



## Prophet of the Age of Nationalism



Monument to Franz Grillparzer at Volksgarten in Vienna

### Der Weg der neueren Bildung geht Von Humanität Durch Nationalität Zur Bestialität

*(The path of modern culture leads from humanity through nationalism to bestiality) Franz Grillparzer, 1849*

Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872), the greatest exponent of the classical drama in Austrian literature, is often overshadowed in the present cultural climate by later Austrian writers of a more modernist, experimental bent: novelists like Robert Musil, Hermann Broch or Joseph Roth. Of these, only Broch and Grillparzer were Viennese-born, and only Musil was not Jewish (though his wife was). Yet Grillparzer was the greatest dramatist in the classical mould in the generation that followed Goethe and Schiller, and has a strong claim to be Austria's national poet. He also delivered the funeral oration for Ludwig van Beethoven on 29 March 1827.

Grillparzer struggled with life. He became engaged to Katharina Fröhlich, his 'eternal bride', in 1821, but never married her, though in 1849 he rented an apartment in which he, she and her three sisters lived until his death. His brooding, retiring disposition also hampered his career advancement; he spent most of his working life in the government service, rising to the uninspiring position of Director of Archives at the Imperial Hofkammer (Exchequer). He was also unfortunate to live under the stifling regime of Franz I, in the reactionary period that followed the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. By the time the regime fell in 1848, he had ceased to publish work for the theatre, having turned his back on it following the failure of his comedy *Weh dem, der lügt* (*Woe to Him Who Lies*) in 1838.

Grillparzer's outstanding theatrical abilities draw on classical themes, such as his trilogy *Das goldene Vlies* (*The Golden Continued on page 2*

## MILESTONES AHEAD

As we pack away our Chanukiahs, we are looking ahead to a busy year of milestone anniversaries. In March we mark 80 years since the Anschluss and in November we will commemorate the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht and the start of the Kindertransport.

No doubt many of you will also have your own personal and poignant anniversaries.

As ever, our team is ready to provide you with all the support you might need, including help with social welfare and volunteer assistance. We also look forward to seeing you at our social gatherings and sharing our activities with you on these pages.

Wishing you and your families a happy and healthy 2018.

Blind Triumph.....	4
Visit to Israel.....	5
Letters to the Editor.....	6 & 7
Art Notes.....	8
Educational grants.....	9
A man deprived.....	10
A man supported .....	11
Reviews.....	12 & 13
Around the AJR.....	14
Looking for.....	15
Chanukah gallery .....	16
Who knew what? .....	17
Obituaries .....	18
Adverts.....	19
News.....	20

### AJR Team

Chief Executive Michael Newman  
Finance Director David Kaye

### Heads of Department

HR & Administration Karen Markham  
Social Services Sue Kurlander  
Community & Volunteer Services Carol Hart

### AJR Journal

Editor Jo Briggs  
Consultant Editor Dr Anthony Grenville  
Secretarial/Advertisements Karin Pereira

## Prophet of the Age of Nationalism Part 2 cont.

*Fleece* (1821), dramatising the story of Jason and Medea, and *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (*Waves of the Sea and of Love*) (1834), a dramatisation of the tragedy of Hero and Leander. He is also justly famed for his historical dramas. The first of these, *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (*King Ottokar's Fortune and End*) (1823), climaxes triumphantly, with the victory of Emperor Rudolf I, founder of the House of Habsburg, over his rival Ottokar II of Bohemia at the Battle of the Marchfeld in 1278. By contrast, *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg* (*Fraternal Strife in the House of Habsburg*), written in Grillparzer's later years and published posthumously, dramatises the catastrophic chain of events that led Austria under Emperor Rudolf II into the abyss of the Thirty Years War (1618-48). The optimism of *Ottokar* gives way in *Bruderzwist* to a dawning awareness of the destructive historical forces unleashed by nationalism and populist democracy, which dominated the later nineteenth century and destroyed the Habsburg Empire, and much more, in the twentieth.

Grillparzer made his theatrical breakthrough with the first performance of *Die Ahnfrau* (*The Ancestress*) on 31 January 1817. The play is a

*Schicksalstragödie* ('fate tragedy'), a sub-genre popular in the early nineteenth century; it follows the working out of a curse whereby the ancestress' ghost can only find rest when her family line is extinguished – as it duly is, amidst much gore and horror. Grillparzer found his own dramatic voice with *Sappho* (1818), a dramatisation of the life and death of the Greek poet. After Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* (1790), the play is one of the greatest in German literature to take as its theme the conflict between the sublime mission of the artist and the more mundane realm of normal human life and happiness. When Phaon, the rather ordinary young man whom Sappho has chosen as her partner, falls in love instead with her servant girl Melitta, the poet is forced to recognise how ill-suited she is to life, and commits suicide. The play is notable for its adumbration of what was to become the central theme of Grillparzer's work: the painful renunciation of ambition, happiness and all forms of active fulfilment in life.

The fate of Jason, the hero of *Das goldene Vlies*, demonstrates graphically how action and ambition lead only to disaster. The Jason who at the start of the play leaves Greece with his Argonauts on a mission to sail to distant Colchis and return with the fabled Golden Fleece is, by the play's end, a broken man consumed by guilt; he has achieved his ambition of acquiring the Golden Fleece, and it has destroyed him. The fleece

becomes the symbol of ambition, in that Jason incurs guilt by stealing it from the King of Colchis. He also makes off with the King's daughter, Medea, only to abandon her on returning to Greece. The end result of Jason's ambition is the dreadful revenge exacted by Medea: she kills their children and leaves him to the torments of remorse.

Grillparzer's *Ottokar* provides another case study in the deceptive and insubstantial nature of fame, power and ambition, inspired partly by Napoleon, the great conqueror who eventually met his Waterloo. All the grandeur of Ottokar's imperial ambitions and conquests evaporates with his defeat and death in battle, but not before he has recognised the tragic guilt with which his seeming triumphs have invested him. *Der Traum ein Leben* (*Life Is a Dream*), a 'dramatic fairy-tale' first performed on 4 October 1834, distils the message of the dangerous vanity of action and ambition into parable-like form. Set against an oriental background, it presents the story of Rustan, an ambitious but essentially weak young man, whose vision of himself as a conquering hero is realised in a dream. But by the end of the dream Rustan's apparent rise to glory has led him only to crime and death; on awakening, the chastened young man decides to stay within the modest bounds of his station, abandoning all desire for greatness.

An intriguing character in *Der Traum*

## Library plaque

A plaque has been unveiled at The Wiener Library in acknowledgement of the AJR's support for their work over the past 70 years.

Ben Barkow, Director of the Library, which has just been officially awarded Designated status by the Arts Council in England in recognition of the outstanding quality of its collections, commented: "The AJR and The Wiener Library perform important complementary roles in relation to the refugee community. The AJR tends to the well-being and physical support of the refugees and their families while The Wiener Library preserves the records and memories of this special community and allows the wider world to learn about the challenges they faced and overcame. I am very proud that the Library and the AJR are such close partners and that together we serve those forced to flee their homes so many years ago.



"At many times over past decades the support of the AJR has been fundamental, most notably during the 1970s when a funding crisis put the Library's future at risk, and in 2011, when the Library moved to its current premises in Russell Square.

"We are grateful to the AJR for their continued support, which allows the Library to fulfil our vision for the future – to collect, preserve and share our archive with the world."

*ein Leben* is the slave Zanga, who in the dream eggs Rustan on to satisfy his lust for glory regardless of the moral cost. Figures like Zanga, Zawisch von Rosenberg in *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* and Duke Otto of Meran in *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* (*A Faithful Servant of His Master*) (1828) embody the principle of action as destruction, morally culpable per se. Duke Otto appears – not unlike Shakespeare’s Iago – to be motivated purely to do evil, leaving death and destruction in his wake.

The theme of action and ambition leading to catastrophe gains a European dimension in *Ein Bruderkrieg in Habsburg*. The policy of masterly inaction employed by the Emperor Rudolf II to prevent an outbreak of religious war in central Europe is undermined by other members of the house of Habsburg. His brother Matthias, blinded by vanity and ambition, sets in train the chain of events that leads to the Thirty Years War when he seeks to replace Rudolf on the imperial throne. Archduke Ferdinand, the future Emperor Ferdinand II, is a Catholic bigot bent only on extirpating what he sees as the Protestant heresy; his actions, he believes, are divinely sanctioned. Archduke Leopold, Rudolf’s favourite, takes action on behalf of the Emperor he loves, but succeeds only in fatally undermining him; representing the spirit of action, Don Cäsar, Rudolf’s illegitimate son, embarks on destruction that climaxes in his own suicide. Europe, too, hurtles into the abyss

of self-destruction as the clash between the forces of Spanish-Austrian Catholicism and Czech Protestantism bursts into open warfare in Prague in 1618.

The drama ends with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, but Grillparzer also looks forward to the future conflicts of the twentieth century. Foreseeing the destructive potential of the nascent forces of popular nationalism in the central Europe of his day, Grillparzer gives the religious conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism a national dimension, as if the conflict between Czechs and Germans in 1618 prefigured the national tensions that consumed Europe in the century after his death. The revolution of 1848 had taught Grillparzer to be suspicious of populism masquerading as democracy; he foresaw the ease with which cynical populists could manipulate the masses by playing on nationalism, bigotry and intolerance of those of different racial and national identities. Not the least of his achievements was his depiction of figures representing ‘the Other’: the alien ‘barbarian’ Medea shunned by the ‘civilised’ Greeks; Zanga, the black man enslaved by Arabs; and above all the small, embattled community of Jews memorably portrayed in the historical drama *Die Jüdin von Toledo* (*The Jewess of Toledo*) (1851), the objects of both scorn and secret desire by their Christian supposed betters.

**Anthony Grenville**

## DEBATE OF THE MONTH



Was the German court right to rule that the 96 year old former Nazi SS guard Oskar Groening, known as the ‘bookkeeper of Auschwitz’ is fit enough to serve a four-year prison sentence?

Email [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk) with your thoughts.

## THE POWER OF WORDS

Please join us for our service to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2018 at 2pm on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at the Belsize Square Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX.

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg will be officiating and refreshments will be served after the service.

Reflecting the theme for HMD 2018, ‘The Power of Words’, we will be

holding a panel discussion before the service, entitled: ‘**Personal Archives: Perspectives on Protection, Preservation, Digitisation, and Donation**’

Beginning at 11.30, the panel discussion will be introduced and chaired by Dr Bea Lewkowicz (AJR Refugee Voices Archive) and will feature representatives from the Jewish Museum, the Wiener Library, the Imperial War Museum, the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, and the London Metropolitan Archives. Members of the panel will present their collections and address the protection and preservation of documents. The panel will also give



advice on opportunities to digitise and donate family correspondence and memorabilia to educational and research institutions.

A light lunch will be served at around 1pm. To secure a place at the workshop and/or the commemoration service please contact Rosemary Peters [rosemary@ajr.org.uk](mailto:rosemary@ajr.org.uk) and/or Karin Pereira [karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karin@ajr.org.uk) at the AJR. If you would like to book lunch please send a cheque for £10 to The Association of Jewish Refugees.

# Blind triumph

If there was ever a tale of triumph over adversity, the life story of Hans Cohn must be one of the most significant. He was born in Berlin in 1923 to a lawyer and his wife and studied at the prestigious Französisches Gymnasium, the French Institute in Berlin, founded in 1686.

In 1934 a fight broke out in the auditorium between two boys, one Jewish, the other a Hitler youth, about who should sit in a certain seat. Hans' misfortune was to be in the adjacent seat; a glancing punch inadvertently hit Hans in the eyes, detaching the retina. Despite an operation by the eye surgeon to the Dutch Royal family, it was not possible to save his sight.

The headmaster felt the school was partly responsible and enabled Hans to continue attending, thus becoming one of the first recipients of integrated education. But in 1938 grammar school education became forbidden for Jewish boys so Hans' parents sent him to England, to Worcester College for the Blind, where he studied until 1942. Speech Day was attended by the director of the Viennese Jewish Braille Institute and the former Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, between whom Hans acted as interpreter. As a result, when Hans' immigration permit was about to expire, Baldwin was his guarantor.

Hans studied English, French and German in Braille and is possibly the only person able to read Braille in three languages. He also has a good working knowledge of Latin and Russian.

In 1939 his mother entered Britain on a Domestic Permit but his father's profession as a German lawyer was not in demand in the UK, despite his famous clients who included Marlene Dietrich and Max Rheinhardt. In 1942 he was transported from Berlin to

Theresienstadt. Hans and his mother were later notified by the International Red Cross of his death "as a result of medical surgery".

When the Kindertransports started, Hans' mother became Matron of the girls' hostel which gained fame recently in "The Pianist of Willesden Lane". Hans fondly remembers staying with his mother in the school holidays, when he was the only boy in the hostel.



Hans Cohn today, with a portrait painted of him in his earlier days by a friend.

After matriculation Hans trained as a physiotherapist at the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB). Whilst there, he contracted German measles, leaving him partially deaf. He qualified in 1945, the first blind refugee to do so, and one of only very few men in a then female-dominated profession.

Hans set up a thriving private practice and, with the advent of the NHS in 1948, spent the next seventeen years as physiotherapist at various London hospitals, ending up as the only male physiotherapist at Willesden General Hospital.

A great passion of Hans' is music (he plays the piano). In 1947 he organised a charity concert and met actress Martha

Rösler. After their marriage she worked as a designer for several London department stores; in addition she drove Hans to and from his professional appointments, as well as herself travelling to Paris for the major fashion shows. This took a great toll on their marriage and they divorced in 1957.

In 1961 he married Steffi Steinhardt, introduced by a doctor friend of his mother's (coincidentally also named Hans Cohn). Steffi had an inherited condition of retinitis pigmentosa, which ultimately left her blind. They were married for 57 years until she died in 2016.

Since schooldays Hans had been a keen chess player and in 1948 he joined the Braille Chess Association (BCA), which enabled blind players to take part in postal chess games. Hans was its president from 1988 to 1992. He was introduced to the Jewish Blind Society by his friend Manfred Vanson (whose daughter writes a regular column from Israel for the AJR Journal) and in 1960 became a member of its Executive council. He also joined the editorial committee and Executive council of the RNIB and the NFB (the National Federation of the Blind in the UK).

The BCA has asked him to write a history of the organisation (which now has around 250 members) so his dining-room table is currently piled high with fifty years' worth of voluminous BCA bulletins in Braille.

In the 1970s Hans obtained a BA in Humanities with the Open University, and in 1995 he was awarded the MBE for his work in helping to restructure the environment for the benefit of blind and visually-impaired people. Even in retirement Hans is extremely busy. He modestly says that he is a "Jack of all trades and master of none" but, reviewing his long, successful and active life, it is totally impossible to agree with his assessment of himself.

**Lilian Levy**

# A WONDERFUL VISIT TO ISRAEL



Thirteen AJR members joined group leaders Lorna Moss, Carole Rossen and Rosemary Peters in November for the fourth AJR trip to Israel. After a comfortable flight we were met by our very capable guide, Zohar. He turned out to be a mine of information, always ready to answer questions no matter how complex or controversial.

A feast met us at our Tel Aviv hotel. Our food throughout was excellent and our rooms all had splendid views of the sea front and of the city, which had grown enormously since my last visit in 1987. The programme was very well planned – no consecutive full-day excursions, with later starts following the more strenuous days. There was ample free time to do our own thing and/or visit family and friends.

Excursions included a short visit to Jaffe, where Jews and Arabs live peacefully side by side. We visited Independence Hall where we relived the Declaration of Israel's Independence by listening to a recording of the speech on 14 May 1948 at 16.00 hours and felt the tension and anxieties as the deadline drew closer. Standing for the Hatikvah after the declaration made us feel we really had been present. I was only four

in 1948 and I never dreamed I would be in the very room 69 years later.

The Palmach museum took us through the history of Haganah's forces before, during and after Israel's hard-won Independence.

Another excursion took us to the Atlit Detention Centre, where we learned how our brethren suffered under the British. Camp survivors likened their experiences to the Camps, with delousing and other cleansing carried out before admittance, barbed wire fences and guards all round. Strict quotas were placed on the number of immigrants, the bulk of whom were turned back and transported to Cyprus. There was one successful attempt at transferring 250 detainees to local kibbutzim: Palmach fighters got the British soldiers to attend a party on Christmas Eve where they were plied with alcohol. It was an ingenious plan and it worked.

We visited the Sea of Galilee and travelled across its peaceful waters in an 'ancient boat'. I had never put a toe in the Sea of Galilee, let alone sailed on it.

During a visit to Kibbutz Lavi we were told of its history and what has been achieved by those who immigrated from the camps of Europe.

We had two full-day visits to Jerusalem. Visiting Yad Vashem was painful and poignant for everyone. The slow-moving crowds made their way through

Nazi-occupied Europe with the help of pictures, videos and survivors' testimonies. I felt I was personally being transported. Finally, seeing the light, gave me a sense of hope. In the Hall of Testimonies I discovered that my late uncle Josef Seckl had registered his parents and his uncle, and I brought home copies of these certificates to his sister, my mother Martha. I urge anyone who has not yet registered the names of family or friends to do so, to make the records complete.

We saw how Jerusalem has spread, with all buildings compulsorily made of limestone. At the Knesset Zohar explained that in democratic Israel all members of society are represented in the Government – Israeli Arabs, Orthodox, Reform and Secular Jews.

We visited the Kotel – what a privilege to touch it and pray with thousands of others. I had never dreamed I would walk through both Arab and Jewish Jerusalem. Most of our group went through the tunnels and said it was quite an experience. The slow crawl up to the Kotel made the visit even more poignant – we were like pilgrims visiting the Temple on the Foot Festivals – Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot.

I should like to thank our three leaders for organising such a successful trip. We learnt so much from Zohar, it would be wonderful to have him as our guide on a future visit to Israel for which, we hope, we won't have to wait too long.

**Patricia Tausz**

---

#### **Eve Willman adds:**

Israel is a beautiful and interesting country and the way the trip was planned showcased all the varied aspects: the beauty of the scenery like Lake Kinneret; the modern like Tel Aviv and the ancient Jerusalem. We were lucky to have such a knowledgeable Guide. I learnt so much.

Last but not least was how the AJR team cared for us. From the moment at the airport when I was greeted, it truly was a blue ribbon affair.

# Letters to the Editor

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

## MEMORIES OF WILFRID ISRAEL

I was interested to see on the back page of your November issue that Naomi Shepherd's biography of Wilfrid Israel has now been re-issued as an e-book.

As a child who arrived in London at the age of six (via Prague) with my parents in 1935, I met Wilfrid before the war through my maternal uncle, Werner Behr. I remember him quite distinctly as slightly "other-worldly". When war came I, as a law-abiding "enemy alien", passed the centrepiece of my small curio collection, an antique pistol, over to Wilfrid who, after all, was a genuine British citizen. Alas, because he was assassinated by the Luftwaffe (in the same plane as the actor Leslie Howard) I never saw my treasure again.

After the war I also got to know Naomi, and my impression of her was that she was "something of a blue stocking" (then current slang for an intellectual female).  
*Michael Feld, London N3*

## BRITAIN OR THE BRITISH?

With respect Philip Goldsmith ("Brussel Spouts", November 2017), all of us refugees must feel grateful to those who helped to keep us alive.

But should we be grateful to Britain? Or the British folk? I, for one, feel little gratitude to the Britain who "Never, never shall be slaves" nor can I hope that "Wider still and wider shall her bounds be spread". 'Official' Britannia acted soullessly, carefully evaluating public pressure for generosity to Hitler's victims against right-wing press and political pressure to appease Hitler.

So the bulk of my gratitude is to the British people. Not all, but the great mass of them and, because their pressure moved officialdom, I consider Mr Goldsmith superficial as he considers himself obligated to Britannia alone.

Secondly he is ill-informed if he believes that socio-economic conditions have improved. The opposite is true of the last 7 – 8 years. The richest 10% of the population own 45% of our gross national

wealth, whilst the poorest 50% own a mere 8.7%!

Mr Goldsmith seems to categorise all refugees as economic migrants, which is nonsense: there are civil wars raging in Syria, Iraq and Iranian Kurdistan, Kurds are an oppressed minority in Turkey, in Africa there is civil war in Mali and South Sudan, Christians are oppressed in the Muslim part of Nigeria.

I agree with him on one point: that the rule of law needs protection. But the protection is needed from a government which is attacking Parliament – with clauses dating from the time of Henry VIII.

Mr Goldsmith, in his presentation of conservatism, contrasts it only with socialism. That too is inaccurate. If we wish to record our debt to the broad mass of the population then we must give official Tory-ism a wide berth, and whilst I would welcome support for Labour, there are also Lib.Dems and Greens to consider, and additional good choices for those in Scotland or Wales.

*Francis Deutsch, Essex*

## LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY

Anthony Grenville writes in his front page article Land of Hope and Glory? (November issue) "The professional bodies representing doctors and dentists accepted only a tiny number of practitioners onto their registers." My father, Dr Marcus Pfeffer, was one of the lucky ones. We escaped from Vienna in February 1939.

We were blitzed twice in London – in Haverstock Hill and Fellows Road. We moved to Garston, near Watford in late 1941. Early in 1943 my father was offered a post in Dagenham as an Assistant Doctor to Dr Jo Finer, a younger man, a fellow Jew but, importantly, British. He accepted and we moved to a council house in the working class area of Becontree. The joy of my father being able to work again was beyond description. Ironically, within two years, a Flying Bomb hit us in Becontree too but although the house was demolished we escaped unscathed.

Next stop was Banbury, in Oxfordshire, working for the Friendly Society Medical Association, and then in 1948 came the NHS. The Society was disbanded and my father was his own boss again, running the largest surgery in Banbury, with a branch surgery in Kings Sutton. He died in 1965 and there was a large memorial service to him at the local parish church, St. Mary's. The British Medical Association allowed him to continue the good work he had been doing in Vienna, but I wonder why he was one of the lucky few? I am so glad he was.  
*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts.*

Dr. Grenville refers to Britain as a land of hope and glory, but his contention that refugees (particularly child refugees) were badly treated is contradicted by the recollection of some refugees who tell a completely different story. It is further contradicted by the article on page 13 of the same issue about Alice and Angus Argles.

These were very difficult times, and we could not have expected to be received with sheer perfection and benevolence. Some of the people who looked after refugees probably also found it difficult to cope. There were bound to be some unhappy experiences; that's life, we are all frail human beings with many faults. As a character says in the last scene of a famous film "Nobody's perfect". The real question is: would the refugees, even those with unhappy experiences, have been better off had they not come to Britain? Obviously not.

In my case I came with my family just before the war, and I appreciate that to come alone as a child, without parents, would have been a horrendous experience. I am a British citizen, but I have never felt particularly English or British, but I acknowledge that had we not come to Britain we would most probably not have survived. So let us have some decency, and show gratitude, and appreciate that we were able to come to practically the only country which would let us enter to be safe and secure.

*Mendel Storz, London N16*




**Piece together your family history**

In the 1930s and 40s, World Jewish Relief rescued tens of thousands of people from the Nazis. We have the digitised family records of those we helped. Now we want to give them back to you, for free.

Find out if we helped your family at:  
[www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives](http://www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives)  
 020 8736 1250

*“These papers are a piece of family history which I will treasure forever”*  
 Jerry Springer

Anthony Grenville's article 'Land of Hope and Glory? Part 2' (December) undoubtedly captured the experience of internment and the feeling of injustice felt by many of the internees. Yet he failed to give credit to the cross-party MPs who took up the cause of the internees and worked tirelessly to ameliorate the situation.

Most notable was Miss Eleanor Rathbone MP who, as founder of the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees, campaigned relentlessly on behalf of refugees and internees along with fellow MPs Col Josiah Wedgwood and Victor Cazalet, amongst others. Her visits to camps up and down the country boosted the morale of internees, who recognised her humanity and determination to challenge government policies on their behalf. She tabled over 80 parliamentary questions on internment alone. Her dogged activism made her many enemies within government circles, but she stuck to her principles, earning her a reputation amongst the refugees as the 'MP for Refugees'.

*Dr Susan Cohen and Lesley Urbach  
 Remembering Eleanor Rathbone Group*

**THERESIENSTADT**

Of all Frank Bright's regular contributions to this Journal, I found his letter in your November issue about his time in Theresienstadt the most interesting and informative, though so sad. My parents and younger brother also suffered this terrible experience before their death, and I can only imagine what it must have been like. By comparison, how lucky I was to have been so wonderfully received in Britain, after benefitting from the efforts of the Berlin Kindertransport organisers.

*Werner Conn (formerly Cohn),  
 Lytham St. Annes*

**THANK YOU GLORIA**

I am dictating this letter to my daughter Patricia. Words cannot express how much I appreciate your audio issue of the Journal and I would like you to convey my special thanks to Gloria Tessler, your Art Reporter.

I am most grateful to her for her many articles but should like to mention specially the November issue and her notes on the Holocaust Memorial in Vienna's Judenplatz by Rachel Whiteread.

After looking many times at the memorial I fully understand the thoughts behind it.

May I therefore suggest that, when the Holocaust Memorial is placed in London, perhaps also some explanation of the thoughts behind it is given?

*Martha Tausz, London N6*

**LUCKY SOUTH-EASTERNERS**

I have just renewed my annual subscription with delight, but feel strongly that you in the South East should volunteer at least double for the generous facilities and opportunities open to you, from grand opera to house-rewiring. We were not all exiled to NW3.

*Dr. Hans L. Eirew, Manchester*

**SAD NEWS**

I am sure that I won't be the only one to express my profound sadness at the news that our greatly esteemed Consultant Editor, Anthony Grenville, has decided to retire. His many thoughtful and well researched articles have been a major feature of the Journal and the Journal won't be the same without them.

*Leslie Baruch Brent (Emeritus Professor),  
 London N10*

# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

**Bellboys and pastry cooks, chamber maids and waiters, chefs and sous-chefs; all the underclass of Parisian hotel life in the *belle époque* are seen through the eyes of Chaim Soutine, with empathy, with distance, with cynicism.**

Soutine's **Portraits: Cooks, Waiters and Bellboys** at the **Courtauld Gallery**, the first British exhibition of Soutine's works in over 35 years, describes the life shared by these hotel workers, painting images of their insecurity and how they see their roles. Perhaps they reflected the artist's own humble beginnings as a Russian immigrant struggling to make his living in Paris alongside his close friend Amadeo Modigliani.

By the 1920s and 30s, Soutine had become one of the leading painters in Paris, a natural successor to Vincent Van Gogh. Captivated by the staff of the city's grand hotels, he painted them in various roles. He was interested in the contrast between the power expressed by their uniforms and their personal insecurity. Even the white of their overalls is broken into semi tones



*Little Pastry Cook (Le petit pâtissier)*, c.1921. Portland Art Museum, Oregon, Ella M. Hirsch Fund



*The Chambermaid* by Soutine

which reflect the nervous demeanour or anxiety in their faces. The butcher's boy's overalls are soaked in blood; as an Expressionist metaphor it is direct and visceral. While one bellboy, spread-eagled in his crimson uniform, has a sneering, insouciant look, another similarly dressed, has much less bravado. He stands awkwardly, poignantly waiting, as waiters do, not offering but begging. Many share the same pointy face and large ears – suggesting the poignancy of raw emotion stretched into a visceral unhappiness in a life of service.

Until 21 January

Some critics suggest that the real gift to the current **Modigliani** exhibition at **Tate Modern**, described as the most comprehensive ever held in the UK, is his sculptures. He started out as a sculptor, but turned to painting, perhaps because stone carving might have worsened the health of a man already suffering from a pulmonary condition and TB. The few he made are bold and powerful, a throwback to African or Egyptian influences, and their solidity is a powerful contrast to his supine nudes, with their elegant limbs, in their apparently effortless seductive poses.

Tate's exhibition features the largest group of his nudes ever shown in the UK. Twelve are on show in an exhibition which also includes an immersive experience in which, with the aid of technology, you can be projected into the studio where he created his last work in 1919, a self-portrait, in which the robust Italian face has dwindled to a narrow image of one facing death. Modigliani's tragedy is also the tragedy of his last partner, Jeanne Hébuterne,



Amadeo Modigliani *The Little Peasant* c.1918 copyright Tate

whom he also painted in 1919. A day after he died she threw herself off a balcony, pregnant with their second child but unable to face life without him.

There is less sense of caricature in Modigliani's fluid work than you might see in Soutine's. In Modigliani's case there seems less edge but perhaps more breadth of vision, even though Soutine's apparent voyeurism is mitigated by genuine empathy.

Until 2 April

## LOST VOICES

On Sunday 27 January at 7pm a special concert at the Royal Academy of Music will showcase music written by composers lost in the Holocaust. Tickets are £7.00 / £5.50 from 020 7873 7300 or [www.ram.ac.uk](http://www.ram.ac.uk).

## Annely Juda Fine Art

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

**CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

# Friedlander in Ditchling

Next spring, Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft presents the story of designer and typographer Elizabeth Friedlander (1903-84).

Best known for her Penguin book covers and Bauer Type Foundry typeface 'Elizabeth', the exhibition will touch on her escape to London from 1930s Nazi Germany, friendship with her sponsor – poet and printer Francis Meynell – and her work during a wartime.

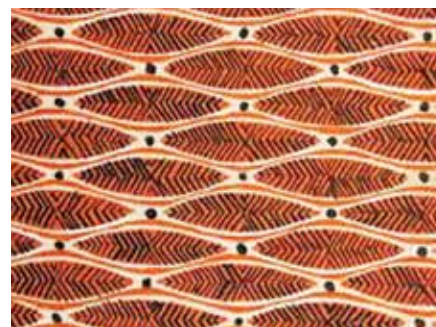
The exhibition is co-curated by video artist and author Katharine Meynell, granddaughter of Francis Meynell, who produced 'Elizabeth', a short film about the artist which will be shown in the exhibition.

Friedlander trained at the Berlin Academy and was tutored by German calligrapher

Anna Simons, who in turn had studied under Ditchling luminary Edward Johnston. Her delicate, elegant typeface 'Elizabeth' was originally to be called 'Friedlander' but was hastily changed to the anglicised version of her first name to avoid confrontation with Hitler's regime.

Friedlander had come to England on a Domestic Servant visa but managed to find work in the newly-formed wartime black propaganda unit, forging Wehrmacht and Nazi rubber stamps and ration books. She privately also produced a simple but beautiful wood engraving of a searchlight over St Paul's Cathedral, as a 1942 Christmas card.

Post-war Friedlander produced commercial works for *The Times*, illustrated maps for BOAC and Shell and delicate calligraphic insteps for Saxone Shoes. She continued to design extraordinary covers for Penguin



Friedlander exhibition

books but her work was not limited to print and typography: she was equally at home with ornamental design, producing stunning pattern paper designs for Curwen Press, ornamental borders for Linotype, and 'Friedlander Borders' for Monotype.

Friedlander moved to County Cork, Ireland in the 1960s where she continued to work and, although hampered by her failing eyesight, pursued her love of gardening and designed keepsakes for local crafts.

6 January - 29 April 2018  
[www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk](http://www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk)

## AT YOUR SERVICE: Educational Grants

As well as serving Holocaust refugees and survivors nationwide, the AJR is committed to the education of future generations about the Holocaust.

We regularly provide financial and other support to educational, research and commemorative projects through our formal process for impact-focused grant making. Our Educational Grants Advisor Alex Maws is the primary contact for charities and institutions which request financial support for Holocaust remembrance and educational projects. He joined the AJR in early 2017 after



ten years working with the Holocaust Educational Trust and is also part of the UK delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

"The AJR offers two different types of grants," explains Alex. "Catalyst Grants of up to £10,000 are available to support initiatives in their infancy which have a limited target audience. We can also award Project Support Grants of over £10,000 for exceptional, larger-scale projects which have potential to make significant impact."

Major projects that have been awarded grants in the past few months include the new Holocaust Learning Centre at the University of Huddersfield, which is due to open this summer, and a major educational project aimed at sharing stories from Willesden Lane and Kindertransport testimonies with students in years 6-8. A fuller article about this project, which is due to launch in the Spring, will appear in the February issue of the AJR Journal.

The AJR also supported the recent UK premiere of a documentary entitled *Wilfred*

*Israel: The Essential Link* as part of the Jewish Film Festival, and is facilitating the creation of new digital content for the Anne Frank Trust.

"The ideal projects are those which reach diverse audiences and have strong multiplier effects," says Alex. "AJR can support these and be a key partner, without controlling the actual delivery."

The grants are mainly drawn from legacies bequeathed by AJR members determined that future generations should learn from their experiences. Alex has drawn up a clear framework to ensure that firm expectations are agreed in advance for any projects, and that rigorous evaluation is put into place.

"The application process helps our delivery partners think very carefully about what they are trying to achieve and why, and makes the AJR feel confident that our partners and their projects will actually deliver" Alex explains.

For more information: [grants@ajr.org.uk](mailto:grants@ajr.org.uk).

# A man deprived and

**This January would have been the 94th birthday of Fiszal Lisner, who spent almost the entire period of WWII in concentration camps.**

Fiszal was born in the Polish town of Zdunska Wola, approximately 40 miles from Lodz. He was the eldest of five children and the family was poor. His father spent the winters driving cattle and the summers painting and decorating.

The Germans invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, turning Zdunska Wola and many other Polish towns into ghettos. Conditions immediately became very hard, and Fiszal's mother died just four months later of unknown causes, aged only 36. Shortly afterwards Fiszal's father was listed for deportation. Sixteen year old Fiszal opted to take his place so his father could stay with the other, younger children. He spent three years in a labour camp, working on an autobahn, before being transferred to Auschwitz in 1943. There he worked down the coal mines, which were so dangerous that the German officers rarely bothered to visit. Fiszal managed to survive, unlike the majority of his co-workers, and even occasionally received extra food from the Polish miners. He saw someone

get murdered every 10 minutes, a total of 250,000 during his incarceration.

In January 1945 Fiszal was taken on a 'death march' to Theresienstadt. The majority of prisoners perished from hypothermia and starvation during the 300 mile journey, but Fiszal managed to survive on a diet of mainly grass and twigs, working in Theresienstadt's bullet workshop until the camp was liberated by the Russians on VE Day.

Fiszal had been incarcerated for over five years, but he was one of the lucky ones. Returning to Zdunska Wola he discovered that the town had been liquidated on 24 August 1942 and all his siblings had been burnt alive in the forest. His father had been taken in by some cousins in Lodz, but had died in 1945 before VE Day.

Fiszal's mother had an older sister, Sylvia, who came to England before WW1 with her husband Charlie Glicksman and had done very well. Fiszal managed to contact them and, after sending one of their sons-in-law to meet him, they arranged for him to come to England. They offered to adopt him but Fiszal was reluctant to give up his name, having fought for so many years to survive. He was also uncomfortable with their opulent lifestyle, although

he remained eternally grateful for their support.

At a tea dance in London's West End Fiszal – now known as Philip – met Yetta (Hetty), the daughter of Polish immigrants. They made an attractive couple and, after marrying in July 1948 at Jubilee Street Synagogue, moved into a flat in South Woodford owned by Fiszal's Uncle Charlie. Estelle was born the following May, followed by Larry, Maralyn and Suzanne. Larry and Maralyn were born exactly a year apart, in 1950 and 1951 respectively, on 24 August – the same date that all Fiszal's sisters and brother had perished in Poland.

Fiszal worked long hours to escape his demons. His various ventures included a café and a coat factory, eventually selling ladies clothing. It was a tough regime, covering several different markets each week, and he had difficulty supporting his family. With the AJR's help he managed to secure an adequate enough pension to retire in 1995. Hetty had sadly passed away eleven years earlier from diabetic complications, but Fiszal never remarried. He died in 2003 on Xmas Eve from an aneurysm which was caused by an enlarged heart – a direct result from his early years of slave labour.

Although never deeply religious, Fiszal was very proud to be Jewish and was initially very upset when his children all chose to marry out. He never covered up his number tattoo but shied away from formal Holocaust education, preferring to share his stories on a one-to-one basis with family, friends and customers. In January 1995 he revisited Auschwitz as part of the 50th anniversary commemorations. Despite the extensive media coverage the visit was emotionally traumatic for him and marked the start of the heart problems which eventually killed him.

Asked how he survived when so many others perished, Fiszal used to name two factors. The first was that he had grown up in a very poor family, making him well used to hardship. The second was that he never gave up hope that there was something still to live for (he harboured a secret crush on a childhood friend), which gave him the impetus to keep on going.



Some of Fiszal's precious memorabilia.

# a man supported

**Larry Lisner is Fizel's son. His father's Holocaust experiences have had a profound effect on his own life and on that of his sisters.**

"We grew up surrounded by Holocaust survivors, but none of them really spoke about it until 50 years later," he explains. "Our dad always seemed to be working. The only times I regularly saw him were when we went to watch Arsenal together."

Larry himself left school at 16 and, like his father, tried his hand at several different professions. These included helping a close friend to establish a successful car brakes business, running a cut-price store in Dagenham and working for the Customs and Excise department. Forced to retire on health grounds in his 40s, he now spends his time helping other people within the close Southend community where he now lives, and pursuing his favourite hobbies of art, table tennis, snooker and fitness.

The AJR is an integral part of his life. He used to bring his father to the regional meetings and continued attending after Fizel passed away. In 2005 he took over the minutes of the meetings, and also writes regular reports for the 'Around the AJR' section of the AJR Journal.

"The AJR has given me a constancy and I have grown very close to several of the other local members, including survivors," he says.

Larry has also developed a very strong rapport with Dean Lloyd-Graham, his local AJR Social Worker. They speak at least once a fortnight, giving Larry the chance to discuss many different aspects of his life. Dean also advises Larry on his eligibility for financial support through the AJR's Self Aid scheme, through which he has recently been able to get a new cooker and a new sofa.

Currently looking forward to the birth of his second grandchild, Larry is grateful that both his sons live nearby. He is very active within the Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation, regularly making up a minyan and contributing to the shul magazine.

"If I have one piece of advice for other AJR members, it's to never be too proud to ask for help," he says. "The AJR has been a fantastic support for me and I'm sure there are other members out there who would benefit from the wonderful services they provide."

Jo Briggs



Larry Lisner with his local AJR Social Worker, Dean Lloyd-Graham

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

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

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

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

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

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

# REVIEWS

## THE BOY IN THE STATUE FROM WARTIME VIENNA TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE

By Sir Erich Reich  
i2i Publishing, Manchester 2017  
ASIN – B074DW4SYV

Quite a life! This auto biography traces the remarkable, extremely varied life of a Viennese boy who started in very unpromising circumstances and who achieved the honour of being knighted in Buckingham Palace.

The statue in the title refers to the Kindertransport Memorial at Liverpool Street Station commemorating the arrival in Britain of nearly 10,000 Jewish children just before the war. The majority came from Berlin, Vienna and Prague via Hook of Holland to Harwich. In Erich's case his route was rather different.

At the age of four he had already experienced the horrors of the family's forced departure from Vienna to Poland and then the painful separation from his parents, whom he never saw again. He was one of only 70 children who came direct from Poland on the 'Warszawa', a Polish steamer, arriving in London six days before Britain entered the war.

In England he was fortunate in being fostered by a very caring couple who, although not Jewish, had escaped from German-occupied Sudetenland because of their political views. They ran a refugee hostel in Dorking, where Erich had a happy childhood and he kept in touch with his foster mother, Emilie, for the rest of her life.

At the age of 13 he was invited by an aunt to come to Israel, a move which greatly influenced his future life. After staying in Haifa he spent the next four years in a left-wing Kibbutz, Merchavyia, in an environment which really suited him. He became an Israeli citizen, joined the Army, became an officer and saw active service during the Suez War. Among the many photos in the book, there is one of Erich as a smart young Israeli soldier!

In 1957, Erich was devastated when his brother Ossie, who had looked after him on the Kindertransport, died suddenly. Erich hurried to England but arrived just a day too late to see him. He writes movingly about his brother and the effect this loss had on him.

Having come to England, Erich stayed on for some time working for the Kibbutz movement. It was during this time that he met his first wife, Yona, and together they returned to Israel and Merchavyia. In 1958 a baby girl was born but unfortunately the marriage did not last. In 1963 he accepted an offer from Mapam, the socialist Zionist movement, to run a hostel in Manchester for prospective Israeli immigrants.

Here he met his second wife, Diana. In 1964 they had a son, Allon, and the couple moved to Israel, although Diana found it difficult to adjust to Kibbutz life. In 1967 Diana again became pregnant and they returned temporarily to London so that she could be near her parents. This move became permanent and Erich reluctantly left Israel after 18 mostly happy years.

As in 1939, his future prospects looked bleak, but he was able to put his leadership skills and strong sense of purpose to good use and soon found his metier in the tourism industry, rising to director level in both the Thomson and Thomas Cook organisations. Amongst some of the special tours he organised was one to Egypt which culminated in a performance of 'Aida' at the Temple of Luxor, with Placido Domingo singing on the first night.

After leaving Thomas Cook he set up his own company, Classic Tours. He organised specialised tours and participated in charity bike rides and treks in different countries, particularly Israel. This aspect gave him great satisfaction and pride. During this time he became involved with the Kindertransport organisation, becoming Chairman and representing it on the AJR Committee. A highlight was the 70th Anniversary in 2008 of the arrival of the Kinder in England. This moving event took place at the Jewish Free School in London, with Prince Charles as guest of honour.

Erich again met Prince Charles, this time at Buckingham Palace when, much to his

surprise, he was knighted in May, 2010.

This very readable and frank account of a remarkable life, with its many ups and downs, is written with sensitivity and gentle humour. It ranges from a tragic parting from his parents to eventually achieving a highly respected position in the Jewish and the wider community in Britain.  
*George Vulkan*

## THE STORY OF HUMANKIND

By Eli S. LeJeune  
(London: Austin Macaulay Publishers, 2017)  
ISBN-10: 1786933993  
ISBN-13: 978-1786933997

The story of humankind is no small thing and to tackle it in 224 pages of fairly large font is a considerable accomplishment, especially as Eli LeJeune commences with the Big Bang many millions of years before our species had even appeared on the scene. To add to the achievement, this is almost two books in one, in that it discusses both science and religion. The first four chapters take one from the creation of our universe, through the various geological formations and onto the emergence of human life. In this brief summary we get a lot of useful basic information such as the size of our galaxy, the distance between us and the sun, the vast timescale of creation, and the names and approximate dates of earth's main geological periods. It's then on to vertebrates, primates, hominids and, eventually, humans.

Chapters five to twelve bring us to what is clearly the main motive for the book. In the introduction LeJeune explains that his interest in natural history and anthropology led 'along a different pathway' in which he 'sought to enrich (his) understanding by introducing the God dimension'. The author tells us that he 'worked for several years in a financial and commercial environment' but oddly, in view of the content, fails to mention (what I discovered via Google) the more relevant fact that he used to be a member of the Reading Hebrew Congregation. He asserts that 'members of the human race are both biological and theological beings' and so writes in response to the current rise of atheist literature with its allegedly 'gratuitously offensive language levelled against all forms of religious observance'.

LeJeune does not shy away from difficult challenges and so, for example, takes up such questions as 'Will my prayers be answered?' and 'Why does evil exist in a world created by God?' In an attempt to reconcile Genesis with the theory of evolution, LeJeune recommends that the word 'day' in the six days of creation has to be taken as a 'poetic expression of a non-specific period of time, perhaps comprising millions or even billions of years'.

The book ends with a recommendation of religion as comforting and supportive. Surely nobody doubts this, but the atheist challenge, which this book purports to take on, is really not about the utility of religion but about its presumed truth. For LeJeune, however, scientific truth is secondary. He prefers 'intuitive faith, which is a faculty higher than intellect'. This book is suitable for those of you who have teenage children or grandchildren who are starting to ponder fundamental questions.

*Michael Levin*

#### UNFINISHED PORTRAIT

By Miriam Frank

Publisher: Gibson Square Books Ltd

ISBN-10: 1783341238

ISBN-13: 978-1783341238

Miriam Frank's mother fled Germany to escape the Nazis and was forced to flee from one country to another as fascism came biting at her heels; mother and daughter moved from Spain to France, finally ending up in New Zealand via Mexico. Miriam was born into exile. Even when theoretically settled in New Zealand, Miriam found an emotional chasm between herself and the other girls, though many became her friends. Finally Miriam came to Britain where she worked as a doctor and anaesthetist.

In this book, Miriam is hunting memories, especially of her relationship with her mother, who had been deeply involved in the literary world as well as for a time being a Communist. Miriam searches

for her mother's past friends whom the schisms amongst the left in the Spanish Civil War had torn asunder. Miriam travels from place to place, poignantly attempting to relive and compare her own and her mother's experiences, and re-establishing contacts across Europe which were a part of their artistic and cultural world.

Miriam is trying to fit together a puzzle which has always perplexed her: how is it that her relationship with her mother, which was so close when Miriam was young, became so antagonistic. For Miriam's mother, always moving, never sure how she and her daughter would survive, Miriam was what made her struggles worth enduring. But as Miriam became increasingly independent, her mother could not bear the loss. The author allows us to see how painful Miriam found her mother's rejection, but also how their personal dynamic was a consequence of the deep insecurities associated with rolling dislocation.

There is much else besides. The title: 'Unfinished Portrait' alludes to the portrait her husband painted of her. He had worked hard on it but it had remained an 'unfinished portrait'. She had lost sight of it after their relationship broke up. Now Miriam comments on the eyes, one alive and truthful, the other filled with a dark pain mixed with defiance. But there is another meaning of 'Unfinished Portrait': Miriam feels that she has not succeeded in resolving the complex misunderstandings with her mother or in completing her mother's 'portrait'.

Miriam searches for light and life wherever she is and whatever she is experiencing; how far this represents a response to an inner darkness is left to the reader to decide.

*Merilyn Moos*

**Have you read any books recently which you think are worthy of a review in these pages? If so please email our editorial team on [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)**

## BEREAVEMENT

### FRANK, GERALDINE

15 November 1923 – 30 November 2017.  
Greatly missed by her family and friends.

## GREAT TENORS



The recent snow in Leeds did not deter members of the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association from enjoying Barry Abis' presentation on "Famous Tenors". The showcased performers ranged from the 1920's to the present day, including Gigli, Björling, Caruso, Lanza, Pavarotti, Domingo, Carerras, Russell Watson and Il Divo.

## AJR ANNUAL TRIP

Join us this year in  
**NORFOLK**

**Sunday 13th May – Thursday 17th May 2018**



Coach travel from London to Norwich, plus four nights' accommodation in Norwich. We will also help arrange travel from other parts of England to Norwich.

Highlights of this trip will include Sandringham House, Sandringham Church and Sandringham Museum, Felbrigg Hall, an award winning National Trust Property, Norwich Cathedral, a boat trip on the Norfolk Broads, a steam train through the beautiful countryside, Sainsbury's Visual Arts Gallery, plus good food and good company aplenty.

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

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

# Around the AJR

## BRIGHTON & HOVE: TOPICAL DISCUSSION

We were greeted with hot tea and cake on a cold morning and a discussion on current affairs, including disputes between the railway unions, developed.

*Ceska Abrahams*

## BROMLEY: WE SAW THE FILM "WATERMARKS".

As a keen erstwhile member of Hakoah-Koeln I was fascinated to see the girls in the Vienna film, who became even more lively and enterprising in later life.

*Lore Robertson*

## EALING: "GROWING UP IN THE SOVIET UNION"

This was an interesting talk by Svetlana-Ruti, detailing the advantages of her former life which was counterbalanced by great lack of freedom.

*Leslie Sommer*

## EDGWARE: "THE BUDAPEST HOUSE" BY MARCUS FERRAR

This is a story about a Jewish family in Hungary

before, during and after WW2; the author was a Reuters correspondent in Eastern Europe.

*Tom Horvath Neumann*

## GLASGOW: "ACTION ON HEARING LOSS" (A TALK BY MALAIKA ROSE)

This was a good opportunity for members to share hearing aid problems and to receive help and advice from someone who has always worn them.

*Agnes Isaacs*

## GLASGOW BOOK CLUB: "CARTES POSTALES FROM GREECE" BY VICTORIA HISLOP

Discussion of this novel was artfully guided by Agnes to recall vignettes within the main story, even though not all present had finished reading the book.

*Vivien Lobell*

## ILFORD: THE LIFE AND WORK OF DANNY KAYE

Lynne Bradley gave us a wonderful talk with illustrations of Kaye's many recordings; we also learned about his early life and how he found fame. Very nostalgic for us all...

*Meta Rosehill*

## MUSWELL HILL: "THE STURGEON QUEEN"

We saw this delightful film on the humble origin of the NY fish deli "Russ & Daughters".

Today it is world-renowned and still a family-run business.

*Kathy Cohen*

## PINNER: JEWISH CHAPLAINCY TO THE UK ARMED FORCES

From small beginnings in the 1890s, the two World Wars saw large increases in the numbers of Jewish Chaplains; well-known figures have served and continue to do so.

*Robert Gellman*

## RADLETT: ADAM WORTH: INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL OF THE 1800S.

David Barnett spoke fascinatingly on the life of this rags-to-riches-and-back-to-rags criminal, who was buried in an unmarked grave in Highgate cemetery.

*Anita Grant*

## AJR OUTING TO "An American in Paris".

This musical is truly spectacular. We experienced an afternoon of such colour, exuberance and amazing dance routines, as well as ever-changing stage settings, which were a joy to behold. Thanks to the team at AJR for arranging this visit ...and for securing such wonderful seats for us.

*Hanne R. Freedman*

## CONTACTS

**Susan Harrod**  
Lead Outreach & Events Co-ordinator  
020 8385 3070 [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

**Wendy Bott**  
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07908 156 365 [wendy@ajr.org.uk](mailto:wendy@ajr.org.uk)

**Agnes Isaacs**  
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07908 156 361 [agnes@ajr.org.uk](mailto:agnes@ajr.org.uk)

**Kathryn Prevezer**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07966 969 951 [kathryn@ajr.org.uk](mailto:kathryn@ajr.org.uk)

**Eva Stellman**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07904 489 515 [eva@ajr.org.uk](mailto:eva@ajr.org.uk)

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

**Child Survivors' Association-AJR**  
Henri Obstfeld  
020 8954 5298 [h.obstfeld@talk21.com](mailto:h.obstfeld@talk21.com)

## JANUARY GROUP EVENTS

All AJR members are welcome at any of these events; you do not have to be affiliated to that particular group. 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.

Ilford	3 January	Social get-together
Pinner	4 January	Les Spitz – Photographer
Leeds CF	10 January	Ex Police Inspector – Paul Leach
Glasgow Book Club	11 January	Social get-together
Hull	14 January	Social get-together
Prestwich/Whitefield	15 January	Social get-together
Edgware	16 January	David Harris: "A four sites saga: a short history of JFS"
Didsbury	17 January	Social get-together
Radlett	17 January	Social get-together
Muswell Hill	18 January	(Earlier due to HMD) Maurice Kanarek: "Prisoners of Conscience" film and Talk on Refuseniks
North London	18 January	(Earlier due to HMD) Social get-together
Glasgow Main Group	23 January	Holocaust Day Lecture – Prof Otto Huttner
Harrogate/York	29 January	Social get-together
Book Club	31 January	Social get-together

## KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH

Kinder were delighted to hear from Prof. Sir Simon Wessely, Regius Professor of Psychiatry, at King's College London. Sir Simon's father, Rudi, came on one of the Nicholas Winton Kindertransports. Sir Simon spoke about his father's life and his return journeys to Prague. He told the audience about the documentary, made with Esther Rantzen, of his father discovering the fate of his family during such a return visit.

Sir Simon founded the King's Centre for Military Health Research. Its flagship project is a large-scale ongoing study of the health and wellbeing of the UK Armed Forces, which had a direct impact on public policy, treatment and help for Service personnel. We heard about the work of the Israeli Army in helping regiments come to terms with trauma they have suffered in combat and how the British Army uses a different method of treatment.

We were very grateful to Sir Simon for taking time out of his busy schedule to join us.

*Janet Weston*

## GLASGOW LUNCHTIME CONCERT

Glasgow AJR's music lovers (almost all of us) had a delightful outing to a lunchtime concert at the Royal Scottish Conservatoire. It was one of a series in memory of a much-loved and popular local pianist and piano teacher, Hilary Rosin, who died a few years ago.

The audience which consisted of members of the general public, but with a predominance of the Glasgow Jewish community, with Hilary's widower, Leslie Rosin, in row one.

The distinguished performers played chamber music by Russian composers, but the outstanding performer was the young baritone, Aleksey Gusev, who sang, among others, songs by Sergey Rachmaninov. We knew that we were in the presence of a future great star of the operatic stage.

*Halina Moss*

# LOOKING FOR?

**The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and others looking for people or for help in particular subjects.**

**Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you can help.**

### BUNCE COURT SCHOOL ALUMNI

Alexander Weidle, a historian at the University of Augsburg, is looking into the reasons for the separate suicides of twins Ernst and Rudolf Farnbacher, who left Germany in August 1939 aged 14 and attended Anna Essinger's "Bunce Court School". Ernst committed suicide in 1941, Rudolf a few years later. Alexander would like to hear from fellow pupils at Bunce Court School in 1941 who might remember the twins.

*weidle@gmx.de*

### A PUBLISHER

John Woods' father, Leonard Berney, was a Belsen liberator who helped to save the life of Nanette Blitz Konig, a former school friend of Anne Frank. John stays in touch with Nanette, who now lives in Brazil and has written her account of being a Belsen survivor. She has translated her book into English and is seeking to get it published in the UK. Any advice and help would be much appreciated.

*johnalexwood@gmail.com*

### JCRA & DP CAMPS

Tom Sampson is a third year student at Cambridge currently researching the work of the Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad at the end of WWII, particularly in the refugee camps of Europe up to 1950. He would like to hear from anyone who has personal experience of post-war refugee work, or who lived in post-war Displaced Person refugee camps.

*ts644@cam.ac.uk*

### WETZLAR FAMILY

Yvonne Levite Heurtier is looking for other descendants of Salomon Wetzlar, a silversmith in Bamberg, Germany, and his wife Pauline, née Klein. Her grandmother Brendina was one of their daughters.

*jeanclaude.heurtier@sfr.fr*

### HACHSHARA / KITCHENER CAMP

Verena Buser is researching the history of hachsharot and non-Zionist training sites in Nazi Germany. Amongst those was the facility in Berlin-Niederschönhausen, led by Leopold Kuh (Kew) and his wife Ruth. They escaped in 1938/9 to England and built up the "Kitchener Camp" in Richborough. Verena would be interested to hear from former trainees who were in Niederschönhausen or in the Kitchener Camp and who also went to Australia or stayed in the UK.

*verena.buser@berlin.de*

### AMERICAN SCHOOL IN BERLIN

Amy Minton is an historian and distant relative of the former headmaster (Gregor Ziemer) of the American School in Berlin. She is seeking Jewish students from Germany and other countries who enrolled in the school after April 1937 with a view to emigrating here or elsewhere, and who can help to shed light on the school's day-to-day life. No story too small, no stone unturned!

*mintonamy@gmail.com*

### DORSET REFUGEES

Catherine Gardner is looking for information on the Dorset Refugee Committee which was established by her second cousin Heinz Alex Nat(h)an, who had been an athlete in Germany and engaged in anti-Nazi political work. He sought refuge in the UK in 1933 and through the Dorset committee helped to save many Jewish children. Catherine is looking for further information on the committee and the children they rescued – including any who may still be alive.

*catherinehlgardner@gmail.com*

# Who Knew What?

**This is one of those endless questions that bothers everyone concerned with, or investigating, or affected by the crimes committed during the course of the War.**

I recently read *Eisenbahner in Krieg und Frieden* (A Railwayman in War and Peace) by Karl Eugen Hahn, published in Frankfurt in 1954, when memories were still fresh for those who wished to keep them fresh. Hahn joined the Reichsbahn and was sent as a 'Blue railwayman' to Occupied France, later to Russia, Holland and Italy. 'Blue railwaymen' were civilians, whereas the 'Grey railwaymen' were Wehrmacht members and came under military discipline but also military supply arrangements – a cause of endless friction between the two groups.

As one might expect Hahn spends much time justifying himself, describing negative feelings concerning Nazi colleagues. I found the following passages very revealing. The translations are mine.

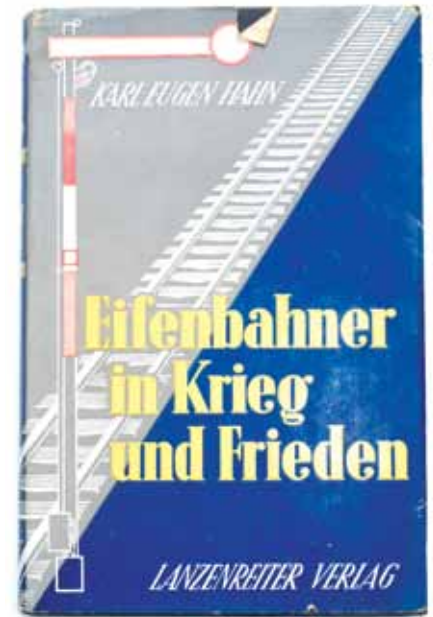
At Reichsbahnrat in Minsk, responsible for getting captured railways working again and producing timetables, he describes the awful conditions and how starving Russian prisoners started to eat the flesh of casualties after a train wreck.

"I tried to get the printing of timetables

done locally in Minsk... One of our native cleaners, whom I occasionally slipped something illegally to eat, saw the large timetable planning sheets spread out on the table, mentioned that she knew of a printing firm in Minsk who could do that.... Indeed there stood here large offset printing machines for colour printing, and soon I had beautiful four-colour timetable sheets which I could take with me to a Timetable Conference.

"Alas, my joy did not last long. With very few exceptions the personnel of this workshop comprised Jews, since these were the only people who could read and set Latin letters. On 6 November 1941 the business had to be closed down, because 18 Jews from the 20 workers had been shot. I was enraged, I screamed at the supervising official that to spare them would have been not only an act of mercy but of common sense since we should keep such skilled labourers. All in vain, he told me that the SD (Security Service) had ordered the "removal" of all Jews from Minsk, including his workers. I was very annoyed and made a report to my Präsident – but what could we do? The orders had come from higher up."

Later on: "During a heated argument with the SD in Minsk I was threatened with being shot if I did not arrange that two trains with Jews from Bremen and Hamburg, who were to be transported into the emptied Minsk Ghetto, should not be terminated instead at two specific suburban stations, so that the German



Jews could be liquidated there. Then things would have been so much more convenient, for everything would have been there together, especially the property of the Jews, so that it would only have been necessary to pull their clothes off, remove rings and other items of jewellery carried on their bodies, and knock out any gold teeth.

"I stubbornly resisted this order and declared, also in the name of my fellow railwaymen, that I would not allow Pogroms against the Jews on Railway Property and so make myself jointly responsible for what happened. I countered all threats with the declaration that on railway property not the SD but I alone had the power to make decisions. Both trains were brought as planned to Minsk and unloaded there. No brutal deeds were carried out on railway property."

This text demonstrates that every loyal, proud railwayman was fully aware of what was happening 'in the East'; Of course he wishes to present himself as one of the 'good guys', one who breaks rules to give food to slave workers and complains about what is happening, yet is proud of working so hard to ensure that all freight trains work to timetable, irrespective of their loads. His main concern is merely that the mass murders should not affect his work or his colleagues. But it is a genuine 'eye witness' report and memoir and therefore of some value.

Rabbi Dr. Walter Rothschild, Berlin

## AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB



Please join us at our Card and Games Club

Monday 12th February 2018 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)

# CHANUKAH WITH THE AJR

Hundreds of AJR members and friends celebrated Chanukah with us last month, at one of our numerous Chanukah parties.

The main AJR Chanukah Lunch took place in London on 14 December, where over 100 guests were entertained by a magician and the Nick Dobson singers. Smaller events took place in Glasgow and Brighton and many other places in between, with members enjoying music, magic and other entertainment as well as the obligatory latkes and doughnuts.

Here is a selection of photos from the events that had already taken place by the time the AJR Journal went to press.



Pinner



Bernd Koschland lights the menorah at the main AJR Chanukah lunch, with the help of Jemima Briggs, daughter of our editor



Liverpool



Glasgow



The main AJR Chanukah Lunch



AJR Staff

# OBITUARIES

## Gerda Torrence (née Grossovar)

Born Berlin 15 May 1922, died London 16 October 2017

**Gerda Torrence was the only child of Victor and Anna Gross and took her father's Czech nationality. They lived a happy, Jewish life in Berlin's West End, where Victor worked as a master tailor.**

After 1933, the Grosses still visited family in Prague regularly, using these opportunities to move money out of Germany. Returning once with her mother shortly after the annexation of Sudetenland, the train was halted and Jews ordered off. Since they could pass for Aryans, Gerda and Anna remained on the train and witnessed eight Jews being shot dead on the platform.

Victor moved to England soon after

Kristallnacht, having been headhunted by a British fashion house. Gerda prepared for emigration by learning secretarial skills, fashion and makeup.

Gerda and her mother went to Prague to collect their money. But Germany invaded Czechoslovakia the following day and their money could not be recovered. Gerda queued daily for a British visa. Finally, she approached an SS officer, claiming she was needed in Berlin for a new job. He let her skip the queue on condition she meet him for coffee there! She and her mother immediately travelled to London to join Victor. Gerda found work in a fashion company, joined Jewish clubs, played sport, went dancing and enjoyed herself, despite the war.

Sadly her mother died of cancer in the late 1940s. Her father remarried another refugee with a daughter by a previous



marriage. Gerda married Jula Torrence in the late 1940s but was widowed in 1989.

After an enjoyable career in the fashion industry, Gerda volunteered at Chai and at the Leo Baeck Lodge Day Centre, making many new friends. She learned Bridge and was an active member of both the Lodge and AJR, at whose lunches her napkin-folding skills were legendary. She was a regular at Covent Garden and a keen theatre and lunch goer. She enjoyed visiting friends abroad. Gerda's charm, generosity, positivity, sense of humour and joie de vivre are sorely missed by her family and exceptionally wide-circle of friends.

**Lesley Urbach**

## Kurt Treitel

Born Berlin on 10 April 1922, died London 4 November 2017

**Kurt was probably the oldest-surviving Kindertransportee in the UK, having arrived from Berlin on 24 March 1939, just two weeks before turning 17.**

Determined to enjoy every minute of his new life, Kurt was notoriously optimistic, positive and kind.

The eldest of three children to Theodor and Hanna Treitel, a successful Berlin lawyer and kindergarten teacher, Kurt grew up in a cultured family whose friends ranged from rabbis to leading theatrical figures and eminent politicians, including Reichstag President Paul Löbe.

Forced to leave the Friedrichswerdersche Gymnasium at 15, he moved to the American School of Berlin, where inspirational headmaster Gregor Ziemer protected Jewish pupils.

On Kristallnacht, Kurt and his father were alerted by a neighbour and fled across Berlin to old friends, the Horwitz family, who sheltered them in their attic. Kurt's parents arranged tickets for Kurt and his younger brother Guenter on the Kindertransport (an uncle helped with guarantees). Kurt's diary – written in English – describes his Berlin farewell and voyage on the SS Manhattan.

His parents and sister, Celia, arrived in England shortly after but in 1940 Kurt was interned on the Isle of Man. He secured a US visa but, unable to travel because of the sinking of all shipping, tailored in London and Bradford.

In 1955 he met and married fellow Berliner Renate Elgin. They settled in Golders Green and had four children: Richard, Jonathan, David and Caroline. Renate persuaded Kurt to pursue his dream of becoming a lawyer like his father: he studied for six years at night school, worked unpaid for a solicitor during the



day, and finally qualified in his mid-40s. His successful legal career spanned many happy years at the Treasury.

Kurt enjoyed travelling, photography, art-collecting and opera and, once retired, also contributed to Holocaust education, sharing his experiences with (among others) the Shoah Foundation and schoolchildren at Dachau.

He will be remembered by Renate, his children, his four grandchildren, and all his friends, as one of nature's gentlemen, with his huge smile, kindness, courtesy, great intelligence, astonishing memory, and ability to get on with everyone; very much missed.

**Caroline Treitel**



## AJR FILM CLUB

Our next film showing will be at Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone N20 9EZ

on **Monday 29th January 2018**  
at **12.30pm**

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

## SUFFRAGETTE

In early 20th-century Britain, the growing suffragette movement forever changes the life of working wife and mother Maud Watts (Carey Mulligan). Galvanized by political activist Emmeline Pankhurst (Meryl Streep), Watts joins a diverse group of women who fight for equality and the right to vote. Faced with increasing police action, Maud and her dedicated suffragettes must play a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse, risking their jobs, homes, family and lives for a just cause

**£8.00 per person**

**BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL**

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



**JACKMAN SILVERMAN**

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

Telephone: 020 7209 5532  
[robert@jackmansilverman.co.uk](mailto:robert@jackmansilverman.co.uk)

## CATERINA ANDREA TRANSLATOR

English to German / German to English

No job too small or too big

Competitive rates and references provided

**00 34 971 886 566**  
[catandreae@gmail.com](mailto:catandreae@gmail.com)



## LUNCH

Wednesday 10th January 2017  
At Alyth Gardens Synagogue  
12.30pm



We are delighted to be joined by **Stephen Pollard**, Editor of The Jewish Chronicle

Booking is essential for catering purposes.  
**£7.00 per person**

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

## JOSEPH PEREIRA

(ex-AJR caretaker over 22 years) is now available for DIY repairs and general maintenance.

No job too small, very reasonable rates.  
Please telephone 07966 887 485.

## LEO BAECK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

### CLARA NEHAB HOUSE RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

Small caring residential home with large attractive gardens close to local shops and public transport  
25 single rooms with full en suite facilities.  
24 hour Permanent and Respite Care  
Entertainment & Activities provided.  
Ground Floor Lounge and Dining Room  
• Lift access to all floors.

For further information please contact:  
The Manager, Clara Nehab House,  
13-19 Leaside Crescent, London NW11 0DA  
Telephone: 020 8455 2286

## [www.fishburnbooks.com](http://www.fishburnbooks.com)

### Jonathan Fishburn

buys and sells Jewish and Hebrew books, ephemera and items of Jewish interest.

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

Contact Jonathan on **020 8455 9139**  
or **07813 803 889**  
for more information



WHY NOT CONVERT YOUR OLD CINE FILMS AND PUT THEM ON DVDS **FREE OF CHARGE?**

Contact Alf Buechler at [alf@buechler.org](mailto:alf@buechler.org) or tel 020 8252 0375 or 07488 774 414

## SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household electrical work

PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518

Mobile: 0795 614 8566

## Books Bought

MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

020 8364 3554 / 07855387574

[ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk)

## PillarCare

Quality support and care at home

- Hourly Care from 4 hours – 24 hours
- Live-In/Night Duty/Sleepover Care
- Convalescent and Personal Health Care
- Compassionate and Affordable Service
- Professional, Qualified, Kind Care Staff
- Registered with the CQC and UKHCA

Call us on Freephone 0800 028 4645

PILLARCARE  
THE BUSINESS CENTRE

36 GLOUCESTER AVENUE · LONDON NW1 7BB  
PHONE: 020 7482 2188 · FAX: 020 7900 2308

[www.pillarcare.co.uk](http://www.pillarcare.co.uk)

## SPRING GROVE

London's Most Luxurious

RETIREMENT HOME

214 Finchley Road  
London NW3



- Entertainment
- Activities
- Stress Free Living
- 24 House Staffing Excellent Cuisine
- Full En-Suite Facilities

Call for more information or a personal tour

**020 8446 2117**

or **020 7794 4455**

[enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk)

# Jewish Britain on film

A fascinating collection of films and documentaries depicting a century of Jewish life in Britain has just been made available to watch for free on the British Film Institute's online archive.

The collection, which includes documentary, first-person accounts, historical dramas and artists' work, has everything from a 19 minute film of the Chief Rabbi's Emergency

Council in 1947 to rarely seen material from the 1962 documentary *The Vanishing Street*, a moving record of a once-thriving East End Jewish community on the cusp of enormous change. The various films explore many big issues as well as documenting the family weddings and community celebrations that typify Jewish life in Britain.



One of the many films available to view for free in the BFI's collection

More information on [www.player.bfi.org.uk/free/collection/jewish-britain-on-film](http://www.player.bfi.org.uk/free/collection/jewish-britain-on-film)

## THE YEAR OF IRENA SENDLER

Throughout 2018, Learning from the Righteous – the Holocaust education charity that works with children aged between 10 and 14 of all faiths and cultures – will be celebrating the life of Irena Sendler.

Sendler was a remarkable woman who co-ordinated a rescue operation that successfully enabled many hundreds of Jewish children to escape the horrors

of the Warsaw Ghetto. Over the next 12 months all the Charity's workshops, exhibitions and events will focus on her story, its historical context and the lessons that can be learnt from her example of altruism.

The launch event is on Sunday 21 January in north London. More information from [ros@learningfromtherighteous.org](mailto:ros@learningfromtherighteous.org) or 020 8364 9404.



## Norfolk here we come

The AJR has just unveiled the 2018 destination for its annual trip – the wonderful county of Norfolk.

Highlights of the four-day trip, which takes place from 13 – 17 May, will include Sandringham House, Sandringham Church and Sandringham Museum, Felbrigg Hall, Sainsbury's Visual Arts Gallery, Norwich Cathedral, a boat trip on the Norfolk Broads and a steam train through the beautiful East Anglian countryside.

The group will be based in Norwich, which has a fascinating Jewish history dating back to



Step in the footsteps of the Royal Family at the parish church of St Mary Magdalene, Sandringham

medieval times. Travel will be by coach from London and the AJR can also help arrange travel from other parts of England to Norwich.

For more information please contact Susan Harrod on **020 8385 3070** or [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

## AFTER BRESLAU

A new documentary featuring the fates of 14 young survivors from Breslau is being premiered on 14 January at JW3.

'We are Jews from Breslau' is a film of pressing topicality that shows where a policy of closed doors towards refugees leads, and which relates the founding of the State of Israel to the experience of the Holocaust through the lives and stories of its protagonists. More information and trailer on [www.judenausbreslaufilm.de](http://www.judenausbreslaufilm.de)

Published by The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), a company limited by guarantee.

**Registered office: Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, Finchley, London N3 1HF**

Registered in England and Wales with charity number: 1149882 and company number: 8220991

**Telephone 020 8385 3070 e-mail [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)**

For the latest AJR news, including details of forthcoming events and information about our services, visit [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)

Printed by FBprinters, Unit 5, St Albans House, St Albans Lane, London NW11 7QB Tel: 020 8458 3220 Email: [info@fbprinters.com](mailto:info@fbprinters.com)