

AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

German-Jewish refugees and German public service broadcasting

One of the most successful institutions established by the Allies in occupied Germany after 1945 was the system of public service broadcasting that originated in the British Zone of Occupation and was subsequently extended to the rest of the country. It was no accident that this development, crucial to the creation of a functioning democracy in post-Hitler Germany, was started by the British, for in the BBC Britain possessed the model of a broadcasting service independent of governments, political parties and commercial interests.

Less well-known is the part played by German-Jewish refugees in this transfer of a quintessentially British institutional structure to occupied Germany. Some had been involved in the BBC's radio broadcasts to Germany during the war; others contributed to the creation of the very first public service broadcasting organisations in post-war Germany, often while on active service with the British forces. Among the latter were Geoffrey Perry and Walter Eberstadt. Geoffrey Perry (obituary, *AJR Journal*, November 2014) was born Horst Pinschewer in Berlin in 1922. He followed his elder brother Joachim Pinschewer (Peter Perry) to Britain in 1936, to be educated at Buxton College in Derbyshire. After leaving school in 1938, Geoffrey Perry set out on a career as a press photographer, but the outbreak of war put paid to his position as a staff photographer on the *Daily Mirror*. In July 1940, he was interned for four months, until he enlisted in the Pioneer Corps. He was commissioned as an officer in October 1943 and sent to Normandy with his unit in July 1944.

Towards the end of the war, as part of the planning for their post-war Zone of Occupation, the British made preparations to take over the German media. Lieutenant Perry, who had informed the authorities of his interest in this, joined the special unit known as T Force ('T' for Target) that was tasked with preserving Germany's infrastructure; in his case, along with his commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Lieven, a Canadian who had worked as a newspaperman, and Major



Walter Albert Eberstadt
(Major Everitt), 1921-2014

Findlay, who had been a senior engineer at the BBC, the target was Radio Hamburg and the city's newspaper offices, subsequently extended to all the newspaper offices in Schleswig-Holstein, from Hamburg north to the Danish border. When Hamburg was surrendered to the British on 3 May 1945, Lieven, Findlay and Perry made straight for Radio Hamburg and, with the support of troops attached to T Force, took it over. Perry was immediately dispatched to find the station's transmitter, which could easily be destroyed and without which the station could not function. He located the transmitter in the suburb of Moorfleet, took some of T Force's soldiers, plus the chief engineer of Radio Hamburg to show him the way, and occupied the transmitter.

Radio Hamburg had ceased broadcasting at 10.26 am on 3 May 1945 and the British had taken it over at 10 am on 4 May. At 7 pm on 4 May, the station went back on air, under Allied military control. An announcement to this effect was broadcast and Lt-Col. Lieven then handed the microphone to Geoffrey Perry, who proceeded to make what was effectively the first Allied broadcast to the German people. For the next two days,

Perry, a native speaker of German, was the station announcer; his duties included introducing British and American war reporters who were making broadcasts from Radio Hamburg, both for local audiences and to be picked up for onward transmission. An added irony was that Perry found himself broadcasting from the same microphone that only two days previously the notorious Nazi propagandist William Joyce, known as Lord Haw-Haw, had used for his final broadcast. The irony was compounded when Perry subsequently came across Joyce in woods outside Flensburg, shot him in the backside when he made to escape, and took him prisoner. Joyce was executed for high treason on 3 January 1946.

Walter Eberstadt was born in Frankfurt in 1921, into a banking family that had moved to Hamburg in 1930. He came to England in 1935 to be educated at Tonbridge School and then at Christ Church, Oxford, where his studies were interrupted by internment in 1940. Like Geoffrey Perry, he joined the Pioneer Corps and was commissioned as an officer, serving with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (the 'Ox and Bucks') in Normandy, where he was wounded in action in August 1944. Back in Britain, he underwent training for one of the Information Control Units set up in the latter part of the war to control the press, publishing and broadcasting in what was to be the British Zone of Germany, and was sent to join the psychological warfare division of SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) at Radio Luxembourg. Shortly after the end of the war in Europe, he returned to Hamburg, the city from which he had been forced to flee ten years earlier, with No. 4 Information Control Unit, which was to operate the city's radio station.

Eberstadt, though not yet 25 years old, played an important part in laying the foundations for the radio station, which became Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (NWDR) in September 1945; based in Hamburg, it also had a transmitter in Cologne, thereby covering the entire British

Zone. In 1956, NWDR was divided into Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), serving Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg, and Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), serving North Rhine-Westphalia. The model established by Eberstadt and his colleagues has thus survived to the present day: NDR now also serves Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the northern part of the former East Germany. Eberstadt had changed his name, returning to Hamburg as Captain Walter Everitt, but had retained his knowledge of German and of Germans, enabling him to make shrewd choices of personnel as the station was increasingly turned over to German-speaking staff. Though he had perforce to man the new station with Germans who had lived in Germany throughout the Nazi years, he was able to select those whose views had made them unsympathetic to the regime or those whose conversion to democracy was genuine.

Knowing that he had to work with people who were to some extent compromised by their past, Everitt interrogated potential staff members searchingly; his natural acumen enabled him to enlist men of the stature of Jürgen Schüddekopf and Peter Bamm. Among those with whom he worked in Hamburg were such future star reporters and broadcasters as Axel Eggebrecht and Peter von Zahn, names to conjure with in the German media world of the post-war decades. Everitt's aim was to democratise and civilianise German society, to convince his German staff that they were not working for the British but were involved in laying the foundations for a democratic Germany for themselves and their fellow citizens. Everitt also played a key part in the broadcasts made by Hamburg's first post-war mayor, Rudolf Petersen, which helped to shore up morale in the dark days of post-war hunger and shortages. He did, however, also take on Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler, who defected to the Soviet Zone, where he employed his

talents in the service of the East German regime, on the notorious programme *Der schwarze Kanal*. Eberstadt later emigrated to the USA, where he died in 2014.

The British contribution to the creation of the (West) German broadcasting system has not received the acknowledgement it deserves, remaining largely unknown to the public in both Germany and Britain. Nevertheless, in 2002 the Research Centre for German and Austrian Studies held a three-day conference in London entitled "Stimme der Wahrheit" [Voice of Truth]: German-Language Broadcasting by the BBC'. The conference proceedings were published in 2003, as volume 5 of the Yearbook of the Research Centre, edited by Charmian Brinson and Richard Dove. Among the conference speakers were two of the greatest German experts on the subject: the late Jens Brüning contributed a detailed and knowledgeable piece on the BBC as a model for German post-war broadcasting, while Hans-Ulrich Wagner, the doyen of German scholars in this field, spoke on the role of the 'London-Remigranten', the refugees who returned from Britain to Germany, in the history of West German broadcasting. Wagner has recently published a further article entitled 'Repatriated Germans and the "British Spirit"' in the journal *Media History*, accessible online at <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/8nyzjfCvegUSX5Fj8zr4/full>

The German Service of the BBC used refugees to remarkably good effect in its wartime broadcasting to Nazi Germany: the actor Martin Miller's parody of a

speech by Hitler, 'Der Führer spricht' (The Führer Speaks), broadcast appropriately on 1 April 1940, still sounds hilariously accurate. Humour was one of the principal weapons deployed by the German Service to undermine enemy morale. The Features Section, headed by Walter Rilla, produced series like 'Frau Wernicke' and 'Kurt und Willi', scripted by Bruno Adler, or Robert Lucas's long-running series of letters supposedly written by a particularly dim German soldier, Gefreiter Adolf Hirnschal (Corporal Adolf Brainshallow), to his wife. This was, one might say, a prelude to the institutional interaction between the BBC and Germany in the years after 1945.

Anthony Grenville

Special KT Lunch

Wednesday 9 September 2015
at New North London
Synagogue

Guest speaker: Barbara Winton

Please join us for a special KT Lunch on Wednesday 9 September at the New North London Synagogue, 80 East End Road, Finchley N3. We are delighted that Barbara Winton, daughter of Sir Nicholas Winton, will be our guest speaker.

Barbara will be talking about her father's remarkable achievements and signing copies of her book *If It's Not Impossible ... The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton*.

We are also delighted that some of the Year 6 pupils from Akiva School will be in attendance to meet you and Barbara. Please strongly encourage your families to accompany you for this unique gathering.

NB: The KT Lunch will be at the regular venue at Alyth Synagogue for the August and October meetings.

NORTHERN REGIONAL LEEDS TUESDAY 21 JULY 2015

Our keynote speaker will be
Dr James Smith,
Co-Founder of the Beth Shalom
National Holocaust Centre and
Museum, who will speak on
'Cultural Genocide: Did the World
Learn from the Destruction of
Germany's Jews?'

The day will include refreshments
and lunch, discussion groups and an
opportunity to meet and socialise with
friends old and new.

For full details and an application form,
please contact
Wendy Bott on 07908 156365 or at
wendy@ajr.org.uk

AJR Chief Executive
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Finance Director
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Heads of Department

Karen Markham Human Resources & Administration
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AJR Journal

Dr Anthony Grenville Consultant Editor
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Andrea Goodmaker Secretarial / Advertisements

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10-DAY VISIT TO ISRAEL NOVEMBER 2015

The AJR is considering organising a 10-day trip to Israel in early November this year. The cost of the visit is not yet decided.

Carol Rossen will be accompanying the trip.

If you would like to join the trip,
please contact

Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070 or at
lorna@ajr.org.uk as soon as possible.

17-21 MAY: FIVE MEMORABLE DAYS NORTH OF THE BORDER

Day 1

A warm welcome awaited AJR members travelling from London King's Cross. Susan, Hazel and Kathryn ensured we were safely installed in our seats on board the 'Flying Scotsman'.

Speeding northwards, we had time to enjoy views of the countryside and make the acquaintance of our travelling companions. A change of train at Edinburgh and we continued on to Glasgow. Agnes, Jim and Myrna greeted us on arrival and had arranged refreshments.

Within the hour, we were at Glasgow Reform Synagogue in Newton Mearns, where we were received with traditional Scottish hospitality: a piper at the door to herald our arrival and a wonderfully warm welcome to a four-course dinner, music and Scottish dancing made the evening a memorable start to our holiday.

Meticulous planning by the organisers, regional co-ordinators and social workers accompanying the party ensured that the programme of cultural and leisure activities was enjoyed by all.

Dorothea Lipton

Day 2

A good night's sleep and an excellent breakfast and we were ready for the first day of our Scotland journey. The coach tour of Glasgow brought home to us what an elegant city Glasgow has become. Interesting modern architecture is intermingled with attractive 19th and early 20th century buildings emphasising the wealth of the city.

Any visit to Glasgow must include Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the most visited museum in the UK outside London. My personal highlight was the Salvador Dali painting Christ of Saint John of the Cross, a rather mysterious work.

An excellent lunch in the museum café fortified us for a tour of Kibble Palace and Botanic Gardens. By this time, mid-afternoon, the sun was out and we enjoyed its warmth, seated on one of the numerous benches overlooking the colourful floral displays.

An excellent dinner at La Bonne Auberge, the hotel's restaurant, concluded a highly interesting day of our tour.

Ernest Simon

Day 3

May 19 was the 76th anniversary of my coming to England so it was a special pleasure to spend it in the company of fellow AJR members.

The highlight of the day for me was visiting the Royal Yacht Britannia. To tread in the footsteps of royalty was a novel experience – rounded off by tea and cake on deck.

This was preceded by a sight-seeing tour of Edinburgh. What a beautiful city we found – the Castle, Holyrood Palace and the Waverley memorial to Sir Walter Scott. Then it was on to view the new parliament building with its intriguing modernity both inside and out. Whether it pleases the eye is something to ponder.

Over dinner I enjoyed the company of an old London friend I hadn't seen for at least 12 years. It certainly was an outstanding day.

Meta Roseneil



Day 4

As usual, the team at AJR put together a fascinating trip for our annual 'bash'. It was good to chat with others of similar backgrounds from different parts of the UK.

The day started with a 'wee dram' of the traditional drink of Scotland, whiskey. The bus took us to Auchentoshan Distillery, where, after a tasting, we were given explanations as to how the drink was made and matured. From the Distillery the bus took us for lunch to Duck Bay Marina, a beautiful hotel on the banks of Loch Lomond.

After lunch we were driven to Luz, a delightful Conservation Village. Here we could admire the small stone cottages with picturesque and colourful gardens,

the village shop and a simple church with lovely windows. From the village we boarded a boat for a conducted cruise around the Loch. Then it was back to the hotel for a short break and off to dinner at Mark's Deli, which served a traditional Jewish meal as good as in any London restaurant. We all appreciated the hard work the AJR ladies had put in to make it an enjoyable and memorable day.

Bob Norton

Day 5

On Thursday morning we split into two groups. One group had a guided tour of Pollok House, a National Trust building once owned by the Maxwell family. The house is set in beautiful gardens, adjacent

to Pollok Golf Course.

The second group had a brief tour of the world-acclaimed Burrell Collection within the grounds of Pollok Country Park. Sir William Burrell, a shipping magnate, built up a unique collection over 70 years and donated it to the people of Glasgow in 1944. The collection comprises amazing stained glass windows, rare sculptures, Impressionist paintings, rare pottery, tapestries and antiquities originating in China, Japan and Egypt.

One morning wasn't enough to see these two wonderful places.

We finished the tours by meeting together and having a delicious lunch in the converted kitchens at Pollok House.

Lynda and Robin Gilmore

LOOTED ART IN THE GDR

The Nazis were not the only people in Germany who looted works of art from Jewish and other families. This was also the case in East Germany after the Second World War. The result is that some German citizens who purchased works of art from galleries and auction houses in the post-war years may have inadvertently acquired items that were misappropriated from their rightful owners.

In 1951 my late wife Susanne inherited many paintings and drawings from her father, the artist, cartoonist and illustrator Albert Schäfer-Ast, who had died in Weimar that year at the age of 61. In addition to the artworks, Susanne inherited cash deposited in a number of bank accounts as well as a timber-built holiday cottage in Ostseebad Prerow on the Baltic coast. As her mother, Steffie, was Jewish, Susanne had been sent to England as a Kindertransport refugee, aged 12, in May 1939. Steffie, who was also an artist, had followed later that year on a domestic permit, which meant that she had had to work in the UK as a domestic servant. Albert, who was not Jewish, had stayed in Germany.

From the early 1920s until his death, Albert was widely known in Germany not only for his cartoons and humorous drawings but also for his book illustrations and watercolour studies of, *inter alia*, flowers, birds and insects. For much of this time he was engaged as a freelance artistic advisor and illustrator by the major Berlin-based publishing house Ullstein Verlag, proprietors of a number of newspapers, including the *Berliner Morgenpost*, and publishers of a wide range of books and periodicals. Towards the end of his life, after the Second World War, Albert was appointed Professor of Drawing at what is now the Bauhaus University in Weimar.

Since Albert died intestate, the court in Weimar initially appointed an employee of the university as an administrator (*Nachlassverwalter*) of the Schäfer-Ast estate. Among other duties, this gentleman compiled an inventory of all the artworks that had been left in Albert's cottage in Prerow and in his flat in Weimar. The list comprises some 1,500 watercolour paintings and drawings plus around 500 lithographs, etchings and other artworks. The *Nachlassverwalter* left for West Berlin.

By the late 1950s, Susanne had been



Albert Schäfer-Ast in 1933

confirmed as the sole living heir and had engaged a London-based lawyer (*Rechtsanwalt*), Dr Rudolf Munster, to oversee the work of the *Nachlassverwalter* in the administration of the Schäfer-Ast estate. Dr Munster therefore appointed a second German *Nachlassverwalter* – who, I believe, carried out his duties in an exemplary manner – but in 1960 he too fled to the West.

The third and last *Nachlassverwalter*, also appointed by Dr Munster, was a resident of Eisenach and is known to have had custody of a very large number of Albert's paintings and drawings, plus furniture and other possessions. Very little is known of his activities but, following the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, communication between him and Dr Munster seems to have become increasingly difficult and to have broken down completely in the early 1960s.

At a meeting with Dr Munster in 1962 or 1963, Susanne was told that there appeared to be no possibility of settling anything in the GDR in a satisfactory manner in the foreseeable future. (The removal of any assets such as cash or artworks from the GDR was at that time prohibited.) Susanne therefore assented to a proposal that, for the time being, Albert's cottage in Prerow should be used by the local authority as the Schäfer-Ast Museum – at least this is what she was told would happen. I think she also believed that Albert's artworks would be retained by the municipality, either in the Schäfer-Ast Museum or elsewhere, though she

had no real say in this matter either.

Precisely what became of the cottage and artworks following the abovementioned meeting remains unclear but in 1997 Susanne heard for the first time of the existence of the Darss Museum in Prerow, which she thought might be another name for the Schäfer-Ast Museum. On making enquiries, she was surprised to discover that the Schäfer-Ast-Haus was not being used as a museum at all but was being rented out to a tenant and that the Darss Museum had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the artworks.

Susanne died in March 2002 aged 75 and, despite having made many other enquiries during the 1990s, she was never able to obtain any information about what had become of her inheritance. She received absolutely nothing from it other than some small royalties from books of drawings published in Germany's western zone of occupation after the death of her father.

In 2007, however, I was amazed to discover that – far from being under the watchful eye of the municipality in Prerow – the paintings and drawings that had been in the control of the last *Nachlassverwalter* in the 1960s had somehow been disposed of by him in the 1970s and that for more than 30 years many, if not all of them, had seemingly been in the possession of a fellow resident of Eisenach or his descendants. Full details of this transaction, including which pictures changed hands, the amounts of money involved and the relationship between the *Nachlassverwalter* and his associate in Eisenach, were, and are, unknown.

On receiving news of this transaction, I asked a Berlin lawyer if there was any possibility of recovering the artworks that were now known to exist in Eisenach, but I was told that because the transaction had apparently taken place more than 30 years previously, the – as I now know disputed – statute of limitations in Germany meant that any possible legal action was 'time-barred'. Also, the lawyer discovered that the *Nachlassverwalter* responsible for this action had died in 1982.

So there the matter rested – until in November 2012 I was informed by a Schäfer-Ast enthusiast that a large number of the artist's paintings and drawings were now being offered for sale on the internet. On checking the

Bergen-Belsen Memorial Day

Having served in Germany during the Cold War and being aware of the treatment of my mother and her family in Germany in the period leading up to and during the war, I decided in my capacity as an AJEX standard-bearer to visit the concentration camp site and take part in this year's ceremonies to mark the 70th anniversary of its liberation.

I arrived on the day in a drizzle which made the event even more sombre as people without umbrellas were huddled together for shelter. In one way, it was comforting to see strangers getting close to one another for a common event. In another way, I myself – with no umbrella – felt we should be braving the elements with heads bowed stoically and respectfully towards the prior occupants of the concentration camp. Those inmates would have had to endure such extremes that we – for once – could have/should have cast aside our comforts and attempted to connect to the feelings they must have had toiling in the rain with no protection or watching relatives being killed whilst standing in the rain with no shelter. I almost felt like telling people to put their umbrellas away and endure – to be strong as they tried to be. Are we – especially the survivors of the camps and their surviving generations – so soft that we don't think twice about our own comforts and how lucky we are to be here?

The first ceremony of the morning was at the main memorial at the



The Duke of Gloucester and German President Joachim Gauck lay flowers at a mourning wall during a ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp

back of the camp site for the other faiths, colours, political views and sexual orientations, reached by a stone path winding its way past mounds of earth which marked the places where the open pits had been filled with bodies, some too numerous to count. These had been used only because the process of taking small groups into the forest, making them dig their graves and shooting them to fill the graves had been too slow. Even in the nearby Hohne Garrison camp, during the Cold War troops were told not to dig in the grounds of the camp as it was likely more bodies would be found buried beneath and they needed to remain undisturbed.

Following the morning ceremony, the Jewish contingent moved to the Jewish memorial for a further service, which was attended by ex-serving soldiers from the German, Dutch, American, Belgian, French and British soldiers, some in uniform and some veterans in their blazers and representatives of AJEX. The Forces Padre, Rabbi Reuben Livingstone, took

the service, which was also attended by HRH The Duke of Gloucester and German President Joachim Gauck, members of the nearby Hannover Jewish community, and Jewish youth leaders. A British veteran who had been in the regiment that liberated Belsen was present too and was interviewed by German TV news – for his age he was doing remarkably well. Due to the service over-running from the morning event, the Jewish memorial service began late but

everyone waited patiently.

Following the ceremonies at Belsen, courtesy buses were laid on to take visitors to Hohne Garrison for a lunch in the great ballroom at the Round House. The troops still stationed in Hohne acted as hosts and took care of visitors' parking and moving around. Due to the return of troops from Germany, the camp is due, in a couple of months, to be handed back to the Germans from whom it was captured. The camp played an important role for Belsen survivors as they were taken from there and housed in the barracks, the ballroom being made into a massive hospital and recovery room. Unfortunately, many survivors who saw liberation didn't see freedom until many years later and some died at the camp. They had no homes to come back to and the process of finding family and places to go to took time and some felt resentment towards the British hosts for keeping them there for so long.

Daniel Millan

Looted art in the GDR *continued*

website, I realised that the works on offer were among those which had been misappropriated from Susanne's inheritance in the 1970s, but I felt at that time that there was nothing I could do about this. However, some time later, I was recommended to get in touch with another Berlin lawyer, Dr Ulf Bischof, who has special expertise in

art restitution cases, and I subsequently noticed that Albert's artworks had been removed from the internet site.

As of this date, these matters are still *sub judice*, but from Dr Bischof I have learned that even if a legal claim should be 'time-barred', that may not necessarily be the end of the story. For the moment, I can only say that, in an

ideal world, if I ever managed to recover any of the paintings or drawings I would wish to bring relatively few of them to the UK for my family and would be glad to donate the rest to a number of museums and public art galleries, which I am sure is what Susanne herself would have wanted.

John Buck



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTION OF FORMER JEWISH REFUGEES TO THE WAR EFFORT

Sir – Helen Fry (May) has rightly raised the question of what might be done to ensure that the substantial contribution of former Jewish refugees to the war effort is remembered. The question is far from rhetorical: the *Kindertransport Newsletter* (surprisingly) published a scandalous letter last year from an unknown and clearly demented or malicious contributor who accused Jewish refugees of having shunned wartime service in the armed forces and of being, *ipso facto*, unpatriotic. I responded vigorously by denying this false accusation and demanded to know what *his* contribution to the war effort had been. There was no response.

Helen Fry has, of course, published a book covering this topic but she is right in suggesting that we should think of a more permanent way of honouring those who volunteered to serve in the armed forces during the war. There were indeed a great many of us, and some lost their lives. (Others served the country well in important civilian occupations.) A memorial, preferably in a place like Hyde Park or some other central London locality, would be a good way of achieving this. Maybe the AJR could take this up with the Holocaust Commission or, preferably, with the Prime Minister himself. Prince Charles might well wish to support such a move.

All the recent rejoicings when commemorating VE Day left me, paradoxically, in a strangely sombre and depressed frame of mind. The reason was that it cast my mind back 70 years when, on *the* VE Day, I – by then a young infantry officer about to be dispatched to Italy – happened to be passing through London at the end of my leave. I found myself surrounded by a wildly euphoric, celebrating crowd, some of them distinctly inebriated. A few days earlier I had been to the cinema and had seen the horrendous Pathé News report on the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. I was nearly sick at what I saw and, for the first time, I had the most awful foreboding about the fate of my family in Germany. It is hardly surprising that I was unable to share in the euphoria – and the

same emotions overtook me during the recent anniversary commemorations, for unfortunately my foreboding later turned out to be justified.

Leslie Baruch Brent, London N19

Sir – I read with great interest Helen Fry's suggestion that there should be some form of monumental memorial to the refugees from the Third Reich who served in so many different ways with the British forces during the Second World War.

My father, Richard Lehniger, of mixed Czech- and German-Jewish heritage and Czechoslovak nationality, was one such. He lost his life in a Special Boat Service raid on the Normandy coast in 1942.

In many ways the best memorial to these soldiers is in the many publications of Helen Fry, one of which contains an account of my father's contribution. I do think, however, that a memorial monument of the kind Dr Fry proposes is highly desirable and I wonder whether the AJR will consider giving formal support to this proposal. I would only add to her suggestion that it should not be confined to those of German and Austrian origin but to all refugees from the Third Reich.

Irene Walters, London N8

'SOCIAL ENGINEERING'

Sir – Peter Phillips's comments (June) relating to the Bushey *eruv* as 'social engineering' to tempt Orthodox Jews are misguided and misinformed.

There are many modern Shabbat-observing Jews whose lives are significantly enhanced by the erecting of an *eruv*, which allows them to carry and push buggies on Shabbat thereby enjoying a full communal life on that day.

That is the prime purpose of an *eruv*. While Jewish communities should be free to provide facilities to support all levels of observance, there is no evidence in favour of a 'social engineering' motive: Ultra-Orthodox Jews – I assume Mr Phillips means the Chasidic and Charedi communities – do not seem to be enticed into areas simply because Modern Orthodox communities have constructed an *eruv*.

To attribute the motive of 'social engineering' to the construction of an *eruv* is to imply a political dark side to its purpose that is misleading, malevolent and damaging to harmonious communal relations.

Mr Phillips would do well to familiarise himself with the needs of a Modern Orthodox community, which adds value to the community at large, rather than suggesting the facilities they require are a cause of anti-Semitism. The causes of anti-Semitism are ignorance and prejudice not communal tolerance and accommodation.

David Kaye, Pinner, Middx

Sir – Peter Phillips raises issues regarding the establishment of the Bushey *eruv*. They are not new and are a small storm in a teacup which soon passes.

In Barnet we have an *eruv* despite all the issues mentioned in his letter – plus several more. The Borough of Barnet, or certain areas of it, has not become an enclave of Ultra-Orthodoxy: the *eruv* raised no extra anti-Semitism nor involved any 'social engineering' – whatever that means in this context. There was a fear of bird massacres because of the wires – but none has been reported (what of telephone or electric cables?). Certain rabbis in the area opposed it and still do, but purely on halachic grounds; individuals can choose whether to use it or not. It is a great sight to see children being wheeled especially to synagogue, and adults in wheelchairs can now be taken for services and visits.

Finally, it is not the *eruv* that attracts people – though it might some – but the expanding Jewish communities of Bushey, Barnet and elsewhere wanting liberation on Shabbat.

Bernd Koschland, London NW4

ANTI-SEMITISM NEVER FAR AWAY

Sir – I'd like to congratulate you on two articles in particular in the June issue of the Journal. First is Anthony Grenville's excellent overview of expressions of anti-Semitism and prejudice in the last few months, to remind us that though prejudice against minorities may not be directed at Jews, its articulation means that anti-Semitism is never far away. I'm glad I'm not alone in thinking that political hostility towards Ed Miliband was expressed sometimes in terms very close to anti-Semitism, especially in what my parents' generation used to call the 'gutter press'.

The second excellent article is that by Edith Argy entitled 'Vive la différence', giving thanks for the presence of immigrants today, especially in the NHS and London's transport system. I find it incongruous that individuals who owe their lives to policies in the past of accepting refugees should turn their backs today on those in similar situations.

With regard to Peter Phillips's relief at the outcome of the recent general election, I presume he never expects to be poor, ill, unemployed, homeless or old. Otherwise he would no doubt have voted differently.

Gaby Weiner, Lewes

Sir – Further to Edith Argy's report that she saw only white faces during a recent visit to Augsburg, Germany, I have found this to be equally true in Poland. I have been one of the survivors accompanying the 200-strong British contingent to Poland on the annual March of the Living. I continue to be surprised by the absence of non-white faces on the streets, in the shops, among hotel staff – indeed anywhere in Warsaw, Lublin, Crakow and smaller cities and villages we visit. The situation was as true this April as it was during my first March in 2012.

Eve Kugler, London N3

SCOTLAND THE AJR WAY

Sir – The luggage taken care of from home to hotel room – what bliss! The pouring rain just beginning in tune with the bagpipes playing in the synagogue no less! Well, now I have experienced it all

Leaving the rain and bagpipes behind, for me the trip went from one memorable experience to another and, judging by the noise level emanating whilst food was being served, it was not only the food that was enjoyed but the company too. I certainly did.

Thank you, Susan and Agnes, and all who helped to make your meticulous planning and hard work the success that I was privileged to be part of.

June Wertheim, Esher, Surrey

Sir – We would like to put on record our grateful appreciation of the excellent five-day trip to Scotland, beautifully planned and organised by your staff. Susan Harrod did an amazing job of ensuring that everything went like clockwork. She was extremely well supported by your teams from Stanmore and Leeds and, of course, by Agnes and colleagues in Glasgow.

There was a really good spirit of friendship among the participants. We sincerely hope that it may be possible to repeat this experience some time in the future.

Anita and Ernest Simon, Pinner, Middx

'THE JOYS OF ADS'

Sir – Our friend Peter Briess's thoughtful letter in May impels me to add some facts on one of the refugee companies he mentions.

Gee Lawson Ltd was not founded by Max Hofman but by my father Arthur Sterne and ably taken over on his retirement by Max, his son-in-law. Our son is the third generation of management. Arthur founded the company in October 1939 after the usual six months' wait for a work permit together with Gustav Lawson, grandfather of Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel and great-grandfather of Nigella of *haute cuisine* fame. The rules at the time were that foreigners were not allowed to be company directors, hence Gustav as a naturalised Briton was nominated and Arthur – ever the optimist – was the export manager within six weeks of the Second World War being declared.

Their tiny office in Finsbury Circus was burnt out in the great Docklands and City fires on 29 December 1940 but was

resurrected and has continued to this day. In 2014 the company celebrated 75 years as a well-known international family trading company. In the decades and up to this day there have been three generations of family members active in the business, which began with one man and one cherished English-speaking refugee secretary and now counts over 40 people – and this in the age of computers!

I am sure there are other 1930s refugees with similar business histories – not to mention contributions by them to the arts, sciences, education, economics and international diplomacy – to mention but a few at random. Their contribution to the British economy is even greater than realised.

Nina Hofman, Lugano, Switzerland

Sir – I should like to add my memories to those of Peter Briess – no less illustrious albeit a little late

My mother, Hilde Galton, opened her flower shop, Galton Flowers, in Golders Green in 1948. Her shop in Berlin was destroyed on Kristallnacht after we as a family of four managed to get out to arrive in the UK in April 1939. I trained in floristry in Switzerland and later carried on the business here.

We knew the parents of Peter Briess very well – they were regular customers, as were Fred and Carola Weldon and Lord and Lady Kissin. I spent many happy teatimes in Richoux in Golders Green, which, I think, was the first of the chain (in those days, Golders Green Road was like Bond Street!).

There are many more names I could add to the list that are personal to us – among them Helmut Rothenberg and his family, Freddie Knoller, whose daughter had a boutique a few doors away from ours, Sir Ralph and Lady Zahava Kohn, Lucie Rie (ceramist), the family Battsek, Sigi and Muriel Nissel (he late of the Amadeus String Quartet), and Lord Ludwig Schon (chemicals).

These were all loyal customers who then became friends and we are privileged to have played a significant part in their family weddings, celebrations and religious events, all within the realm of flowers. Their contribution to the UK – and to our wellbeing – cannot be measured.

My mother died in 2003 but Galton Flowers is still going strong – attending to the floral requirements of the offspring! She would be so pleased.

Your magazine is great – took it over after my mother died – and is so interesting and informative.

Brita Wolf, London NW3

ISRAEL AND GAZA

Sir – I am saddened to read Caroline Salinger's view (May) on the Israeli-Gaza situation. Israel forcibly evacuated Gaza to return it to the Palestinians. The reward was Hamas and rockets fired on innocent civilians.

No other country would have waited

ten years to try and give its citizens a night's sleep. It has been verified by foreign journalists that the rockets were fired from within civilian areas – that is how much Hamas cares for its citizens! No mention of the tunnels built with bricks and mortar supplied by Israel for houses to be built in Gaza – tunnels certainly not intended to be used for a friendly visit.

As for including Hamas in peace negotiations, this would make a mockery of peace when they have openly stated that their final aim is the destruction of Israel.

As for occupied territory, a German film director said to me that his parents came from a part of Germany that became Poland after the war but, if you are the aggressor, you have to bear the consequences.

Israel was attacked soon after its foundation and had to defend itself and secure its borders.

I remember Mr Kinnock looking at the Golan Heights and saying you can never give this up – you would be shot at every day.

Sometimes the aim of security might go a little too far but, if you have suffered a number of terrorist attacks, it is hard to find a balance.

Gisela Feldman, Manchester

Sir – What a letter by Ms Salinger! She should follow the example of J. D. Salinger, the author of *The Catcher in the Rye*, and become a recluse and not publish anything.

Of course the IDF was aware of the risk to civilians in the Gaza conflict. More often than not, warnings were issued to civilians to vacate schools and privately occupied houses, where Hamas kept its rockets etc. That these warnings were not heeded is Hamas's fault.

Ms Salinger's statement that the Palestinian Authority needs a willing partner in peace negotiations is laughable. The well-known saying – that the Palestinians never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity – is rather apt. The IDF is there to defend Israel and it has always performed admirably and in a far more humane manner than, I believe, any other army would have done.


Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath

Sir – Your correspondent Caroline Salinger seems to promote some interesting ideas.

She suggests that had the Hamas rockets achieved their intended purpose of murdering a few thousand Israelis, she would be happy that proportionality had been achieved.

I would nevertheless like her to clarify whether the Israeli casualties would all have to have been religious Jews or just plain, ordinary Jews and would any Christians, Bedouins or oppressed Palestinian Muslims also qualify in her arithmetic?

Ms Salinger is also in favour of the Israeli government including Hamas in the negotiations for the future of the area. Given that the group currently ruling Gaza have clearly and repeatedly, in Arabic as

continued on page 16 

ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

The fun starts at the entrance to the **Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition** (to 16 August 2015). The sweeping staircase is coated in multi-coloured strips, painstakingly laid by Turner Prize nominee Jim Lambie. Outside, on the Annenberg courtyard, **Conrad Shawcross's** contrasting steel cloud-scape *The Dappled Light of the Sun* is more rollercoaster than cloud, promising not sunshine but rain.

For several years the Summer Exhibition has been engorged with random works shoved into every available space. Curator Michael Craig-Martin tries a different take: by painting the galleries magenta pink or turquoise, and putting less on the walls, he has enabled visitors to move freely around the space, in what he describes as choreographing the exhibition around people.

The show won't give you a specific artistic direction for 2015 but it does open your eyes and mind to many different materials from which art can be made.

For example, you can't miss **Matthew Darbyshire's** super-life-size statue in the Wohl Central Hall, made from purple and yellow polycarbonate and steel and bearing the unbearable name *Captcha No. 11 (Doryphorus)*. It looks as though it is made from CD boxes. Your eye is quickly drawn to Room III, where a



Grayson Perry *Julie and Rob* 2013 (Image: Victoria Miro, London)

jumble of hairy legs emerges from red shorts in an apparent rugby tackle by the well-known Academician **Wolfgang Tillmans**. Nearby, a more subtle image evokes Gauguin: *Dancing in Solitude* is a milky blend of shape and colour by **Eileen Cooper RA**. *Tree No 7* by Academician **Tony Bevan** in acrylic and charcoal swirls attractively against its white background. A few figurative works share space with abstracts, including *Untitled (Watch)*, a colourful acrylic on aluminium clock by Craig-Martin himself. Two subtle pieces by **Mick Moon**, *Noon Fishing* and *Dawn Fishing*, are both visually and texturally exciting.

Jock McFadyen expands the landscape theme he curates in Room II to invite a broader depiction of Britain. Notable are the contrasts between a snowy landscape bisected by a black path and another in which a massive white moon hovers over a deep blue sky dwarfing tiny buildings.

While political messages are rare this year, an imaginative narrative often takes over. Sculptures or two-dimensional art works resemble sets for *Harry Potter* or *Game of Thrones* – fantastical and threatening black, brooding shapes McFadyen's painting of *Dungeness* under a calm blue sky is nominated for the Charles Wollaston Award.

Grayson Perry's huge tapestry of *Julie and Rob*, a strong but tender Asian couple, dominates one end of the room. Room IV, curated by David Remfry, examines the texture of film and hair. I loved *Amer Fort and Orange Yellow* by **Güler Ates**, featuring the back of a woman veiled in orange in an old Indian fort. An untitled seated bronze figure with a tray by **Mimmo Paladino** exemplifies the excellent sculptures this year. Playful bronze miniatures sit beside **Antony Gormley's** heavy abstracts.

But finally, to return to painting, I was struck by *The Old House Dreams It Is Still There* by **Peter Messer** – a tender image of a ghost building between trees and shrubbery which have long covered its traces.

Most of the 1,200-plus works in this year's Summer Exhibition will be on sale to the public.

Annely Juda Fine Art

23 Dering Street
(off New Bond Street)
Tel: 020 7629 7578
Fax: 020 7491 2139

CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

A century-long saga

THE LADY IN GOLD: THE EXTRAORDINARY TALE OF GUSTAV KLIMT'S MASTERPIECE, PORTRAIT OF ADELE BLOCH-BAUER

by Anne-Marie O'Connor

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, 368 pp. hardcover, ISBN 9780307265647

Anne-Marie O'Connor begins her monumental book with a Prologue that describes what happened at the end of the century-long saga about which she writes, when a young Los Angeles attorney comes to Vienna's Belvedere Palace 'to lay claim to a painting he had spent years fighting for'.



So there is no suspense in store for the reader as he or she proceeds through the three separate sections and 80 (short) chapters of the book. Nevertheless, it is a gripping story, laying bare in considerable detail aspects of the intellectual and artistic life of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna up until 1938. The first section also describes the intricate relations between the various sections comprising Viennese society, focusing in particular on the several branches of the Bloch-Bauer family.

The Bloch-Bauers played a prominent role in society as wealthy patrons of the arts and it was Adele, the young wife of Ferdinand, who was the model for Klimt's painting. The second part of the book relates – again in considerable, and often harrowing, detail – what became of the family and other Austrian Jews after the *Anschluss*, describing exactly how their homes, commercial enterprises, stocks and shares, bank accounts and other property were stolen by the Nazis, aided and abetted by the Austrian population and authorities. The author also relates how individuals were abused, beaten, sent to concentration camps, raped and murdered. A few of the descendants of the Bloch-Bauer family managed to survive, however, and that is the key to what transpires in the last part of the book.

The third and final section recounts

the six-year legal battle undertaken by an unknown American-Jewish attorney, Randol Schoenberg, grandson of the composer, together with Maria Altmann, Adele's niece, to regain ownership of the painting from the Austrian authorities.

The author, who is a journalist, has used her professional skills to trace and interview many of the surviving members of a once prosperous and extended family. She has also spoken to officials at various levels of Austrian governmental, judicial and art circles, presenting the reader with a veritable smorgasbord of facts and figures pertaining to the myriad aspects of the complex litigation and emotional commitment of those involved.

As one reads the book the brilliant society of Vienna in the first third of the twentieth century takes shape before our eyes through the depictions of the painters, poets, writers and philosophers, many of them Jews, who were the flower of this society. Sigmund Freud, Alma Mahler, Stefan Zweig, Gustav Klimt and the painters of the Secession. Arthur Schnitzler and even Theodore Herzl grace the pages of the book with their presence, often situated in the cafés they tended to frequent, whether in order to drink their morning coffee, play chess, read the newspapers or meet friends.

Reading this book with hindsight one's heart sinks at the insistence of certain members of the Bloch-Bauer clan to remain in Vienna in order to retain control of their possessions. While the reader knows the inevitable fate that awaits them – stripped of everything but lucky to be left alive at best, or shipped off to a concentration camp in the worst cases - we see how each individual does his or her best to retain every last vestige of decency and honesty. Adele's niece, the newly-married Maria Altmann, is reunited with her bridegroom when he returns from months of starvation rations and hard labour in Dachau and the young couple are obliged to conduct their lives under the watchful eye of the Gestapo agent who has 'appropriated' their apartment. They managed to escape in just the clothes they were wearing (and a concealed pair of diamond earrings) by using false papers and pretending they were going to a dentist's appointment.

Adele's sister Luise managed to escape to Yugoslavia together with her husband Viktor and their two children. The family survived the Nazi occupation, although not without considerable suffering, but after the war the Communist government under Tito took power and Viktor was arrested for having been a 'capitalist who cooperated with the Nazis' and summarily executed. His teenage daughter Nelly was permitted to visit him in his prison cell on the night before his execution. This harrowing experience overshadowed her whole life. Nelly eventually emigrated to Canada, married a member of the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy, and became a leading figure in medical research.

Those two Bloch-Bauer descendants, Maria Altmann and Nelly Auersperg, were the leading figures in the legal battle to reclaim the Klimt painting and, while not always in agreement with one another as to the best way to proceed, both eventually benefited enormously (as did Randol Schoenberg), together with several other Bloch-Bauer relatives. The picture was purchased for \$135 million by one of American Jewry's leading figures, Ronald Lauder, and now hangs in his Neue Galerie in New York.

As readers will be aware, *Woman of Gold*, the British-American film of the story, went on general release earlier this year after having been screened in the Berlinale Special Galas section of the 65th Berlin International Film Festival. The World Jewish Congress (WJC) and The Weinstein Company announced that Academy Award-winner Helen Mirren would receive the WJC Recognition Award for her portrayal of Maria Altmann in the film and for helping to educate the public about the issues of Nazi-looted art.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Life of a heroic, if enigmatic, man

**ESCAPE, EVASION AND REVENGE:
THE TRUE STORY OF A GERMAN-
JEWISH RAF PILOT WHO BOMBED
BERLIN AND BECAME A POW**

by Marc H. Stevens

*Pen & Sword Aviation 2011, 223 pp.
paperback, £12.99, ISBN 1-84884-
554-5*

Who could have imagined that the brave RAF pilot who flew 22 combat operations before becoming a prisoner of war was in fact a German-Jewish refugee on the run from the police?

Georg Franz Hein escaped Nazi persecution by fleeing to England with his brother Erich to continue his education. Their wealthy family stayed in Hanover and many relatives perished in the Holocaust.

Unfortunately, once he had finished school in London Georg was soon in trouble. Having squandered the remains of the family fortune, he turned to crime to support himself and ended up in Wormwood Scrubs.

But immediately war erupted, while out on licence and still a German citizen, the 20-year-old committed identity theft and joined the RAF under the name of Peter Stevens. He was chosen to train as a pilot and flew solo for the first time in August 1940, six months later flying combat aircraft.

Stevens flew a Hampden, which was

fast becoming obsolete, and his last bombing mission was over Berlin, the limit of the aircraft's operational range.

Disaster struck when his aircraft was hit and, as fuel emptied, it proved impossible to reach England. He was forced to crash-land near Amsterdam during the early hours of 8 September 1941. The two rear gunners had already bailed out: one was captured and the body of the other was never found. Stevens and his navigator were discovered by German soldiers and taken prisoners of war.

During the next four long years Stevens was sent to a series of camps where rations were scarce. He always existed at great personal risk: had the Germans ever learned his true identity, he would have been tortured and summarily executed as a traitor.

As it was, escaping became his *raison d'être* and his great advantage was being a German in his own country. He was able to understand what the guards said and his linguistic skills also enabled him to forge the vital documents needed when anyone broke free.

Stevens was always recaptured but, on the first occasion, he visited his hometown of Hanover, where he learned that his mother had committed suicide in July 1939. Relatives gave food and money but he was later captured in Frankfurt.

Having been recaptured after covering 350 miles in a second successful escape, he was sent to Stalag Luft III, near Sagan, designed to make breakouts impossible. Nevertheless, he helped to plan the 'Great Escape' and the 'Wooden Horse' escape, although he never got back to England himself.

After the war, when the true nature of his exploits came to light, Stevens was awarded a Military Cross. His commanding officer said he acted with 'conspicuous gallantry and went quite low before dropping his bombs'.

At the beginning of the Cold War Stevens served as a British spy before emigrating to Canada. There he married and enjoyed a successful professional life starting as a personnel manager for an aeroplane company. He never told his Catholic wife or two sons of his Jewish origins.

Stevens died in 1979 and was always reluctant to discuss the war with his son Marc, the author of this biography, who provides a painstaking and thrilling reconstruction of his brilliant father's life. The book is meticulously researched and provides unique insight into an extremely courageous and heroic, if enigmatic, man. The story would make a very good film!

Janet Weston



'THE LAST FAREWELL': INAUGURATION OF KINDERTRANSPORT MEMORIAL IN HAMBURG



The statue sculpted by Frank Meisler in honour of the Kindertransport that was unveiled in Hamburg with the plaque that accompanies it

The AJR was delighted and honoured to support the inauguration of The Last Farewell, a statue sculpted by the internationally acclaimed artist Frank Meisler, himself a *Kind*, in Hamburg on 6 May.

In 2006 Frank Meisler was awarded the Freedom of the City of London in recognition of his work producing a similar statue at Liverpool Street Station, where he and hundreds of others arrived from Nazi-occupied Europe. He has also created monuments in Berlin, Rotterdam and his home

town of Danzig/Gdansk.

The AJR was represented at the inauguration of the Hamburg statue by Sir Erich Reich, Chairman of the AJR-Kindertransport Special Interest Group, and staff members Andrea Goodmaker and Carol Rossen. The monument was unveiled by the Mayor of Hamburg, Olaf Scholz.

'After Berlin and Frankfurt, Hamburg was one of the hubs of the transportation,' said Lisa Bechner,

leader of the Kindertransport Organisation of Germany. 'Also, about 500 children were sent by their parents from northern Germany to England. Most of them came from Hamburg but some were from Kiel, Jever, Bremen, Schwerin and Wismar. Their ages ranged from three months to 17 years.' From Hamburg the transports went by train to Rotterdam and from there by ship to England.

ARTS AND EVENTS JULY DIARY

Wed 1 Dan Michman, Professor of Modern Jewish History and Chair of the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research at Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan: 'Shoah, Holocaust, Churban and More: On the Emergence of Names for the Lethal Nazi Anti-Jewish Campaign'. At Wiener Library 6.30 pm – 8 pm, admission free, tel 020 7636 7247

Sun 5 English Chamber Choir and Jazz Trio 'The Jewish American Songbook' Songs by George and Ira Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Weill and many more. At JW3, 8 pm, tel Immanuel on 020 7433 8988

To 2 Oct 2015 'Humanity After the Holocaust: The Jewish Relief Unit, 1943-1950' This newly curated temporary exhibition at the Wiener Library marks the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen. The exhibition focuses on the Library's outstanding collections relating to the post-war relief and rehabilitation work of the Jewish Relief Unit in Bergen-Belsen and elsewhere. 10 am-5 pm Monday to Friday and until 7.30 pm on Tuesdays. Admission free. Tel 020 7636 7247

30 YEARS AS A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

At the Kindertransport Group monthly lunch meeting in May, our speaker was my younger son Paul Lang, making a welcome return visit.

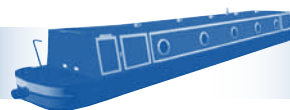
This time, Paul told us about his 30 years as a professional photographer since he was a teenager – though even before that he was into photography! He projected for us a photo of one of his earliest assignments when, at his sixth birthday party, he positioned his little friends in our garden and took a group photo of them

Paul also showed us the cameras he has used over the years, ranging from a simple Instamatic to a modern digital camera, which he now uses for weddings and barmitzvahs.

David Lang

Visit to the London Canal Museum

Thursday 16 July 2015



At the London Canal Museum you can see inside a narrow boat cabin and learn about the history of London's canals, the cargoes carried, the people who lived and worked on the waterways, and the horses that pulled their boats.

Peer down into the unique heritage of a huge Victorian ice well used to store ice imported from Norway and brought by ship and canal boat.

This unique waterways museum is housed in a former ice warehouse built in about 1862-3 for Carlo Gatti, the famous ice cream maker, and features the history of the ice trade and ice cream as well as the canals.

Following on from this visit we will have lunch in a nearby restaurant.

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

'DEEDS NOT WORDS!' DEMANDS MEETING ON HOLOCAUST IN HUNGARY

A well attended special seminar focusing on Hungary's role as chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was held at the Wiener Library in May. The seminar was organised jointly by the AJR, which is part of the UK delegation to IHRA, and the Library.

The purpose of the gathering was to assess critically the Hungarian Government's approach to memorialising the Holocaust and its impact on Hungarian civil society as well as to evaluate Hungary's plans for the IHRA chairmanship.

The IHRA describes itself as an 'intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally'. The IHRA has played a leading role in commemorative activity across the world since its founding in 1998 and operates a rotating chairmanship, which last year was held by Britain and this March passed to Hungary.

In recent years, however, serious concerns have emerged about the politics of Holocaust commemoration in Hungary. This raised the question: Was it possible for Hungary to provide the moral leadership in Holocaust commemoration that is demanded by taking on the IHRA chairmanship?

The event at the Wiener Library provided an opportunity to explore this question. The members of the panel were Paul Shapiro, Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies; Dr Mária Vass-Salazar, Deputy Head of Mission (standing in for His Excellency Péter Szabadhegy, Hungarian Ambassador to the UK, who was unable to attend); Susan Pollack, a survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen, born in Hungary; and Michael Newman, Chief Executive Officer of the AJR. The meeting was chaired by Ben Barkow, Director of the Wiener Library.

Keynote speaker Paul Shapiro provided a historical overview of Hungary's role in the Holocaust, outlining its complicity in those events, and touching on the present-day situation with the rise of the anti-Semitic and anti-Roma Jobbik Party. He further criticised Hungary's ruling Fidesz Party for its trivialisation and distortion of the Holocaust and its rehabilitation of figures such as Miklós Horthy, Hungary's war-time ruler and ally of Hitler.

Dr Mária Vass-Salazar mounted a defence of the Hungarian Government's approach to the Holocaust and anti-Semitism generally and outlined measures her Government was taking in the realm of policy, legislation and



Paul Shapiro, Susan Pollack

education.

Susan Pollack spoke passionately of the need for Hungary to reassess its attitude towards the Holocaust. Not words but strong legislation and education were required: 'The world will be watching Hungary!' she declared.

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman described the purpose, origins and development of IHRA and, in particular, its members' commitment to the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust.

In an emotional audience discussion, issues such as Hungary's 'victimhood' and Fidesz's 'insincerity' were repeatedly raised. The overall sentiment expressed was that deeds not words regarding Hungary's attitude to the Holocaust and present-day anti-Semitism were required.

AN OBSCENELY TRAGIC SITUATION: THE FATE OF GÜNTHER UNGER

In Berlin in the 1930s, my father and Bruno Unger were not only colleagues but also close friends. By coincidence, Bruno's son Günther and I were in the same class at the Grosse Hamburgerstr. Schule Jewish secondary school, now known as the Moses Mendelssohn Gymnasium. Günther and I were the best singers in the class, though he had a slight advantage over me in that he could memorise songs a little more quickly than I and he was thus chosen whenever the teacher, Alfred Loewy, wanted a newly learnt song demonstrated. Loewy was murdered in Auschwitz and, not long after the *Wende*, I took the initiative in having the music room in the school, which had been undamaged and restored, named the Zimmer Alfred Loewy.

The Ungers emigrated to New Zealand and to this day I can hear Bruno saying to my father at the station while waiting for the train 'Dieses ist meine schwerste Stunde!' (This is my darkest hour). Little did Bruno realise that he would have to endure an even more serious time later.

They settled in Auckland and Günther studied, and eventually qualified in,

dentistry. An additional room was installed in his father's practice and, before Günther actually started work in 1950, he and a group of friends went out in a launch for a cruise to the nearby dormant volcanic Mayor Island off North



(from left) Suzi Goldberg (had recently arrived from Theresienstadt), Pat Unger, Mina Gillespie (Günther's fiancée), Ralf, Günther

Island. All of a sudden, a storm blew up and the boat was driven on to the rocky shore and smashed to pieces, resulting in the deaths of 22 people, including Günther. I well remember my parents' reaction when they received the letter informing them of this tragedy: it will not escape readers of this journal how obscenely tragic this situation was.

Following a brief further exchange of correspondence, all contact with the family ceased until, a few years ago, a letter appeared in the Berlin journal *Aktuell* from a Ralf Unger in New Zealand. I knew Günther had a brother called Heinz but I took a chance and wrote to Ralf, who was indeed Günther's younger brother: Ralf had changed his name as he didn't want to be associated with the well-known food company. Fortunately, he and his wife Pat were planning to visit the UK shortly afterwards and we met at the home of an ex-Berlin lady friend whose parents were even closer friends with the Ungers than my parents had been.

Pat has just written to me that a New Zealand television company has made a film commemorating the disaster as part of a series of such and I have requested a copy. Pat and Ralf have four sons and seven grandchildren. The eldest son is called David Günther and the third son, Simon, has a son named Bruno. All children and grandchildren are either graduates or undergraduates. Sadly Ralf died recently.

Rudi Leavor



EALING Female Flyers

Paul Lang gave us a fascinating talk about the part played by women in aviation. He began with an account of the early pioneers such as Amy Johnson and Amelia Earhart, continued with the key role played by women during WWII – flying aircraft from factories to airfields – and ending with the situation in the last 20 years, which has seen women become pilots of commercial airlines as well as space travellers.

Leslie Sommer

DUNDEE A Delightful Afternoon

A delightful afternoon at the home of Zofia Allen. We were delighted to welcome Karola and Peter Regent and Charlotte Gamzu to our gathering. There was no shortage of topics of conversation – rather of finding sufficient time to explore the numerous points of interest over a delicious tea. Armed with all these topics, we look forward to future gatherings here.

Agnes Isaacs

ILFORD 'Mishmash: A Walk through Jewish Trivia'

Another session of nostalgia, this time from Tony Zandle, who gave us a talk on 'Jewish Trivia', which included clips from old films, all fondly remembered, as well as amusing trifles to astound us. An unusual but – as always – very pleasant morning.

Meta Roseneil

SHEFFIELD CF The Life of Geoffrey Perry

Ian Vellins gave an absolutely fascinating talk on Geoffrey Perry, a refugee from Germany who became a well-known millionaire publisher. While serving as an officer in the British army, Perry was involved in the shooting and capture of the British traitor Lord Haw-Haw. The talk generated much lively discussion and was followed by the usual excellent refreshments.

Renee Martin

PINNER Home Office Insights

Leslie Sommer gave us insights into his posts in the Home Office including Prison Service (parole, deportation), Fire Service (Green Goddess during strike), and Coroner's Office (disabled access). Leslie observed the precept that a good civil servant should listen well and get on with everybody.

Walter Weg

HGS History of the Wiener Library

The Wiener Library's Katy Jackson gave us a most informative and interesting account of the history of the Library. Along with all the plans for the future, her PowerPoint presentation was quite remarkable. Facts and figures are still being updated. The Library now provides an incredible online service with an interactive map of the world on which one can pinpoint a town and obtain a family history.

Hazel Beiny

ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) From Obscurity to Lord Chief Justice

We had a very intimate meeting with the very knowledgeable Godfrey Gould on the life of Rufus Isaacs. Rufus, born in 1860, was a Sephardi of Dutch descent who rose from obscurity to the position of Lord Chief Justice, which aroused anti-Semitic feelings.

Larry Lisner

ST JOHN'S WOOD 'The Kaiser's Jewish Soldiers'

Dr Toby Simpson, Learning and Engagement Manager at the Wiener Library, gave a very interesting talk entitled 'The Kaiser's Jewish Soldiers'. We also heard about the history of the Library, where this story is well documented, and about its founder, Dr Alfred Wiener.

Kitty Balint-Kurti

HULL CF Lunch and Documentary Film

A delicious lunch was followed by a showing of the excellent documentary film about Sir Nicholas Winton, *The Power of Good*.

Wendy Bott

BOOK CLUB A Popular Choice

Meeting at Joseph's Bookstore in London's Temple Fortune district, we discussed the novel *Butterfly's Shadow* by Lee Langley, which was enjoyed by all who read it. Our next book is Ian McEwan's *The Children Act*, which

has had very good reviews and is very different from our usual choice.

Irene Goodman

WELWYN GC A Man of Principle?

Lesley Urbach spoke to us about the political and personal life of Herbert Morrison, on whom she has just completed her Masters degree. Morrison, whose father was a policeman and who lost an eye in an accident as a child, was responsible for the evacuation of children from London during the Blitz. One of his daughters married Peter Mandelson. Morrison was described as a man of principle but, as we learned, his principles changed like the wind!

Hazel Beiny

GLASGOW BOOK CLUB A Most Enjoyable Afternoon

The May Book Club was held at the home of Anthea Berg. As usual, it was a most enjoyable afternoon spent discussing our book, Philippa Gregory's *The Constant Princess*, which was enjoyed by everyone. Followed by a lovely tea.

Agnes Isaacs

CARDIFF Residents of Ostrawa

Members enjoyed a delicious deli lunch with rye bread, salmon and other goodies. David Lawson presented his fascinating talk about residents of Ostrawa. He had done detailed research and it was especially interesting to see how descendants of the original individuals had fared, and particularly gratifying to note how large the families had become and how much they had achieved.

Kathryn Prevezer

NORTH LONDON 'London and the Wine Trade'

Debbie Pearson talked to us on the subject 'London and the Wine Trade' as it has developed over the past decades. One has to say that the talk was largely historical – although we were given a chance of a taster, red or white

Herbert Haberberg

WEMBLEY Special Chocolate Tasting For Research Purposes ...

We were treated to a talk, including some fascinating scientific facts, by Professor Michael Spiro on the history of chocolate, with a special tasting – for research purposes of course! This was followed by tea and cakes

Kathryn Prevezer



OUTING TO REGENT'S PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE

THURSDAY 9 JULY 2015

2.15-5.00 pm

'The Seagull' by Chekhov

As guests assemble at a country house for the staging of an *avant-garde* open-air play, artistic temperaments ignite a more entertaining drama behind the scenes, with romantic jealousies, self-doubt and the ruthless pursuit of happiness confusing lives, loves and literature.

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JULY GROUP EVENTS

Book Club	1 July	Social Discussion
Café Imperial	1 July	tbc
Ilford	1 July	Social Morning with Music
Pinner	2 July	Sarah Walford, Nutritionist: 'Feel Better: Simple Ways to Improve Your Wellbeing with Food'
Sheffield	5 July	Afternoon Tea at Botanical Gardens
Newcastle	6 July	Barbara Winton Event
Ealing	7 July	Dr Eric Moonman: 'The Best of Health'
Liverpool	7 July	Afternoon Tea at Tea Rooms
Glasgow Book Club	9 July	Social
HGS	13 July	Lynn Julius: 'Jews in the Arab World'
Essex (Westcliff)	14 July	Speaker: Otto Deutsch
St John's Wood	14 July	David Barnett: 'Judith Montefiore'
Radlett	15 July	Lesley Urbach: 'The Story of Labour MP Herbert Morrison'
Brighton	20 July	Jenny Manson: 'From Pogrom to Public School, 1918-19'
Marlow CF	20 July	Social Get-together
Edgware	21 July	Lesley Urbach: 'The Story of Labour MP Herbert Morrison'
Wembley	22 July	Nick Dobson: 'Dazzling Dahlias – a Colourful Introduction with Slides'
Oxford	23 July	Summer Luncheon
Welwyn GC	23 July	Mike Levy: 'Great Jewish Lyricists (Gershwin etc)'
Kensington	27 July	Social
Norfolk	28 July	Musical Social and Lunch
North West London	28 July	Trip to Rinkoff Bakery
Nottingham	29 July	Lunch at home of Ruth and Jurgen
North London	30 July	Kathryn Prevezer: 'My Trip to WWI Battlefields'

CONTACTS

Hazel Beiny
Southern Groups Co-ordinator
07966 887 434 hazel@ajr.org.uk

Wendy Bott
Northern Groups Co-ordinator
07908 156 365 wendy@ajr.org.uk

Susan Harrod
Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

Agnes Isaacs
Scotland and Newcastle Groups
Co-ordinator
07908 156 361 agnes@ajr.org.uk

Kathryn Prevezer
Southern Groups Co-ordinator
07966 969 951 kathryn@ajr.org.uk

Esther Rinkoff
Southern Groups Co-ordinator
07966 631 778 esther@ajr.org.uk

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker
020 8385 3070 andrea@ajr.org.uk

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld
020 8954 5298 h.obstfeld@talk21.com

FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS

Death

Gerry (Gerhart) Sigler (born Prague 05.04.21, died London 30.05 2015) passed away at the grand old age of 94 years. He will be sorely missed by his two children Janet and Nicholas, their partners, his four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Arriving in this country on the Kindertransport in 1938, he contributed much to the Jewish community, took an enduring interest in Holocaust learning, and was a man of great humour, intelligence, education and kindness.

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OBITUARY

Marianne Leavor, born Breslau 12 October 1933, died Bradford 15 April 2015

Marianne, the only child of Rudi and Erna Bright (previously Breitbarth), was born in Breslau, now Wrocław. Her parents decided to have no more children because of the political situation. Rudi, a lawyer, was interned in Buchenwald and was released only when they could produce visas for England, guaranteed by Dr Fritz and Alice Engel. They came in March 1939.

With Rudi unable to carry out his profession, the parents worked at menial jobs while Marianne as a five-year-old made good progress at school. They lived first in Timsbury near Bath, then in Kempley in the heart of Gloucestershire, then in London, where Rudi worked as a consultant at the United Restitution

Organization and studied accountancy.

Marianne gained Higher School Certificate at Princes Road Grammar School in Kingsbury and worked as a secretary for Trans-Canada Air Lines. She joined the B'nai B'rith Youth Group which met at West London Synagogue and through which she met her husband, also called Rudi. The group, now adults, still meets once a year.

Rudi too was a refugee. As he lived in Bradford she had no choice but to move there when they married. Though she became a good Bradfordian, she always liked to go back to London to see her parents and friends.



Four children came along: Anthony, Jonathan, Deborah and Caroline, who all pursued academic careers. They eventually married and between them had eight grandchildren. Birthdays and festivals were always celebrated for 18 people – which was a crowd, but Marianne wouldn't have it otherwise. There was great love between all the family members.

Cancer became an interloper but Marianne survived for nine years. A consolation for all was that, when she died peacefully, the immediate family were with her. She will be sadly missed by many relatives and friends.

Rudi Leavor

The courage to care and the will to act

I found the article by Lesley Urbach about Herbert Morrison in the April issue of the Journal very interesting. There is no doubt that there are many people today, including politicians, who are not aware of their own deep anti-Jewish hostility: fear that rescuing endangered Jews will set off uncontrollable anti-Semitism, like fear of racist riots if you allow in asylum seekers, usually masks deep personal hostility or racism.

When I speak with groups on Holocaust issues, I usually challenge participants to think outside their comfort zone with the challenging question 'Who actually owns Planet Earth?' Are we not all temporary tenants for the biblical 'three score years and ten' or the modern four score years and ten if we are lucky? What gives us the right to refuse to rescue fellow human beings from violent death on such footling self-interested excuses? Morrison's generation did not learn from the hushed-up Ottoman genocide and our generation has not yet learned the lessons of the Holocaust. There is still so much unwitting denial and so much indifference that makes people reluctant to open their eyes, their minds and their hearts as to how their own actions – and particularly their inaction – might be causing misery and suffering.

How many people have given any thought to the suffering caused by the failure to bring the Ottoman genocide to justice and closure after 100 years? The generations of the survivors carry

the burden of keeping the memory of this genocide alive until the modern Turks, the inheritors of the perpetrators, are ready to face their history. They also carry the burden of their ancestors being murdered a second time by denial, while the rest of us avoid responsibility by colluding with denial. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust slogan this year is 'Keep the Memory Alive'. But this becomes a means for denial when only the Holocaust is selected for commemoration. And quite often this leaves out the genocide against Roma in the same camps and killing fields, the disabled murdered in the T4 Euthanasia programme, and all the political opponents summarily murdered or tortured to death.

April 24 1915 is the date on which the Armenian community in Istanbul was literally beheaded: its leaders and intelligentsia were rounded up and decapitated in public, after which the rest of the Christian communities were evicted into the desert and murdered. Britain and France reneged on their wartime promise to bring the perpetrators to justice after the First World War, enabling the modern Turkish Republic to impose denial ever since. This year, the Armenian Embassy's commemoration in Westminster Abbey on April 24 was 'postponed' (probably meaning cancelled) on the absurd excuse that it was too near the election date! Even the Pope requested the cancellation of the commemoration this year in Erevan in response to Turkey's threat against the Christian community in Istanbul. The only

major centenary commemoration I know of was in Cardiff on April 24 and I was there.

There was an interesting review of two books under the heading 'Hitler and the Muslims' in the April edition of the *New York Review of Books* that shows just how much the Ottoman genocide contributed to Hitler's 'Final Solution'. The two books are *Islam and Nazi Germany's War* by David Motadel and *Ataturk in the Nazi Imagination* by Stephen Ihrig (both Harvard University Press).

I am convinced that, had the Ottoman genocide been brought to justice, the Holocaust could – and probably would – have been prevented. Not even the Holocaust has inspired enough people to protest early enough to create the will for action to prevent the many genocides since 1945. As the saying goes, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' Twenty years ago, when I started talking in schools in response to the government's requirement of Holocaust education in the curriculum, groups of school students regularly thought the Holocaust could never happen again. At least in the last few years, every group has told me they think that if the Holocaust happened once it could happen again. I then tell them it surely will happen again unless enough of us are determined not to allow it – which means developing the courage to care and the will to act.

Ruth Barnett



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Gardens well worth a visit

In May, after several unseasonably cold and rainy days, the day for the tour of the Botanical Gardens by the group of English-speaking ladies to which I belong was dry and fine (and neither too hot nor too cold).

Our guide led us first to what she euphemistically called the Japanese Garden, but the sight that met our eyes was somewhat disappointing, with what looked like half a dozen Bonsai trees (trees that have been miniaturised by pruning and special methods of cultivation) ranged in pots along a rough wooden plank. This was deceptive, however, as the gardens contain 150 such trees, the world's largest collection of them. There were many more wooden planks, each with its own assortment of trees. In addition, the garden contains a number of Japanese cherry trees. Because of Jerusalem's unique climate, those that were planted to enable Israelis to enjoy the Sakura festival had bloomed in February, two months earlier than in Japan. We were told that April is usually the best time to visit the gardens as that is when many flowers are in bloom.

While there were also some other Japanese plants and trees to be found in this section, the most striking element was an unusual plaque engraved on an enormous green rock that had been brought from Japan, marking the 'ties of friendship between Israel and Japan'. The monument was erected by Japanese followers of Reverend Shinmin Sakamo and bears a touching text reminding the visitor of the age-old aspiration for peace of the Jewish people and all humanity. The idea of a minimalist Japanese garden that inspires the visitor with a sense of harmony and tranquility was notably absent, but perhaps that will be attained one day.

After our tour of that part of the Botanical Gardens, we proceeded along the paths to other sections. The gardens are arranged according to phytogeographic region, and so plants from South Africa are situated in the Mediterranean section, where they usually feel very much at home. Our guide told us with genuine sorrow, however, that many of those plants and trees had been adversely affected by the snowfall this winter, as Jerusalem's climate constitutes a unique combination of European and Mediterranean features

not found anywhere else. I remember the mantra of Miss Jones, my geography teacher at school, telling us about the typical Mediterranean climate: 'hot dry summers, warm wet winters'. Jerusalem's summers are certainly hot and dry but, because of its elevation, its winters can be very cold and snow is not an unusual occurrence.

The gardens also have sections displaying the plants and trees of other regions, and so in the European part we were treated to the sight of a full-blown English oak tree. Although oaks grow naturally in Galilee these are smaller than the European kind. We were told that the English oak grows faster in Israel than in its native habitat and the one we saw was undoubtedly a splendid specimen. We were also shown an olive tree that is indigenous to South Africa, its fruit being smaller and drier than the kind that grows in Israel.

We ended our tour by taking the little train that chugs along the paths to tour the rest of the garden, making our way back to the entrance along flower-lined paths. On our way we encountered groups of schoolchildren, both Israeli and Palestinian, enjoying the grass-covered play areas and the natural beauty that abounds everywhere. The gardens cover a large area comprising several *dunams* on a rocky hill adjacent to the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and are well worth a visit at any time of the year.

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

well as English, stated that their aim is the destruction of the 'Zionist entity' and the elimination of all Jews from the area (only the area?), what exactly would Ms Salinger talk about with Hamas? The location of the mass graves for the 'colonising Zionists'?

L. Roman, London

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

Sir – A bribery and corruption scandal is engulfing the football world. If it were not for the huge amounts of money paid for seats in the stadia by football fans, the present state of affairs would never have happened. A new executive of FIFA should be chosen primarily of Europeans. After all, football started in Europe and England created it!

It makes one wonder how many rogues in other organisations, public bodies, associations and institutions have escaped detection, investigation and censure so far. Money may not be the root of all evil but it certainly flourishes profusely at the top! One only needs to think back to the expenses swindles of a few years ago. Many MPs lost their seats, but by no means all of them. They still hold positions in government for one reason only – the votes of the people.

How is it possible for authorities to consistently make the headlines for a variety of offences? We read about organisations, such as schools, hospitals and other public institutions, being under scrutiny for many years before any action is taken against them. People die unnecessarily, being

treated for ailments by bogus professionals. The absence of sufficient trained teachers and lecturers gives students a bad start in life. Unscrupulous individuals continue to offend despite tens of previous convictions. The number of examples is endless.

We must all take responsibility for allowing the present state of affairs to persist by acceptance and inaction. Except for newspapers, political correctness ensures that offending matters are not brought out into the open. This is in direct contravention of democracy and freedom of speech. Moreover, it is the underlying cause of the country's ever increasing financial burden. Its abolition has been promised many times. Let it be our first goal.

Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx

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