPs. Most commentators had assumed that the reforming measures implemented since the disastrous general election defeat of 1983 by successive leaders of the Labour Party – Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair – had so weakened the Labour left that it could no longer mount a credible challenge to the dominance of the right wing.

The Labour Party has been divided into rival factions for much of its post-war history. In the 1950s, the bitter internal disputes between the Bevanites, followers of the firebrand left-wing orator Aneurin ‘Nye’ Bevan, and the moderate supporters of party leader Hugh Gaitskell convulsed the party; the debate on nuclear disarmament, in particular, divided the left, hostile to Britain’s foreign and defence policy, from the pro-American stance adopted after 1945 by Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. The ‘Bevanite wars’ were only temporarily halted by the adroit tactical manoeuvring of Prime Minister Harold Wilson, whose principal concern after Labour returned to power in 1964 often appeared to be to hold his schismatic party together. By the 1970s, with the rise of the Bennite left, led by Anthony Wedgwood Benn – or Tony Benn as he liked to be known in his proletarian incarnation – the internal party divisions became well-nigh unmanageable.

Today, it may seem incomprehensible that after its fateful electoral defeat in 1979 Labour elected the left-winger Michael Foot as party leader in preference to Denis Healey, one of the ablest politicians Britain has seen since 1945. Healey was one of only two ministers – the other being Michael



Eduard Bernstein, 1850-1932

Heseltine – to achieve the feat of bringing the Ministry of Defence under effective and efficient control. Healey, who died in October 2015, had a dimension that most other politicians lack; his autobiography *The Time of My Life* (1989) – probably the best British political memoir I have ever read – demonstrates the breadth and depth of his musical and cultural interests, as well as the organisational abilities that saw him act, aged 26, as Military Landing Officer (beach-master) for the British assault brigade at the landings at Anzio in January 1944.

Internal party conflicts have troubled the Labour Party since its early days. Like most socialist parties, it was divided in 1914, with leading figures on the left, like the pacifist Ramsay MacDonald, opposing the war. In 1931, at the time of the political crisis triggered by the Great Depression, MacDonald, by then Prime Minister, found himself on the other side of the left/right divide, when his policies for coping with the economic disaster that had struck the country split his party; MacDonald and the right-wing minority who supported him joined with the Conservatives to form the National Government, with MacDonald remaining

as an increasingly ineffectual Prime Minister until 1935. He was expelled from the Labour Party.

But, for all these splits and controversies, the Labour Party in Britain has largely held together, while the Communist Party of Great Britain remained very small. That was not the case in European countries like Germany, where the split between moderate and radical socialists led to the creation of two large and bitterly hostile rival parties, the moderate Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Communist Party (KPD). This split was deeply ideological and its roots lay back in the 1890s, when the political theorist and SPD politician Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) began to publish work critical of the orthodox Marxist doctrine that underpinned German Social Democracy, which then still saw itself as the party of revolutionary socialism. Bernstein had been closely associated with the founding fathers of Marxism, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, so his critique of revolutionary Marxism from within the party became known as ‘revisionism’ – Bernstein was the original revisionist. He argued that the aims of Marxism could be achieved by peaceful means, by political and legislative reform within the existing political system.

Bernstein disagreed with his orthodox Marxist opponents’ belief in the necessity of violent revolution; as a political theorist, he was the father of what came to be called reformist socialism. He also questioned Marx’s theory of immiseration, which held that the workers must inevitably become poorer under capitalism, as the capitalists grabbed an ever greater share of wealth. In the latter argument, Bernstein was at one with the powerful German trade unions, who worked for the improvement of the pay and conditions of their members on a day-to-day basis. Bernstein’s reformist socialism thus had weighty support from within the labour movement. It also had the facts on its side: the improvement in the condition of the

 Schisms on the left *continued*

German working class in the second half of the nineteenth century was huge, and plain to see. After Bismarck's anti-Socialist laws, outlawing the SPD, were allowed to lapse in 1890, the party took to participating in the political and electoral processes in Wilhelmine Germany, while maintaining its revolutionary rhetoric and its belief in class war. It achieved its greatest success in the Reichstag elections of 1912, when it won no less than 34.8 per cent of the vote, over twice as many votes as any other party, and 110 seats (of 397) in parliament. The goal of a peaceful accession to power appeared ever closer.

The SPD's move towards moderate, reformist socialism aroused bitter opposition among its radical left-wingers, like the brilliant and charismatic Rosa Luxemburg, who pressed for a strategy based on the party's traditional faith in class conflict, militancy and the proletarian revolution. Between the two wings, balancing skilfully between reformist and revolutionary strategies, stood those at the head of the party hierarchy, its leader and founding father August Bebel and its chief theoretician, Karl Kautsky. When Bebel died in 1913, the leadership passed to an outright moderate, Friedrich Ebert, but with a left-winger, Hugo Haase, as his co-chairman. In August 1914, the party resolved, against the opposition of a left-wing minority, to support the war effort, by voting in favour of the war credits in the Reichstag, in breach of the SPD's traditional opposition to militarism and war.

However, the left-wingers did not remain bound by party discipline for long; in December 1914, Karl Liebknecht was the first to vote against further war credits in the Reichstag. Haase and other opponents of the war, including both Bernstein and Kautsky, but predominantly from the party's left, founded in 1917 the Independent Social Democratic Party

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(USPD), which also contained Luxemburg, Liebknecht and others on the far left who had formed the Spartacus League in late 1914. With Germany's defeat in November 1918 and the revolution that overthrew the imperial regime, the USPD joined the SPD in the coalition that governed the country, but resigned in December 1918, in protest against the government's increasing reliance on the old imperial bureaucracy and the armed forces. This triggered the Spartacist Uprising of January 1919, an attempt by the far left, now reconstituted as the Communist Party, to launch a second change of regime, as the Bolsheviks had swept away the Kerensky government that had replaced the Tsarist government in Russia. But the government, led by Ebert of the SPD, called in right-wing forces, which bloodily suppressed the uprising; Luxemburg and Liebknecht were murdered.

These events cemented the divide between moderate and revolutionary socialism in Germany. In 1920, the majority of the USPD voted to affiliate to the Communist International, and thereby to join the KPD, which thus became the major rival to the SPD for the allegiance of the German working class; the remainder of the USPD rejoined the SPD in July 1922, in the wake of the political crisis triggered by the assassination of Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau. As Germany entered the Great Depression in the crisis-torn early 1930s, the KPD, under instructions from Stalin, directed its fire against the SPD, the principal party supporting the parliamentary democracy of the Weimar Republic against the Nazi threat.

Moscow's imposition of the policy that designated the Social Democrats, termed 'Social Fascists', as the principal enemy of the revolutionary working class proved to be an insuperable barrier to working-class unity in the struggle against the Nazis. When the Nazis came to power, they had secured less than 40 per cent of the vote in the general elections of 1932, less than the combined votes of the SPD and the KPD, by November 1932 the two next largest parties. But whereas at the time of the Kapp Putsch in 1920, the working class had stood united in the general strike that ensured the failure of Kapp's short-lived right-wing regime, in 1932-33 it was bitterly divided. The radical strategy of the KPD merely smoothed Hitler's path to power, while the moderates of the SPD had no effective answer to the Nazi electoral machine.

**Anthony Grenville**



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## AJR GROUPS ANNUAL CHANUKAH PARTY

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Michael Newman

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# Kristallnacht Memorial Service, November 2015

Photos: Michael J. Ezra

Some 120 AJR members and their families, as well as representatives from the Austrian, German, Hungarian, Israeli and Slovak Embassies, attended this year's AJR Memorial Service for Kristallnacht at the Belsize Square Synagogue on Wednesday 11 November.

With Michael Newman, the AJR's Chief Executive, having outlined the historical context of the memorial service, a candle-lighting ceremony was held. It was led by Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg of the New North London Synagogue, whose grandfather, Dr Georg Salzberger, was the Rabbi of the Westend Synagogue in Frankfurt-am-Main, which was destroyed on Kristallnacht. Noting that at the 1938 Evian conference European governments had been 'found wanting' in their reaction to Hitler's anti-Semitism and reluctant to accept the immigration of Jews from Germany, Rabbi Wittenberg asked 'Who will take today's refugees?'

Professor Leslie Brent, who was on the first Kindertransport from Berlin on 2 December 1938, gave a brief, deeply emotional, testimony of his recollections of Kristallnacht. Born in Köslin, Germany, on Kristallnacht he had been at the Berlin-Pankow Jewish Orphanage, where his parents had taken him two years earlier. Kristallnacht was an 'abrupt' event, Professor Brent said: 'Many Jews thought their situation would improve despite all the tribulations.' The Kindertransport had come as 'a great act of mercy', he added.

Guest speaker Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chair of the United Kingdom



Hedi Orchudesch lights memorial candle with Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg and William Kaczynski looking on; Leslie Baruch Brent and Ruth Danson; Sir Peter Bazalgette

Holocaust Memorial Foundation launched by the Prime Minister earlier in the year, noted the international reaction to Kristallnacht at the time: many words but little action. He reported on the recent activities of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation, recommended that as many people as possible visit the Journey Exhibition, with its Kindertransport element, at the

National Holocaust Centre in Laxton, and praised the work of the AJR.

Speakers also paid tribute to Sir Nicholas Winton, who had died earlier in the year, and to the Holocaust historian Professor David Cesarani, who had died several weeks earlier at the untimely age of 58.

Prayers were recited by Elkan Pressman.

## 'A dream come true': Holocaust Memorial Garden opened at Waltham Abbey Cemetery

On 12 October 2015 I attended the opening in the United Synagogue's Waltham Abbey Cemetery in Essex of a beautiful garden donated and dedicated by Kathrin and Joseph Szlezinger and family to the memory of the six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis.

Mr Szlezinger, who himself lost many members of his family, including his father, in the Holocaust, explained that the garden came about because 'I,

like other Holocaust survivors, have no grave to visit to grieve at.' He hailed the opening of the garden as 'a dream come true.'

The garden was officially opened by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, who said it was 'a perfect model which I would love to see replicated by Jewish communities around the world.'

The 40 or so people present must have had their own painful memories. It was a privilege to attend.

Susie Barnett



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## MARGARETE STERN, A TEENAGE REFUGEE IN TRING

**M**argarete Stern was born in Fürth, near Nuremberg, on 28 June 1925. Her father, Gustav Hirsch, was deputy manager of the Dresdner Bank in Nuremberg.

In 1933 the situation in Germany was no longer tenable for Jews and so the family left for Yugoslavia, where they had relatives. They lived in Maribor in Slovenia. Margarete went to school there, learning Slovene and Serbo-Croat.

Having eventually to leave Yugoslavia, the family decided to come to England. They arrived here on 12 November 1938. Margarete remembers the journey clearly. As they weren't allowed to travel through France, they had a police escort (a single plainclothes policeman not in the same compartment) from Ljubljana across the Yugoslav/Italian frontier and then they took a train to Trieste, then to Venice, then to Milan, which they reached at midnight, and on to Switzerland. From Zurich, they flew to Croydon.

Three uncles of Margarete's mother had settled in England before the First World War but only one agreed to sponsor the family. He was a rich bachelor who had been persuaded to work with Marks and Spencer, where he had made a significant contribution to the firm's development. His name was Herman Loewi and he lived at 81 Bryanston Court, George Street, London W1. Bryanston Court comprised two buildings. In one of them (not the one Herman lived in) lived Mrs Simpson and he used to see the as yet uncrowned king enter it on his way to see his mistress.

On their arrival in England, the Hirsch family first went to live at the New Mansion Hotel in Lancaster Gate, London W2, until just before Christmas. Margarete attended a local school, St Mary's. It was a Catholic school but not one with nuns. There were quite a number of Jewish children there and they didn't try to ram religion down one's throat. They even provided Margarete with a private tutor to teach her English.

Then just before Christmas they moved to the West London Hotel, London W2, a more pleasant hotel in Kensington Gardens Square. A great-aunt persuaded Margarete's mother to send her to Kensington High School, which was extremely snobby with archaic rules and an all-encompassing costly school uniform, including knickers! School fees were very high and her great-aunt persuaded the



Margarete Stern looks at a Tring photograph book shown her by Shelley Savage

school to accept only half the fees. Margarete started there in January 1939.

At the beginning of September 1939, just before the outbreak of war, the school was evacuated to Oxford, where it merged with Oxford High School. Margarete was billeted in an English family, the Berkets, who took in far too many evacuees as they got paid for each one. The Berkets had to confirm that they had some home help - which they did (a Swiss girl) - only to sack her immediately afterwards to save money.

It was literally an answer to Margarete's prayers that Mrs Berket offered her mother free board and lodging in exchange for her help in the household: she had implored her parents not to abandon her. A week later her father returned to London and her mother moved in with her. But living with the Berket family wasn't pleasant ('My floor is clean!', Margarete was told after she had refused to eat a piece of bread and butter that had fallen on the floor) and it got too cold in their unheated bedroom. So they moved to a local hotel and, not long afterwards, back to London. It wasn't until the new term in January 1940 that she started attending Henrietta Barnett School in Hampstead Garden Suburb. But not long after that the Blitz began. That is when the Hirschs moved to Hertfordshire.

The family - parents and two daughters five and a half years apart (Margarete is the younger) - were living in a block of flats in Swiss Cottage, where Margarete still lives. At the time, her mother was disabled from severe sciatica and, when in 1940 a bomb fell

across the road, her father realised that running to a shelter was out of the question so he decided to move out of London. He could commute to the chocolate factory which he part-owned: Union Chocolates. The elder daughter remained in the London flat, which was filled with lodgers during the war, but for a short spell came to the Cow Roast Inn near Tring.

Initially they stayed with the Fileman family in a farmhouse at Cow Roast, near Tring, which they found through the German actor Frederick (Fritz) Valk. They were taken in as fee-paying guests. The Filemans were living in a vast farmhouse with a pig in the yard and rabbits, as far as Margarete can remember, so they needed farm hands. They had taken in a middle-aged Jewish lady teacher from Germany who had brought several of her former pupils along and recruited them to do the work free of charge in return for their board and lodging. They accommodated Margarete in the same dormitory room as those girls, who were a little older. Her parents slept in a separate room. They couldn't stand the atmosphere there so after only one night they moved several doors away before moving to Tring.

The family then moved into the Royal Hotel at Tring Station, where they remained for three years. While in Tring, Margarete continued her schooling in Berkhamsted, at South Hampstead Girls School, which had been evacuated to that town. In the afternoon they used the premises of Berkhamsted Girls' School, which the main school used in the morning. Margarete left at the age of 17 with a School Certificate and was 18 when she left Tring.

Margarete remembers Tring High Street, where they shopped for fresh fruit and clothes, went to the hairdresser, and sometimes paid a visit to the cinema. That was where the dentist and doctor had their surgeries. Aldbury was nearer and they sometimes took walks there at weekends. There was a synagogue in Tring, probably rudimentary. Miss Moos, the Jewish religion teacher at South Hampstead High School, used to conduct religious 'services' at the school, which she and her mother attended on the High Holidays.

Other Jewish families living in one of the houses between Tring Station and Tring Town were the Wechslers and the Schwabs. There Margarete attended her first Seder but had to

## CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION

The event held at the British Academy on 10 November 2015 proved to be a remarkable success. It was attended by well over 100 people, including AJR members, Fellows of the British Academy and independent academics. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship, financed by donations from the Jewish refugees from Hitler, presentations were given on four distinguished refugee academics.

Professor Sandra Fredman

(Oxford) spoke on the expert on labour law, Sir Otto Kahn-Freund. Professor Richard Gombrich (Oxford) then delighted the audience with memories of his father, the art historian Sir Ernst Gombrich. Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson spoke about Sir Ludwig Guttmann, founder of the National Centre for Spinal Injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, birthplace of the Paralympic movement. Sir Ralph Cohn recalled Sir Ernst Chain, whose post-doctoral fellow he had been,

and his Nobel Prize-winning work on the development of penicillin. Dr Anthony Grenville outlined the history of the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship and spoke in commemoration of those Jews from Germany and Central Europe who perished unknown in the Holocaust.

The event concluded with a reception. Lord Stern, President of the British Academy, gave an address, and our Chairman, Andrew Kaufman, responded on behalf of the AJR.

### Margarete Stern, a teenage refugee in Tring *continued*

leave long before the end because of the curfew on 'aliens'.

As for Mrs Valk, Frederick's mother, she too came to the Royal Hotel a short time later. One evening she got too close to the small electric heater in her bedroom and her nightshirt caught fire. She managed to put the fire out herself by laboriously filling her washbasin with water from her jug, putting it on the floor and sitting in it. But by that time, a large part of her skin was burnt. She was taken to hospital, where she died ten days later, aged 78. Tring had been thought safe from the bombs in London but fate had decreed otherwise.

There were actors living in the hotel at the time. Margarete remembers Lily Kahn. Born Lilli Hertha Kann in Berlin, she acted in British films in the 1940s-50s, the parts she played ranging from charwomen to aristocrats. Lily was best known for her roles in *Cat Girl* (1957), *The Clouded Yellow* (1950), and *Betrayed* (1954). She died in 1978 in Sussex. She had an illegitimate daughter – pretty, slim, blonde, agile – by an Italian actor.

There was also Walter Rilla, who appeared in over 130 films between 1922 and 1977. Born in Neunkirchen in 1894, he died in Rosenheim in 1980. He appeared in *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938), directed by Herbert Wilcox. A strikingly handsome man, Walter was a non-Jew whose wife was Jewish. Their son was called Wolf.

Another well-known actor who sometimes visited the hotel, but lived nearby, was Norman Shelley. He wasn't, says Margarete, a show-off like most others but 'quite normal'.

Margarete remembers seeing Winston Churchill arriving at Tring Station. It was said that during the war years the population of Tring rose

to 20,000.

On their return to London in 1943, the family first had to live in a boarding house as there were lodgers in the flat.

When Margarete gained her School Certificate her parents wanted her to do a secretarial course. She took this at a top secretarial school and subsequently landed a job with the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile in London and, after the war, at the Yugoslav Embassy.

In 1946 Margarete met her future husband and they married in 1948. Margarete came from a very assimilated German-Jewish background but became an observant Jewess, which is why she met her husband ... but that's another story! They had four children. At the time of writing, she has 28 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren.

Margarete Stern's English is excellent, with only a slight accent. Besides German, she speaks Serbo-Croat, as mentioned above, and understands Russian. Her French is fluent because her mother was a French teacher. She has learned Italian, some informal Spanish and basic Japanese and is trying hard to improve her modern Hebrew and Inuktitut (the language of the Inuit).

Margarete sums up the family's stay in Tring as interesting and good: it was a rather primitive place but 'heaven' compared with what befell so many of their fellow Jews at the time!

Mrs Stern doesn't possess any photographs of her stay in Tring: as 'aliens' they weren't allowed to keep cameras for the duration of the war. But she has a page of small pictures taken in John Barnes (now Waitrose) in May 1941 in Finchley Road, London, i.e. at a time when they were still living in Tring. She needed them as she was about to turn 16 and was required to carry an identity card. Moreover, she had to

appear before a tribunal to determine whether she was a 'friendly' or an 'enemy' alien and be sent to the Isle of Man! Her account of this occasion is as follows:

The tribunal was held in Cambridge, which, we were told, was the nearest place to Tring. We drove there by car. The tribunal took place at the local court of law. It was a very frightening experience. I was sitting with my parents in the corridor awaiting my turn. After a while we saw a young girl emerging from one of the rooms, sobbing inconsolably, leaving the building between her father and mother. It was obvious how she had been classified – not very encouraging for me.

Thereupon I was ushered into the same room, a proper courtroom such as are associated with criminal cases. It was empty apart from the few people in the front, who, I admit, were looking at me in quite a friendly way. 'Mustn't spoil the impression' I kept thinking, but my command of English seemed to evaporate as I was bombarded with questions, e.g. what had been my father's occupation in Maribor? I could think of the word in Slovene (*druzabnik*), in German (*Teilhaber* or *Kompagnon*), but in English? Then it somehow did come to me as I seem to recall: a 'partner' in a chocolate factory. They were very friendly and classified me as a 'friendly alien'.

**Shelley Savage**

*This is a condensed version of an article which appeared in the July 2015 issue of The Tring and District Local History & Museum Society Newsletter. Shelley Savage would be delighted to make contact with anyone else who was evacuated to Tring during the war.*



# Letters to the Editor

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

## REFUGEE CRISIS

Sir – Kindertransport-AJR Chairman Sir Erich Reich deserves congratulations for his letter to the Prime Minister (October issue), particularly for his emphasis on children. Among Syrians, 51 per cent of those fleeing (overall) are children but of particular concern must be those youngsters who are, but do not always start out as being, unaccompanied. In the last calendar year, the OECD reported 24,000 unaccompanied children arriving in Europe as asylum seekers, the majority from Syria and Afghanistan. (Germany accepted 10,400 of them.)

In case there are people so lacking in imagination or knowledge of the circumstances in the Middle East that they actually believe the Home Secretary's 'pull factor' argument for not helping those seeking asylum in Europe, the case for giving shelter to youngsters is unanswerable. First, many will have had no say in where they are being taken; second, humanity as well as international law demands that priority be given to the weak and innocent.

The Government knows it is on weak moral ground. When the Prime Minister announced the pitiful token of 20,000 Syrians from Lebanon, Jordan or Turkey over the next five years there was a spate of weasel words about 'preparations' and 'being ready' to proactively justify any amount of foot-dragging. However, following public pressure, Mr Cameron is suddenly ready for the first 1,000 by Christmas. A wonderful demonstration of the power of public opinion!

Can we therefore hope to see the AJR associating with the Refugees Welcome Here alliance of civil societies or at least lending its name if its resources do not reach further? And might I invite/ask/plead with your readers to put pen to paper to ask their MPs to urge the Government to be generous and open the gate to at least some lone kids?

*Francis Deutsch, Saffron Walden*

Sir – In the film *The Power of Good* we are shown the plight of homeless refugees – men, women and children – fleeing from Sudetenland towards

the end of 1938. In December that year Nicholas Winton was shown one of their makeshift camps. The refugees were fleeing to Prague and it was the sight of these people which prompted him to ask Britain to help their children. The parents were anti-fascists, not necessarily Jews. Their lives were in danger. Sir Nicholas saw the humanitarian need and dealt with it.

By chance, I recently met with fellow Jewish refugees. I didn't know them and mentioned the possibility of sending blankets, warm clothing, cooking pots etc directly to asylum seekers camping out in Calais (via Islington Town Hall, tel 020 7527 2000). A deathly silence until one of these people informed me that I shouldn't be under the illusion that we had it so easy when we came to England!

I failed to see the connection entirely. Something wrong with my thinking here? Whatever is in store for these people – stay in Europe, return to their homeland or go to another place – it is *now* that they need help. Shame on us for even using such language. I am glad Nicholas Winton is no longer around to hear it!

*Susanne Medas, a 'Winton child',  
London W10*

Sir – I note the compassion of some of your readers regarding the treatment of the many recent migrants from the Middle East.

I too was a refugee/migrant, having survived the Holocaust as a hidden child in Paris, coming to England legally in 1948. Therefore I too am overwhelmed with pity and horror to witness children trekking through the mud and rain, and soon the freezing cold, to seek sanctuary in northern Europe. For me, there is a sense of *déjà vu*.

I have a few qualms, however. To compare these migrants with those of the late 1930s-early 1940s is erroneous. We were fleeing murderous Nazis and certain death if we remained in mainland Europe. Most importantly, however, our people had no history of attacking our hosts. I know of no instance of our people leaving bombs on trains or buses or engaging in other

terrorist activities.

I ask myself: will these poor migrants become disillusioned, unhappy, angry at the lack of housing and jobs and resort to violence and terrorist activity in five or ten years' time? The omens are not too good judging by the killings in France, Belgium and Denmark, where the Jews were specifically targeted.

I think the Prime Minister's reaction to the crisis has been spot-on. Should it be the survival of the fittest or the survival of the needy and weakest?

*Marcel Ladenheim, Surbiton, Surrey*

Sir – Peter Briess (November) rightly points out the dangers as a large number of mostly economic and not political refugees arrive in Europe. No question that they will include some extremists (the Germans are investigating ten people presently, suspecting them of being terrorists).

Most of the migrants are men. They will marry in their adopted countries or eventually bring the families they left behind and increase the alien populations. Multiculturalism is a failure and it only produces problems. As Peter Briess rightly points out, some of these people mean us harm. This should moderate the enthusiastic welcome for the migrants.

*Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath*

*See article by WJR's Richard Verber on page 11 (Ed.).*

## HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY PLEA

Sir – When Hitler invaded Poland on 1 September 1939 many Polish Jews left their homes trying to outrun advancing German armies by moving east. Only 17 days later the Russians occupied eastern Poland by agreement with Hitler and most refugees found themselves on Soviet territory. In the summer of 1940 they were deported to *gulags* in Siberia to work as slave labourers in extreme cold, on starvation rations without adequate clothing or medicines. Countless numbers died. And many survivors of the *gulags* later lost their lives in Central Asia due to epidemics and hunger.

One and a half million people were thus affected but their fate remains largely unknown, even to victims who themselves suffered persecution and spent the war in hiding or in concentration camps.

In January on National Holocaust Day we will again be commemorating the dead. I am writing to plead that those who lie buried in Siberian permafrost or the sands of Central Asia be included in these commemorations this year and every year. This would bring great solace to survivors and their children.

*Berta Klipstein, Leeds*

## PAINFUL GHOSTS OF THE PAST

Sir – I think that most persons who

would attend the Memorial Service at Belsize Square Synagogue in connection with Kristallnacht would have personal experience of that dreadful night, so what is the point of hearing others speak and so conjuring up the painful ghosts of the past?

If the three people scheduled to speak at Belsize Square Synagogue did so in, say, Cologne or Berlin to non-Jewish audiences, I feel some good might be achieved – for it is *they* who need to be told what occurred on 9-10 November 1938.

*E. G. Kolman, Greenford, Middx*

### NOT ONLY NICHOLAS WINTON

Sir – Your October issue again has articles on Sir Nicholas Winton, who undoubtedly deserves every credit for how he helped 669 children to escape from Nazi-occupied Prague.

Every time this comes up I feel that just as much mention should be made of the other significant organisers who did the same for the 9,331 or so children – such as myself from Berlin – whose lives were saved by means of the Kindertransport but whose names and achievements are not usually given alongside those of Sir Nicholas.

This, I feel, is a very unfair way of presenting the facts. Can we hope that the Editor will give wider publicity in the Journal and elsewhere to those wonderful people, to whom 15 times as many children owe their lives in the first place as those 669 from Prague?

*Werner Conn, Lytham St Annes*

### A HAUNTING QUESTION

Sir – Several recent letters have probed the German-Nazi relationship. Each has reopened a question which has troubled me for years.

I grew up in pre-war Vienna in a youthful orgy of boy-scouting, lake-swimming, mountain-climbing and campfire-singing. After the Anschluss my schoolmates joyfully transferred to the Hitler Youth, which offered even better sport and *esprit de corps*, while my family and I lost everything and escaped with our bare lives.

I am, however, constantly facing this question: Supposing Hitler had not been an anti-Semite – quite possible after his earlier life in Vienna? Would I not, like my chums, have followed the same advance from Hitler Youth to Nazi Party to SS to Waffen SS to wartime service and then, perhaps, even the horrible Stasi? Would I during the wars in Poland and Russia, Yugoslavia and Greece have behaved any better than other 'good Germans' when given orders from above? Are other readers haunted by the same question?

*(Dr) Hans L. Eirew, Manchester*

### THE HAVEN

Sir – In December 1938 the first Kindertransport children arrived in London from Germany and Austria. Many ended

up living with individual families, some in London, others across Britain.

Twenty of these children were housed in a small flat in Kentish Town in north London above a Lyons teashop. This home became known to its young residents as The Haven.

The Haven was set up by the Salmon and Gluckstein families, who were concerned about the plight of these children. The Salmons and Glucksteins were the owners of Britain's largest catering company, J. Lyons & Co.

The children at The Haven were clothed and fed and each provided with a small bear. They were taken to see a dentist at the Lyons headquarters in Hammersmith and enrolled in school. It took some time for them to master the language of their new home.

I am fortunate to have spoken to one of The Haven children, who now lives in Milan, Italy, but am very keen to talk to others. I would also greatly appreciate seeing any photographs, letters, diaries, or recorded interviews about The Haven.

If you can help, please do get in touch c/o Patrick@convilleandwalsh.com

*Thomas Harding, author of Hanns and Rudolf: The German Jew and the Hunt for the Kommandant of Auschwitz (2013) and The House by the Lake (2015)*

### MEMORY OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT

Sir – My PhD research focuses on the memory of the Kindertransport in national and international perspectives. A key part of this project will involve interviews not only with Kindertransportees but also the second and even third generations, to discover how the memory of the Kindertransport has been passed down to the next generation(s) but also how it has developed over the years. These interviews will be used to compare how *Kinder* from the various host nations such as America, Australia, Britain and New Zealand were treated on arrival and how they adapted to life in these new lands. Moreover, a comparison of the interviews may reveal that memory of the Kindertransport is not uniform but shaped by national factors.

However, this project will hope to draw out common themes within the interviews as Holocaust memory also operates within a transnational, even global network. I hope to start interviewing *Kinder* and their families from this November onwards, starting with those who live in Britain and travelling to the other three host nations next year. It would be great to hear from *Kinder* and their families willing to be interviewed by myself for my research. Please feel free to contact me at N0393224@ntu.ac.uk

*Amy Williams, Nottingham Trent University*

### KINDER HOSTELS

Sir – I am trying to identify to which hostel my mother, Lore Freudenthal, was sent

on her arrival in London as a *Kind* on 25 August 1939 aged nine. I recently learned from a letter that she was in the vicinity ('in der Nähe') of her first cousin, Walter Marx, who was then in a boarding house at 26 Highbury New Park, London N5.

Does anyone know of any hostels to which *Kinder* were sent in this area? I would also be very grateful for any suggestions of publications or other sources to which I could turn for further information.

*Gina Burgess Winning  
johnandgina@ausum.co.uk*

### JEWS IN THE MERCHANT NAVY IN WW2

Sir – I am researching a book on this subject. Do your readers know any members who served in the UK or Commonwealth Merchant Navies in WW2, including in Israel (Mandate period)? I would appreciate any photos of the men in uniform and any anecdotes/stories they told – and meeting any willing to be interviewed.

Please contact me at martin.sugarman@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 07806 656756 or 020 8986 4868.

*Martin Sugarman, AJEX Archivist*

### SUPERB AJR LUNCH

Sir – This year's AJR Lunch was absolutely superb and I must congratulate everyone who organised it, in particular Carol Rossen and Lorna Moss. As usual, it was a pleasure to meet up again with friends and AJR staff and with plenty of time for everyone to schmooze together.

This year in particular the meal was excellent. In fact, I thought it was better than at previous Lunches and this certainly seems to be the general consensus. In addition, I and many others appreciated all those lovely touches like each table having a fabulous platter of fresh fruit following the meal.

Also, I was chosen for a little twirl during the musical entertainment ... almost praying that I wouldn't fall flat on my face in front of everyone!

Please convey my thanks and appreciation to all involved.

*Ms Doona Labi, London NW3*

### ISRAEL RIGHT OR WRONG?

Sir – Jenny Manson (November) displays a curious myopia. No one doubts that there are individual cases of injustice against Palestinians in Israel – just as there are individual cases of injustice in every country in the world, including the UK. Nor should there be any doubt that it is proper for Israeli organisations such as the ones she cites to make representations to the Israeli Government about alleged injustices.

However, so far as Jews in this country are concerned, the overwhelming picture of Israel conveyed by our news media, in

*continued on page 16* ➔

# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

He is known as the painter of Primrose Hill, rising at dawn to capture new imagery in places he has known virtually since he escaped Nazi Germany in 1939. Now 84, **Frank Auerbach** doesn't rest on his laurels. He doesn't rest at all. Camden Town and Mornington Crescent are relentlessly daubed on and scratched out in canvass until he is sure they reflect his vision.

**T a t e Britain's** new exhibition of Auerbach's work (until 13 March 2016) includes seven paintings shown for the first time. They depict the artist's Camden locale. *The House 111* (2011), *Hampstead Road*, *High Summer* (2010) and *In the Studio* were painted in the part of north London that has become the artist's world. The show also includes two early nudes that haven't been seen since they were painted some 57 years ago and are now in private collections.

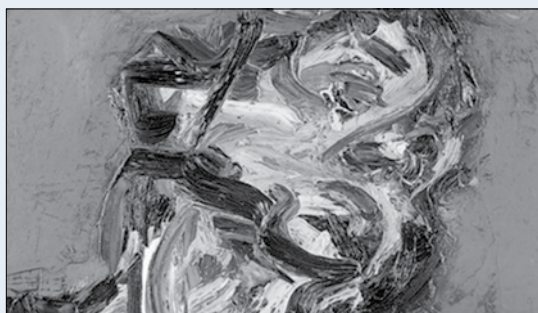
This urban landscape painter uses colour and oblong shapes to vibrant and immediate effect. A person walking in the street appears to be made of the same fabric as the buildings in Mornington Crescent or the land or the sky. His portrait heads have the same blurred effect in which the artist sketches the human dynamic rather than feature detail. The movement and feeling suggest Francis Bacon, Leon Kossoff and Lucian Freud, all painters who define the world differently.

Auerbach's work encourages us not to be lazy but to use our eyes. For instance, the iridescent *Primrose Hill*, 1971, with trees and houses in the background against a rather febrile blue sky, allows you to see the hill as a natural phenomenon

through a more spectral prism. Its shape and movement also reference Constable.

Auerbach came to Britain with the Kindertransport and was orphaned. Art historian Catherine Lampert, who curated the exhibition, was one of his models for 37 years. According to her, he does not dwell on the past: everything he sees is newly born in the present despite his tendency to repeat the same scenes. Inevitably despair and loss will seep through the heavy impasto that he constantly reworks. This is most clearly defined in his haunting 1958 charcoal self-portrait. Yet life, energy, joy, speed all flow through his work with real warmth and spontaneity.

Another artist who looks for essence rather than likeness is the Swiss-born **Alberto**



Frank Auerbach *Head of J.Y.M II* 1984-85  
Oil on canvas 660 x 610

**Giacometti.**

His exhibition, **P u r e Presence**, at the **National Portrait Gallery** (until 10 January 2016), is aptly named. Considered a giant of

Modernism, Giacometti is known for his pin-headed, lean sculptures. At art school he had difficulty in capturing the likeness of his models because one pose could not give him the whole person. A solid intensity comes through both his paintings and his sculpture of family members – his mother Isabel, his wife Annette, his brother Diego and sister Ottilia, and the philanthropist Lord Sainsbury and the young woman Caroline.

The son of a famous Impressionist painter, Giacometti tried to disguise his developing post-Impressionist influences, which finally led to Abstraction and Expressionism, again suggestive of Francis Bacon.

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

## REVIEWS

### A dynamic and richly textured silence

**BREAKING THE SILENCE: VOICES OF THE BRITISH CHILDREN OF REFUGEES FROM NAZISM**

by **Merilyn Moos**

London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015,  
334 pp. paperback, £24.95,  
ISBN 9781783482962

**M**erilyn Moos's book *Breaking the Silence* is a study of 'those whose grown-up parents escaped and ... enter[ed] the UK before the outbreak of war'. This, according to Moos, is one of four subcategories of the British 'second generation'. Such precision lies at the heart of her book: 'My position is that the experience of a child of refugees from Nazism has to be distinguished from a child of any Holocaust survivor'. These comments begin to suggest the complexity of the field and what further work might be done to explore the full range of refugee experiences.



Merilyn Moos

In Section I, Moos teases out some of the nuances of Holocaust history. She briefly surveys the countries of origin of Britain's wartime and post-war refugees, exploring the historical contexts of immigration from each. She then examines the British context into which the refugees came. The resonance with current events is hard to overlook. Recent *Daily Mail* headlines about asylum seekers, and recent revelations of immigrants' abuse and exploitation as domestic servants, find strong echoes here. When considering the present situation, we could do worse than reflect on Louise London's estimate, quoted by Moos on page 22, that 'ten times as many people sought refuge in Britain as succeeded in getting in', in the years before the Second World War. Many, in fact, were sent back from British ports as late as 1939 – their fates, in Moos's words, 'part of Britain's forgotten history'. In the final, methodological part of this section, Moos identifies the different historical stages of the Holocaust and

reminds us of the groups targeted for systematic extermination: 'Roma, Sinti, gays and black Germans, along with the Jews'. She also highlights the fact that psychoanalytic literature on intergenerational or transferred trauma has concentrated on children of death camp survivors in Israel and the United States. How valuable, she asks, is this research to understanding a British context, lacking as it does those countries' 'vocabulary that celebrates ethnicity or diversity'?

The interview transcripts that form Section II present second-generation refugees in dialogue with the author. It includes her own interview, which contains echoes of her engaging autobiographical novel *The Language of Silence*. A number of interviewees, already displaced, and living with traumatised or frightened parents, were subjected to bullying for their 'difference'. Henry describes bullying by pupils and teachers which compounded his situation, and his serious problems with the 'free-floating anxieties' that have persisted throughout a successful academic career: 'I think what was really transmitted through the Holocaust experience was not death itself but the fears that went with it. [...] I feel the anxieties are so deep ground, it's almost as if it was inherited.' (Henry's story, p.121)

Throughout, Moos remains alert to her position in relation to her material, neither claiming ultimate authority nor immersing herself with dubious empathy.

Gender differences in the refugee experience emerge as one of the project's most interesting themes. The interviewees tend to be more reluctant to talk about their mothers than their fathers, and what they say about them is more complex and ambivalent. Moos contends that the refugee experience, with its 'discontinuity of family and professional structures', impacted women more than men. We hear, for example, of highly educated women – two of whom were going to become academics – who not only suffered the trauma of displacement but found their roles confined to 'Kinder und Küche' once in Britain. The tensions this situation produced became part of the texture of their children's experiences.

Section III synthesises much of what is discussed in Section II, drawing out and interpreting key themes such as loss of grandparents, troubled relationships with parents, and difficulties in expressing anger. But the key theme is silence. Silence

here is not absolute but something dynamic and richly textured. Moos mentions in her conclusion 'the manifold differences in types of silence'. There is the silence of absence – grandparents untalked about and unknown. There is a powerless silence: 'the second generation did not even know what there was to know.' There is sometimes the silence of Jewishness kept secret from the second generation; and the silence of that generation in not voicing their experiences until later in life. In the absence of words and explanation, writes Moos, 'another form of discourse developed among the silences' – one which, this book shows, often weighed heavily, emotionally and psychologically. In *Breaking the Silence*, Moos has produced a tightly focused, worthwhile piece of scholarship, of relevance to those with personal or academic interests in this area.

Marita Grimwood

### Unsentimental record of a successful life

#### LIFE IN TWO COUNTRIES

by John Hajdu

*Self-publication, 2015, 118 pp.*

*paperback*

This autobiography begins with a brief overview of the Jews in Hungary from the year 906 – a story of almost continuous persecution. In John Hajdu's time, many Jews were in the professions and the arts; they were prominent and generally well off, which in turn bred anti-Semitism and violence.

At some unspecified time the Hajdu family changed their name to a Hungarian one and settled in a 'Jewish area' of Budapest.

In January 1945, following liberation, the situation in the capital became exceptionally difficult, with little food available. John and his father moved to Nagyvarad in Transylvania (now part of Romania but mostly still Hungarian-speaking). Here he entered a Hungarian school, obtaining excellent results.

John's mother ended up in Mauthausen concentration camp and the family concluded she had perished. Fortunately, she survived and returned to Budapest but found her husband living with somebody else. John's parents divorced; there's

no mention of the trauma this must have caused the family. John failed in his attempt to enter a university as his family's background proved a handicap during the Communist era. The best option was a technical college. Besides his studies at the college, he took up English lessons, an inspired decision it later turned out.

On graduation, John's first job involved hard physical work, which again was to his advantage in later life. Soon he obtained a supervisory job with Hungarian railways.

Like most Jews in Hungary, he took no active part in the 1956 Revolution. When the Russians suppressed the ill-equipped revolutionaries, John, his mother and his best friend Peter managed to escape to Austria, a quite hazardous journey. In Vienna, they chose England as their destination. A short spell in a refugee camp and work as an interpreter near Guildford followed.

With some help from the Jewish Refugee Committee, John and his mother settled in London. She did various menial jobs while he studied at Hendon Technical College, supplementing his finances by working at the Grosvenor House Hotel. After graduating, his ascent in the hotel industry was very fast (helped, I guess, by his good looks). A high flier, he managed to land a number of interesting jobs in the hotel industry, enabling him to travel the world, often with the family. His mother became a bookkeeper and settled in Golders Green.

In 1972, by then holding the post of chairman of the Hotel Industry Marketing Group, he

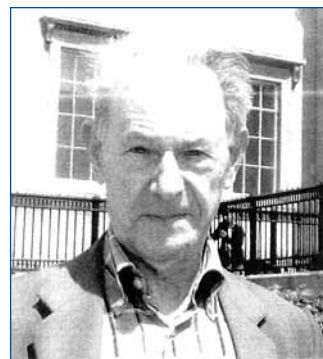
married Maureen. Two children, Georgina and Nicholas, followed; both are married by now.

In time, John also became, among other things, a magistrate, vice president of the University of the Third Age, and chairman of the very active Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association. As a

'sideline', he took part in various pursuits – car rallying, tennis and table tennis – winning many cups.

The book is lavishly illustrated with photos of the family, train tickets, school certificates, etc. I marvel how he was able to save all these photos. This is an unsentimental record of a full and successful life.

Janos Fisher



John Hajdu

## ARTS AND EVENTS DECEMBER DIARY

**'The Diplomats & Spies Who Saved Jews from the Nazis: 70 Years On: Reflections on the Holocaust, Liberation and Aftermath'** A course by Dr Helen Fry. **Week 2: Wed 2 Dec** – Thomas Kendrick & Vienna's Jews; **Week 3: Wed 9 Dec** – Oskar Schindler; **Week 4: Wed 16 Dec** – Raoul Wallenberg & Hungarian Jews. At JW3, tel 020 7433 8988 info@jw3.org.uk

**Thur 3 Dec Book Launch: Thomas Harding's 'The House by the Lake'** 6.30-8 pm. Admission free, booking recommended. At Weiner Library. Tel 020 7636 7247

**Tues 8 Dec Prof Moshe Zimmerman: 'Germany and Israel – a Historical Asymmetry'** At New North London Synagogue, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY, 7:45-9:00 pm. Organised by Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, in conjunction with New North London Synagogue. Contact Diana Franklin

T +44 (0)1273 678771 (University)

T/F +44 (0)20 8455 4785 (London)

E d.franklin@sussex.ac.uk

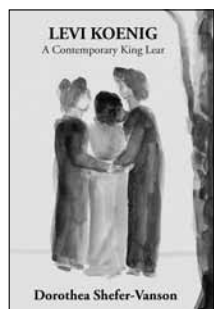
**Sun 20 Dec (evening)** Piano recital by Mignonette Aarons dedicated to the

memory of Jewish composers forbidden by the Nazis, including music composed in Terezin. At home of Mignonette Aarons in Kingsbury. Tickets £15 including refreshments. Proceeds to AJR and B'nai B'rith shoes. Tel 020 8204 8778

**20 Jan to 27 Feb 2016 Mona Golabek in 'The Pianist of Willesden Lane'** At St. James Theatre, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JA, tel 0844 264 2140. Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane: Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Music, Love, and Survival* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen (reviewed in AJR Journal in October this year)

### 'Levi Koenig: A Contemporary King Lear'

The novel explores relations between three grown-up sisters, their attitude to their aged father, and the way each one strives to juggle home, family, work, and love life while tending to their father's needs.



Available as paperback and ebook from Amazon and at [www.shefer-vanson.com](http://www.shefer-vanson.com)

### THE STORY OF 20TH-CENTURY GERMANY

The speaker at our October Kindertransport Lunch Meeting, Thomas Harding, author of the acclaimed *Hanns and Rudolf: The German Jew and the Hunt for the Kommandant of Auschwitz* (2013), told us about his latest book, *The House by the Lake*. This is the story of his family's weekend home on the shores of Lake Wannsee – and the story of 20th-century Germany. Lived in and lost by five different families, this house will now be set up as a place of remembrance and reconciliation.

David Lang



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## KINDERTRANSPORT SCULPTOR FRANK MEISLER CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY

Architect and sculptor Frank Meisler is celebrating his 90th birthday this month.

Born into a Jewish family in Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland), Frank was evacuated from Germany on the Kindertransport in August 1939. He travelled with 14 other Jewish children via Berlin to Holland and then on to Liverpool Street Station in London. Three days after he left Germany his parents were arrested, held in the Warsaw Ghetto, and subsequently murdered at Auschwitz.

In London Frank was raised by a grandmother. He went to school in Harrow and did national service in the RAF. He studied architecture at Manchester University and worked on the construction of Heathrow Airport with Sir Frederick Gibberd.

In 1960 he moved to Israel, where he has a workshop in the Artist's Quarter of the Old City of Jaffa.

Frank Meisler's public works include a series of Kindertransport memorials, several of them erected with AJR support: 'Children of the



'Kindertransport', erected in Hope Square at Liverpool Street Station in 2006 (he was also awarded the Freedom of the City of London); 'Trains to Life, Trains to Death', Friedrichstrasse Station, Berlin, 2008; 'The Departure', Gdansk Glowny Station, 2009; 'Channel Crossing to Life', Hook of Holland, 2011; and 'The Final Parting', Dammtor Station, Hamburg, May 2015. Each Kindertransport sculpture includes

bronze statues of a group of children with luggage.

Frank also designed the interior of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Moscow and a number of sculptures for Russia's National War Memorial.

In 2011 his memorial to the death march of Jewish prisoners and subsequent murders at Palmnicken (now Yantarny) was erected in Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg).

In 1996 Frank published his autobiography: *On the Vistula Facing East* (André Deutsch).

In 1999 he was awarded the Franz Kafka Gold Medal for Artistic Achievement by the Czech Academy of Arts; in 2002 he was made an Honorary Academician by both Russian and Ukrainian Academies of Arts; in 2012 he was awarded the Federal Republic of Germany's Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit 1st Class in recognition of his services to German-Jewish and German-Israeli relations; and in 2014 he was made an Honorary Ambassador of the Hanseatic City of Danzig (Gdansk).

## Standing up and being counted: the refugee crisis and British Jews

During the evening of 2 September this year, pictures of Aylan Kurdi started to circulate round the world. His image would grace the front cover of nearly every British newspaper the next day. Three years old, from Syria, Aylan died as nearly 3,000 people have done this year – trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

The world suddenly seemed to wake up. The timing was strange: the Syrian civil war has been burning for well over four years. Two hundred and fifty thousand people have died. Nearly eight million Syrians are displaced within their own country. Another four million people have fled to neighbouring states – mostly to Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Many have been there for years.

But it took the tragic death of one little boy – Aylan – to galvanise the British public and get the government to act. The British-Jewish community knew it too had to stand up and be counted.

This was a grim reality we knew all too well. World Jewish Relief has been working with Syrian refugees since 2013, when we set up programmes in Jordan.

With rations cut, resources

expended and the prospect of conflict resolution at home in Syria non-existent, some refugees decided that the only option of a better future was a move westwards into Europe.

Once refugees starting entering the EU – and arriving at Calais in particular – the refugee crisis became a domestic issue for Britain as well as a foreign policy one.

British Jews felt a moral imperative – perhaps even a religious duty – to act. Whatever our family backgrounds, we don't have to go too far back in our history to find relatives who were also refugees.

For many people it is the story of the Second World War and the Kindertransport. Tens of thousands of children and adults were saved thanks to the Jewish community here and because Britain eventually opened its doors just a little.

I am alive today only because my grandma, aged eight, somehow made it to a boat from Germany, arriving in Southampton as part of the Kindertransport just two months before war broke out. Her parents died in Auschwitz, as did her sister and cousins.

As the Jewish community's response to international disasters, World Jewish Relief launched an emergency appeal, providing education facilities and winter emergency packages to Syrian refugee children. Although our television screens have shown thousands of refugees on the move across Europe, the greatest vulnerability among the largest number of refugees still remains in and around Syria itself.

The community is responding positively. The Board of Deputies brought together organisations like AJR, JCORE and JSAF for a roundtable meeting, out of which came a community website offering ways to get involved – [www.supportrefugees.org.uk](http://www.supportrefugees.org.uk) – and over 200 people came to JW3 to learn more about the crisis and how to help by volunteering and campaigning.

This crisis will get worse before it gets better. We must all do what we can to make a difference.

**Richard Verber**  
richard@worldjewishrelief.org

*Richard Verber is Campaigns Manager, World Jewish Relief, and Senior Vice President, Board of Deputies.*



### **PINNER The Life and Work of Abram Games**

Naomi Games told us that her father Abram, the illustrious graphic designer, had worked for London Transport, Shell and the Post Office before becoming a freelance and winning major awards. He designed posters and stamps both at home and abroad. His stark, simple designs, well ahead of their time, created maximum impact: among the most memorable are those for the Second World War recruitment posters, the Olympic Games, the Festival of Britain, and the *Financial Times*.

*Walter Weg*

### **SHEFFIELD CF 'The Power of Good'**

We met in the synagogue to see the film 'The Power of Good', which tells the story of Sir Nicholas Winton's work. Sue Pearson, one of 'Nicky's children', brought along a copy of his now famous scrapbook and answered questions from the audience. Another member told us her mother and aunt had been saved by Sir Nicholas. A most interesting and heartfelt afternoon.

*Wendy Bott*

### **HGS The First Jewish Prize-fighter**

David Barnett told us about the life of Daniel Mendoza, 1764-1836, the first Jewish prize-fighter, who was only just over 5 foot tall and weighed 160 pounds. An interesting talk.

*Hortense Gordon*

### **GLASGOW The Queen's Jewels**

Edward Green's talk about the Queen's Jewels was very interesting and amusing. It was also lovely to meet everyone and to be made to feel so welcome. I'm looking forward to the next meeting that I'm able to attend.

*Charlotte Alexander*

### **ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) The Life and Times of Judith Montefiore**

David Barnett showed us pictures of Judith Montefiore, a fine-looking woman born in 1784 and married to Moses Chaim Montefiore. The couple travelled extensively around Europe staying in expensive hotels and visited the Holy Land in 1827. Her brother-in-

law was Nathan Mayer Rothschild!

*Larry Lisner*

### **ST JOHN'S WOOD 'Suitcase 39'**

Jane Merkin, the producer of 'Suitcase 39', a play written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport, told us how the idea for the production originated and about the process of putting it on. Jane explained that her mother was a *Kind* and that she and her sister had felt a responsibility to tell the story.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### **CAMBRIDGE Jewish Lyricists**

Members were treated to a fascinating talk by Mike Levy about Jewish lyricists, including the Gershwins, Oscar Hammerstein, Irving Berlin, Kurt Weill and the British-born Lionel Bart. Mike read some of the lyrics to us and we could hear the skill, humour and poetry of the words. He also played us some tracks.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### **Interesting Day Out to Chatsworth House**

An interesting day out was arranged by Esther and Kathryn to Chatsworth House, home of the Duke of Devonshire. Members from



(from left) Beulah Worth, Bob and Gerry Norton, Lia and Philip Lesser, Kathryn Williams

Birmingham and Nottingham were taken round on a personal guided tour and shown the various art and furnishing treasures. An excellent lunch was enjoyed in the restaurant before returning home. Our sincere thanks to Esther and Kathryn for arranging it and in the East Midlands we look forward to seeing them both at a meeting in Spring 2016.

*Bob Norton*

### **IMPERIAL CAFÉ A Lively Gathering**

A lively gathering with many topics discussed, mainly the Home Office's inability to look sympathetically on war veterans and the driving tests that many never took owing to it's being war time - but they can all drive a tractor and HGV!

*Esther Rinkoff*

### **LEEDS CF Animated Afternoon**

A most animated afternoon of discussion

- everything from racism to foreign children needing English coaching in British schools to ... baking! All washed down with Barbara's legendary afternoon teas.

*Wendy Bott*

### **BRIGHTON AND HOVE 'SARID' The Life of Judith Montefiore**

David Barnett spoke about Judith Montefiore, who, among many other things, was fluent in several languages, published the first Jewish cookbook and, with her husband Moses Montefiore, a rich broker, visited the Holy Land. Judith generously supported Jewish and non-Jewish charities.

*Ceska Abrahams*

### **A Day to Remember: An Outing to Emirates Air Line Cable Car**

Happily the weather was fine for our trip, ensuring our little group had a superb view of London's many magnificent new buildings - the Shard as always dominating the skyline but also numerous other wonderful buildings reaching into the sky. In the distance a glimpse of Greenwich Park and, of course, the Thames below us sparkling in the sunshine. An outstanding experience.

After a short walk to the O2, we enjoyed a two-course lunch, giving us the opportunity to greet old friends as well as meet other AJR members - always a pleasure.

We were then taken on a 45-minute boat ride to the Embankment, passing many famous sights. With the sun shimmering on the water and the blue sky above, our excursion came to a wonderful conclusion.

Our thanks to the AJR, in particular Kathryn and Esther, who ably guided us around all day.

*Meta Roseneil*

### **HULL CF 'Woman in Gold'**

Our host was Rose Abrahamson and it was in her lovely home that we watched 'Woman in Gold'. Everyone enjoyed the film and thought it was extremely well made.

*Wendy Bott*

### **EDGWARE Imperial War Museum**

The Imperial War Museum's Suzanne Bardgett spoke about the Holocaust exhibition, research conducted by PhD students, and a recent exhibition about Indian soldiers in Brighton during WWI.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### **LIVERPOOL An Extraordinary Man**

Liverpool members came out in force - a crowd of 25 members attended a screening of the film 'The Power of

Good', the story of the late Sir Nicholas Winton. By the end of the film there was hardly a dry eye and we all left with even more respect for a man who never once considered what he did to be extraordinary.

*Wendy Bott*

### KENT The Life and Career of Herbert Morrison

Lesley Urbach spoke about the life and career of the eminent Labour politician Herbert Morrison, particularly his attitude towards Jewish refugees both before and after the war. There was a lively debate about internment, of which members shared personal experiences.

*Janet Weston*

### EDINBURGH Firm Friends

Members warmly welcomed Susie Kelpie to her first AJR meeting. By the end of the meeting we were firm friends and looking forward to our next get-together.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### RADLETT Strange Form of Entertainment

Frances Long described the introduction of Italian opera into London society in the 18th century. Especially fascinating was her analysis of the social changes taking place among the English upper classes at that time, which made this strange form of entertainment acceptable. The talk was witty, informative and wide-ranging and stimulated a great deal of discussion.

*Fritz Starer*

### OXFORD WWI Battlefields

Meeting at the home of Suzie and John Bates, I talked about my April trip to the WWI battlefields in France and Belgium, showing photos of the cemeteries and monuments I had seen. We discussed the bizarre fact that many members had relatives who had fought for Germany in WWI and had been honoured for bravery, yet had faced the horrors of WWII 20 years later.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### WELWYN GC A Well Established Group

Kind hospitality from Monica in the warmth of her home, giving me the chance to get to know this well established group.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### CHESHIRE Varied Discussion

Meeting at the home of Ernie Hunter, topics for discussion included the various forms of group rescue that brought people into Britain; how a longstanding ban on *Stolpersteine* ('stumbling stones') outside the homes of Holocaust victims in Munich may be on the verge of being overturned; and what members of the gathering would do if they were to become PM of Britain.

*Tomi Komoly*

### SURREY/KINGSTON Old and New Friends

We met for coffee at the home of Edmee Barta. It was lovely as always to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. Edmee's hospitality was much appreciated by all.

*Susan Harrod*

### NORTH WEST LONDON The Jewish

#### Pam Ayres

Michelle Wolff – the Jewish Pam Ayres – read some of her own poems, including 'About Age' (growing old isn't a crime!) and 'Paved with Gold' (a light-hearted look at Golders Green). Being a poet is a condition, not a profession, Michelle insisted.

*David Lang*

### GLASGOW CF A Most Enjoyable Event

Once again, on behalf of the group, I have to extend thanks to the AJR for a most enjoyable event: a Soup and Sandwich Lunch followed by a game of Kalooki, making an extremely pleasant afternoon.

*Ruth Ramsay*

### NORTH-WEST LONDON A Pleasant Lunch and Good Company

This group meets once a month at Alyth Gardens Synagogue. It's always a pleasant lunch and such good company. This time, we had a very light poetry reading, which we all enjoyed.

*Margarete Weiss*

### WEST MIDLANDS (BIRMINGHAM) From Birmingham to Broadway

Glamorous 83-year-old Jean Bayliss regaled us with tales of her illustrious career spanning 70 years. She had met and counted as friends Audrey Hepburn, Anthony Newley and Millicent Martin, as well as encountering Elvis Presley, Richard Burton, Mae West and Danny Kaye. Jean starred as Maria in the original Rodgers and Hammerstein production of *The Sound of Music* in London. A real trouper!

*Esther Rinkoff*

*continued on page 14* ➔

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## DECEMBER GROUP EVENTS

Ealing/Wembley	1 Dec	Chanukah Quiz and Refreshments
Leeds CF	1 Dec	Visit to Marks & Spencer Archives
Ilford	2 Dec	Savoy End Chapel Players
Pinner	3 Dec	Chanukah Party
Wessex	3 Dec	Chanukah Party
Birmingham	7 Dec	Chanukah Concert
Essex (Westcliff)	8 Dec	Chanukah Quiz
Liverpool	8 Dec	Chanukah Lunch
Leeds CF	9 Dec	Chanukah Lunch
Manchester	13 Dec	Chanukah Lunch
Kent	15 Dec	Fish & Chip Lunch
Book Club	16 Dec	Social Discussion
Glasgow	16 Dec	Early New Year Party
Cambridge	17 Dec	Jonathan King: 'Buffalo Bill and the Wild West'
Edinburgh	17 Dec	Social Get-together
Imperial Café	17 Dec	Lunch
Brighton	21 Dec	Chanukah Quiz and Refreshments

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

**PRESTWICH/WHITEFIELD 'What Makes You Smile?'**

In a world full of bad news stories it was lovely to think about the things that make us smile – from grandchildren and great-grandchildren to a good game of golf to listening to music to hearing a good joke. A big thank you to Louise for being our host.

*Wendy Bott*

**NORTH LONDON Secrets of the City**

We knew some snippets of information about the City – its Roman origins, etc – but learned so much more from our excellent speaker, Elaine Wein. Only a few of us knew of Pye Corner, where the Fire of London finally stopped, and probably fewer had heard of Postman's Park, where there are memorial tablets commemorating ordinary citizens who died whilst saving the lives of others.

*Hanne R. Freedman*

**WEMBLEY Jewish Developers in the City of London**

Colin Davey's fascinating talk included many well-known buildings such as The Gherkin (architect Norman Foster), Lloyd's (Richard Rogers), Alban Gate (Terry Farrell) and the Natwest Tower (Richard Seifert). This was followed by a Q&A session and a delicious tea and conversation! Thank you, Colin and Kathryn.

*Ruth Pearson*

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**Jonathan Fishburn**

buys and sells Jewish and Hebrew books, ephemera and items of Jewish interest.

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

**Contact Jonathan on**

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**for more information**

## OBITUARIES

### Edith Helene Kaufmann (née Popper), born Tetschen, Bohemia 12 December 1903, died London 7 October 2015

A much admired amateur photographer, talented potter and active resident in Hammerson House, my cousin Edith Kaufmann died on 7 October. Her many friends here and abroad mourn the passing of a handsome, artistic woman with an alert mind and an indomitable spirit, a warm, loyal and courteous friend, always welcoming and receptive.

Edith was born the only child of Hermine and Louis Popper, in Tetschen, Bohemia, (now Decin in the Czech Republic). When Louis died in 1909 mother and daughter moved to Vienna; coming from a German-speaking part of Bohemia, they did not need to learn a new language. As a child, Edith had a camera and so began her lifelong passion for photography. She studied History of Art at the university in Vienna and at the Sorbonne, gaining her doctorate in Vienna, where she worked as a guide in a number of galleries, including the prestigious Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Edith met her future husband Paul on a skiing trip – he complimented the ever-chic Edith on her new haircut – and they married in 1931. Leaving Vienna in 1938, they came to London by a circuitous route in 1939. They settled in a flat in South Hill Park, overlooking Hampstead Heath

(a district the delighted Paul described as a little piece of Vienna in north London). Paul's mother Wilma escaped the Nazi advance, to rejoin her son and daughter-in-law. Hermine Popper was not so lucky. Nor were 16 of Edith's 24 cousins.

Childlessness was another source of grief for Edith. But it was a full life in other ways, with many trips abroad, immortalised in their photography, many friendships and their membership of the Hampstead Photographic Society. Edith worked in an administrative capacity for the Central Council for District Nursing and subsequently for Paul's import/export firm. Paul died after a short illness in 1980. Sustained by her friends and her wide-ranging interests, Edith remained in the flat, climbing the stairs to the top floor, until 2001, when the building was developed, and she moved into Hammerson House. Here, she threw herself into the home's many activities, especially crafts, gardening and keep-fit. On her 109th birthday, Edith gave a slide show to residents, with her own commentary.

Sadly but inevitably, her faculties declined over the last few years but she enjoyed her



flower-decked balcony with its backdrop of mature trees. A great joy was the visit from Australia in the summer of 2014 of the daughter of a friend of Edith who had died relatively young with her teenage daughter Imogen, an aspiring ballet dancer. Imogen performed some ballet steps for her. Edith's eyes danced when she recalled this.

A longstanding friend of Edith, Ann Bone, wrote: 'I found her remarkable for her frankness and directness, her complete lack of sentimentality, for the things that tickled her sense of humour – I often came away chuckling, with a story to relate – and for her intellect. On top of that, she made me a present of a beautiful pottery jug she had made in her nineties; even after she had spent so long in this country, it carried all the hallmarks of early Viennese modernism: its boldness and again – even though it was decorated with flowers – its clarity and lack of sentimentality.'

The theme for Edith's funeral was taken from the closing lines of Shakespeare's King Lear, applicable to so many refugees and survivors:

'The oldest hath borne most; you that are young  
Will never see so much, nor live so long.'

Vera Lustig

### David Cesarani, born London 13 November 1956, died London 25 October 2015

David Cesarani, who has died at the age of 58 following surgery to remove a tumour on his spine, was the son of Henry Cesarani, a hairdresser of Italian-Jewish descent, and Sylvia née Packman.

An only child, he won a scholarship to Latymer Upper School in west London and, after spending time on an Israeli kibbutz during his gap year, won a scholarship to Queens' College, Cambridge, where he gained a first in history. He went on to receive an MA in history from Columbia University in New York and was subsequently awarded a DPhil from Oxford, studying Anglo-Jewish inter-war history at St Antony's College.

In the 1980s and early 1990s he was one of a number of historians who re-examined

Anglo-Jewish history of the 19th-early 20th centuries, challenging a view which had tended to smooth out the darker side of immigration and assimilation. He edited *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (1990) and wrote *The Jewish Chronicle*



and *Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (1994).

He advised the All-Party Parliamentary War Crimes Group looking into Nazi war criminals and collaborators who had come to Britain after the war; this led to the 1991 War Crimes Act. He also advised Prime Ministers Tony Blair and David Cameron on Holocaust education, which resulted in his being awarded the OBE in 2005, and advised the Imperial War Museum on their permanent exhibition on the Holocaust.

His *Eichmann: His Life and Crimes* (2005) was published in the USA under the title *Becoming Eichmann: Rethinking the Life, Crimes, and Trial of a 'Desk Murderer'*.

Cesarani held positions at the University of Leeds, Queen Mary University of London, and the Wiener Library, where he was Director

for two periods in the 1990s. He was Professor of Modern Jewish History at the University of Southampton from 2000 to 2004 and Research Professor in History at Royal Holloway, University of London, from 2004 until his death.

## CORRECTION

**In the obituary of Eva Weill in our November issue, her date of birth should have been given as 24 December 1914. We apologise to her family and friends for this error.**

At the time of his death he had just completed work on two further books: *Disraeli: The Novel Politician* and an account of the events leading up to the Holocaust, which is due to be published shortly under the title *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews 1933-1949*.

Cesarani also became known as a broadcaster and journalist, regularly speaking and writing on the Holocaust, Israel and anti-Semitism. In addition, he advised on many programmes, including the award-winning documentary feature film *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (2000).

He is survived by his wife Dawn and children Daniel and Hannah.



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### Life goes on

It always looks worse from the outside than the actual situation on the ground. Of course, wherever and whenever violent attacks occur there is mayhem, often with tragic consequences, but life in Israel goes on pretty much as normal everywhere else, though there is a noticeably greater police and military presence.

Walking through the centre of modern Jerusalem the other day the only remarkable feature was the lack of anything remarkable. People were sitting in outdoor cafes enjoying the sunshine and the delicacies on offer. Tourists were enjoying ice creams as they strolled along the pedestrian mall, trying to decide which souvenirs to buy. Shops seemed to be doing good business and it wasn't always easy to find an attendant to take one's money.

The question is who gains from stirring up these attacks? The perpetrators are almost invariably shot and killed. The physical damage they inflict is not always as lethal as they had hoped and the resulting security clampdown and destruction of family homes are scarcely beneficial to their community.

It would seem that those who suffer the most are the shopkeepers and stallholders of the Old City as few Israelis are prepared to venture there today and tourists are less inclined to frequent the narrow alleys and streets. There are enough attractions and ancient sites in modern Jerusalem to keep any tourist busy for days on end.

What has been achieved, however, is a reinforcement of intransigence on the part of Israelis who might previously have been inclined to cede parts of Jerusalem and the Territories to Palestinian control. What hope is there for peaceful coexistence if murderous violence is apt to erupt whenever one Palestinian agency or another decides to incite its youngsters to take up knives and stab Jews whenever and wherever they can?

It's no use telling us that 'they just want their own country,' as I heard when I was in London a few years ago. Is that why they did their utmost to destroy Israel in 1948, 1967 and 1973? Is that why rockets have been fired at Israel from Gaza ever since Israeli troops pulled out of the Strip and handed it over, lock stock and barrel, to the Palestinians? Why did they not seize the opportunity to create a flourishing state of

their own instead of destroying everything in sight and launching murderous attacks on their neighbours? It might be worth recalling that in 1929, long before Israel's establishment, the Muslim residents of Hebron rioted and killed Jews indiscriminately, completely annihilating the Jewish population of the town.

Yes, they have succeeded in creating an atmosphere of enmity and possibly even fear, but that too shall pass. Israel has experienced similar outbreaks of hostility from time to time and eventually these have abated, whether as a result of harshly repressive measures or through an effort to engage in dialogue with the other side.

While Israel's Messianic Zionists are doing their utmost to arouse feelings of anger among Muslims by organising demonstrative outings to the Temple Mount there are pinpricks of light here and there where Palestinians and Israelis stand side by side and refuse to be drawn into the senseless cycle of aggression and enmity.

The sad fact remains, however, that the forces of reason – those segments of Israel's Jewish population who once thought that coexistence alongside a Palestinian state was possible – are diminishing daily as they are confronted by the all-pervasive intransigence. Given the current atmosphere on both sides, there does not seem to be much light at the end of the tunnel. But then again, life goes on and is sometimes full of surprises.

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

particular the BBC, is that Israel is guilty of the most horrendous institutional crimes against the Palestinians, that she is a pariah state, and that she fully deserves the BDS campaign to ostracise and weaken her. The picture is one of hatred against a small country trying to defend itself.

Virtually the entire Middle East is aflame with rival hatreds yet all eyes are focused on the alleged crimes of Israel. I would ask Jenny Manson to say in which Middle Eastern country apart from Israel she would be able to practise her religion in peace and security if she were a Muslim. And I would invite her to agree that while criticism of Israel's actions is always proper, there is a red line beyond which criticism should not go and that membership of organisations devoted to

the delegitimisation of Israel, such as Jews for Justice for the Palestinians (and even J Street), crosses that line.

*Lionel Blumenthal, London NW11*

#### THE GHOST OF ADAMSON ROAD

Sir – Further to George Vulkan's letter about Adamson Road (October), I believe I can add some facts.

My grandmother was the cousin of Mrs Berta Pick, who was a partner with Mrs Sachs from around 1933 to 1965 (I believe this was the date when she died). They owned 2, 4, 5 and 7 Adamson Road and a further house up the road for staff.

Berta and Dr Pick arrived around 1933 from Germany, where they had been running a sanatorium. In 1939-40 my

grandfather (cousin-in-law to Berta), having left Berlin, worked in the boarding house doing small jobs until he and my grandmother emigrated to the USA in 1940.

In the late 1950s my father also worked for them during the weekends to make ends meet, and in around 1957-60 I too used to go at weekends to help in the kitchen. I remember very clearly the afternoon bridge parties when I would serve coffee and cakes. The two chefs, Heinz and Gisela, were excellent. They certainly instilled in me a love of cooking, which I still have today.

If anyone else remembers these times, I would love to hear from them.

*(Mrs) Irene Goodman (née Segal),  
London W9*

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