

# AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Fin-de-siècle Vienna and its chroniclers

The American historian Carl E. Schorske, who died in September 2015 aged 100, was one of the greatest and most innovative of the intellectual historians working in the second half of the twentieth century. It was Schorske who, with his seminal study *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980), took the concept of Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century and gave it the full substance and significance with which we now associate it. Few historians have possessed his wide range of cultural reference and his ability to relate developments in literature, art, music, architecture or psychoanalysis to their historical, political and intellectual background. One historian who did was Peter Gay, born Peter Fröhlich in 1923, who fled Germany with his family, arrived in America in 1941 and went on to write political history (*The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx*), cultural history (*Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*), and an acclaimed study of Freud. Gay died in May 2015, aged 91.

I first encountered Carl Schorske through *German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism* (1955), his meticulously scholarly but eminently readable study of split in the socialist movement in Germany that led to the emergence of two warring parties, the Social Democrats and the Communists. In *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, he established Vienna as the 'laboratory of modernism', the cradle of such crucial pioneering influences on the modern world as Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy, or the music of Gustav Mahler and, more radically, Arnold Schoenberg. These great innovators had, according to Schorske, all broken with the historical outlook characteristic of the liberal, rational thinking that had dominated the nineteenth century: 'Vienna in the *fin de siècle*, with its acutely felt tremors of social and political disintegration, proved one of the most fertile breeding grounds of our [the twentieth] century's a-historical culture.' Across a broad range of intellectual and artistic activity, the Viennese creators of a new culture represented a revolt against the value system of liberalism that had previously been in the ascendancy.

Schorske set these developments within the framework of the politics of imperial Austria in the half-century before 1914, relating them in

particular to the weaknesses and deficiencies of Austrian liberalism. The liberals had suffered a stunning defeat through the failure of the revolution of 1848, which, they had hoped, would establish a democratic, constitutional form of government in the Habsburg Empire but was instead brutally suppressed by the



Karl Kraus, 1874-1936

resurgent forces of reaction united behind the monarchy. That the liberals came to power in the 1860s was due almost entirely to the incompetence of the Habsburg autocracy, which achieved the feat of losing the war of 1859 in northern Italy to the French under Emperor Napoleon III (otherwise notorious for his military failures in Mexico and in the Franco-Prussian war). When Austria was defeated by Prussia in the war of 1866, losing its traditional position as the leading power among the German states, it became even more obvious that fundamental reform was necessary and that Austria must embark on a new, progressive path.

But the new dawn proved illusory. The liberals failed to reform the institutionalised bureaucracy of the Habsburg Empire and to create a democratic Austria on the model of the parliamentary systems of government of Western Europe. Instead, they were rapidly overtaken by new mass movements both on the left, with the creation of the Social Democratic Party, and on the right, with the rise of the Christian Social Party of Karl Lueger and the Pan-Germans of

Georg von Schönerer, both avowed anti-Semites. In Vienna, the stronghold of Austrian liberalism, the election of Lueger as mayor in 1895 marked the seismic shift that had taken place in politics, the eclipse of classic liberalism by the populist mass movements of a new era. With characteristic acuteness, Schorske focused on 'the phenomenon of the disintegration of Austrian liberal society under the impact of anti-Semitism', in his analysis of Arthur Schnitzler's novel *Der Weg ins Freie* (*The Road into the Open*) (1908); the title 'refers to the desperate attempt of the cultivated younger generation of Viennese to find their way into the clear, their road out of the morass of a sick society to a satisfactory personal existence'.

The crisis facing the new generation of Viennese writers, which had originated in the political threat to liberalism and its values, also made itself felt in the authors' dawning awareness of the inadequacy of existing literary and aesthetic models, principally the realist novel that was the dominant form in the nineteenth century. Schorske devotes the opening chapter of his book to two writers, Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, whom he saw as pioneers of literary modernism, as they confronted the dilemmas posed by 'the disintegrating moral-aesthetic culture of fin-de-siècle Vienna'. Unlike their counterparts in London or Paris, the liberal, progressive intelligentsia in Vienna had been too weak to emancipate themselves from the dominant aristocracy. In consequence, according to Schorske, they had felt constrained to adopt elements of the traditional, dominant Baroque culture of Vienna, which, with its amoral sensuousness and its emphasis on the ephemeral nature of human existence, had little in common with the liberal ethic of industry, self-discipline and service to the community. The weakness of liberalism in politics appeared to leave writers like Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal with no road forward in literature, other than pessimism, resignation or a flight from the modern world into a realm of pure art.

With great brilliance and erudition, Schorske demonstrates how a similar dilemma affected artists and intellectuals across a wide range of activities. In the field of architecture, he describes the building of Vienna's Ringstraße and the reactions to it of two great modernist architects, Camillo

## Fin-de-siècle Vienna and its chroniclers *continued*

Sitte, author of *Der Städtebau (City Building)* (1889), and Otto Wagner, creator of the Österreichische Postsparkasse (Postal Savings Bank) building. Schorske also covers the artists Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka, the composer Arnold Schoenberg, the politicians Lueger and Schönerer, Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, and Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. His approach has come under fire, notably from Steven Beller, in *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938* (1989), but *Fin-de-siècle Vienna* remains a memorable monument to a remarkable era.

One of the most striking literary figures to emerge from Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century was Karl Kraus (1874-1936), the writer, journalist and satirist who edited and wrote the celebrated journal *Die Fackel (The Torch)* from 1899 until the year of his death. The labels 'journalist' and 'satirist' convey only inadequately the range and quality of Kraus's writings, which also included aphorisms and plays, as well as a large number of substantial and thought-provoking essays. Kraus's writings were unique in their highly original and polemically pointed style and in their inimitable humour, which mainly used language to pillory and deconstruct the objects of his criticism. He targeted those who held power and influence in Austria, the press (especially Moriz Benedikt and the *Neue Freie Presse*), manifestations of hypocrisy in such spheres as sexual morality and, above all, the corruption of language.

These all feature prominently in Kraus's extraordinary masterpiece, the anti-war drama *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit (The Last Days of Mankind)*, conceived in 1915 but only published after the fall of the Habsburg autocracy, first in *Die Fackel* in 1918-19, then in book form in 1922. The problem with the play is its sheer unstageability: my edition, published by Pegasus Verlag in Zurich in 1945, runs to over 700 pages, with an enormous panorama of scenes set on the various fronts on which the Austrian armies were fighting (as well as on the home front, where the favoured scions of the aristocracy were lining their pockets and sweet-talking their young ladies). The play is seldom performed, as it would cover several evenings. Its apocalyptic finale,

**REVISED ITINERARY**



### Kindertransport

A special interest group of the  
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**Kindertransport Commemorative European Train Trip**  
**Sunday 26 June to Friday 1 July 2016**

A journey following in the footsteps of Kinder from 77 years ago, taking in the opportunity to view Kindertransport statues and places of cultural interest, together with a full schedule of events including:

Flight to Vienna • Two nights in Vienna with sightseeing and visit to *Kinder* statue

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Ferry from Hook of Holland to Harwich • Overnight stay in Harwich

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**A fully accompanied trip including all travel, accommodation and meals**

We particularly encourage *Kinder* to come along with their children and grandchildren on this historic trip to see your place of birth and share your history and heritage

**To register your interest, please speak to Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070  
or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**

depicting the end of the world as mankind destroys itself in ever-intensifying conflict, strains the resources of the theatre to its limits. Its last words are spoken by the voice of God, who declares, in utter impotence in face of the destructive madness of his creatures: 'Ich habe es nicht gewollt' ('That was not what I intended'), words attributed to the Emperor Francis Joseph when contemplating the disaster of the Great War that his underlings had so frivolously helped to provoke.

A full English version of *The Last Days of Mankind* has now appeared, translated by Fred Bridgman and Edward Timms and published by Yale University Press (January 2016, price £25). The translators make a formidable team. Professor Timms is the leading expert on Karl Kraus and author of an outstanding two-volume study of the writer, *Apocalyptic Satirist* (1986/2006); he is also well known to AJR members as the founder of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex. Fred Bridgman, formerly of the University of Leeds, is a distinguished translator and author of the delightful *Friendly German-English Dictionary* (London: Libris, 1996). Their translation is a splendid achievement, and warmly recommended.

Anthony Grenville

### ADVANCE NOTICE • ADVANCE NOTICE

## Day Trip by Special Train: London to Harwich 1 July 2016

On Friday 1 July 2016 a number of 'Kindertransport 77' special trains will run from London and elsewhere in the UK to Harwich to mark the first anniversary of Sir Nicholas Winton's passing and the 77th anniversary of the arrival in Harwich of his largest single transport of 241 children.

It will also coincide with the arrival in Harwich of the group above from Vienna, Prague, Berlin and Hamburg.

A Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving will be held in St Nicholas Church in Harwich together with other events in the town which welcomed many thousands of *Kinder* to safety in 1938-39 and accommodated many hundreds at Dovercourt.

The organisers wish to invite any *Kinder* – not only those on the Czech transports – to attend with their families.

**For further information,  
please phone 01908 410450,  
email [kt@papyrus-rail.com](mailto:kt@papyrus-rail.com) or go to  
[www.papyrus-rail.com/kt77](http://www.papyrus-rail.com/kt77)**

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



## AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB

Please join us at our new Card and Games Club  
on Tuesday 22 March 2016 at 1.00 pm

at North Western Reform Synagogue,  
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN

Card games, Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble – you decide.  
Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient.

**A sandwich lunch with tea, coffee and Danish pastries will be served on arrival.**

*Booking is essential – when you book please let us know your choice of game.*

Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

£7.00 per person



## Irma Turnscek, Righteous Among the Nations

Helmut Turnsek was a patient at the North London Hospice who had a story to tell. He felt he couldn't rest until his story had been heard and the heroes of it recognised. Luckily, he had a dedicated social worker at the hospice, Anne Mossack, who not only listened but acted to ensure the deserved recognition and to reunite Helmut with the other surviving hero of his story.

During his childhood Helmut knew and played with a boy his age, Franz. Franz was the son of his mother's employers in Vienna, the Leichter family, for whom his mother Irma worked as a cook and maid. The hard-working woman had to give Helmut, born 1930, to a foster family but would still bring her son to visit and play. When the boys were eight years old, however, their lives were changed forever.

Following the Anschluss of March 1938, the Leichter family's situation changed dramatically. Since men were especially targeted Otto Leichter escaped. He first attempted to cross the border into Yugoslavia but, when this failed, he managed to illegally get into Switzerland. His wife, Käthe, who was active in the Socialist Party, was in danger both as a Jew and a socialist and began to make arrangements to leave with her two sons, Heinz (Henry), born 1924, and Franz, born 1930. She applied for passports for them all. At the same time, probably not trusting the authorities, she planned to leave illegally and to take her older son, Heinz, with her. She asked their former cook, Irma, who had a passport where her son Helmut was registered, to take Franz on Helmut's travel document.

Before they could leave, on 30 April 1938, Käthe Leichter was arrested. She had told of her plans to an acquaintance who was an informer and he denounced her to the Gestapo. Her two sons were taken by two families of friends. In her interrogation, Käthe denied that she wanted to leave illegally but it was clear that she and the boys were in danger. The boys' father sent a messenger who was to take Heinz to his father but the family who took care of him, innocently believing that a solution could still be found without breaking the law, refused to hand him over. Irma Turnscek, however, decided to go ahead with the plan she had made with Käthe before her arrest and to take Franz out of the country and then return for her son. On 5 August 1938 they left Vienna and travelled through Germany to Belgium, where family friends were waiting for them to take Franz to his father.

Following Irma's departure, notice was received that the passports for the two boys had been issued and that they were permitted to visit their mother in prison before their departure. The family friends who were

taking care of Heinz feared that it would be highly suspicious if only one boy came to visit and therefore informed the authorities that Irma Turnscek had kidnapped the other boy. On 11 August 1938 Heinz visited his mother accompanied by the lady who took care of him. In 1971 he recalled that

he told his mother of Franz having been kidnapped by Irma so that she would know that her youngest son was safely out of the country. A day later Heinz left Austria legally with his new passport and joined his father in Switzerland.

Käthe Leichter was deported to Ravensbrück camp, where she perished in 1942. Her husband and sons eventually emigrated to the United States. Since she had

been accused of having kidnapped Franz Leichter and smuggled him across the border, Irma Turnscek could not return to Vienna and fetch her son. She remained in England for the duration of the war, separated from her son, who had to stay with foster parents, until they were reunited in 1947. They settled in the United Kingdom and changed their last name to Turnsek. The two families lost touch.

Anne Mossack heard Helmut's story and was very moved by it. She contacted her cousin,

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman, who suggested that she contact Yad Vashem, introducing her to Irena Steinfeld of the Department of the Righteous Among the Nations.

In September 2013 Anne Mossack contacted Yad Vashem and told the story she had heard from Helmut Turnsek, who by

then was critically ill. When the Department of the Righteous Among the Nations traced Franz Leichter in New York, he immediately flew to London to meet Helmut. Shortly afterwards Helmut passed away, having finally been reunited with his childhood friend and hoping that his mother's heroism would be recognised.

On 20 January 2015 Yad Vashem recognised Irma Turnscek as Righteous Among the Nations and on 19 November last year Franz took part in a moving ceremony at the Israeli Embassy in London when Heinz Turnsek's family received a special certificate from Yad Vashem presented by Chargé d'Affaires Eitan Na'eh.

**Rony Yedidia-Clein**

*Rony Yedidia-Clein is Minister-Counsellor for Public Diplomacy at the Israeli Embassy, London*



(from left) Eitan Na'eh; Rony Yedidia-Clein; Nina Benjamin, granddaughter of Irma Turnscek; Stephen Turnsek, grandson of Irma Turnscek



Franz Leichter (with hat) and members of family of Irma Turnscek

### Angels Costumes receives BAFTA Award

Angels Costumes received the Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award at this year's BAFTA ceremony last month.

Now in its 175th year, Angels Costumes is the world's longest established and largest professional costume house, having become an integral part of the international film industry over the past century.

The AJR congratulates AJR Trustee Eleanor Angel, husband Tim, the family and company on the award.



### AJR FILM CLUB

at Sha'arei Tzedek North London Reform Synagogue in Whetsone

120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone, N20 9EZ

on Monday 4 April 2016 at 12.30 pm

Lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be served before the film.

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**Would you risk everything – your future, your citizenship, even your life – to help a brother in need?**

In 1948, just three years after the liberation of the Nazi death camps, a group of American-Jewish pilots answered a call for help. In secret and at great personal risk, they smuggled planes out of the US, trained behind the Iron Curtain in Czechoslovakia, and flew in Israel's War of Independence. As members of Machal – 'volunteers from abroad' – this ragtag band of brothers not only turned the tide of the war: they also embarked on personal journeys of discovery and renewed Jewish pride.

**'ABOVE AND BEYOND' is their story**

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£7.00 per person



GLYNDEBOURNE

### 'Le Nozze di Figaro'

Wednesday 17 August 2016

Evening performance

We are delighted to offer our members a unique opportunity to experience the wonders of Glyndeboune as part of our 75th Anniversary celebrations.

We have secured a limited number of tickets for the performance of 'Le Nozze di Figaro' on Wednesday 17 August, which will be preceded by the unveiling of a commemorative AJR plaque in honour of Sir Rudolf Bing, who was General Manager at Glyndeboune between 1936 and 1949.

The AJR is offering the tickets, together with a three-course dinner and transport by coach to and from Glyndeboune from pick-up points in Central and North-West London at the heavily subsidised combined price of £100 per person.

**Tickets are available strictly on a first-come-first-served basis and will only be confirmed once payment is made. To apply, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**

## First day

‘What funny clothes they’re all wearing!’ I said to Ruth. She was the oldest of my sisters and, since we’d arrived, I had hardly let go of her hand. My usual place at Mama’s side had been usurped by my father and I was still too shy of him to protest.

‘Well, what d’you expect?’ Ruth replied scornfully, ‘They’re English.’

‘But they look like us all the same,’ I went on.

‘Don’t talk so loud,’ Ruth said, with all the authority now invested in her. We had been warned before we arrived that, until we learned to speak English, we must talk softly to one another – German was not popular in England in the winter of 1938.

‘But we’re Austrian, not German,’ I had protested.

‘All the same,’ one of my cousins, vastly superior in age and knowledge, had told me, ‘they might think we were spies and arrest us.’

I didn’t know what a spy was but a lot of people we knew had been arrested in Vienna during the past months. Thinking of his words now, I clapped my hand over my mouth and looked around fearfully. Curiosity had mingled with fear in my mind ever since our arrival on the boat train at midday. I wanted to gaze and gaze at everything – the people, buses, shops and policemen, all so different from the ones we had left behind in Vienna – but I was constantly terrified of being lost, of letting go of a hand and finding myself alone in a crowd of strangers. The nightmare journey still fresh in my mind, I looked around at the family to make sure all were there.

‘Where’s Mama?’ I asked, my voice, in spite of the warnings, rising in panic.

‘Shush,’ my big sister said again, ‘she’s gone into the shop with Papa.’

‘I want to go too!’ I said shrilly, beginning to cry.

Ruth gave a sigh of exasperation. Twelve years old – which was twice my age – she was, as far as I was concerned, one of the grown-ups. I had shared a cabin with her on the crossing, while our mother had shared another with our child-like and somewhat hysterical aunt. Finally, on the boat at Hoek Van Holland, both were overcome by the trauma and fatigue of our departure and train journey from Austria, during which Mama, virtually the only adult in charge of seven children, had been too vigilant to relax for a moment.

To allow Mama to rest, Ruth, as so often before, became a temporary parent, taking charge of me and keeping an eye on nine-year-old Renee and ten-year-old Hedy. Renee was not a real sister but an orphaned cousin, who had lived with us ever since I could remember. Her two older brothers,



Brainin parents, Renee, Hedy, Ruth and Putzi after arrival in London (Kensington)

Norbert and Hugo, were travelling with us, as was my 15-year-old brother Harry. After having been confined with us for so long, the three boys couldn’t wait to get on the boat and wander off by themselves. Ruth had to implore them to be back in time for us all to settle down in our cabins; she must have felt the weight of the responsibility Mama had thrust upon her and had visions of having to search the boat for the teenage boys, with me clinging onto her the while and Hedy and Renee trailing after.

Ruth was tall and fair-haired and people were always marvelling at how pretty she was. I’d also heard them remark that she didn’t look the least bit Jewish. ‘You’d pass as an Aryan anywhere’, Mrs Wittman, our local grocer’s wife, had told her fondly. Ruth had breasts and, on the occasions she shared a room with us younger girls, we had to turn our backs while she undressed. In between our weekly baths she washed herself all over every day and no one, not even Mama, was allowed to look while she did. This habit soon caused a problem in our cabin on the boat. I lay in my underwear on the bunk, longing to sleep but needing her next to me. As she moved to go over to the washstand I became rigid with fear. Then came the

dreaded words:

‘I’m just going to wash, Putzi, don’t look.’

‘Oh please, please don’t wash, Ruth!’ I pleaded, almost hysterical now. The washstand was at the other end of the cabin, in a dark corner. To me it seemed miles away.

‘But I have to,’ she replied, ‘I always do.’

‘Not tonight, oh don’t wash tonight,’ I wept.

‘But if I don’t do it now I’ll have to in the morning,’ she said reasonably.

Relief flooded through me. ‘Oh yes, Ruth, wash in the morning’, I said and, as she finally lay down next to me, I held on to her and drifted off to sleep.

In the morning, as soon as Ruth tried to creep out of the bunk for her wash, I was instantly awake and the previous night’s scene was repeated.

We must have looked an odd assortment of refugees, trooping down the gangway early the next morning. Now I clung onto my mother again. She was wearing a hat which had been smart and

becoming at the beginning of our long journey; now it looked wilted, like flowers that had been too long out of water. Her skirt was on crooked and I wondered whether she had slept in it.

My aunt Dora made a pretence at keeping the boys in order. In Vienna Renee’s brothers had lived with her and my Uncle Willy. Uncle Willy had had to travel via Hungary because of his passport and would, we hoped, meet us in London, and Aunt Dora seemed quite helpless without him. Poor Mama had her hands full with all of us. We younger girls were still wearing our heavy winter clothes and I, at least, still had my knickers on inside out. As we were about to leave our apartment in Vienna one of our copiously weeping neighbours who had come up to take leave of us had insisted that this would bring us luck. Superstition reigned supreme in our household and so Hedy, Renee and I had had to submit to the indignity of having these items of our underwear removed and put on again the wrong way.

The next thing I remember is our luggage being opened and looked at by men in uniform. They seemed quite kindly, not at all like the Nazis at the *Bahnhof* in Vienna and Cologne, who had so frightened us and taken

## Eleventh of the Eleventh

The night of 9 November 1938 was the catalyst that changed my life. At that time we lived in a small village in rural Austria, tucked away in the mountains of Carinthia. My parents had obviously thought it would be a safe place, having been deprived of their livelihood in Germany in 1936. They hoped to disappear into the background, keep their heads down, and be allowed to continue farming and live in peace. Austria was then still an independent state and Europe was not yet at war.

Two years later everything had changed. It was still peace-time but the Nazis had already declared war on part of the German people. During the night of 9-10 November synagogues and other Jewish-owned buildings up and down Germany and Austria were set on fire, shops destroyed, and people humiliated, injured and killed. Many took their own lives in desperation.

Through radio and newspapers my parents would have been aware of the build-up of anti-Jewish propaganda and hysteria. They must have been very frightened and worried about their safety. Every night they must have put us to bed hoping we would

wake up in the morning and enjoy the day with them.

But this night was to be different. My older brother recalls that he heard the tread of heavy boots and loud banging on the door. My father went to open the door. 'Are you the Jew Lothar Auerbach?' He confirmed that he was Mr Auerbach. 'You are arrested. Come with us.'

Did he dare ask to see the arrest warrant? I doubt it. Did he have time to say goodbye to his wife and us? I don't know. He was loaded onto a waiting lorry and disappeared. My brother saw all this happen through a broken window. Stones had been thrown and glass lay shattered on our cots.

It was only several days later that my mother learned that he had been taken to a local prison. Then more days passed till she received a card written by him from Dachau concentration camp.

My father never divulged what happened to him en route or later. It was a devastating experience that he wanted to expunge from his mind. My mother's panic and fear I can hardly imagine. Would she ever see her husband again? Would she and her children be taken away?

Then an official letter was delivered to our door. We were told that by order of the Gestapo we had to emigrate or relocate to Vienna and there report to the police. My mother was an astute woman: she decided to go to Berlin, where she had relatives and friends, and try to get a visa to emigrate. Had she gone to Vienna I would most certainly not be here in Market Bosworth! A friendly local agreed to take her and us children hidden on a wagon across the border into Czechoslovakia, from where she took a train to Berlin. Perhaps she was afraid of being intercepted in Austria. In Berlin my parents managed to get a visa to Britain. But that's another story.

We are the lucky ones and I am grateful to be alive. So many – among them my grandmothers and aunt – were not.

This is the memory that came back to me on Armistice Day, when we remember all those who died in wars. The eleventh of the eleventh is a day for me personally to reflect and be thankful but also to remember the many who died in all the wars, which rob mankind of humanity and life.

**Ruth Schwiening**

### First day continued

Mama off the train for a never-to-be-forgotten half-hour. These officers smiled and spoke to us but only the boys understood a few words of what they said. Norbert clutched his violin protectively, glaring so fiercely at them that no one asked him to put it down. (Perhaps they already sensed that he would one day be world-famous ...)

Our big trunks and furniture had been sent ahead – and Mama had wondered aloud several times about whether her piano would arrive safely – but we still had quite an amount of luggage with us. Among the things being opened and examined were two of my mother's hatboxes. As an official turned one over a plaintive cry of 'Mama!' issued forth from it. Startled, he sprang back, then gingerly opened it. Packed among the hats and oddments was Susie, my Mama Doll. I was so glad she hadn't lost her voice during the journey and insisted on taking her out and keeping her with me thereafter. The customs man patted me on the head and looked no more. We were free to go.

Later I remember seeing Papa's

brother, Uncle Max – and then Papa for the first time for nearly a year. He was almost a stranger to me, though he had a familiar tobacco smell about him. He and Mama stood together for a long time, her face buried in his coat. Astonishingly I heard my big bear of a father sob out loud.

And now, hours later, here we were, walking down Bond Street, in the West End of London, where Papa and Uncle Max had a workshop and a shop that made and sold beautiful fur coats, just as they had had in Vienna. And my parents had disappeared into it.

'I want to go too', I repeated to Ruth. But before she could decide what to do with me, out they came, Mama and Papa, smiling, holding out their hands to us. Up the steep stairs we all trooped, into a showroom full of big mirrors. I looked at myself reflected in one; I seemed to be all solemn expression and high button boots.

Papa bent down and put his arms round me. I felt the familiar sensation of his moustache brush my cheek. 'And



Putzi and doll in Vienna

this is Putzi, my youngest,' he said with pride to the lady with the painted face and the pearls at her throat. 'Thank God I have the children here at last!'

I had a flash of recollection of my father in Vienna singing a lullaby in Russian to me before I went to sleep, and another of him carrying me when I was ill up and down in the big bedroom I had shared with him and Mama. And suddenly he was no longer a stranger.

**Mary Brainin Hutterer**



# Letters to the Editor

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

## STAFF CHANGES AT MANX NATIONAL HERITAGE

Sir – May I take this opportunity to inform your readers of my retirement as Librarian of Manx National Heritage Library on 21 March 2016. In the 23 years I have worked in the Library I have had the pleasure of meeting numerous former internees and members of their families and have helped curate a large amount of material relating to the Isle of Man's involvement with internment in the Second World War from May 1940 to September 1945.

I contributed two articles about our records to the *AJR Journal* in 2008 and 2010 – 'Second World War internee records for the Isle of Man' and '1940-2010: the individual and family legacy of WW2 internment as it relates to the Isle of Man: a guide to aid personal research' – which readers may still find useful.

I am also currently revising a draft for a potential book about internment drawing heavily on original material, including items received largely as a result of the response to the above-mentioned articles.

With our line manager Paul Weatherall also having retired at Christmas, all future enquiries should be sent to my archivist colleague at Wendy.Thjirkettle@gov.im. Wendy has also been on the staff since 1992 and has an extensive knowledge of our manuscript material.

Finally, I would advise any potential visitors to the Isle of Man from April this year to check beforehand regarding opening hours as, with the retirement of three of our library staff in quick succession and no replacements as yet agreed, it is probable that opening hours will be reduced and the response to post or email enquiries will be delayed.

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## 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF AJR JOURNAL

Sir – I'd just like to tell you how moved I was by the 70th Anniversary issue of the *AJR Journal*.

It brought back many memories. The *AJR Information* occupied such a large place in my family's life that I came to regard it as a sort of younger brother. It didn't exactly eat with us but, when its galley proofs were spread out over the table after dinner, it seemed to provide us with a special sort of dessert!

*Michael Rosenstock, Toronto, Canada*  
*Michael Rosenstock is the son of Werner Rosenstock, who was General Secretary of the AJR from 1941 to 1982 and Editor of AJR Information from 1946 to 1982 (Ed.).*

Sir – After 70 years this 'Blatt' – the *AJR Journal* – is still relied on with fond thanks. Our thanks too for the office work, the caring, the outings, and all the services the AJR provides. Bis 120!

*Helen Grunberg, London NW10*

Sir – Congratulations on your 70th Anniversary!

Henry Wuga's reference to Eleanor Rathbone in your Anniversary edition has much resonance with me as a former MP and as a pupil of the Liverpool school in her name in Kensington. Alas, it no longer exists but several of us honoured her hard work some years ago. A caring, remarkable woman.

*Eric Moonman OBE, London N7*

## CÉLINE MORALI

Sir – My grandmother Céline Morali started saving lives in May 1940, continuing through September 1942. Many survived, including Leo Helner, Émile Zenatti and Émile's family: son Claude, daughter Arlette, wife Lucie, and Lucie's sister Marietta Bloch.

In all, approximately 300 Jewish refugees and prisoners of war escaping Nazi Germany made their way to her hardware store, Quinquallerie ROMO, 113 rue de Patay in Paris. In small groups they came to hide in the basement of

the store or above the store in the family living quarters.

Céline's teenage daughter Simone practised classical piano music that helped to mask the sound of hidden refugees. Several days later at dawn they mounted a utility truck behind the store driven by Alfred Fuhrman which spirited her over the border at Chalon-sur-Saône to a hiding place in the Unoccupied Zone.

Arlette and Claude Zenatti were 11 and 13 years old at liberation. They provided the testimony to Yad Vashem. If you or a family member were aided by Madame Morali at the Quinquallerie ROMO in Paris please respond to madamemorali@gmail.com

Céline Morali received (posthumously) Yad Vashem's highest honour: Righteous Among the Nations, 29 June 2015. The award ceremony will take place on 18 April 2016 in Paris. Details will shortly be posted at [www.yadvashem-france.org/la-vie-du-comite/ceremonies-venir](http://www.yadvashem-france.org/la-vie-du-comite/ceremonies-venir). The public are invited.

*Marie-Anne Céline Harkness,  
Holocaust Center for Humanity,  
Seattle, Washington, USA*

## 'DANGER IN THE STREETS – VIENNA, NOVEMBER 1938'

Sir – I read Hedi Schnabl Argent's article in your February issue with interest and great sadness. I too was in Vienna that fateful night. It was the night before my 12th birthday. I vividly remember the fear, the noise of smashing glass, and the shouting of people, many of whom were dragged from their homes and away from their families. My own father disappeared that night and it was only after the war that I found out what had happened to him.

I was one of the lucky ones. I was put on the Kindertransport by my grandmother in April 1939. She certainly saved me from the same fate as that of my father.

*Gabriele Keenaghan (née Weiss),  
North Shields*

## PHILADELPHIANS AND THE KINDERTRANSPORT

Sir – I teach a Holocaust studies class at the Christadelphian Heritage School in Los Angeles and am hoping to put together a book on Christadelphians and their involvement in the Kindertransport. If you stayed with Christadelphians or in a Christadelphian Hostel (Elpis Lodge, Little Thorn) during the 1930s and 1940s, or have any sources of information that you would like to share, please contact me at [jhensley@heritageschoolcalifornia.com](mailto:jhensley@heritageschoolcalifornia.com) or on +1 (805) 304-7860.

*Jason Hensley, Principal, Christadelphian Heritage School, Los Angeles, California, USA*

## TEREZIN NEWSLETTER

Sir – I'm currently donating to the Wiener Library the large collection of memorabilia

from my uncle Ewald Bauer, who died in Auschwitz in September 1944 aged 38 after a period in Terezin.

I'm passing to the Wiener Library a stack of copies of the Terezin newsletter *Salom na Patek*, delightfully illustrated by Ewald and with text in some instances in German, in others in Czech. Yad Vashem have the originals.

I would very much like to locate people whose relatives were in Terezin and who might have met Ewald and/or contributed to this newsletter. I hope they will contact me at the email address below.

*Vera Lustig veralustig@mail.com*

### THANKS TO AJR 'CARE TEAM'

Sir – A big thank you to Carol Rossen and the AJR 'Care Team' for looking after us so well during our recent trip to Israel. I appreciate it is a big undertaking to manage such a group and thought you were all extremely thoughtful and caring.

I enjoyed the trip very much and found it most interesting and now look forward to learning more.

It was my first visit to Israel and my first trip with the AJR – both very enjoyable.

*Edith Vanstone, Ashted, Surrey*

### HOLOCAUST AND HUNGARY – DEEDS NOT WORDS

Sir – The International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) is an inter-governmental organisation established in 1998 for the purpose of remembrance, education and research of the Holocaust. The United Kingdom was a founding member; the AJR's Michael Newman is on the UK delegation.

Given Hungary's attitude to the Holocaust, it may be considered surprising that in 2002 it joined the Association and applied for chairmanship for 2015 for the second time. There being no other applicant, Hungary assumed the post. It was no doubt hoped that the position would serve to change the present Hungarian government's approach to the Holocaust, which was, and remains, even more negative than that of earlier administrations.

The misgivings prompted the AJR, in collaboration with the Wiener Library, to organise the 19 May meeting reported in the July issue of the *AJR Journal*. I am reliably advised that the substance and details of the meeting were relayed by the high-level Hungarian diplomatic representative present to both the Hungarian Foreign Ministry and the head of the Hungarian delegation with positive recommendations. These appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

As Michael Newman reported at the June meeting in Budapest some lip service may have been paid by Hungary

in accepting some responsibility for massacring 450,000 Hungarian Jews, but there was no declaration to such effect. The project for an alternative Holocaust museum continues; the 'spiritus rector' of the activity, although discredited because of her 'improved understanding' of the Holocaust, still receives her salary. It is said that Jewish community approval is required. Understandably, they keep their heads down.

The November plenary session showed no progress – indeed, the opposite. The rehabilitation of Nazi-era politicians continues unabated, the latest being Balint Homan, who, apart from other manifestations, openly proposed the deportation of all Jews in February 1944 – a month before the German occupation. He was actually pardoned for one act only, namely voting for war on German's side in 1941; other details of the original indictment 'could not be found'. Judgement administration in the heat of post-war 1946 may not have been perfect but revisions in 2015 are worse. The 'hero's' statue was ready to be erected in Szekesfehervar, but foreign, particularly US, protest stopped the plan.

The fact remains that in May-June 1944 a handful of Eichmann's crew, assisted with enthusiasm by the Hungarian gendarmerie, managed to embarrass the Auschwitz organisation by sending too many Jews too fast for extermination. Even a small slowing down could have saved 100,000 lives. No Hungarian government ever admitted this fact and the present one positively denies it.

Quite clearly, the pious hope that Hungarian attitudes will change with the chairmanship was an illusion. In fact, it proved that Hungary is only interested in an unrealistic whitewash. This makes it equally clear that not only is Hungary not a suitable chairman of the IHRA, but just as unsuitable as a member and should be removed as such. It is hoped that the IHRA UK delegation can be persuaded, through the AJR, to initiate the appropriate process.

*George Donath, London SW1*

### DEPLORABLE STATE OF WEISSENSEE CEMETERY

Sir – I have previously, among others, aired the condition of the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe.

I am referring to Weissensee in east Berlin, which is in a deplorable state. It is very much overgrown and consequently, apart from the difficulty of finding the grave where one's beloved relative is interred, it gives a very bad impression to the non-Jewish world.

Is there a chance for us to do something about this problem or would it be advisable to write to the leading Jewish person in

Germany who can start a 'clean-up' campaign?

*Gordon G. Spencer, Barnet, Hertfordshire*

### 3 TROOP

Sir – In reply to Henry Tobias (February issue), I am very proud of the fact that my late uncle, Herbert Sachs, was a German Jew who fought and died with 3 Troop, No.10 Inter-Allied Commando, also known as X Troop.

Herbert arrived in England with his father, Eugen, in 1938. When war broke out, they were both interned on the Isle of Man. In 1941 Eugen was allowed to return to live in London with his wife, Gretel, while Herbert got the choice of either being interned in Australia or Canada or joining the Pioneer Corps. He served with The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regt), labouring in North Africa building aerodromes, camps, etc.

In 1943 Churchill realised that fluent German speakers would be especially useful for the invasion of Europe. 3 Troop consisted of 67 German, Austrian and Hungarian Jews, all of whom were officially 'enemy aliens'. They were promised British citizenship if they survived the war. They trained in all the arts of commando warfare, in Wales, under two non-Jewish Welsh Officers. D-Day was the first time the whole Troop went into action. Herbert was killed crossing the Rhine with the Royal Marines two months before the end of the war. I attended with a number of those ex-commandos the unveiling of a memorial to the Troop in Aberdovey in 1998.

Troop member Peter Masters has written an excellent book, *Striking Back: A Jewish Commando's War Against the Nazis*, which chronicles in great detail the history of these heroes.

*Steven Schrier, Hayling Island*

### 'OUR THANKS TO BRITAIN'

Sir – Fred Stern's letter in your January issue headed 'Our thanks to Britain' started with the words 'All of us'. No doubt the author meant that the words following this quote applied to all AJR members. I have to point out that they do not – and I am referring neither to the British-born spouses of members nor to British-born descendants.

'We refugees, who were designated for the gas chambers ...', Mr Stern writes. I am a survivor not a refugee and have never been a refugee. I was certainly designated for the gas chambers, having received call-up papers to go and 'work in the East' at the ripe old age of two years.

I was 'subjected to living under the Nazis' – and probably longer than the author of the original letter, namely for five years.

*continued on page 16* ➔

# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

From Monet to Matisse to van Gogh and back to Monet again, the garden is a place of solace – or just a blaze of pure energy. Certainly the latter is true of Wassily Kandinsky or Vincent van Gogh or Emil Nolde. But in the Royal Academy's exhibition *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* (until 20 April 2016), the romantic theme is probably the most vivid. There are 19th-Century salon gardens where people read newspapers, walk and chat about art, literature and music, evoking times past. Gardens in the era of the Impressionists helped to reconnect with nature as the urban industrial world intruded on the romantic imagination.

*Avant-garde* artists like Vincent van Gogh felt differently. With his intense and febrile imagination, he studied flowers to discover the emotions suggested by their strength of colour. Some garden paintings here are lavish, some just show a formal path, and others take the image into Modernism and Abstraction.

And yet it is Monet with whom we start and Monet with whom we end. The exhibition spans the early 1860s to the 1920s, a period which saw considerable social change and creative innovation. Despite the coming of war, romance flowered in the horticultural imagination of artists, often with darker imagery, as we begin to see in Monet, whose pacific and structural format, as in his 1867 *Lady in a Garden* – almost ethereal in her white sunhat and pale blue dress, contemplating a bed of red flowers beneath a small flowering tree – develops into something more abstract later. In earlier years, Monet would write copious letters to his gardener specifying what should be planted, a practical and formal side to his nature, indicating how the artist did not just paint what he saw and felt but had a hand in the gardens' original design.



Claude Monet *Jeanne-Marguerite Lecadre (Lady in a Garden)* 1867

By contrast, Pierre Bonnard preferred his *jardin sauvage*, in which plants ran riot, evoking some nostalgic idyll.

Monet had cultivated gardens from his early days at Argenteuil in the 1870s until his death in Giverny, north-west of Paris, in 1926. After the death of his second wife, Alice, in 1911, he was too distressed to paint for three years. Failing eyesight did not help but it improved in 1914 and his water garden and Japanese bridge at his beloved Giverny continued to preoccupy him as he wandered there white-haired holding a gigantic palette.

At the beginning of the First World War, Monet refused to join the masses fleeing Giverny, believing that continuing to paint was his patriotic duty. As his blue tones deepened, irises and willows began to appear at the water's edge in his 1918 canvases. The exhibition ends with a roomful of his large canvases in which his famous water lilies now seem as delicate and obscure as the souls lost in battle. To paint them so large he had constructed a studio big enough to contain them. The Impressionist was turning abstract. Although his floral themes persisted, they now meant something different to him: 'The subject is secondary', he said, 'What I want to reproduce is that which is between the subject and me.'

## REVIEWS

### Individual stories masterfully woven together

#### THE HOUSE BY THE LAKE: A STORY OF GERMANY

by Thomas Harding

*William Heinemann, 2015, 464 pp.*  
hardcover, ISBN 978-043-4023226,  
£20.00

Let's get the basics out of the way first. This is a good book, very readably written and yet encompassing an enormous amount of well researched information, both on individuals who were involved in some way in the history of a small timber summer house built for weekends and holidays on the shores of the Glienicke See south-west of Berlin, and on the whole history of what was going on around it. I refer to the snobbism of the Kaiser period, whereby one had to be a 'von' in order to get 'to' anything; the economic problems of the 1920s; the rising nationalism and thuggery of the 1930s; the flight of those who could get out in time and the fates of those who could not; the course of the war in Germany leading eventually to defeat and occupation; the fate of local civilians – rape and murder by Soviet soldiers described briefly and dispassionately but factually; the machinations of Communist East Germany (the border between the DDR and West Berlin essentially passing through the garden of this summer house); and so forth to the present, when it is a rotting, abandoned ruin. Along the way are snapshots of family life, both for the landlords and the tenants or lessees of the house. The ownership details were complex: at times, for instance, a family leased the house but not the land; at times they acquired the land but then lost the house. In other words, by focusing on his grandparents' little bit of 'Jwd' – the Berlin dialect term for 'janz-weit-draussen' (out in the country) – Thomas Harding is able to paint in the entire scope of German history and politics over a century or more.

Driven initially by that urge that so many of us of a particular generation have – an existential curiosity to find out more about what we were not told by those who experienced and knew much more than they were ever prepared to tell – and so occasionally pushing into open doors in the family history and occasionally pushing against closed ones which reveal, almost literally, skeletons or at least descriptions of death once opened – Harding in 2013 visits the ruins of the house of which

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he has heard fond accounts from his grandmother. Stimulated by what he finds, he engages researchers, visits archives and official offices, learns of the complex personal and family histories of the various people who designed it or owned it or leased it or borrowed it or 'acquired' it, talking to individuals or their descendants, including villagers of Groß Glienicke whose ancestors worked on the estate before it was parcelled off, some forcibly sold to become military bases or the Gatow airfield, many being called up to fight either for the Kaiser or for the Adolf, many of them later victims of the casual brutality that characterised the post-war period. There are ironies along the way. One owner of the estate, being a high-up in the SA, gets beaten up and arrested and eventually driven away by the very Hitlerian movement he adores ... A later owner, an ambitious music publisher, benefits from his party membership until in due course it becomes a hindrance when he needs a de-Nazification certificate ... (His business is badly affected when an RAF bombing raid destroys its storage facility in Passauer Strasse on 11 November 1943 – interesting to this reviewer, who now lives in the same street!)

Here and there the author slips into fictionalisation, being forced into making assumptions about what a character thought or did or said so as to fill in the gaps in the historical narrative. Here and there one finds a reference that doesn't make 100 per cent sense – Russian jets in 1945? – but this does not really affect the flow. In retrospect, the childhood holidays and the weekends were always idyllic. The book starts with a series of maps slowly increasing in scale and focusing on the area and there are various diagrams of the house's layout at different periods as well as a family tree of the Alexander family to which the author belongs (Hirschowitzes becoming Hardings while in England).

In fact, the book is about *people* and the house forms a convenient focal point and the history forms the background. Each generation in turn strives to build up a business and to survive any conflicts that blight their lives. For some it is an escape from the stress of city life; for others it is an escape from the stress of the bombing; for yet others it is an escape from the attentions of the Gestapo – or later from the Volkspolizei. The changing nature of the village itself through the decades, especially the DDR period and during and after the *Wende*, is described and then towards the end the remarkable interest in retaining and preserving and restoring what is left. The house is now being turned into a memorial and centre (details at [www.alexanderhaus.org](http://www.alexanderhaus.org)).

Fascinating are the Notes on pp. 361-410, the four-page Bibliography, the lengthy personal Acknowledgements on pp. 415-21 and an extensive Index on pp. 423-42! Clearly this is not a book that one person could write just by himself in one year, especially as the author frequently explains his limited German, but the individual stories have been skilfully and masterfully woven together.

**Walter Rothschild**

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

### 'Exile is all around us'

**EXILE AND EVERYDAY LIFE: THE YEARBOOK OF THE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN EXILE STUDIES, VOLUME 16**

**edited by Andrea Hammel and Anthony Grenville**

*Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015, 217 pp. paperback*

Since its foundation in 1995 the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies has been central to exile studies in the UK. The topics of its yearbooks have over the years covered a broad range of key aspects of exile from Nazi Germany – quite a number of them relating to the work on oral history documents and material collected by the Centre.

Volume 16, following in the footsteps of Wolfgang Benz's groundbreaking study *Das Exil der kleinen Leute* (1991), which concentrated on the experience of the broad mass of the refugees from Nazi persecution, aims to take further this important work on contemporary witnesses, while at the same time 'not losing sight of the larger picture' (p. xiii).

The volume contains ten articles, highly distinctive in their approaches and all showing in different ways how life in the new countries of refuge was determined by the background of the individual refugees as well as by conditions in the host countries. Focusing on the everyday life of the 'ordinary' people in exile, in contrast to the life of artists, academics or prominent public figures, means not dealing with literature and other forms of high art but with letters and, in some cases, fragments of life accounts. This gives the quotations in the articles in this volume from this kind of source material an astonishing freshness and presence, in particular in the light of the current refugee crisis. Exile is all around us.

One of the great achievements of this volume is that it makes clear

beyond doubt that every case of exile, every refugee's fate, is individual. The generalising statements frequently made about exile are shown to be trivial in the light of these case studies and the snippets of information about individual behaviour they provide to throw light on the overall experience of exile: 'Having lost everything, my mother kept everything' (p. 65), says Elizabeth Schächter in her moving description of the struggle that everyday life was for her parents, two young dentists from Vienna. Janine Barker gives an interesting account of the life of Henry Rothschild, who emigrated as early as 1933 and became a leading patron of the crafts in his new home country.

Bastian Heinsohn's life stories of two emigrants who settled in the USA demonstrate vividly their very individual reactions to life in their new country and the different ways in which they dealt with it. Both were helped to gain admission to the country by Carl Laemmle, the founder and first president of Universal Films. After his early death in 1939, this support for many émigrés stopped; this had more serious consequences for those who arrived later than for those who had been in the USA for a longer period. The collection of individual life stories is enriched by Jennifer Michaels's portrait of everyday life in Shanghai, a destination for refugees that has come into the public eye fairly late in the history of exile studies and is thus particularly interesting as a research topic. Likewise, Ireland as a refugee country has attracted attention only relatively recently, having received only a small numbers of émigrés, as Horst Dickel and Gisela Holfter indicate.

Andrea Hammel's article 'Liebe Eltern – Liebes Kind' looks into the very specific relationship between children on the Kindertransport and their parents and the communications between them. And considering the general lack of source material when it comes to research into everyday life in exile, it comes close to a miracle that Anna Nyburg has been able to write such an illuminating article on one activity central to human life: the provision of food, cooking and the role of food in the situation of exile.

Three contributions to this volume focus on writers. One is by Jan Schröder on Jean Améry and his writing on exile in the 1960s. Two further contributions are devoted to women writers. The first, by Regina Christiane Range, investigates the life and work of the multi-talented Austrian writer and screenwriter Gina Kaus on the basis of Kaus's own autobiography and Hollywood film scripts, while Rose Sillars looks into Vicki

## Reviews continued

Baum's novel *Die Karriere der Doris Hart* (1936), examining the survival strategies of the exiled Doris, who, despite a damaged lung, becomes a highly acclaimed opera singer in her new country. Doris Hart's singing career, based on regaining her voice under the most difficult conditions in exile, serves as a symbol for all those whose voices were not heard and gives convincing proof that exile can strengthen the 'power of human will' (p. 21).

This volume convincingly portrays the impact of emigration and the various cultural environments in which the refugees found themselves and, by not generalising, it gives a voice to those refugees who were not heard at the time and later were nearly forgotten. A short biographical list of the volume's contributors is missing in a volume that is in all other respects a great asset in its field of research.

Ursula Hudson-Wiedenmann

## Search Notices

**Moritz-Max Abraham**, born 18.12.1919 in Berlin, last known address Haifa Kiriya, Samach Sajin 2. Berlin memorial researcher is looking for family or friends who may be able to help with research on **Louise Prinz née Abraham and her husband Detmar Prinz**, who committed suicide in 1941 to avoid deportation and are buried at Weissensee Cemetery, Berlin. (Mary Bianchi Bia24@web.de)

**Bruno Adler, Annemarie Hase, Walter Rilla** came to the UK in 1936 and worked on BBC World Service's 'Frau Wernicke', a German-language radio show broadcast 1940-44. Any info pls contact Michelle Deignan info@michelledeignan.info

I am looking for a photo or sketch of the synagogue (external view) at **Babenhäusen**, Hessen, Germany (NB: not the synagogue at nearby Sickenhofen). I purchased land on which this synagogue stood. Pls contact Petra Lambernd p.lambernd@gmx.net

**Traute Bank née Leisersonn**, last known address 61 Clova Road, London E7. Traute came to the UK by Kindertransport in 1938. Her parents and her brother Gerd were murdered. Berlin memorial researcher wishes to contact her, her family or friends who may be able to help with research on **Louise Prinz née Abraham and her husband Detmar Prinz**, who committed suicide in 1941 to avoid deportation and are buried at Weissensee Cemetery, Berlin. (Mary Bianchi Bia24@web.de)

I am researching the Nazi occupation of the Channel Islands and seeking friends or relatives of **Hedwig Bercu (aka Goldenberg)**, born Austria 1919. She came to the UK in 1938 and lived in Jersey during the war. She may have had a sister in London. Any info pls to Alice Allen alicemaryallen@yahoo.co.uk

**Jutta Fabian** came to the UK in late August 1938 (?). She was born in Berlin on 27.3.1932, possibly to Walter and Charlotte Fabian. Walter, born 1896, was murdered in 1942. Charlotte was born

## An Unusual Theatre Experience: *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*

As Mona Golabek was coming to the conclusion of her musical story at the St James Theatre in London on 4 February there couldn't have been many dry eyes in the capacity audience. Many of the 41 AJR members in the audience, particularly those who had had their own experience of the Kindertransport, must have had very mixed feelings during this amazing performance. I myself was constantly reminded of my own Kindertransport experience.

Mona Golabek is an accomplished concert pianist who has had training as an actor. She plays the part of her mother, Lisa Jura, also a concert pianist, whose parents managed to secure a place for her on the Kindertransport out of Vienna.

This is a one-woman show, yet one has the feeling there are several people onstage. Mona Golabek switches from being an excited 14-year-old Lisa Jura visiting her piano teacher in Vienna to the sad voice of the teacher who tells her he is now forbidden to give lessons to a Jew, to her mother explaining she will shortly be leaving for England. These stories are interspersed with the most beautiful piano interludes. There is a wonderful mixture of fear and excitement in her account of the train and ship journey and her arrival at Liverpool Street Station. Her account of the meeting with her relative, who is meant to take her in and who in the end leaves her

to the Jewish authorities, starts the tear ducts flowing.

After an unhappy period in the country, Lisa is helped by Mr Hardisty of the Jewish Refugee Agency to find a home with Mrs Cohen at 243 Willesden Lane, where she finds comfort and friendship – and where she finds a piano in the basement.

The show, based on Mona's book *The Children of Willesden Lane*, is a powerful piece of theatre which evokes memories of a terrible period in Jewish history, but also happy memories of friendships and achievements. Mona is clearly very proud of the fact that her mother won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London.

Sitting in the audience it was sometimes difficult to realise that this is the daughter of the actual person being depicted. It is an unusual theatre experience. Only Mona Golabek could tell this story in this very powerful way – a daughter onstage paying tribute to her mother.

After her performance, Mona Golabek came back onstage to talk with AJR members, who had been invited to stay behind. She was astonished to hear from one lady, Henni Franks, that she had known Lisa Jura as a young woman. Henni even produced a photograph of Lisa.

This was a delightful, well-organised afternoon. Thank you, AJR, for the initiative.

Ernest Simon



Charlotte Braun in 1909 in Berlin. Jutta had been adopted in Germany by Schlesinger family. Any info on Jutta pls to Alexander Watson a.watson.genas@gmail.com

If you have any info on my cousin **Kazimierz-Riszard (Kazimir-Richard) Frenkel**, born Lodz 1919, and his descendants, pls contact Isak Gath, Israel, isak@bm.technion.ac.il

Any info pls on **Harry Jacobs** of Times Furnishing Store whose family hosted a number of Kinder, including me, in their stately home in 1939-42? (Paul Alexander Minikes paulalex99@gmail.com)

My grandmother, **Hedwig Jordan**, a refugee from Nazi Germany, lived in the Jack Gardner House in London in 1952. Any info pls to Caroline Newton cnewton@cityholden.com.au

Kindertransportee **Kurt** (second name?), from Germany, celebrated his barmitzvah in Chester while living with my late parents in 1943 or 1944 in Liverpool. My father was a soldier; my mother lived during the war in North Wales. Kurt's sister too was taken in by a Liverpool Jewish family. After the war the parents collected the children and went to America. Any info about Kurt pls to Angela Lehrer angela.lehrer@gmail.com

**Dr Elsa Pick née Hermann**, born 9.1.1893 in Plauen, lived until 1933 in Berlin, later Prague. In August 1939 she emigrated to the UK, where she lived in Birmingham with her husband Karel Pick. The death is recorded of an Elsie M. Pick aged 57 in Birmingham in December 1952. Karel died 5.5.1950 in London. Any info pls on Elsa/Else/Elsie/Pick or Karel to Judith Joseph josephj-2007@hotmail.co.uk

Information sought on the burial place of **Karel Pick**, born Prague 26.11.1880, emigrated to England in 1939, died in London 6.5.1950. Karel was married to Dr Elsa Pick née Hermann. (Arthur Fleiss affleiss@waitrose.com)

Was **Fritz (Israel) Schlesinger**, born 14.5.21 in Königshütte, interned? Fritz arrived in Harwich 28.8.39, re-entered the UK at Fleetwood 5.6.41. (Neil Kaplan udikaplan@yahoo.com)

I am seeking contact with descendants of **Stephanie Schlesinger/Shanson née Sax** (1921-99) and **Heinz Sax (later Henry Saw (Shaw?))** (1918-53), who escaped from Berlin. Their parents were Willy and Margarete. (Axel Huber hubers\_axel@web.de)

**Marie (Mizzi) Schubert**, born Linz 1896, arrived in UK in 1938 or 1939 as domestic servant in contact with Anna Cripps, Austrian Domestic Agency, London WC2. Any info pls contact Verena Wagner emaz@24speed.at

I was a Jewish child evacuated from Germany to Sweden in 1939. Whose decision was it to send me and the children from the Swedish Tjonarps hemmet children's home to England in 1943 where bombing and war continued for two more years? (**Eve Sheftel** née Hartmann aesheftel@shaw.ca)

Czech Jewish refugee **Karel Sperber** (?) was a GP who lived in the Edgehill area of Liverpool after 1945. He was a POW in Germany when in the Merchant Navy. Any info pls to Martin Sugarman (AJEX) martin.sugarman@yahoo.co.uk

# 'Don't Stand By': AJR Holocaust Memorial Day 2016

Almost 200 people attended this year's AJR Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) service at Belsize Square Synagogue. Under the national HMD 2016 theme 'Don't Stand By', author and BBC broadcaster Edward Stourton, in conversation with AJR member and child Holocaust survivor Joan Salter, drew on his book *Cruel Crossing*, in which he describes the escape of thousands of people – including Joan – across the Pyrenees from Nazi-controlled Europe. Signed

copies of the book were available after the event.

Sir Eric Pickles, the UK Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, gave the concluding remarks. He declared that 'constant vigilance' with regard to anti-Semitism was essential. He paid tribute to Sir Nicholas Winton and historian Sir Martin Gilbert, who had both died last year. The British Government stood '100 per cent behind UK Jewry', Sir Eric said.

The Choir of the Jewish Community Secondary School performed a number

of songs.

Among guests at the service were, from the Austrian Embassy, HE Dr Martin Eichinger, the Austrian Ambassador, and Christoph Weidinger, Minister Plenipotentiary; Charlotte Schwarzer, Head of Culture and Education at the German Embassy; and Counsellor Diane Feher from the Hungarian Embassy.

Commemorative prayers were led by Belsize Square Synagogue's Rabbi Stuart Altschuler and the event was introduced by AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman.

## Edinburgh HMD schools event

Edinburgh AJR members attended an excellent HMD event at Firhill High. It was due to the enthusiasm of a wonderful lady by the name of Sheila Watson, lead teacher for Holocaust initiative at Firhill, that the school was chosen to host this year's event.

Keynote Holocaust Educational Trust (HET) speaker, survivor 86-year-old Zigi Shipper, gave a heartfelt account of his experiences during the Holocaust. He was followed by 13-year-old Reuban Winer-Ogilvie, who gave a most impressive talk on his grandfather's Holocaust experiences. Evelynne Garbacz spoke about Yad Vashem UK's Guardian of the Memory project. Memorial candles were lit by, among others, Zigi Shipper, Maria Chamberlain and human rights activist Professor Mukesh Kapila CBE.

Agnes Isaacs

## Scottish National HMD Event

The Scottish National HMD event, in Falkirk this year, was organised by HET, the Scottish Interfaith Council, the Scottish Government and Falkirk Council. The AJR's Scotland Memorial Book was on display at the lavish kosher reception.

The reception was followed by a most inspirational speaker, Terezin survivor Inge Auerbacher, a child from the state of Baden-Württemberg who survived the concentration camps.

Professor Mukesh Kapila drew a comparison between the Holocaust and atrocities taking place in the world today.

A children's choir performed a moving repertoire. Rabbi Moshe Rubin of Giffnock and Newlands Synagogue told the story of Naftali Lua, a labour camp inmate who was brought back from the brink by hearing a tune hummed by fellow inmate and composer Yoselle Mendelbaum. He then sang this tune in his memory and that of other victims of the Holocaust.

Agnes Isaacs



Photos: Michael J. Ezra

Gina Burgess Winning lights memorial candle; Edward Stourton in conversation with Joan Salter; Sir Eric Pickles; the Choir of the Jewish Community Secondary School

## TO MY UNFORGETTABLE DAN

The following poem was written by Hulda Gembitzky on hearing that her great-nephew Dan Simon, aged 4, and his parents, Evi and Werner Simon, had been murdered in Auschwitz on 24 October 1944. The poem was sent to us by Bradford AJR member Rudi Leavor, also a great-nephew of Hulda Gembitzky. Hulda herself was a survivor of Terezin.

'Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht.  
Mein süsßer Bub, wer hätte das gedacht  
Dass Du durch Mörderhand bist  
umgebracht?  
Du warst mein Alles, warst mein Glück  
und Stern,  
Nur Gott allein es weiss, wie hatt' ich Dich  
so gern.  
Verhallt sind Deine Schritte, verstummt  
Dein süsßer Mund,  
Es gab für mich nichts Schön'eres im  
ganzen Erdenrund.  
Verjüngtest mir die Jahre, brachtest Sonne  
ringsumher,  
Ich kann es garnicht fassen, dass jetzt ist  
alles leer.  
Nie wieder soll ich sehen Dein liebes Angesicht,  
Gott wollt' noch einen Engel und so rief er Dich.  
Ich träumt' von schön'ren Tagen, hofft' auf ein  
Wiedersehen,  
Der Traum ist nun verronnen, ich muss allein  
nun gehen.  
Ewig werd' ich um Dich weinen bis der Tod  
mich wird mit Dir vereinen.



'There was a frost that spring  
night.'  
My dear sweet boy, who ever  
would have thought  
You could be murdered in  
this way!  
You were my everything, my  
happiness, the apple of my  
eye,  
God alone knows how I loved  
you.

Stifled are your steps, silenced your sweet  
mouth,  
For me nothing in the world was more beautiful.  
You made the years young for me, brought  
sunlight all around,  
I cannot grasp how empty everything is now.  
Never again will I see your beloved face.  
God wanted one angel more and He created  
you.  
I dreamt of better days, hoped we'd meet again,  
That dream now is past, I must go alone.  
I will weep for you always, till death brings  
us together.

## Holocaust memorial to be in Westminster

Britain's national Holocaust monument is to be built in Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster by the end of 2017, Prime Minister David Cameron announced on Holocaust Memorial Day.

An international competition to design the memorial has been launched.



### HGS Hammerson House Then and Now

Our first meeting of the year provided fascinating insight into the founding of Hammerson House. Resident and long-time AJR member Anne Marks recalled visiting the East End with Sue Hammerson to meet potential residents who still had cows for milking in their yards! Today, Hammerson is a vibrant community that has expanded hugely since the first foundation stone was laid by the then Jewish Lord Mayor of London. There was also an opportunity to introduce Eva Stellman, newest member of the AJR's Outreach Department. *Esther Rinkoff*

### EALING Group's 9th Year Celebrated

We had a delightful social gathering to mark what Esther reminded us was the 9th year of our close-knit group. We discussed world and Jewish issues, the New Year's honours list in relation to notable Holocaust survivors, and some high-profile new year resolutions as published in the media. *Leslie Sommer*

### HARROGATE Wishes for 2016

We met at the home of Inga, who made us so welcome. With Wendy's encouragement we had a discussion which travelled halfway to Europe, including recipes and things that used to be. We expressed what our wishes were for 2016 – top of the list was everything good for our beloved children and their families. On this special day, we also observed a minute's silence for those who were no longer with us, past and recent past. *Suzanne Ripton*

### ILFORD Looking to the Future

We started the new year with a pleasant get-together enabling members to relate their personal stories and hear how others had spent the last days of 2015. Now we all look forward to a healthy and happy 2016. *Meta Roseneil*

### Copies of AJR member's book to be distributed to schools in Newcastle area

The Newcastle Skills Centre has arranged to distribute copies of Sylvia Hurst's book *Laugh Or Cry: A Jewish Childhood in Nazi Germany, Including the Factual Historic Background* (second edition, Durham 2015) to secondary schools throughout the Newcastle area.

The copies will be distributed with the endorsement and support of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

### HULL CF Things To Do

We enjoyed Veronika's wonderful hospitality and discussed new year resolutions. Members spoke of the different things they were promising to do – from clearing out old cupboards to learning a new piece on the piano! *Wendy Bott*

### PINNER Photographic Grand Tour

Expert photographer Les Spitz treated us to a grand tour of Singapore, Bali, Vietnam, Chicago with its Art Institute, and an intriguing insight into Cape Town. His audio-visual presentation was all the more enjoyable due to the helpful maps, fine detail and carefully chosen mood music. *Walter Weg*

### CHESHIRE CF Present-day Problems Discussed

Helen and Nachman Herz kindly offered their flat to us for our meeting. After lunch we had a discussion of present-day problems, covering Jewish university students on campus, how Israelis came to the rescue of flood victims in Cumbria and Lancashire, Israeli-Palestinian relations, and how Israelis see their future with Iran. *Thomas Einstein*

### ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) Recollections of Years Gone By

Otto Deutsch brought photos from years gone by of the Essex group, which has been running since 2001 and was originally founded by Myrna Glass. Otto also recalled being beaten up on Kristallnacht. *Larry Lisner*

### IMPERIAL CAFÉ Scientifically Speaking

Our conversation started on a scientific note, with our resident Felix giving us an informative view on the importance of H<sub>2</sub>O. Harry was able to absorb this with talk of atoms despite his trade in electrical engineering, and Maureen with her amazing news that they had discovered they had a relative who was a Nobel Prize-winning physicist. *Esther Rinkoff*

### KT LUNCHES

#### A Second Noah's Ark?

Our January meeting was lunch with a new-style deli platter menu arranged by Susan Harrod – much appreciated. We were also delighted to meet Eva Stellman, the AJR's new Groups Co-ordinator.

Our guest speaker, Jonathan Wittenberg, Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism in the UK, came with his famous dog, nicely named Mitzvah. Jonathan spoke to us about climate change and insisted we all do something about it – otherwise, as his mother, who is almost 93, told him, we are in for another flood on the scale Noah experienced when he built his ark! *David Lang*

### LEEDS CF Memories Good and Bad

'Significant memories of 2015' was the topic for discussion – some good and not so good – followed by Barbara's legendary baking and good banter around the dining table. *Wendy Bott*

### BRIGHTON Survival Owed to Music

We were privileged to see the BBC TV documentary *Everything is a Present* about a remarkable lady who, despite losing her parents, sister and husband at the hands of the Nazis, always remained positive, putting her survival in Terezin down to music. Alice Herz-Sommer continued playing and lived until she was 110 without hatred for anyone despite the suffering she had witnessed. *Shirley Huberman*

### GLASGOW BOOK CLUB Enjoyable Read

Jane Johnson's *The Tenth Gift*, our book for discussion, was an enjoyable read, giving an insight into the Barbary pirates of the 17th Century. This made for a lively discussion and was followed by tea and cake to celebrate the birthdays of two of our Book Club members, Marion and Halina. *Anthea Berg*

### BROMLEY Grateful to Come to the UK

The Group met again in the comfort of Lianne's home. Delicious cakes and cups

### The AJR has served its members well, historian concludes

Dr Anthony Grenville, Consultant Editor of the *AJR Journal* and historian of the AJR, told a lunchtime staff meeting that members should be proud of belonging to the AJR, an organisation that had many achievements to its credit.

Recalling the flight to the UK of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria following Kristallnacht – the pogroms of November 1938 which were a turning point in the Nazi persecution of the Jews – Dr Grenville described the history of the AJR from its inception in 1941.

The AJR's head office was based in the Swiss Cottage-West Hampstead area of London in which the bulk of the refugees originally settled. The major driving force of the organisation was Werner Rosenstock, its General Secretary from 1941 to 1982 and Editor of *AJR Information* (the precursor of the *AJR Journal*) from 1946 to 1982.

In its early years, the AJR created an employment agency, assisted members with naturalisation problems and provided old-age homes for members. In the 1950s, restitution as well as compensation from the New York-based Claims Conference became issues of overriding importance.

The 1980s saw a decisive turn from political to social work. In the 1990s, the 'second generation' took over leadership of the organisation and the Kindertransport Association and Child Survivors' Association were affiliated. The AJR also shifted to dealing with historical events, as with the *Continental Britons* exhibition of 2002 and the *Refugee Voices* oral history project. Nowadays, the AJR is the principal representative of Holocaust survivors in the UK.

During the 75 years of its existence the AJR had represented its members very well, Dr Grenville concluded.

of tea were served whilst the conversation flowed, with members contributing their stories of how they were fortunate enough to come to Great Britain. A lively and passionate afternoon with everyone participating.  
*Esther Rinkoff*

#### **RADLETT An Encore Requested**

Our speaker Alf Keiles discussed Jewish songwriters, mostly in the USA in the first half of the 20th Century, a group representing a very high proportion of the total! Alf has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the subject, an entertaining delivery and a huge library of recordings to illustrate his talk. No wonder the event was met with great pleasure and interest – we're hoping for something similar from Alf in the not too distant future!  
*Fritz Starer*

#### **DIDSBURY Enjoying a 'Catch Up'**

Members enjoyed a 'catch up' while eating a delicious lunch. The discussion focused on new year resolutions. Most of us felt they weren't terribly effective so we talked about things we hoped to do in 2016 – from moving house to taking more regular exercise!  
*Wendy Bott*

#### **'Was the Holocaust modern?'**

Professor Peter Hayes of Northwestern University Illinois gave the 16th Holocaust lecture at the Western Infirmary Lecture Theatre in Glasgow with many AJR members present. Speaking under the title 'Was the Holocaust modern?', his view was that the Holocaust was enabled not by modern methods of organisation and control but by baser mediaeval instincts. It was, he said, 'the old line in prejudice in new bottles'.

*Agnes Isaacs*

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

## MARCH GROUP EVENTS

<b>Ealing</b>	1 March	Andrew Roth: 'My Hungarian Childhood'
<b>Harrogate/York</b>	2 March	Social get-together
<b>Ilford</b>	2 March	Nick Dobson: 'A Good Laugh – Humour in Literature' (with readings and pictures)
<b>Glasgow Book Club</b>	3 March	Social discussion
<b>Pinner</b>	3 March	Sir Bernard Zissman, Lord Mayor of Birmingham
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	8 March	David Barnett: 'The Most Famous Jewish Business in Victorian London – The Story of E. Moses & Son'
<b>Birmingham</b>	9 March	Annual Concert at Town Hall
<b>Didsbury</b>	9 March	Social get-together
<b>KT LUNCHES</b>	9 March	Hilary Hodsman – her life as an actress
<b>Edinburgh</b>	13 March	Social get-together
<b>HGS</b>	14 March	David Barnett: 'The Most Famous Jewish Business in Victorian London – The Story of E. Moses & Son'
<b>Marlow CF</b>	14 March	Lunch at home of Alan Kaye
<b>Edgware</b>	15 March	Lesley Urbach: 'Sir Isaac Shoenberg' – an electronic engineer born in Russia who was best known for his role in the history of television
<b>Norfolk</b>	15 March	Phyllida Scrivens – her book about AJR member Joe Stirling
<b>Radlett</b>	16 March	Susan Shaw JP: 'Justice of the Peace, Not Jewish Princess'
<b>Imperial Café</b>	17 March	Meeting at RAF Museum Hendon
<b>Wessex</b>	17 March	Tea and speaker – details to follow
<b>Glasgow</b>	20 March	Susan Cohen, Executive Director, Six Point Foundation: 'One Year to Go'; and Sandra Jacobs, SPF Connect at Natpoint: 'The SPF Connect Computer Project – Is It For You?'
<b>Bath/Bristol</b>	21 March	Barbara Winton: 'Sir Nicholas Winton'
<b>Brighton</b>	21 March	Lawrence Collin: 'Don't Write Me Off Just Yet – Jewish Nonagenarians'
<b>Leeds CF</b>	22 March	Gerald Jackman: 'Gerald's Choice'
<b>Book Club</b>	23 March	Social discussion
<b>Prestwich</b>	24 March	Social get-together
<b>North West London</b>	29 March	Dr Susan Cohen: 'The Life of Eleanor Rathbone'
<b>Oxford</b>	29 March	Local author Marcus Ferrar on his books <i>The Budapest House: A Life Re-discovered</i> and <i>A Foot in Both Camps: A German Past for Better and for Worse</i>
<b>Wembley</b>	30 March	Nick Dobson: 'An Underground Guide to Literary London' – a virtual tour of London by Tube, stopping off at places of literary interest
<b>North London</b>	31 March	David Barnett: 'The Life of Judith Montefiore'

## ARTS AND EVENTS MARCH DIARY

**Tues 8** Dr Susan Cohen, author of *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees: 'A Most Independent Member: Eleanor Rathbone MP (1872-1946)'* International Woman's Day Lecture 2016. At House of Commons, Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, London SW1, 6-7.30pm. Bookthrough <https://internationalwomensdayrathbone.eventbrite.co.uk>

**To Sat 12** 'Transports' Pipeline Theatre revives its 2013 play. At Pleasance Theatre, London N7, £12 (£10 concessions, £1 booking fee). Story inspired by the experiences of designer Alan Munden's mother Liesl, who was on the last Kindertransport to England. Contact Chris Hislop on 07711 033 205 or at [chris.hislop@gmail.com](mailto:chris.hislop@gmail.com)

**Tues 15** **The Refugee Crisis – Action** Organised by Second Generation Network. At Wiener Library, 6.30-9.00 pm. To register go to <https://eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-refugee-crisis-action-tickets-20913304256>

**Tues 22** **'Admission: One Shilling'** The extraordinary story of Dame Myra Hess and her famous wartime concerts, with Patricia Routledge and Piers Lane. Musical performance followed by buffet supper. At Foyles, 107 Charing Cross Road, London WC2. Tel Wiener Library on 020 7636 7247 or email [kmikola@wienerlibrary.co.uk](mailto:kmikola@wienerlibrary.co.uk)

**Wed 23** Dr Helen Fry with Susan Ronald: **Nazi Looted Art: New Revelations** The story of Hildebrand Gurlitt, one of the most important and elusive art dealers of the 20th Century. At JW3, 2-3.30 pm. Tel 020 7433 8988



**Visit to St Albans Cathedral and Synagogue**  
**Monday 7 March 2016**

Please join us for a visit to St Albans Cathedral, the oldest site of continuous Christian worship. We will have a guided tour lasting approximately one hour, with some walking involved.

The tour will be followed by lunch in a local restaurant and, in the afternoon, a visit to St Albans Synagogue. Established in 1933 and affiliated to the United Synagogue, the Synagogue contains two stained glass windows by artist and Hebrew scholar David Hillman which are considered among its most cherished ornaments.

*Please note there is a fair amount of walking involved in this outing.*

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**For full details, please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**

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**KT LUNCH**

Wednesday 9 March 2016  
 at Alyth Gardens Synagogue  
 12.30 pm

We are delighted to welcome the actress **Hilary Hodsman**, who has appeared in a number of theatre, film and television productions and will talk to us about her interesting career.

In addition, Hilary's father came to the UK on the Kindertransport and she is very much looking forward to meeting members.

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

We look forward to seeing you



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## OBITUARIES

### Lord Weidenfeld, born Vienna 13 September 1919, died London 20 January 2016

Arthur George Weidenfeld was born an only child into a Viennese middle-class Jewish family of modest means; his parents were Max and Rosa. He attended the well-known Piaristengymnasium and the Diplomatic College of Vienna University.

In the summer of 1938 George obtained a visa for the UK and, with the assistance of Quakers, was able to bring his parents to the UK before the outbreak of the war. The family settled near Stroud, Gloucestershire. George was said to have arrived in England with only 16 shillings and a small suitcase.

From virtually the moment of his arrival in London, George met leading British Jews at Woburn House, the headquarters of the British organisations for the relief of refugees, and was soon being invited to the Hampstead homes of Jewish intellectuals.

In 1939 he joined the BBC's Overseas Service, the wartime forerunner of the BBC World Service. Working as a commentator on European affairs, he interviewed numerous prominent figures, including Charles de Gaulle and the Czechoslovak politician Edvard Benes. His BBC colleagues included George Orwell and Richard Crossman.

After the war he started up the magazine *Contact*, which was designed as an outlet for smallish books. His association with Nigel Nicolson began soon after the war and in 1949 they launched the firm Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Later in 1949 he took a year's leave of absence from the fledgling publishing house to become chef de cabinet to Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first head of state. His principal task was to keep Weizmann informed about world affairs and their bearing on Israel. Among prominent diplomats he met both inside and outside Israel were David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan, whose books and biographies he was

later to publish.

On his return to London, he took full control of his publishing firm. In 1952 he married Jane Sieff of the Marks & Spencer family; their only child, Laura, was born in 1953.

The first breakthrough for Weidenfeld & Nicolson came in 1953, when they published Isaiah Berlin's *The Hedgehog and the Fox*. At around the same time, Marshal Tito's memoirs became the firm's first bestseller.

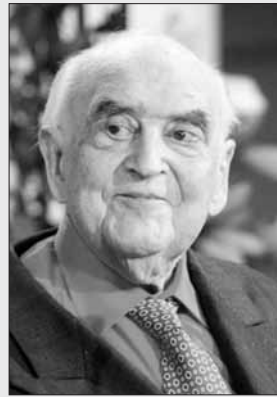
The decision to publish Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* in the UK in 1959 catapulted the firm from the literary pages to the front pages. The authorities decided against prosecution: *Lolita* sold well and confirmed the publisher's daring reputation.

Weidenfeld also spotted the potential of Victor Klemperer's diaries of a Jew in Nazi Germany, successful in Germany but unnoticed internationally.

The memoirs, biographies and autobiographies of political figures he secured were numerous – among many others, those of Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle, Henry Kissinger, Golda Meir and Shimon Peres. Among bestselling authors he published were Edna O'Brien, Saul Bellow and Antonia Fraser.

In the mid-70s Weidenfeld met Ann Getty, a connection which led to, *inter alia*, the decision to set up a Weidenfeld & Nicolson imprint in the USA. In 1991 he sold the firm to the publisher Anthony Cheetham, who retitled it Orion.

Weidenfeld devoted much of his attention to the promotion of better understanding between Britain, France and Germany. In 1996, with a group of friends, including Helmut Kohl, he created another vehicle



for international discourse: the Club of Three. After the 9/11 attacks he applied a similar format to the Amereus project, initiating conferences on politics and the arts with participants from the USA, Russia and a number of European countries.

For Weidenfeld, work and social life were a seamless whole. He relished all his connections and his demanding social life, never lost his deep affection for

Austria, and created exceptionally close links with Germany. In the 2011 New Year's honours list, he was appointed GBE.

Following on from his friendship with Kohl, he befriended Angela Merkel, well before she came to political prominence and, when she became Chancellor, Weidenfeld became a trusted counsellor.

Over the years Weidenfeld was awarded a number of German and Austrian honours. He became even more prominent in Germany after developing a close association with the Springer press, above all with its chief executive, Mathias Döpfner. Weidenfeld became a household name in Germany as a regular columnist in two of the Springer newspapers: *Die Welt* and *Welt am Sonntag*. Germany was virtually a second home.

In the last months of his life, Lord Weidenfeld sought to 'repay the debt' to the British Christians who had helped him to settle in Britain, gathering 'some very high-minded friends, Jews and Christians' to fund a rescue mission to bring Christian families out of Syria and Iraq and resettle them.

Lord Weidenfeld was married four times: to Jane Sieff, Barbara Skelton, Sandra Meyer and Annabelle Whitestone.

### Denis George Avey, born Essex 11 January 1919, died Bradwell, Derbyshire, 17 July 2015

My husband will be remembered for his book *The Man Who Broke into Auschwitz* (2011), written with BBC journalist Rob Broomby. The book narrates how, as a prisoner in a camp for British soldiers adjacent to Monowitz, he helped save the life of Ernst Lobenthal, a Jewish inmate of Auschwitz. Having eventually reached America, Ernst gave testimony to the Shoah Foundation confirming the abovementioned fact.

Along with Sir Nicholas Winton, Denis received the British Heroes of the Holocaust award. They were the only two people then living to do so.

In 2010 the Raoul Wallenberg Foundation

honoured Denis. Their diploma reads 'We hereby grant this diploma to Dennis Avey as a humble token of recognition for his unique courage and spirit and pledge to divulge his legacy to the future generations.' The Foundation also sent a famous artist to paint his portrait, which now hangs in their New York museum.

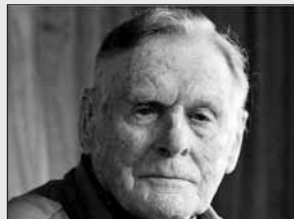
Denis also received a letter of appreciation from Yad Vashem, which states 'The record of the humane conduct of Denis Avey will be preserved in the archives for the benefit of future generations.'

Denis spent his latter years talking to

schools and synagogues as well as to, among many others, The Nicky Alliance Day Centre in Manchester, the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Laxton, Nottingham, and Cambridge University. Each year following 2011 we were visited at our home in Bradwell by parties of disabled Jewish war veterans – always a great pleasure to both of us.

Denis is sadly missed by his wife Audrey and their daughter Gillian along with other family and friends.

Audrey R. Avey





## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### Even more so ...

It's one of the best-kept secrets of British journalism that the Life and Arts section of the *Financial Times's* weekend edition contains some of the best written and most stimulating articles and reviews. So, as we were leaving the airport of our almost next-door neighbour of Cyprus for the brief flight home on a Saturday night, I picked up a copy of the 'pink'un', as it's known among the *cognoscenti*, to try to retain my connection with the best of Blighty.

Imagine my surprise then when I opened the aforesaid section to find an enormous front-page article entitled 'More British than the British' by Ian Buruma, a writer/journalist previously unknown to me, describing the German-Jewish roots of his family (he notes that his Schlesinger grandparents took in ten Kindertransport children). His ancestors came to Britain

in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, far from being penniless refugees, were moneyed professionals. Their deep-seated attachment to German culture (especially the music of Wagner) did not prevent them from becoming equally attached to all things British – literature, cricket and even Christmas (not solely British, I know) – or from identifying with Britain in the tradition of immigrants who become 'British through-and-through'.

They abandoned their ancestors' attachment to Orthodox Judaism but couldn't shake off their Jewish cachet and developed a family code-term, 'forty-five', for referring to matters redolent of the insidious and typically British form of anti-Semitism. Although some professional avenues were closed to them others were not and their obvious intelligence, abilities and persistence enabled

them to climb to social, professional and intellectual heights.

The article, lavishly adorned with nostalgic family photographs, could well have come from the pages of the *AJR Journal* and, as I read it, I felt the strings of the land of my birth tugging fiercely at my heart. The piece ends with some well considered thoughts about Britain, assimilationism and the lessons to be learned with regard to Islam and the current immigration issue. As Buruma points out, Judaism has nothing similar to violent jihadism but, leaving that aside, it is possible to hope that the second and third generations of immigrants will find their place in what has become an increasingly multicultural Britain.

In what I think is the most telling phrase, Buruma concludes his article by remarking that his grandparents were fortunate in being able to find their place 'in a relatively decent society during frequently indecent times. One can only hope that, eventually, other children of immigrants will feel as lucky as they did.'

I'm sure I'm not alone in heartily endorsing that view.

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

I do not wish to invoke the hierarchy of suffering: a comparison of suffering and its after-effects cannot stand up to scrutiny.

We, children who survived in Nazi-occupied Europe, found that people did not wish to hear our stories because they were often too disturbing, while some 'experts' have tended to marginalise our voices as being of little importance. Therefore for many tens of years we were reluctant to speak. As a small group, we are usually overlooked.

Returning to the phrase 'All of us', I feel it is about time that we child survivors were allowed to speak up for ourselves. And we should.

*Henri Obstfeld, Stanmore*

#### TIMELESS REFLECTIONS

Sir – I read the sad news of Lord Weidenfeld's death, one of a number of obituaries about Jewish refugees with interesting lives, in the national press recently. Their passing made me feel terribly sad.

More refreshingly, I caught a glimpse of an old edition of *Tomorrow's World* showing Professor Heinz Wolff as a

younger man.

One mainly thinks of Jewish refugees as being very elderly and they seemed so even during my childhood 50 years ago, when most of those we knew were somewhat younger than I am now!

*Janet Weston, Westerham, Kent*

#### REFUGEES 'LACK CELEBRITY QUOTA'

Sir – Recently I read a report on an exhibition in the Albert Einstein museum in Bern, Switzerland. The ease with which the Nobel Prize-winning scientist transferred from a Nazified German university to Princeton must have been the envy of thousands seeking admission to the USA.

Sigmund Freud's escape from Vienna to London was not quite so smooth but it wasn't too difficult either. As we know, not only Jews sought refuge from the Nazis. The great Hungarian composer Bela Bartok gave up a comfortable life in Budapest to establish himself in New York. Nazified Hungary, engulfed in war, was not the place from which to make a bid for world fame. But Bartok found the growing restrictions on his Jewish colleagues unacceptable. The great refugee flood fleeing the Nazis had a high

quota of celebrities.

The present mass movement of refugees is lacking in a similar celebrity quota. Without us realising it, this may have influenced our perception of the present refugee crisis.

*Nicholas Pal, London NW6*

#### FOR A TWO-STATE SOLUTION

Sir – Frank Bright's one-sided and doctrinaire letter (January) hardly merits a response. But his claim that the Arabs were as culpable of the Holocaust as the perpetrators shows that he is as bigoted as the Arab journalist he quotes. Happily a growing minority of Israelis see the Israel-Palestine conflict quite differently, as shown by frequent marches and demonstrations calling for a peaceful two-state solution to the conflict.

Incidentally, I was sorry to learn from the letter by Susan Jacobs ('Kristallnacht service', January) that she found my address in Belsize Square Synagogue on 11 November last inaudible. If she would like to let me have her address (I can be reached at [lesliebrent@waitrose.com](mailto:lesliebrent@waitrose.com)), I would be happy to send her a typescript.

*Leslie Baruch Brent, London N19*

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