

# AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Special 70th Anniversary Issue

January 2016 marks the seventieth anniversary of the first appearance of our Journal, then known as *AJR Information*, in January 1946. The year 2016 is also the 75th anniversary of the founding of the AJR.

The Journal was a bold venture for an organisation as young as the AJR, which had only been founded in 1941, when a handful of Jewish refugees from Hitler, recently expelled from their home countries and still classed as 'enemy aliens' by their British hosts, decided to establish their own representative association. Few would then have guessed that what appeared to be a small and

struggling publication would outlast almost all its counterparts to survive and flourish well into the twenty-first century.

Over the decades, the Journal has devotedly performed its core function of keeping its readers informed about matters that concern and interest them; its reports, editorials and reviews have been of consistently high quality. It has also developed an enviably high standard in its many articles on cultural and historical themes.

The quality of the Journal owes a great deal to continuity. Its first editor, Werner Rosenstock, held the position from 1946 until 1982, initially together with Herbert Freedman

and Ernst Lowenthal. After an interregnum filled by Murray Mindlin (1982-86) and C. C. Aronsfeld (1986-88), Richard Grunberger became editor in 1988, holding the position until 2005. In 2006, Anthony Grenville was appointed consultant editor – sharp-eyed readers will have noticed that he has now been editor for exactly ten years – though Howard Spier, the executive editor, has been compiling the Journal for considerably longer. In this anniversary issue, we present a selection of pieces designed to illustrate the Journal's past record for our readers.

### *AJR Information, January 1946, Page 1 – The First Page of the First Issue*

*AJR Information of January 1946 set the pattern for the future issues of the Journal for many years to come. The left-hand column of the front page contained items that resembled the editorials of British newspapers. The four items to be found here reflect the AJR's principal concerns in 1946: the publication of its journal, a new and proud venture for an organisation that had been in existence for less than five years; the resumption of naturalisation, which would lead to the great majority of the Jewish refugees from Hitler in this country being granted British citizenship by 1950; the critical situation in Palestine, where the British mandatory authorities were maintaining a strict limit on the immigration of Jews from Europe, most of them Displaced Persons desperate to escape from DP camps; and the searing experience of the Holocaust, linked with the hope that the Nuremberg Trials would bring a measure of justice for the victims in the struggle against Nazism and anti-Semitism. The items in the left-hand column were written by the editor(s), predominantly by Werner Rosenstock, and were unsigned.*

#### A NEW VENTURE

The first issue of "AJR Information" is out. One of the primary functions of this monthly publication will be to keep its readers informed about the position of Jewries on the Continent and about the work for their relief and rehabilitation. It will bring into contact the members of the AJR with the immigrants overseas, especially with our kindred organisations, and ventilate all possibilities of immigration for the remnants on the Continent. The problem of refugees in this country will be no less our concern, and legal, economic and social questions and all the factors which add up to their status, will be dealt with extensively. "AJR Information" will report on the activities of the Association, both of its Head Office in London, and of the various branches and groups in the provinces, and thus strengthen the link between the members. Stressing these salient points, it will be of service to the whole Jewish community.

#### A STEP FORWARD

Two statements recently made by the Home Secretary in Parliament have given new hope to Jewish refugees in this country and to those survivors on the Continent who have close relatives in the United Kingdom. One statement concerns the resumption of naturalisation, giving priority to all those who have made a specific contribution to the country's war and economic effort; the other refers to

distressed persons in Europe desirous of joining their relatives in this country.

"In spite of economic difficulties, and within the limits imposed by them," said Mr. Ede, "the utmost should be done to maintain Great Britain's historic tradition of affording asylum to the distressed." A noble statement in a noble spirit!

The A.J.R., which has taken an active interest in the issue, will readily advise members and friends on methods of procedure.

#### SHADOW OVER PALESTINE

The Board of Deputies of British Jews voiced the feelings of Jews in this country when it expressed its regret that in spite of the overwhelming evidence of the tragic situation of the Jewish survivors in Europe, no provision had been made for their immediate admission to the Jewish National Home as of right.

The monthly immigration quota of 1,500 will be a bitter blow to thousands of men, women and children still in the camps on the Continent, who face, insufficiently clad, nourished and housed, the terrible hardships of a winter, and whose primary hope was a speedy immigration into Palestine.

#### NUREMBERG

Indictment Number 1 of the trial "unique in the jurisprudence of the world" reads: "Of 9,600,000 Jews who lived in the parts

of Europe under Nazi domination, it is conservatively estimated that 5,700,000 disappeared, most of them deliberately put to death by a Nazi conspiracy." For the Jews in Germany the name of Nuremberg has a bitter ring. It was from there that year after year, on the Party anniversaries, blatant announcements were made on the wireless, culminating in 1935 in the so-called "Nuremberg Laws." It was from Nuremberg that [Julius] Streicher contaminated the Reich with his pornographic journal *Der Stuermer*. For all those who have been spared, the days of Nuremberg are indeed days of judgment, and the name of that town, soiled by the lowest perfidy, will be cleansed and raised to an emblem of justice.

### TWO SCARLET PIMPERNELS (AJR Information, November 1955, page 7)

*In addition to its function of informing its readers about matters of concern to them, AJR Information published some more eye-catching stories, like this review of the autobiography of an unorthodox British aristocrat, Sir Michael Bruce, who tried to assist the Jews of Germany in November 1938, when the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a young Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, was used by the Nazis as the pretext for the anti-Semitic pogroms known as 'Crystal Night'. Sir Michael's account of his meeting with Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck, who refused to leave Germany, survived Theresienstadt and became the spiritual leader of the Jewish refugees from Germany, and Wilfrid Israel, who was killed when his plane was shot down as he was returning to Britain from a wartime rescue mission in Portugal, is especially moving. The review was written by Werner Rosenstock, editor of the journal from 1946 to 1982 and General Secretary of the AJR from 1941 to 1982. (The second 'Scarlet Pimpernel' – the nickname is taken from the hero of the novels*

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*by Baroness Orczy who spirits endangered people out of revolutionary France – was an Italian hotel porter, Mario Toselli.)*

### The Scottish Baron

In these November days we are again reminded of the events of 1938, which were the signal of the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question", the pogroms in Germany. It is, therefore, apposite to quote a description given by an Englishman (or rather Scotsman), who recently published his memoirs and who in those days acted as one of our Scarlet Pimpernels. In his autobiography "Tramp Royal" (Elek, 16s.), Sir Michael Bruce reports that, at the instigation of the late Oscar Deutsch, he was invited to a conference at New Court, the Rothschild Office, where he met Messrs. Rothschild, Lord Samuel, Mr. Neville Laski and Mr. Otto Schiff. They told him that according to their information the Gruenspan incident in Paris would serve as a pretext for large-scale anti-Jewish measures in Germany and asked Sir Michael to go to Berlin in order to secure a complete report of what was happening inside that country. In Berlin, Sir Michael was brought into touch with Wilfrid Israel, Paul Eppstein, Heinrich Stahl and Julius L. Seligsohn. None of these is alive to-day; Wilfrid Israel lost his life while on a mission to the Continent during the war, the three other unforgettable leaders of German Jewry, who voluntarily had remained in Germany, perished in concentration camps. "They told me," Sir Michael writes, "they had definite warning that the SS and SA had organised a demonstration against the Jews for that evening. It was to be the torch that would set off a pogrom. They added that Mr. Geist, the American Consul, had warned Hitler that he knew these risings had been arranged and that no one would believe them to be spontaneous expressions of distaste by the German people. They asked me to tell the British Embassy of the demonstrations, to ask the Embassy to take the same line with the Nazis as the Americans and also to warn the foreign pressmen in Berlin. ... Reports on the treatment of the Jews in Berlin and elsewhere, they said, would be sent to Anna (a non-Jewess), who would cache them in different places — mostly with Aryan sympathisers of the Jewish Cause — until they could be got out of the country. It would be my responsibility to organise the smuggling of the reports to Britain. The interview was over. Israel rose and stretched out his hand with a smile. Thank you for helping us, Sir Michael, he said. Good luck go with you."

### Eve of November Pogroms

"It was now seven-thirty," Sir Michael continues, "and I went at once to the

British Embassy. I told Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes everything I knew and urged him to contact Hitler and express Britain's displeasure. He told me he could do nothing. The Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson, was in London, and the Foreign Office, acting on instructions from Lord Halifax, had told him to do nothing that might offend Hitler and his minions."

The author then recalls his experience during the pogrom night and his efforts, in which courageous non-Jews joined, to come to the aid of maltreated Jews. He also mentions that he had persuaded a friend to carry two unauthorised passengers to safety in his private plane. He begged Wilfrid and Dr. Baeck to be those two passengers. "Wilfrid said quietly: 'I will go when Dr. Baeck goes.' Dr. Baeck looked at him and smiled, and said: 'I will go when I am the last Jew alive in Germany'. ... The world is a better place for having given birth to two such gallant men. I am proud and honoured to have worked for a brief space at their sides," he writes. Under immense difficulties and at greatest personal risk, Sir Michael arranged for handing the reports to a friend at the British Embassy. They were sent to London in the diplomatic bag "carefully disguised as official papers, because neither the Embassy nor the Foreign Office must know that the sanctity of the bag had been violated."

When he realised that he was watched by the Gestapo, Sir Michael decided to return to England. His suspicion proved justified. At the Bentheim frontier station he was thrown into a cell and repeatedly interrogated and heavily beaten. Bravely he refused to give any information the police wanted to get out of him. Only 12 days after his arrest he was released, the British Embassy having intervened on his behalf.

For us the story has a threefold meaning. It reveals the initiative, solidarity and imagination of Anglo-Jewish friends in those days of peril, it reflects the unselfish courage of a Scotch nobleman, and it also recalls the brave deeds of German Jewry's leaders. Yet the history of the 'underground work' done by responsible German Jews in contact with non-Jewish anti-Nazis and friends abroad still remains to be written.

W.R.

Lucie Schachne

"... IT TAKES MORE THAN ONE  
GENERATION"

A Documentary on Refugee Children  
(AJR Information, July 1966,  
pages 1-2)

*The suffering inflicted on the Jewish refugees from Nazism by their enforced emigration from their native countries is a topic that*

*has never been far from the pages of the Journal. This moving front-page article is a review of a well-known edition of extracts from testimonies by Kindertransport children compiled by the refugee writer and poet Karen Gershon (Kaethe Loewenthal) (1923-1993) and published in 1966 under the title 'We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography of Refugees' by Gollancz in London. It conveys with considerable emotional power the experience of the Kindertransport children, the separation from their parents, their journey to Britain, their initial reception in this country, their education, integration into British society and subsequent adult life. Much of the review focuses on the psychological impact of the Kindertransport experience on the later lives of the children and the burdens and traumas it imposed on them. Lucie Schachne, born in Berlin in 1918 and also known by her married name, Lucie Kaye, wrote frequently for the Journal and was one of its most capable reviewers.*

Almost 30 years have passed since the 10,000 boys and girls arrived in this country. They came to these shores in those fateful days after 1938, the majority without their parents, under the auspices of "The Movement for the Care of Children from Germany and Austria". Even the youngest among them—some of them not more than two or three years old—have grown into adults, most of them have become parents. Today they are the mothers and fathers of children to whom words like "permit" and "visa" have no magic attraction and terms like "Refugee from Nazi Oppression" (if at all known) belong to the past. The events of this era, with all their dramatic personal content, are known as contemporary history—that is "contemporary history" to the scholar and student. For all those who had to play an active part, these years will remain the most formative period of their own life-stories.

Karen Gershon, the poet and herself a former child refugee, has collected the life histories of 234 of her contemporaries and the result of her effort is a most remarkable account, published recently under the title "We Came As Children". It is indeed true, as one reviewer observed, that "this overwhelming book has 234 authors", but it is equally true that the imaginative manner in which the editor has moulded the wealth of her material, has produced a documentary of outstanding quality.

Even those among us who still vividly remember and personally witnessed the arrival of the children and became familiar with their background, and in many cases have followed their careers, are bound to be deeply stirred by the impact of this "inside story" of human experience in

our midst.

The accounts are arranged in such a way that we follow the children's life through the various stages of their integration into this country. We are not, however, able to trace one individual record in its chronological sequence, since they are compiled in anonymous excerpts from the original autobiographies. Thus, their collective memory carries us back to the moment where they parted from "parents who in order to catch a very last glimpse of their children's faces followed them from station to station". All the children had to be under 16 but this very wrench catapulted them into adults, burdened them with a responsibility and consciousness far beyond their age.

"My brother who was only two was allowed to come to England with me. When we were going from the train to the boat he was far ahead of me leading the long line of children. He looked like a drummer, with his chamber pot strapped on his back. I was ten years old then and had promised my mother to look after him. But as soon as we had said good-bye to my parents we were separated and we have never lived together again at all."

And then the boy of three in one of the transports who kept memorising a name and address. "After we had left Germany he asked me to write it down. They were people in England who might help his parents". Most of them in spite of the shock of separation were full of expectance of a new life, away from terror and brutality. "Any hardship I countered with the thought: 'better this than living in Germany.'"

The hardships in store for them were only too many. Their arrival in midwinter was followed by a reception in summer camps near the coast—really not more than an improvised shelter—offering a cold welcome in every sense of the word. It was impossible to create any kind of warmth in these places, let alone an atmosphere which might have reassured these young refugees of newly found security or given them confidence in an unknown future. Reading their stories, it is very hard to understand why so much suffering had to be inflicted in the process of saving their lives and helping them to grow up.

"We were told that we must always remember that other children might have come out in our stead and they might have been more worthwhile people than we. Since then I have always been obsessed with the thought that I must justify my survival."

"I was unhappy at Dovercourt but I was terrified to leave it. There were rumours that if you were lucky in your adoption the people might help your parents—but it was also said that girls of 15 like myself were only wanted by English families as servants. What frightened me was the thought that I would be giving strangers absolute power

over me. I didn't know that the committee would still care what became of me once I had left the camp. Everybody wanted us to leave so that more children could be brought over from Germany. I can see now that the next step determined the whole of my life but I was made to feel very guilty about taking it with so much care."

Worst of all must have been the arbitrariness with which the children were "sold" in many cases to the potential foster parents who came to select them while they were in the camps.

"Even as a boy of twelve I knew that being taken in by a family instead of going to a hostel or institution of some kind was not only preferable, but one step up in the social scale. I had stayed with a family for a few days in transit to a hostel, but this family asked if I wanted to stay with them, and of course I was only too glad."

Their education was a great worry to them and many suffered real frustration by being sent to manual labour at the age of 14 instead of being educated for a profession. However inevitable this might have been under the circumstances, how could they have realised when leaving home as youngsters that the whole course of their lives was to be so different from what they (and probably their parents) had longed to do? One young boy, asked by some official what he wanted to be when he grew up, answered frankly "a doctor" and was promptly answered, "I can't put that down, you must remember you are a refugee."

Their difficulties in adapting themselves to their new life did not become less when war broke out and they had to meet new challenges. Learning the new language may not have been so difficult, but not being able to speak German any more constituted for many of them a major obstacle for one simple reason: it was the only link with their past and "at home". New resentments formed themselves—sometimes against England, sometimes even against their parents who had sent them here where they had to fend for themselves. Many of these accounts present a confusion of mind and soul too entangled to have been rationalised and relieved by outside help even when it was offered.

Struggling to adapt themselves to the new life and trying to keep their identity in spite of the handicap of a double labelling as "Jew" and "Refugee" the children became now—in the eyes of their surroundings—"Germans" as well and often found it impossible to defend themselves.

"The warden of our hostel saw me laughing and asked, what have you got to laugh about? You have been classified as an enemy alien."

All in all, their experiences either with foster parents or in institutions and

schools varied. Many of them were and, most important, felt themselves treated wonderfully well. They were made to feel that they had found real homes and belonged. They also found friends and teachers who offered understanding and love without expecting constant gratitude and explanation. Those were the fortunate ones, keen to assimilate to their surroundings, and often succeeding in forgetting the past. So much so that the arrival of their parents could be regarded as an intrusion.

"More than anything in the world I wanted to be an English girl; I rejected my past and my parents. As I grew up I was paralysed with shyness, petrified in case my parents should come to school and that my friends should hear them speak with their broken accents. Their speech and their ways were different and I suffered. I was seven years old when I came."

As they grew up and started their own careers they soon realised that their past and background proved stronger than their upbringing in this country. The problems of integration which they had to solve were very similar to those of the older refugees—with one striking difference, however: they were at the same time battling against their basic experience of insecurity and loneliness—a poor equipment for any struggle. Very often they felt their being different not only a burden but even a guilt.

"Being a refugee has meant and means that I don't belong anywhere. I am never free from insecurity and I am always afraid, this is of course something that does not show, even my husband is unaware of the depth of panic that can still overwhelm me. My father is dead; his nine brothers and sisters were deported and died. I live a very normal and successful life, but I am always oppressed by the past, I don't know any people like me, and therefore find it difficult to make lasting contacts."

On the whole, however, and with certain reservations, the majority of the writers have come to terms with their refugee past. Most of them feel completely accepted in their individual walks of life although they are aware of not quite belonging, and perhaps those with children feel the break of continuity in their own past even more acutely, as one of them summed it up:

"I have now been married for 15 years and have two children, and we are comfortably off. But in all these years of British citizenship we find that whereas we certainly don't feel like refugees any more, we don't seem to be fully integrated either. It takes more than one generation to do that."

Many more aspects of refugee mentality and present-day existence are highlighted

in these pages, reflecting like a mirror problems and thoughts of the entire German Refugee Community here. I am thinking of attitudes towards Germans and Germany, relations to the Anglo-Jewish community and attachment to synagogues and Jewish traditions. In all these questions the younger people's opinions vary and range from one extreme to the other. But in all this variety they don't differ much from those held by the older set, and I believe that this is rather accounted for by differences of temperament and character than by past experiences.

Throughout the book Karen Gershon, the poet, has remained silent. But she has added some of her poems in an appendix. They are strong, truthful verses interpreting her childhood experiences with an artistic simplicity that reaches heart and mind alike.

I don't think that a sociology of Jewish Refugee Communities has been written as yet. "We Came As Children" would certainly be a most valuable contribution (or perhaps the stimulus?) towards one. Whoever is going to write this will find some important spade work already done. In the meantime everybody should read this collective autobiography. It is *our* book.

#### RETURN TO OLD JERUSALEM

##### *(AJR information, July 1967, page 3)*

*The Six-Day War of June 1967 was a period of high emotion at a critical historical juncture. The reports in AJR Information swung from anxiety at the apparent threat to the very existence of the Jewish state to joy and relief at Israel's stunning victory, which culminated in the taking of Arab-held East Jerusalem and the reopening of the city's holiest places to Jews, who had been unable to visit them since 1948. In this vivid piece of journalism, Herbert Freedman (Friedenthal), who had been co-editor of the Journal from 1946 until he left for Israel in 1950, describes his journey through the Damascus Gate into the Old City and his delight at the reunification of Jerusalem, which, he hoped, could usher in a better and more peaceful future.*

As the car full of journalists was passing through the thronging multitude which had assembled in front of the Mandelbaum Gate, the former frontier between the Israeli and the Jordanian Jerusalem, the colleague from Tel Aviv who sat next to me said: "What morning papers write is already superseded by the time they appear. You should read Psalm 126 which is now topical: 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream'".

We really are like them that dream.

Passing through the streets which lead from the Mandelbaum Gate to the Old City, one comes to realise the former, enforced, division of Jerusalem to its full extent. What we see here is nothing but the continuation of the streets of the Jewish part. The houses, the shops and the offices are built in the same style, even the people resemble those on our side. We are amazed by the great number of young men of military age, who are not in uniform and who are allowed to move around freely.

Of course, there are many visible marks of the recent fighting and of the damage sustained, such as smashed cars, demolished house frontages, stone boulders and broken glass. Yet some of the shops have already reopened.

One can buy souvenirs, coca cola and bananas, and payment in Israeli currency is gladly welcomed. An urchin presses a card into our hands: "Orient-Bazaar-Specialities and Handicraft made by Refugees". In front of the Damascus Gate we get into a conversation with two young men of about 18. One of them turns out to be a tourist guide. There have been no tourists for the past month, he complains. A journalist points out to him the tremendous possibilities which are now opening up for tourism. "Do you really think that many tourists will come now?" he asks hopefully. And he adds: "What we need is peace".

We enter the Old City through the Damascus Gate. We have been warned to move carefully. Unexploded shells are lying around, and if you are unlucky you may step on a mine or get hit by a sniper.

It is twenty years ago that I was here for the last time. We are going along the Via Dolorosa and from the monasteries and sanctuaries which form this road, we are greeted by monks and nuns with "Shalom". Then we reach the Temple Place. Only now, in the days of the war, may we enter this place without having to take off our shoes, as is prescribed by the law of Islam. Only now may Orthodox Jews approach the Wailing Wall from this side because, according to the Halacha, no Jew may step on the Temple Place before the Temple has been rebuilt.

At the Omar Mosque a warning has been fixed: "Holy Place. Do not enter". Through an open window we can look into the building which, next to Mecca, is one of the holiest monuments of Islam. Then on to the Wailing Wall. It is reached through a cul-de-sac. Under the British Mandate, Jews were not permitted to blow the shofar here, apparently so as not to "provoke" the Arabs. For that very reason, the clang of the ram's horn was the first sound to be heard when the Jews returned to this only remnant of the Temple of Solomon. The huge stone blocks

on the Western front of the Temple have remained intact through the millennia. Into their gaps the faithful have placed small bits of paper with prayers for the life and health of their husbands and sons who are still fighting on the front. A Torah scroll has been placed on a table – an improvised synagogue. The voices of the visitors die down. People stay silent or pray quietly. Only now and again the words of blessing are heard: "Blessed art Thou, our Eternal God, who hast permitted us to live through this day".

When we wanted to return to the Damascus Gate, we were stopped by Israeli soldiers, who are on guard with their automatic rifles. There are still snipers left, who fire from hidden places. Through a labyrinth of alleys we reach a hill from which we can see the entire Old City, surrounded by Mount Scopus, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, modern hotels and the wide landscape of Judaea.

"To spare the Holy City our troops had to fight from street to street and from house to house", our guide tells us. "We had to pay for our respect of the holy places of Christianity and Islam with our blood".

**Herbert Freeden**

### Ida Herz

#### MEETING THOMAS MANN

#### *Recollections on his Centenary*

(June 6, 1975)

*(AJR Information, June 1975, page 5)*

*The devotion of the German-speaking Jews from Central Europe to high culture is very well known. Among AJR members were many with close connections to celebrated figures from the literary, artistic and musical spheres, and the Journal published numerous highly interesting contributions from them. This article offers a fascinating insight into the private persona of one of Germany's greatest men of letters, the Nobel Prize-winning novelist Thomas Mann (1875-1955). The Nuremberg bookseller Ida Herz (1894-1984) first met Mann in 1924; in 1925 he commissioned her to reorganise his library and she became a devoted friend. Ida Herz was Jewish and had to leave Germany in 1935, settling in London; she lived at 95 Gilling Court, Belsize Grove, London NW3. Twenty years after his death, she was in a position to paint a sympathetic and intimate portrait of a great writer whose Olympian public image had by then largely eclipsed the more human side of his private personality. Mann portrayed Herz – a good deal less sympathetically, it must be said – in the figure of Kunigunde Rosenstiel in his novel 'Doktor Faustus'.*

The relatively few lively pictures I can still recall of the many meetings I had with Thomas Mann in the course of more than thirty years remind me how many of these precious moments I have in fact forgotten. The modulation, the timbre of his voice, are still preserved in my inner ear. When I read any of his writings, be it a letter, an essay, or one of his novels, it is always as if he were reading them aloud to me. How often did I listen to him when he read in the family circle, with perhaps one or two other friends present, a piece he had completed in the morning hours in the seclusion of his study.

It was in the summer of 1925, when I was working on his library, that I heard him thus for the first time. At supper, he asked us: "Would you like me to read tonight from my essay for Keyserling's *Ehebuch*?" In the study only the standard lamp with a large yellow shade was burning and threw a soft and golden light on the easy chair, a beautiful piece of furniture with richly carved arm supports in the shape of swans' heads and their curved necks. It was a relic from the parental home in Lübeck. There Thomas Mann sat down, the loose pages of the manuscript in one hand, in the other the shortening end of a cigar. He waited until we had settled down, then he cleared his throat and began. For me it was a solemn moment. Not so for him: everything happened with intimate informality.

Many of Thomas Mann's critics, especially those in Anglo-Saxon countries, think of him as pompous and solemn. This is sheer nonsense. The pomposity and solemnity is all in their own imagination, deriving no doubt from the considerable intellectual challenge of his creative work. Confrontation with the exceptional tends to make us shy; and we are reluctant to admit the difference which often exists between person and personality. In Thomas Mann's case it was the more bewildering because he himself did not take notice, or did not seem to notice the effect upon others of his unaffected simplicity.

Thomas Mann met his visitors without expectations of any kind, neither in this direction nor in that. They had told him in their letters why they wanted to see and talk to him, and had asked whether and when they might come. That was enough for him. He then knew where the person hailed from, in the literal and the figurative sense. Who and what he was, was something still to be discovered. Understandably, most of his visitors came with preconceived ideas about him. After all, they had read his works and discussed them with their friends or in print. Now, they looked forward to the opportunity of developing their thoughts in brilliant conversation with the author. This was

their hope – until ... Until they were confronted with the object of their long curiosity. However, the object of their curiosity was not willing to follow suit. He was looking forward to a leisurely talk with a pleasant companion, maybe on the walk he took regularly with his dog after three exhausting hours at his desk. Unexpectedly, surprisingly, this was the moment of truth. Few recognised it as such. They were convinced that it was Thomas Mann who had failed them. "He is an uninteresting bore", some of them complained. And in their vanity, they did not reflect how revealing of themselves such a remark was.

After a hard day's work, Thomas Mann loved to have guests, so long as, he once wrote to Agnes Meyer, "I can trust their sincerity." What he meant by this was: so long as he could believe in their sympathy. In fact, he could only live, and only work, in an atmosphere of sympathy. Then all his gifts unfolded, in other words: his genius. And then his genius generously returned a hundredfold the sympathy he received. The world at large learned very late that it was this abundance of sympathy with humanity which inspired his thoughts and actions. People who met him only once were inclined to take his innate shyness for aloofness, and the apparent aloofness for haughtiness.

#### Helpful to Fellow Writers

This false image that people often made for themselves is now slowly making room for a truer one. This, I believe, is chiefly due to the publication of his letters. Thomas Mann rarely left a letter unanswered. Short and factual though the answer may have been, it was not merely polite, it was always friendly. Behind the writer he saw the person. When, in 1925, I was putting his large library in order and cataloguing it, he complained to me of the overwhelming influx of books sent to him by publishers and by writers anxious to have his opinion. "If only I had the heart to throw a book away as many of my colleagues do. But behind each book there lives a man, who tried to put his best into it." This remark was characteristic of him. Well into old age he was willing and ready to compare his own beginnings with that of his younger contemporaries.

I once asked him what he felt about the great success of *Buddenbrooks* once the cheap one-volume edition was put out by his publisher S. Fischer of Berlin in 1903. "Not as happy as you may think. I only felt the very heavy responsibility. Would I be able to live up to it? It was really more discouraging than encouraging." Such reservations were, I think, responsible for his often far too kind criticism of writers.

*continued on page 6* ➔

"A young writer's life is nowadays much more difficult than it was when I was young", he once said to me when we were talking of his son Klaus, of whose great talent he was convinced from the beginning. "He has the talent", he said, "what he will make of it, is a question of character".

If I were asked to offer a characterisation of Thomas Mann in a couple of words, I think I would say: "He was *un homme de bonne volonté*". For this implies both a belief in the fundamental goodness of man and the will to realise it in action. At the same time it demands recognition of the human limitations imposed by man's frailties and subsequent failings. With ironic wisdom and wise irony Thomas Mann therefore decided that the best he could expect or demand from himself and his fellow human beings was "intelligent kindness".

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (AJR Information, March 1984, page 6)

*These six letters provide a good example of the remarkably high quality of AJR Information's letters' page, which remains one of the most lively and eagerly read sections of the Journal. The contributions demonstrate the depth and breadth of knowledge on a wide range of subjects that have always characterised the Journal's correspondents, and also their willingness to engage in often heated polemics on controversial subjects. Among the members of the AJR one can, it seems, find someone who knows about or has a personal contact with almost any person, topic or event from recent Jewish history.*

#### Dr. Schmitthoff

Sir, – I refer to the paragraph on the December 83 Home News page headed 'A Lawyer's Achievements'. Well over 25 years ago Dr. Schmitthoff was my teacher in English Company Law at what was then the City of London College. I wish now to take the opportunity through your pages to pay tribute to him for his excellent teaching. Dr. Schmitthoff's lectures and notes were so clear and lucid that I simply did not need my textbooks. Everyone in the class could feel his enthusiasm for the subject, making it so easy to retrieve the information at exam time. Long may he continue to help his students, who must by now run into many hundreds.

K. C. SAUNDERS  
103 Britten Close  
Wellgarth Road  
London NW11 7HW

*K.C. Saunders's letter was inspired by a tribute to the barrister Clive M. Schmitthoff, entitled 'A Lawyer's Achievements', published in the issue of December 1983. An attractive feature of the Journal over many years was the section that contained tributes to distinguished AJR members or others who had rendered great services to the refugee community, on such occasions as round-number birthdays – Schmitthoff had recently celebrated his eightieth. The other subjects of such tributes in December 1983 were F. A. Mann, one of the most eminent legal experts to have emigrated from Germany to Britain, and Alice King, one of the AJR's unsung heroines, who had worked in the cause of restitution (probably for the United Restitution Organisation, a sister organisation of the AJR) and had persuaded some of the recipients to make bequests to the AJR.*

#### Georg Rusche

Sir, – We are currently preparing the French edition of the works of Georg Rusche (Hannover (Germany), 1900-London, 1950). A former member of the "Institut für Sozialforschung" (Institute for Social Research) in Frankfurt a/M., he is best known as the co-author with O. Kirchheimer of "Punishment and Social Structure" (Columbia Univ. Press, 1939). All documents and information welcome. We are especially looking for the original German manuscript of the book (by G. Rusche alone), "Arbeitsmarkt und Strafvollzug", or its English translation. Please write to:

R. LEVY, C.E.S.D.I.P.,  
4. rue de Mondovi,  
75001 Paris.  
France  
or

H. ZANDER  
Institut für Sozialpädagogik  
Und Erwachsenenbildung,  
Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität,  
Feldbergstrasse 42,  
6000 Frankfurt a.M.,  
West Germany

*Enquiries related to academic research projects were frequent in AJR Information. This enquiry about the criminologist Georg Rusche provides a connection to one of the most celebrated of academic institutions forced into exile by the Nazis. This was the Institut für Sozialforschung, the pioneering institute established in 1923 in Frankfurt am Main to promote research in the social sciences, which re-established itself as the Institute for Social Research in the USA under the luminaries of the Marxist left, Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, authors of 'Dialectic of Enlightenment'; they and their colleagues, who included the Marxist philosopher-sociologist Herbert*

*Marcuse, were known as the Frankfurt School, and their Critical Theory exercised a powerful influence on the New Left that emerged in the 1960s, as did the writings of Walter Benjamin, a colleague in the Institut's Frankfurt years.*

#### Selma Mayer

Sir, – I am the niece of Schwester Selma Mayer, erstwhile Matron of the Shaare Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem. Schwester Selma Mayer had her 100th birthday on 4 February, and although I suppose she might not be classed as a 'refugee' in the strict sense, she went to Israel in 1916 following the call of Dr Mosche Wallach (who came from Cologne) to help him found the Shaare Zedek. She will be well known to many of your members.

Schwester Selma was born in Hanau am Main on 4 February 1884 and trained and worked as a nurse and infant school teacher (having trained in Montessori) in Hamburg. When Dr Mosche Wallach advertised for a fully qualified nurse to go to Jerusalem in 1916, she followed his call. As it was in the middle of the First World War, the journey, over land, took many weeks, but she made it and never regretted it.

The conditions under which both she and Dr Wallach worked (operations in a tent by the light of oil lamps, etc.) are hard to imagine in this day and age, but gradually, also with Schwester Selma's help (she used her leave to go on fundraising trips in many countries), a proper well-equipped hospital developed. Dr Wallach was a hard task-master, but demanded no less of himself than he did from his helpers, and the desperate need for medical and human care made their work extremely rewarding.

Schwester Selma worked as Matron of the Shaare Zedek until she was in her 80s, and a great many nurses were trained by her. She is now, alas, very old and frail, but is enjoying the care and attention she so richly deserves at the Hospital which for so many years has been not only her place of work, but also her home.

(Mrs.) E. L. WILD (née Mayer)  
59 Wellesley Court, Maida Vale,  
London, W.9

Sister Selma died the day after her birthday, – Ed.

*From Britain, the contacts of members of the AJR reached out across the Jewish world. This letter from Mrs Wild transports the reader from Maida Vale in London to Jerusalem, and from 1984 to 1916, when her aunt, Sister Selma Mayer, went to work at the Shaare Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem. One must bear in mind that in 1916 Jerusalem was still under the control of the Ottoman*

*Turks, who were ejected from the city by the British the following year. Sister Selma's devoted service thus spanned the period of Ottoman rule, that of the British Mandate and the first years of the State of Israel.*

### An Opposing View

Sir, – In his illuminating review of the new Gregor Strasser biography, Mr. Richard Grunberger states that "the very term Nationalsozialismus was as self-contradictory as dry rain or vegetarian butcher". Some of us hold the opposite view and consider Hitlerism to have been the very essence of socialism.

G. SCHMERLING

20 Bishops Close,  
Old Coulsdon,  
Surrey

*G. Schmerling's letter is typical of that most valued and esteemed breed, the controversial correspondent who delights in arousing disagreement by espousing a provocative point of view. Schmerling was reacting to a front-page article by Richard Grunberger in the January 1984 issue entitled 'A Nazi on the Left', in which he reviewed Peter Stachura's biography of Gregor Strasser. Strasser was the leader of the 'anti-capitalist' wing of the Nazi Party; he clashed with Hitler shortly before the latter became Chancellor in January 1933 and was 'eliminated' in the purge of 30 June 1934, the 'Night of the Long Knives'.*

### Camp Hospital

Sir, – The article of Mr. M. M. Goldenberg "Memories of an arrival" gave me great pleasure and as I remember the situation of March 1939 very well, may I add a few words to these wonderful and interesting reminiscences from my own experience.

I was one of the 25 of Poldi Kuh's (Kew) Party. On my arrival at the Camp I was given the job of transforming an old derelict hut into a hospital. There were four of us. After 36 hours hard work we were ready to present the hut for inspection. Along came Mr. May and his staff. The transformation from an old hut, a relic from the 1914/18 war, into a hospital was approved and I was informed that a doctor would arrive in the afternoon. At the same time it was announced that everybody and everything should be ready for the midnight arrival of the first transport from Dover which would include several men released from K. Z. camps.

The doctor, who took over the hospital, was Dr. Mink, who a few weeks later was joined by Dr. Schatzki. It was a pleasure to work for Dr. Mink. Almost twice a week and always near to midnight the transports arrived. There were always men amongst

them who were in urgent need to be taken straight into the hospital. The doctor and our little staff worked endless hours.

Our reward came one Sunday afternoon, when Chief Rabbi Hertz and his son-in-law Rabbi Dr. Schonfeld and many other Jewish leaders from Woburn House came to visit the camp. They all came to the hospital, spoke to the patients and made personal enquiries. The Chief Rabbi then turned to the staff and addressed us. He praised and thanked us and wished us well for the future. "There is no need for words when one has got eyes to see." That was his blessing for us, which I still remember. W. HENDERSON (formerly F. W. Hirschfeld)  
3 Moor End Avenue,  
Kersal, Salford 7

*M. M. Goldenberg had written an account of his arrival from Vienna in March 1939 at Kitchener Camp in Richborough, near Sandwich, Kent, in the December 1983 issue of the Journal. This inspired a response from W. Henderson, another former inmate of the camp. Both pieces are valuable to historians as records of a past that had already vanished, by eye-witnesses who would also disappear all too soon. Kitchener Camp was set up in early 1939, largely through the efforts and support of Anglo-Jewry, to accommodate male refugees, many of them newly released from Nazi concentration camps. The administration of the camp was in the hands of the brothers Jonas and Phineas May. Leopold 'Poldi' Kuh, later Kew, was a prominent member of the AJR.*

### The Falashas in Exile

Sir – I was most interested to read Egon Larsen's article on that curious character, "Prince Monolulu of the Falashas". The history of this Ethiopian Jewish Tribe is indeed a fascinating one, not only because of the mystery surrounding the actual origins of the Falashas but also because the Falasha Tradition offers a valuable insight into Pre-Rabbinic Judaism.

I am at present engaged upon writing a doctorate on the Falashas (the first of its kind in Europe). One of my intentions is to pay tribute to the ceaseless efforts of Joseph Halévy, the renowned nineteenth century Ethiopian and Semitic scholar, to overcome the prejudices and suspicions of Western Jewry against the Falashas. Similarly I intend to applaud the Pro-Falasha Crusade led by Jacques Faitlovitch, Halévy's greatest pupil. In fact it was Faitlovitch's campaign which led to a breakthrough in the attitude of Western Jewry to the Falashas, as symbolised by the open letter of 1906 addressed to the

Falashas, "Our flesh and blood", by 44 Rabbis from all over Europe. It was only in 1975 that the Israeli Ministry of the Interior decreed that the Falashas were entitled to automatic citizenship under the Law of Return.

It is somewhat tragic that the political events in Ethiopia have not allowed for a wholesale emigration of the Falashas to Israel. Thus there are no more than 2,000 Falashas in Israel, while their 30,000 kinsmen remain in harsh exile. It is quite clear that something must be done and immediately to unite the Falasha People who are in the words of Jacques Faitlovitch, "an elite desirous of emerging from their degraded condition, burning with idealism, full of love for the faith of their ancestors".

LAVINIA BRAUN  
Newnham College  
Cambridge

*The well-known writer and journalist Egon Larsen (Lehrburger), who frequently wrote for AJR Information, had written an article entitled 'Prince of the Falashas' in the January 1984 issue, about the curious and flamboyant figure who called himself Prince Monolulu, claimed to have been born a Falasha Jew in Ethiopia and became famous in Britain as a racing tipster with the catchphrase 'I gotta horse'. In reality, his name was Peter Carl Mackay, and he was born in what was then the Danish West Indies, now the United States Virgin Islands. Larsen had met the self-proclaimed prince and was evidently captivated by his open and friendly nature as well as his robust defence of Jews against their anti-Semitic detractors. Larsen's article elicited this somewhat unexpected response from a doctoral student at Cambridge, who was working on the Falashas and who supported the then controversial attempts to bring them to safety in Israel from Ethiopia, where they were suffering persecution under the Marxist regime of Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu.*

### Richard Grunberger

*Richard Grunberger (1924-2005) was born in Vienna and came to Britain on a Kindertransport in December 1938. He was editor of 'AJR Information' (from 2000 'AJR Journal') from 1988 until his death in 2005. Grunberger was the last, and arguably the greatest, of the editors of the Journal from the refugee generation. A brilliant stylist, capable of conveying ideas and information with remarkable succinctness and never afraid of controversy or polemic, he raised the standard of writing in the Journal to new heights.*

*Grunberger's writing was always*

*continued on page 8* ➔

informed by a profound sense of history. In the first of these three articles, his historical consciousness is combined with his deep attachment to the Jewish tradition from which he came; in the second, he deploys his knowledge of art and art history to buttress his reflections on Christian anti-Semitism; in the third, he contemplates the history of the State of Israel on its fiftieth anniversary, demonstrating both his commitment to the Jewish state and his awareness of its faults.

### Passover thoughts

(AJR Information, April 1992, page 1)

Judaism is a history-conscious faith. Tisha b' Av, Chanukah, Purim, above all Pesach, commemorate landmarks of our past.

At Passover we also seek past echoes in the present. Remarkably, the Jews' 40 wilderness years between escaping Pharaoh and entering Israel have an exact parallel in Eastern Europe's Communist interim between Hitler's defeat and the coming of democracy. One can also liken the current Russian aliyah to the Exodus. For all its vicissitudes it has contributed to Israel's six-fold population growth since 1948. Such an increase in four decades is a near-miracle almost comparable to crossing the Red Sea.

### Clerical errors

(AJR Information, January 2000, page 2)

It is a well known fact that the year Zero, the designated starting point of the Christian millennia, should really have occurred four years earlier. As a repository of knowledge the Christian Church clearly did not have very auspicious beginnings.

In the fourth century Saint Jerome committed another egregious error with the most far-reaching consequences. While translating the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, the Church father – always depicted as deeply studious on medieval paintings – made a slip that reverberated down the ages. He mistranslated the rays emanating from Moses' forehead on Sinai as horns, or *cornatu*. This clearly influenced Michelangelo when he sculpted his famous and awesome statue of Moses at the church of St Peter in Chains – but what mattered more was that the broad public ever after associated the founder of the Mosaic faith with horns, i.e. devilish characteristics.

In the thirteenth century the Spaniard Jacobus de Veragine wrote the *Golden Legend*. Also known as *The Legend of the True Cross*, it purported to provide a prequel as well as a sequel to the story of

Jesus' life. Due to its publication prior to the invention of printing, Veragine's work did not have a very wide circulation – but it was disseminated via the medium of painting (most notably Piero de la Francesca's frescoes in the church at Arezzo).

Already the first "frame" of the fresco cycle is overtly antisemitic. In it two stern Jewish Elders bar Jesus' grandfather Joachim from entering the synagogue. They do so because they consider Joachim accursed of God on the grounds that his twenty-year old marriage has not been blessed with issue. The antisemitic motif recurs in the final sequence of the cycle. Here the location of the True Cross – i.e. the instrument of the crucifixion – is only discovered when the Jew who had hidden it underground in Jerusalem is threatened with death by drowning on the orders of St Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine.

A Jewish malefactor again appears in the (personal) writings of the mid-twentieth-century Pope Pius XII who, as Cardinal Pacelli, had been Papal Nuncio in Munich during the 1919 Bavarian Soviet Republic. In the aftermath of the Great War, Rome felt acutely threatened by atheistic Bolshevism and in Pacelli's paranoid imaginings Jews became conflated with Bolsheviks. He described the Munich Soviet leader Max Levien as an 'unkempt frenetic Jew' (see December issue, p. 4). In fact Levien was a non-Jew who, like many Baltic Germans – such as the Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg, or the 1940s screen actor Albert Lieven – bore a Jewish-sounding surname. To err, as they say, is human – but it can have deeply inhuman consequences.

### Reflections on the Jewish state's heroic past and clouded present

Israel at fifty

(AJR Information, May 1998, page 1)

The birth of Israel fifty years ago was not only the culmination of Jewish history – it replicated many features of our contradiction-haunted past. Diaspora Jewry had been both a target for perennial aggression and incredibly strong – as proved by its survival through centuries of persecution. It had been vilified as less than human by many of its neighbours, while often being culturally superior to them. It had appeared homogeneous to the outside world at the same time as it was deeply riven by internal dissent, and so forth.

1948 represents a multiple landmark. For one, the new-born Jewish state was

heir to the greatest tragedy in history – a tragedy exceeding in scale the Irish potato famine, the Armenian massacres and even the African slave trade. For another, it faced instant assault by the neighbouring Arab states intent upon smothering the infant at birth. Despite fearful odds Israel won the War of Independence and thereby began the process of dismantling the age-old perception of Jews as a race of lily-livered Fagins.

In the intervening fifty years Israel has enabled every Diaspora Jew to hold his head up high, even while it intermittently made our hearts ache over the recurrence of war and terror. In that half century Israel has grown seven-fold in population – a feat of immigrant absorption without precedent in history. And the crowning glory of it all: despite wars and emergencies compounded by the tensions of a cultural melting pot inside a political pressure cooker, the country has remained a democracy.

But democracy requires a disposition towards give-and-take and an awareness that national cohesion outweighs party politics – virtues increasingly absent from the mindset of Israeli policy makers. This is not all that surprising in a country where an impassioned minority believe laws drawn up by a merely human legislature possess less validity than rabbinical injunctions. Nor must the historical experience of different components of Israeli society be left out of account. Those traumatised by their European past discern the lineaments of Hitler in the visage of Nasser or any other Mid-Eastern dictator.

Immigrants from Arab countries bring with them an unfamiliarity with democratic practices, while (the comparatively more recent) Russian arrivals experience culture shock when confronted by Western freedoms and *laissez faire*. Such groups are readier to follow a policy offering 'us-against-them' certainties in preference to a doveish gamble on the goodwill of former enemies like Arafat.

Thus the peace process so hopefully inaugurated at Oslo is currently in the doldrums, and it would be extremely rash to hazard a guess about its future. In consequence one is tempted to raise only two cheers on this golden anniversary. If, however, one looks back at the fragility of the Jewish state at birth and compares it to its current regional power status and prosperity such reservations fall away. Besides, Israel can no more be identified with Netanyahu than the Britain of today can be with the thrice elected Mrs Thatcher.

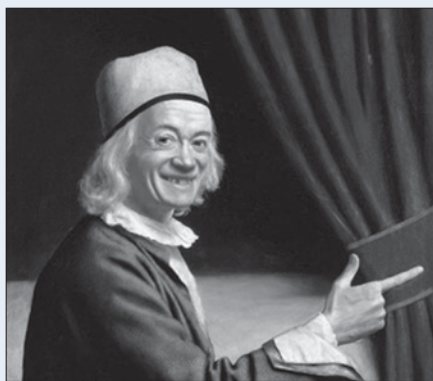
# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

Described by the **Royal Academy** as 'this idiosyncratic Swiss artist', the 18th-century painter **Jean-Etienne Liotard** (exhibition to 31 January 2016) is also considered one of the most sophisticated artists of the European Enlightenment. Noted for his pastels, he was a master of both full-length portraiture and enamel miniatures. The idiosyncratic label probably derives from his Middle Eastern dress style and his surprising humour. In *Self-portrait Laughing* (c. 1770), the greying, gap-toothed artist in a yellow hat wryly points at a hidden figure – maybe you or me.

Born in 1702 the son of Huguenots who fled persecution in France to settle in Geneva, Liotard travelled all over Europe, spending much time in Constantinople, where he brought oriental costume to the canvas in astonishing detail.

He painted members of the French and English court with a porcelain finesse paying attention to the lace and layering of



Jean-Etienne Liotard *Self-portrait Laughing* c. 1770

their fine fabrics. By contrast, his subjects' faces are often pallid. His depiction of the French court is stiffly mannered, while the English aristocrats seem more relaxed.

His portrait of the youthful Marie Antoinette in salmon pink with a ruff of ribbon around her graceful young neck is particularly poignant given our knowledge of her fate. A child still, she sits erect, her hands working at a craft called knotting, and her eyes betray a surprising irony.

Perhaps the aristocratic restraint of Liotard's sitters foreshadowed the French Revolution, which partly emerged from the Age of Enlightenment and its social and political self-questioning. His work

was first shown at the Royal Academy in 1773 but the current exhibition is the first seen here in recent times.

Liotard's most dramatic paintings include a miniature of *Laura Tarsi* in rich oriental dress, emphasising her introspective beauty. A painting of *Julie de Thelluson-Ployard* smiling at a twin portrait of her husband Issac-Louis, both in lace and turquoise brocade, offers a sense of joy. There are some innocent touches: a child's hand reddened by the candle he is holding beside an elegant young man with a white quill pen.

The **Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize** at the National Portrait Gallery (to 21 February 2016) features a geographical and political blend of statement and style, and this year includes several series of photographs.

Photographers from 70 countries depict love, loss, tragedy, conflict, peace and reconciliation. For *In Focus*, **Pieter Hugo**, who grew up in Cape Town at the end of the apartheid era, chose one year, 1994, that of South Africa's first democratic elections and the Rwanda genocide. One photo shows a child lying in the grass offering the illusion of standing amidst the stars.

This year's winner, **David Steward**, features a group portrait of his daughter and her friends newly graduated, staring over their paper coffee cups – a near repeat of his 2008 entry in which the same group were launching into their GCSEs. In this later photo, he explores the girls' similarity and their emotional distance.

I was moved by the 4th-prizewinning portrait of the Iraqi refugee family who fled Mosul in the wake of Isis taking control: *Amira and Her Children*, by **Ivor Pickett**, shows pride, dignity and togetherness.

## Government confirms Child Survivor Fund payments exempt from tax

The AJR is delighted to have received confirmation from the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the Rt Hon David Gauke MP, that the one-time payments made from the Child Survivor Fund (CSF) will be exempt from Income Tax, Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax.

Responding to a letter from the AJR to the Chancellor, George Osborne, Mr Gauke announced the Government's intention to add the CSF to a list of payments that qualify for Inheritance Tax exemption. The measure will be confirmed in the Finance Bill 2016 and will apply retroactively to payments made to people who died after 1 January 2015, when the scheme was launched.

Mr Gauke separately confirmed that there will be no Income Tax charge on payments from the CSF and that awards will not be liable to Capital Gains Tax.

The CSF makes awards of €2,500 to eligible child survivors of the Holocaust, specifically those born after 1 January 1928 and who endured persecution in Nazi-occupied Europe. The Fund was established in September 2014 following an agreement between the German Government and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), a US-based not-for-profit organisation that negotiates financial support for Holocaust survivors worldwide.

Earlier this year, the Claims Conference remitted CSF payments to 21,600 Jewish Nazi victims, including 153 to UK survivors. It is estimated that some 75,000 survivors worldwide will be eligible for a payment and that approximately 85 per cent of the remaining 250 applications received from Holocaust survivors living in the UK will be entitled to an award.

AJR Treasurer David Rothenberg, who corresponded with Mr Gauke, said: 'This wonderful news will be of great comfort to those of our members who will receive an award from this historic programme. My colleagues and I are most grateful to the Financial Secretary for his intervention and personal interest in this matter and in the work of the AJR.'

## AJR HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Tuesday 26 January 2016, 2.00 pm at Belsize Square Synagogue,  
51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX

Please join us to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, when the author and BBC Radio 4 presenter **Edward Stourton** will be in conversation with AJR member and child Holocaust survivor **Joan Salter**.

The event, which will reflect the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2016, 'Don't Stand By', will draw on Edward's book, *Cruel Crossing*, in which he describes the escape of thousands of desperate people, including Joan, across the Pyrenees from Nazi-controlled Europe. Signed copies of the book will be available after the event.

**Sir Eric Pickles MP**, the UK Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, will give the concluding remarks.

Please bring your children and grandchildren, who will be very welcome.

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

Light refreshments will be provided after the service.

**For catering purposes and to help us organise sufficient transport, please contact Karin Pereira on 020 8385 3070 or at [karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karin@ajr.org.uk)**

For those unable to attend, Belsize Square Synagogue will be live-streaming the event via their website – please visit <http://www.synagogue.org.uk/services/live/> for details of how to log in.



# Letters to the Editor

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

## ROYAL FAMILY

Sir – I do not share the fulsome praise of the Royal Family on the front page of your November issue.

My late wife, active in politics after the war, had it on good authority that King George VI was of the opinion that all ex-refugees, who of course were mainly Jewish, should be sent back to the countries they came from. The idea was squashed by the then government.

However, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was very keen to pay a visit to the 'Holy Land' – a desire that was sat on by the Foreign Office – so she went to her grave never having visited Israel.

The only visitor to the Jewish state was the Duke of Edinburgh in connection with his mother.

Despite innumerable visits to the Arab Muslim states – not known as upholders of human rights – the Queen, the Prince of Wales and assorted Royals have never set foot on Israeli soil.

I think that as long as we need the Arab states' oil, gas and capital, nothing will change. It can be summed up in one word: *Realpolitik*.

*E. G. Kolman, Greenford, Middx*

Sir – Describing the ex-King as a Nazi sympathiser is a little sweeping. He went straight, via Waterloo and an overnight train, from Windsor Castle to Schloss Enzesfeld and, during his stay in Vienna in 1936-37, was treated by the well-known ENT surgeon 'Haschel' Neumann. According to Neumann, he told his illustrious patient, who was then due to visit Hitler, that he did not like the man – and was told in reply by the Duke that *he* did not like him either!

Even if this story is apocryphal, the facts are that the Duke was staying with Jewish friends – the Rothschilds at Enzesfeld – for months and that of all the

doctors in Vienna he chose a prominent observant Jew, with whom he seems to have discussed the Fuehrer. Hardly the acts of a Nazi!

*Francis Steiner, Deddington, Oxfordshire*

Sir – I refer to the section of your article concerning the photograph of Queen Elizabeth and the two young Princesses doing the Hitler salute. Are you aware that, at the time, schoolchildren were standing in their playgrounds with knees bent, legs apart, bottoms stuck out, their right arms raised in the Hitler salute and yelling 'bing-bong', followed by blowing a very loud raspberry and shrieking 'right in the Fuehrer's face!' Even the refugee children joined in the laughter.

I must add that my school was an 'all-girls' one. However, my brother (if he were well enough) would corroborate that all the boys in his boys-only school did exactly the same.

I was about ten at that time and he almost four years older. I really do think that almost all children within the British Isles enjoyed doing this from, say, 1938 until war was declared on 3 September 1939 and a great proportion of children were evacuated from their homes.

I really cannot imagine the Queen and the two little Princesses actually doing all the actions that we all did, but couldn't it have been their version? I am sure they did it in mockery. I am certain this was the case.

I would add that when I read the final lengthy paragraph of your article it was like hearing my late father's voice over again – except that he mentioned several more names, some of them of titled people, and a few companies who were sworn anti-Semites.

*Hilda Garfield, Hertfordshire*

## PECUNIARY VALUE OF JEWISH SCIENTISTS

Sir – Sir Ralph Kohn's excellent talk on Sir Ernst Chain at the 50th anniversary of the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship, held at the British Academy, stimulated a question that I wish to share with readers

of the Journal. It concerns the pecuniary value to the UK of the work done by the Jewish scientists personified by Chain.

The immediate reaction is to say that the question is too difficult to answer but, in my view, that is not so. Difficult, yes, but so is most of what we do. A famous

example concerns the value to the USA of the work done in that country by the Serbian scientist/engineer Nikola Tesla. Serious estimates give figures of the order of \$1,000 million. For Chain, the co-discoverer of penicillin, using values for the numerical value of human life appropriate to the time will probably give an equally large sum.

In my view, contemporary attitudes to immigration, as well as the need to quantify the 'very important work' done by Jewish refugees, require estimates to be made. A PhD beckons ...

*Sir Arnold Wolfendale FRS, Durham*

## THOMAS MANN AND JEWISH HISTORY

Sir – Anthony Grenville's elegant and thought-provoking essay on Thomas Mann (September) set me thinking about the great German writer in relation to his representations of Jewish history.

In his last novel, *Doktor Faustus*, he sets up parallels between German and Jewish history. Naturally it is not done scientifically: we are in a novel so it is handled as part of character-building. But even so, many people would find the idea of parallels between German and Jewish history deeply offensive: Jewish history has blood-stained chapters but nothing remotely like the Holocaust.

Still, Mann deserves our undying gratitude for his monumental efforts to recreate the birth of Jewish identity in his works based on the Bible. He did so in an era when many of his compatriots were engaged in a determined effort to exterminate the Jewish people and their culture.

*Nicholas Pal, London NW6*

## OUR THANKS TO BRITAIN

Sir – All of us are very lucky to have been rescued from a certain ill fate by coming to Britain in Neville Chamberlain's time as PM. But in 1940 Winston Churchill, who succeeded Chamberlain, made the unforgettable pronouncement 'Collar the lot!', which put all refugee males and many females behind barbed wire. My internment lasted for 24 months – I was assigned a 'B' as I might have spied on my parents! My father too was interned, but for a lesser term: he was awarded a 'C', which freed him earlier.

The Germans were prepared to invade this island, having taken all of France. The Government under Churchill took fright and sealed the fate of thousands of refugees, who had previously been given asylum. We refugees, who were designated for the gas chambers and were so obviously the greatest enemies of the Nazis, were, in fact, the very best friends the British ever had. After a long struggle, including a hunger strike, we were re-designated as 'friendly enemy aliens'. The refugees were unanimous in objecting to that title and agreed that only an English

mind could invent such an absurdity. It should therefore not come as a surprise that the majority of English-born Jews agreed with the Government's action. But then, they were neither subjected to living under the Nazis nor to our treatment in this country. We are the only true refugees and did not come to Britain to just seek a better life!

It is recognised officially that we refugees gave more to this country than a similar number of English people in the war and since – our better education bears this out, as was repeatedly stated in this Journal's editorials. Having been engaged in numerous activities in my working life, I have given my thanks to this country through my work as a chartered engineer, designer and inventor: this will be archived in 'Refugee Voices 2'.

Moreover, had that 'great' Englishman not made the monumental mistake of taking our freedom away, the war would undoubtedly have been over somewhat sooner, missing the doodlebugs and the V2s. The rest is history.

*Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx*

#### 'MP FOR REFUGEES'

Sir – The 70th anniversary of the death of a great lady, Eleanor Rathbone, 'MP for Refugees', is being commemorated in January 2016. I hope the AJR will be actively involved with the Remembering Eleanor Rathbone Group.

As a Kindertransportee, I corresponded with my parents in Germany via an uncle in Brussels. Convicted at the High Court in Edinburgh of 'Corresponding with the Enemy', I became a 'Dangerous Enemy Alien Cat. A' at the age of 16, interned and tracked by MI5!

My connection with Eleanor Rathbone MP is that my letters of complaint from the Isle of Man were addressed to her and the *Manchester Guardian*. We were delighted to hear our letters were mentioned during debates in Parliament. Though behind barbed wire, we had a voice in a democratic country. 'MP for Refugees' indeed – we owe this humanitarian lady our gratitude.

*Henry M. Wuga, Glasgow*

#### HERBERT MORRISON – A QUESTION OF AMBIVALENCE

Sir – I am very grateful for the summaries of my talks about Herbert Morrison to AJR groups in a recent issue of the Journal.

I would just like to clarify that I only found Morrison to be sympathetic to Jews during the 1930s – and even then there is evidence of some ambivalence. His response to the Jewish plight during the war at the very least lacked compassion. Eleanor Rathbone, whose life we are commemorating this year, certainly was 'never disposed to credit him with a substratum of warm humanity towards the Jewish plight' (Mary Stocks).

I would suggest that the level of his

humanity changed depending on whether he was sitting on the Front or Opposition bench of the House of Commons.

*Lesley Urbach, London N3*

#### JEWISH CHAPLAINS IN BRITAIN'S ARMED FORCES

Sir – I am researching Jewish chaplaincy in the British Armed Forces from its origins in the 1890s to the present day. I would welcome help in locating (1) unpublished material about Jewish chaplains and (2) material about people who, although not ordained ministers, took it upon themselves to provide chaplaincy services for the Jewish personnel with whom they found themselves serving.

I would also welcome material from people who served as chaplains, official or unofficial, and from those who remember them. This could include contact they may have had as refugees serving in the Armed Forces or any contact they may have experienced as survivors in the aftermath of liberation. If people would prefer to tell me, rather than write down, their experiences I would be happy to meet with them.

*Jonathan Lewis, Pinner, Middx,  
tel 020 8868 6550*

*email lewisjandr2004@yahoo.co.uk*

#### 'CHILDREN-IN-WAR MEMORIAL DAY'

Sir – My husband, Rev Gershon Glausiusz, a survivor of Bergen-Belsen, and I, a Second World War evacuee to Britain, have started a petition to the UK Government to dedicate 20 November as 'Children-in-War Memorial Day' and need everyone's help to get it off the ground.

Right now, as we watch the unfolding tragedy of refugee families escaping war zones and seeking a better future for their children, we aim to bring into the public domain the plight of war children, whether in past or present-day conflict.

We ask the UK Government and its citizens to recognise 20 November as an annual day of commemoration of children-in-war. On that date in 1989 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This has become a day of commemoration in Sweden and other Nordic countries are likely to follow.

You can sign the petition by clicking <http://www.change.org/p/uk-government-dedicate-20th-november-as-children-in-war-memorial-day>

*Irene Glausiusz, Honorary Secretary,  
Committee Promoting a UK Children-in-War Memorial Day*

#### KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE

Sir – I would like to say how glad I am that I made the effort to attend the AJR's Kristallnacht Memorial Service.

It was interesting to hear all the dignitaries who were invited: Sir Peter Bazalgette, Professor Leslie Brent and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg. (Unfortunately, I

found Professor Brent's talk – if I may say so – inaudible because he was not given a hand microphone. I would love to have heard what he had to say.)

The tea was delicious and most generous. Will you please thank whoever was responsible for the catering?

A very enjoyable afternoon and experience for me as I met people I hadn't seen for years.

*Susan Jacobs, Edgware, Middx*

#### LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT TRIP

Sir – Anita and I would like to express our appreciation of the very friendly care exercised by Carol, Ros, Rebecca and Jim on the AJR trip to Israel.

Everything seemed to run smoothly. If there were any problems, they were dealt with quietly. The programme was well planned and extremely interesting and the whole journey was, in our view, good value for money. Anita and I are looking forward to the next trip, this time to Yorkshire.

*Ernest Simon, Pinner, Middx*

#### AJR HOSPITALITY APPRECIATED

Sir – Very many thanks for the AJR hospitality at the events at the British Academy and Belsize Square Synagogue, which we much appreciated. Our sincere congratulations for arranging such very interesting, important and moving events.

*Elaine and Peter Hallgarten, London NW3*

#### 'ISRAEL RIGHT OR WRONG?'

Sir – I respond to Jenny Manson's article (November) by declaring that I do not face a dilemma – never mind a complex one – in relation to Israel.

My view was formed as a ten-year-old refugee from Berlin to Prague and stuck there, with all that that entailed, because the Palestinian Arabs showed not the slightest sympathy towards us, who were trying to flee from deadly persecution, and in fact sided with the Nazis.

The Arabs are as guilty of the murder of my parents, my relatives, my Jewish classmates, and their parents and siblings as are the actual perpetrators because they played their part in the Holocaust to perfection. Had it not been for the Arab Revolt all of us left behind on the Continent would have survived in Palestine. At present, they are on a knifing, stone-throwing, car-ramming and shooting spree. My sympathy is with the many Israeli victims, whatever Rabbis for Human Rights and B'Tselem may find wrong with that.

Please consider and inwardly digest what Khaled Abu Tomeah, an Arab journalist, has to say: 'Even if a Palestinian state is established in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, Hamas and other Palestinians will continue to fight until Israel is completely destroyed.'

*Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk*

# INSIDE the AJR

## HARROGATE/LEEDS Memorable Visit to Beth Shalom



(from left) Wendy Bott, AJR Northern Groups Co-ordinator; Margaret Platek (Facility Manager); Marc Schatzberger; Simon Foulds, Development Team; Rosl Schatzberger; Edith Jayne; Sian Davies; Phil Lyons, CEO

Members were welcomed most warmly to Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre. CEO Phil Lyons gave us a most informative talk, followed by a tour of 'The Journey', after which, together with a large audience of schoolchildren, we listened to a talk by survivor Trude Silman. Following a delicious tea, members walked through the gardens, where thousands of white roses have been dedicated to lost loved ones, then took a tour of the museum itself. Our gratitude to the Smith family, who founded Beth Shalom, and to all those who run it so excellently.

*Wendy Bott*

## KENSINGTON Relaxing Afternoon

We met at the delightful home of Peter Wayne, whose hospitality made for a most relaxing afternoon. Members got to know each other and spoke about the current refugee crisis. This newly formed group has already bonded and is looking forward to further meetings in 2016.

*Susan Harrod*

## EALING Negative Policies of Herbert Morrison

In a most interesting talk on Herbert Morrison MP, centering on his time as Home Secretary during WWII, Lesley Urbach described his negative policies on the granting of visas to Jewish children, in particular from Nazi-occupied Europe. While it didn't excuse his policies, Lesley said, they needed to be understood in the context of pressures on the government on the home front during the war.

*Leslie Sommer*

## DIDSBURY CF Kaffeeklatsch

We met at the Bridge Club over a delightful



## AJR ANNUAL TRIP

JOIN US THIS YEAR IN YORKSHIRE

Sunday 22 May

to Thursday 26 May 2016

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

Highlights of the trip will include York Minster; the Chocolate Factory; a trip to the home of the Bronte sisters; a journey on an old-fashioned steam train; a cream tea at Betty's Tea Room in Harrogate; Harewood House; Harlow Carr Gardens; the Thackray Medical Museum; the Yorkshire Dales and lots more.

All meals and travel included  
Places are limited

Please call Susan Harrod  
on 020 8385 3070 for full information  
pack and booking form  
or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

sandwich lunch with tea and coffee and lovely sweet tartlets – almost like the *Kaffeeklatsch* of a bygone era! We had a good *Klatsch* – nearly missing out on what we would take with us if ever stranded on a desert island. Our thanks to Wendy Bott for her excellent organisation of the meeting and refreshments.

*Ernie Hunter*

## BOOK CLUB Slums of Naples

We reviewed Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*, translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein, which tells the story of two young girls from the slums of Naples. We found it an interesting book on post-war poverty in Italy.

*Irene Goodman*

## ILFORD Jewish Developers in the City of London

Colin Davey gave a fascinating resume of architects and developers involved in London's new-world skyline. Some of the names he mentioned were well known and from a Jewish background, but everyone should also be aware of their overwhelming philanthropy in many fields. We were very impressed.

*Meta Roseneil*

## NEWCASTLE Chanukah Meal for Friends Old and New

Friends old and new tucked into a three-course Chanukah meal. Entertainment was provided by violinist David Biermann. It was also a good opportunity to thank our social worker Jim Sutherland for all his hard work and to introduce his replacement, Dave Moon. Jim will now be covering areas nearer home.

*Agnes Isaacs*

## HGS Comedian Harmonists

Martin Aaron introduced the film *Comedian Harmonists*, a true story set in 1930s Berlin. A highly popular musical group, the Harmonists were forced to disband because three of their members were Jewish. A film with deeply upsetting content and only too familiar to our members, but the portrayal of Berlin and its characters was phenomenal.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## PINNER Riveting Thesis

Margaret Brearley's thesis that Hitler's early fascination with Wagner's operas inspired him to recast himself as the chosen leader – both to rescue the spirit of the German nation from paganism in the face of the perceived Jewish evil and to conquer the world – made riveting listening.

*Walter Weg*

## ST JOHN'S WOOD Mouth-watering Morning

A delightful morning spent with Charlotte and Tony Balzacs regaling the glory days of their families' restaurants The Cosmo and Dorrice, which were located in 'Finchleystrasse'. Mouth-watering.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## BROMLEY CF A Well Established Group

It was a pleasure to meet this well established group in the hospitable environment of Lianne's lovely home. Lunch, much enjoyed, was provided by Rinkoff Bakery. Many topics, including perceptions of Israel, were covered.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## A message from Computer Help Co-ordinator Claude

I have recently started in my post as Computer Help Programme Co-ordinator, taking on the reins that were so ably held by my predecessor, Jonathan.

I am a qualified IT teacher, with numerous years' experience of teaching in secondary schools. I have also been a Project Manager at Jewish Care, where I was responsible for managing a computer training centre, in which the volunteers and I taught people with visual impairment and/or physical disabilities how to use computers. It gave me a great deal of satisfaction to witness people previously intimidated by the technology we use finding a new way of communicating with family and friends.

The AJR Computing Programme fills me with excitement and, from meeting and talking with a number of you, I know how much the services we provide are appreciated. Our volunteers really enjoy helping you to discover a new, exciting world!

Please feel free to contact me at the AJR offices (my extension is 3096) if you would like a chat about your progress or if you are thinking about dipping your toes into the virtual waters!

**Claude Vecht-Wolf**



**An Enjoyable Treat:  
Outing to Gipsy**

Many readers of the *AJR Journal* will have come across the unfailingly enthusiastic reviews of *Gipsy*, at the Savoy Theatre, so it was a good idea on the part of the AJR organisers to make tickets available to members. The reviews were entirely justified: the production, acting and singing were highly polished. Imelda Staunton as Momma Rose was outstanding. Once again, we must thank the AJR organisers for an enjoyable treat.

Fritz Starer

**HARROGATE/YORK The True Story of Peter Stevens**

Ian Vellins gave a most interesting talk on the true story of Peter Stevens, the German-Jewish RAF pilot who bombed Berlin, became a POW and participated in the Great Escape. As if this wasn't enough, we were treated to Rosl and Marc Schatzberger's generous hospitality in the shape of a magnificent afternoon tea! It was also a pleasure to welcome Felix Kafka, a new addition to our group.

Wendy Bott

**BRISTOL War Graves of Northern France**

We welcomed several new faces, which made for interesting lunch conversation, and then Kathryn Prevezer took us on her journey round the war graves of northern France with some excellent photos. It was so poignant to hear of families fighting on different sides in different generations.

Hazel Rank-Broadley

**GLASGOW/EDINBURGH A Great Night Out**

A large group of first and second generation members enjoyed a great night out at the gala opening of the Jewish Film Festival to see *Apples from the Desert*. It was very much a social gathering.

Agnes Isaacs

**BRIGHTON AND HOVE 'SARID' 19th-Century Railway Builders**

Godfrey Gould told us that the father of the 19th-century railway was George Stephenson; his son Robert was an engineer. With the help of many inventors and engineers such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the Great Western Railway was built in 1825. It was financially backed by Thomas Cook and many others. They even started building a Channel tunnel but stopped through lack of funds.

Ceska Abrahams

**EDGWARE Wiener Library Visitor**

Toby Simpson from the Wiener Library described a recent exhibition which highlighted Jewish soldiers in WW1 and discussed the work of the Library and the documents it holds.

Kathryn Prevezer

**GLASGOW BOOK CLUB A Good Read**

*Heartbreak Hotel* by Deborah Moggach was a good read. Helpful tips like shopping at meals-for-one counters to meet a new partner proved most popular.

Agnes Isaacs

**ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) Painful Reminder**

Esther Rinkoff showed us *Watermarks*, a documentary featuring women from the pre-war Vienna Hakoah swimming team. Sixty-five years later some of the swimmers held a reunion in Vienna. Watching this film brought a lump to the throat.

Susie Barnett

**RADLETT Women Pilots**

Paul Lang gave an interesting talk about women in aviation. Following the first flight by the Wright brothers in 1903 (120 feet!), women regularly became pilots, breaking the sound barrier and participating in space exploration. We enjoyed being reminded that in September 1940 female pilots flew urgently needed planes from the factories

to airports, where the heroic RAF pilots were winning the Battle of Britain.

Bruno Muller

*continued on page 14*

**The Pianist of Willesden Lane**

A true story of family, hope and survival told through the world's most beautiful music

Set in Vienna in 1938 and in London during the Blitz, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* tells the true story of Lisa Jura, a young Jewish pianist who is dreaming of her concert debut at Vienna's Musikverein concert hall.

But with the issuing of new ordinances under the Nazi regime, everything for Lisa changes – except her love of music and the pursuit of her dream – as she is torn from her family and sent on the Kindertransport to London.

Featuring some of the world's most beloved piano music played live, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* is performer Mona Golabek's true family story. The production makes its UK premiere at the St. James Theatre after critically acclaimed, sold-out runs in New York, Chicago, Boston, Berkeley, Los Angeles and San Diego.

Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane: Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Music, Love, and Survival* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen.

**The AJR has obtained a block booking for the matinee at 2.30 pm on Thursday 4 February 2016**  
For booking details, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

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Henri Obstfeld  
020 8954 5298 [h.obstfeld@talk21.com](mailto:h.obstfeld@talk21.com)

**JANUARY GROUP EVENTS**

Ealing	5 Jan	Social Get-together: 'Any Questions?'
Ilford	6 Jan	New Year Social Get-together
Pinner	7 Jan	Les Spitz, Photographer: 'Visual Works from around the World'
Sheffield	10 Jan	Talk by Ian Vellins
HGS	11 Jan	Social Get-together
Essex (Westcliff)	12 Jan	Social Get-together: Discussion – 'What the Future Holds'
Didsbury	13 Jan	Social
KT LUNCH	13 Jan	Speaker: Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg
Glasgow Book Club	14 Jan	Social Discussion
Imperial Café	14 Jan	Lunchtime Get-together
Brighton	18 Jan	Film: 'Alice Sommer-Herz – Still Playing the Piano at 104 Years'
Cheshire	18 Jan	Details to follow
Bromley	19 Jan	Tea at home of Lianne Segal
Radlett	20 Jan	Alf Keiles: 'New Musical Programme'
Hull	24 Jan	Details to follow
Glasgow	26 Jan	Lecture on the Holocaust
Leeds CF	26 Jan	Details to follow
Scotland	27 Jan	HMD at Falkirk
Edinburgh	28 Jan	HMD Scotland
North London	28 Jan	Nick Dobson: 'A Good Laugh – Humour in Literature with Readings and Pictures'

 **INSIDE THE AJR** *cont. from p.13*
**KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH The Remarkable Judith Montefiore**

David Barnett's subject was the remarkable Lady Judith Montefiore (1784-1862), wife of Sir Moses Montefiore. Both came from wealthy Jewish families and their philanthropy helped Jews around the world. Judith, well educated and multilingual, travelled extensively with her husband to Europe, the Holy Land and Damascus. She also wrote the first Jewish cookery book in English; it is still available today on the internet under the title *Lady Montefiore's Cookbook*.

*David Lang*

**IMPERIAL CAFÉ Secret Listeners**

Our troops discussed the Secret Listeners, of whom David's mother was one at Latymer. Peter's first rent was 8/6, including a cup of tea! Harry's was 7/6 and he had to deliver the groceries! We also discussed the atrocities in Paris and the high regard for British intelligence – two members are still sworn to secrecy.

*Esther Rinkoff*

**MARLOW No Shouting Down!**

Alan Kay welcomed us warmly to his beautiful home. The current political climate was a robust topic – we all got a chance to voice an opinion without being shouted down, unlike in the House of Commons!

*Esther Rinkoff*

**BRADFORD Past and Present**

Meeting in Bradford Reform Synagogue, we were joined by local historian Nigel Grizzard, who helped inform our discussion about Bradford past and present. All wrapped up nicely with a lovely afternoon tea and a huge chocolate cake to celebrate Albert Waxman's forthcoming special day.

*Wendy Bott*

**NORFOLK Bar Mitzvah Twinning**

A throng of 17 people met at Norwich synagogue for a fabulous lunch and to hear another instalment of Frank's life. Also present were the father and two family members of a boy twinned on his bar mitzvah in Jerusalem with a murdered boy found among Frank's classmates at the Prague Jewish School whose fates Frank had traced. Thanks again to the members of the congregation for their valued assistance.

*Frank Bright*

**WELWYN GARDEN CITY Six Point Foundation**

Six Point Foundation's Susan Cohen gave us insight into this charity. Of particular interest is its involvement in an exciting project to make a number of communal services available to those who are less mobile through the use of specially adapted computers.

*Peter Colman*

**WEMBLEY Career of a Professional Photographer**

Paul Lang delighted members with a wonderful talk on his career as a professional photographer. He took his first picture aged

8 and has never looked back. He has kept all the cameras he has used since childhood and brought some along to show us. Paul also showed us some tricks of the trade – things aren't always what they seem!

*Kathryn Prevezer*

**Kristallnacht Memorial Service at Imperial War Museum North**

The event was chaired by Michael Newman, who introduced Ivan Lewis MP as guest speaker. His speech was most interesting and topical. Gisela Feldman spoke of her memories of Kristallnacht; Hanna Goldstone gave a third generation perspective; and Chazan Michael Isdale and Reverend Brodie conducted prayers. Chazan Isdale also gave a moving solo rendition with guitar accompaniment of 'Eli Eli'.

*Wendy Bott*

**NORTH LONDON A Most Illuminating Talk**

Colin Davey's talk proved most interesting, particularly as it embraced the construction of so many landmark scenic changes in the City. We also learned the fate of less successful constructions. A most illuminating talk – thank you, Colin.

*Herbert Haberberg*

**NORTH WEST LONDON Life of a Busy MP**

Finchley and Golders Green MP Mike Freer told us about his typical seven-day week, which only gives him time for about 5 or 6 hours of sleep a night. Monday to Thursday he works in Westminster on his duties as a Conservative MP. Also he is Parliamentary Private Secretary to the leader of the House of Commons and Chairman of the Parliamentary Group on HIV/Aids. Friday to Sunday he is in his constituency and he often takes his mobile home around for use as his MP's Advice Surgery.

*David Lang*

**GLASGOW Pre-Chanukah Lunch**

This year's pre-Chanuka lunch was a beautiful event with lovely fresh flowers on the table. We were served an excellent three-course meal followed by tea, which allowed much time to socialise with the four generations – ranging in age from 3 to 95-ish. Sheila Osborne sang a variety of

recognisable melodies, allowing many to join in. A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon for around 40 people who braved the torrential rain. Once again, many thanks to all involved, particularly Agnes.

*Ruth Ramsay*

**KT LUNCH**

Wednesday 13 January 2016

at

Alyth Gardens Synagogue

12.30 pm

Speaker:

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg

Jonathan Wittenberg was born in Glasgow in 1957 to a family of German-Jewish origin with rabbinic ancestors on both sides.

In 1963 the family moved to London, where he attended University College School, specialising in classical and modern languages. He further developed his love of literature when reading English at King's College, Cambridge (1976-9). After two years' teaching and social work in Israel and England he took a PGCE at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Already deeply involved in Jewish life, he trained for the rabbinate at Leo Baeck College, London, receiving ordination in 1987, and continued his studies to gain a further rabbinic qualification from his teacher Dr Aryeh Strikovsky in Israel.

Since then he has worked as Rabbi of the New North London Synagogue and has taken a leading role in the development of the Masorti Movement for traditional non-fundamentalist Judaism in England. In 2008 he was appointed Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism in the UK.

**For further details and booking, please contact Susan Harrod at AJR on 020 8385 3070 or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**

**We look forward to seeing you**

**KT OUTING**

Wednesday 10 February 2016  
**FRANK AUERBACH EXHIBITION AT TATE BRITAIN FOLLOWED BY TEA**

In February, instead of our normal monthly lunch, we have arranged an outing to the Frank Auerbach exhibition at Tate Britain.

Frank Auerbach has made some of the most inventive paintings of recent times, of people and urban landscapes. He works every day, constantly returning to a narrow range of subjects: landscapes near his studio in north London and a relatively small number of sitters.

Born in Berlin in 1931, Auerbach came to Britain in 1939 as a refugee from the Nazis. Having attended Bunce Court School in Kent, he moved in 1947 to London, where he has lived since.

After you have had the opportunity to tour the exhibition we will be having a cream tea.

Return coach travel from Stanmore and Finchley Road  
Booking essential

For details and booking, please contact Susan Harrod at AJR on 020 8385 3070 or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

**We look forward to seeing you**

**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.**

## OBITUARY

**Ruth Usrad, born Berlin 31 March 1925, died Kibbutz Lehavot HaBashan 4 October 2015**

### A life well lived ...

On 6 October 2015, our beloved older sister Ruth Usrad was laid to rest in the cemetery of Kibbutz Lehavot HaBashan, in the foothills of the Golan in Upper Galilee. Ruth is buried next to David, her husband of 54 years, who sadly died in a tractor accident in 2002 whilst tending the gardens of the Kibbutz, of which they were both founder members. Her grave is not far from that of our mother, who died in Lehavot, and also bears a memorial for our father, who was murdered in Bergen-Belsen in January 1945 and has no known grave.

The funeral was attended by over 450 people: Ruth's four sons, their wives, 17 grandchildren and cousins; close friends and members of Lehavot and neighbouring kibbutzim; doctors and nurses Ruth had worked with over the years; and colleagues of Ruth on the editorial team of a monthly newspaper for the senior citizens of Upper Galilee, which she was still editing up to six months before her death.

A unique event occurred at this memorial service. A 75-year-old lady named Corinne came to pay tribute to Ruth. In 1943, at the height of the war, living under an assumed name in Grenoble, France, Ruth had joined the MJS, a Zionist youth movement whose main activity in the Resistance was to rescue Jewish children by smuggling them across the border to safety in Switzerland. The MJS learned that a Jewish infant was to be taken by the Gestapo from an orphanage where her parents had hidden her. Ruth immediately volunteered to dress up as a Gestapo officer in order to compel the matron to hand over the child to her. This extremely dangerous operation succeeded: the infant was rescued, placed by Ruth in a safe house, and survived the war. Corinne eventually made her way to Israel and was able to make contact with Ruth, the person who had rescued her at the risk of her own life – she therefore called Ruth her 'second mother', as she felt Ruth had given life to her a second time.

Ruth managed to evade capture by the Gestapo,

who were looking for her following this daring rescue, by joining a small group of young people who escaped to Spain across the Pyrenees without shelter and with scarcely any food for four days and nights.

This escape trail has now become known as the 'Chemin de la Liberté' – 'Freedom Trail'. In October 1944, Ruth was eventually given permission to join a boat leaving for Palestine and, on arrival in Haifa, was interned in Atlit by the British as she could not prove her identity, until our Aunt Betty, living in Haifa, managed to convince them that Ruth was not a spy.

It is written in the Talmud that 'Whoever saves a single life saves the whole world.' What more can we say about our sister, whom we shall miss and mourn forever?

**Betty Bloom and Bronia Veitch**



### ARTS AND EVENTS JANUARY DIARY

**Mon 18 Book Launch *Who Betrayed the Jews?*** Agnes Grunwald-Spier's groundbreaking study examines the various ways Jews were betrayed by their fellow countrymen during the Holocaust. At Wiener Library, 6.30-8 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

**Tues 19 Book Launch *The Last Days of Mankind*** The Centre for German-Jewish Studies and the Austrian Cultural Forum present the London launch of the first complete English edition of Karl Kraus's documentary drama of the First World War. At Austrian Residence, 18 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8HU, 6.30 pm. Tel 020 7225 7300

**Wed 20 90th Birthday Concert for Anita Lasker-Wallfisch.** Anita's son Raphael's Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch play works by Beethoven, Arensky, Rachmaninov, Brahms. At Wigmore Hall, 7.30 pm

**Thur 21 Jan to 24 March 'After the Break: Grete Marks and Laure Prouvost'** Exhibition by Bauhaus-trained ceramicist and artist Grete Marks and of Laure Prouvost's Turner Prize-winning video work *Wantee*. At Studio 3, University of Kent. Curator Katie McGown, tel 01227 823 448

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### B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Lodge Holocaust Memorial Day Wednesday 27 January 2016, 8.00 pm at 11 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 5JY

We are delighted to welcome Professor Dan Stone, who will be speaking about 'The Liberation of the Camps'.

Dan Stone is Professor of Modern History at Royal Holloway, University of London. A historian of ideas, he works on historiographical and philosophical interpretations of the Holocaust, comparative genocide, the history of anthropology, and the cultural history of the British Right.

The lecture will be followed by tea and biscuits.

Admission free.

*AJR members are most welcome to attend our Commemoration.*

*Tel Philippa Strauss on 020 7431 3181*

### US State Department accepts applications for compensation from SNCF

Following the landmark \$60m agreement reached towards the end of last year, the US State Department has begun accepting applications for compensation in recognition of the role played by the French Railways (SNCF) in the deportation of Jews during the Holocaust.

Although the scheme specifically excludes citizens of certain countries, including Britain, from applying owing to the separate earlier bilateral indemnification agreements with France, eligible survivors will receive \$100,000. Also eligible to apply are surviving spouses of deportees as well as the estates of either a survivor or their spouse who died after the Second World War.

Full details of the scheme, including links to the eligible criteria and application forms, are available at <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rt/hlcst/deportationclaims/index.htm>

### 'Forced Walks: Honouring Esther'

**4 and 5 February 2016, Lower Saxony, Germany: a walk in witness on the route of a Nazi death march to Belsen: sharing survivor testimony; repatriating memory; connecting past to present**

In February, artists Lorna Brunstein and Richard White will leave the site of a slave labour camp near Hannover in Germany and walk to Bergen-Belsen, retracing the route of the death march that Esther Brunstein (Lorna's mother) was forced to make towards the end of the war. They will walk for two days beginning on **4 February**, the 71st anniversary of the exact date on which Esther began her forced walk.

This walk is the final phase of a participatory walking arts project that began in April 2015, when they walked with 25 others the same death march route transposed to Somerset, the area where they live.

They will stop at the same 10 points along the way where the route in the UK crosses the actual route in Germany.

They will listen to survivor testimony, poetry and music and have moments of silence and reflection. Lorna and Richard are inviting others to join them on foot, online or to make their own walk in their area on the same day.

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

If interested, please contact Lorna and Richard at [forcedwalks@gmail.com](mailto:forcedwalks@gmail.com)  
If you would like to donate to the project and support Forced Walks please contact the artists





## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### The world of the paranoid

So now 'radical Islamist' terror has spread to Paris, the centre of culture, civilisation and enlightenment. Last January Paris was subjected to a similar heinous attack, but that was confined to targets that could be – and were – dismissed or defined as 'appropriate', i.e. the offices of a satirical magazine that had lampooned Muhammed, and a kosher supermarket.

Of course, if Jews are the object of Muslim opprobrium, that is understandable. Palestine and all that. Of course, that's also why Sunni and Shia Muslims are killing one another.

But enjoying the pleasures of modern life – eating, drinking, listening to music – what can possibly be wrong with that? If you subscribe to a certain version of the Muslim religion – and I'm being very careful to define it as such and not to tar all the adherents of that religion with the same brush – the answer is: a lot.

Equality of women, for a start. How can you tell whether a man is Muslim or not? By looking at his womenfolk. They are the ones who display the outward signs of their religion – at the very least, these consist of a carefully arranged headscarf, followed by the all-encompassing hijabs and burqas. Muslim men, on the other hand, dress just like their modern Western counterparts, with short-sleeved shirts and any casual wear that

takes their fancy. Many more – and more severe – restrictions are imposed on women, ranging from general suppression to 'honour killing', but you get the general idea.

While reaping the benefit of life in the West, those people abhor the free and easy lifestyle of its native population, with its liberal values and mores that can be defined as hedonistic. And what's wrong with hedonism, as long as you're not inflicting harm on anyone else? Some might even go so far as to say that we've been put on earth in order to enjoy ourselves, which is as good a definition of hedonism as any. But that, of course, is anathema to orthodox Islam.

Here in Israel the reaction of the population to what happened in Paris is confused and confusing. There are those who are consumed by satisfaction, *Schadenfreude*, even a sense of divine retribution, noting that the plague that has afflicted this country on and off ever since its inception has extended its tentacles to other, supposedly 'untouched', parts of the world. But many Israelis, myself included, mourned for those caught up in the tragedy in Paris, shedding tears for the young lives lost so suddenly to blind and senseless hatred.

In an interview with Fox News, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the Somali-born Dutch-American author and

political activist, declared that it was time the world learned from Israel about maintaining security and dealing with terrorists. In the light of recent terrorist 'successes' in Israel, that statement seems slightly problematic, but at least mass terror attacks of the kind recently seen in Paris no longer occur here.

One thing is clear: the Europe that we once knew, with its open borders and freedom of movement, will have to change in order to survive. Israel has long pursued a policy that involves strict control of those who may and may not enter the country, with a powerful security presence, whether seen or unseen, and it seems that the countries of Europe will henceforth have to adopt a similar approach. Only the paranoid survive, as Andy Grove of Intel declared in a different context.

Welcome to the world of the paranoid, Europe!

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