

# AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## From Schloss Salem to Gordonstoun

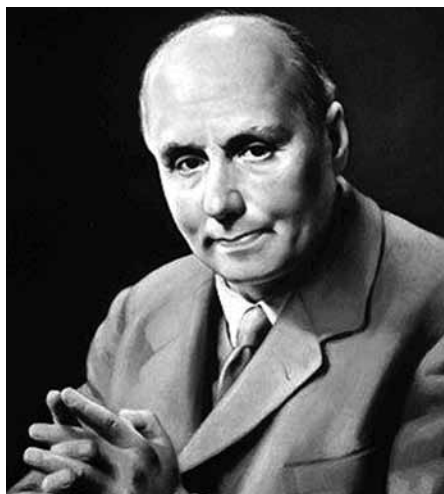
One of the undoubted highlights of the UK's recent Holocaust Memorial Day activities was the high profile participation of HRH Charles, Prince of Wales, who spoke at the WJR dinner and also visited Yavneh College. On both occasions Prince Charles spoke glowingly of Kurt Hahn, the German-Jewish educator credited with founding the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and Gordonstoun in Moray, Scotland – the school attended by Prince Philip, and later by Prince Charles, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward.

Hahn had been headmaster of the famous progressive Schule Schloss Salem, near Lake Constance in South Germany, before fleeing to Britain in 1933. The school had been founded in April 1920 by Hahn, with the support of Prince Maximilian of Baden. It numbered the children of many celebrities among its pupils, including two of Thomas Mann's children, Golo and Monika. The renowned violinist Carl Flesch, a Jew, sent his son, also named Carl, to Salem. In 1934, the younger Carl Flesch emigrated to Britain, where he became a successful insurance broker and an active figure in the AJR; he has left a vivid picture of his time at Salem in an interview in the AJR's *Refugee Voices* collection. Hahn was responsible for the development of original and important pedagogical principles, which sought to combine academic studies with physical activities and character building. These principles are also evident in the Outward Bound courses that he originally devised for young seamen at Aberdovey in Wales during World War II; these derive from his concept of an intense experience involving challenges in a natural setting, through which the individual builds a sense of self-worth, the group comes to a heightened awareness of human interdependence, and all grow in concern for those in danger and need.

### The Revolution that Overthrew the German Empire

Kurt Hahn (1886-1974) also provides the link between the heir to the throne of England in 2017 and the revolution that brought about the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II in November 1918; Wilhelm was Queen Victoria's grandson (his mother was her eldest daughter Victoria), and Prince

Charles is her great-great-great-grandson. At that critical historical juncture in November 1918, Hahn was acting as private secretary to Prince Max of Baden, who had, if reluctantly, been appointed Chancellor of imperial Germany in early October 1918, when its military and political leaders were struggling to come to terms with the catastrophic reality



Kurt Hahn

of Germany's imminent defeat in World War I and its terrible implications for the country's future. After two years of what had effectively been the military dictatorship of the German Supreme Command, the looming prospect of defeat on the Western Front had deprived the army leaders, Field Marshall von Hindenburg and General Ludendorff, of their hold on power, which passed to Germany's politicians.

In November 1918, military defeat led to the collapse of the German Empire, the abdication of the Kaiser and the establishment of the Weimar Republic, Germany's first parliamentary democracy. But what happened in Germany in November 1918 was very different from what had happened in Russia a year earlier, when the Bolshevik Revolution had swept away the old Tsarist order; in Germany, by contrast, much of the old order survived. What has often been seen as the failure of the November revolution in Germany to effect thorough-going change created a weak and flawed democracy heavily reliant on anti-republican, right-wing forces; in the crisis situation of the early 1930s, these forces proved only too willing to undermine

the struggling Weimar Republic and to replace it with a more 'nationally-minded' government – which turned out to mean Hitler.

Prince Max of Baden (1867-1929) played a brief but important role in the tumultuous events of autumn 1918 in Germany, which were to bear such fateful fruit for Germany and Europe some fifteen years later. Kurt Hahn, who had previously worked for the German Foreign Ministry, was at his side. Prince Max could claim to be Germany's first parliamentary chancellor. For ever since Bismarck had first assumed that position in 1871, when Germany was united, the chancellor had been appointed by the Emperor; he was not the leader of a parliamentary party, commanding a majority in the Reichstag, and did not even sit in parliament. He had to secure a majority in the Reichstag to ensure the passage of his legislation, but – typically of imperial Germany's hybrid constitution, which placed it somewhere between democracy and autocracy – he was ultimately dependent on the Emperor, not on the Reichstag.

In autumn 1918, Ludendorff, realising that the German army was in danger of collapsing, became convinced of the necessity of negotiating an armistice; but he was aware that President Wilson of the United States would not negotiate with the old autocratic regime in Germany. He therefore pressed for a parliamentarisation of the regime, at least to the extent that the new chancellor must have the backing of the moderate majority in the Reichstag, the Social Democrats, Progressives and Centre (Catholic) Party, who had voted for the Peace Resolution in July 1917 (which the Supreme Command had ignored). Prince Max, a man of liberal views despite his royal birth, was acceptable both to the politicians in the Reichstag and to the army leadership. He was accordingly appointed chancellor on 3 October 1918, leading a government that included members of the majority parliamentary parties and was directly dependent on the Reichstag, in particular on the Social Democrats, the largest party representing Germany's working class.

But Prince Max assumed office under the most difficult circumstances. He had to

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**From Schloss Salem to Gordonstoun**  
*continued*

shoulder the heavy burden of negotiating the terms of Germany's defeat with its victorious enemies. Worse still, Ludendorff insisted that the new chancellor must make an immediate approach for an armistice to President Wilson – which, as Prince Max realised, would gravely weaken his government's position both in his negotiations with the Allies and in dealing with Germany's internal situation, where news of the armistice negotiations would undermine morale on the home front and among the fighting forces. Ludendorff's demands had the effect of laying the heavy responsibility for dealing with the disaster of Germany's defeat onto the new civilian government, while at the same time hobbling it in its attempts to do so. The military leaders thus offloaded much of the blame for their disastrous conduct of the war onto the civilian politicians who replaced them in power. The weakness of the subsequent civilian governments of the Weimar Republic, and the undeserved glorification of the imperial army that had in reality lost the war, can in part be traced to this juncture in events.

On 3 October, Prince Max addressed a note to President Wilson, requesting an armistice and accepting Wilson's celebrated Fourteen Points, set out in his speech of 8 January 1918, as the basis for peace negotiations between Germany and the Allies. As Prince Max feared, events rapidly ran out of his control. The start of peace negotiations made it obvious that Germany could no longer hope to win the war and that a new focus for popular support was required; but Prince Max, even as chancellor, was a little-known figure unable to unite the mass of the people around his policies in a radically changed situation.

When a naval mutiny broke out in the ports of Kiel and Wilhelmshaven in late October, it spread like wildfire across Germany, triggering a revolution in Bavaria and reaching Berlin on 9 November, when the Kaiser abdicated. On that day, the leading Social Democrat Philipp Scheidemann



Prince Charles at Gordonstoun

proclaimed the republic from the balcony of the Reichstag, while his colleague Friedrich Ebert informed Prince Max that, in view of the insurrectionary mood of the masses, he would have to withdraw his party's representatives from the government. Prince Max accordingly resigned, leaving a situation in which the moderate Social Democrats sought to head off a wave of revolutionary extremism. In that they succeeded, but only by calling in the army and by siding with right-wing forces fundamentally hostile to democracy and to the new republic. Prince Max's short-lived government had been the opening phase in Germany's troubled transition to democracy.

**Hahn's Career after 1918**

After the First World War, Kurt Hahn's liberal principles were evident in his politics as well as in his attitude to education. He was an outspoken opponent of the Nazis, giving public expression to his abhorrence of Nazi violence even after Hitler's assumption of power in January 1933. For this he was arrested and imprisoned for five days in March 1933; he was only released after an appeal from Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister. Hahn left Germany in July 1933 and settled in Scotland, where he founded Gordonstoun on lines more similar to Salem than to conventional British public schools. He also became a convinced Christian. Hahn remained at Gordonstoun until 1953, when ill health forced him to resign the headship; he returned to Germany, where he died in 1974.

Anthony Grenville

**ANTISEMITISM UP 36%**

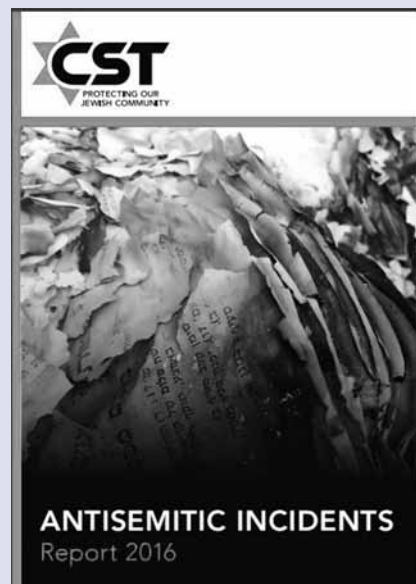
AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman has joined leading politicians and policemen in denouncing the shocking rise in antisemitic hate incidents in the UK, as reported in the Community Security Trust (CST)'s annual report.

The CST recorded 1,309 antisemitic incidents nationwide during 2016, a 36 per cent increase on 2015. The cause for the increase is believed to be the cumulative effect of a series of events and factors, including the Gaza conflict, terrorist incidents in Europe, allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party and a general increase in racism and xenophobia following the EU referendum.

Taken together, these factors have created an atmosphere in which more antisemitic incidents are occurring, and are also more likely to be reported to CST and the Police.

The most common single type of incident recorded by CST in 2016 involved verbal abuse randomly directed at visibly Jewish people in public. There were also 107 violent antisemitic assaults, although fortunately none of these resulted in grievous bodily harm or threat to life.

AJR's Michael Newman commented: "This significant increase is profoundly troubling and a stain on Britain which already does so much to counter these hateful attacks. Most worrying is the form and sources of reported incidents, from among politicians to students as well as both physical and verbal assaults. We strongly commend the CST for its gathering and reporting of these crimes and call upon all sectors of society to redouble efforts to address this scourge."



**AJR Chief Executive**  
Michael Newman

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David Kaye

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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.

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## How can life go on?

The Ambassadors of five European counties and many other dignitaries were among the AJR's guests at our official Holocaust Memorial Day service, held on 24 January at Belsize Park Synagogue.

The event, which was attended by over 150 people, reflected the overall theme for HMD2017, ie *How can life go on?* This asks audiences to think about what happens after genocide and of our own responsibilities in the wake of such a crime.

Introducing the service, AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman reflected on the work of the Association since it was set up in 1941. He concluded by saying, "Our collective duty now is to counter and combat those seeking to divide and inhibit freedoms, and to ensure that despite the atrocities that still exist today, life can carry on with freedom, dignity and tolerance."

The Emeritus Rabbi Rodney Mariner of the Belsize Square Synagogue, established in 1939 by Jewish refugees from Central Europe, then invited six AJR members to light memorial candles. This was followed by an address by His Excellency the German Ambassador, Dr Peter Ammon, who attended the event together with the Ambassadors from Austria, Poland, Hungary and the Slovak Republic.

AJR member Eva Clarke, who was born in Mauthausen concentration camp in April 1945, then gave her

testimony. She and her mother were the only survivors of their family, 15 members of whom were killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Perhaps the most encouraging perspective was delivered by the AJR's current intern from the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace, Merrit Jagusch. She assured the audience that "my generation remains sensitized, and recognises any injustice and intolerance" and that she personally "...will tell my children what you had to go through if they don't have the opportunity to hear the experiences directly from an eyewitness anymore."

German children are encouraged to learn from WWII to help create a brighter future. Many of Merritt's classmates have taken part in anti-racist demonstrations in their hometown of Hanover. Other classmates have spent time helping refugees from Syria or Iraq to settle in their new homeland, and one friend plays football with a group of young refugees every week.

"We all want a peaceful coexistence where everyone respects each other," concluded Merritt. "I once asked a Holocaust Survivor, a kind and wise man, what my generation should learn from the Third Reich. Without thinking twice he answered: "being tolerant". Tolerance within a framework of justice under the rule of law in a free and open society is the key."



Alfred Kessler, George Vulkan, Paul Lang, Charlotte Lang, Timotheus Winterstein and Merrit Jagusch light the candles

## Northern Ireland Learns From Past

AJR member Mindu Hornick spoke at a Holocaust Memorial Day Event in Armagh, organised by the Northern Ireland Executive Office.

Mindu, who is originally from Prague and now lives in Birmingham where she is also known as Margaret, was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau at the age of 13 with her mother,

sister and two younger brothers. She has shared her story many times to ensure future generations can learn from the mistakes of the past.

Among the Armagh audience were several History students from the Banbridge Academy who will be visiting the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin and Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp later this year.

## DESIGNS SHORTLISTED FOR HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation has unveiled the ten shortlisted designs for the new National Holocaust Memorial and learning centre, which will stand in Victoria Tower Gardens.

The 10 concept designs, which range from a giant rock overlooked by Cypress trees to a large translucent sculpture above a subterranean 'Hall of Voices', were submitted in response to an international design competition which drew interest from 92 different teams. The different teams behind the 10 shortlisted designs comprise some of the finest and most famous artists and designers in the world, including Zaha Hadid, Rachel Whiteread, Foster & Partners and Studio Libeskind.

The site for the £40m project is right in the shadow of Parliament, at the heart of British democracy. As well as honouring victims and survivors of Nazi persecution, the centre will educate future generations about the dangers of prejudice and hatred, and serve as a powerful statement of our values as a nation.

The Foundation is now actively consulting on the shortlisted designs with the public, those working in the field of Holocaust remembrance and education, and technical experts. This consultation will play a crucial role in informing the jury's final decision on the memorial.

View the 10 shortlisted designs on <https://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/holocaustmemorial/#shortlist> and submit your feedback by email to [ukhmf@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:ukhmf@cabinetoffice.gov.uk). Please remember to specify which design team you are referring to when providing feedback.



Allied Works' proposed memorial is 'folded back like a prayer shawl'



The concept proposed by John McAslan + Partners and MASS Design Group includes the laying of six million stones

# Our Wall of Honour

The Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide is situated in a beautiful 19th century London townhouse in the heart of Bloomsbury, and is one of the world's leading and most extensive archives on the Holocaust and the Nazi era. It forms a quiet centre amidst the rabbit warren of university buildings where the young and not so young hurry about their exciting lives of learning and discovery.

In the Library a small and dedicated team continues the work of Dr Alfred Wiener caring for, and making available to all, its unique collection of over one million items, including published and unpublished works, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimony. Valued volunteers devote their time to helping the staff in their work caring for this remarkable archive of lost voices, while supporters of every type give donations large and small, without which the Library would cease to function and entire family archives of memories and lives lived would be lost.

The term genocide can seem to conflate the horror into a statistic or a legal argument, but in the Library's archives each individual testimony whispers its personal story and lives on. We continue to make these whispers more loudly heard and are digitising vast amounts Holocaust testimonies recorded by the Library in the 1950s for the Library's forthcoming *Testimonies to the Truth* website.

During the 53 years that the Library occupied its former home at 4 Devonshire Street, supporters who wished to commemorate their own loved ones had the option of placing a brass plaque in the Library's

Reading Room. The presence of over 100 plaques gave the Reading Room a very special quality and reminded all visitors of the individuality of those touched by the Holocaust. Thanks to a generous gift, when the Library moved to Russell Square on a long lease in 2011, all these plaques were refurbished and mounted in the Wolfson Reading Room, to perpetuate the Library's commitment to honour these men and women.

In 2016 we unveiled a unique new way of commemorating family, friends and colleagues with the creation of the Wiener Library Wall of Honour.

Each commemorative plaque on the Wall of Honour carries the name of the person being honoured and is linked to a page on our online Digital Wall of Honour. There an applicant may add photographs, details of the honouree's life and additional commemorative words, such as reflections on their life, personal recollections by family members or friends, poems or passages from Scripture.

Those honoured on the Wall of Honour are as varied as they are personal to those who applied for their plaque. The AJR commissioned a Wall of Honour plaque for the Eva and Hans Reichmann; others honoured include those whose lives were cut short brutally by war both individually or in one instance a plaque that honours all the victims of the Holocaust. Others celebrate

more recent generations, equally cherished and missed.

If you would care to commemorate someone on the Wall of Honour and add another voice to those that speak out from the heart of the Wiener Library, please contact Jane Biro at the Library via [development@wienerlibrary.co.uk](mailto:development@wienerlibrary.co.uk) or 020 7636 7247 or our website ([www.wienerlibrary.co.uk](http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk)).

The Wiener Library asks for a minimum donation of £2,000 for a commemorative plaque, thereby securing the core work of the Wiener Library in opposing antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and intolerance.

Jane Biro



The original brass commemorative plaques in the Wolfson Reading Room



Franziska Weit, former ARSP volunteer, admires the Wiener Library's new Wall of Honour



The Library's Head of Digital, Dr Toby Simpson, explains one of the most unusual items in the collection: a children's board game from 1938 called *Juden Raus (Jews Out)*.

## BOOK NOW FOR YOM HASHOAH

AJR members and other Holocaust refugees and survivors will once again be welcomed as guests of honour at this year's National Yom HaShoah Commemoration Ceremony, which takes place on Sunday 23 April at Barnet Copthall Stadium.

The AJR is one of the sponsors of the Forum for Yom HaShoah. Carol Hart, our Head of Volunteers and Community Services, sits on the event committee and has specific responsibility for all aspects of the event that directly relate to volunteers and refugees.

"Unlike Holocaust Memorial Day, which is the international date to commemorate the Holocaust, Yom HaShoah was decreed as a day for the Jewish community to remember the Holocaust and honour those who perished. It has, quite rightly, become a major event in the Jewish calendar, as a platform for sharing public mourning and ensuring the stories will never be forgotten," explains Carol.

2017 is the third year that the National ceremony has taken place at Barnet Copthall. Last year's event was attended by thousands, and we had the privilege of over 200 survivors, refugees and veterans joining us at the ceremony.

This year the main ceremony begins at 4.30pm, with a special reception for survivors, refugees and veterans commencing at 3pm. To secure your ticket please call Carol Hart on 020 8385 3083 or book online at [www.yomhashoah.org.uk/NationalEvent](http://www.yomhashoah.org.uk/NationalEvent)



### POSTSCRIPT

*Congratulations to the Chair of the Yom Shoah Forum, Neil Martin – who is also CEO of the JLGB – who was recently presented with his MBE by HRH The Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace.*



# Association of Jewish Refugees

This is the new logo that will soon replace the blue 'AJR' logo in all the Association's communication materials.

Designed by Graphical, which works for numerous Jewish organisations and charities, the new logo is a the result of a thorough consultative process involving members, staff, volunteers and trustees, all of who agreed that after over 20 years of using the old blue blocks, it is time to bring a new and more 'meaningful' symbol to our name.

The colour orange was chosen for the new logo because it projects vibrancy and reflects warmth and

security. The flame-shaped symbol reflects the need for remembrance, but also implies light and hope for the future.

Most importantly, the logo spells our name out in full, preventing us from being confused with the American Journal of Roentgenology or any other terminology that might come to mind during these acronym-ridden times.

The new corporate identity is gradually being rolled out across our website and our offline media, and in the April issue we will show you what the new front cover of the AJR Journal is going to look like.

## Quilters Wanted

The 70273 Project is a worldwide collaborative art project designed to commemorate the 70,273 physically and mentally disabled people who were murdered between January 1940 and August 1941 by Nazis under Aktion T4. The founder of the project, Jeanne Hewell-Chambers, is gathering 70,273 quilt blocks which will be made into 1000 or more quilts that will travel the world, commemorating the disabled who died, celebrating those with special needs who live, and educating all who will listen. For more information about the project – including guidelines for making blocks – visit [www.The70273Project.org](http://www.The70273Project.org).



Some of the quilt blocks that have been already made

## PENDANT HOLDS THE KEY

Can anyone shed light on how this pendant ended up at the Sobibor Death Camp? It belonged to Karoline Cohn from Frankfurt, who was transported to the Minsk Ghetto on 11 November 1941.

The pendant, which remained buried for more than 70 years under the ruins of a hut at Sobibor, was unearthed in October 2016. It has captured public interest because of its similarity to one belonging to Anne Frank, but the full fate of Karoline remains unknown.

You can watch a video about the discovery of the pendant on Youtube.



Photo credit: Yoram Haimi, Israel Antiquities Authority

## Increase in Enquiries

The International Tracing service (ITS) reported an increase in enquiries during 2016, proving that interest is as strong as ever.

Of the 15,635 enquiries received, over 2,000 were from survivors of Nazi persecution. Enquiries came from 73 nations, with a quarter from Germany.



# Letters to the Editor

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

## HALF A SIXPENCE

Sir – Thank you to AJR so much for booking tickets for this wonderful and invigorating show. I don't remember enjoying myself so much since my darling Leo passed away nearly ten years ago.

I thought Charlie Stemp was superb in the title role and is a new star. I laughed, clapped and could not keep the tears of joy from pouring from my eyes. The music, dancing, acrobatics and singing all added to the wonderful acting skills of the cast. What a wonderful production. Even the sets were incredible. No words can adequately describe the wonderful feeling I had from this super show.

Please keep on booking similar events. We all enjoyed ourselves.

*Helena Horn*

Watching Half a Sixpence at the Noel Coward Theatre with AJR was sheer delight. It was truly an amazing production with fantastic sets, superb singing and dancing, and really intricate and faultless routines. Charlie Stemp's performance was superlative and every single member of the cast seemed to enjoy the performance as much as the audience. We all left with huge smiles on our faces.

An added bonus was being taken to and from the theatre by cab on what was a freezing January afternoon.

Thank you so much AJR!

*Hanne Freedman*

## LIGHTING A CANDLE

Sir – I should like to put on record my deep appreciation of being invited by the AJR to light a candle on Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 in memory of the 6 million victims of the Holocaust of which my beloved father, Josef Schütz, who was murdered in Bergen-Belsen, was just one.

### **FULOP, Walter 1922-2017**

Beloved Husband, Father, Grandpa and Friend who will be deeply missed.

Funeral arrangements obtained from Powell Funeral Service, Tel. No. 01992 470153

No Flowers.  
Donations to:  
The Association of Jewish Refugees

The theme of this year's Memorial Day "how can life go on?" was conveyed to us by the German Ambassador, Dr Peter Amnon, in his very moving words; a testimony was rendered by Eva Clarke, a survivor of Mauthausen concentration camp where she was born in April 1945, just prior to its liberation, and a young German volunteer spoke about her work with the survivors who are looked after by the AJR. The kaddish which was recited by Rabbi Mariner brought tears to my eyes.

The event was well attended and great respect and consideration was shown by all the AJR staff to the mostly elderly survivors, such as myself, who were present. Thank you for your work and dedication on our behalf.

*Betty Bloom (nee Schütz)*

## TRY SUBSTITUTING MUSLIMS

Sir – I was much saddened to read, yet again, Mr Peter Phillips' pronouncements on the unpatriotic and uncivilized way religious, as well as other Jews conduct their lives. ("The Jewish bubble", AJR Journal January 2017).

In Mr Phillips' opinion Jews shouldn't live too close to each other (presumably nine Jews in a square mile should be sufficient), shouldn't teach their children too much, if anything, about the Jewish religion and forget (or deny!), anywhere outside Israel and probably even in Israel itself, all about having been Jewish in the first place.

I assume Mr Phillips was born Jewish, or at least had one orthodox or cultural Jewish grandparent, and therefore would have qualified for transport to the death camps together with the "shtetl Jews".

Just as the Nazis of the '30s and '40s, today's growing number of anti-Semites do not need eruvs, Jewish schools or Israel to hate us. If Jews would live with no visible signs or actions of being Jewish, the anti-Semites would scream that "these Jews are trying to hide – but we will get them!"

I wonder whether Mr Phillips is nearly as judgemental of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus or any other group of people trying to live their lives in the UK according to their tradition. Because if he did hold such views that would be racist!

Just try to substitute "Muslim" for the word "Jewish" in Mr Phillips' January article and see how it reads!

Do we have to read Mr Phillips' dissertations in the Journal almost every month?

*Laszlo Roman, London N22*

Sir – In response to David Kaye's attack on me in your February issue, I should like to ask him in what way he would describe "Shomer Shabbat", "Eruv Engaged" and "Wig Wearing" as being part of Modern Orthodox Judaism? Let his family practise what it wants but how can he call it Modern Orthodox when there is nothing modern about this form of worship? As for Bernd Koschland's attack, I agree that many pupils from Jewish schools ultimately make their way to universities. I asked whether they would feel comfortable there, away from their Jewish bubble. The fact that Jewish schools strengthen their pupils' Judaism is not questioned but can they cope in the outside world where, for the first time, they are in the minority?

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

**NOTE FROM EDITOR:** All letters that we receive are considered for publication. In each issue we try to cover a range of subjects and different viewpoints, while making it clear that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the AJR. We are always delighted to hear from new correspondents as well as regular contributors.

## 1950's POP

Sir – I read with great interest Tony Grenville's piece "Another Jewish Nobel Prize for Literature". While he did not seem to agree that Dylan had the literary credentials of other winners, he did praise Dylan for transforming the standard of popular music from the "... cheerful banalities of 1950's pop."

Is this not a rather harsh reflection on 1950's pop?

Surely an academic of Tony Grenville's calibre should be able to comprehend the deep profundity embedded in the immortal words:

"Pretty, pretty, pretty, pretty Peggy Sue-eh-oo?"

*David Kaye, Pinner*

## MARK NOT MARSH

Sir – My letter in the AJR Journal February issue 'Keep sharing the stories' gave my name as Eric Marsh, Kraainem, Belgium. My wife and I have lived in Belgium for decades after I was nominated by HMG to a post in the European Commission. My name is Eric Mark which perhaps would merit a correction in your next edition to help those readers who are not necessarily aware of my existence.

*Eric Mark, Kraainem, Belgium*

## TWO FINGERS UP

Sir – I must express my delight that the Two Great Leaders decided on continuing the Churchill Tradition.

I admired Mr Churchill because he put up his hand and used his two fingers as

V-sign. That ensured British Victory. I used to admire his image and was hoping to gain his facial likeness when I grow up.

I admired Mr Churchill when in 1944 he bravely took to the sky and reached the Kremlin and negotiated with Mr Stalin, who became our Liberator from Nazi Occupation. Due to Mr Churchill's care, the Yalta agreement came to effect. Eventually our Party Secretary publicly took the Oath in all of our names that we remain loyal to the fine political ideas.

So may the spirit of Sir Winston – who was Liberal & also Conservative – lead the unity of our Great Britain.

*Jenkev Jusef ben Doved VBE,  
London N2*

Sir – Thank you again for your sterling efforts in producing AJR Journal – I really look forward to receiving and reading it every month.

I have one small suggestion:

As you may know the Six Point Foundation is apparently closing in about 6 weeks. They have done magnificent work in a supportive, modest and understanding fashion. As a linkage to the Otto Schiff past they also have links to the AJR.

Would it be possible to have an article on their creation, work and demise?

*Arthur Oppenheimer, Brighton*

**NOTE FROM EDITOR:** *The Six Point Foundation is indeed closing and in our April issue we will feature a review written by Frank Harding, who is a trustee of both the Foundation and the AJR.*

Sir – May I assure Ernest Kolman (Feb. 2017) that I do not just oppose Nazism old and new by merely writing letter to this learned journal, though that is the icing on the cake.

My and my classmates' fate at the Jewish school in Prague forms a chapter in Hodder Education "History Year 9" (2009), 10th imp. 2013) Schools History Project. This last January 26th I gave the inaugural address on "How can life go on?" to pupils from 9 schools, 8 from Essex, at the University of Essex auditorium and next day I was on BBC-TV East for which I had been filmed by BBC-TV East from Norwich and interviewed by BBC-Radio Suffolk in Ipswich and was seen and heard as far as Australia apart from immediate neighbours, my GP receptionist, my dentist and uncle Tom Cobby and all.

I had been visiting schools in Suffolk for years but invitations from those schools which had converted into academies have dried up completely. Their trusts, who determine their syllabus, as distinct from local authority schools, have dumped Holocaust Education at the very first opportunity, either due to antisemitism or because they prefer to keep their charges ignorant of modern European history even though a witness of events is still around.

*Frank Bright,  
Martlesham Heath, Suffolk*

## Righteous Amongst the Nations awards for Josef and Irena

It is written in Jewish Talmudic texts "Whosoever saves a single life, saves an entire universe" (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:5). So what to say about someone who saved many more? Or someone who, even if he was unable to save as many as he would have liked, did his utmost to help them in their hour of need?

Josef Pluskowski risked his life to assist Jews imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was a member of PPS, the Polish socialist party, who had befriended Gustav Miller, a Jew, through their mutual activity in the trade unions of Łódź.

Pluskowski worked for Warsaw City Council, but secretly served as liaison between the Polish and Jewish resistance movements. He provided Jews with fake identity documents, crucial information on German activities, and viable hiding locations. Wife Irena helped by carrying weapons to the ghetto. They also hid Gustav Gerson Miller's family and others in their flat.

During the Warsaw Ghetto uprising Pluskowski was arrested. He was released in 1945 with nothing, and had to appeal to the Central Jewish Committee for clothes and shoes.

Pluskowski was then imprisoned by the Communists. The Jewish community fought to save and smuggle him to France. They secured a Jewish passport for Irena under the name Rachel Miller and smuggled her and son Andrzej to Israel, from where they travelled to France to be reunited with Jozef.

In December 1946 Gustav Gerson Miller spoke to the Jewish Committee, Łódź:

*"I testify that Josef Pluskowski and his wife Irena Pluskowska hid me and my family in their spacious flat in Warsaw, on 5 Electrolena Street, between 1942 and 7th August 1944. They have done so not for profit, while demonstrating great devotion, care and friendship."*

In 1950, Pluskowski suddenly passed away, leaving Irena and two toddlers isolated. The exiled Polish Government in London brought them

to England, where the Committee of the Jewish Trade Unions in New York provided them with a monthly allowance.

Andrzej Pluskowski grew up not knowing about his parents' heroics. His father passed away when he was young, and Irena never spoke about those days. In 1970 Andrzej discovered a book at the London School of Economics, and began to research the story. Eventually he pieced it together and presented it to Yad Vashem. Joseph Pluskowski and Irena Pluskowska were recognized as Righteous Amongst the Nations and on 23 November 2016, their children took part in a moving ceremony at the Israeli Embassy where HE Ambassador Mark Regev presented Andrzej with the award.

Ambassador Regev said: "An inherent part of our gathering here today is to reflect on the Holocaust, to stand together courageously to say 'never again'. During humanity's darkest days some people stood out as rare beacons of light. These people recognized our common humanity; they offered sanctuary, safe passage and support. They stood out for decency, tolerance and respect and they risked their own lives in doing so".

**Rony Yedidia-Clein,  
Minister-Counsellor for Public  
Diplomacy at the Embassy of Israel**



Andrzej Pluskowski receives the award from Mark Regev on behalf of his parents.

# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

When a nation comes to terms with its history, it often does so through art. The Royal Academy's new exhibition, **Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932** commemorates the centenary of this most turbulent period of history, which despite the flamboyant colours of many paintings, proved a time of repression and betrayal. For the peasants who believed in their economic salvation, for the artists stunted by the regime, for the intellectuals who ended up in Stalin's gulag, this optimism soon soured.

There were a few brief periods of illumination, when the state released its stranglehold on freedom of expression, and poets and peasants looked to an exciting future and the chance to build a new proletarian art. But the work of avant-garde artists like **Chagall**, **Kandinsky**, **Malevich** and **Tatlin** was violently suppressed while the Socialist Realism of **Brodsky**, **Deineka**, **Mukhina** and **Samakhvalov** portrayed the truth of Mother Russia. As peasants starved and ration books favoured the Red Army against children, an inevitable nostalgia developed in paintings of onion-domed churches and past elegance.

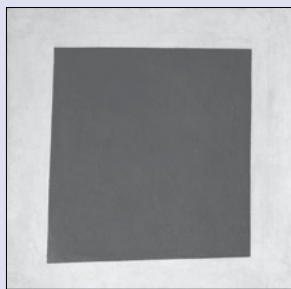
Perhaps no-one was more optimistic – or incongruously romantic – than Marc Chagall. Look at his celebratory wedding self-portrait *Promenade* set in his home town of Vitebsk, in which his wife Bella floats above him in the clouds with the wedding wine glass, the green houses and countryside and the ghost onion-dome of the church in the background. But in 1922 Chagall grew disillusioned and left for France. This nostalgia is seen in **Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin's** *Petrograd Madonna*, reflecting the traditional style of icon painting as the Madonna and child are viewed against a revolutionary background

of which they share no part.

The exhibition has several themes, including Lenin's cult status, the heroism of the proletariat, the eventual betrayal of the peasants, whose agrarian-industrial collective dream led to starvation, nostalgia and Stalin's dystopian Utopia. This is an art of five-year plans, of poverty and disillusion portrayed with realism, with surrealism, with cubist blocks of colour and regimented symmetry. The artists' portrayal of women workers: strong, muscular, raw-faced and angry,



Marc Chagall, *Promenade*, 1917-18. © 2016, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg



Kazimir Malevich, *Red Square*, 1915. © 2016, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg



David Shterenberg, *Aniska*, 1926, © 2017 The Tretyakov State Gallery

foreshadows the fate of the impossible vision of the agricultural-industrial collective, although **Alexander Deineka's** delicate looking *Textile Workers* of 1927 is an exception. **Kazimir Malevich's** *Peasants*, 1930, presents two stiff and faceless people in bright colours looking over the regimented agricultural land intended to be their heritage, but which will lead to poverty. That poverty becomes explicit in **David Shterenberg's** Modigliani-like *Aniska*, a painting of a forlorn Russian girl shown with half a loaf of bread on the table.

For a while artists used their talents to commercialise the Revolution in a flurry of cheerful posters on hoardings, windows and trams, before being crushed by the proletarian boot – evident in **Boris Mikailovitch Kustodiev's** *Bolshevik* in which a giant revolutionary rampages through his ancient city. The final Room of Memories is a black cube illustrating the thousands sent by Stalin to the gulag, many of whom were shot or died there.

Till 17 April 2017

## REVIEWS

### Amor Fati

#### SEVEN ESSAYS ON BERGEN-BELSEN

by Abel Jacob Herzberg

Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2016

Although the number of inmates murdered at Auschwitz, Treblinka and Sobibór, were much greater, it was the photos taken at Bergen-Belsen during its 1945 liberation that shocked the world, to the extent that to this day it is Belsen that represents the depravity of the Nazi extermination machine.

In 1946 one of the survivors, Abel Jacob Herzberg from Amsterdam, wrote seven essays based on his secret camp diary for a Dutch periodical, and in 1947 published them in a slim volume. It was one of the first witness statements. Although the book was subsequently translated into German, Italian and Hebrew, it has only now appeared in English, published in Germany (with German punctuation) in a good translation by another Dutch Belsen survivor, Jack Santcross.

The essays contain few overt "horror" descriptions, and no statistics, but they are not needed – nobody who has seen the photos can ever unsee them. Rather, Herzberg attempts to dig into the psychology of the large – and small-scale persecutors, the Kapos (the "in between" – prisoners charged by the SS with maintaining order), and the inmates themselves. He contemplates moral questions, which sometimes come down to a piece of swede or a lump of bread, the piece that will keep one alive. Self-preservation versus the greater good.

We see portraits of the SS lieutenants – are they "ordinary" men? – and "The Bitch", one of the female guards who were perhaps worse than the men (though she takes to the baby of an inmate and promises "if you're all to be gassed or shot, I'll save this little one"). We read of the *ad hoc* court of justice set up by the prisoners, dealing with such matters as stolen food, and generally settled by the death of the accused. And we see the evacuation train that departs Belsen in front of the advancing Allied armies, a train that is "nothing but a travelling dunghill, a lazaretto full of infection", which Herzberg describes as "the tragedy of the wounded hero who is falling, but who, in his downfall, is determined to drag his enemy with him. Even though all is lost, he still keeps his grip around his opponent's throat. Beautiful, don't you think? Movingly beautiful! *Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!* Never before has the world heard a more strident death cry. For what else can it mean than, *Long live death!*"

There is little black and white here; he examines many shades of grey.

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

His expression is dry, with occasional touches of sarcasm and *Galgenhumor* ("There I was with a Magen David on my breast," he writes of the camp evacuation ahead of the liberating armies in 1945, "standing between cross and swastika begging for a piece of bread. Who would want to miss something like that in his life?"). His references to the dead and dying are devoid of emotion – it is the anaesthesia of his situation.

It is hard to imagine the effect these essays must have had so soon after the end of the war. Even 70 years later they remain powerful; lessons of history never to be forgotten.

Tanya Tintner

## Thank Heaven for Emil PUTZI'S MEMOIRS

by Mary Brainin Huttner  
Available from Amazon

This is a gem of a book. Mary Brainin Huttner – whose nickname is "Putzi" – has written about her life in Vienna, abruptly cut short by the arrival of Hitler and her family's flight to England.

She describes life in her new country and the trials of growing up here. Many refugees have written similar autobiographies. But I have read none which describe their situation with such humour.

She describes the trials of living in England with inadequate knowledge of the language, as well as an episode when aged seven she was sent to a boarding school that was more Dickensian than 1939. Fortunately, she was with her big sister, Ruth, who always managed to outwit the evil adults.

One of my favourite episodes, amongst many, is when the most popular girl in the class enlisted the teenage Mary to act as interpreter at her clandestine meetings with a young German POW. The young man brought along a friend for Mary and they had to make conversation whilst the other couple indulged in passionate embraces. Mary struggled to find a subject and was delighted to find that Karl had read *Emil and the Detectives*, which was the only German book she knew. They made this discussion last for the whole encounter.

As Mary grew up her life had both comedy and tragedy. Each episode is utterly absorbing and I am sure that many of us would feel, on reading this lovely book, that we would do well to emulate Mary's sense of humour in life's difficult situations.

I strongly recommend this book, not just to Austrian and German refugees, who of course will love it, but also to anyone who wants a good and satisfying read.

Thea Valman

## OUTING

MONDAY 3 APRIL 2017



Elstree and Borehamwood Museum is an independent local history museum which opened its doors in 2000. It evolved out of a community history project with a small collection of objects and photographs. Run entirely by volunteers, the museum has acquired a large collection of items leading to the production of themed displays and talks.

We will be visiting the new exhibition entitled:

### FROM VILLAGE TO TOWN Celebrating A Century Of Migration

which explores the changes to Borehamwood since the coming of the railways as wave after wave of new people settled in the Village and made it a Town.

After our visit we will have lunch at a local restaurant.

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

## KT LUNCH

Wednesday 8 March 2017  
At Alyth Gardens Synagogue  
12.30pm

Please join us for lunch where we will be joined by two representatives from the Charity **Citizens UK**. This charity has recently initiated "The Dubs Fund" an arm of the charity to help support refugee children currently arriving in the UK. Lord Dubs, himself a Kind, has lent his name to this new project and hopes it will help refugee children, both in continuing to open up safe and legal routes to sanctuary, but also building durable community-led support for refugee children who have arrived in the UK to lead a full and dignified life.

Booking is essential  
for catering purposes

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

£7.00 per person

## GROUPS OUTING

THURSDAY 16 MARCH 2017

Willow Road, Hampstead  
Built by Erno Goldfinger  
Followed by lunch at  
The Freemason's Arms



2 Willow Road is part of a terrace of three houses in Hampstead, London designed by architect Ernö Goldfinger and completed in 1939. It has been managed by the National Trust since 1995 and is open to the public. It was one of the first Modernist buildings acquired by the Trust, giving rise to some controversy, even said to be the inspiration for a James Bond villain.

No. 2 is the largest of the three houses and features a spiral staircase designed by Danish engineer Ove Arup. Goldfinger himself designed much of the furniture and the house also contains a significant collection of 20th-century art by Bridget Riley, Marcel Duchamp, Henry Moore and Max Ernst.

We will have a guided tour of the property but due to the size numbers are limited to 20, so be sure to book quickly. After the tour we will walk to The Freemason's Arms for a two course lunch.

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

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Impeccable references provided



## AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB

Please join us at our new Card and Games Club  
Tuesday 28 March 2017 at 1.00pm

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

Open to all levels Bridge players – come and join us

We also offer card games, backgammon, scrabble you decide.

Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient – the more the merrier  
A sandwich lunch will be served upon arrival with tea, coffee and Danish pastries.

£7.00 per person

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

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



## Care Charity to Expand Services

Nightingale Hammerson has a long history and reputation of providing care to older members of our community, over the years housing and helping to support several AJR members.

One long-standing AJR member who is now resident at Nightingale House in South London is Wlodka Blit Robertson, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto in 1943. With Nightingale Hammerson's help, Wlodka still takes part in many Holocaust education events. Just last month she gave an inspiring talk to 90 schoolchildren, discussing how to combat hate in the modern world.

Wlodka and a number of other Holocaust survivors and refugees take part every month in Nightingale Hammerson's Conversation Café, a support project which enables survivors to discuss their past experiences in a safe and caring environment.

Now all of the fantastic Nightingale services that are on offer in South London will soon be fully mirrored north of the river, through a £36 million redevelopment of the charity's North London home which will significantly broaden the level of care it can offer,

Hammerson House originally opened over 50 years' ago for older people requiring relatively low levels of residential care. The situation today is very different and the focus of the redevelopment reflects that. People are living longer, coming into care homes much later in life, and many are experiencing dementia.



Music is one of many therapies enjoyed by residents



Wlodka Roberston speaking at Nightingale House



An impression of the new look Hammerson House, © Pollard Thomas Edward

The redevelopment will implement improvements that will have a significant, positive impact on the

quality of life for all residents, particularly those with dementia. Around 65 per cent of residents at Nightingale Hammerson are living with some form of dementia. When completed Hammerson House will be a world-class facility, fully equipped to provide exemplary residential, dementia and nursing care for older people.

The charity is famous for its person-centred approach looking beyond the physical health of their residents. Questions asked include how is their mental wellbeing? What sort of life did they lead? What did they like to do when they were younger? Are we taking account of things that might create anxiety because of their life story?

Seemingly ordinary things like therapies and activities can make a huge difference. From pottery, to art, theatre and music, and a conversation café, Nightingale Hammerson offers residents a huge selection of creative therapies to enable them to reignite memories, express themselves and increase joy and happiness. It also runs projects that are both inclusive to all, but sensitive to the needs of each individual.

Generous donations help support the activities and therapies provided and ensure no one is turned away from their homes for financial reasons. Even the residents get involved. Later this year, Ann Rowe, who is 87, is taking part in a 5km push/run race called Parallel London. She will be pushed by a physio at Nightingale House, but Ann plans to walk over the finish line!

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**SURVIVOR SPEAKS:  
POLAND**

On Thursday 2 March at 7:30pm at JW3, the Ambassador of Poland, Arkady Rzeczocki, will be interviewed by Trudy Gold and then be in conversation with Polish survivors. For more information see [www.jw3.org.uk](http://www.jw3.org.uk)

**LOOKING FOR:** 

The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and other people looking for help in particular subjects. Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you think you can help.

**The George Pub in London**

Richard Strimber is looking for any information about a pub that his late mother Lilo Strimber, nee Liselotte Gesztesi, used to frequent during WWII. Apparently it was a very popular meeting place for pro-Israeli groups and Czechoslovakian Jews.

*richard@strimber.com*

**Stones & Congenhoe Kindertransportees**

Susi Weiss, who traveled on the Kindertransport from Vienna with her brother Peter, is keen to track any of the eight other children who were all fostered by a Quaker family named Max & Sylvia Stone, who subsequently moved them all to Cogenhoe in Northampton. One of the other children was called Thomas Feuer (d.o.b. 30 May 1930) and another was Frances Tetzner, who was later formally adopted by the Stones. Susi, who now lives in the US, is being helped in her search by Denise Robinson, whose email address is below.

*den.rob@verizon.net*

**Mike Papo**

Adrian Sichel would like to contact the son of the late Dr M Papo, Rabbi of the Sephardic community in Zimbabwe. He is responding to an enquiry posted by Mike Papo himself in the AJR Journal in 2010.

*adrian.sichel@gmail.com*

**Feelings about Berlin**

For a new research project, Professor Joachim Schlör has read through several collections of letters exchanged between former Berliners from all over the world and representatives of the city and institutions such as the Jewish Museum or the Centrum Judaicum. Deeply impressed by the variety of Berlin-related feelings in these letters, he would be grateful if readers with a Berlin background would contact him.

*schloer@soton.ac.uk*

*If you would like to place a search in a future issue of the AJR Journal then please email [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk), including the words SEARCH REQUEST in the title of your email.*

**Kindertransport**  
by Diane Samuels

is being staged by the Tower Theatre Company at Camden's Theatro Technis between 4 – 8 April.  
More info via [www.towertheatre.org.uk/](http://www.towertheatre.org.uk/)



**AJR FILM CLUB**

Please join us at our next Film Club.

Our film showing will be at Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone N20 9EZ on **Monday 13 March 2017 at 12.30pm**

A lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be served first.

**HUNTING ELEPHANTS**

*(This film has sub-titles so we will be showing it on a large screen to make viewing easier)*

Three elderly men and grandson Yonatan find themselves stuck together in a Jerusalem nursing home. The kid is a genius, but stammers and is bullied at school. Yonatan's grandfather, Eliahu, whom he had never met, is a former member of the Lehi (pre-State Jewish underground), and a cold person. Eliahu's best friend from Lehi, Nick, is full of ambition and passion that will never materialize; and Eliahu's English brother-in-law, a has-been, third-rate actor in debt for 232,000 euros. There's one thing keeping them together – they all want to rob the bank that employed Yonatan's deceased father to avenge it for not paying the Yonatan's mother compensation for his dad's death, due to the "small print" in his employment contract. And they want the money to make their last wish come true.

An Israeli award winning comedy – join us for an afternoon of laughs.

£7.00 per person

**BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL**

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**SAVE THE DATES**

**JOIN US THIS YEAR IN LIVERPOOL**

**Sunday 21st May – Thursday 25th May 2017**

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Highlights of this trip will include The Albert Dock and the museums of Liverpool based there; Southport with a Fish & Chip lunch; Port Sunlight; Lady Lever Art Gallery; a ferry across The Mersey; The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour; Speke Hall Tudor House; Princes Road Synagogue and much more.

All meals and travel will be included. Places are limited.

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

**AJR ANNUAL LUNCH**

**Sunday 10th September 2017**

Holiday Inn, Borehamwood

Further details to follow

**WHY NOT TRY AJR'S MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE?**

The AJR offers a kosher Meals on Wheels service delivered to your door once a week.

The meals are freshly cooked every week by Kosher to Go. They are then frozen prior to delivery.

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

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### CARDS & GAMES CLUB Rummikub is Favourite

Our monthly club takes place at Alyth, after a lovely lunch. There's a good choice of games (Rummikub is my personal choice) – please look out for future dates and come along for what is always a fun afternoon.

*David Lang*

### SCOTLAND REMEMBERS THE HOLOCAUST

Scotland's National HMD event was held at Bishopbriggs Academy in East Dunbarton. Speakers included Scotland's Deputy First Minister John Swinney, Umutese Stewart – who survived the 1984 Rwandan Genocide, unlike other members of her family – and Saskia Tepe, whose mother Brigitte survived the Holocaust. Pupils from local schools performed with distinction and the memorial prayer was sung by Rabbi Moshe Rubin.

Meanwhile First and Second Generation survivors joined a packed audience to hear Professor Phillippe Sands QC talk at the 17th Glasgow University Holocaust Memorial Lecture, which is sponsored by the AJR. Professor Sands talked about the origins of genocide and crimes against humanity, and also described becoming personal friends with the son of Hans Frank, who was Hitler's personal lawyer and governor-general of the Polish Territories.

*Agnes Spier*

### BRIGHTON & HOVE Late but lovely

Because of the rail strike our Chanukah party was very late this year, but nevertheless we enjoyed the doughnuts and the quiz. Remembering our families, we also had a debate about the forthcoming Holocaust Memorial Day and religious expression.

*Ceska Abrahams*

### EALING Learning from the young

Twelve year old Sienna Noxtton came to talk to us about the volunteering work

she is doing at a local care home, as part of the Yoni Jesner Award Scheme. The award honours the memory of avid volunteer Yoni, who was just 19 years' old when he was killed by a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv. Sienna also gave us an interesting account of her school JCoSS.

*Leslie Sommer*

### EDGWARE Record chaplaincy

Dr Rob Ginsberg gave a fascinating talk on his father Major Rabbi Alec Ginsberg, who was the longest serving Jewish British Army Chaplain. He spent many of his 16 years' service overseas, in various post-war areas where Jews of all ranks were still serving, and then worked as a Rabbi here in the UK.

*Edgar Ring*

### ESSEX Life goes on

This was the first meeting without our Chairman Otto Deutsch who sadly passed away on 3 January, and we spent the time fondly reminiscing. Otto always spoke English with a strong Viennese accent, but was also known to revert to Geordie, having lived with and learned English from a Christian family in Newcastle after arriving on the Kindertransport.

*Larry Lisner*

### GLASGOW BOOK CLUB Thumbs up for coffee

Heavy snow showers led to a smaller than usual turnout, but everyone enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea and agreed that *The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul* made excellent reading. Here's hoping that next month's book, *Silver Linings Play Book* is just as good.

*Anthea Berg*

### HARROGATE & YORK 70th anniversary

We met for a delicious lunch at the lovely home of Marc and Rozi Schatzberger, who had just celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. We chatted about recent and forthcoming Holocaust memorial events, Mr Trump and many other things...as always conversation flowed and a good time was had by all!

*Wendy Bott*

### ILFORD Welcome back

During a very pleasant and leisurely morning, we discussed many interesting topics. We were particularly delighted to welcome back Josie and Peter Granby after Peter's recent stay in hospital.

*Meta Roseneil*

### LEEDS Sweet treats

Leeds members enjoyed a lovely social at the home of Barbara Cammerman and

a scrumptious afternoon tea of her now infamous baking!

*Wendy Bott*

### NORTH WEST LONDON How to commemorate?

Our first lunch meeting of 2017 focused on Holocaust Memorial Day. Opinions were mixed as to whether HMD should be just for the Jewish Holocaust, with other more recent genocides having their own memorial days (*Editor's note: interesting point, let us know what you think*). Either way, we must preserve the memories and I'm proud that a photo of my wife Charlotte (a survivor born in Vienna) and myself with our sons and grandsons is now on permanent display in Block 27 at Auschwitz.

*David Lang*

### PINNER Prison badge

Wearing his official 'Jewish Rabbi' badge, Keith Simons shared a mix of serious and amusing stories drawn from his 30 years' as a volunteer prison chaplain. He gave a fascinating insight into how Jewish prisoners are helped by the community, including with kashrut matters.

*Robert Gellman*

### MAKING MEMORIES

Rabbi Mark Goldsmith of Alyth Gardens synagogue was the main speaker at the first Kindertransport Group lunch meeting of 2017. His theme was the important subject of *Making memories for the future*, speculating on what younger generations will tell their children about the Shoah in years to come, and the need to employ modern technology to ensure that memories are preserved.

*David Lang*

### PRESTWICH Animated discussion

The conversation became most animated as Mr Trump's name was raised over lunch at the lovely home of Louise Elliott in Manchester. Other topics included antisemitism at universities. As always a good time was had by all.

*Wendy Bott*

### RADLETT Picture this

Members took the opportunity to share their stories with a young photographer Benji Gordon, which resulted in a lively cross-generational discussion about the Holocaust's origins, forgiveness and learning from history.

*Merritt Jagusch*

## CONTACTS

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**Esther Rinkoff**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
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**Eva Stelman**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07904 489 515 eva@ajr.org.uk

**KT-AJR (Kindertransport)**  
Susan Harrod  
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

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

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## 10-DAY VISIT TO ISRAEL NOVEMBER 2017

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

If you would like to join the trip, please contact **Lorna Moss** on 020 8385 3070 or at [lorna@ajr.org.uk](mailto:lorna@ajr.org.uk) as soon as possible.

## MARCH GROUP EVENTS

As the exact timings of these events are often subject to last minute changes we do not include them in the AJR Journal and suggest you contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

<b>Book Club</b>	1 March	Discussion and tea
<b>Glasgow</b>	1 March	Outing to Garrion Antiques and Garden Centre
<b>Ilford</b>	1 March	Kathryn Prevezer and Colin Davey – 'A virtual tour of Jewish Soho'
<b>Cheshire</b>	1 March	Social get-together
<b>Pinner</b>	2 March	Please bring along a possession that has a story behind it and tell us the story
<b>Sheffield</b>	5 March	Dr Julie Macdonald, High Sheriff of Nottingham
<b>Bath / Bristol</b>	6 March	Refugees and Immigration from Kinder to present day
<b>Ealing</b>	7 March	Nick Dobson – 'An Underground Guide to London'
<b>Norfolk</b>	7 March	Second Generation speaker to be confirmed
<b>Harrogate / York</b>	8 March	Social get-together
<b>Oxford</b>	9 March	Social at home of Helga Brown
<b>Muswell Hill</b>	9 March	Inaugural meeting
<b>Bradford</b>	10 March	Lunch at Salt Mills
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	14 March	Ronnie Schwartz – 'East London'
<b>Radlett</b>	15 March	Lawrence Colin – 'Ogenarians'
<b>Brighton</b>	20 March	Lawrence Colin – 'Ogenarians'
<b>Edgware</b>	21 March	Philippa Bernard – 'Roderigo Lopez: Physician to Queen Elizabeth I'
<b>Didsbury</b>	22 March	Social get-together
<b>Nottingham</b>	22 March	Film afternoon – 'Woman in Gold'
<b>Manchester</b>	26 March	Speaker – Brian Greene
<b>North West London</b>	27 March	Helen Pankhurst – 'History of Famous Aunt Emily'
<b>Liverpool</b>	28 March	Fingerprinting speaker
<b>Wembley</b>	29 March	Social get-together
<b>North London</b>	30 March	Peter Hedderley – 'The Winton train and other journeys'
<b>Ealing</b>	4 April	Harvey Bratt from UJIA
<b>Book Club</b>	5 April	Discussion and tea
<b>Ilford</b>	5 April	A return of one of our regular speakers – David Barnett

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## OBITUARIES

**Dr Kurt Schapira, MD FRCP FRCPsych DPM**

**Born in Vienna, 2 December 1928. Died in Newcastle upon Tyne, 20 November 2016, aged 87**

**B**orn in Vienna but practising in Newcastle, Dr Kurt Schapira personified the image of the Jewish psychiatrist – wise, warm, generous and sympathetic, with a depth of experience and fund of jokes. He was also a leading researcher into the effects of Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

Kurt's happy early childhood in Vienna was spent in a traditional orthodox Jewish home with his older sister Jenny, until his mother died when he was seven. By this time, Hitler was firmly in power. In 1938, sometime between March (the Anschluss) and November (Kristallnacht), his beloved father – a wholesaler in household linens – was sent to Germany to be incarcerated in Dachau and then Buchenwald. There he managed to secure a visa for Shanghai via London. He stayed in London and was joined by one brother.

Meanwhile, 10 year old Kurt and his sister were sent first to their maternal aunt and uncle in Berlin, and then on separate Kindertransports to England in 1939. The rest of their large extended family all perished.

Arriving at Liverpool Street, Kurt found no one to meet him, due to faulty communications. Sent back to Harwich, he spent his first night in England in the nearby converted Dovercourt Holiday Camp, sobbing. The following day he was reunited with his father. They had lodgings in Stamford Hill and he was educated at the orthodox Hasmonian Grammar School, which was evacuated to Bedfordshire in 1944.

Under the tutelage of Rabbonim Schonfeld and Spitzer, Kurt proved an excellent pupil but, unlike most of the boys who went on to become rabbis, he chose medicine. In 1947 he gained a place at Newcastle Medical School, qualifying five years later.

He served his "house jobs" in Paediatrics at the Fleming Memorial Hospital for Sick Children and in Adult Medicine at Dryburn Hospital, Durham. After a two-year National Service stint in the Royal Army Medical Corps he returned to Newcastle for the rest of his career and his life.

In 1956 he was appointed research fellow for the eminent neuropsychiatrist, Dr (later Professor) Henry Miller, head of the newly established neurology department at the Newcastle Royal Victoria Infirmary. Kurt's work involved the mammoth task of reviewing over 1,000 local sufferers of MS, which opened his eyes to the psychological effects of degenerative disease. This became his specialist subject, contributing towards 16 published scientific articles between 1959 and 1967 on various aspects of the epidemiology



and clinical features of MS, many of which are often cited today.

In 1961 Kurt negotiated a transfer to the University Department of Psychiatry. Promotion to Senior Registrar followed, then First Assistant to Professor, then Lecturer and, in 1970, Senior Lecturer. His final move was to become Consultant Psychiatrist to the Newcastle Health Authority in 1974, whilst remaining an Honorary Lecturer. He retired from the NHS in 1989.

He participated in studies on anxiety and depression and undertook his own research into suicide and attempted suicide. He also became particularly adept at treating sufferers from anorexia nervosa. He contributed several articles on these and other subjects, and lectured as far afield as Brisbane, Minnesota, Montreal and Jerusalem.

In retirement he continued his research into factors influencing suicide. His last article on the subject, in collaboration with others, appeared in June 2016.

He was a member of several committees within the university and the Royal College of Psychiatrists, as well as examiner for various psychiatry-related degrees and president of two professional bodies. He enjoyed teaching and regularly topped student ratings for the wit and erudition of his lectures. He was equally popular among non-medical audiences, especially on the art of Chagall and Salvador Dali and the artistic portrayal of doctors and lawyers. He was also a connoisseur of opera and classical music, particularly Mozart and Giuseppe Verdi, referring to the latter as Joe Green.

In 1965 he married Eva who, sadly, had recently been widowed and brought two children into the marriage: Susie (now retired but previously the Manager at the AJR Centre in Cleve Road) and Steven (a practising solicitor), both proud to call Kurt their father. Kurt and Eva had a son, Martin, a psychotherapist.

A genial extrovert and renowned raconteur, Kurt was always willing to speak about his childhood experiences to audiences ranging from schoolchildren to prisoners, and was proud to meet Prince Charles at a reception for Kindertransport survivors.

From the Danube to the Tyne was a long and arduous journey, both physically and metaphorically, but Kurt Schapira felt very secure within the Newcastle Jewish community and often expressed his indebtedness to England for accepting him as a refugee.

He leaves his wife, Eva, three children, sister, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**Ruth Rothenberg**

**Julius Jakob Klein**

**4 April 1925 – 27 December 2016**

**J**ulius Klein was born in Düsseldorf on 4 April 1925, the second child of Lilli Klein (née Plotke) and Rabbi Dr. Siegfried Klein – the much-loved "Junior" Rabbi of the mainstream Jewish community in Düsseldorf.



Julius was 13 years old when, during the night of 9 November 1938, he watched SA troops force their way into the family home, assault his parents and vandalise everything in their path. Together with his parents, Julius was marched down to Düsseldorf Police HQ and released with his mother the next day. His father was detained for a further 12 days.

In early 1939 Julius (and, separately, his sister Hanna) arrived here thanks to the Kindertransport. His parents were not so fortunate. In October 1941 they were deported to Łódź Ghetto where, a few months later, his mother succumbed to the twin horrors of starvation and lack of hygiene. In 1944 his father was transported to Auschwitz and probably murdered on arrival.

Julius was taken in by Arnold and Lena Levy, a childless couple living in Petersfield. There he absorbed the ethos of orthodox Judaism which was to sustain him throughout his life.

In 1998, almost 60 years later, Julius – accompanied by his niece Marion – set foot in Düsseldorf for the first time since leaving in 1939. Marion recorded an interview with him in which the most striking characteristic is the absence of any emotional expression. Understandably but sadly, the events of the late 1930s had a lasting effect on Julius: he found it extremely difficult to express his feelings.

Without a soulmate, Julius devoted his life to his adoptive Portsmouth & Southsea Hebrew Congregation and to the cause of inter-religious relations. He was a member of the Portsmouth branch of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, a cause close to his heart. Whilst not a qualified rabbi he often led services, and was a pillar of the community.

Julius spent the whole of his adult life in and around Southsea until November 2015 when he moved to a Jewish residential home in North London where he endeared himself to staff and residents alike. Within days he had taken charge of lighting candles and leading prayers, not only on the Jewish festivals but every Friday evening.

His death leaves one surviving member of the older generation of our family. Despite being a very private man, Julius was a huge presence and his passing will leave an unfillable void.

**Marion Koebner**

## OBITUARIES

**Felix Franks**

**Born 21 March 1926,  
Died 5 September 2016**

Felix Franks was the son of Henriette Muller and Paul Frankfurter, who ran a successful textile business in Berlin. Sadly, his mother died very young, and his father remarried Nina Lachman. They lived in a spacious villa in Dahlem with a large family nearby.



As Nazi clouds gathered, Felix frequently skipped school. In 1936 he slipped unnoticed into the Olympics. He saw Jesse Owens win a race and Hitler storm out in disgust.

Felix and his sisters arrived at a Jewish boarding school in Surrey in April 1939 via the Kindertransport. Their parents escaped Berlin days before war broke out, with the secret help of Magda Goebbels, who was fostered by Nina's family during WWI. They rented rooms in Hampstead and his father borrowed money to send Felix to Haberdashers School.

In 1943, having changed his name to Franks, Felix enlisted. He fought in the D-Day landings and witnessed the liberation of Belsen, before spending two years working undercover in Soviet East Germany.

In 1948 Franks became naturalised and studied physical chemistry at London University. In 1950 he met fellow refugee Hedy Werner, originally from Czechoslovakia and a survivor of Terezin. They were married by Rabbi Georg Salzberger at the New Liberal synagogue.

Franks gained a PhD at Birkbeck and held academic posts at Bradford, Nottingham and Cambridge, interspersed with work for Unilever and Carnegie Mellon. He focused on the fundamental physical properties of water, earning the nickname "Water Franks".

Later Franks turned to preservation technologies, including freeze drying. His group of six people at Cambridge Science Park worked for 18 of the top 20 major pharmaceutical companies. Collaborating with a US biotech company he developed inhalable insulin, ending daily injections for some diabetic patients. He gained widespread recognition and in 2014 an international conference was held in his honour at Cambridge.

Franks was a fine pianist and cellist, playing in music ensembles into his late 80s. He sang in Finchley Reform Synagogue choir and played the organ at Bradford Reform Synagogue.

In 2000 Felix retired from Cambridge and he and Hedy moved to London. Having seen his family scattered during WWII, being close to his children was crucial. He was a devoted father and grandfather, frequently taking the entire family on summer holidays to the South Tyrol, where he had spent happy times as a child.

In 2006 Felix's story was featured in 'Heimat und Exil' – an exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Berlin. He returned there in 2015 aged 89 to speak to German schoolchildren.

He is survived by his wife Hedy, daughters Suzanne and Carolyn and five grandchildren.

**Suzanne Franks**

**Otto Deutsch**

**1928-2017**

Otto was one of those rare people who captivated the attention of those around him. He befriended people from all communities, leaving a lasting impression of kindness, tolerance and endurance despite hardship and atrocity in his young life that most people are fortunate never to experience.

Otto was born in Vienna on 12 July 1928 to Victor and Wilma Deutsch, poor but loving parents. He spent the early years of his life, along with his older sister Adele, as part of the large Jewish pre-war community in the *Favoriten* district until the Nazis invaded Austria before the start of WWII.

His childhood and family were then savagely destroyed. First his father was betrayed on Kristallnacht in November 1938 by their neighbour and former friend, Kurt Kowatsch. Otto knew him as Uncle Kurt. He had been in the Imperial Austrian Army in WWI with Victor and they were both decorated soldiers. Otto never again saw his father, who was assigned to the Forced Labour Battalion that built Germany's first autobahns.

Otto himself was then forced to flee Vienna on the Kindertransport. His mother queued desperately long hours to secure Otto a ticket. As he walked one last time with his mother and sister to catch the train, her parting wish became embedded in his memory forever: he should never lose his *Yiddisbkeit*.

Otto and his cousin Alfred Kessler landed at Harwich on 6 July 1939 and went to live with a Christian couple, the Fergusons, in Morpeth. Otto called them Auntie Nell and Uncle Jim. They ensured Otto had some Jewish education by arranging monthly visits from a yeshiva student in nearby Gateshead. Very sadly, his parents and sister, all of whom he adored and never tired of speaking about, were murdered by the Nazis on 24 May 1942 along with many others at the Maly Trostinec concentration camp near Minsk, Belarus. In 2011 Otto visited the forests where they were killed and their bodies burned. He said kaddish for them and left a photo pinned to a tree in their memory.

When Otto turned 16 he made his way to London and worked as a tour guide, putting his language skills to good use with the burgeoning business of European tours. There were several ladies to whom he was close at different times of his life but for various different reasons none became

a life partner.

Eventually, one weekend in the early 1970s, he visited Southend-on-Sea and fell in love with it. He bought a flat in Southchurch and never left. He was an active member of the Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation for over 40 years. He would sit in the same corner each Shabbat, sharing stories of his life with all who asked.

Otto was fiercely independent, preferring to make his own way whenever he could. He loved classical music, arranging shows of his favourite Austrian pieces at the shul and the local council offices. He never learned to cook, but enjoyed eating out every day, either at the Christian Fellowship Centre or at the town cafés that served Austrian-style food with rice. He was especially fond of chicken soup!

In 2007 Rabbi Binyamin Bar organised his barmitzvah. On his German passport, as for all male Jews who lived under Nazi control, the second name of Israel was inserted. Rabbi Bar suggested that even though the name was originally a symbol of degradation, Otto should now wear it with pride. And so Otto Deutsch became 'Yisroel ben Avraham'. His only regret was that his family was not there to celebrate what was also his 79th birthday.

At social events children would always enjoy hanging around Otto, whose face beamed pure joy. He was in great demand at home and abroad by schools, clubs and organisations, giving talks on his early life in Vienna and England. As an active AJR member he was well known amongst both Holocaust survivors and interfaith groups. The internet contains many articles and interviews of him talking in his familiar Austrian accent and his story can be found in a number of books about the Holocaust, most recently in "Who betrayed the Jews?" by Agnes Grunwald-Spier.

Otto was a dearly loved and much respected man, both for what he went through to escape the Nazis, leaving his family behind, and as a symbol of good triumphing over evil, reminding us always to be vigilant against such evil, whatever form it take.

Otto Deutsch died peacefully at his home as the New Year was beginning, leaving behind five first cousins. His memory will burn brightly forever and his devotion to the family he lost will be a shining example of how love can endure despite the most heinous of atrocities being committed.

**Kevin Leigh**





## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### Leo Baeck and Jewish Liberalism

Tucked away in a quiet Jerusalem side-street is the Leo Baeck Institute. Its official purpose is 'the study of German and Central European Jewry' and it hosts a wide range of lectures, symposia and seminars. Sister institutes can be found in Frankfurt, New York, London and Berlin, and the Jerusalem institute.

One recent symposium, held in partnership with the Association of Former Residents of Central Europe and Beit Theresienstadt, the Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association, was entitled 'Liberal Judaism Then and Now, Sixty Years Since the Passing of Rabbi Doctor Leo Baeck.'

The turnout for a cold, wet December evening was surprisingly large, and I was lucky to find an empty chair at the back of the hall to hear the director of the Institute, Professor Samuel Feiner's introductory

lecture. After a brief welcome from the Deputy German Ambassador to Israel, five different experts in aspects of Liberal Judaism as currently practised in Israel and elsewhere, gave a short lecture. Professor Moshe Halbertal of the Hebrew University spoke about the importance of ethics and spiritualism in the USA today and how this features in the focus of Liberal Judaism. Dr. Hillel Ben-Sasson, of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, spoke about the central position of the individual in Liberal Judaism in the USA and the heightened attention placed on the separation of religion and state in the political arena, the implication being that this is sadly lacking in modern Israel.

For me personally the talk by Rabbi Gabi Dagan, who heads the Leo Baeck institutions in Haifa, was particularly interesting. The emphasis there, starting in kindergarten and

going through to high-school and vocational education classes, is on inculcating the values of Liberal Judaism as opposed to the rote learning and restricted intellectual scope of orthodox Jewish learning. He stressed how this approach had been advocated by Rabbi Leo Baeck himself, and that pupils who go through their educational institutions are equipped for life with an open mind, an enquiring approach, tolerance and acceptance of others, and recognition of the importance of self-realisation within the framework of the community.

Professor Ruhama Weiss of the Hebrew Union College spoke of the importance of feminist interpretations of the Talmud, particularly the Babylonian Talmud. She noted with satisfaction an increasingly feminist

## Reclaiming Identity

### JOINT AJR & GERMAN EMBASSY EVENTS

On 16 March at 6pm at the German Embassy, 34 Belgrave Square, there will be a panel discussion during which the author Thomas Harding, QC Philippe Sands and Prof Mary Fulbrook will discuss approaches of Holocaust survivors or their descendants to looking at their family's background and what this means with regard to confronting and reclaiming their (German) identity.

On Friday 17 March between 10am – 12 noon at the offices of the AJR, a delegation from the German citizenship authority "Federal Office of Administration" (Bundesverwaltungsamt) will be available for questions re naturalisation according to Art. 116 (2) Basic Law.

Please contact Susan Harrod via [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk) or 020 8385 3078 for more information or to book.

approach to religion throughout Judaism, including even the orthodox variety, and certainly in Liberal Judaism.

Finally, Dr. Margalit Shlein, who heads the Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association, gave an outline of Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck's activities during 1943 – 1945 when he was incarcerated in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Although given preferential treatment as a 'Prominent,' he devoted himself to bringing succour to the other inmates, providing spiritual guidance as well as lectures connected with his religious philosophy and outlook.

Dr. Shlein was at pains to point out that, although he was aware of the fate of the Jews at Auschwitz, Rabbi Baeck kept the information to himself, fearing that knowledge would serve to deter those being deported from cooperating, and thus cause additional suffering. When the prisoners were finally released in May 1945, Rabbi Baeck refused to leave until the last prisoners had left.

The evening ended on a lighter note, with singers performing songs in English, German, Yiddish and Hebrew.

**NOTE FROM EDITOR:** Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck was a figure of great importance to the AJR and its members. One of the leading Liberal rabbis in Germany, he refused every opportunity to emigrate after 1933, stating that he would leave only when the last Jew had left Germany. After surviving Theresienstadt (Terezin), he came to Britain, where he was acknowledged as the spiritual leader of the German Jews who had fled abroad. He wrote the front-page article for the first issue of AJR Information in January 1946.

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