

The Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain and the Holocaust

By the outbreak of war in September 1939, some 60,000 Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia had fled to Britain. These refugees are of particular importance when it comes to investigating what was known in Britain about the Nazi persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust, and what those who had information about these subjects were able truly to comprehend. For the Jewish refugees were the only group in Britain to have lived under the Nazis, to have had direct experience of Nazi persecution, and to have acquired – painfully – some idea of what the Nazis were capable of, especially in their treatment of Jews.

The Jewish refugees from Hitler were thus uniquely well placed to grasp what might be taking place in Nazi-controlled Europe, to comprehend the reality of what we now call the Holocaust, and to inhabit what the French camp survivor David Rousset called ‘l’univers concentrationnaire’, a universe that most people found impossible to access. To ascertain how much that group of refugees knew, and how much they comprehended, about the Holocaust, I have researched the circulars that the AJR, the principal organisation representing the Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain, distributed to its members during the war. These circulars, the forerunners of our Journal, provide a unique insight into what the acknowledged representative organisation of the Jews from Central Europe in Britain knew, and did not know, about the Holocaust.

The Jews from Germany and Austria in Britain were, of course, aware that persecution on a massive scale was being visited on the Jews of occupied Europe. But a generalised awareness of Nazi atrocities was very different from a proper understanding of the systematic policy of mass killings on an industrial scale that was the reality of the Holocaust. For throughout the war, and even beyond, the circulars maintained the hope that

substantial numbers of survivors would emerge from occupied Europe. In June 1943, the AJR appealed for large numbers of its younger members to volunteer for training for post-war relief work so that they could participate in the ‘sacred duty’ of rehabilitating the survivors of Nazi rule. The expectation was plainly that considerable numbers of volunteers would be needed to cope with the liberated

concentrated not on the vast extent of the mass killings but on the relief and rehabilitation of the survivors: ‘The revelations of the horror camps, in which were imprisoned so many Jews, have shocked humanity. All people of goodwill will wish to succour those who have been so maltreated. It is hoped it may be possible to make arrangements whereby the relatives of those suffering people may be reunited with their own folk in this country, and that they may be able to make a new start either in this land or in some part of the Empire.’ As

a commentary on the consequences of the Holocaust, this must strike us as remarkably understated, given that, for all its pathos, it shied away from the mass extermination of the Jews of Europe.

From June 1943, the circulars carried information about the camps, under the heading ‘Jews on the Continent’. At first, information about the Nazi camps was both sparse and vague: it came mainly from Theresienstadt, where conditions were alleged to be tolerable – this was, we now know, largely a Nazi fiction – and from Holland, from where news of the deportation of Jews had reached Britain. Otherwise, the more detailed reports related to Jews who had managed to reach neutral countries, or were in camps in southern Italy liberated by the advancing Allies. Only in August 1944 did substantial reports about the Nazi camps begin to appear, by which time most of the extermination camps had either ceased to function, had been liberated by the Red Army, or, in the case of Auschwitz, was to stop the gassing of Jews within three months.

The front page of the circular of August 1944 was headlined ‘Towards Jewish Freedom’ and it dealt with the fate of the Jews of Budapest, but in an unexpected way: ‘An inconspicuous news item in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency of May 22nd related that in the ghetto of the largest

The juxtaposition of the report from Birkenau with that from the Upper Bavarian internment camps is striking, even jarring, to us: it illuminates vividly the gulf between our era, where the Holocaust forms part of the historical heritage, and the mental world of an earlier era still innocent of the true import of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Jews: ‘there cannot be too many trained helpers willing to undertake hardship and privations for the sake of those who are now going through suffering and despair and who will need all the assistance we can give them once the war is won’ (pp. 7f).

The AJR also plainly expected that after the war substantial numbers of refugees would be reunited with family members trapped in Europe. That purpose would be served by the Transmire index of addresses of refugees abroad that the AJR had compiled: ‘Such a register would be at the disposal of all those Jews on the Continent who after liberation of a territory from Nazi rule will be anxious to find their relatives in this country. By collecting these addresses and keeping the register up to date we hope to contribute substantially to the re-union of families after the war’ (December 1943, p. 2).

Even in June 1945, after the end of the war, the front page of the circular

The Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain and the Holocaust *continued*

Budapest suburb not more than two square metres of space had been assigned to each person.' This news was given far greater prominence than the deportation of the Jews of Hungary, though the circular reported, briefly and on an inside page, on the halting of those deportations by the Horthy government in July 1944, indicating that the writer of the circulars knew about the fact of the deportations, but did not – or could not – grasp their true significance. This is one of the clearest instances demonstrating the gulf between knowing about the deportations and comprehending what that knowledge meant.

The circular of August 1944 could throw little light on the fate of Jews in Nazi camps in Poland, where it admitted its almost total ignorance of developments, pleading that 'tremendous difficulties stand in the way of finding out anything in territories that have been a theatre of war for five years.' One report, however, stands out from all the others. It was headlined 'Birkenau' and read as follows: 'Parcels to Birkenau in Upper Silesia may still be sent if a person is known to have been sent there. We are aware of the contradictory rumours that have recently been spread about Birkenau, but it has proved impossible to get reliable information at the present moment.' This was the first reference to the Auschwitz complex in the circulars. Birkenau was, of course, Auschwitz II, the extermination centre itself, and one of the last places on earth to which relief parcels might penetrate.

In contrast to the brief seven lines devoted to Birkenau, 21 lines were devoted to two camps in Upper Bavaria, Ilag VII Z, Tittmoning, and Ilag VII H, Laufen, establishments that would usually hardly merit a footnote in a history of the Holocaust. Camps called Ilag were civilian

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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.

HOLOCAUST GENERATIONS CONFERENCE

Sunday 18 January 2015

The inaugural Holocaust Generations Conference will be held in central London on Sunday 18 January 2015.

The Conference aims to bring together First, Second and Third Generations of Holocaust survivors and refugees. There will also be an announcement of the findings of an Institute of Education survey of pupils' attitudes towards Holocaust education in schools.

The Conference will aim to promote community, networking and learning. Among major themes will be history, psychology, culture and legacy.

For further information, please visit www.holocaustgenerationsconference.org or email conference@ajr.org.uk

internment camps where communication with the inmates was possible and from where internees, including Jews, were released in exchange for Germans held in Allied countries. These reports in the circulars were, of course, reliant on whatever information filtered through to the person who wrote them; if they were inaccurate or incomplete, that is only to be expected under the circumstances. But the juxtaposition of the report from Birkenau with that from the Upper Bavarian internment camps is nevertheless striking, even jarring, to us: it illuminates vividly the gulf between our era, where the Holocaust forms part of the historical heritage, and the mental world of an earlier era still innocent of the true import of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The remaining circulars, which continued until October 1945, contained little more detailed information from the camps in the East. The last reference to Auschwitz appeared in October 1945, with a brief and not altogether accurate explanation for this absence of information: 'we have to make it clear that Auschwitz was not a camp where people were supposed to stay for any length of time, but a distribution centre from which people were sent to working parties or to death camps' (p. 5). That Auschwitz was itself a death camp of almost unimaginable dimensions seems to have been beyond the writer's mental grasp.

My purpose has not been to ask or answer questions about who had what factual information about the Holocaust during the period of its implementation, but rather to ask an anterior question: what would people in Britain, in this

KEEP THE MEMORY ALIVE

Stephen Fry Launches Memory Makers Project for Holocaust Memorial Day 2015

Stephen Fry has joined a group of British artists and Holocaust and genocide survivors in launching an arts project in which survivors' stories will be interpreted and explored through writing, poetry, ceramics, film, illustration and collage.

The Memory Makers project pairs nine artists with survivors of the Holocaust and genocide living in the UK to hear their remarkable life stories before creating a work of art that explores the horrors and consequences of the atrocities.

Stephen Fry met 89-year-old Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, a cellist and surviving member of the Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz. He is working on a written response to the memories she shared with him at her home in London.

To find out more about the survivors and artists, visit www.keepthememoryalive.hmd.org.uk where the artworks will be revealed ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2015.



AJR ANNUAL TRIP JOIN US THIS YEAR IN SCOTLAND 17-21 May 2015

Accompanied travel by train from London to Glasgow, plus four nights' accommodation in Glasgow. We will also help arrange travel from other parts of England to Glasgow.

Highlights of the trip will include a day in Edinburgh with a visit to The Royal Yacht Britannia and the new Parliament building.

Our days in Glasgow will include Kelvingrove Museum; a guided tour of Pollok House; a visit to a whisky distillery; a boat trip on Loch Lomond; and visits to Luss Conservation Village, Keeble Palace, The Burrell Collection, The Botanical Gardens and many other Scottish delights.

All meals and travel included. Places are limited. For a full information pack and booking form, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk

case the Jewish refugees from Hitler, have made of that information? That question addresses the mental or psychological world of the recipients of the information and it relates not to what they knew but to what they were able, or willing, to comprehend.

Anthony Grenville

This article is adapted from a paper given at a conference at Staffordshire University on 30 November 2014, on the occasion of the plenary meeting of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in Manchester.

☞ *Mir zaynen do* – We're still here! ☞

OPENING OF THE POLIN MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS

M*ir zaynen do* – 'We're still here!' – words of defiance from a Polish-Jewish partisan song. The words were spoken by Piotr Wiślicki, the Chairman of the Museum Council, at the opening of the core exhibition of the Polin History of Polish Jews in Warsaw last October. The Museum, which stands on the historic site of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, had been open since April 2013 and had already drawn over 400,000 visitors thanks in part to its eye-catching design.

We were privileged to receive invitations for the official opening and decided to fund the trip ourselves. As we approached the site on the inauguration day, we were struck by the size and awesome appearance of the building.

In the queue to enter the Museum the atmosphere was such that people from all corners of the world were asking each other why they were there. We happened upon a Polish woman with her mother and a man from Israel. It transpired that her mother and father, Sabina and Aleksandr Smocak, had hidden this man's father, Laibo Basiel, for two years.

A military fanfare announced that the Presidents of Israel and Poland had arrived. The eternal flame was burning beside the memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto as the speakers walked up to the podium. The crowd was highly emotional. Huge screens enabled all to see the transcripts of the speeches.

First to speak was the President of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski. He referred to the Hebrew word *Polin*, meaning both Poland and 'Rest here' – the story Jews related about how and why they came to Poland and stayed there.

The following speaker was Israel's newly elected President, Reuven Rivlin. He spoke movingly of the suffering of the Jews of Poland: '[This building] is not a museum of the Holocaust,' he declared, 'it is a museum of life.'

President Rivlin was followed by Museum Council Chairman Piotr Wiślicki. It was he who quoted *Mir zaynen do* in what was for us the most evocative speech of the ceremony.

The Mayor of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, and the Minister of Culture, Małgorzata Omilanowska, said how proud they were that the Museum, which memorialised 1,000 years of Polish-Jewish life, had finally come to fruition.

Quite by chance, on approaching a security guard to ask directions for

a scheduled Jewish walking tour, we expressed our sadness at not being able to enter the Museum. A miracle occurred! As if out of thin air the security guard offered us two tickets: 'You can have these – my friends can't



A replica of the ceiling of Gwoździec's 18th-century synagogue, a key exhibit in Warsaw's new Museum of Polish Jewry

go tomorrow.' *Beshert* – it is fated

One of the sites we saw on the Jewish walking tour was a well in the centre of Warsaw – the oldest building still in existence. The huge MetLife building that towers over the old city was built on the site of the original Great Synagogue, burnt down by the Nazis as a 'leaving gift' knowing they had lost the war. Two floors in that building are now occupied by the Jewish Community. The building faces what was the Ghetto.

There are numerous monuments to heroes of the Uprising, including Janusz Korczak, the director of an orphanage in Warsaw who stayed with the children when the institution was sent from the Ghetto to Treblinka extermination camp, and a monument listing almost every first name of a Jewish person lost from Warsaw.

That cold crisp night there was a free concert, open to the public. Huge screens were erected around the grounds and performances took place on three stages. There was an incredible performance by the band Ancestral Groove, with David Krakauer, the brilliant clarinetist renowned for his

input into the films *Sophie's Choice*, *The Pianist* and *Life is Beautiful*. David dedicated his beautiful music to his grandfather from Łódź and his great-grandparents.

Day two dawns – another beautiful blue sky. We were searching for breakfast but within minutes we had struck up a conversation with South African and Canadian Jews there for the Museum opening. John Rubin's film *Raise the Roof* premiered that afternoon. With *chutzpah* we secured two entries!

You are greeted on arrival at the Museum by the wooden structure of the reconstructed Gwoździec synagogue roof dating back to 1731. Its significance became apparent when we viewed an inspired

documentary on Rick and Laura Brown's vision: they rebuilt the wooden structure with the help of the Timber Frame Guild Craftsmen. No modern tools were involved. Four hundred student volunteers from around the world painstakingly recreated the biblical images.

The Ghetto exhibition and subsequent Holocaust exhibitions have been sensitively arranged and you are transported into that era, viewing footage, testaments and images that are unimaginable. This exhibition will be a powerful educational tool for future generations and to all who deny the Holocaust.

Mir zaynen do seems the most appropriate way of saying thank you to the visionaries who succeeded in making the dream of a museum become reality. It was an honour to have been present at its inauguration.

Hazel Beiny and Esther Rinkoff

Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Institute of Modern Languages Research

14 January 2015, 6.00 pm

Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, WC1

Professor Charmian Brinson will speak on

“‘Very Much a Family Affair’:
The Kuczynski Family and
British Intelligence’

BENTLEY PRIORY MUSEUM

MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2015

1.30 pm

Guided Tour
Followed by Tea



Bentley Priory Museum tells the fascinating story of the beautiful Grade II* listed country house, focusing on its role as Headquarters Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain.

You will be told the story of 'The One' – Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding; 'The Few', who took to the air to defend our skies; and 'The Many', without whose tireless work on the ground victory would not have been possible.

For further details, please contact
Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070
or at susan@ajr.org.uk

'THE LAST TRAIN TO TOMORROW'

In our December issue, we gave an account of the London premiere of *The Last Train to Tomorrow* and a selection of photos of this historic occasion. Here we present a selection of reactions to a remarkable concert.

REACTIONS TO A HISTORIC EVENT

The children's opera *The Last Train to Tomorrow* is an immensely evocative piece. I suspect there wasn't a dry eye in the audience. But, much more than the wonderful experience of being there at this London premiere, it is so clearly a tremendously important educational tool. Such a magnificent premiere surely means it will be staged many times more and, hopefully, tour Britain and other countries. *The Last Train to Tomorrow* will certainly contribute to keeping Holocaust education going long after the survivors have all left this world.

Ruth Barnett

Sir – I was going to email you to congratulate you on a most unbelievable event, but I was too busy telling everyone how fantastic the premiere was. Congratulations to all at AJR.

Michael Blake

The great iron-girdered shed of the Roundhouse, once a turning point for trains, came into its own as the perfect venue for the London premiere of a work that formed the grand finale to commemorations by the Association of Jewish Refugees of the 75th anniversary of the start of the Second World War and the creation of the Kindertransport.

... And, though I could have wished for a touch more grit, grime and sheer musical challenge in the score, the plain-speaking simplicity and integrity of [Carl] Davis's writing – for the most part in folksy-Broadway mode – won me over ...

Hilary Finch, *The Times*

It was extraordinary how Carl conveyed the terror and bewilderment of the *Kinder* at different points of their journey and the normality of their lives before the rise to power of the Nazis. I found one of the most shocking episodes the arrival of the *Kinder* in the Netherlands, where they were so traumatised that they were unable to react to the kind Dutch people who boarded the train.

I haven't had a proper conversation with HRH since the event but, when I saw him off from the Roundhouse, he was clearly similarly moved.

I could not have hoped for a more special evening as my first engagement in attendance on HRH.

Jamie Bowden

Sir – Thank you for a great performance. I will remember it forever. I really liked listening to Louisa playing the violin and seeing the actors singing in the song cycle.

I felt sorry for the people who were



Given the popularity of the souvenir brochure, the AJR is to issue a re-print. If you would like a copy please send a cheque for £5 to the AJR, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL.

If you wish to purchase a CD please visit www.carldaviscollection.com or www.amazon.co.uk/Last-Train-Tomorrow-Davis-Collection/dp/B00N83U810

evacuated because they had to leave all their families behind.

We are so lucky that we live in a time where we are with our families and we don't need to leave them. I hope this will never change.

Alexandra Briess (aged 10)

My son and his wife and two daughters (nine and ten) were much moved by the song cycle especially.

I had tears in my eyes when I heard the *Kde domov můj* Czech anthem, which I remember singing as a child in Olomouc.

Again, many thanks for an inspiring afternoon ... and what an amazing violinist is young Louisa Staples!

Peter Briess

During the interval, Charles met some of the 'Kinder' children at The Roundhouse – which was formerly a turning point for trains and is located near Swiss Cottage, where many of the refugees settled. He asked them about their stories and pointed out that his friend Nicholas Soames attended last week's ceremony in Prague when Sir Nicholas Winton was honoured by the Czech president for saving 669 children from the Nazis.

Among those given refuge in the UK was Rolf Penzias, now 92, who said: 'I said thank you to the Prince for honouring us with his presence again. He said 'I'm honoured'. He is personally very interested in the *Kinder* and re-arranged his diary to join us. It means a lot to us.'

Jewish News

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the families who took these children in at the time! Without them, there would have been no Kindertransport!!

Bettina Cohn

I am one of the ex-KT immigrants who attended the remarkable session at the Roundhouse. I found the whole occasion incredibly moving.

My parents were murdered in Auschwitz in the summer of 1942, at a time when it looked as if Hitler would win the war and end all European Jewish life. My greatest regret is that they did not know that their six children would survive in Argentina, the USA and northern and southern England, and in hiding in central and south-west France.

I am particularly grateful to the younger generations for their patience and tolerance and increasing understanding of what their forebears had to face.

Ruth David

Prince Charles, who attended the theatre in Chalk Farm just hours after paying tribute to fallen armed forces personnel at the Cenotaph, joined dozens of those saved by the Kindertransport mission to watch *The Last Train to Tomorrow*.

The sold-out show retraced the journey of some 10,000 children aged as young as three who fled Nazi Germany without their parents in 1939 to find refuge in Britain.

Many, now in their 80s and 90s, never saw their parents again.

Bob Kirk, 89, who fled Hannover on the Kindertransport aged 13, was taken in by a foster family living in Hampstead Garden Suburb. He said:

'It was such an exciting and emotional afternoon.

'The children performed wonderfully and the wording really did reflect the journey we took.

'What I found particularly striking was the description of the German border police coming onto the train. I've never heard it expressed so well.

'It was great to see Prince Charles there as well. He's been a great supporter.'

Paul Wright,

Hampstead and Highgate Express

Outstanding. Completely poignant and memorable. Everything so well organised.

Helen Grunberg and Sue Arnold

Absolutely brilliant, and many congratulations on the organisation of this very important and moving event.

Peter Hallgarten

Sir – I wanted to thank you immensely for the memorable event yesterday. I came with my husband, who is himself the child of a survivor and he also felt that it was a fantastic and moving event.

Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko, Deputy Director, Council of Christians and Jews

I attended yesterday's event with my mother and uncle, both *Kinder*. It was educational yet personal. I now have a greater understanding of what they experienced and for that alone I am grateful.

Janet Jacobs

It was wonderful!! Many outstanding moments: the violinist, the children, Prince Charles. The whole atmosphere was amazing. We were a party of ten – three generations – and everyone was touched and moved. Brilliant idea to have the words on the screen. Great credit to Carl Davis. Quite inspirational words and music.

Ruth Jacobs

Sir – A truly memorable afternoon. Heartwarming, uplifting, sad and joyful.

Michael Joseph, Joseph's Bookstore Cafe Also

Sir – Many, many, many congratulations on yesterday's AJR concert at the Roundhouse.

Carl Davis's *The Last Train to Tomorrow* is so incredibly poignant and I truly hope it will become a staple in schools. The afternoon made me feel even more grateful for Mummy, her parents and for this country letting them in and, of course, all the aid and assistance from the AJR. Mummy would have been so proud of you.

Doona Labi

Truly a memorable occasion. We know that these events do not just happen. Planning goes on for months ahead. A wonderful afternoon from start to finish.

Lia and Philip Lesser

Sir – Just to tell you how much we enjoyed the concert yesterday afternoon. My daughter was especially excited to see the VIP guest!! We were seated just below him! The concert conveyed so many emotions.

Marion Manheimer

Sir – It was a privilege to be present at yesterday's performance of *The Last Train to Tomorrow*. Having worked in education, it strikes me there is an abundance of cross-curricular links schools could consider when using the piece to support learning. As well as the historical component, there is also literacy, music and tons of geography links.

Clive Martin, Producer, 'Hollow Dog', a film about Maurice Blik

The performance was stunning and a truly fitting tribute to the *Kinder*, their families who bravely let them go, and the British people who invited them in. Bravo.

Leslie Michaels

I am a Christian Englishwoman in her mid-70s. With a lump in my throat, I followed every word from the arena of that emotive building, the Roundhouse. All the speeches were so beautifully delivered and having His Royal Highness there was a bonus – even if we didn't actually see him!

Denise Moll, West Byfleet, Surrey

Sir – Congratulations on the outstanding Roundhouse performance! It could not have been better orchestrated. Perhaps something should have been said about Bertha Leverton as linking the Kindertransport children together in the 1980s was also very important. The afternoon was a big success.

Clemens Nathan

Sir – A big thank you to the AJR team who worked so hard to arrange the premiere of *The Last Train to Tomorrow*. My sincere thanks to all the cast of this first-class production. As an ex-Kindertransport child, I was very moved, even though I was one of the lucky ones who saw my parents again.

Dorli Neale

Many thanks to all at the AJR who, I am sure, worked very hard to make this such a great success.

Eric Newman

THE Prince of Wales paid a visit to the Roundhouse in Camden Town this weekend to watch a concert which honoured the Kindertransport.

The special showing of *The Last Train to Tomorrow*, composed by Carl Davis and arranged by the Association of Jewish Refugees, coincided with the anniversary of Kristallnacht. Also known as the *Night of Broken Glass*, it referred to the wave of anti-Jewish attacks in Germany, Austria and other areas occupied by Nazi forces, on November 9 and 10 in 1938.

The choral performance followed the journey of children making their way to London's Liverpool Street to start a new life.

Alina Polianskaya, Camden New Journal

Our congratulations to everyone involved in producing this wonderful celebration of, and tribute to, the children and families affected by this extraordinary journey.

I was moved to tears as the photos projected on the screen gave real faces to the children's beautiful singing and it was wonderful to have the opportunity to hear the whole work performed without worrying about whether I was giving the right conducting cues at the right time! The staging was brilliantly done and the haunting melodies carried beautifully to the back of the room.

Rebecca Rutzou, Music Teacher, Akiva School

Yesterday's performance of *The Last Train to Tomorrow* proved an inspirational experience.

It occurred to Judith Thwaites and myself that the 'show' would make wonderful material to use in the Holocaust Memorial Workshops we organise every January and to which several local schools send their children. Owing to the advanced age of us survivors, we are very short of speakers. So, if you know of anyone out there who would be willing to speak to our children of their experiences, we would be most grateful. The synagogues in question are the Kingston Liberal and Kingston Orthodox Synagogues.

Bronia Snow

Congratulations to the whole team for all your hard work in organising and producing yesterday's dignified and successful event. In particular, thank you for inviting my mother Margot to the interval reception, which she greatly appreciated.

Philip with Margot Spiers

Just want to let you know that we thought the concert was beyond every expectation. We will never forget having been lucky enough not just to be there but to have bought brilliant tickets.

Gillian Stellman

Yesterday was one of the most emotionally charged days I can remember. My youngest child, Gideon, is a member of the FCMG and was lucky enough to be one of the actors.

You cannot overestimate the joy the Holocaust survivors and *Kinder* I have spoken to over the years feel for children – the redemption, the hope, the relief that their journey was not in vain. Yesterday was testimony to that and I wanted you to know that there were people there who will never forget that performance and it will be with them, somewhere, forever.

Gideon said that being part of it was what 'life is about'. If his singing touched the people who had experienced the Kindertransport, then that is something he will always be privileged to have done.

Gillian Stern

Prince Charles marked the anniversary of Kristallnacht at a special tribute concert honouring those who fled to Britain on the Kindertransport.

The heir to the throne was guest of honour at the London premiere of *The Last Train to Tomorrow*, a musical re-telling of the story of the 10,000 Jewish children who found refuge from Nazi oppression.

Former *Kinder* met the prince at a reception following the performance at the Roundhouse in Camden, north London, on Sunday afternoon.

The event was organised by the Association of Jewish Refugees. Prince Charles is a long-standing supporter of the charity and last year welcomed 400 guests to Clarence House to mark the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport.

Marcus Dysch, The Jewish Chronicle

Congratulations to the AJR for putting on this really excellent concert. Six of my very large family went to this remarkable concert and were moved to tears by the whole performance. I myself did not go as I am now 93 years old and thought that it might be too nostalgic.

I arrived in June 1939, 17 years old. People like my mother, a widow and on her own, had to work very hard for the rest of her life – but we were the lucky ones who live in a country like Britain, which has given us a new life. Hitler was very wrong – he could not kill all the Jews!

Ruth Young



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

PADDINGTON BEAR – AND THE KINDERTRANSPORT

Sir – AJR members who have seen this new film will have noted with interest that the character of the antiques dealer Mr Gruber, played by Jim Broadbent, explains that he was once a refugee from Hungary and a Kindertransport child – hence his friendliness towards the newcomer Paddington Bear.

Michael Bond, author of the Paddington books, has said he was inspired by the sight of evacuee children passing through Reading Station from London. He claimed he based the character of Mr Gruber on his own literary agent, Harvey Unna, who fled Germany after someone told him they had seen his name on a list. Unna arrived in London with just £10 in his pocket.

What is less explicit is that Paddington Bear himself is clearly intended to represent a Kindertransport child. Following a catastrophic situation that has developed in his faraway homeland, Paddington has to be sent away alone from his friends and family. He arrives in England following a journey by boat and by train. He is carrying in his hand an old and worn suitcase containing his worldly possessions and has a label around his neck saying 'Please Look After This Bear' – the exact experience of the real Kindertransport children. He is wearing unfashionable clothes, in this case a government surplus duffel coat. He is met at the station by the Browns, his new 'parents'. He has arrived in a grim and rainy London, disappointed that people don't say hello or wear hats like he does. This will all strike a chord with many AJR members.

The rest of the film shows his trials and tribulations as an outsider and an innocent as he tries to adjust to the British way of doing things. Nicole Kidman plays the very unsympathetic Millicent, whom many critics have assumed to have UKIP-like tendencies – but maybe extreme right-wing might be a better description.



So this becomes a second extremely popular computer-generated film for adults and children based on events from the Holocaust. The first? *Ratatouille*, of course. *Ratatouille* a Holocaust film, I hear you ask? Of course. The despised community of rats have to eke out a living in the ghettos of the gutters and sewers, having their own diets, customs and way of living and invisible to the main population. Watch it and see. Were not the Jews portrayed as rats in the Nazi propaganda films?

David Wirth, London SE21

KINDERTRANSPORT – ANOTHER SIDE TO THE STORY

Sir – The *AJR Journal* tells me that the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Kindertransport are finished – well, they have had a good run, especially by the great and the good.

Undoubtedly many of our lives were saved by coming to this country, but there is another side to the story.

Starting with Kristallnacht, where I was an eyewitness to the burning of the synagogue, followed a few weeks later by the Kindertransport, and, on leaving, seeing my parents for the last time.

Arrival in London, then a city clothed in the smoke of thousands of chimneys and fog. Accommodation in London in a converted house as a hostel ruled by a strictly orthodox Jewish regime with six or seven boys to a room.

Education, despite the promises (in writing to our parents), descended from a gymnasium to a working-class slum school.

As the war approached we were evacuated to an unknown destination and billeted with non-Jews who served bacon for breakfast.

All the time we received the occasional Red Cross letter consisting of 25 words and that stopped in 1941 until the end of 1945, when I received a telegram that my family had been murdered

What was there to celebrate – being a *de facto* orphan since the age of 12?

Ernest G. Kolman, Greenford, Middx

RETURN TO WIESBADEN

Sir – My sister and I came over on the Kindertransport in 1939. I arrived in July, she a little earlier. My dear mother, suffering from a prolonged illness, had to be hospitalised in Frankfurt am Main as there was no place for her condition in Wiesbaden and she sadly died in 1938.

It was a painful decision for my father to allow his two girls to leave him and go to England, but he was aware this was in our best interest. At the same time, he sent a loving and moving letter to me laying out in great detail many family facts, dates and particulars I might require in the future – and indeed that letter gave me all the background I eventually needed to locate my former family.

My beloved father, Leon Golomb, was deported to Poland and I eventually learned that he died in one of the many concentration camps there.

In April 2014, accompanied by my son, two nephews and a niece, I went back to my home town of Wiesbaden for the inauguration of a *Stolperstein* in memory of my dear father.

In a moving ceremony, attended by the local mayor, I was very happily surprised to meet Helga Dumican, who told me that as a little girl, she had lived opposite me and had always wanted to meet the playful child across the road. I had no recollection of Helga but I was of course delighted to make her acquaintance.

My family and I were given almost a royal welcome in Wiesbaden and, seeing the Leon Golomb *Stolperstein* in situ gave my heart a great lift and I felt my dear father had been returned to his family home.

Hella Pearlman, Ilford

MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE?

Sir – Irene Messinger's article in the November issue of the *AJR Journal* reminded me of the story of Kaethe Goldring, one of my mother's friends.

Born Jewish but baptised, Kaethe came up with an imaginative strategy to get out of pre-war Nazi Germany. She wrote letters to a number of people with the surname Goldring that she found in the UK telephone directories and asked if they would sponsor her to seek asylum in England.

She received a response from Edgar Goldring, a widowed estate agent in London who took the risk of sponsoring his unknown namesake for her emigration to England. Whether marriage was part of the arrangement I do not know. But they did marry and were married for many years until Edgar died.

They lived in a flat in Lancaster Grove, London NW3, where we visited them many times.

Edgar was keen on horse racing and they regularly went to the races and often my mother was invited to join them.

Kaethe Goldring did not have to change her name except that Kaethe became Katie.

Kaethe died quite a few years ago and they had no children. So I have been unable to substantiate this story. But from my own personal contact with the Goldrings in my youth, I am sure that the basic facts are correct.

Whether it was a marriage of convenience or an act of rescue that turned into a marriage I do not know. But I do know that Edgar Goldring's act of befriending a stranger on the strength of a letter out of the blue almost certainly saved her life.

I wonder if this is an isolated story or whether others adopted a similar strategy and whether it was equally successful.

Michael Heppner, London N21

AWARD TO SIR NICHOLAS 'A HOLLOW PR STUNT'

Sir – No one needs to be impressed by the recent honour given to Sir Nicholas Winton by the President of the Czech Republic, richly deserved though it is. This PR manoeuvre does not at all represent genuine benevolence and good will on the part of the Czech Government.

In the restitution of property their position has been nothing short of obstructive, certainly in my family's experience. At the start of our claim some ten or twelve years ago, our grandfather's property was in the possession of the Communist Party. A court hearing and appeal for recovery were both unsuccessful and we have heard from more than one Czech lawyer that the most that can be expected in such cases is a small amount of monetary compensation in no way approaching the real value of the property.

The Czech Government's honour to Sir Nicholas, coming from where it does, should be seen as the hollow PR stunt that it is.

G. J. Tyrrell, London N3

PLAYING THE DRUMS

Sir – In response to the letter by Professor Michael Streat (November), my father, Alfred Neustadt, who passed away in December 1981, was a drummer. He was on the Isle of Man, at Kitchener Camp, and in the Pioneer Corps in Ilfracombe. He played in the band at Kitchener Camp and Pioneer Corps.

In fact, there was a programme on TV a few years ago about Kitchener Camp and to my amazement they showed the band and my father sitting behind his drum

kit. Although I was not born until 1943 my mother Hanna still remembers little Michael Strietzel from Ilfracombe. As a child I was taken to Bertram Mills Circus every year to see Coco the Clown and he gave me a book signed by himself.

In later years, my father often played in the same band as Max and Georg Strietzel and I remember socialising with both families.

In answer to Fritz Lustig, Herbert Kruh, who died in January 1980, and my father played together for many, many years, usually on Saturday nights. We also socialised but eventually lost contact with his wife Yetta.

I am surprised that nobody has mentioned the Ex-Serviceman's Club in Circus Road, where all the refugees used to meet on Sunday mornings. I remember going with my father every week. Another memory I have is of the Saturday night dances they had where my father also played the drums.

Eve Bryer, Stanmore, Middx

A CORRECTION

Sir – May I make a correction to Frank Bright's letter in your December issue? It concerns Irma Löwenberg. She, in fact, came from Düsseldorf, where her husband had been a skin specialist and a close friend of my father Siegfried Ursell, a paediatrician.

Irma began teaching the children of Jewish friends prior to emigration. She taught me English, although she also taught French and Italian. I kept in touch with her until she died, while she was living in London. Her daughter Thea, a friend of mine, died over a year ago.

Mrs Ilse J. Eton (née Ursell), London NW11

'CONFESSIONS OF A GRAMMAR FREAK'

Sir – In her letter (November), Susanne Medas pointed out that German has four cases and Latin has six. During my chequered life I learned Czech and that has seven cases. So there!

Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk

FILMING NOT AT BLETCHLEY BUT AT LATIMER

Sir – As Janet Watson stated in last month's issue, the AJR visit to Latimer House was most interesting and educational. Those who took part in the visit and subsequently watched the film *The Imitation Game* about Alan Turing will have been amused to note that the filming was not at Bletchley but at Latimer House!

Edgar H. Ring, Edgware, Middx

'A DIFFERENT LETTER FROM ISRAEL'

Sir – The AJR Journal is sent to my address for my mother, Bertha Leverton, who lives with us. For all those who know her, she

is doing fine and is content here in Israel.

I was rather shocked and disgusted by last November's 'Letter from Israel' by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, who joined, and wrote very understandingly about the work of, the women of 'Machsom Watch'.

I would like to set the record straight. This is a group of ultra-fanatical women who betray Israel and stop at no means available to them. They have power as many of them are connected to politicians and people who are wealthy and to news channels etc. One of their leaders is the wife of a former prime minister.

Their aim is to weaken Israel and encourage the political aims of Palestinian Arabs, whose objective is to destroy Israel in as many ways as possible and by all means at their disposal.

Some of their methods are to stand at checkpoints and disturb Israeli soldiers whose job is to check if Palestinian workers coming into Israel are armed with knives or suicide belts. Unfortunately, there have been many successful terrorist murders committed due to soldiers being neutralised by having the Machsom women photographing them or calling our soldiers insulting names if they dare to check the 'youngsters' who are 'suffering' from bureaucratic procedures.

Your writer fails to state that these 'youngsters' kill and maim innocent Israelis and soldiers on a daily basis. The sons of the women of Machsom Watch usually do not enlist in the army or, if they do, will be what is called a *jobnik* and not a fighter.

Dorothea didn't tell you the full story.
Mirry Reich, Kedumim, Shomron, Israel

Sir – The prejudice towards 'the other' expressed in Fred Stern's letter 'The threat of Islam' (November) is the mirror image of the prejudice towards Jews expressed by anti-Semites. The violence of a few thousand jihadists in Syria, Iraq and Gaza does not represent the vast majority of Muslims.

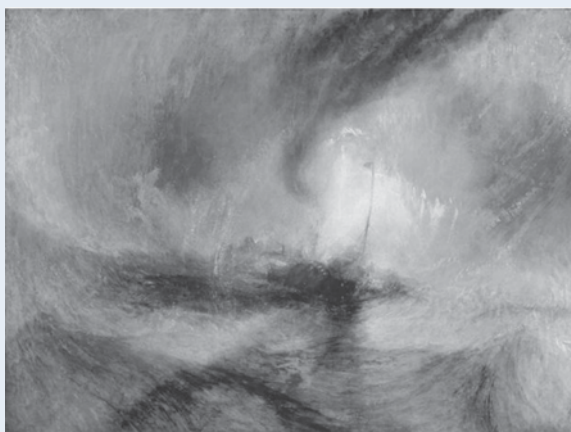
There is another point of view. While there are serious religious, ethnic and cultural differences within Islam, most of the more than two billion Muslims around the world only want to live in peace. For centuries, in many countries including Iraq and Iran, Muslims and Jews lived peacefully, tolerating each other's religion and culture. The Iranian extremists who talk of 'wiping Israel off the map' do not represent the population or even their current government. The violent jihadists claim that they fight against military and political intervention by the USA, the UK and other Western powers in Muslim countries more than against Israel. To speak of Israel – for all its military prowess – as 'the only bastion against Islamic world domination' is just *meshuggah!*

continued on page 16 ➔

ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

It is hard to reconcile Turner at **Tate Britain** with Mike Leigh's version of the unattractive, bumbling, stumbling, grunting artist in his film *Mr Turner*. In **Late Turner: Painting Set Free** (until 25 January 2015) we are treated to the mesmerising subtlety of Turner's imagination, which, towards the end of his life, grappled with the deepening mystery of all things around him. A ship or an architectural ruin becomes redundant and merely the thing that gives life to



J. M. W. Turner *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (1842)

the quick and pull of universal energy. Here is an artist who, as the first English Impressionist, had a grasp of things that almost cannot be painted because they are so swift and subtle and sensual. The Tate has wisely chosen the last 16 years of his life, from 1835, to project his new-found creativity.

The source of light in Turner's paintings doesn't come from the sun: it is not hidden in the clouds – it comes from somewhere within. Like Rembrandt, Turner has an inner luminosity not easily explained but is there within the swell of the sea and the clouds, the flow of the wind, the endless merging of sky, water and landscape – even buildings.

As someone said to me, in Turner's art the water is not wet. In Constable's paintings, so vivid, so literal, so earthbound, you can really feel the physical elements, the perfect rendering

of trees, horses, grass – and the water is wet. But Turner's work is so vaporous that you can lose yourself in his sense of the spiritual and insubstantial. The water is open, changing, a life force within the dissolution of light.

While Constable offers a literal translation of the English landscape, Turner seeks a more original and classical interpretation, in the style of Claude. As a marine painter and a superb water colourist, Turner was popular in his day with Jewish industrialists, notably the banker John Julius Angerstein, who collected Claude. Angerstein found a similar symmetry in Turner, who was admired by the Jewish financial and business worlds and the burgeoning ship-building industries in Manchester, Birmingham and Belfast. Queen Victoria, however, was less amused by him, preferring form and shape to abstraction.

Turner loved history, photography and steam engines: you can virtually smell the steam from a train emerging from a tunnel into the countryside. Figurative art was his weaker point, evident in *The Departure of the Fleet*. He liked to mythologise his landscapes, not all of which are turbulent: some harbour views have no storms and represent peace. In *War, the Exile and the Rock Limpet*, the colours are vibrant. Napoleon, painted off-centre, references war but the concept suggests Turner's exploration of states of consciousness, such as in

Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth, with buffeted ships, red sunsets, cobalt blues – all merging into a stream of consciousness.

In Mike Leigh's film, the bumbling artist does not come across as the sensitive visionary who travelled all over Europe with his sketchbook to achieve ethereal views of Venice or Lake Lucerne. In Tate Britain, he does.

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CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

Life and work of an exceptional man

SPYMASTER: THE SECRET LIFE OF KENDRICK

by Helen Fry

London: Marranos Press, 2014, 528 pp. paperback

'This book', writes Helen Fry near the end of her carefully researched account of the life and work of Thomas Kendrick, 'is just the beginning of a campaign'. It is a campaign for recognition of the lifesaving work Kendrick carried out at the British Passport Office in Vienna in 1938 when, working around the clock, he facilitated the emigration of thousands of Austrian Jews, and others in danger from National Socialism, to Britain and the British Empire. Though precise numbers are hard to come by, it is calculated that, following the Anschluss, and until compelled to leave Austria some months later, Kendrick and his staff succeeded in enabling around 175 to 200 Jews per day to leave the Third Reich. Moreover, Kendrick's case is made all the stronger by the public recognition already received by his counterpart in Berlin, Frank Foley, for his humanitarian work.

There are further similarities, too, between Kendrick and Foley, both of whom were covertly working for British intelligence while occupying a position, that of Consular Officer, that did not grant them diplomatic immunity. Whilst in Vienna, Kendrick, as one of Britain's most senior spymasters, ran a team of agents throughout Central Europe to gain information firstly on Communists and secondly on Nazi activities. It was in this shadowy world, which included such figures as Edith Tudor-Hart and Kim Philby – both later revealed as Soviet agents – that one of Kendrick's team turned out to be a double agent, leading to his arrest by the Gestapo in August 1938. Released after a few days, however, amidst much press and diplomatic interest, Kendrick was swiftly recalled to London.

If this is already a gripping story well told, Helen Fry really comes into her own in her portrayal of the next (wartime) instalment of Kendrick's life story (and one which continues to bear fairly close comparison with that of Frank Foley, incidentally). Still in the employ of British intelligence, on the outbreak of war Kendrick and a small team began to operate the 'Combined Services Interrogation Service', described by Fry as the 'biggest bugging operation ever mounted against the enemy in

British history'. The service was to be used in the interrogation of enemy prisoners of war, first at the Tower of London then, as prisoner numbers increased, at Trent Park and lastly in two further units, Latimer House and Wilton Park in Buckinghamshire. Helen Fry has already shown her mastery of this area of research in her book *The M Room: Secret Listeners Who Bugged the Nazis in WW2* (2012) and she does not disappoint here either. From the 'M room', a special room that was built into all Kendrick's prisoner of war units, sophisticated listening equipment made it possible for 'secret listeners' to plug into not only the interrogation rooms but also the private conversations of prisoners in their cells (where microphones were placed in the electric light fittings, a device that was apparently never detected).

Although in the first year of the war, relatively small numbers of German officers were captured, by the end of hostilities a staggering number of German generals and other high-ranking officers were being held in the interrogation units: 50 senior officers were captured in April 1945 alone. Interestingly, the most valuable information gleaned – on Hitler's 'secret weapons' the V1 and V2 – was not gathered from formal interrogations but from a private whispered conversation between two generals, bugged as all such conversations were. On receipt of the information, Kendrick immediately phoned the Air Ministry. Evaluating the importance of the work carried out in the interrogation units, Fry quotes one of Kendrick's colleagues: 'Had it not been for the information obtained at these centres, it could have been London and not Hiroshima which was devastated by the first atomic bomb.'

Kendrick was released from his post in November 1945 and assigned to 'special duties'. Although evidence as to their exact nature is sparse, Fry deduces that he continued to work for British intelligence, probably at MI6 headquarters, before being posted to Aldershot to join the interpreters' pool. He retired in 1948.

Thomas Kendrick died in 1972, unrewarded, in the view of some of Fry's informants for this book, for his 25 years in British intelligence. While this, presumably, can no longer be remedied, Helen Fry is still keen to make the case for Kendrick, in his Vienna years, to be recognised as a 'Righteous Gentile' at Vad Yashem (as was the case with Frank Foley). With this book, certainly, Helen Fry has done her best to publicise the life and work of an exceptional man, to whom many people have cause to feel grateful.

Charmian Brinson

A must read for students of diplomacy and international relations

WORLD ORDER: REFLECTIONS ON THE CHARACTER OF NATIONS AND THE COURSE OF HISTORY

by Henry Kissinger

Allen Lane 2014, 432 pp. hardcover

Henry Kissinger was one of the most powerful men in American politics. He was Secretary of State under Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973. His was a household name around the world.

Kissinger was in fact born on this side of the Atlantic, in Fürth, Bavaria, to Jewish parents who fled to the USA to escape Nazi persecution. The young Heinz was a pupil at the Jewish Fürth Realschule. He pays tribute to his adoptive country: 'Having spent my childhood as a member of a discriminated minority in a totalitarian system and then as an immigrant to the United States, I have experienced the liberating value of American values.'

In addition to a remarkable career advising numerous US presidents on foreign policy, Kissinger has written many books. He published this volume at the age of 91 – no mean feat!

Kissinger is preoccupied with building an international order in a world of divergent historical perspectives, violent conflict, proliferating technology and ideological extremism. He identifies what he describes as four great historical 'world orders': the European, Islamic, Chinese and American.

He is especially preoccupied with balance of power issues as well as Communist influence. Stalin, whom he describes as 'implacable and ruthless', 'considered Hitler a *sui generis* representative of the capitalist system, not an aberration from it. The capitalist states remained adversaries after Hitler's defeat no matter what their leaders said or even thought.'

As for Mao Zedong, he 'Governed with a style as remote as that of any emperor (though emperors would not have convened mass rallies), and he combined it with the practices of Lenin and Stalin.'

Kissinger played a major peace-keeping role in the Middle East – 'The chrysalis of three of the world's great religions ... Nowhere is the challenge to international order more complex.'

Exploring the role of new technology, the author stresses that smartphones now enable the populace to access information beyond the range of many intelligence agencies a generation ago and quotes the commander of US Cyber Command: 'The next war will begin in cyberspace.'

This erudite work draws on a vast knowledge of global politics witnessed at first hand, including some of the most momentous events of recent history. His grasp of the English language is especially

impressive given that it is not his native tongue.

As might be expected from someone who became a Harvard professor, this book is not an easy read but the value of the information conveyed is profound and immeasurable. It is a must read for students of diplomacy and international relations.

Janet Weston

ARMISTICE DAY UNEASE

Do any other AJR members feel somewhat uneasy on Armistice Day? I always have done – ever since I was a little boy.

My father fought for the enemy in the First World War. He was an officer in the medical corps of the Austrian army and in the middle of his medical studies at Vienna University when he was enlisted. It was 1917 – he was only 19 years old. He was sent to the Russian front (I always found it a consolation that he didn't fight against the British) and he was wounded in the neck, the scar showing till the day he died. He always wore stiff collars to try to hide it.

When the war was over my father received a bronze beaker for his efforts and then went back to university to finish his studies. I don't know whether he felt any guilt about fighting against the Allies when we first came to England in 1939. He certainly considered joining the Pioneer Corps. However, in 1941 he was told that German and Austrian doctors would be allowed to practise medicine in the UK if they passed an examination in the English language and he preferred to do this.

Oddly (or perhaps not!), my late father-in-law was the only person to actually rub it in to my father that he had fought for England's enemy. My father-in-law was part of Anglo-Jewry. He had been born in the UK and he had not been sympathetic to the influx of Jews from the Continent. He thought this would cause a rise in anti-Semitism – what with their foreign accents and foreign ways! He was aghast that my father should dare to show him the bronze beaker he had been given after the First World War.

Without doubt, there was some antipathy between Anglo-Jewry and Continental Jews. I wonder whether one of the reasons was that the two were on different sides in the First World War. Is my unease on Armistice Day due to my father having fought on the side of Germany and Austria against England? I think it probably is. I wonder if anyone else has that feeling?

Peter Phillips

A very unconventional teacher

The repeated mentioning of the Internationale Sozialistische Kampfbund (International Socialist Combat League, ISK) in Irene Messinger's article 'Marriages of convenience as a survival strategy' in your November issue prompts me to draw attention to the life of a relative of mine, a cousin of my mother, who was a leading light in that organisation and an active anti-Nazi fighter: Julius Philippson (1894-1943).

The ISK, which had been founded by, and followed the philosophy of, Leonard Nelson, was not based on Marxism but advocated the leadership of a socialist elite. Philippson had volunteered for service in the First World War, been taken prisoner by the Russians, earned the Iron Cross First Class, and managed to flee from Russia back to Germany. After the war he qualified as a teacher and became a *Studienassessor*, teaching at schools first in his birthplace of Magdeburg and later in Berlin, where my family lived. He was a very unconventional teacher, encouraging his students to address him by his first name and call him by the informal 'du'. Due to his left-wing views he was never promoted to *Studienrat*, i.e. he did not become a permanent member of a school's staff.

After the Nazis came to power in 1933, Philippson's teaching career came to an end as he was a Jew and, like most ISK members, he started to work

illegally against the Nazis. In order to make it more difficult for the Gestapo to find him he never slept at the same address on two consecutive nights and frequently turned up at our flat asking for a bed – always without notice. He had arranged for us to receive the illegal monthly newsletter published by the ISK which was the size of what is now known as A5 – four pages and printed on extremely thin paper. Looking back, I am still surprised that my father had agreed to receive this: it was delivered by hand, we never saw the person pushing it through our letter box, and, if the Gestapo had ever discovered that we received it, the consequences would have been dire.

Philippson was eventually arrested by the Gestapo in 1937 and, as he had slept in our flat the previous night, my parents, my sister and I were all summoned to Gestapo headquarters at the Alexanderplatz to be interrogated. We had agreed that we would firmly deny knowing anything about our relative's political activities and fortunately the Gestapo believed us. It remained our only encounter with the Gestapo, much to our relief.

There was a trial by the Volksgerichtshof and Philippson was condemned to life-long penal servitude. The official Nazi newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, acknowledged his fortitude at the trial, where presumably his admission of his philosophical beliefs saved him from the death penalty. He served time in

several prisons and the last we knew about him was in the town of Celle, not too far from Hanover, where I was stationed as a member of the British army in 1945-46. Wearing a British uniform you could get entry practically anywhere, so I went to the prison in Celle and enquired about him. The official who saw me got hold of a fat ledger and very quickly found the appropriate entry: Philippson had been sent to Auschwitz in 1943. We later learned from a fellow prisoner of his, who had survived, that our relative had not been gassed but had died a 'natural' death, caused by overwork and poor food.

Philippson's parents – my mother's uncle and aunt – were deported to Theresienstadt when they were in their eighties and died shortly after their arrival. Kind people in Magdeburg, where they lived, recently arranged for *Stolpersteine* to be laid in the pavement where their house had been (it was demolished after the war) and one was added for their son Julius. Only a few weeks ago I visited the city, where I had not been for 81 years, and was able to inspect the *Stolpersteine*, including that for Julius Philippson.



Julius Philippson

Fritz Lustig

'FREDDIE KNOLLER'S WAR'

A one-hour documentary

BBC TWO

27 January 2015

Time of programme to be advised

ARTS AND EVENTS JANUARY DIARY

Tues 13 Professor David Tal: 'Israeli Society: Ruptured or Multicultural?' At LJCC, 2.00 pm. www.ljcc.org.uk (Centre for German-Jewish Studies)

Mon-Fri 19-30 Exhibition: *Faces in the Void: Czech Survivors of the Holocaust* A collaborative project by poet Jane Liddell-King and photographer Marion Davies. At Jubilee Library, Jubilee Street, Brighton BN1 1GE

Mon 26 Jane Liddell-King and Marion Davies will give a poetry reading and photographic presentation of *Faces in the Void* 1.15-4.00 pm at The Old Courtroom, 118 Church Street, Brighton BN1 1UD

THEATRE IN THE THERESIENSTADT GHETTO: NEWLY DISCOVERED WORKS

An invitation to a staging of newly discovered works by prisoners in the World War II Jewish ghetto at Theresienstadt (Terezin). Featuring students from University College London and the University of York in association with the Bloomsbury Theatre and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The Theresienstadt Ghetto was a site of great suffering and deprivation. It was also the site of a vibrant cultural life including music, visual art, poetry and theatrical performance. During interviews with Dr Lisa Peschel in 2004-08, survivors of the ghetto directed her to private collections and small archives, where she found scripts ranging from cabarets and puppet plays to verse dramas. These have recently been published in her anthology *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezin/Theresienstadt Ghetto*.

This rare staging features both comic and tragic works. After a historical

introduction by Dr Peschel (University of York) and Professor Michael Berkowitz (UCL), Part I, *Laugh with Us*, presents comic scenes and songs from the Theresienstadt cabarets. In Part II, *The Smoke of Home*, this one-act historical allegory set in the Thirty Years' War poses the question: If we survive, will we be able to return to the home we knew?

Performances are Saturday, 7 February, 19:30 and Sunday, 8 February, 15:00. Tickets £14 (£8 concessions). Group booking is available for schools, colleges and universities. To order, visit www.thebloomsbury.com/event/run/14151

For further information, contact Assistant Producer Daisy at daisy.theresienstadt@gmail.com





Two photos



I possess two photos of me – one taken after the Anschluss and one taken before our departure from Vienna to Britain. Each photo illustrates something of what was going on at that highly significant time in my life.

Would-be Jewish emigrants needed to amass various documents such as transit visas and entry visas to their hoped-for place of exile. They also needed someone in the host country to sponsor them. That meant someone accepting financial responsibility for us in case we were unable to support ourselves. People tried to find relatives to offer themselves and, in some cases, friends and business contacts were prepared to help in this way. For our family, none of these options was available.

When people ask me how we overcame this obstacle I always reply that we were chosen out of a catalogue. My brother and I had our photographs taken during the summer of 1938 to appear in that catalogue. From what I know about our ultimate sponsor, I am fairly sure it was organised by the Save the Children charity. The photographs were taken at a central place in Vienna by a photographer dealing with many children waiting to be photographed.

Unusually we were taken there by our father. Our mother was busy joining the hordes of women daily besieging the various consulates in a desperate bid to obtain the precious documents. He, on the other hand, had just had his business confiscated and handed over to an Austrian Nazi. So he was available and she wasn't. He didn't take kindly to his new role as nursemaid and I clearly recall him being short-tempered. Above is the photograph that resulted.

For the only time in my entire childhood I had been somewhat neglected. When my mother saw the result of his 'effort' she was very angry. The whole idea was to persuade someone in England to choose us to sponsor. She had expected to see that care had been taken over my appearance, which clearly had not been the case. He had thus, she concluded, completely failed in his task. As it happened, she was wrong. There was something waif-like about this picture

and, indeed, a well-placed English lady took pity on us and eventually we got away with just six months to spare before the outbreak of the war. It's quite possible that I owe my life to this single instance of neglect.

My second photograph was very much my mother's responsibility and it too has a story to tell.

During the few weeks before our actual departure, various preparations were made. Visits were paid to relatives, many of whom we never saw again. Much thought was put into what we could take with us as luggage space was limited. New clothes purchased were meant to last as we grew older.



Photo 1

Money could not be taken out of the country and this was clearly going to be a problem in the years to come.

However, prudence wasn't the only consideration. I am sure there was a parallel agenda also present in my mother's mind. She, like many others about to make this journey into an unknown future, also wanted to make a gesture which said 'We may be destitute now but once we amounted to something.' I believe this second photograph, taken in a studio by a professional photographer, is a product of this instinct.



Photo 2

I can clearly recall the jacket I was wearing: it was made of dark-green velvet. It wasn't the most prudent choice for an eight-year-old boy to wear. It seems to me that this picture was taken in order to satisfy an irrational desire to shake a defiant fist in the face of misfortune.

I have since wondered why that patrician English lady would have gone out of her way to help us, who were complete strangers to her. I knew she had two sons, each of them just a little older than my brother and me, but I did wonder whether there might have been a further reason.

Not very long ago I discovered something else about our benefactor. I found her in the 1901 census on the internet. There I learned that the very young Vivienne was living in Hampstead in some style. Her family was served by a cook and a housemaid. Next door lived an equally affluent timber merchant by the name of Heinrich Rosenbaum with two daughters, Ruth and Abigail, one a little older and the other a little younger

Teaching the Holocaust

The third in a series of staff training sessions was given, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, by Louise Heilbron, a Fellow of the Imperial War Museum and a highly experienced educator, having worked with the Holocaust Education Trust (HET) and the Institute of Education.

This followed talks by AJR Trustee Joanna Millan, who recounted her personal experiences as a Holocaust survivor, and Alex Maws, HET's Head of Education, who insisted that Holocaust teaching must be based on secure historical knowledge and understanding: there were no neatly packaged 'lessons' which students could simply absorb.

Louise described her work speaking to groups in schools and churches. She noted that even 70 years after the Holocaust – so many books, films and testimonies – we still knew so little about it. She put to those present such thought-provoking questions as 'When did you first hear of the Holocaust?' and 'What is a survivor?' She emphasised that there was no need to attempt to shock children – they needed time to think.

Louise showed that the Holocaust was a process: the Nazi regime had taken enormous care over a period of years to exclude Jews from many walks of life, transforming their status slowly but steadily in to that of 'the other'. She also made it clear that Jews were not the Nazis' sole target of persecution: other targeted groups included Gypsies and homosexuals.

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than my eventual saviour. It seems very likely that the three little girls spent a lot of time in each other's company. I strongly suspect that the memory of her young friends touched her heart when she read about the plight of other Jewish children in Nazi Germany.

Erwin Schneider



EDINBURGH One-Woman Costume Parade



National costumes were the theme of our November meeting, which was enlivened by Lilian Bell's one-woman costume parade: a splendid – regal even – gown, followed by her Tyrolean maiden outfit complete with genuine lederhosen and cowbells. A beautiful Salzburgerin doll, a Polish mountain-area kaftan and some 1920s family photos added their flavour to the costumes theme. The usual noisy chatter and a sumptuous spread – thank you, Françoise and Agnes.

Jonathan Kish

BIRMINGHAM Six Point Foundation grants

Susan Cohen from Six Point Foundation spoke to us about the grants to fund projects for AJR members. Ivan presented the SPF Connect project that will enable members to make use of touch screen computers in their homes with the addition of specialist training.

Esther Rinkoff

MANCHESTER 'Terrific Tchaikovsky'

A small but appreciative audience was magnificently entertained by local lawyer Roger Bower and retired businessman Brian Greene with the audio-visual presentation 'Terrific Tchaikovsky'. A most enjoyable afternoon.

Werner Lachs

MARLOW Visit to Warsaw

We met again at the home of Alan Kaye, to whom many thanks are due. Hazel had prepared a good Jewish lunch, enjoyed by all present. Among topics discussed was Hazel and Esther's recent visit to the new, impressive Jewish museum in Warsaw.

Arthur Mayer

LEEDS CF Film and Afternoon Tea

We enjoyed the hospitality of Donisthorpe Hall for a screening of *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, followed by a scrumptious afternoon tea.

Wendy Bott

EALING Unique Jazz Collection

Alf Keiles treated us to recordings from his unique jazz collection, ranging from

Paul Whiteman, Irving Berlin and Benny Goodman to Duke Ellington and many others. Much foot-tapping to familiar tunes.

Leslie Sommer

LIVERPOOL King David School Heritage Plaques

At a very well attended meeting we had the pleasure of listening to Michael Swerdlow, a well-known Liverpool community historian, who spoke about the King David School Heritage Plaques project, which was officially opened in November.

Wendy Bott

NORFOLK All the Proper Ingredients

We had a social lunchtime meeting with all the proper ingredients: from schmaltz herring to rye bread and home-baked quiche. I presented the first instalment of my life – from 1928 Berlin to leaving Auschwitz in October 1944. I would like to express our appreciation to the members of the Norwich Hebrew Congregation who contribute so much to the success of our meetings.

Frank Bright

HULL CF Recipes and Foods Remembered

Recipes and foods remembered kept us all chatting until it was time for tea, including a birthday cake for Rose, who had recently celebrated her 90th birthday.

Wendy Bott

CAFÉ IMPERIAL 'We'll Meet Again'

A generous lunch hosted by Vera and Henry Meyer at Kosk Restaurant in Borehamwood. An honour to be among such fine company. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the food and conversation flowed. Dr Helen Fry was with us and we all felt like Vera Lynn as she sang 'We'll Meet Again' – but we knew where and when: Wednesday 10 December!

Esther Rinkoff

GLASGOW BOOK CLUB How Dating Has Changed

A most delightful afternoon, held at the home of Anthea Berg. While *Mad About the Boy* proved perhaps more suited to younger people, it made us consider how dating has changed over the years and where best to meet people of our age – if we want to.

Agnes Isaacs

HGS A Happy Dairy Farm Childhood

Jane Greenfield gave a most interesting and enjoyable talk about the happy childhood she spent on her parents' dairy farm. She was an expert in milking cows both on the farm and for two years on a kibbutz. She is also a champion horse rider.

Kitty Balint-Kurti

GLASGOW CHANUKAH LUNCH AND DANCE An Uplifting Afternoon

We had a lovely and successful gathering of four generations. After lunch we had the sweet sounds of klezmer by Second Generation Gica Loening and her son Fin. There was no shortage of volunteers to make sure everyone got up to the dance floor for a waltz or two. An uplifting afternoon that must have brought happiness and joy to all guests, due to the excellent organisation and hosting by the AJR team.

Esther Finlay

BRIGHTON-SARID (SUSSEX) Meeting New Family

Esther Rinkoff always felt deprived of cousins until an email appeared from Israel bearing the name Terkeltaub – her family name until her grandfather changed it. The contact resulted in Esther making a trip to Israel to meet the family she had never known. Pride and happiness were reflected in her enthusiasm as she shared her story with us.

Ceska Abrahams

EDGWARE Joining in Singing

Alf Keiles demonstrated to us with prerecorded music parts of jazz we all enjoyed very much. He also played some current music and songs and a number of us could join in singing.

Felix Winkler

SHEFFIELD Jewish Refugees and the Arts, Science, Politics

A most interesting discussion on the influence of Jewish refugees on the arts, science, politics etc in this country and the USA. We were joined by two Second Generation members. As usual, delicious refreshments were provided by Wendy.

Renee Martin

RADLETT Down Leather Lane

Pat Clarke took us on a virtual walk through Leather Lane and Hatton Garden, where she had lived as a child. She was therefore able to give us a very lively and interesting commentary on the area. She also included significant events in the local history, some going back to the time of Elizabeth I. At the end of our extensive walk we felt well informed and not the least bit exhausted ...

Fritz Starer

GLASGOW A Night to Remember

We had a great night at the Gala opening of the Jewish Film Festival. The reception hosted by the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council was most enjoyable, as was the film *Magic Men*. The care and attention our 20-strong group received from all who accompanied us made it a night to remember.

Halina Moss

ST JOHN'S WOOD Judith Hassan

Judith Hassan OBE from Jewish Care talked to us about her life, including starting up the Holocaust Survivors' Centre and the Shalvata Centre. She also said that she was greatly influenced by her mother and the people she had helped.

Irene Goodman

SURREY AND KINGSTON Splendid Food and Convivial Company

We met at Susan Zisman's lovely house to enjoy splendid food and convivial company. A most interesting account of Hazel and Esther's trip to Warsaw kept us enraptured and memories of the past were invoked.

Anthony Portner

NORTH WEST LONDON Six Point Foundation Explained

Renata McDonnell explained Six Point Foundation, which has been well endowed and can still consider applications. After an excellent lunch, Rivah from Extend made everyone do some simple (sitting) exercises to keep us all fit.

Eva Freaan

A Visit to Sweetbird Heritage Centre



Estelle Angel and Sylvia Winroope

Some 25 First and Second Generation members visited the Speedbird Heritage Centre, housed in Waterside, BA's impressive headquarters at Heathrow Airport. We were accompanied by aviation expert Paul Lang, who gave us a background talk about the Centre and other places of aviation interest. Our guide spoke to us about the history of BA and its predecessors since 1919 and showed us a film intended to introduce the weekly intake of new cabin staff recruits to BA and its history and the development of its aircraft, especially with regard to passenger comfort. A very interesting and enjoyable visit. We all appreciated the hard work put in by Esther and Hazel in arranging these events.

George Vulkan

CAFÉ IMPERIAL Lunch at Giacomo's

Peter Eden's very generous invitation to the remaining war veterans was well attended and enjoyed by all. Thank you again, Peter, and wishing everyone compliments of the season!

Ralph Stanton

Kristallnacht

'How to move forward in educating the future generations'

We commemorated Kristallnacht at the Imperial War Museum North with special guest Clare Ungerson, who spoke about her recent book *Four Thousand Lives: The Rescue of German Jewish Men to Britain, 1939*. Caroline Slifkin chaired the event and Hannah Goldstone gave a Third Generation perspective on 'never forgetting the past and how to move forward in educating the future generations'. Personal accounts of Kristallnacht were delivered by Werner Lachs, Ann Cohen and Gisela Feldman, and Chazan Isdaler and Reverend Brodie recited the memorial prayer.

Wendy Bott

WELWYN GC A Lovely Intimate Gathering

A lovely intimate gathering on a cold November day. Peter Coleman told us of his son's involvement in *The Last Train to Tomorrow*. I gave an account of my and Esther's recent trip to Warsaw. And a general discussion prevailed.

Hazel Beiny

PRESTWICH AND WHITEFIELD 'A Person Who Made a Significant Difference to Your Life'

Meeting at the home of Werner and Ruth Lachs, members enjoyed a most interesting discussion about 'A person who made a significant difference to your life' – then enjoyed socialising over refreshments!

Wendy Bott

THANK YOU

**TO THE TRUSTEES,
STAFF AND MEMBERS
OF THE AJR FOR ALL
YOUR KINDNESS ON
THE LOSS OF MY DEAR
HUSBAND ADRIAN**

CAROL ROSSEN



NEWCASTLE Young and Humble

I was born in Romania and arrived in this country in 2013 from Israel via South Africa. I was privileged to be invited with my daughter to the AJR's pre-Chanuka lunch, attended by over 30 people. The scrumptious three-course meal prepared by Brenda was enjoyed by all. The highlight of the lunch was the concert with wonderful music from the European *shtetls* played by the Klein Klezmer group from Edinburgh. I felt humbled by the company I found myself in and – at the age of 67 – quite young.

Judith Fodor

continued on page 14 ➔

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Henri Obstfeld
020 8954 5298 h.obstfeld@talk21.com

JANUARY GROUP EVENTS

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------|---|
| Café Imperial | 6 Jan | Social |
| Ilford | 7 Jan | Social get-together |
| Pinner | 8 Jan | Judy Herman: 'A World in My Earphones' |
| HGS | 12 Jan | Dr Susan Cohen: 'Medical Services in the First World War' |
| Whitefield/Prestwich | 12 Jan | 'A favourite poem or piece of music' |
| Essex (Westcliff) | 13 Jan | Winter Warmer: Bring along a poem or short story |
| St John's Wood | 13 Jan | The Fire Brigade – Safety in the Home |
| Book Club | 14 Jan | Social |
| Didsbury | 14 Jan | 'A favourite pastime' |
| Brighton-Sarid (Sussex) | 19 Jan | Film Morning: <i>The Sturgeon Queens</i> |
| Marlow | 19 Jan | Social get-together |
| Bradford | 20 Jan | Ian Vellins: 'The Life of Geoffrey Perry' |
| Edgware | 20 Jan | Paul Lang: 'Concorde – Its History and Legacy' |
| Glasgow | 20 Jan | Holocaust lecture |
| Radlett | 21 Jan | Film Morning: <i>The Sturgeon Queens</i> |
| Glasgow Book Club | 22 Jan | Social and discussion |
| Welwyn GC | 22 Jan | Social get-together |
| North West London | 26 Jan | Social get-together |
| Scotland | 27 Jan | Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) |
| Harrogate/York | 28 Jan | 'Contributions of Survivors to the Arts' |
| Wembley | 28 Jan | Nick Dobson: 'The World of Flowers' |
| Edinburgh | 29 Jan | HMD event |
| North London | 29 Jan | Anthony Joseph: 'In Search of Jewish Ancestry' |



INSIDE THE AJR
cont. from p.13

PINNER A Life in the Media

It proved a most amazing and thoroughly enjoyable afternoon to hear Brad Ashton sample some of his many funny wares in his long career as scriptwriter to comedians such as Groucho Marx, Tommy Cooper and many others. *Walter Weg*

NORTH LONDON 'Women in Aviation'

Paul Lang's subject proved most interesting. How many men realise that women's involvement in aviation goes way back and is equally prevalent in modern sciences such as space travel? An absorbing morning.

Herbert Haberberg

ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) Meeting Long-lost Cousins

Esther Rinkoff, née Lecash, granddaughter of Joseph Terkeltaub, gave us a moving story about meeting relatives she never knew she had. Her cousin, Anat Shalinsky, came over from Israel and they met in Golders Green. Esther and Ray reciprocated the visit and met her long-lost cousins in Mattan, a suburb of Tel Aviv.

Larry Lisner

BROMLEY CF Six Point Foundation

Renata McDonnell gave an informative talk on Six Point Foundation, which, working with partner organisations, distributes grants to survivors and refugees. They can be contacted via the AJR.

Dorothea Lipton



FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS

Frederic (Freddie) Kramer, husband of Lotte, father of Stephen and grandfather of Joanna and Robert, died peacefully on 15 November.

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AJR Head Office on 020 8385 3070.

**'FORCED WALKS'
15 April 2015**



'Forced Walks' is a participatory walking art project led by artists Lorna Brunstein and Richard White.

On 15 April 2015, the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Belsen, Lorna and Richard will make a walk based on the testimony of a survivor of the Nazi Death Marches. Using the original route as a guide, the walk will take place in the UK through a familiar landscape in an area close to their home.

Lorna and Richard are inviting others to join them on foot or online or to make their own walk in their area.

Documentation of the project and creative responses to the experience will form the basis of an exhibition later in the year.

For further information, please see
<http://forcedwalks.wordpress.com/>

If interested, please contact Lorna and Richard on forcedwalks@gmail.com

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Six Point Foundation



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

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

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OBITUARIES

Harold Livingston, born Stuttgart 20 November 1923, died London 9 October 2014

Harold (formerly known as Helmut Loewenstein) was born in Stuttgart in 1923. His father had six brothers and two sisters – thankfully all managed to leave Germany in time.

Harold first encountered anti-Semitism when children at his school refused to play with him or sit near him any longer. Being uprooted from one's country is necessarily traumatic but Harold and his family were obliged to endure it twice. In 1936 Harold, his parents and his sister left to live in Italy but two years later Mussolini's anti-Semitic laws compelled them to leave and they settled in England, where a relative of his mother managed to arrange a financial guarantee.

His father bought a house in Wembley, where they lived with grandparents and his mother's sister, whose husband had been murdered by the Nazis. Harold went to a school in Edgware to learn some English and then to Harrow Polytechnic but, after a while, this came to an end because all Germans were classified as 'enemy aliens'.

At the age of 16 he was sent to Australia on board the notorious *Dunera*, the passengers of which were treated abominably as though they were prisoners of war – shouted at, made to run barefoot on broken glass and

no change of clothing for 12-13 weeks: 'It was a real hell ship and the soldiers guarding us were the scum of the earth.'

The journey back to the UK on the *Sterling Castle* was less traumatic. Here Harold volunteered for the RAF and worked as ground crew for Stirling and Lancaster bombers.

Towards the end of the war his knowledge of German led to a transfer to a disarmament unit, where he spent two years 'disarming' the Luftwaffe, mostly by translating for RAF officers who were interrogating Luftwaffe personnel. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He was subsequently transferred to a school for glider pilots, where the experience of flying solo gave him a wonderful feeling.

After the war Harold joined the rubber company his father had built up from scratch. Under the name Waterford Rubber Manufacturing Company it became one of the largest suppliers of rubber goods: customers included British Rail and London Transport. On his father's death, Harold took over the company, eventually selling it at the age of 72.

Harold met his wife Ruth at a club in London. They had two children, Jacqui and Ashley, and were very happy together. Sadly Ruth became ill with multiple sclerosis

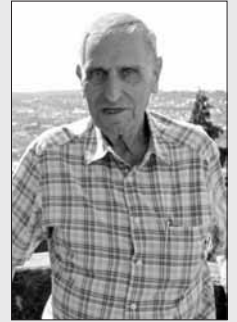
and after some time Harold was no longer able to cope at their adapted Edgware home so he reluctantly had her transferred

to a nursing home, where she still lives. He visited her every day even though she no longer recognised him. He was not religious but never forgot his Jewish identity and even during Ruth's illness he did charity work at Norwood and was an active member of the AJR.

Harold had a hard life: many a lesser person would have cracked under the strain. It was only fitting that near the end of his long life he received some good news from a totally unexpected quarter. His father and uncle had built up a successful textile business in Messingen until the Nazis took it over and the authorities, now wishing to acknowledge the benefits the business had brought to the community, organised visits and ceremonies. To quote Harold, 'it was quite overwhelming to see a square named after our family – the "Loewenstein Platz".'

Harold will be sadly missed.

Robert Lowe



Franz Baermann Steiner, born Prague 12 October 1909, died Oxford 27 November 1952

On 19 October 2014 a stone-setting ceremony was held in the Jewish section of Wolvercote Cemetery in north Oxford for Franz Baermann Steiner, who died over 60 years ago, on 27 November 1952, and was buried in an unmarked grave in that cemetery.

Steiner, who was born near Prague on 12 October 1909, was an anthropologist who, before he died aged 43, had written *Taboo*, which has come to be regarded since his death as a classic study of its subject. He came to London in 1936 to pursue his research, but was unable to return to Czechoslovakia after its occupation by Hitler in 1939. His family perished in the Holocaust.



Steiner spent the later part of his life in Oxford, where he eventually secured a position. The influence of British anthropologists like Evans-Pritchard transformed his approach to the subject. Steiner, one of that special breed of Central European intellectuals, was a polymath and a poet. His poem *Gebet im Garten* (The Prayer in the Garden) is now regarded as part of the canon of poetic responses to the Holocaust.

Whereas only a few friends had attended Steiner's burial in 1952 – among them H. G. Adler, the distinguished man of letters and Steiner's literary executor, and Iris Murdoch, to whom Steiner had been engaged – the stone-setting ceremony was attended by a number of academics and others drawn to Steiner's legacy. It was followed by a lunch hosted by Professor Wendy James at Wolfson College, at which short speeches were given by Professor Richard Fardon (SOAS), Professor Ritchie Robertson (Oxford) and Professor Erhard

Schüttpelz (Siegen, Germany), among others. Credit for organising the event is due to Professor Jeremy Adler (King's College London and the son of H. G. Adler), who gave a moving and eloquent address over the newly laid stone, a fitting tribute to the memory of a refugee scholar who died too young.

Anthony Grenville



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LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Hansen's Disease

In a part of Jerusalem that is now prime real estate (where the prestigious neighbourhoods of Talbieh and the German Colony meet), but was once on the outskirts of the city, stand the imposing building and grounds of what was initially known as the Jesus Hilfe Asyl (Jesus Help Asylum), then as the Hansen Hospital and, more recently, as Hansen House.

Built in 1887 by Jerusalem's German Protestant community and designed by Conrad Schick, an architect and German missionary who built many of the nineteenth-century buildings in Jerusalem, the hospital was originally intended to provide shelter and succour for those residents of the area who were diagnosed as suffering from leprosy. Both highly infectious and physically disfiguring, the disease was considered to be incurable until the middle of the twentieth century, when a year-long treatment with a cocktail of

antibiotics was found to stop its progress. Dr Armauer Hansen of Norway was the first to see the leprosy germs, *Mycobacterium leprae* and *Mycobacterium lepromatosis*, under the microscope in the mid-nineteenth century. Because of his identification of the disease as differing from biblical leprosy, it is often known as Hansen's Disease.

I was given a thorough tour of the site by Rivka Regev, the daughter of the former resident physician of the institution. Rivka grew up in the separate building in the grounds where the doctor and his family lived and remembers the inmates as her friends. On returning home from the hospital she was required to wash her hands and forearms thoroughly but, other than that, there was no restriction on associating with the patients.

Today, the large two-storey building belongs to the Jerusalem Municipality and houses a small museum displaying the medical instruments employed at the

hospital as well as a modern Centre for Art and Technology allied with the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. It is set in a large, terraced and walled compound containing many trees and plants. In the past, it comprised a vegetable garden, fruit trees and livestock and was intended to be self-sufficient. My guide was very knowledgeable about the workings of the huge cistern in the grounds and even remembered the chickens and cows that once constituted part of the working farm there. All this was necessary as, at the time the building was constructed, there was no running water or electricity in Jerusalem and every household and institution relied on collecting the winter rains for use throughout the year.

Between 1887 and 1950 the Herrenhut brotherhood of the Moravian church ran the facility. Staff came from Europe to care for the patients, who were mostly Muslims, although there were some Christians and a few Jews. In 1950 the Moravian church sold the entire compound to the JNF, following which Israel's Ministry of Health ran the asylum. With the development of an effective cure for leprosy, patients were gradually rehabilitated and discharged, the last in-patients leaving the hospital in 2000.

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

Early secular Zionists and most post-Second World War immigrants to Israel wanted to 'make the desert bloom' and share the potential prosperity of the land legitimately with their Palestinian neighbours. Unfortunately, Palestinian leaders and their Arab allies didn't see it that way. Political and military confrontation has continued ever since.

Anti-Semitism today around the world – as distinct from anti-Zionism – is fuelled by the unquestioning support by Jews in the diaspora for the discriminatory, cruel and inhumane conditions imposed on the Palestinians by the current Israeli government. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson gives a very small example in the same issue of the *AJR Journal*.

I am not blind to the threats. Israel lives in fear and has the right to defend itself. But can the deliberate destruction of electric power infrastructure be condoned? Or the killing of civilians and children? Or the continuing grabbing of Palestinian land? Not only gentiles but many Jews within and outside Israel condemn such actions by a nation-state that claims to be civilised.

Many episodes of the Torah tell of the

Jews, with the help of God, celebrating the mass slaughter of their enemies. But other passages show the possibility of peaceful coexistence.

John Farago, Deal, Kent

Sir – As usual, Eric Sanders has confused me. 'The British electoral system is undemocratic because of our lack of proportional representation', he says in your October issue. Surely democracy means 'one man (or woman) one vote'. What has proportional representation to do with it? He goes on to say that it is our lack of a constitution which caused, among other things, 'the sale of our railways and the criminal damage to our health service.' How would proportional representation have prevented this? These measures were voted through democratically in parliament.

Also, what is the 'criminal damage' to our health service to which he refers? He continues: 'A proportional system ensures that no one's vote is wasted.' Again, how does proportional representation prevent this? He names countries that 'do better.' Better than what? Continuing, he

says that he does not believe that Israel's proportional voting system is the cause of its parliamentary instability. No – it certainly is not the *sole* cause, but it is one of the most important factors contributing to it.

Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

Sir – I have a very bad feeling towards Jews like Eric Sanders who do not know the history of our people and our land. When was it ever the West Bank? It was Judea and a large part of Jordan created from our land.

Clare Parker, London NW11

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