

AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Germans, Greeks, Jews

The apparently never-ending crisis that has enveloped Greece since the economic crash of 2008 has brought the relations between that country and Germany sharply into the limelight of public debate. Germany's position as the most powerful country in the Eurozone and as one of debt-ridden Greece's principal creditors has propelled Berlin into the role of prime arbiter in the Greek imbroglio; Germany's hard-line stance on Greek debt and economic restructuring has led to its being viewed in some quarters as the arch-villain of the piece.

But relations between the two countries go back far beyond the current crisis and beyond the German occupation of Greece between 1941 and 1944, which still casts a terrible shadow over present-day events. In the late 18th century, many decades before Germany emerged as a unified nation in 1871, the culture of classical Greece powerfully influenced German culture. The Classical movement, associated with Goethe and Schiller, the greatest names in German literature, drew its inspiration in no small measure from Greek antiquity. The painstaking researches of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-68), the archaeologist and art historian and an important influence on Goethe, revealed what Roman culture – hitherto considered the crowning glory of antiquity – in reality owed to the Greeks. Though German writers in search of the sun-kissed clarity and harmony of Classical art travelled to Italy, as Goethe did in 1786, rather than to distant

Greece, still under Turkish rule and unwelcoming to visiting literati, it was Greece as much as Rome that constituted the cultural ideal of German Classicism.

Works such as Goethe's drama *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (Iphigenia in Tauris) and Schiller's epic poems *Die Bürgschaft* (The Hostage) and *Die Kraniche des Ibykus* (The Cranes of Ibycus) – learnt by heart by generations of German and Austrian schoolchildren in bygone times – testify to the hold of ancient Greece over the creative imagination of German writers of the Classical period. Less well known is Schiller's resonant poem *Nänie*, whose title derives from the Greek word for a funeral elegy. Written in the spare, severe Classical form of the elegiac couplet, which alternates hexameters (metrical lines of six feet) with pentameters (lines of five feet), *Nänie* is a profoundly moving lament for the inevitable mortality of all things human. It begins with the arresting formulation 'Auch das Schöne muss sterben' (Even that which is beautiful must die), and goes on to illustrate this with examples, taken from Greek mythology, of the qualities that constitute the glory of humankind: love, beauty, heroism.

The poem culminates in a universal



Friedrich Schiller, 1759–1805

lament for human mortality: 'Siehe! Da weinen die Götter, es weinen die Göttinnen alle, / Dass das Schöne vergeht, dass das Vollkommene stirbt' (See! The gods weep, the goddesses, they all weep, / That what is beautiful must pass away, that what is perfect must die). But it concludes on a note of reconciliation with the fate of everything mortal, for in mourning the death of the best of humankind, the gods (and we) commemorate them

and perpetuate their memory, in this case, through the poem/funeral elegy itself. What is deserving of commemoration is that which is truly noble in human life: 'Auch ein Klaglied zu sein im Munde der Geliebten ist herrlich; / Denn das Gemeine geht klanglos zum Orkus hinab' (Just to be a song of lament on the lips of the beloved ones is glorious; / For what is base goes down to Hades unsung).

Arguably the most memorable fusion of Greek and German culture in this period occurs in the work of Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843). The eponymous hero of Hölderlin's epistolary novel *Hyperion*, published in two volumes in 1797 and 1799, is a young idealist who participates

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The following letter appeared in the London Jewish News on 4 September 2015:

Dear Mr Cameron,

As a former child refugee, who was rescued on the Kindertransport, I urge you to commit the United Kingdom to once again demonstrate its humanitarian compassion by providing a safe haven to many more of the children fleeing persecution in war-torn Syria.

Without the intervention and determination of many people of many faiths, I – along with some 10,000 others – would have perished. I strongly believe that we must not stand by, while the oppressed need our help. We cannot ignore the sight of desperate people and in such a crisis we must act to save the most vulnerable refugees: the children, and provide them with the same sanctuary I,

along with others, was fortunate to receive.

Although the circumstances surrounding the current refugee crisis are notably different to the persecution the Jewish people of Europe endured under the Nazis before and during the Holocaust, the words of MP Philip Noel Baker echo loudly from the debate he instigated in Parliament in November 1938.

'I beg to move, that this House notes with profound concern the deplorable treatment suffered by certain racial, religious and political minorities [in Europe], and, in view of the growing gravity of the refugee problem would welcome an immediate concerted effort amongst the nations, including the United States of America, to secure a common policy,' he said.

From humble, unfamiliar and uncertain beginnings, many of my fellow Kinder turned adversity into triumph and went on to leave a rich legacy to their adopted homeland. Given the same opportunity, some of the refugees we help today could equally make invaluable contributions to British society, and we would be able to take great pride in taking the lead to perform our moral duty.

As we approach the Jewish New Year, it is my fervent wish that we offer a new hope to a new generation of child refugees.

Yours sincerely

Sir Erich Reich
Chairman
Kindertransport-AJR


Germans, Greeks, Jews
continued

in the Greek uprising of 1770 against Ottoman rule, the precursor of the Greek War of Independence (1821-32). In his poetry, Hölderlin draws inspiration from ancient Greece, which he saw as a society where human beings lived in harmony with nature and the creative spirit of the divine, a harmony that had been lost in modern society and that Hölderlin hoped would be recreated in Germany.

In an unorthodox synthesis of Christian and Greek deities, Hölderlin celebrated Christ as the last in a line of gods who had made themselves visible to human beings; after Christ, the age of light, that of divine presence, was replaced by the age of darkness, that of divine absence. The dawning of that age of light and of a human community infused with divine values is celebrated in *Der Archipelagus* (The Archipelago, meaning Greece), in the visionary re-creation of the city of Athens in its golden period following the defeat of the invading Persians at the naval battle of Salamis (480 BCE). In his great elegy *Brot und Wein* (Bread and Wine), Hölderlin also fuses the figure of Christ – bread and wine are the consecrated elements used in the Eucharist (Holy Communion) to symbolise the body and blood of Christ – with Dionysus, the Greek god of wine whose birth is associated with thunder and lightning, the forces that fertilise the earth and bring forth grain for bread.

But *Brot und Wein* lapses into deep pessimism as the poet, contemplating the darkness around him, poses the plaintive question 'wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit' (what use is a poet in an impoverished age?). He consoles himself with the belief that the gods had left signs of their past presence in the bread and wine, tokens of their future reappearance in a renewed age of light. One of the most famous of Hölderlin's hymns, *Patmos*, takes its title from the name of the Greek island where St John the Divine is thought to have written the Book of Revelation. Hölderlin believed this St John to be identical with St John the Apostle, author of the Gospel of John and the last living person to have known Christ on earth. The poem thematises the last human contact with the age of divine presence; thereafter, darkness and

alienation ruled, until the spirit of ancient Greece might reawaken elsewhere.

After achieving independence in 1832, Greece was ruled by a royal house from Germany; the first king of Greece was the Bavarian prince Otto of Wittelsbach, who ruled for 30 years until he was deposed in 1862. His successor was William of Glücksburg, who ruled from 1863 as George I. Though the house of Glücksburg was the ruling house of Denmark, its full name, Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, reveals that it too was heavily Germanised: only Sonderburg and the northern part of Schleswig are not in Germany. George was assassinated in 1913 and was succeeded by his son, Constantine I, whose pro-German inclinations during the First World War brought him into conflict with Prime Minister Venizelos; Constantine opted for a policy of neutrality, while Venizelos wished Greece to enter the war on the side of the Allies. Constantine's reign was stormy: he was twice forced to abdicate, the second time in 1922, when he was succeeded by his eldest son, George II. The German heritage of the Greek royal house continued to manifest itself: Princess Alice of Battenberg, mother of the Duke of Edinburgh, was married to Prince Andrew of Greece, one of George I's sons.

After the Second World War, Greece received reparations from Germany for the appalling losses and suffering inflicted on its people during the German occupation. These were fixed in 1960 at DM 115 million. When Greeks now complain of the inadequacy of these payments, they should remember the failings in Greece's own treatment of its Jewish citizens, whose sufferings in the Holocaust have received scant recognition from their Greek compatriots. In the matter of restitution, Jews had very great difficulty after 1945 in recovering Jewish property that had been confiscated by the Germans and had then fallen into the hands of non-Jewish Greeks.

The ethnic exclusiveness that characterises Greek nationalism has led to an intolerance of minorities that are not ethnically Greek. That intolerance manifests itself in the effective disappearance of the Jews of Greece from public memory. In Salonika, where Jews formed the majority of the city's inhabitants in 1912, when the city passed from Turkish to Greek rule, they are now a fraction of 1 per cent of the population, thanks to the Holocaust and to emigration to Israel. In her study *The Jewish Community of Salonika: History, Memory, Identity*, Bea Lewkowicz states that as late as the 1990s Jewish history was 'absent from the consciousness of the majority of the city's population'. She was shocked when her taxi driver refused to acknowledge the very existence of the square that had been named 'Jewish Martyrs' Square' and, when he eventually drove her there, to find that the square's name had been spray-painted over, leaving only the word 'square' legible. Jewish tombstones were also visible as part of the city's paths, walls and courtyards,

including in the university. Lewkowicz is at pains to state that this situation has since changed for the better; but the increase in the popularity of the openly anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn is hardly a reassuring portent.

Anthony Grenville

AJR Lunch Sunday 11 October 2015

*If you would like to attend,
please complete the enclosed
form and return it to us ASAP*

KRISTALLNACHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Belsize Square Synagogue

Wednesday 11 November 2015, 2 pm

Please join us for a service to commemorate the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

We will be lighting memorial candles and there will be a guest speaker. Light refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the service.

We are providing free transport to and from Belsize Square Synagogue with collections at Stanmore, Golders Green and Finchley Road Station.

**Please contact Karin Pereira at
AJR Head Office on
020 8385 3070 or at karin@ajr.org.uk if
you would like to travel on the coach.**

Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR)

The Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at **11 am on Tuesday 24 November 2015 at Belsize Square Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX.**

The following serving Trustees are being proposed for re-election: Andrew Kaufman, Joanna Millan and Sir Erich Reich.

Any associate member wishing to nominate any other associate member for election as a Trustee must submit a proposal signed by ten associate members to the AJR's Chief Executive, together with the signed agreement of the person being nominated.

The deadline to submit nominations is midday on Friday 23 October 2015, duly received at the AJR's offices: Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL.

AJR Chief Executive
Michael Newman

Finance Director
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Heads of Department
Karen Markham *Human Resources & Administration*
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Carol Hart *Community & Volunteer Services*

AJR Journal
Dr Anthony Grenville *Consultant Editor*
Dr Howard Spier *Executive Editor*
Andrea Goodmaker *Secretarial / Advertisements*

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

RECOLLECTIONS OF SIR NICHOLAS

The obituary of Sir Nicholas Winton in the August issue of the *AJR Journal* reminded me of a meeting my colleague Felicity Griffiths and I had with him at his home in Maidenhead on 28 February 2005. In the meeting, which took place on behalf of the *Elmbridge and Runnymede Talking News* for the blind, he modestly elaborated on that initial visit of his to Prague following the notorious Munich annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland by Nazi Germany.

Speaking of Martin Blake, Sir Nicholas explained how he and Martin were deeply involved in left-wing politics of the time and he knew that Martin was in touch with the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC), whose agent in Prague was Doreen Warriner.

It was a complete surprise, however, that directly he arrived in Prague, Martin said to him: 'The first thing you are going to do is to be introduced to Eleanor Rathbone MP and I want you to take her to the camps.' 'These camps,' he explained, 'were for people who fled into Czechoslovakia from the Sudetenland and had no relatives or friends with whom they could stay. The camps were pretty bleak and pretty horrible. So I went round and took Eleanor Rathbone in and around the camps. I think my chief reason for escorting her was that ... when she sat down, or did anything, she always left something behind, so my real reason for escorting her was to collect all her belongings she left along her path as she went. She wasn't forgetful in that way – she was absent-minded. She was a remarkable lady and, of course, very well known.'

When he met up with Doreen Warriner, who had the job of bringing out elderly people who were endangered – who were on Hitler's black list – Sir Nicholas said to her: 'What about all these kids?' She replied that the BCRC had neither the money nor the energy or facilities to do anything and that, in any case, they wouldn't be allowed into England on their own.

While in Prague Sir Nicholas also met Trevor Chadwick, who had been a master at a school in Swanage, and said to him: 'We've got to list these children who need to get out. I'll go back to England to see what can be done. If I'm successful, will you run the office in Prague? I left all the organising to Trevor. All I said to him and the children was: "Look, don't be so excited. I want to do this – everybody says it's



impossible. Until I get back to England and find out whether it can be done, all this is completely academic ... Well, my motto is like Sherlock Holmes's "If something is not blatantly impossible, there must be a way of doing it."

Back in England at the Home Office, Sir Nicholas was told that all he had to do was to find a home that would look after every child until the crisis was over and that every child would need a guarantor to provide £50. To do this, he explained, he had to call himself something! So he had a letterhead printed as 'The Children's Section of the BCRC'. It was official in the sense that everybody who read it thought it was official. The only people who knew it wasn't were the BCRC and they couldn't say anything! That was the beginning – the rest is history.

There is one other part of the story related to us by Sir Nicholas which well illustrates his character. With the outbreak of war, as a pacifist he joined the Red Cross and went over to France. Having been evacuated from Dunkirk, he returned to the City, where he had 'quite an important job', to meet his boss, 'who was very right-wing.' His boss turned round to him and said: 'It's no use going on fighting this chap – we might just as well make the best peace terms we can now!' That, Sir Nicholas said, was one of the main things that changed his life. He never went back to the City again even though he was a member of the Stock Exchange.

In conclusion, it must be said that finding families in England for the children was the most difficult part of the job for Sir Nicholas. He managed to persuade *Picture Post* magazine to help by running weekly articles for him.

Heinz Vogel

AJR/British Academy Conference

On 10 November 2015, the AJR and the British Academy will jointly hold an afternoon conference to celebrate the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship, which was funded 50 years ago by donations from the Jewish refugees from Hitler and is one of the most prestigious Research Fellowships awarded by the Academy.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Fellowship, the Academy has invited a panel of eminent academics to speak about four refugees of special distinction in their fields. The conference will be followed by an early evening reception.

The conference will begin at 2.00 pm. The speakers will be Professor Richard Gombrich on Ernst Gombrich, Professor Sandy Fredman on Otto Kahn-Freund, Sir Ralph Kohn on Ernst Chain, and Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson on Ludwig Guttman, with a concluding lecture by Dr Anthony Grenville. Sir Erich Reich and Dr Eugene Rogan will chair. Lord Stern, President of the Academy, will give a brief address at the reception.

The British Academy is located at 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Contact details for registration at the conference and reception: Jennifer Lawton (British Academy) 020 7969 5258 or j.lawton@britac.ac.uk by 31 October.

AJR members are cordially invited to attend either or both of these events.

EMIRATES AIR LINE CABLE CAR

Thursday 8 October 2015

London as you have never seen it before!



Join us for a day of sightseeing in London. After our trip across the river in the Emirates Air Line Cable Car, we will take a Riverboat for sightseeing along the Thames.

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



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HOMAGE PAID TO THE ROLE OF DOVERCOURT CAMP AND THE KINDERTRANSPORTS

A remarkable event took place on 1 July this year in Dovercourt and Harwich High School. It was twofold. First, a display of a series of panels showing very professionally the results of two terms of research into the critical role played by Dovercourt Camp when the Kindertransportes began to arrive on 2 December 1938. And second, the dramatic display on stage of how some of these children arrived



and how they adapted to their new environment in a strange land. The Chair of the local District Council graced the occasion with his presence.

The schoolchildren came from Year 9 (14-year-olds) and had clearly developed a great enthusiasm for the project. The project, to which they devoted a great deal of time, both in and out of school hours, was enthusiastically supported by the school staff, in particular the Deputy Head, Simon Garnham, who had previously served as an officer in the Marines in Afghanistan, as well as by Mike Levy, a historian and researcher from Keystage Arts and Heritage in Cambridge. The school had received generous financial support from the English Heritage Lottery Fund.

In a recent issue of the *Journal* I reported on a day trip to the school by a group of five *Kinder* and some of their spouses, invited by the school to meet the pupils engaged in this project. They were Eric Newman, Ralph Stenton, Harry Fleming, Inge Hack and myself – all nearly 90 or over. The trip, organised by Hazel Beiny of the AJR, proved to be greatly enjoyable and we were made very welcome, received in festive fashion by the pupils as well as the staff, interviewed and filmed, and taken for a ride in a 1938 red London bus through Dovercourt and Harwich Harbour.

For the presentation on 1 July I was the only *Kind* present, accompanied by my wife Carol, and the visit involved an overnight stay. A significant other guest was Mandy Williams, the granddaughter of Mr and Mrs Bond, the managers of the camp, who now lives in Wales. The exhibition, which is in panels suitable for transportation,

included new information about the camp and its owner, Captain Warner, the managers and the organisers. I had not known that before the closure of the camp in mid-1939 the remaining children had presented Mr and Mrs Bond with a large signed scroll in which they registered their gratitude and that this is now housed in the Jewish Museum. Many of the children who had gone on a day visit to London described their visits to the Jewish Museum and the Wiener Library as the highlights of the day for them.

All manner of information – photographs, contemporaneous press cuttings, and even videos of the period – are succinctly described and illustrated in the exhibition panels, discovered during the course of their research, as are accounts of the local cinema to which children had been taken to see Disney's *Snow White*. Extracts from the interviews the five *Kinder* had given during the previous visit to the school were displayed. Anna Essinger, the redoubtable headmistress of Bunce Court School, who, with some of her teachers, had been in charge of the educational facilities in the camp, was given full credit.

The theatrical event was not so much a play as a series of tableaux in which children read extracts from letters that *Kinder* had written to their parents in which they described their hopes and fears and their new life in England and sometimes their homesickness. The large screen showed videos of children disembarking, led into the camp carrying their suitcases, at play (table tennis was clearly very popular), and outside their little wooden chalets. A clip of David Hughes, in which he –

now 96 – reminisced about his role as a volunteer in the camp was shown and two women and a man from the local theatrical society, dressed in period clothes (including a fox fur!) and impersonating the camp manager and his wife and the owner, spoke about their reactions to what was happening.

Towards the end an extract from a BBC broadcast in January 1939 – *Children in Flight* – was played. The

broadcast was intended to encourage English couples to take in children and I was one of several who had been asked to take part. A girl introduced me as 'Here is Lothar, who comes from Berlin' and, in my unbroken voice (I was 13 and had been taught English by an obnoxious Nazi teacher), I explained what we did routinely during the course of a day in the camp. I finished by saying that when I grew up, I wanted to become a cook!

The show's *coup de théâtre* was to ask the boy – now within a few days of reaching his 90th birthday – to come on to the stage to explain whether he really did become a cook. Needless to say, I did not, though I enjoy cooking a lot, and I explained very briefly what had become of me since those dark days in 1938.

Having fulfilled its purpose, the camp was closed in March 1939 with a farewell party for the children still there. Many of us who were there in the winter will vividly remember the bitter cold but for all of us it was the gateway to a new life.

The 12 children who carried out the research and performed the theatrical event, as well as their English teacher, Emma Barr, who directed, the school (especially Simon Garnham, the Deputy Head, who took a very personal interest in the event), and Mike Levy, who had written some of the scripts and had helped the children in their fund-raising and researches (and whom I thank for making corrections to this article), are to be warmly congratulated on an exceptionally telling, nostalgic, and historically interesting evening.

Leslie Baruch Brent

Refugees and normality

Germany is not a normal country. There is no need to be surprised by this.

A country that has expanded and contracted so many times over the past 200 years is a country that can never quite work out where its borders are.

A country which was physically and ideologically split for an entire generation – from 1961 to 1990 – so that for 30 years Germans shot and killed Germans because they were trying to flee Germany in order to get to Germany ... A country which then suddenly had to open these borders and say 'Hey, we are all united again – isn't this wonderful!' while carefully covering up so many instances of oppression and injustice, carries, of course, immense internal traumata ...

A country which spent almost 50 years occupied by the powers which had beaten it in a previous incarnation has trouble coming to terms with what really happened and can see itself as the victim. Entire regions have reverted to a pre-industrial peasant mentality.

The Jews in Germany are also not normal. But the Jews in Germany are mostly not Germans. Or, if they are, they are Germans who became Jews. The majority are technically 'refugees' from the former Soviet Union: not only can they not read Hebrew, they need lessons to be able to read German! Many came here at an advanced age. Some have children and grandchildren here who are growing up in the West but find themselves – as has been the case throughout history – living in two worlds.

Many Germans are fascinated by Judaism; many resent it. Although parts of the media are obsessed with it at a very superficial level, most know nothing about it. An increasing proportion of German citizens were not only born after the events of the mid-20th century but actually come from totally different countries and continents and do not share this history at all.

The AJR exists to serve the needs – as far as possible – of Jews who fled or were expelled from several European countries in the 1930s and 1940s. Interestingly, the Bundesrepublik Deutschland had to absorb many thousands of refugees – the *Vertriebenen* from Ostpreussen or Ost-Pommern or Sudetenland or from Schlesien – just a few years later. It then spent several decades accepting refugees from the DDR before mass flight in 1989 brought down what was left of the DDR structure. So the whole country is built on refugees and on the experience of the parents or grandparents of almost every citizen.

The Jewish community remained absolutely tiny until *die Wende* – the Reunification – when it was decided at some political level to allow in 100,000 'Jewish refugees' as *Kontingentflüchtlinge*. Although this move has created several

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other issues, how many of these people were actually Jewish? How many actually wanted to be Jewish once they got out? The fact is that the overwhelming majority of Jews in the communities in Germany are technically also 'refugees', those who fled a country that was collapsing from within.

And now we are faced with more refugees – from countries south or east of the Mediterranean but also from the Balkans. And suddenly it's a major political problem. Of course, any organisation can be briefly overwhelmed when literally thousands of hungry, homeless people appear within a week so I do not want to criticise the *Notaufnahme* arrangements, which are far from perfect but at least well-meant. Of course, politicians argue about who should be paying – the *Kommunen*, the *Länder* or the *Bund*. Of course, there are bureaucratic problems with officials who do not speak the languages of the asylum-seekers. This is normal and should calm down after a few months.

What interests me is the emotional response – 'they' are coming 'here'. No one ever asks how Israel managed to absorb so many immigrants, with different languages and cultures and few resources and little security. No one seems to ask 'Would I be here if my grandfather had not been allowed to come a few decades ago?' In 1946 up to half or more of the population of some parts of Brandenburg was formed of refugees and I sometimes ask a school class how many of them have or had four grandparents all from Brandenburg.

We as Jews have been warned many, many times never to forget that we were once wanderers in the wilderness, escaping oppression. We have been invaded and we have been in exile.

By August at least ten desperate young men and women had died trying to flee this year from France to England. They were unwanted and feared. Will 'Calais' be found inscribed on their hearts? I doubt it.

Has the world got any better since 1939? Alas, I need not provide an answer to this question. Sudden developments at the time of writing (early September) – stimulated largely by public disgust at images of corpses on the beaches or reports of dozens suffocated in what were little more than mobile gas chambers on the Autobahns – indicate a changed awareness and this is to be welcomed.

Britain too is having to bow to the inevitable. If such a large proportion of the world's population are now desperate refugees, they will have to go somewhere. And where?

Walter Rothschild

Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild was born in Bradford, UK, was ordained by Leo Baeck College, and has lived in Berlin since 1998 serving mainly communities around Germany and Austria.

KT LUNCH

Wednesday 14 October 2015
Alyth Gardens Synagogue
12.30 pm

Speaker: Thomas Harding

We are delighted to be joined by Thomas Harding, an author and journalist who has written for the *Financial Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian*, among other publications.

Thomas co-founded a television station in Oxford and for many years was an award-winning documentary-maker. He also ran a local newspaper in West Virginia, winning the West Virginia Association of Justice's Journalist of the Year Award, before moving back in 2011 to England, where he now lives with his family.

His internationally bestselling book *Hanns and Rudolf: The German Jew and the Hunt for the Kommandant of Auschwitz* won the JQ-Wingate Prize in 2015, was shortlisted for the Costa Book Award Biography prize in 2013, and is being translated into more than a dozen languages.

His book *Kadian Journal* was published in June 2014.

Thomas will be talking to us about his latest book, *The House by the Lake*, which is due to be published several weeks before our meeting.

For further details and to book a place, please contact Susan Harrod at the AJR on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk

Frederich Feigl, 1884-1965

Information and reminiscences relating to Czech émigré artist Frederich Feigl, his many years in the UK, and his artwork sought for retrospective exhibition in the Czech Republic in summer 2016 and accompanying bilingual publication.

Please contact Rachel Dickson at racheld@benuri.org or on 07919 221 788.



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

REFUGEE CRISIS

Sir – As one of the worst refugee crises in modern history unfolds, our Jewish community institutions remain, apparently, all but silent.

As the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of previous generations of those who sought, and found, refuge in Britain, how can we stand idly by as a new generation of people fleeing conflict and oppression are washed up on the shores of Europe, humiliated at our borders, and subjected to yet more deprivation?

It is surely time for us to stand up and be counted – to demand of the government that it acts in a more tolerant, caring and open way, to urge the AJR and our other communal institutions to take a lead in offering support and comfort to the refugees, and to do whatever we can as individuals to ensure that these people who have lost their homes, their livelihoods and

often their loved ones do not have to suffer any more.

Have we learned nothing from our own community's history and fate?

Nick Sigler, London N22

Sir – I am incensed by the attitude of politicians and media when they use the phrase 'processing people' to describe detaining the refugees in camps. You simply do not 'process' people – you process their applications for asylum and treat them with respect as distressed human beings while you are processing their cases. 'Processing people' is what the Nazis did with Jews and Gypsies and what many governments that are not democratic do today.

European democracies should rise above regarding people as cattle to be processed and treat them with respect for their humanity.

Ruth Barnett, London NW6

REFUGEE 'CLIPPY'



Gerty Hess, winter 1943

Sir – A life-long friend and school chum of my mother, Elfi Frohlich, asked me to send in this story and photo.

In 1939 my mother, Gerty Hess, was a 13-year-old sent via Kindertransport from Vienna to London to escape the Nazis. In England she eventually became a hairdresser and was also obligated to choose a 'war work' occupation. She became the only Austrian refugee to serve as a 'clippy' for the London bus system – see photo.

One of the stories relayed to me of her war experiences includes persuading the bus driver to wait until midnight so he

could pick up the band that played at a social club for Jewish refugees. The bus made the stop and the boys serenaded my mother on the upper deck all the way home. The grateful bandmates gave their chocolate and nylon rations to my mother in gratitude for her service.

Gerty Hess married a refugee she met at one of those social clubs: Alfred Benesch. They eventually moved to New York, where I was born two years later. Sadly, neither of my parents is alive but these lovely stories make their history come to life.

Linda Epstein (formerly Linda Benesch), Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey, USA

'LITERATURE AND DISEASE'

Sir – I was enthralled by the article 'Literature and disease' (your September issue) and thank Anthony Grenville for interpreting some of the great works written before the onset of barbarism in Nazi Germany.

An excellent film of *Der Tod in Venedig* was made but it could not evoke the symbolism of the original written text, which Dr Grenville so aptly describes.

Frederick Hirsch, Pinner

Sir – Your article 'Literature and disease' reminded me of an important Hebrew romantic poet, Micah Joseph Lebensohn (1828-52), who died of tuberculosis. He was not resigned to his fate. A moving poem, written on a bench in a park in Berlin, ends with the cry 'Cursed be death, cursed be life!'

Josef Schubert, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

WHO ARE THESE DOVERCOURT BOYS?



Sir – This photograph was sent to me by Carol Ascher, whose parents were Dr Paul Bergmann and Irma Ellen. Both volunteered to help at the Pakefield and Dovercourt camps. The couple were, in fact, married during their time at Dovercourt. But who are these boys and where is the picture taken? It is likely to be in December 1938.

If you can throw some light on this, please contact me. I am researching a book about Dovercourt and working with Carol.

Mike Levy, Cambridge, mike.levy82@gmail.com

SHIFTING THE BLAME

Sir – Making the point that it is more accurate to blame 'the Germans' rather than 'the Nazis' for the Holocaust, David Wirth (September) chooses a dubious analogy: 'Britain' rather than 'Thatcher's Conservatives' launching the war to 'liberate' (sic) the Falkland Islands.

In fact, it's more accurate to say that the war was between General Galtieri, who was facing domestic difficulties, and Mrs Thatcher, whose popularity ratings had slumped.

Interestingly, the British naval presence in the South Atlantic had recently been stepped down, suggesting a lack of urgent interest.

Among people I knew, the majority were infuriated by 'Britain's' action – one colleague going so far as to violently kick an innocent (and unresponsive) stone pillar. Tam Dalyell reckoned that if Denis Healey hadn't unfortunately been out of the country, he would certainly have knocked heads together and Labour would have come out against the war.

In the event, the Argentinians got rid of their General Galtieri, while we were saddled with ours.

A depressing thought: did Thatcher's triumphant assumption of Churchill's

mantle inspire her admirer Blair to join in Bush's crusade against Iraq?

Naomi Klein (*The Shock Doctrine*, ch. 6) briefly and usefully puts the Falklands war in context, quoting Jorge Luis Borges: 'a fight between two bald men over a comb'.

George Schlesinger, Durham

BUSHEY ERUV

Sir – I note with interest that Peter Phillips has chosen to ridicule my use of the word 'modern' in my description of the community which is constructing the Bushey *eruv* (September issue).

I'm sure Mr Phillips will acknowledge that current laws such as those relating to murder, theft and incest have the same provenance in the antiquity he chooses to deride. I note he chose to adopt a semantic approach rather than respond to the substance of my letter, which was to refute his accusation that the motive of the Bushey *eruv* was to achieve some kind of demographic population shift, which he categorises as 'social engineering'.

Mr Phillips's letter failed to produce any evidence of the demographic change that his words 'social engineering' imply in any of the five *eruvim* that have been constructed and used by the community of the United Synagogue, whose stated values are 'authentic, inclusive and modern Torah Judaism'. The community is the largest synagogue organisation in Europe and is headed religiously by Chief Rabbi Mirvis. It is therefore not unreasonable to recognise it as modern and mainstream.

David Kaye, Pinner, Middx

A LIFE RUINED BY BEING A JEW

Sir – Thank you for finding space for a review of my book *Out of Time: The Vexed Life of Georg Tintner* (August).

Of course it is disappointing to receive a bad review but this is a hazard of writing and publishing a book. I have, in fact, been remarkably lucky in my reviews: of approximately 24 reviews, from eight countries, all but the one in the *Australian Book Review (ABR)* and Mr Lustig's have been very favourable.

But even the rather savage *ABR* critic still managed to see the main thrust of my book, which I feel Mr Lustig did not. That is, the tale of a Jewish refugee from Vienna, whose life was ultimately rendered tragic through a combination of circumstance and unintentional self-sabotage. Mr Lustig sees the self-sabotage – enshrined in your heading 'A difficult man' – but the role of circumstance has almost entirely passed him by. Which is rather curious, as of all the critics he is the only one who was himself a refugee.

I'm afraid I am not convinced Mr Lustig has read the book with much attention, given that he puts at least one factual error in almost every paragraph. Georg's mother's name was Mizzi Horowitz, not

Mitzi Steinhof. The quote about operetta composers was not said by Georg but written by me. Georg was persecuted by the director of the Wiener Sängerknaben, Rektor Schnitt, not the conductor Franz Schalk, who actually admitted him to the choir. Georg gave up the baton at the age of 48, which doesn't seem 'quite early on'. He did not record all the Bruckner symphonies in Glasgow in 1998 – he recorded them in Wellington, Dublin and Glasgow between 1995 and 1998.

In remarking that I have included too much detail, Mr Lustig says: 'Thus she quotes the programme of practically every concert Georg conducted ...' I have a file of concerts Georg conducted that runs to 173 single-spaced, double-columned pages. A very rough estimate would be 2,800 performances, 1,500 discrete programmes. Perhaps Mr Lustig means his claim to be poetic licence, but in that case it should not be presented as fact.

I confess I am baffled by his suggestion that I should have omitted details such as soloists' names as they mean little to English readers. The book is a memoir but also a contribution to twentieth-century musical and cultural studies and I therefore included such facts as I deemed important, whether or not readers of any particular country might find them familiar. Fortunately, this was not a concern of the critics in America, Luxembourg, South Africa and Austria, nor even in other British publications (*International Record Review* and *Classical Recordings Quarterly*). In fact, some of the soloists' names I mentioned were English, or worked in England, in the section on Georg's four years at Sadler's Wells – and I find it a little odd that Mr Lustig didn't mention this period, or Georg's refugee year in England in 1938–39, as I should have thought these sections would be of interest to your British-based readers.

I wonder if Mr Lustig might have been deeply offended at Georg's remark that he takes the trouble to quote – 'One of the worst things that has befallen the Jews is ... that they think they are the salt of the earth. I don't feel any of that' – and whether this may have coloured his response to the entire book – or to Georg. If that is the case, it's a great pity because Georg's entire life was conditioned, directed, and indeed ruined, by his being a Jew. A fate all too familiar to most of your readers.

Tanya Buchdahl Tintner, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Fritz Lustig: I am sorry that Tanya Tintner was disappointed by my review and, of course, I apologise for any errors that may have crept in. However, as she herself says, 'to receive a bad review ... is a hazard of writing and publishing a book', and, to be frank, I do not think I was unfair.

Probably Mrs Tintner is not conscious of the fact that the AJR Journal is not a

publication for music lovers, as are the others which she quotes.

What I wrote represents my honestly held view of Mrs Tintner's book – so perhaps the best way for potential readers to judge its merits is for them to read it themselves.

THE SAGA OF ADAMSON ROAD



A special meeting with a prominent speaker (name unknown) during the 1967 Six Day War. George Vulkan is on the left; Adamson Road is in the background

Sir – I had hoped that the saga of Adamson Road had by now been forgotten but the helpful letter from Victor Ross in your September issue has reignited my interest!

I know nothing about 3 Adamson Road in the pre-war years, but between 1940 and 1945, when my parents and I lived there, it was *not* Boarding House Sachs. Although most residents who lived there were Jewish refugees it was owned by a Mrs Jones and, from what I remember, the breakfast was definitely not kosher!

I don't believe the boarding house had a name. For my bar mitzvah, Mrs Jones kindly allowed us to use the communal lounge for the reception, with cakes baked by my mother. As well as my parents, two of my aunts lived there and my uncle stayed there when on leave from the Pioneer Corps. Other people I remember living at No 3 were Mrs Elly Turner (Türkel), Mr Heymann and Miss Annie Rubin.

Incidentally in the 1960s I returned to Adamson Road but this time for weekly meetings of the New Jewish Society, which met in the basement of No 9 (owned by the AJR). Elizabeth Arendt was secretary and I was chairman at that time. Does anyone now remember the organisation?

George Vulkan, Harrow

LOU LENART, FIGHTER PILOT

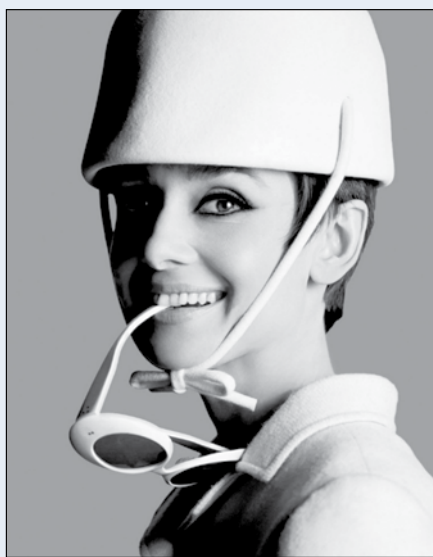
Sir – I believe few people know how one of the major battles of the 1948 Israeli War of Independence was won. It's quite a story.

The Hungarian-born Lou Lenart emigrated to America when he was ten years old. In 1940 he joined the Marine Corps. He fought against the Japanese in the war and was discharged with the rank of captain. When he returned home he learned that 14 members of his family

ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

She is described as one of the world's first international stars by the **National Portrait Gallery** in **Audrey Hepburn: Portraits of an Icon** (until 18 October 2015). But of all the glamour stars of her era, the elfin Audrey



Audrey Hepburn dressed in Givenchy with sunglasses by Oliver Goldsmith, photographed by Douglas Kirkland for *How to Steal a Million* (1966). Iconic Images/Douglas Kirkland © Douglas Kirkland

has something different to offer. The excellent images of her by photographers such as **Richard Avedon**, **Cecil Beaton**, **Anthony Beauchamp**, **Angus McBean**, **Irving Penn**, **Terry O'Neill** and **Norman Parkinson** – alongside an array of vintage magazine covers, film stills and extraordinary archival material story – are not the whole story.

That the photographers saw something special in her – almost the yielding nature of a plant in the wind – is not surprising. But the shy eyes beneath the heavy fringe belie a hidden strength not immediately obvious in this gorgeous celebration of the Hepburn look and charm.

A starving teenager in wartime occupied Holland, Hepburn herself would hardly have imagined that one day she would model stunning ball gowns by Givenchy or play the lead in films such as *Roman Holiday*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* or *War and Peace*.

Born in Brussels in 1929 to a Dutch

mother and a British father, she had been sent to boarding school in England at the age of five and her father had walked out on the family with no forwarding address when she was six. Believing Holland to be safer than England, her mother brought her back shortly before the war and she studied ballet in Arnhem and became the class's star pupil.

While in England her father, Joseph Ruston, was imprisoned for his pro-Nazi activities. Her uncle was executed by the Nazis for a Dutch underground attempt to blow up a train. Audrey danced in secret to raise funds for the Resistance and became a courier. A near-starvation diet during the war seriously impaired her health, making it impossible to gain weight or, for a time, to dance. At the age of 15, she took up ballet again and, on her 16th birthday, saw Holland liberated.

Early photographs in the exhibition show her child-like poise and the gamine piquancy she never lost. A cover girl on many issues of *Dancing Times* from 1952, she always retains her true face – that of a ballerina.

Hepburn's rise to fame came as gender roles were being redefined. Many like her contributed to the war effort but this abruptly reversed in the 1950s, when stars like Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell were celebrated for their overt sexuality. Hepburn, however, was the eternal contrast: she had something liberating and tomboyish in her black polo necks and trousers.

An occasional ballet pose surfaces among the portraits, suggesting a girl who in other circumstances might have been a leading prima ballerina. But whether in the role of the sprite Ondine or Natasha in *War and Peace*, that heavy-browed, soulful look speaks of many things left unspoken.

For her leading role in *Roman Holiday*, Hepburn became the first actress to win an Academy Award, Golden Globe and BAFTA. From 1988 until her death in 1993 she was a UNICEF ambassador. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1992 in recognition of her contribution to the arts and humanitarian work.

Annely Juda Fine Art

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

CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

Delightful account of a Kindertransportee's life

THE CHILDREN OF WILLEDEN LANE: BEYOND THE KINDERTRANSPORT: A MEMOIR OF MUSIC, LOVE AND SURVIVAL

by **Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen**
New York and Boston: *Grand Central Publishing*, 272 pp.,
ISBN 9780446690270

This is a delightful account of yet another Kindertransportee's life. Most of us who came to this country on the Kindertransport had one thing in common: we left behind loving, supportive middle-class parents and found ourselves in a strange new environment without knowing a word of the language. Thereafter our adventures and experiences differed and are always interesting to read.

Lisa Jura came to England from Vienna aged 15. She arrived at Dovercourt Camp, where she was chosen for domestic service in a large mansion near Brighton. Here she was promoted to the position of lady's maid. But she had other ambitions and made her way to London, eventually finding accommodation in the hostel at 243 Willesden Lane run by the matron, Mrs Cohen. All the children had to earn their keep and Lisa and her best friend travelled to the East End, where they worked in a garment factory machining uniforms. Lisa got the job because she knew how to work a sewing machine, her father having been a tailor in Vienna.

The children were not evacuated and their lives and experiences of the Blitz are graphically described. A camaraderie developed among the children, who shared the same anxieties regarding the loved ones they had left behind and living without any news from them. They became very supportive of one another. Lisa seems to have been a most attractive person with a lovely personality, whom everyone grew to love. Some of the readers of this journal may actually have lived at the hostel in Willesden Lane and may remember Lisa and the people mentioned in the book.

Lisa was an exceptionally talented pianist.

Mrs Cohen placed a piano for her below the stairs so she could practise safely during the air raids. After a hard day's work at the factory, she put in hours of practice every evening, at the same time giving a lot of joy to those who heard her.

I will not give



Lisa Jura (photo from www.HoldonToYourMusic.org)

too much away as to Lisa's eventual life. I cannot recommend this book too highly. It is beautifully written by her daughter, Mona Golabek, a concert pianist, and co-writer Lee Cohen. Mona hopes to come to London to perform and speak about the book and her mother. I cannot wait to meet her.

Bronia Snow

Roller coaster of emotions

OUT OF THE SHOEBOX: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHIC MYSTERY by Yaron Reshef

Amazon, 2014; translated from the Hebrew by Nina R. Davis and Shira E. Davos

The author begins with a declaration regarding the sequence of chance and serendipitous events that led him to engage on an unexpected quest to discover aspects of his own and his family's past. Although he had shown some interest in his family's history, the fact that his father had died when he was seven years old had inevitably limited his access to information. What eventually set him off on a two-year paper trail was a phone call out of the blue in July 2011 from an attorney representing the Company for the Location and Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets; the caller was seeking Yaron, the son and legal heir of Shlomo Zvi Finkelman. It transpires that, together with an associate, one Mordechai Liebman, Yaron's father had bought a plot of land in the Haifa area in 1935 and that in order to benefit from this property all Yaron had to do was to prove that he was indeed the son of Shlomo Zvi Finkelman and that neither Mordechai Liebman nor his heirs were alive.

It turned out that this was no simple request. Yaron's father had moved from Poland to Israel, then Mandatory Palestine, on a student visa in 1934 though he had never actually attended any academic institution, having already qualified as an architect in Vienna. Furthermore, he had changed his name by Hebraicising it and had not been registered as possessing an identity card until a later date.

In Israel as elsewhere, the authorities require legal proof of identity, whether in the form of an identity card or evidence of residence or both. This was not easy to obtain and Yaron invested much time and energy tracking down documents attesting to his father's residence in pre-State Israel by means of the Haifa Technion, the Israel Lands Authority, the Tel Aviv City Archives and the Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. He was also required to find proof of a connection between his father and Mordechai Liebman and in this too he was eventually successful, though this was far from easy. Amazingly, he claims that wherever he turned, the officials with whom he came into contact were invariably courteous and helpful.

To cut a long story short, the necessary documents were eventually found, the relationship between father and son established, the address where his father had first lived verified, and compensation received. But that was not the end of the story. Having uncovered all kinds of previously

unknown connections with his father's past, Yaron felt impelled to visit the town of Chortkow in Ukraine from which both of his parents had originally hailed and escaped at the eleventh hour, having returned there for a family visit.



Yaron Reshef

It so happens that my own father-in-law also came from there and, reading the account of the theft of property and wholesale massacre of almost all the members of Chortkow's once prosperous Jewish community, first by the Soviets then by the Nazis and local residents, was almost unbearably painful for me.

Yaron describes in considerable detail his visit to Chortkow and the surrounding area. Like his father, he is an architect and he thus provides a telling visual account (with photographs) of the remaining structures in the region. There are many emotional moments and the reader is swept along with Yaron on his roller coaster of conflicting emotions and heart-wrenching experiences. The English translation reads well on the whole, though I'm not convinced that 'lot' is the best term for the Hebrew word *migrash*. I think 'plot of land' or 'plot' or 'parcel' would have been a better choice.

I wrote to Yaron, telling him of my connection with the story and the depression that beset me every time I read another chapter. He replied that for him it had been an uplifting experience, bringing him back into contact with the family he had never known and clarifying his past. As someone who has written about her own family's history, I can sympathise with that emotion – despite the bitter taste that is left by reading about yet another occasion when evil prevailed over good.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Labour of love

THIS IS A SITUATION REPORT ON JEWISH LIFE AS IT WAS AND IS IN PARTS OF PRESENT-DAY POLAND AND LITHUANIA

by Gerhard Salinger

2014, soft cover 49 pp., numerous b/w photographs, private publication, available at Wiener Library

MEMORIES OF THE FORMER JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SILESIA: A SITUATION

by Gerhard Salinger

2013, soft cover 241 pp., numerous photographs, private publication, available at Wiener Library

Salinger is a 93-year-old former accountant, born in Germany and a survivor of Auschwitz, who has lived in the USA since 1947. He has devoted

the years following his retirement to painstaking research on the Jewish past in East European countries, including the former German provinces now part of Poland. To achieve this, he has travelled far and wide, driven by a chauffeur and entirely at his own expense, around the countries of his choice and he has self-published a number of books, some of which have previously been reviewed in this journal. His method is to take photographs of Jewish sites (synagogues, cemeteries and community houses), some in ruins and others still intact, and to write scholarly accounts of their history and that of the former and present-day Jewish communities. His work is a labour of love and cannot be praised too highly as his research is truly unique.

The first of the above books is a slim volume, including maps of the regions (the former East Brandenburg and Lithuania) and short explanatory texts accompanying the photographs. Most of the synagogues in Brandenburg were destroyed during Kristallnacht but a few have survived because by 1938 they had been allocated to other purposes. Some cemeteries too survived, as did a number of tombstones. In Frankfurt/Oder a memorial stone for the synagogue is to be found. Although the cemetery in Damm-Vorstadt (now Slubice) was destroyed c. 1970 it is now fenced off and contains three new marble tablets dedicated to 19th-century rabbis.

In Lithuania the situation is somewhat less dire, but here too Jewish sites have been destroyed. In Taurage (formerly Tauroggen) there is a memorial site dedicated to 3,000 Jews who were murdered there in 1941, with part of the inscription in Yiddish. In Swetsna, as in Joniskis, the old synagogue has survived in the centre of the town, as have a number of tombstones in the cemetery. In other towns some very impressive Jewish buildings have survived although they are now used for other purposes.

The situation in former Silesia, a province of the former Germany in which Salinger spent the first two years of the war in a training camp, is described in a number of articles in the second and very much more detailed publication. He calls it 'essentially a situation report, because more than in other regions ... more former synagogue buildings and Jewish cemeteries have survived'. Former Silesian communities were researched and described and an account is given of the history of the region. Salinger states the number of Jewish families residing in different areas of Silesia during the 18th century and traces their diminishing number until the outbreak of the Second World War. Of the 8,129 Jews living in Breslau, 2,700 were sent to various camps in 1941. The mass deportation to Auschwitz and Theresienstadt began in November 1941 and continued until 1943, with a final transport 'from Breslau to the East' in 1944, leaving a remnant of about 150, 'most probably partners of

continued on page 10

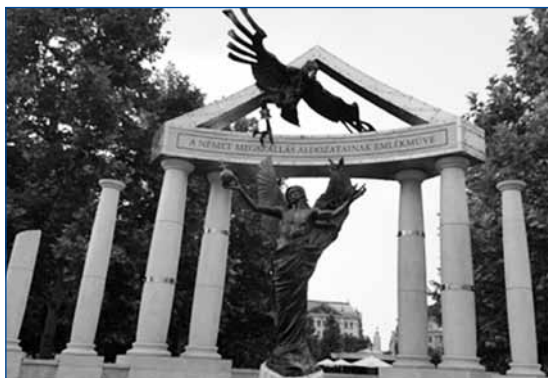
BUDAPEST IHRA MEETING – DETAILS OF FURTHER PROGRESS AWAITED

The backdrop to the Budapest plenary this June under Hungarian chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was the concern expressed by IHRA delegates from many countries about how the Holocaust is commemorated in Hungary – not least the controversy surrounding the proposed establishment of a second Holocaust museum, House of Fates, in its capital.

The issues surrounding Holocaust memorialisation in Hungary have been well documented and were explored in the seminar the AJR co-organised with the Wiener Library this May (see “‘Deeds not words!’ demands meeting on Holocaust in Hungary”, *AJR Journal*, July), but it is evident that the Hungarian government has taken on board the critical objections raised in the 18 months since Hungary was confirmed as IHRA chair for this year.

The Hungarian government assumed the chairmanship for the second time in March, taking over from the UK, with Sir Andrew Burns, who skilfully led the organisation for the past year, continuing to head the UK delegation. (By coincidence, the meetings this year marked the beginning of my tenth year as part of the UK delegation, with my first plenary in Budapest in 2006.)

Perhaps the best attended session was a presentation by the Budapest city councillor responsible for building the House of Fates museum, who is aiming to create ‘the most recognisable Holocaust centre globally’, one that will ‘bring the



younger generation closer to the subject’.

Nonetheless, the situation remains complex, not least because, while the premises have been built (at the site of the former railway station in the Josefsvaros district from which Jews were deported), it is the content of the proposed museum and the need for a second institution commemorating the Holocaust that are proving controversial. I visited the excellent Pava Street Holocaust Museum during the first Hungarian chairmanship.

The original concept was proposed by the historian Maria Schmidt, who has since been discredited for her ‘understanding’ of the Holocaust. Although we were told she will no longer be part of the House of Fates project, she has not been formally dismissed.

Several leading Holocaust scholars wrote objections to the original ideas behind, and the concept of, the museum, which appeared to omit the historical context and extent of Hungarian complicity as well as the anti-Semitism that existed in the country prior to the German occupation. It was therefore greatly encouraging to hear the reassurances of the Hungarian Chair, Szabolcs Takacs, who noted that ‘We [Hungarians] have to show everything in connection with the Hungarian Holocaust.’

In a separate meeting, Andreas Heisler, Chair of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary, confirmed that the Jewish community had submitted proposals for a new concept, which the government was now reviewing. In Mr Takacs’s words, there was a ‘need to start a consultation’.

I also saw for myself the controversial statue (see above) in a prominent Budapest square depicting a German eagle swooping onto the ‘innocent’ Archangel Gabriel, a Hungarian symbol. There is a permanent protest at the statue with a space for people to meet to vent their opposition to what they see as a distortion of history, as well as a line of personal mementos, including photographs and lists of Hungarians who were murdered. Although the Hungarian government points out that the statue is not a Holocaust memorial, to the uninitiated it falsifies the reality of what

became of Hungarian Jewry during the Second World War.

Aside from these internal Hungarian issues, IHRA’s output continues to be prodigious, with the further development of its core activities in the areas of Holocaust education, remembrance and research. IHRA recently released its first publication, *Killing Sites*, following the groundbreaking conference last year in London. Alongside prospective members, such as Portugal and Turkey, Australia has expressed interest in joining and delegates heard from each of the Alliance’s permanent international partners – inter-governmental bodies such as the United Nations, the Claims Conference and the International Tracing Service of the Red Cross – on their areas of operation that intersect with the IHRA.

One key issue currently consuming IHRA’s energy is the European Union’s proposed General Data Regulation, the so-called ‘right to be forgotten’, which will grant individuals the right to have their name, and any articles in which they are mentioned, removed from internet search results. IHRA resolved to submit a proposal ensuring that ‘Nothing in this regulation affects the full and open access to documents bearing on the Holocaust.’

As mentioned above, the title of the *AJR Journal* article reporting on this May’s event at the Wiener Library was ‘Deeds not words’ and delegates will be expecting to hear details of further progress during the next plenary, in Debrecen in November, before Romania takes over the chairmanship next March.

Michael Newman

REVIEWS *cont. from p.9*

intermarriages’.

After the war ended many thousands of Jewish survivors from the Soviet Union and Poland made their way west via Silesia and many decided to settle there, establishing new communities and cultural organisations. Following the establishment of the State of Israel the majority decided to move there, reducing the Jewish population to about 8,000. But the anti-Semitic policies of the Polish government (Silesia having been incorporated into Poland after the war) led to a new exodus and by 1990 only ten Jews remained in Breslau. However, some returned and others who had hidden their Jewish identity rejoined the Jewish community, which numbered about 300 in 2013, the second largest in Poland after Warsaw.

Salinger provides detailed maps and descriptions of the fate of individual towns and villages, with numerous photographs of synagogues and cemeteries past and present. The book is a valuable resource for anyone with an interest in this region.

Leslie Baruch Brent

HARE KRISHNA TEMPLE: A MEMORABLE VISIT

The ladies in the AJR administration have a genius for finding interesting places to visit which might easily be overlooked. This time it was the Hare Krishna Temple in Aldenham in Hertfordshire.

The Temple itself is situated in a large mock-Tudor building which stands in extensive grounds, partly agricultural but also including some large and very beautiful gardens. It houses about 35 monks and fewer nuns.

One of the monks gave us a conducted tour and spoke at some length, and rather beautifully, about the Hare Krishna religious teaching. I doubt that many of our group were converted but his talk did raise the question of choosing a particular religious belief. Finally, we had a light lunch of the usual AJR high standard. This proved a really memorable morning and our thanks are due to all involved in organising the visit.

Fritz Starer

Hazel Beiny leaves the AJR

Hazel Beiny, who was instrumental in developing our regional groups and outreach programme in London and across the south of England, left the AJR at the beginning of September after almost ten years' service.

As part of her role, Hazel set up new groups, including some in more remote parts of the country, affording some of our more isolated members the opportunity to participate in AJR events and activities. She was also part of the team that organised and oversaw several regional get-togethers – as well as innumerable outings, visits and day trips – and jointly arranged the very popular London visits.

Hazel brought great enthusiasm and dynamism to her work and the AJR and our members will be forever grateful for her invaluable contribution and passion for our work. We wish her all the very best for the future.

ARTS AND EVENTS OCTOBER DIARY

Thur 8 Oct Jenny Manson: 'From Pogrom to Public School in 1918/19' In aid of Freedom from Torture. At Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church, London NW11. Entry £10 per head or £7 for concessions, payable at door

To mid-October 'From Hitler to Hi-De-Hi: The Dovercourt Holiday Camp and the Kindertransport' Exhibition at High Lighthouse, Harwich, tel +44(0)7816 468 760

Sun 18-Wed 21 JW3's amateur dramatics troupe Spielers presents Lionel Bart's *Blitz!*, a Romeo and Juliet story of the Jewish Blitzstein family and the cockney Lockes. At JW3. Tickets £10. Tel 020 7433 8988

To 13 December 'Out of Chaos; Ben Uri: 100 Years in London' Presented in association with the Cultural Institute at King's College London. At Inigo Rooms, Somerset House East Wing, WC2R 2LS. Admission free. Tel 020 7604 3991

'70 Years On: Reflections on the Holocaust, Liberation and Aftermath'

at JW3, all events at 7.30 pm, tel 020 7433 8988

Mon 26 Oct 'Holland: A Case Study' Panel: Trudy Gold (Chair), Jerry Gotel, Bert Jan Flim, Steven Frank, Patrick Bade

Wed 28 Oct 'A Survivor Speaks' Zahava Kohn, a survivor of Bergen-Belsen and Westerbork concentration camps, will be in conversation with her daughter Hephzibah Rudofsky

Tues 3 Nov 'Music: Beyond Good and Evil' Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, survivor of the women's orchestra in Auschwitz, Clive Marks, former Chairman of the London College of Music, and Dr Shirli Gilbert will discuss cultural creativity during the Holocaust. Music will be performed by Simon Lasker-Wallfisch

At Special Kindertransport Lunch, Barbara Winton dispels myths about her famous father

For our Special pre-Rosh Hashanah Kindertransport Lunch meeting, we moved to the Sternberg Centre in order to accommodate the large group of *Kinder*, including some of the 'Winton children', and their families together with pupils from Year 6 of the adjoining Akiva Primary School.

After lunch, before introducing our speaker, Sir Erich Reich paid tribute to Andrea Goodmaker, who was leaving the AJR after 23 years' loyal service, and presented her with a bouquet of flowers. In a tear-jerking reply, Andrea declared – to a thunderous round of applause – how well she had bonded with all of us and stressed how much she would miss us.

Sir Erich then introduced our very special speaker, Barbara Winton, daughter of Sir Nicholas and author of the book *If It's Not Impossible ... The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton*.

The story of Nicky Winton's rescue of over 600 children from Czechoslovakia immediately prior to the war is well known, but Barbara added to our knowledge by dispelling a number of myths about her distinguished father. For instance, she said, it was not true that he never spoke about his story and that his family did not know about his Czech scrapbooks before the Esther Rantzen BBC TV *That's Life* programme in 1988. Furthermore, the number of children Sir Nicholas had rescued, while normally given



Photo: Paul Lang

Barbara Winton reveals further information about Sir Nicholas

as 669, was in fact larger and the true figure might never be known.

What motivated her father to do as he did? Barbara offered four good reasons: Sir Nicholas was familiar with the situation on account of his German-Jewish background – the family name was Wertheim before it was changed to Winton; he had a strong social conscience; he had the necessary skills and spoke fluent German (though not Czech); and, finally, he was a very stubborn character!

The meeting ended with a lively Q&A session, in which the Akiva pupils took part, and a presentation to Barbara.

David Lang



'THE LAST TRAIN TO TOMORROW'

The speaker at our August Kindertransport Lunch Meeting was Carl Davis, the well-known conductor and composer of 'The Last Train to Tomorrow'.

'The Last Train to Tomorrow' tells the story of the Kindertransport and,

among its performances, was one at The Roundhouse on 9 November 2014, the anniversary of Kristallnacht. Carl Davis made a recording in Prague of 'The Last Train' and the CD is available on his Carl Davis Collection website.

Where now for this Train? Probably it will have a place in Holocaust education.

David Lang

Ushakov Medal awarded to AJR member

The Ushakov Medal for bravery and courage in the Second World War has been awarded to AJR London member William (Bill) Howard.

The Medal, awarded to Veterans across the world, is a state decoration of the Russian Federation that was retained from the awards system of the USSR

Two years ago, Bill was awarded the Arctic Star, a campaign medal of the United Kingdom awarded retrospectively for operational service in the Second World War north of the Arctic Circle.



Association of Children of Jewish Refugees (ACJR)

Do you know of anyone who would like to join a social group the parents of whose members escaped Nazi persecution?

The ACJR holds social functions every month, including barbecues, walks in the countryside, and musical evenings. We also celebrate Jewish festivals with our own Seder and Chanukah Party.

**For further details, please contact
ACJR Chair Anthony Abbey
on 07415 304 832 92
or 020 8201 7986.**



EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW A Very Pleasant Way to Spend a Summer Sunday

The annual Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Edinburgh Synagogue Open Day provided a good reason for a number of members to make the trip east from Glasgow on a lovely sunny day and join up with the Edinburgh Group. Entertainment provided by actors and musicians participating in the Fringe ranged from comedy to calamity and music to memories and left a great desire to see more of the shows. A tour of the synagogue, led by their rabbi, David Rose, was available and we all definitely enjoyed the bagels and cakes during the lunch break. It was a very pleasant way to spend a summer Sunday.

Anthea Berg

EALING Poems That Mean a Lot

Members read out poems that meant a lot to them and we noted how much poetry reflects the age in which it was written. A most enjoyable summer afternoon.

Leslie Sommer

DIDSBURY CF Immigrants, Alcohol Intake Discussed

We chatted over lunch primarily about the immigrant situation and suggested solutions to this massive problem. Then we discussed a recent report on excessive alcohol intake of the 'over-65s', which caused much amusement.

Wendy Bott

ILFORD Waiting for a Blue Dahlia

Nick Dobson gave us an illustrated talk on dahlias and we were shown many colourful examples. Named after Anders Dahl, dahlias originated in Mexico but came to England in 1798. They are known as Georginas in the USA. The world still awaits the discovery of a blue dahlia, for which a prize is on offer. A great morning.

Meta Roseneil

PINNER Annual Garden Party

Having enjoyed the sunshine in Robert and Vera Gellman's house, we moved inside to be treated to a fabulous cream tea and cake with home-made scones. There were goodies to take home and this happy annual occasion was marked by a member's 100th birthday celebration.

Walter Weg

HGS Ambivalent Attitude to Jews

Lesley Urbach told us that Herbert Morrison, the well-known Labour politician and supporter of Zionism, was extremely impressed by how the Jews had toiled the land in Palestine – though it seems he didn't want them to come to the UK.

Esther Rinkoff

ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) Jewish Nonagenarians

Local pharmacist Lawrence Collin explained why there is a greater percentage of Jewish nonagenarians compared with the rest of the population. Among those present was Bernice Clarke, who will be 96 this December and is keen to celebrate her 100th birthday as part of the largest number of centenarians in one room in the world!

Larry Lisner

LEEDS CF Yet Another Wonderful Garden Party

Members enjoyed yet another wonderful garden party courtesy of Pippa and Norman Landey at their beautiful home in Thorne, Leeds. We were entertained by 'crooner' Chris Jefferies – feet tapped and people joined in as he sang his medleys. The 'icing on the cake' was Pippa's spectacular home baking and members tucked in to the most delicious afternoon tea. Thank you Pippa once again for your hospitality!

Wendy Bott

ST JOHN'S WOOD HMDT Briefing

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's (HMDT) Alice Owen told us of the many events that had taken place this year, about the creation of the new Youth Champions' group, and about plans for 2016. Members also described their own personal experiences, which the HMDT team found very rewarding.

Kathryn Prevezer

BOOK CLUB A Companionable Afternoon

Another successful meeting, chaired by Esther Rinkoff, took place at Joseph's Bookstore/ Café Also in Temple Fortune, London NW11. The meeting was well attended and the discussion lively. A thoroughly enjoyable and companionable afternoon. Do join – you'll love it!

Jill Pivnik and Rhoda Robinson

CAFE IMPERIAL Refugees/Migrants et al Discussed

An array of subjects was covered, including the current issue of refugees and migrants from Calais. We also discussed the liberation of Kaunitz camp, as well as D-Day heroes being awarded the Legion of Honour by the Home Office.

Esther Rinkoff

BIRMINGHAM Delightful Occasion

Meeting at the Betty Lions Hospitality

Rooms, an extension of the Birmingham Jewish Care Home, 20 refugees/survivors enjoyed a delightful lunch, reminiscences and chat. It was good to see Esther Rinkoff back with us again.

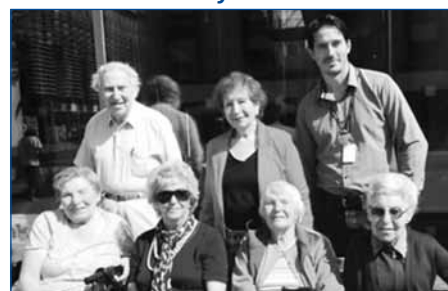
Mindu Hornick

GLASGOW Spirited BBQ

Heavy rain didn't dampen spirits as four generations enjoyed themselves at Glasgow's annual BBQ. The burgers and sausages were just as tasty indoors and everybody chatted and enjoyed a delicious lunch. Perhaps there'll be better weather next summer?

Agnes Isaacs

BRIGHTON Library Visit a Real Treat



(from left) Seated Evelyn Evans, Anne Cohn, Ceska Abrahams, Shirley Huberman Standing Leon Paget, Joy Markham, Ben King

Our visit to the Jubilee Library, hosted by the Library's Ben King, was a real treat. Ben gave us a tour of, and talk on, the 10-year-old masterpiece, designed to combine ecological efficiency with the latest technology.

Ceska Abrahams

KENT Fish, Chips and Trains

It made a lovely change to tuck into a fish-and-chip lunch at our meeting. Afterwards Godfrey Gould gave us an enlightening talk on how the railways changed our lives – including the greater availability of food such as fresh fish! Many other benefits of the railways included mass travel, leisure opportunities and fast freight transport.

Janet Weston

RADLETT Life in the London Musical World

Marion Friend spoke about her life in the London musical world. Having been an oboist in several major orchestras, she turned to administration of musical centres and education and was recently awarded an MBE. Her love of music was beautifully illustrated by several excellent recordings she played us.

Fritz Starer

WHITEFIELD/PRESTWICH CF Full House

There was a full house at the home of Werner and Ruth Lachs when we met to discuss the news topics of the day. Conversation was very animated and enjoyable, the afternoon suitably ending with kuchen and tea!

Wendy Bott

Andrea Goodmaker leaves the AJR

Andrea Goodmaker is departing from the AJR after almost 23 years of service, having worked across a number of departments during her time. She has been a dedicated and popular employee.

Andrea's first role was that of membership administrator at the AJR's former location in Adamson Road, Swiss Cottage. As well as accompanying members on holidays, assisting the Social Services and Volunteer Departments, and helping with



Photo: Paul Lang

restitution enquiries, Andrea has primarily been employed to assist with the production of the *AJR Journal* (formerly *AJR Information*), including organising the advertising and typing out the handwritten lead articles prepared by the late Richard Grunberger. For the past ten years she has been the first face and voice of the AJR manning the reception desk at Jubilee House.

Andrea has also been the secretary of the

Kindertransport Committee, organising highly successful monthly lunches and helping to arrange the anniversary Reunions, including giving a reading at the gathering at JFS in 2008 when the Prince of Wales was guest of honour, and again in 2013 at St James's Palace. She was also involved in the organisation of the concert at The Roundhouse last year when she had a third chance to meet Prince Charles.

The AJR is deeply grateful to Andrea for the enormous contribution she has made to the organisation and wishes her every success for the future.

CAMBRIDGE 'Born Survivors'

We were delighted to hear Eva Clarke talk about Wendy Holden's wonderful book 'Born Survivors', which relates the amazing stories of three babies born in a concentration camp. Eva was one of those babies and her late mother had been a member of our group. Eva managed to find the other two babies in different parts of the world and all came together at Mauthausen for a camp liberation anniversary.

Keith Lawson

HULL Well Looked After

Hull members enjoyed a delicious home-cooked lunch at the delightful East End Park Pavilion on a wonderful sunny Sunday afternoon. We were well looked after and the room rang with conversation and laughter. A good time was had by all.

Wendy Bott

NORTH WEST LONDON An Essential Part of Our Justice System

Susan Shaw, a magistrate for 24 years, told us magistrates were an ancient but essential part of our justice system. Magistrates, who are unpaid, she said, need a degree of common sense, although they are trained and kept up to date with changes in the law.

David Lang

WELWYN GC 10th Anniversary Lunch

We met for a delicious lunch to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Group's formation together with Esther Rinkoff and some members from the Radlett Group. It was a very enjoyable event and

discussion was lively. We saw friendship, support and the sharing of experiences as invaluable within the Group. We expressed our appreciation of the AJR, particularly the expansion of many support services and the inclusion of the Second Generation.

Georgina Broh

KINGSTON UPON THAMES AND SURREY The Lucky Ones

We were the lucky ones as Susan's long and elegantly laid table welcomed us into her home. There were 21 of us enjoying the unbelievable variety of food. Small wonder

continued on page 14 ➔

CONTACTS

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

OCTOBER GROUP EVENTS

Pinner	1 Oct	Naomi Games: 'Maximum Meaning, Minimum Means: The Life and Work of Abram Games'
Sheffield	4 Oct	Social
Glasgow	11 Oct	Edward Green: 'Auction Houses and eBay'
Cheshire	12 Oct	Social
HGS	12 Oct	David Barnett: 'Daniel Mendoza – World Boxing Champion'
Essex (Westcliff)	13 Oct	David Barnett: 'The Life of Judith Montefiore'
Leeds CF	13 Oct	Discussion Group
St John's Wood	13 Oct	Jane Merkin, Producer of <i>Suitcase 39</i> , the Story of the Kindertransport
Café Imperial	15 Oct	Lunchtime Social Get-together
Cambridge	15 Oct	Mike Levy: 'Great Jewish Lyricists – Gershwin and Others'
Hull	18 Oct	Social
Brighton	19 Oct	David Barnett: 'The Life of Judith Montefiore'
Whitefield	19 Oct	Social
Edgware	20 Oct	Suzanne Bardgett, Imperial War Museum
Kent	20 Oct	Tbc
Liverpool	20 Oct	Social
Glasgow CF	21 Oct	Kalooki and Lunch
Radlett	21 Oct	Frances Long: A Musical Recital at home of Stagers
Oxford	22 Oct	(11.30 am at home of Susie Bates) Light lunch. Kathryn Prevezer: 'WW1 Battlefields'
Welwyn GC	22 Oct	Social
Cardiff	26 Oct	Michael Newman, AJR Chief Executive
West Midlands (Birmingham)	27 Oct	Jean Bayliss-Johnson, Theatre Founder: 'From Birmingham to Broadway'
North West London	26 Oct	Michelle Woolf: 'The Jewish Pam Ayres'
Wembley	28 Oct	Colin Davey: 'Jewish Developers in the City of London'
North London	29 Oct	Elaine Wein: 'The City of London – Hidden Secrets'
Nottingham and Birmingham	29 Oct	Outing to Chatsworth House

INSIDE THE AJR cont. from p.13

that the ensuing chatter was to lead to new friendships being forged and old ones cemented.

June Wertheim

NORTH LONDON A Great Do

We celebrated our birthday in some style! Good food, wonderful entertainment and great company. What else can one ask for! Thank you Kathryn, Susan and all other helpers for masterminding such a great do.

Herbert Haberberg

EDINBURGH CF Superb Lunch and Concert

We enjoyed a superb lunch and a classical piano concert at the ROL. Jan Hugo delighted everyone with a selection of pieces by Chopin and Liszt.

Agnes Isaacs

BRISTOL Favourite Pieces of Music

Members met at Bannerman Road for a delicious lunch, after which we heard some favourite pieces of music chosen by members along with their reasons for so choosing. One piece of music reminded a member of the English countryside, in sharp contrast with the klezmer music chosen by another guest.

Kathryn Prevezer

EDGWARE Jews in Arab Lands

We had an interesting and informative talk by Lynn Julius, who had herself spent much time in Arab lands, on how Jews were treated in Arab countries both before and after the creation of Israel.

Edgar Ring

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WHY NOT TRY AJR'S MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE?

The AJR offers a kosher Meals on Wheels service delivered to your door once a week. The meals are freshly cooked every week by Kosher to Go. They are then frozen prior to delivery.

The cost is £7.00 for a three-course meal (soup, main course, desert) plus a £1 delivery fee.

Our aim is to bring good food to your door without the worry of shopping or cooking.

For further details, please call AJR Head Office on 020 8385 3070.

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

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for more information

OBITUARIES

Eli Fachler, born Berlin 27 October 1923, died Jerusalem 23 July 2015

Eli Fachler was born in Berlin in 1923 to Polish parents. He had one younger sister, who also came to England. Their family were traders and Orthodox. Prior to leaving Berlin, Eli experienced seminal events such as Kristallnacht and the deportation of his father. Both parents were murdered in the Holocaust between 1942 and 1945.

Eli came to England on the Kindertransport from Berlin under the auspices of Youth Aliyah, and he went to Whittingehame Farm School on the Balfour Estate near Edinburgh. The school had been started as a shelter for 120 boys and 80 girls. He remained there until July 1941, when he went to two small Bachad Kibbutzim near Newport Pagnell and Buckingham. In March 1943 he travelled north again and became deputy headmaster at Poulton House, the successor to Whittingehame School. While there, he was instrumental in starting B'nei Akiva in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

In March 1944, after refusing to serve in the Polish Army-in-Exile because he regarded them as anti-Semitic, Eli joined the British Army, serving as a sergeant instructor in the Education Corps. He celebrated VE Day in 1945 in Trafalgar Square and was eventually demobbed in July 1948.

The year 1944 was special: Eli married Chava Becker. They lived with Chava's parents in Letchworth. After his demob Eli

began working for Stern and Grunbaum, kosher butchers in Letchworth. In November 1948 he was offered a job in Manchester managing a kosher restaurant but, when this did not work out, he returned to Stern and Grunbaum. In 1952 he opened the Hadassah Wine Company and the following year, when meat rationing came to an end, he opened Luton Kosher Foods.

For the next several decades, Eli was instrumental in delivering kosher meat to small communities in the south of England and beyond. By this time, I had become a friend of the family and I remember those days vividly. It was clear that Eli was regarded as a pivotal figure in smaller Jewish communities from Cambridge to Bournemouth, from Carmel College to Gibraltar.

By this time, Eli and Chava had six children (very sadly their second son had died at a very early age and their youngest was not yet born). The Letchworth Jewish community was small and Orthodox, with the Fachlers and the family of Rabbi David Sassoon living on the same road, Sollershott East. The Fachlers were very hospitable and their door was always open



to visitors, many of whom stayed with the family for Shabbat. They included Jewish pupils from the local St Christopher's Boarding School and students from Cambridge University. I remember these Shabbatot very fondly as inspirational, full of fun and learning. It was during this period that the Fachlers fostered a young girl who became an important member of the family and is now a cantor in California. They also had their seventh child.

Eli and Chava first visited Israel in 1961 and always intended living there. Although they made *aliyah* in 1972 they were not able to live there permanently until Eli retired from the meat trade in the late 1980s. In 2010 they suffered the bereavement of their son, Rabbi Mordechai Fachler, after a long health struggle.

At the time of Eli's death, the tribe that he and Chava had created included five remaining children, 26 grandchildren, and 92 great-grandchildren. Most of the family now live in Israel.

Eli Fachler was learned and loyal, a true gentleman. He was warm and tolerant with a lively sense of humour. He will be much missed by all who knew him.

Further information about Eli is available in his *Refugee Voices* interview.

Ann Rau Dawes

Bina Wallach, born Vienna 20 February 1916, died London 1 May 2015

Albine Wallach, known as Bina, died just nine months short of her century. She was born in Vienna in the middle of the Great War. Her father fought in the Austrian army and died in 1918, leaving Bina's mother to bring her up together with her elder brother, Jacob.

Her formative years were characterised by considerable happiness at school but economic shortages at home. Bina was so grateful she was able to continue her schooling through to the equivalent of A-Level. She was undoubtedly a natural and talented student, someone who under different circumstances would have gone to university. A highly cultured person, she was interested in learning about the world until the very end.

But her life was not able to follow such a path. She left Vienna in 1937 as an economic migrant and initially found work as a 'domestic servant' in Ireland

and then in England. These were not happy times but they paled into insignificance after the Anschluss in Austria. Bina's mother and brother were living in Vienna and she was in a foreign country. She played a large part in securing her brother Jacob's entry into the UK in 1939 and then his emigration to the USA in 1940. She never saw her mother again: her mother was deported to Lodz in 1942 and killed at Chelmno.

Bina worked until she was nearly 90 years old! She worked for several Jewish employers as a personal assistant and bookkeeper/accountant. Although not formally trained, she possessed awesome numerical and financial skills. In a different era she would probably have become a chief financial officer. She was particularly proud of her activities as a trade unionist, defending the rights of female employees.

Bina never married. Indeed, she remained an amazingly independent person up to the



time of her death. She lived in her own home throughout her life. She 'acquired' two families with whom she was extremely close. One was mine (she and my father were loosely related); the other was the Keidens. To my family, she was always Auntie Bina and she was a central part of our lives, for my parents, for my wife Cynthia and myself, and for our two children and their children.

Paul Miller



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

The courage of their convictions

The recently published joint autobiography of Beate and Serge Klarsfeld is entitled simply *Mémoires*. Their stories, individually and jointly, are truly remarkable.

Beate, who was six years old when the war ended, was born in Berlin. She and her mother survived the war unscathed and Beate went to Paris after finishing high school to work as an *au pair*.

Serge's youth was a very different affair. His parents met and married in Paris before the outbreak of war and, like many Jews, sought refuge in the French Free Zone. Serge's father arranged a hiding place for his wife and two children but was caught and deported to Auschwitz. Serge writes movingly about the father he hardly knew, having in later years researched his trajectory and death. Throughout his childhood, and in later life, Serge was haunted by thoughts of, and longing for, his father and, when he visited Auschwitz as an adult, he determined to do something to bring to justice those perpetrators of the Shoah who had not yet paid for their crimes.

Beate was the first of the couple to embark on a career that involved battling against injustice. In 1967, still a young mother, she initiated almost single-handedly a campaign against West German Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger, exposing his Nazi past and calling for his resignation. She travelled throughout Europe, campaigning to expose the truth, and even slapping

Kiesinger publicly. Her account goes into considerable detail about how she set about raising support for her cause and it may well be partly due to her that Kiesinger's party was defeated in the subsequent general election and Willi Brandt, whom Beate supported, became chancellor.

Beate also waged a campaign against another former Nazi in a high position, Ernst Achenbach, and it was thanks to her exposure of his past that he was not appointed to a senior position on the newly formed European Commission. In all these activities Serge was her prop and support but the initiatives and actions seem to have been largely hers. Thus, in the 1970s, at considerable personal risk, she ventured alone into Poland and Czechoslovakia to distribute pamphlets and attract attention to her battle against officially inspired anti-Semitism in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

Serge fought alongside Beate to bring to justice Kurt Lischka and Herbert Hagen, former senior Nazi officials in occupied France, after the French authorities had failed to do so. Lischka and Hagen had signed orders consigning thousands of French Jews to the death camps but after the war were able to live in comfortable security in Germany. Beate and Serge gathered extensive documentation regarding their activities in France, even confronting them in person in order to bring the case to public attention. While undertaking this campaign, the Klarsfelds suffered poverty and even imprisonment but

persevered, convinced of the importance of their cause. Eventually the two men were brought before a court of law in Cologne and sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

As well as unmasking many former Nazi criminals, between 1971 and 1987 the Klarsfelds endeavoured relentlessly to bring Klaus Barbie, the 'Butcher of Lyon', to justice, using both the French and German judicial processes and seeking to galvanise public opinion. Barbie was living in comfort in Bolivia under the alias Altman. The Klarsfelds found him and unmasked him, even though their campaign encountered numerous setbacks, being hindered not least by the authorities in various South American countries. Eventually Barbie/Altman was extradited from Bolivia and tried by a French court. Other former Nazi officials whom the Klarsfelds sought to bring to justice included Mengele (Brazil) and Alois Brunner (Syria), although not all their efforts were crowned with success.

In addition to their Nazi-hunting activities, the Klarsfelds sought to convince the governments of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and of a number of north African countries to cease persecuting the Jewish population and accord Israel 'the right to live in peace'. Several Israeli governments awarded the Klarsfelds honours in recognition of their activities on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people. Beate was even proposed as a candidate for the German presidency in 2012: although she lost to Joachim Gauck she was honoured by the German establishment and felt that all her efforts had been vindicated.

The courage, determination and dedication of these two individuals stand as a shining light and example to us all.

Beate and Serge Klarsfeld: *Mémoires*, Fayard/Flammarion, 2015, 687 pp.

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

in Hungary had perished in the Holocaust. That made him volunteer to fight in Israel's War of Independence.

Lenart turned out to be the most experienced pilot in the tiny Israeli air force. Parts of four Messerschmitt aircraft sourced from the Czechs were assembled in Israel and Lenart was made the commander in charge of them. One of his pilots was Ezer Weizmann, who became a lifelong friend.

In the war the Egyptian army stood at Ashdod, threatening Tel Aviv. Lenart and his four planes flew to attack them with

the machine guns attached to their planes. The attack was a success, despite the loss of one of the pilots and two of the planes.

Lenart now lives in Israel and is involved in the film industry.

Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath

GETTING IN TOUCH

Sirs – I've been a reader of the *AJR Journal* for a loooooong time and wonder if you could publish an ad in your next issue that I came to London on a Kindertransport from Vienna in April 1939, eventually ending up in an orphanage in Glasgow, which was

financed by the then Gertrude Jacobson philanthropic organisation. From there I was sent to the Bitkenward Hostel in Skelmorlie, Ayrshire, which housed around 50 boys and girls, mainly from Austria and Germany.

I lived all over Latin America for some 40 years but for the last five years I have been living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I would be delighted to get in touch with anyone who happens to relate to my background.

Henry Herner, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA, hherner@hotmail.

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Telephone 020 8385 3070 Fax 020 8385 3080 e-mail editorial@ajr.org.uk

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