



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Where Are They Now?

Where did Jewish refugees come from and where did they settle in Britain? This may seem obvious but in fact is a little complicated.



The Great Court surrounding the Reading Room at the British Museum where several of the Jewish refugees liked to work (copyright VisitLondon)

It is obvious because we all know that most Jewish refugees came from German-speaking central Europe to Britain. Of course, there were many Italians and even more from east Europe: Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, especially if we include those who fled from the Russian Revolution after 1917, others who left Hungary after 1956 and Poland after the war and then after successive waves of antisemitism, especially in 1968. These east European and Soviet refugees are often treated as a marginal part of the story, even in the histories of these countries, but they were important.

So, what is the complication? Did you happen to see the BBC2 documentary

series, *Rise of the Nazis*, in September? There was surprisingly little archive film. Most of the programmes consisted of interviews, the best being interviews with leading historians, and beautifully filmed dramatised sequences. But the archive film was particularly interesting. There was one sequence just before the 1932 election in Germany. The clip was chosen to show the middle German heartland that Hitler claimed to speak for: rural, Aryan, mostly women and children. What was interesting, though, was who was missing: Jews, of course, Communists, intellectuals, and, above all, people from big cities.

The point is that most Jewish refugees came from cities. Of course, the *Continued on page 2*

### SHANA TOVAH

We start October in the middle of the high holy days and with our wishes that all our readers have a very happy and healthy new year.

The next few weeks are very busy for us and we particularly ask you to mark your diaries for the annual Kristallnacht commemorations early next month.

In the meantime we hope you find our October magazine interesting and, as always, we welcome any feedback.

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*Please note that the views expressed throughout this publication are not necessarily the views of the AJR.*

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## Where are they now? (cont.)

Jewish population throughout Europe was largely urban, many working as lawyers, doctors, university teachers and businessmen. They didn't just come from cities but, crucially, from very particular neighbourhoods in Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and Prague.

When they fled from Germany and Austria many initially settled in other large cities, including Prague, Amsterdam (like Anne Frank's family) and Paris (like Judith Kerr's family), and then when they came to Britain, they came to London, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool and university towns such as Oxford, Cambridge and Bristol.

My own family was typical. My maternal grandmother and her two children were from west Berlin and came to Oxford, where my grandmother lived for the rest of her life. My uncle, a psychologist, worked at various hospitals in London, my mother was a GP in London and later also worked mostly at various London hospitals. My father came from Warsaw to Britain via Brussels and Paris, arrived in Liverpool, spent the war in Glasgow and most of the rest of his life in London.

In short, the great modern Jewish migration was not a movement from European countries to Britain so much as from particular neighbourhoods in central and east European cities to particular areas in a few British cities: north Oxford, a handful of streets in Cambridge, the area around *Finchleystrasse*.

For example, take Bloomsbury. There was the famous Dillon's University Bookshop on Malet Street where Eva Dworetzki moved its German section in 1959 from the well-known bookshop Bumpus. Breslauer & Meyer, the Berlin bookshop, was restarted in Bloomsbury by Martin Breslauer in 1937, later run by his son. There is the famous Warburg Library, home to so many distinguished art historians, and now the Wiener Library has made the move to Russell Square.

Nearby is the British Museum, where the great historian Norbert Elias, helped

by a Jewish refugee fund, worked on his masterpiece, *The Civilising Process* and where Paul Hirsch donated his collection of almost twenty thousand volumes on music in 1946. Stefan Zweig worked regularly in the famous British Museum Reading Room when he first arrived in Britain in 1933 and it was where Emeric Pressburger did the research for the famous duel in the film, *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*. Just round the corner is Birkbeck, where Pevsner was professor of the History of Art and EJ Hobsbawm taught for more than thirty years.

At UCL on Gower Street, Hugh Blaschko and Sir Bernard Katz both worked in AV Hill's lab, Armando Momigliano, was professor of Ancient History from 1951-75, the poet Michael Hamburger was assistant lecturer in German in the 1950s and the great Chimen Abramsky, antiquarian bookseller and scholar, was reader in Jewish history and later head of the department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

Go south to Holborn and the LSE, onetime home to Hersch Lauterpacht, one of the two heroes of Philippe Sands's terrific book, *East West Street*, Friedrich Hayek, professor of economics for almost twenty years, and the philosophers, Karl Popper and Ernest Gellner, who both taught there for many years. Lauterpacht studied law at the University of Lviv, Hayek and Popper were from Vienna and Gellner was brought up in Prague. LSE undergraduates included the famous financier, George Soros, born in Budapest.

It is as if the great cultural centres of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe were tipped up and their contents poured into the lecture rooms and libraries of central London. Look at the current issue of the magazine, *Jewish Renaissance*, and you can see the same is true of Oxford.

Of course, there are exceptions. The artist Kurt Schwitters lived in obscurity in Ambleside in the Lake District after the war. There was an interesting group of refugee artists who were drawn to Wales, including Martin Bloch and Heinz Koppel, who taught painting for many years at the Merthyr Tydfil Educational Settlement. The writer Arthur Koestler lived for some time in Suffolk, where

he would play chess with visitors like George Steiner and Julian Barnes.

Helen Lewis, a Czech who was sent to Terezin and Auschwitz, founded the Belfast Modern Dance Group. The Dundee University Archives are now home to more than 100,000 prints and negatives of the great Jewish Hungarian photographer, Michael Peto, after his son settled there. The great medieval historian, Walter Ullmann, taught history and modern languages at Ratcliffe College, Leicester, before he moved to Cambridge where he spent the rest of his life. Kurt Hahn, a German refugee, founded Gordonstoun School in Scotland in 1934. Its alumni included Prince Philip (who loved his time there) and Prince Charles (who didn't, as viewers of *The Crown* may recall).

In almost every part of Britain refugees from Nazism found sanctuary and made their mark. The AJR has placed blue plaques of remembrance from Kitchener Camp in Sandwich, Kent, in the south, to Whitehaven, in Cumbria, and north to Edinburgh, where Rudolf Bing founded the Edinburgh Festival.

This range is an important part of the history. But so is the pattern. Yes, refugees settled in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and many parts of England. But their greatest impact was in a small handful of cities and university towns. They were far more concentrated than earlier Jewish immigrants. And this largely explains their extraordinary impact on postwar British culture, from small shops to concert halls and theatres, from physics labs to the BBC.

**David Herman**

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## OUR KITCHENER PLAQUE

On Monday 2 September AJR unveiled a plaque in Sandwich, Kent, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Kitchener Camp - one of the lesser known acts of rescue of Britain's WW2 history.

The plaque was unveiled on the wall of the Bell Hotel – a popular meeting place for the refugees - by Robert May and Adrienne Harris, whose fathers were brothers and were both Directors at the camp, along with AJR Trustee, Frank Harding, who devised

our commemorative plaque scheme. Guests included several Kitchener Camp descendants and the Mayor of Sandwich.

More information about the Kitchener Camp, which saved the life of approximately 4,000 refugees from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, can be found on [www.kitchenercamp.co.uk](http://www.kitchenercamp.co.uk).

The plaque is the 11th in AJR's scheme, which helps to form a tangible link between key locations where refugees



From L-R Adrienne Harris, Robert May, Frank Harding

from the Holocaust were welcomed and those who made an everlasting contribution and the local community as well as fascinating residents and visitors.

## RESTORING GERMAN CITIZENSHIP

AJR warmly welcomes the recent announcement by the German government of two decrees that simplify the process and widen the eligibility criteria for those descendants of victims of National Socialist oppression applying for the restoration of German citizenship.

This simplified path to citizenship was previously restricted to a time window from 1957 to 1970. It is now open to all children (and their descendants) whose German parents acquired foreign citizenship due to National Socialist persecution and consequently lost their German citizenship.

Additionally, the decrees now permit citizenship applications from children (and their descendants) born before 1 April 1953 to foreign fathers married to German mothers who had been victims of National Socialist oppression and lost their citizenship due to their marriage. The decrees also provide for certain children born out of wedlock to foreign mothers and German fathers suffering from National Socialist oppression. Under the former rules these children could not become German citizens.

Applicants will also need to demonstrate basic knowledge of the German language and the German social and political order.

Eligible persons will also not be required to give up other nationalities they may possess and will be naturalised free of charge.

The new rules apply to all those born up to 1 January 2000 while there is also a process for naturalising a descendant born after this date as German.

Full details of the announcement of the decrees is available at <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/EN/2019/08/wiedergutmachung-ns-verbrechen-en.html>

## A Journey of Zeitzeugen

AJR's Rosemary Peters recently escorted four AJR members to Berlin, who had been invited to take part as 'contemporary witnesses' in a special four-day programme organised by the German government and the Goethe Institute.

Among the group was 94 year old Alice Alexander, who since wrote a detailed report for East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue. Their itinerary included the Foundation Exile Museum – due to be completed in 2025 – and the Wannsee district, where Alice found it "difficult to associate the large and elegant villa, surrounded by a beautiful garden, with the unspeakable evil planned there".

They also attended meetings with, among others, the Federal Agency for Civic Education and Holocaust Remembrance, Centropa (an organisation which records Jewish memories), and Heimatsucher, a group of second generation survivors, and addressed a very large audience of teachers and schoolchildren, which was well attended by the media. Alice said there was sadness on the trip, for obvious reasons, but that it was very well-planned and reassured her that "present-day Germany is doing everything possible to ensure there will never be a repetition of the past".

Also among the group was Tania Barnett, daughter of Ruth, who afterwards

wrote how privileged she feels to have a Jewish heritage, believing that adaptability, survivor instinct and the transmission of solid values provide the key to Jewish survival. She also told us how the trip has made her "cherish our Judeo-Christian values, which many UK laws and institutions are based on. I commit to challenge any threats to the freedoms which these values bring, such as discrimination, including antisemitism and sexism. I commit to being an Upstander rather than a Bystander, whenever these values are threatened. I hope always to be brave and take risks, rather than play too safe, if my conscience and integrity are challenged."

# GIFT FOR A LIFETIME

Can you remember when *refugeenglish* was the order of the day? When you might have overheard a Hampstead mother call out to her son in the street below: "Humphrey, schtop playing mit dirt!" exposing in one soundbite the generational predicament? When jokes based on misunderstood idiom and literal translation were passed round in Swiss Cottage every day, like the one about the wife sitting downstairs in a double-decker, telling the conductor "The lord above will pay"? You could call it Dorice-speak.

It's all about language, isn't it? The generation that arrived before the war had to learn quickly; speaking deutsch in public was not on. The passengers on that bus would have been treated to some choice dialogue: "We steig out at the next station." An entire generation had to go back to school, gaining a new language but never losing their accents. Indeed, accent became the indicator of age at the time of immigration. The critical point lay somewhere between 14 and 16. Over-sixteens rarely lost their accents; under-fourteens usually managed it, sometimes acquiring the tone of foster parents or locality.

The best of the bunch became highly articulate, making English their instrument of choice as authors, editors, publishers. Michael Hamburger, poet and supreme translator of Rilke and Hölderlin, was equally at home in English and German. Arthur Koestler, novelist and polemicist, fired words from a flamethrower; his accent left scorch marks. His friend George Mikes knew enough English to make millions laugh with *How to be an Alien* which was published by André Deutsch, another Hungarian Brit.

A Berlin-born member of that gifted generation, Judith Kerr, author of *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*, illustrated her own books and won the hearts of English children. She came to this country aged 13. For her language was the soil in which one grew roots. Hans Habe, Hilde

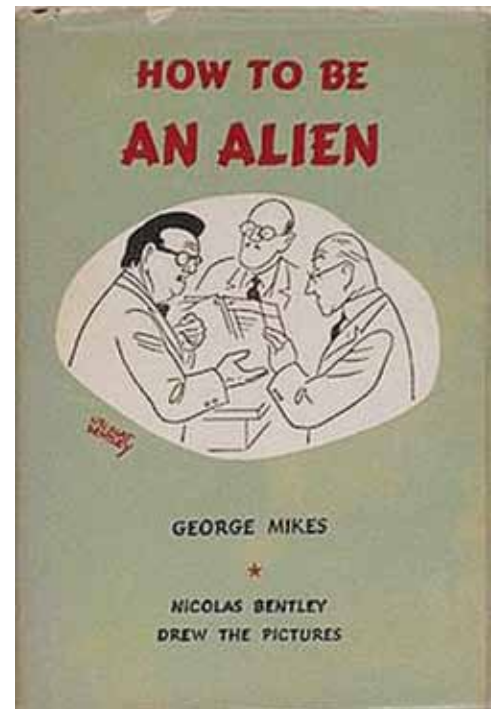
Spiel, Robert Neumann, Heinrich Mann made the transition to writing in English; Friedrich Torberg, Ferenc Molnar, Thomas Mann and many others didn't. Some ended up speaking and writing mishmash.

First-generation survivors who have mastered English the hard way tend to hold on to their version of it. They do not see the irony of playing keepers of the Queen's English when their offspring are at ease in the language that is spoken out there. It can make for strange conversations over dinner.

The natives have always sought to baffle newcomers by turning language into a code. Sport makes a big contribution through phrases borrowed from football, golf, snooker, even hunting to hounds and shove ha'penny (e.g. "streets ahead"). The most insidious source may well be cricket as a metaphor - sticky wicket, knocked for six, that sort of thing. Silly mid-on is quite a stretch if you were born in Vienna.

Love, however, was around before tennis. On top of that there is jargon from the wonderful world of woke ("how to pivot from a perspective of frustration..."), rhyming slang, limericks, clerihews, cryptic crosswords and other verbal pranks.

Our English neighbours are often accused of being unreconstructed monoglots. Not really; they speak in many tongues: private and official, demotic and posh,



simple and stately, reflecting Germanic and Norman roots. And they do not shrink from creating turbulence by changing nouns into verbs (to transition), plurals into singulars (data, media), singulars into gender-neutral plurals (his to their), dear sir/madam into hi, "see-you-later" from a promise into goodbye, "calling out" from vocal into moral, the principle being that language is constantly evolving and this is the day of wokabulary.

Confusing? Maybe. But on arrival in their new-found land every immigrant is handed a gift voucher redeemable in sublime poetry and prose, in a licence to engage and to contribute, in a challenge to break the code and ultimately to attempt a joke. A stake in the culture of the country gives one strength.

It is a treasure that lasts a lifetime.

**Victor Ross**

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# LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



## SPEAKING GERMAN IN ISRAEL



My desire to learn German came late in my life. In fact, I had always shied away from the sound of the language. It was

the language of the nation that had caused so much suffering to my family and my people. But when my parents moved to Israel in 1983 they brought with them folders full of documents, letters and family correspondence from their past, and I was curious to find out what they contained.

So I resolved to learn German. As a result, some of the contents of those folders were eventually published in one form or another (*The Tobacco Road*, an English version of the letters sent by my 20-year-old uncle in the USA to his family in Hamburg in 1928 before his untimely and tragic death a year later in Shanghai; and *Aber Seid Alle Beruhigt*, containing the letters sent in German by my paternal grandmother from Hamburg and Theresienstadt in 1940-42). Some of the documents also constituted the basis for my novel, *Time Out of Joint*, in which I attempted to reconstruct the world that was lost.

I grew up in post-war London, and although the mother-tongue of both my parents was German, I hardly heard the language in my childhood. It was

not wise to speak German at that time and place, and luckily both my parents spoke good English (albeit with an accent). Since learning German and joining German-speaking groups here in Israel, I have found that people here spoke German relatively freely in the early days of Israel's existence. Thus, the members of the German-speaking groups I attend today learned German as a living language and not, as I did, as a foreign tongue.

My first German teacher was Gerda Hoffer. Originally from Austria, she fled to England and worked as a German teacher in a Berlitz language school. After the premature death of her husband she moved to Israel. They were childless, by design, or so she maintained, but her life was full with meeting friends, playing bridge, writing books and attending meetings of the German-speaking lodge of B'nai Brith, where she often gave lectures.

I found her at the recommendation of a colleague, and though I hardly knew a word of German, she soon had me forming sentences and increasing my vocabulary at our weekly meetings in her comfortable Jerusalem flat. Soon our lessons developed into political discussions, which sometimes became quite heated as Gerda had very definite views on everything. Aged sixteen she had been imprisoned as a Communist in her native Vienna, although over the years her views moderated. Still, whatever she did she did wholeheartedly.

She had written several novels in German, as well as a volume containing a series of

vignettes of outstanding Jewish women, and these were published in Austria and Germany. Under her supervision, I translated her thoroughly-researched book of vignettes, *Zeit der Heldinnen* (The Time of Heroines) into English, but haven't yet found a publisher for it. When Gerda died in 2012, aged 93, friends of all ages and from a wide variety of backgrounds came together to honour her memory, and a plaque commemorating her was put up in the garden of one of them.

I have continued to pursue my studies of German, managing somehow to stumble along in a German-speaking group which meets twice a month in Jerusalem, under the auspices of the Association of Former Residents of Central Europe, to meet, chat or discuss a given topic. I also attend a weekly German class run by the local pensioners club near my home. We have a delightful young teacher, Heike, who was born in Germany and came to live in Israel after marrying an Israeli. She is full of lively and original ideas to keep our ancient brains active, getting us to play games, act out scenes, prepare little talks, improve our grammar and even enjoy a picnic – all in German.

It seems that there are quite a few Israelis who yearn to hear and speak the language of their youth. And although I don't quite fit that mould, and even used to recoil from the language, I'm glad that I manage to converse relatively freely and make myself understood in German, though I can't guarantee that my grammar is flawless.



## ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING

The Annual Election Meeting of the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at 3pm on 5 December 2019 at Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF.

All questions for the chair should be submitted by **Friday 29 November** to the Chief Executive at the same postal address, or by email to [Michael@ajr.org.uk](mailto:Michael@ajr.org.uk). If you wish to attend please contact Karin Pereira on 020 8385 3070 or at [Karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:Karin@ajr.org.uk).



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# Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

## ARE WE KOSHER?

One of the very few advantages of getting older is that it appears easier to become more quickly irritated. This happened to me when I read the handout for the AJR annual tea which accompanied your August issue.

I tried to deconstruct the sentence which was prominently displayed as part of the event heading. It read 'Tea will be strictly Kosher under the London Beth Din'

It is probably sensible to have a kosher tea as this means that some people will attend who may not have done so otherwise. However I failed to understand the necessity for including the word 'strictly' in this context. Perhaps the reference was to 'Strictly dancing' – but this is apparently the combination of Strictly Ballroom and Come Dancing. It would be an interesting exercise to see what two phrases could be combined to form Strictly Kosher.

Having failed to understand what the alternative might be (perhaps 'deceptively Kosher', or 'carelessly Kosher' – but certainly not 'leniently kosher') I am concerned that the AJR is heading into dangerous uncharted territory. Humour aside, this is a plea that the AJR should not become embroiled in the endless discussion about what is the strictest, best, or most rigid kashrut.

*Arthur Oppenheimer, Hove, Sussex*

## The SS WARSZAWA

As an AJR member and child refugee I was saddened by the article (August) regarding the attempt to rescue Polish Jewish children on the SS *Warszawa*. In spite of their best efforts the two men in England were not able to secure enough sponsors to rescue all the children. What an indictment of the English Jewish population that relatively few people financially sponsored the 10,000 Kinder into England or took them into their homes. It was left to the Quakers and many other non-Jewish organisations to provide the money and shelter, leaving so many to die.

*Bob Norton, Nottingham*

## KINDERTRANSPORT SANCTUARY AT WADDESDON MANOR

The articles in recent AJR Journals about the blue plaques were of great interest. I would just like to mention a plaque which, though not blue, is sometimes overlooked by Jewish visiting parties to Waddesdon Manor. It is situated in the grounds at the back of the Manor, by the Lion Steps and says "This plaque is dedicated to the memory of Mr and Mrs de Rothschild in gratitude for providing sanctuary to The Cedars boys and girls in 1939" (not the exact words). I am the sole survivor in this country and a group of us were accommodated in a house called "The Cedars" on the Waddesdon Estate and well-looked after by the Rothschild family.

*Helga Brown (née Steinhardt), Abingdon, Oxon*

## AJR's EASTBOURNE HOLIDAY

This year's trip to Eastbourne in July was, once again, much enjoyed by participating members. Mr Abraham David writes "It was very well organised and we were well looked after: I would recommend this holiday to everyone". Mrs Anne Goodwin writes "I particularly appreciated that everyone was so friendly and welcoming as it was the first time I was on holiday without my husband whom I lost last year". Mr Solly and Mrs Bertha Ohayon invited relatives to accompany them who wrote enthusiastically that "the whole week was a great success and it was interesting for us to meet other AJR members, all of whom had a story to tell".

## SAILING WITHOUT A RUDDER

The mother of Parliament has caught an incurable disease, which keeps her family and former friends from her bedside. There is no precedent, but numerous disagreeing doctors offer their advice. Yet, her disease has been forecast in these pages long ago. It is likened to a ship without a rudder which causes her to capsize.

*Fred Stern, Wembley Middx*

## LABOUR REALITY?

M David and G Weiner (September) express great surprise that their Labour party could be antisemitic. Could they have convinced themselves there was nothing to see during that notorious conference with the Soviet hammer and sickle on show and Palestinian flags abundant but not one Union Jack? Maybe they failed to detect the exodus of party activists, MPs and Peers - both Jews and non-Jews – who have left the Labour party, citing anti-Jewish racism as their primary reason?

David and Weiner focus on defending a trivial and brief charge sheet against Corbyn. By contrast, many former Labour figures know what to make of Corbyn and his advisors. John Mann MP, who is being made the antisemitism tsar by the Conservative government, is unequivocal about the blame for the horrendous transformation of the governing institutions of the Labour Party lying with Corbyn. Mann (Sunday Times 8 September) says: "The party will not survive the erosion of its principles and its soul by racist infiltration. Corbyn has given the green light to the antisemites."

Luciana Berger MP, in the same Sunday Times, says: "(Labour's leaders) have a hierarchy of racism where antisemitism is deemed less bad than other forms of prejudice...(they) have betrayed its history as an anti-racist party"

These, decent Labour members have nailed the reality of what Corbynite Labour means and what it would mean for Jews should it ever succeed to become the government of the UK.

*Greg Lubinsky, London NW6*

## WONDERFUL SUPPORT

My mother Rose Coten z'l recently passed away and I wanted to express my appreciation to the AJR who were with me during a very difficult time. It is a wonderful, supportive organisation which is there when you need it most. Thank you to all those who helped me during a difficult time both recently and over

the years: Sandie Myers, a wonderful Social Worker; Sharon and Dipti in administration; David Kaye, Finance Director, who gave me advice. Everyone was so kind and helpful.  
*Rabbi Stanley Coten, Ruislip*

### QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

Thank you for devoting your first two pages to Holocaust education (September), the importance of which cannot be over-rated. I do not see the crucial element being with 'quality or quantity' but rather the creeping negative effect of denial on any progress made.

Holocaust remembrance, commemoration and education are positive and essential but not sufficient to overcome the negativity of denial without serious action. Overt Holocaust denial is only the pinnacle of the iceberg that is visible and can be easily countered if the will is there. The enemy is the insidious denial that is normalised in our institutions and particularly in our approach to current ongoing genocides.

Holocaust commemoration and education is not taken seriously enough to inspire action, while genocide predating the Holocaust is air-brushed out and countries that we have a vested political and economic interest in are not held to account for the current Crimes Against Humanity they commit against their own people.

Until this deep and largely unconscious conflict between remembrance and denial is exposed and understood, neither quality nor quantity of Holocaust education is likely to make any serious inroad against the currently intensifying antisemitism and racism in general. We need discussion panels run by every local authority and also televised, consisting of four representative speakers: representing Holocaust survivors, survivors of genocide since the Holocaust, genocide prior to the Holocaust, and current on-going genocide, together with plenty of time for audience participation. I have

contributed on panels in one or two forward looking schools moving in this direction and the effect on the student audience is awesome and inspires the will for action. Action then needs to be initiated to find ways of using the UN Associates to support and use the international laws we already have for the protection of Human Rights and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity.  
*Ruth Barnett, London NW6*

### WHO WAS THE TIGER?

I would like to take issue with David Wirth's claim to detect in the enigmatic tiger in *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* a hint of the terror inspired by the Nazis in those who fled from them (September).

On 18 March 2019, not long before her death, the Gesellschaft für Exilforschung (Society for Exile Studies), the leading academic organisation concerned with emigration from Nazi Germany, awarded honorary membership to Judith Kerr. I had the honour of delivering the formal address at the award ceremony at the Wiener Library.

I see Judith Kerr's tiger as standing more in the tradition of British children's stories where animals act almost like humans, appearing so to speak as half walrus, half carpenter. That tradition goes back to Beatrix Potter, to Jemima Puddle-Duck and Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, as well as to Lewis Carroll, encompassing AA Milne's Winnie the Pooh and Michael Bond's Paddington Bear. In an article in February 1954 in the monthly journal of the AJR, Kenneth Ambrose (born Kurt Abrahamsohn in Stettin) pointed to the gentle, humane quality of the books that he was reading to his British-born children, by contrast with their gory German counterparts recounting the grisly fates of Struwwelpeter (Shock-Headed Peter) and Max and Moritz, to say nothing of the Grimms.

Judith Kerr's tiger has just that hint of mystery, that frisson of the unknown to appeal to young children; he is not merely a bouncing bundle of energy,

like AA Milne's Tigger, nor on the other hand does he have the fearful symmetry of William Blake's Tyger, stalking the forests of our nights. Judith Kerr's tiger is not overtly threatening; he knocks politely at the door of Sophie's family's home and displays his manners as he sits down at table. But he devours all the food in the house ravenously and drinks the water tank dry, so Sophie cannot have her evening bath - whether to her regret or her relief we are not told. Finally, although Sophie's mother lays in a stock of tiger food, he never returns. The tiger remains a mystery, his story an indication to children that there may exist a world beyond the mundane world of adults, a world that can be approached through the power of a child's imagination, a world where the normal rules of everyday life are suspended in playful wonder. After all, if one can have cat food or dog food, why should there not be an imaginative space for tiger food?'

Wirth claims that Judith Kerr was 'told as a young child that her father could be grabbed at any moment by either the Gestapo or the SS'. Yet the young Judith Kerr knew nothing about the threat to her father, as her parents kept it from her during the brief period that they spent in Germany under Nazi rule. The first thing she knew was that her father, the renowned theatre critic Alfred Kerr, had disappeared overnight on 14 February 1933. He had fled to Prague, where it was impossible for the Gestapo to 'grab' him. The rest of the Kerr family slipped across the border to Switzerland on 5 March 1933. I also find David Wirth's arguments based on the similarity between the words 'Tiger' and 'Hitler' unconvincing. One can easily play word games to come to completely different conclusions: what about 'Gestapo' and 'Guest', for example, or 'Hitler' and 'Butler', which have in common the same combination of letters as that cited by Wirth. As for his attempt to compare the empty taps in little Sophie's home to the shower heads in the Nazi gas chambers, words fail me.

*Anthony Grenville, London*

# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Last month Yad Vashem commemorated the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War with a new online exhibition featuring the final days of Jewish family life in Europe.

**1939: Jewish Families on the Brink of War** looks at the life and times of a dozen Jewish families as the Holocaust begins to take its inexorable toll. Documents, photographs and artefacts from the Yad Vashem archives, many donated by survivors and their families, form the basis of this powerful and tragic personal history.

A 56-page diary, written in September 1939 by Mira Zabludowski, describes the terror of machine gun-fire and the thunder of overhead planes as she visits her parents in the first months of the Nazi occupation of Warsaw. She was one of

the lucky ones who managed to escape Poland and return to Israel. Her father died in July 1940 in Warsaw and her mother was murdered in Treblinka.

Pre-war photographs show the 21-member Majer family from Belgrade, including eight children and numerous grandchildren, happily posing in holiday attire, unaware of the coming devastation. Only one of them survived; one died before the war and the rest were murdered.

It is a typically nostalgic family photo; far from any sense of impending doom,

the older family members were reassured by the German courtesy that had been extended towards them during WW1. But in fact most of the Jews of Belgrade were murdered less than a year after the German invasion.

None of this is new to Holocaust survivors. But the graphic importance of this exhibition, which includes a darkly prophetic sketch by the artist **Felix Nussbaum**, is the way it captures a sense of Europe's Jews pitched between innocent joy and the coming horror as the Nazis tightened their grip on the jugular vein of Europe, destroying centuries of Jewish life.



*The Great Disaster,*  
Felix  
Nussbaum  
1939



These pages are from an album that Jiri Bader's friends made for him on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah, which he celebrated in the Theresienstadt ghetto. The album was illustrated by caricaturist Max Placek, a relative of Jiri's, who came from Jiri's home town of Kyjov, in Czechoslovakia.

In October 1944, Jiri Bader and his father Pavel were deported to Auschwitz, where they were murdered. Jiri's mother Grete and his sister Vera survived. Vera Bader donated the album and other artifacts to Yad Vashem.

The extracts show how Jiri was growing

up surrounded by love. His grandpa and grandma delight in his talking about "Gaga" (the ducks) and his discovery that the nanny waits for the "mail".

"Soon he will be a sportsman in body and soul. His favourite pastime is the car. After that, school, where he behaves well, but he likes the store more. The wagons that come and go – he has to know everything and see everything. Years come, years pass, and the future looks secure and rosy. But things are turning out differently... because in our good old house – which stands firm as in days gone by – many things have changed: the Aryan landlord is busy."

"Even 80 years on it is still hard to understand the huge discrepancy between Jewish life before the war and their tragic fate during the Holocaust," said Yona Kobo, researcher and curator of the online exhibition. "We see families from Yugoslavia, Germany, Austria, Poland, Romania, Greece and Czechoslovakia in their happiest days – weddings, births and other joyous events – but also in hard financial times, searching for escape routes, struggling to cope with their worsening daily lives – and in the end, the mass murder of the Jews without distinction between men, women and children."

<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/1939/index.asp>

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# LEOPOLDSTADT ON STAGE

Alert AJR readers have probably booked their seats already for Tom Stoppard's new play, *Leopoldstadt*, which will have its world première in London's West End next year.

**Martin Mauthner** shares a few insights about the work.

Late in his career, Sir Tom, who was born in 1937, has chosen to work his own background as a Czech Jewish refugee into a generational drama set in what was once Vienna's most distinct Jewish area, the 'Zweiter Bezirk' - 'second municipal district' - or 1020 Wien (also home to the Prater park and its iconic giant wheel). Located near the Danube, Leopoldstadt's crowded tenements traditionally housed the thousands of mostly orthodox Jews fleeing poverty and persecution in the empire and beyond. Ironically, the district is named after an Austrian emperor who expelled its Jews in the seventeenth century.

Stoppard's play is about the evolution of such a family: Hermann's grandfather, who wore a caftan; his father, who went to the opera in a top hat; and Hermann himself, a factory owner, who has the opera singers to dinner. Needless to say, the play focuses on the tragic fate of the family, which mirrored that of millions of others, including that of Sigmund Freud, who went to school in Leopoldstadt.

Stoppard told *The Guardian* that his new play 'took a year to write but the gestation was much longer,' adding that 'quite a lot of it is personal to me but I made it about a Viennese family so that it



Sir Tom Stoppard



Orthodox Jews on Karmeliterplatz in Vienna's Leopoldstadt district in 1915

wouldn't seem to be about me.'

His father, Eugen Sträussler, worked as a doctor in Zlin, Moravia - where Stoppard was born - for the progressive Bata shoe factory, a family concern that grew into a multinational enterprise during the glory days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. With the Nazis about to pounce on Czechoslovakia in 1939, the firm transferred its Jewish employees to branches further afield.

A few years later the Sträussler family found themselves in Singapore, where Bata had a factory, facing the threat of Japanese occupation. Tom, his brother Peter and their mother Martha set out for Australia but were diverted to India. Eugen stayed behind but did not survive either Japanese captivity or the bombing of a ship on which he was trying to flee. Stoppard's grandparents and several other relatives in Europe also perished.

Having started his schooling in Darjeeling, Stoppard came to Britain with Peter and their mother in 1946; she had married a British major, Kenneth Stoppard, who was returning home.

Various reasons explain why Leopoldstadt became Vienna's main Jewish zone. Jews have lived in the capital at least since the 12th century, with all the familiar ups and downs, but in the 17th century a ghetto was set up in Leopoldstadt. Gradually conditions improved: religious restrictions on the empire's Jews were partly lifted during the Enlightenment by Joseph II, eldest son of the antisemitic empress Maria Theresa.

But it was the emperor Franz Joseph who emancipated the Jews by granting them equal rights in 1867. That encouraged persecuted Jews fleeing Russian pogroms in the 19th century to head for Vienna, arriving at the Nordbahnhof, the railway station near Leopoldstadt that opened in 1865 to improve links between Prague and Warsaw.

During and after WW1 some 350,000 refugees transited the station, fleeing war and destitution in Galicia and Bukovina. Between 50,000 - 70,000 of them were impoverished and mostly orthodox 'Ostjuden', to be disparaged not only by Austria's 'Aryans' but also by many of its assimilated and increasingly secular Jews. The door opened to the rapid growth of virulent antisemitism in Austria.

Tom Stoppard's new play is sure to provide audiences with much food for thought, especially as immigration remains a highly controversial topic on both sides of the Atlantic. With what the *New York Times* calls his 'deep humanistic commitment to civil liberties', we surely know where Stoppard stands.

***Leopoldstadt* will première at the Wyndham Theatre in February but there will be a special performance around Holocaust Memorial day in January, to which all former 'Leopoldstadters' are invited. Please contact Peter Phillips at the address below if you are a refugee from Leopoldstadt and would like to attend.**  
[peterphillips35@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:peterphillips35@tiscali.co.uk)

# A Story of Survival

Liz Brodie was born Lisbeth Judelowitsch in Poznan, Poland, in May 1911 to Rabbi Nathan and Martha Judelowitsch. Lisbeth was an only child and worked briefly as a journalist before she and her mother were sent to the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942.

After the war she came to England. She spent time in a nursing home recovering from her ordeal. She wanted to teach as she could speak five languages, but was only allowed to work as a cleaner. She decided to go to the USA where she could start afresh doing what she was educated to do. She went to Westfield, NJ, and with wonderful help from the American Rabbi and others she founded a Hebrew School in the local synagogue where she was revered and she taught many generations of children till her death at 90 in 2001. After a time she felt she should tell her story and did speak to audiences. Her fiancé with other males were all murdered in a Polish village by the Nazis. She never married. This is her story as written by herself.

My name is Liz Brodie. Early in 1940 in the Warsaw ghetto a few heroes rose to defend the ghetto and to resist the Nazis to their death. I was there and I was witness.

Only a handful of us are still alive to pass on a warning to a young generation who have grown up in a comfortable life that they take for granted. We must try to

make young people realise the greatest danger comes from indifference. Many of us want to forget the past, while the wrong people remember it: those who hate the Jews and deny that the Holocaust happened.

I should explain why I came to be in the Warsaw Ghetto. Before I came to Warsaw, I lived in the beautiful and cultured city of Poznan, which had a very rich Jewish past. We Jews were deported in December of 1939 to a small Jewish village near Lublin.

Friends in Warsaw advised me to come there, where I could teach languages to people hoping to get away to foreign countries. So this is what I did. My friends had connections with Germans, who were smuggling food into the ghetto in exchange for valuables. One of the Germans asked them if they knew someone who could translate Polish pamphlets into German and my friends mentioned me.

The German commandant came to rely on these translations. When the ghetto liquidation and the transports to the extermination camps began on a large scale, he put me into the only safe place he knew: a walled former monastery which had been turned into a prison, where the Germans captured the Polish resistance fighters. It was called the 'Pawiak'. There, right inside the lion's den, I continued to do translations and clerical work as one of the Jewish working prisoners. And all around me the ghetto became a slaughter house. Probably would have lost my mind, were it not for the fact that I worked 16 hours a day under unbelievable tensions. Twice, I saw my own death warrant.

My driving ambition was to tell the world what had happened. But when the end came, I was all alone with an immensity of memories that no one wanted to believe. I was regarded with suspicion. "How was it that you survived?" "What did you do to stay alive?" I fell into silence, alone with my nightmares.

We are grateful to AJR member Erica Matthews for sharing this moving story of her father's cousin Liz Brodie.

Decades passed, until I happened on Dan Kurtzman's description of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in his book *The Bravest Battle*. There, he mentions one name, Leon Wanat, with whom I worked in the Pawiak, and this ripped off the veil of my silence.

My life in that fortress of evil was horrifying. Even though I had an isolated existence there, I was surrounded by danger and atrocities. I heard screams, horrible laughter, heard dogs snarling and saw the dead faces of human beings being led to their execution. An iron armour grew around my soul. This is what I still carry around with me; the inability to feel deeply, to cry freely. Whatever dreadful events I had seen, I was left without tears. I hate the things that happened around me because they robbed me of the ability to mourn.

But I want to speak of the events surrounding the uprising. Even though, because of my imprisonment, I have only a limited knowledge. At first I saw the Germans bombing and burning buildings in the distance. Soon they burned buildings closer and closer. The smell sickened me. I saw flames and smoke cover the sky.

Large groups of Jewish people were herded into the prison yard and driven away. Shots rang out everywhere, but I had only a partial understanding of the situation. I was never allowed to walk by myself. There was always a guard with me and contact with the other prisoners was difficult.

On the second day of Easter, 59 Jewish men and two women were led into the Pawiak courtyard. This group was composed of the Jewish ghetto police in their blue caps. Lieutenant Brandt, the Gestapo specialist on Jewish affairs, ordered the guards to make sure that all prisoners in the Pawiak were confined to their cells for the next hours.

The Jewish policemen were ordered to lie down; a guard motioned to the first one and he was led out of the prison



gates. Then another and another. A shot rang out every time they went outside. They had worked for the Gestapo and this was their reward. All the bodies were piled up in the buildings across the street. The Nazis set the buildings ablaze and watched the smoke curl into the sky.

Leon Wanat wrote about this in his book *Behind the Walls of the Pawiak*. Kurtzman has repeated them in his book *The Brave Battle*. And I too watched the same scene out of my prison window.

The ghetto was now completely liquidated. On the spot where life had been teeming, only burned and broken walls were left, along with scattered bricks, piles of rubble and, here and there, some iron bits and pieces. The ghetto ruins now became the place for the execution of prisoners from the Pawiak. The search for Jews in hiding went on relentlessly. With the execution of the prisoners and the Jewish police, the liquidation of the ghetto was complete.

During the uprising I had seen the Germans running into the Pawiak courtyard for shelter. I had heard them speak. They could not believe the bravery of the few Jews. They were afraid of these Jews and some of them were in awe of such heroic resistance.

Another example: one day I was working in one of the buildings by the Umschlagplatz, the railway station, where Jews were rounded up for deportation to the death camps. Suddenly everybody rushed to the windows. There was silence. We were watching Janusz Korczak, a world-renowned educator, leading an orderly line of children from his orphanage to the station. One little child was in his arms. Although I did not know it then, I was seeing something



extraordinary and historic. And the Germans were silent.

What happened later? The Russian troops were coming closer - the Nazis were planning their retreat. It was now late summer of 1944. The prison was emptied and I was left alone, locked up in my cell. I did not know if they would take me with them or let me perish with the building. But they dragged me along, together with a typewriter and paper, to do whatever office work they needed. Such decisions by the Germans saved human lives more than once.

The retreat during the fall and long winter was another miserable event in my life. I got a high fever and still dragged along to the West. Somehow - from a Czech with a conscience - I had got false papers. In

January I came to Berlin and was taken to a prison on the Alexanderplatz, a place of horror, even for the Germans.

I was sent to the collection place for Jews on their way to Buchenwald. While on the train, the news came that the Russians had taken over the camp and we were deflected to Theresienstadt. There on 8 May I realised that I had survived the war.

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# Forgotten Victims

**This Autumn The Wiener Holocaust Library is staging a special exhibition on the genocide of the Roma and Sinti, entitled *Forgotten Victims: The Nazi Genocide of the Roma and Sinti*. The team at the Library have written this article especially for our readers.**

The genocide carried out against the Roma and Sinti communities of Europe by the Nazis and their collaborators during WW2 – the persecution and murder of as many as 500,000 people – has been referred to as ‘the forgotten Holocaust’ by Professor Eve Rosenhaft.

From 1933 the Nazis built on historical prejudices to label the Roma and Sinti communities as ‘anti-social’ and ‘racially inferior’. They enacted discriminatory measures against Roma and Sinti, including confinement in special camps and a massive programme of pseudo racial science investigation. Many Roma and Sinti were forcibly sterilised. Alongside Jews, the Roma and Sinti people faced violence, deportations to ghettos and camps and then genocide as the German army invaded Poland (1939), the Low Countries and France (1940), and the Soviet Union (1941). In the Soviet territories, the Nazis and their collaborators massacred thousands of Roma and Sinti in mass shootings. The genocide also occurred in pro-Nazi states, such as Croatia.

From January 1943, all Roma and Sinti from across Europe were deported to the *Zigeunerlager* (‘Gypsy camp’) at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where it is estimated that 21,000 people were murdered. On

31 July – 2 August 1944, the Nazis liquidated the *Zigeunerlager* and killed over 4,000 men, women and children

After the war, survivors and relatives of victims struggled to gain recognition and compensation for the persecution and losses they had suffered. Even in Britain and Europe today, prejudice and discrimination against Roma and Sinti remain common.

The Wiener Holocaust Library’s Autumn 2019 exhibition draws upon the Library’s collections to uncover the story of this little known aspect of Nazi persecution. It explores Roma and Sinti life in Germany and Austria prior to WW2, and the genocidal policies that started in German-occupied Poland in 1940. It also examines the post-war lives and legacies of Roma and Sinti. The exhibition reflects on the situation in Britain and Europe today and explores why the Roma and Sinti communities are still ‘forgotten’ victims of genocide.

Forming the backbone of this exhibition are testimonies from victims and survivors. During the 1950s, researchers at The Wiener Holocaust Library gathered over 1,000 accounts from witnesses to Nazi persecution and genocide, which included a number of testimonies from Roma and Sinti survivors. The Library also has possession of the Kenrick Collection, which contains a wealth of material relating to the persecution of the Roma and Sinti under the Nazis, collected and compiled in 1968. Both of these collections sought to gather and preserve testimonies from the marginalised Roma and Sinti people soon after the end of the Second World War. The Library is committed to ensuring that the suffering and injustices that these communities endured are not forgotten. These unique collections are available for users to access digitally in the Library’s Wolfson Reading Room.

Margarethe Kraus, a Czech Roma, photographed after the war by Reimar Gilsenbach © Wiener Library Collections



The exhibition tells the stories of a number of individuals, including Margarethe Kraus. Originally from Czechoslovakia, Kraus was deported to Auschwitz sometime in 1943, along with her family, when she was just a teenage. Whilst imprisoned in the concentration camp she was forced to endure maltreatment and extreme privations, and she contracted typhus. Kraus was also subjected to medical experiments in Auschwitz. Her parents did not survive the Holocaust. In this photograph, taken by Reimar Gilsenbach in the 1960s in East Germany, her Auschwitz camp number tattoo is visible on her left forearm.

The Wiener Holocaust Library is one of the world’s leading and most extensive archives on the Holocaust and Nazi era. Formed in 1933, the Library’s unique collection of over one million items includes published and unpublished works, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimony. The Library provides a resource to oppose antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and intolerance by being a living memorial to the evils of the past.

***Forgotten Victims: The Genocide of the Roma and Sinti* will run from the 30 October 2019 until 11 March 2020. Admission is free and is open from Mon-Fri 10.00 – 17.30, Tues 10.00 – 19.30. For more information on The Wiener Holocaust Library, and where to find it, visit [www.wienerlibrary.co.uk](http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk).**

# A ROMA REVIEW

## LEAVES IN A HOLOCAUST WIND

by Robert Dawson

Austin Macauley Publishers

ISBN 978-1786937179

Three generations ago little children were expected to be 'seen and not heard', but today's children are considered people in their own right. Sadly, not so for Roma/Gypsy/ Travellers. Even today many people wish neither to see them nor allow them a voice in the community. And this goes for Holocaust testimony too, of which Romany ones, like this book, are rare.

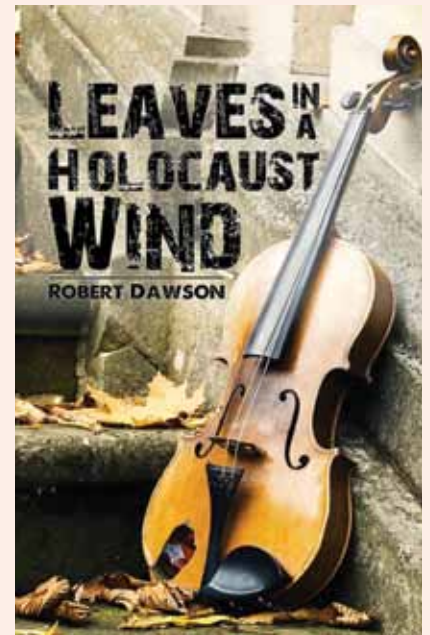
For decades the Roma part of the Holocaust was air-brushed out of the Jewish narrative of the Holocaust, in spite of documented evidence of Roma in all the main concentration camps and killing fields of Eastern Europe, even in the same barracks as Jews. The narrative kept them invisible just as local planning laws try to do today. So it is very important that Dawson, who has been seeped in Romany culture since he was a small boy, exposes the truth about this much maligned people.

Why, when an international day of remembrance, commemoration and Holocaust education was eventually founded in 2001, was it a 'Jewish only' narrative? The devastation and demoralisation of six years of war was on such a scale that those who survived had little energy or appetite for anything more than picking up the shattered pieces of their lives to adjust and start anew. Avoidance, lethargy, indifference and denial set in. The very first memorial to the Holocaust victims, Yad Vashem, was opened in Jerusalem in 1963. Because the rest of the world was not ready to face the past, Yad Vashem's narrative spread through the Jewish diaspora as 'Jewish property'.

*Leaves in a Holocaust Wind* introduces readers to the richness of the Romany culture and the humanity behind the usual negative stereotypes of

'gypsies'. Dawson was able to tap in to their oral culture to write testimonies for those who were unable to write. Zuzzi, in France, and Foxy, in Slovakia, are fictional characters based on the oral testimonies Dawson absorbed. Sole survivors of their large families caught up in Nazi purges, they give statements to the Allied War Crimes Commission after the war. The reader is immediately drawn into the two teenagers' situation of awe and anxiety but also their determination at taking on such a task so soon after the massive trauma and grief they have suffered. They feel they must tell the world what happened to their families and themselves. Dawson has them choosing to do this by first Foxy and then Zuzzi telling their own family story up to the point where they first meet. After that they tell their joint story alternately, chapter by chapter.

Just as in so many Jewish survivor testimonies, the reader is taken to meet the people in each of the two families and is introduced to the traditions, beliefs and mores of two variations of the gentle, self-sustaining and very rich culture of the Romanies. The appearance of the Nazis brings all the horror and destruction intrinsic in any Jewish Holocaust testimony, yet from an interestingly different angle. The Romany deep respect for all life is an antidote diametrically opposite to the Nazi disregard for all life they deem 'unworthy of living'. Roma and Jews have thrived persecution, not by aggression but by developing skills that help them to adapt. Romanies adapt through their closeness to nature in the countryside. Dawson's story introduces us to many of their skills in utilising the bounty of nature for food, healing, hiding, communication and many other ways vital to survival and radically different to Jewish adaptation mainly within urban living.



The theme of leaves appears repeatedly, first introduced in the passionate dancing of Zuzzi as a happy little girl, and later in more sombre tones representing the fate of Romanies scattered like leaves in the wind and the bitter-sweet music of their guitars. Both the title of the book and the cover design magnificently capture this essence of Romany being. The leaves that city dwellers sweep away as rubbish are the fundamental pillar of survival skills of those who live with nature in the countryside.

The end of the story will come as a shock to many readers but, sadly, true to the still pervasive attitude to gypsies today - that they are often not taken seriously and 'don't count'. As I read the story I wondered, like in so many Holocaust testimonies, what justice would there be for Zuzzi and Foxy? How much justice was even possible after WW2? And how little of what might have been possible was actualised! Dawson's story captures this well.

Dawson offers 21 books for further reading for those who have been inspired by this book to learn more about Roma as an interesting human people like any other.

Ruth Barnett

# 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.

## KINDER HOSTEL IN TWICKENHAM

Andy Lawrence, a History teacher at Hampton School, wishes to incorporate more about the Kindertransport into his teaching of the Holocaust and is seeking information on a former hostel for Kinder at 52 Lebanon Park Road, Twickenham. [A.Lawrence@hamptonschool.org.uk](mailto:A.Lawrence@hamptonschool.org.uk)

## FINCHLEY STRASSE

Playwright Amy Rosenthal, currently under commission to the Hampstead Theatre, is interested in the history of Swiss Cottage/ Finchley Road as a post-war base for Jewish refugees. She wishes to talk to anyone with memories of the area, particularly the Cosmo Café. [amyrosenthal74@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:amyrosenthal74@yahoo.co.uk)

## REICHENHEIMSCHES WAISENHAUS, BERLIN

Information, photos or other materials are sought on/from Kindertransportees and refugees who used to live in the Reichenheimsche Waisenhaus, an orphanage of the Jewish Community in Berlin. A publication is planned for the 150th anniversary of the opening of the orphanage in 2022. [sabine.hank@centrumjudaicum.de](mailto:sabine.hank@centrumjudaicum.de)

## Books Bought

**MODERN AND OLD**

**Eric Levene**

020 8364 3554 / 07855387574  
[ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk)



Passengers on board the *MS St. Louis*

## MS ST LOUIS REUNION

In the December 1983 AJR Journal Hans Kupsch asked about a possible reunion of “*MS St. Louis* Survivors”. Michigan-based Shailesh Saigal, who has Hans Kupsch’s travel documents, would love to know whether a reunion ever took place. [shailesh1saigal@gmail.com](mailto:shailesh1saigal@gmail.com)

## BABY BRODIE FROM COLOGNE

Information is sought about the case of a baby girl from Cologne who was brought to the UK in September 1938 and subsequently adopted by Margaret & Benjamin Brodie of Cooden Road, Bexhill, and later of Farm Avenue, NW2. [david@lewinsdlondon.org.uk](mailto:david@lewinsdlondon.org.uk)

## BRITISH LIBRARY KINDER PROJECT

The British Library is aiming to preserve digitally the UK’s most at-risk audio recordings through the *Unlocking Our Sound Heritage Project*, making them freely available to the public. One of the collections selected for this project is a series of oral history interviews made in 1989 by the Central British Fund / World Jewish Relief with over 100 individuals who came to Britain on the Kindertransport. This collection, which commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Kindertransport, was deposited at the British Library Sound Archive in 1991. Josie Wales, Data Protection and Rights Clearance Officer for the *Unlocking Our Sound Heritage Project*, is seeking to contact the 100+ participants or their families to ask permission to publicly share the interviews. [josie.wales@bl.uk](mailto:josie.wales@bl.uk)

## ENFIELD KINDER

Henry Jacobs is hoping to find former refugees who were cared for in 1939 at Enfield and Winchmore Hill Synagogue, 53 Wellington Road, EN1 2PG, and who can recall Reverend Abraham Lewin. He particularly wishes to find the families of Hanan (Hans) Waizner and Max Pais. [hjacobsm@macace.net](mailto:hjacobs@macace.net)

## NON-ARYAN CHRISTIANS FROM BERLIN

Roland Dunn is looking for descendants of refugees who came from Berlin in June 1938 with the help of Miss Laura Livingstone - Bishop Bell’s representative in Berlin – and the Church of England Committee for Non-Aryan Christians. [roland.dunn@gmail.com](mailto:roland.dunn@gmail.com)

## KINDER AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

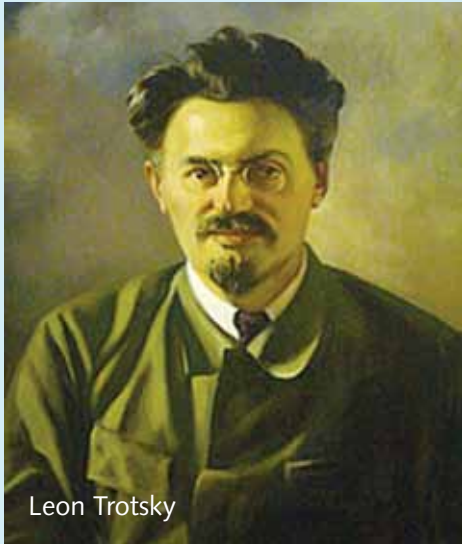
Carmen-Francesca Banciu, a Berlin-based German writer of Romanian origin (and with long hidden Jewish roots) is seeking for her new novel the answer to the questions of forgiveness and reconciliation and their possible limits. She is particularly interested to interview Kindertransportees and their descendants about their attitudes to these subjects. [cfbanciu@aol.com](mailto:cfbanciu@aol.com)

## FELICITAS HAUSEN/BLUM

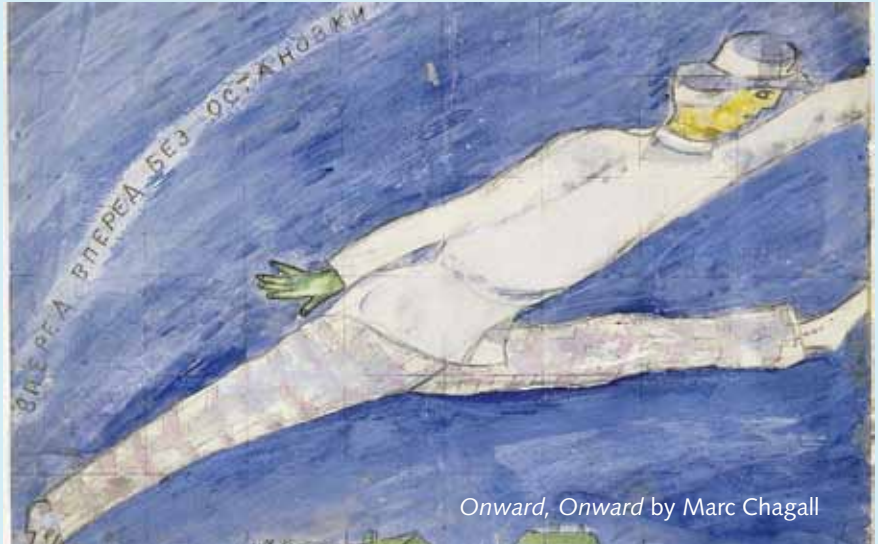
Jeanne Kortz is looking for her long lost aunt, Felicitas Hausen, now Mrs. Ernst Heinz Blum, who came via a Kindertransport from Berlin and settled in London. [jeannekortz@gmail.com](mailto:jeannekortz@gmail.com)

# From Trotsky to Chagall

## THE ROLE OF JEWS IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



Leon Trotsky



Onward, Onward by Marc Chagall

**Russian Jews played a very important part in the October 1917 revolution. One of the most notable was Trotsky. He was the first Jew since ancient times to become the commander of an army. His real name was Bronstein, but after escaping from a tsarist prison he took on the name of his prison warden. His role in the revolution can be said to have been as important as Lenin's. Trotsky's army marched to the music of Samuel Pokrass with words by Pavel Gorinstein.**

Another important personality with a prominent role was Sverdlov: he was president for two years and academies were set up in his name to train a new generation of commissars. He never wore a uniform, but sported a short leather jacket which then became very fashionable for a time. The

order for the execution of the Tsar and his family was given by Sverdlov and then approved by Lenin. The execution squad was a mixed bunch with a variety of weapons. The squad of six had one Jewish member, Yurovsky, who always boasted that he fired the first shot.

Two assassination attempts were made on leaders of the revolution, both carried out by Jews. The first one, by a man called Kanigesser, was on the head of the local Cheka, Ulitsky, another Jew. The attempt in front of the Mikhelson Factory on Lenin, was by Fanny Kaplan, who considered Lenin a traitor to the revolution because he was not extreme enough. Lenin was hit, but survived. Both Kanigesser and Kaplan were subsequently shot. To revenge Ulitsky's death 500 people, mainly from the aristocracy, were then executed.

Chagall studied painting in St Petersburg and Paris; when he returned home he became Commissar for the Arts. After the revolution many murals of his were hung in St Petersburg. They were signed: "From Chagall to Vitebsk", the town where he was born and which was the subject of many of his works. The new avant-garde style became the official art form for Russia after the revolution.

Moshe Neppelbaum was the most prominent exponent of photography before the Revolution and ended up photographing all the famous politicians and artists of the time.

One of the best films of all times is *The Battleship Potemkin*, made by Sergei Eisenstein. Other important film makers were: Grigori Kozintsev, Leonid Trauberg, Sergei Yutkevich, Mikhail Romm, Iofitz Kheifitz, Alexander Zrkhi, Fridrikh Elmer.

Jews in Russia were teachers, doctors, engineers, artists, and they now became comrades sharing Bolshevik values and ideology. The country saw them as the builders of socialism and they were much appreciated - but of course this then did not last too long.

Janos Fisher



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# Around the AJR

*These are just a few of the many recent AJR events around the country.*

## NORTH LONDON

Following our delicious annual Celebratory Lunch we were regaled by "CJ" with a wonderful medley of songs from various decades, with keyboard accompaniment. It was a most professional and successful event, thoroughly enjoyed by all.

*Gordon Spencer*

## ILFORD

Nick Dobson took us through Swinging London in the Sixties: the Beatles came on stream, the Clean Air Act came into force, England won the World Cup, Dr Who started and trolley buses were phased out.

*Meta Roseneil*

## GLASGOW



Over 40 first and second generation members of Glasgow's AJR 'family' enjoyed a very special lunch in the Reform Synagogue to mark the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport. Henry Wuga spoke of arriving in Glasgow at the age of 15 in 1939, thanks to the massive co-ordination effort involving the Quakers, not really understanding why he and the other children had had to leave their homes. He left us with many questions, time too short and full of praise for AJR. The group also celebrated Alice Malcolm's 95th birthday.

*Ruth Ramsay*

## PINNER

Dan Fox gave us an insight into the experiences of a Jewish 'volunteer', later a 'regular', in the British Army's intelligence battalion and his deployment in Afghanistan. A subject with a difference, and very well presented.

*Henri Obstfeld*



'Royal' cake maker Dawn Blundell created this amazing cake, which is a replica of The Walled Garden at Highgrove, in November 2008 for HRH The Prince of Wales' 60th birthday. On 29 October Dawn will talk to the AJR's North West London group.



**PLEASE JOIN US  
AT OUR NEW  
HAMPSTEAD GROUP  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
SOUTH HAMPSTEAD SYNAGOGUE**



**Monday 11 November 2019  
2pm-4pm**

**at South Hampstead Synagogue,  
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*Rabbi Shlomo Levin will be our guest  
speaker at this inaugural meeting.*

We will then continue to meet on the second  
Monday of each month.

**Please contact Ros Hart on  
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# FORTHCOMING AJR EVENTS

TITLE	DATE	VENUE	DETAILS	CONTACT
<b>KT LUNCH</b>	2 October	North Western Reform Synagogue Alyth Gardens	Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Director of <i>Refugee Voices</i> – the AJR's ground breaking Holocaust testimony of over 200 filmed interviews. Dr Lewkowicz will talk about Kinder who have taken part in the project.	Susan Harrod
<b>CARDS &amp; GAMES</b>	7 October	North Western Reform Synagogue	Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble, Rumikub, Games dependent on numbers being sufficient. Light lunch served before games commence. Booking essential	Ros Hart
<b>KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE</b>	5 November 12.30pm	Prestwich Hebrew Congregation (Shrubberies)	This special event will begin with lunch, followed by our keynote speaker, Dr Bea Lewkowicz, <i>Director of Refugee Voices</i> .  The event will end with Rabbi Eisenberg reciting the Memorial Prayer for Victims of the Holocaust and Kaddish, together with a candle lighting ceremony.	Wendy Bott
<b>ANNUAL KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE</b>	7 November 2pm	Belsize Square Synagogue	Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg will officiate the service, which will include a testimony from AJR member Eli Abt and an address by Clare Weissenberg of the Kitchener Descendants Group.	Karin Pereira

# REGIONAL MEETINGS

The AJR operates a nationwide network of Regional Groups that offer our members a unique opportunity to socialise with friends of similar backgrounds. There will be an interesting programme of speakers, plus the opportunity to meet up with old friends and make new friends.

There will always be the opportunity for socialising at each meeting, plus a cup of tea or coffee and some cake in true AJR style. All AJR members are welcome at any of these events; you do not have to be affiliated to that particular group. Please contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

GROUP	CO-ORDINATOR	AUGUST	EVENT
Ilford	Karen Diamond	2 October	Susan Kikoler – <i>The History of the Jews of Italy</i>
Cheshire	Wendy Bott	2 October	Social get-together
Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs	3 October	Sharon Mail – <i>Co-ordinator for 'My Story' project</i>
Glasgow Book Club	Agnes Isaacs	10 October	Book Club meeting
Hertfordshire	Ros Hart	16 October	Jonathan Sumberg – <i>BBC News Cameraman &amp; Producer</i>
Glasgow	Agnes Isaacs	24 October	Lunch at the Corinthian Club
North West London	Karen Diamond Ros Hart	29 October	Dawn Blundell – <i>Baking Cakes for the Royal Family</i>
Book Club	Karen Diamond	30 October	Book Club
Muswell Hill	Ros Hart	31 October	Andrew Leigh, Nightingale Hammerson – <i>Making the right choices</i>
North London	Ros Hart	31 October	Judy Karbitz – <i>Behind the Camera</i>

# OBITUARIES

## STEPHEN LITCHFIELD (formerly Siegfried Lichtigfeld)

**Born:** 21 December 1924, Düsseldorf  
**Died:** 9 April 2019, London NW11

**Siegfried Lichtigfeld (later known as Stephen Litchfield for professional reasons) was the eldest of twins born in Düsseldorf to Matilda (née Landau) and Simon Lichtigfeld. He died on 9 April 2019. His twin, Paul, died in 1981.**

Simon was a successful factory owner who was awarded the Iron Cross in WWI. Initially, the boys were educated in Germany, until state education was banned for Jews.

Shortly before Kristallnacht (9-10 November, 1938), Simon came to England to arrange to immigrate to Britain. His family remained in Düsseldorf and were given refuge by a gentile employee of Simon's.

Returning to Germany, Simon eventually found his family at their refuge. The Nazis had vandalised their home, including the boys' toys.

In April 1939 the twins were sent to their uncle Adolph in London and therefore did not form part of the Kindertransport. They were

joined by their parents in August 1939.

In England, Simon started a successful food business, which assisted the Food Ministry supply rations during WWII.

The boys studied at Welwyn Garden City Grammar School and law at University College, London.

Siegfried remained close to his family, in America, Europe, Israel and South Africa. His uncles were rabbis, lawyers, or judges. I met Siegfried through his cousin Freddie Lichtigfeld and uncle Adolph (then a South African rabbi).

Siegfried exemplified the traits of his South African relatives: All were self-effacing, learned, humane, and humble. They showed inexhaustible tolerance, well-illustrated by the fact that although I knew them for many years, I never heard them criticise anyone. It was the latter trait that made them all so special to me.

The many tributes received on Siegfried's death all noted that Siegfried was 'a true gentleman, and a very private person.' He is survived by his wife Betty (née Rose). They had no children.

*Prof. Mark A. Gillman, South Africa*



## ALBERT WAXMAN

**Born:** 26 November 1924, Alsace  
**Died:** 20 August 2019, Bradford

**Albert's parents Samuel and Lipka Wachsmann kept a draper's shop in Saarbrücken. His father was a learned Talmudic scholar who instructed rabbis and served as the local cantor.**

After living through a terrifying Kristallnacht - their flat was ransacked by the SS and the family fled in their nightclothes - Albert and his three brothers were dispersed overseas. Idush and Isaac went to Palestine, Phillips - the youngest - to a farm in France and Albert on the Kindertransport to the UK.

He was sent to a Jewish hostel in Bradford, learned English for three months, then set to work in a comb factory. He opened a Post Office account with seven shillings and later said "my bank book was the book that changed my life."

He joined an engineering company, but quit at 18 to join up. With almost no education, he passed his pilot's exam and joined the RAF, where he was recognised as 'an excellent Ace'.

After release he joined his parents in Paris where they had miraculously survived, later moving back to Saarbrücken to resume their cloth business. During a buying trip to Bradford in 1949 he met Lilly Sobol. They married a year later and Albert moved back to Bradford to work for his father in law, Adolph Sobol. After six years he started his own textile business and later bought and expanded Sobol's mill in Elland.

His hobby was golf and he later became President of his club. He was also President of the JIA and the Bradford Jewish Benevolent Society. Later he took over the Presidency of the failing Bradford Hebrew Congregation, his acumen keeping it going for a further 25 years.

Albert Waxman was a prominent industrialist and philanthropist, highly respected for his modesty, sincerity, generosity and integrity. Many benefited from his advice, warmth, and kindness. He is survived by Lilly, their children Susan, Richard and Alan, their grandsons Samuel and Joshua and great-granddaughter Willow.



# TRANSIT ON SCREEN

British cinemas this summer screened a new adaptation of *Transit*, Anna Seghers' classic novel about desperate refugees – stranded in wartime Marseille, and frantically seeking a ship's passage to America.

Seghers wrote the novel during her Mexican exile and based it on her own experiences. First issued during the war in Spanish and English, the original German version was published in book form in 1948. It has been filmed at least twice before, in 1977 and 1991.

Co-produced by ARTE and ZDF, French and German television stations, *Transit* was first released in 2018 and received favourable reviews. It is available as a DVD.

Germany's Christian Petzold, *Transit*'s director, has previously made films linked to an Auschwitz survivor and to the Stasi (East Germany's secret police). While following *Transit*'s storyline, he intentionally sets it in today's Marseille. That may have confused some viewers, but his purpose is clear: he wants to draw attention to the migration drama on our doorstep that we have been living through these past years. The Guardian referred to its 'chilling topicality.'

Seghers described the refugees – Spanish civil war veterans, Jews and opponents of the Nazis fleeing persecution and others – drifting in the cafés of the Vichy-administered port as they struggle to get a place on a boat and obtain the documents they need, false or genuine – job offers, guarantors, exit, transit and entry visas. -*Transit* was seen as a situation 'where you can't stay where you are, and you can't go elsewhere.'

Born into a Jewish family in Mainz

in 1900, Netty Reiling adopted the pen-name Anna Seghers, possibly because she was familiar with the work of the painter Hercules Seghers, a contemporary of Rembrandt – the subject of Seghers' thesis. Seghers joined the Communist Party in 1928 and formally gave up her Jewish affiliation in 1932. Her Hungarian husband László Ráadványi was also a communist. Briefly arrested after the Nazis came to power, Seghers, with her husband and their two children, escaped via Switzerland from Germany to Paris. There she became active in the émigré opposition to Hitler and completed her novel about fugitives from a concentration camp, *Das Siebte Kreuz* (The Seventh Cross). The English translation became a bestseller and in 1944 the basis of the Austro-American Fred Zinnemann's first movie hit.

Fleeing Paris, Seghers managed to free her husband from detention in Le Vernet, a camp in the Pyrenees. In Marseille the Quakers and other organisations helped the Seghers family

secure a passage to New York, but they were turned back on Ellis Island and ended up in Mexico City; the Mexican government accepted the family as part of its programme to allow entry to anti-Franco veterans of the Spanish civil war. -

After the war, Seghers settled in what became East Berlin. Much feted and awarded several literary prizes, Seghers remained a steadfastly loyal communist to the end, allowing the German Democratic Republic to exploit her fame. She clouded her reputation, however, by not openly taking a stand on popular uprisings in East Berlin, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, or criticising the regime when it persecuted intellectual and artistic personalities such as the chansonnier Wolf Biermann and the publisher Walter Janka. Seghers died in 1983. Her son Peter described her novel *Transit* as a topical story for the whole world.

**Martin Mauthner**



*Transit* is now available in DVD format

## Events and Exhibitions

### BEYOND BAUHAUS

This new exhibition revisits the impact of three notable Bauhaus émigrés: Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer and László Moholy-Nagy, centring on the brief period of 1934-37 when they came to live and work in Britain.

1 October – 1 February 2020  
 Architecture Gallery, RIBA, W1B 1AD  
[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

### BEING SECOND GENERATION

Children of Holocaust survivors and refugees will explore together how it has affected their lives. The workshop will be led by Gaby Glassman, a psychologist and psychotherapist who has facilitated second generation and intergenerational groups in the UK and abroad since the 1980s. This

session is specifically for the Second Generation and involves personal participation.

3 November at 11.00am  
 JW3  
[www.jw3.org.uk](http://www.jw3.org.uk)

### THIRD GENERATION: HOLOCAUST AND ME

Grandchildren of survivors and refugees can join a discussion group to explore the significance of the Holocaust in their own lives. It will be facilitated by David Polak, a psychotherapist and grandchild of survivors who has led groups, given talks and radio interviews about the concept of holocaust trauma transmission through the generations. This session is specifically for the Third Generation.

3 November at 2.00pm  
 JW3  
[www.jw3.org.uk](http://www.jw3.org.uk)

## IHRA GRANTS



The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has announced that the grant call for 2020 applications is now open. The IHRA will consider grant applications from non-profit organisations and institutions in the field of education, remembrance, and research for programmes that meet one of the IHRA's core objectives, ie safeguarding the record of the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma, and countering distortion.

Full information on the IHRA's grant strategy and the application process can be found on <https://holocaustremembrance.com/funding>

## AWARDS FOR AJR MEMBERS

### SONIA STRONG

The Merseyside Jewish Representative Council has appointed Sonia Strong as the first recipient of its highest honour, the Honorary Life Vice-President award.

During a presentation on 3 September, Rep Council chairman Howard Winik said: "Sonia is the doyenne of Merseyside WIZO and her work for that organisation is legendary".

Sonia was born in Magdeburg and with her family had to flee Germany in 1934. Since arriving in Liverpool after her marriage to Gerald, a well-known Liverpool solicitor who died in 1990, she has been active in a wide range of community life, including the 35s Group and Wizo. She is a regular attendee at Merseyside Jewish Representative Council meetings and Mr Winik said: "her often powerful contributions to our debates have reflected a richness of experience and a passion for Israel and her fellow Jews that is an example to us all. . . it is fitting that we should choose Sonia as the council's first

Honorary Life Vice President, an honour richly deserved and one which we all hope she will enjoy in good health and for a long time to come."

### VERA SCHAUFELD

The University of Roehampton has awarded an honorary doctorate to AJR member Vera Schaufeld MBE, who came to England in 1939 on the Kindertransport. She trained to be a teacher, moved to Israel and lived on a kibbutz where she met her husband Avram - also a Holocaust survivor - and together they moved back to London where she taught English to recently arrived Asian immigrants.

At a Festival Hall ceremony in July, University Vice-Chancellor Professor Jean-Noël Ezingard said "Vera is a truly inspirational person, whose suffering created in her a drive to support others. She has dedicated her life to upholding those values which our institution holds most dear and to combatting those actions and attitudes which we most abhor. We are honoured to call her a member of Southlands College and an honorary graduate of the University."



Sonia Strong being presented with her award.



Vera Schaufeld, together with Dr Christopher Stephens, Head of Southlands College, and Professor Jean-Noël Ezingard, Vice Chancellor of the University of Roehampton.

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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)

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