



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

What to Leave Behind

When Esther Saraga's mother died, she left behind boxes and envelopes full of papers and photographs. "They were in sideboards and cupboards," writes Esther, "in the loft and in the garage. Some were simply stuffed at the back of drawers."



Conservator Poppy Singer working on Sigmund Freud's couch in 2013. The couch was among the treasured possessions that Freud brought from Vienna and still has pride of place in the Hampstead museum that was his former home.

These papers provided the basis for Esther's family memoir, *Berlin to London*, which tells the story of how her Jewish parents, Lotte and Wolja, left Berlin and came to Britain in 1938 (and which is reviewed on page 16 of this Journal).

One of the best chapters of the book is about how Lotte and Wolja desperately tried to get their possessions out of Germany. Among the things they left behind were a desk, a couch and a list of books: "All the classics," wrote Lotte, "the Gundolf edition of Shakespeare; very many philosophy books: Kant,

Nietzsche, Hegel et al." In addition, there were books of Roman and Jewish history, novels by Thomas and Heinrich Mann, works by Freud and Jung.

Esther quotes a powerful passage from Irène Némirovsky's *All Our Worldly Goods*. It describes how French villagers flee from the invading German army in 1914. Madame Hardelot exclaims:

"Just imagine everything we have to leave behind, our furniture, our linen, our family mementos... I'm just throwing
Continued on page 2

CHANUKAH GREETINGS

Last month was a very busy time for the AJR, with events remembering Kristallnacht, Refugee Voices and our Northern volunteers all in addition to our normal packed Outreach programme of regional events. You'll find details of these and other events in this Journal.

We are also proud to report on some of the educational projects that we are currently funding, on page 13.

2019 has been a turbulent year for many different people, in many different ways. As it draws to a close we wish you a happy Chanukah and holiday season

Refugee Voices Archive.....	3
Atomic Spy Klaus Fuchs	4
Letter from Israel	5
Letters to the Editor.....	6-7
Art Notes.....	8
European Views	9
Every life tells a story	10
A trip to Vojvodina	11
Holocaust education update.....	12-13
Around the AJR.....	14-15
Reviews.....	16-17
Looking for.....	18
Obituaries	19
Invitation to debate the Zeitgeist.....	20

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

AJR Team

Chief Executive Michael Newman

Finance Director David Kaye

Heads of Department

Community & Volunteer Services Carol Hart

HR & Administration Karen Markham

Educational Grants & Projects Alex Maws

Social Work Nicole Valens

AJR Journal

Editor Jo Briggs

Editorial Assistant Lilian Levy

Contributing Editor David Herman

Secretarial/Advertisements Karin Pereira

What to Leave Behind (cont.)

together what I can at random... I want to take everything, she said as she picked up a variety of objects and pressed them close to her heart before putting them down again: a photo of Pierre as a child, a silver sugar bowl, a damask and lace table cloth."

As I read Lotte's account of the books they had left behind, I thought of my grandmother's bookcase in the living room in her small flat in north Oxford. The bookcase was full of German classics that she had managed to bring from Berlin, also in 1938. Nothing that would have suggested that she was Jewish. All her books were German classics, mostly in Gothic print. After she died, I kept one book, an old leather-bound edition of Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*.

When my mother died in 2015, my sister and I discussed what to keep. There was almost nothing from Germany, just a few baby photos of her, documents and photos of her parents and grandparents. My sister kept her jewellery and I kept a few glasses and coffee cups. They were the cups she always served coffee in after dinner parties. A few weeks ago, the poet Elaine Feinstein died. She was one of the last survivors of those dinner parties. My father, born in Warsaw, left Poland for Belgium then France, before escaping to Britain in 1940. He brought what he could carry.

In 1935, Stefan Zweig wrote in his diary, "Two suitcases, one of them containing clothes, the earthly necessities, and the other manuscripts, the intellectual wherewithal, and one is at home everywhere." This is not quite true. It wasn't until 1937 that he sold his beloved house in Salzburg, selling off his prized collection of manuscripts, books and objects, including Beethoven's violin. Somehow, however, he managed to get his most prized possession of all, Beethoven's desk, to London.

Zweig's friend, the writer Josef Roth, also talked of living out of two suitcases, a large one and a small one. Both men, constantly on the move, thought of themselves in terms of what they could carry.

Freud, like his friend Stefan Zweig, left

Austria for London. He brought more than two thousand antiquities to his new home in Maresfield Gardens in Hampstead. A few months after his arrival in England, he wrote,

"All the Egyptians, Chinese and Greeks have arrived, have stood up to the journey with very little damage, and look more impressive here than in Berggasse [his apartment in Vienna where he had lived and worked for almost fifty years]."

Freud also brought his library, papers and furniture, including the famous couch.

In his autobiography, *Interesting Times*, the historian EJ Hobsbawm, wrote of his itinerant childhood. Born in Alexandria, he spent his childhood in Vienna and then Berlin, before coming to Britain in 1933. It was a tragic childhood: both parents died young, his father from a heart attack, his mother from lung disease. He doesn't dwell on these years of loss but the sadness is conveyed by a few objects. When he thinks about the last year of his mother's life what he remembers is a birthday present she gave him, "a very cheap second-hand bike," "its frame was visibly both repainted and bent." In 1933 he left Berlin. He returns to the image of the bicycle at the end of the chapter:

"I still arranged that the old bike with the bent frame, the present from my mother that had caused me so much embarrassed teenage anguish, should be lost when the Hobsbaum [sic] effects were packed for storage."

A few years later, his uncle, cousin and sister left Britain for Chile. Hobsbawm was left behind, completely alone. He went back to the now empty home in Edgware. He writes, "[t]he bottle of good Tokay, which I had saved from the old home, had somehow disappeared in my absence. Then I went back to Cambridge." The loss of the Tokay and the bike somehow stand for all the other losses of his childhood, things and people he left behind. They are the most memorable moments in the book.

Early in her famous book, *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, Judith Kerr describes the day her family left "the ever emptier rooms" in Berlin. "Deciding which toys to take was the hardest part,"

she writes. "In the end there was only room for some books and one of Anna's stuffed toys. Should she choose Pink Rabbit which had been her companion ever since she could remember, or a newly acquired woolly dog? It seemed a pity to leave the dog when she hardly had time to play with it, and Heimpi packed it for her. Max took his football."

Anna's pink rabbit, Max's football, Hobsbawm's second-hand bicycle, Freud's couch, Beethoven's desk, the books belonging to Lotte and Wolja... These all stand for so much. Memories of home, of a childhood, of a life's work. Precious objects refugees managed to take with them or had to leave behind.

The second and third generations have had to clear their parents' and grandparents' homes. And we have had to make choices: what to keep and what to dispose of in charity shops and rubbish dumps. And then one day, our children will look at the little glasses and coffee cups, the old copy of Goethe, and wonder why anyone would ever have kept them?

David Herman

AJR ANNUAL CHANUKAH PARTY



WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2019

12pm – 3.30pm

New North London Synagogue

Please join us at our
Annual Chanukah Party

A welcome by
Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg
and **Michael Newman, AJR's CEO**

Entertainment by:

Judy Karbitz
The Story of Musicals
and **The Velvet Voices duo**

A two-course hot lunch
£10.00 per person payable on the door

Places must be booked in advance.

Please contact
Susan Harrod on Susan@ajr.org.uk
or 020 8385 3070

Refugee Voices Archive



From L-R: Bea Lewkowicz, Tamara Finkelstein, Kurt Marx, Lord Daniel Finkelstein, Michael Newman & Toby Simpson

The AJR marked last month's 81st anniversary of Kristallnacht by launching the **AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive**, a groundbreaking collection of Holocaust oral histories. It includes the **Refugee Voices website** and **dedicated social media channels**.

The event took place on 7 November 2019 at the Wiener Holocaust Library with a group of notable speakers. The Refugee Voices Archive consists of 250 filmed interviews and more than 3500 digitised photographs and documents of Jewish survivors and refugees from Nazi Europe who rebuilt their lives in Great Britain.

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, AJR Refugee Voices Director, commented: "These interviews present a unique 'history from below',

narrated by individuals who experienced major historical and political and whose lives were profoundly affected by a upheaval, separation, emigration, displacement and resettlement. We are proud to have conducted almost 250 interviews and to invite family members, researchers, teachers, students and the general public to listen, engage, learn, and take inspiration from the many different experiences the AJR Refugee Voices Archive has recorded."

At the launch Kurt Marx recalled Kristallnacht in Cologne, while Lord Finkelstein and his sister Tamara spoke of their mother Mirjam, who survived Bergen-Belsen and who recorded a testimony for the Refugee Voices Archive in 2006. Lord Finkelstein underlined how, as a *Times* columnist and political commentator, his parents' story has proved an invaluable resource, while his "direct experience" highlights the importance of the archive in telling the story to wider audiences.

Tamara said "there are things that I learnt from the interviews which are very precious to me, things that my parents can no longer tell me".

Also at the launch AJR's Head of Educational Grants & Projects, Alex Maws, introduced his *Kindertransport – Remembering & Rethinking* podcast series, which uses excerpts from the Archive - www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/podcast - and media had the opportunity to meet several interviewees who have shared their story.

From next month the AJR Journal will be publishing testimonies taken directly from the Refugee Voices Archive, beginning with Mirjam Finkelstein.

For further information or to be interviewed, please visit www.ajrrefugeevoices.co.uk or contact bea@ajr.org.uk.

Antisemitism: strengthening the fight

The AJR very much welcomes the appointment of John Mann to the House of Lords as the government's antisemitism tsar.

Lord Mann, who was elected as a Labour MP in the 2001 general election and who has been a prominent campaigner against antisemitism, took up the post of Independent Advisor to the UK Government on antisemitism on 28 October.

A fortnight before taking up his peerage John Mann was the keynote speaker at the National Holocaust Centre and Museum when it marked its 24th anniversary as a leading educational organisation against racism and its consequences.

AJR member Ronald Channing was at

the event at the centre formerly known as Beth Shalom, and reports on the expanding demand for its unique services, which included visits from more than 20,000 schoolchildren in the last year. During the event its founders recalled the loss of refugees and survivors who had volunteered unstinting support to the Centre, often recalling their own unimaginable childhood experiences and the need for respect for all humankind, especially to guide the comprehension of schoolchildren. Among those recalled were Rudi Oppenheimer, Harry Bibring, sculptor Naomi Blake and Sir David Sieff.

Henry Grunwald QC, Chair of the Board of Trustees, whose father reached the safety of Britain on 4 September 1939 but was the only survivor of his family, praised the Centre as a unique place of education, with outstanding exhibitions and memorial gardens.

Marina Smith sitting for the sculptor Frances Segelman during the National Holocaust Centre's 24th anniversary event



Marina Smith hosted the day's events with her usual warmth and friendship, while eminent sculptor Frances Segelman - whose recently unveiled bust of Sir Ben Helfgott was on display in the presence of Sir Ben - generously undertook to create a bust of Marina herself under the admiring scrutiny of all present. Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovic of Nottingham Synagogue recited the Kaddish.

SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT ATOMIC SPY

Klaus Emil Julius Fuchs was a German-born leading physicist involved in crucial research on the atomic bomb. But neither Fuchs nor his scientific publications were mentioned in the booklet that the now defunct Ministry of Supply issued in the 1950s, recording the vital work carried out at Harwell, Britain's atomic energy research establishment.

After all, at the beginning of that decade Lord Goddard, the Lord Chief Justice, had found Fuchs guilty of passing invaluable British and American nuclear secrets to Russia over some eight years. Goddard had a reputation as a stern judge but had to limit himself to issuing the maximum sentence foreseen by the law, fourteen years in jail. Fuchs' good behaviour brought him liberty after serving nine years. But he also lost his UK citizenship, returning reluctantly to (communist) Germany, where he died in January 1988.

As Frank Close, his new biographer, and himself a leading theoretical physicist now retired, puts it, in that 1950s booklet Fuchs was airbrushed in a Harwellian rewrite of history which would have done credit to his new masters in East Germany.

Yet, in June 2018, Fuchs' name was among the luminaries etched onto bronze petals of an intricate sculpture unveiled at Harwell to commemorate its scientific pioneers. Such was his acknowledged and enduring worldwide eminence as a theoretical physicist.

Close's meticulously researched *Trinity* (a reference to the code name given to

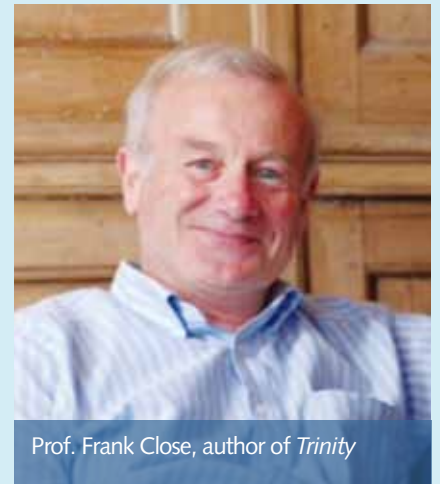
the first detonation of a nuclear device, in New Mexico in July 1945) makes it clear why, with the passage of time, Britain's nuclear establishment had second thoughts about ignoring the achievements of the 'scheming communist traitor' of yesteryear.

To appreciate adequately Fuchs' deeds and misdeeds, lay readers need an accessible account of the scientific background. Close – whose previous books aid the public understanding of antimatter, quarks and neutrinos - provides this brilliantly. Readers will be fascinated by his gripping John Le Carré-like passages narrating the tribulations of MI5 and other spy agencies on both sides of the Atlantic, as they devote huge resources to trying to incriminate Fuchs.

Many outstanding Jewish scientists were forced to flee from Hitler and Mussolini – Rudolf Peierls (baptised a Lutheran), Franz Simon, Otto Frisch, Max Born, Pontecorvo (Jewish on his father's side). But Fuchs, like his deputy at Harwell, Oskar Bünemann, was Lutheran. His father Emil had fought in WW1 and the trauma had turned him into a Quaker pacifist, teaching Klaus to do what is right, whatever the cost. By the early 1930s Klaus had moved beyond pacifism, seeing communism as the only bulwark against Hitler and joining paramilitary groups in street brawls against the Brownshirts; three of his front teeth were knocked out.

He was therefore an obvious target for the Nazis after the burning of the Reichstag. Fuchs, however, had been tipped off and managed to escape in July 1933 from Berlin to Paris. That September he was on the ferry to Folkestone, sponsored by a leftish Quaker couple in Bristol. He was allowed to complete his studies and do research, but also sought out other communist sympathisers.

Briefly interned on the Isle of Man, Fuchs endured a further five months of detention in Canada, before pressure from the Royal Society, among others, led to his release



Prof. Frank Close, author of *Trinity*

and return to the UK in December 1940. But by then a fellow internee, Hans Kahle, a Kind, had 'radicalised' him into becoming a spy. Close is not sure, and it is an important point, if Fuchs turned traitor while Stalin and Hitler were allies, or after the Führer attacked Russia, in June 1941.

What is certain is that Fuchs' special skills – he worked in Britain and the US - were crucial for building the first nuclear weapons, and that in sharing that knowledge with Moscow he betrayed his adopted country and those scientists who befriended him, especially Rudolf and Genia Peierls, with whom he lodged for a while and who treated him as a 'son'.

If Fuchs' conscience told him it was right to help wartime Russia, how did he justify his continuing espionage during the Cold War? He wanted to ensure that the US did not have sole ownership of the new weapon. Close reminds us that, anxious to keep their global hegemony, there were military hawks in Washington calling for pre-emptive strikes against the Soviet Union.

Close concludes his thought-provoking book with the observation that 'the subsequent development of an atomic arsenal by the Soviet Union created a balance of terror – mutually assured destruction – that has now lasted for seventy years. From this perspective, it may be that Fuchs' sharing of atomic knowledge with the Soviet Union has affected history for the better – or the less bad.'

Martin Uli Mauthner

LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



BIBLE LANDS MUSEUM



In the course of salvage excavations on the outskirts of Beit Shemesh prior to the expansion of one

of its neighbourhoods, remains were discovered of an impressive sixth-century church dedicated to a 'glorious martyr' whose identity is unknown.

As everyone knows, one can hardly take a step in any direction in Israel without stumbling across an ancient artifact of one kind or another, and this was certainly the case here.

Hence, according to Israeli law, all civil construction work must be preceded by salvage excavations under the auspices of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Artifacts from the newly-discovered Byzantine church now form the focus of a fascinating display in Israel's Bible Lands Museum, an institution established some 27 years ago by collector Eli Borowsky to demonstrate the links between the various cultures and religions of the region, emphasising elements that unite the peoples of the Ancient Near East rather than those that divide them. The museum is located opposite the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

Objects salvaged from the site include an elaborate mosaic floor panel showing an eagle, the symbol of the Byzantine empire, and an inscription proclaiming the victory of the Messiah. Numerous clay and copper lamps, as well as a quantity of broken glass – presumed also to have constituted lamps – demonstrate the importance of light – both natural and artificial – in Byzantine churches. It is fair to say that the excavations at the Church of the Glorious Martyr have uncovered

one of the most complete assemblages of Byzantine glass window panes in Israel.

I happened to be present when Amanda Weiss, the dynamic Director of the Museum, welcomed a large group of Christian leaders from America. In her speech she reiterated the purpose of the museum and stressed the importance of continuing to send its message around the world. In private conversation she later told me that a large group of Armenian priests had attended the official opening of the exhibition the previous day, and that many of them had been moved to tears.

The findings from the Church of the Glorious Martyr occupy a small but prominent space in the Bible Lands Museum, and there are many other sections exhibiting archaeological treasures from various parts of the Ancient Near East.

THE ART OF VOLUNTEERING



On 6 November, AJR held a thank you event in Leeds for our dedicated team of Northern volunteers.

An art therapist spoke about how effective art can be when talking may be too difficult, using the example of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, who taught art to Jewish children in the Terezin Ghetto in 1943-44. giving the children the freedom to express themselves. Before being deported to Auschwitz, the artist hid 4387 pieces of the children's artwork in a suitcase inside a dormitory.

Our volunteers were able to try art therapy for themselves, using a range of different materials. We learned that everyone has a different way of expressing themselves; even the most self-deprecating volunteers produced thought-provoking artwork and all left feeling enlightened and relaxed.

Naomi Kaye

Kristallnacht commemorated



Candle lighting at London Kristallnacht Ceremony

© ADAM SOLLER PHOTOGRAPHY



Renee Mosbacher, Dr Bea Lewkowicz and (seated) Ruth Edwards in Manchester

AJR commemorated the 81st anniversary of Kristallnacht with ceremonies in both the north and south of England. The first event took place at the Prestwich Hebrew Congregation in Manchester on 5 November and featured first hand accounts from AJR members Renee Mosbacher and Ruth Edwards of their traumatic experiences of the Kristallnacht in Vienna.

Kindertransportee Eli Abt – whose story was featured in the November AJR Journal – was among the keynote speakers at our London Kristallnacht Commemoration Ceremony on 7 November. Other speakers included Dr Clare Weissenberg, who heads the Kitchener Descendants Group and who shared insights into what life was like for the men coming over to the UK, and Toby Simpson, director of the Wiener Holocaust Library, which holds contemporaneous accounts of Kristallnacht.

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.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

David Herman's article "Where are they now?" (October) claims Jewish refugees came from "very particular neighbourhoods in Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and Prague". But according to Kristallnacht data, of 1400 synagogues and prayer halls destroyed throughout Germany, Berlin accounts for only 31.

And while the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum confirms that, in Austria, the majority of Jews lived in the capital city (see David's thought-provoking September article) the same was not true of Germany. Berlin accounted for 40% of the Jewish population. No other city had more than 6.5%. Indeed, German cities with Jewish populations of over 10,000 only accounted for two-thirds of the country's Jewish population.

A trawl through back issues of the AJR Journal reveals grain merchants, horse dealers and smallholders, none of whom would have lived in the neighbourhoods that David seems to have in mind. If one thinks of the comparatively decentralised and rural world of nearly a century ago, even little towns of 15,000 or so had their own doctors, lawyers and banks, not to mention the services of a district Rabbi, and where several shops around the market-place would likely have had Jewish proprietors.

In 1950s London, the one refugee GP, two dentists and one each mathematician, historian and industrial scientist represented in or known to my family were outnumbered by former tradespeople and housewives. Many had made it to London from outside Berlin.

With 40% of the population you'd expect Berlin to come up in family histories more than anywhere else in Germany (it does in mine). But oversimplification destroys the richness of the picture.

Max Klein, Liverpool

I grew up in a middle class assimilated Jewish family in Teplitz Schoenau (Teplice Sanov) in northern Czechoslovakia. As a seven year old I experienced the annexation

of Sudetenland and, less than a year later, the invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia. Each time we suffered the deprivations that the German/Austrian Jews had experienced before us. All my family perished in the Holocaust with the exception of my parents, two cousins and myself. My family had lived in the area for over 200 years and, like my father, were businessmen, doctors, lawyers etc. They believed nothing like the Nazi pogroms could happen to them in that democratic country of Czechoslovakia. Hence, few left early and only very few, like me and my parents, managed to escape to England. On arrival in late July 1939 we lived in London until 1941, when we moved to Leicester, where we were treated like pariahs by the local "English" Jews, most of whose parents had escaped the pogroms of Eastern Europe in the late 19th century.

Bob Norton, Nottingham

I came to London from Vienna on 22 May 1939. An English-Jewish taxi driver paid the required £50. Bloomsbury House sent me to an orphanage in Glasgow. Later all the children were sent to a large mansion called the 'Birkenward' in Skelmorlie, near Largs.

In 1945 my grandparents, who also arrived in London in 1939, brought me to London where I attended Mercers School in Chancery Lane. In 1950 I went to the US and was promptly drafted into the army on account of the Korean conflict. After three years I decided to go to Mexico City College where I picked up Spanish. I then landed a job with the Gillette Company in Boston where I stayed 18 years before moving to Johnson & Johnson in New Brunswick. I was general manager at one time or another for these companies in Panama, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. On account of the communist dictatorship we (I've been married for 57 years) came to Florida 10 years ago. And here we are still, hurricanes and all.

Henry Herner, Florida, USA

READING OLD GERMAN LETTERS

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson is thought-provoking on belatedly learning German (October). Her belief that in early post-war

London "it was not wise to speak German" does credit to her honouring of the Fifth Commandment. Actually, it has no basis in fact. It was an anxiety fostered by some of the German parents who chose – understandably even if misguidedly – not to teach the language to their children.

I wonder, however, whether merely learning the language is sufficient for Dorothea's objective of reading old family documents? She makes no mention of two other possible obstacles: the gothic hand-writing, still widely used in the early twentieth century, and the fact that senior pupils in German school were habitually taught shorthand. Sometimes, like my mother and other family members, they used it to correspond – leaving me unable to read their letters. Shamefully, I lack Dorothea's willpower. Does anyone out there know German shorthand?

Peter Oppenheimer, Oxford

In 1934 I was enrolled in a German State School at the age of six. We learnt our alphabet in *Suetterlin Schrift*. I was one of two Jewish children in the class and the teacher had been asked to separate us. The following year we were excluded and I moved to a Jewish school where the emphasis was on Hebrew, English and needlework, these subjects being considered more useful for emigration. In 1939 I arrived on a Kindertransport; the English lessons proved useful, but I did not think I would ever need *Suetterlin Schrift* again. How wrong I was! Three years ago I offered to help a second generation with translation of letters addressed to her late father, whose dad found asylum at the Kitchener Camp. The letters, affectionate but desperate, were written by his mother and other relatives in Germany and they were written in *Suetterlin*. I was pleased I was able to help. At last my alphabet had its uses after 85 years.

Helga Brown, Abingdon, Oxon

GIFT FOR A LIFETIME

In addition to the two letters you printed in November, I have so far had five emails and letters in response to my article

in your October issue about *refugeenglish*, positive on the whole, and very positive about the *AJR Journal*.
Victor Ross, London

ONE WHO DIDN'T SURVIVE

Your article about Liz Brodie (A Story of Survival, October) mentioned the renowned educator Janusz Korczak. I would like to tell readers of the *AJR Journal* a little more about him.

Janusz Korczak was born as Henryk Goldszmit, in Warsaw in 1878, to a Jewish lawyer family. He qualified as a doctor but was also well-known as a writer of 13 children's books, a teacher and a newspaper correspondent. In 1912 he became director of the Jewish orphanage but his work was interrupted by WW1, when he was called up as a doctor in the army.

After the war, he returned to the orphanage. He respected children as individuals and responsible human beings, capable of making their own decisions. He opposed corporal punishment, which in his time was a part of normal parenting. One of his books, *Persistent Boy*, is the biography of Louis Pasteur, in which he emphasised persistence in achieving goals, not material comfort or class.

During the occupation of Poland, the orphanage was forced to move to the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940. In August 1942 195 orphans and 12 staff members, including Korczak, were deported to Treblinka. The Gestapo knew that he was a well-known writer and offered 'special treatment' (to save himself) but he always refused and stayed with the children. He was a courageous, selfless man, who chose the welfare of orphans before his own. His life ended in Treblinka at the age of 64.
Dr Elena Rowland, London SE18

KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE

I would like to thank the AJR and the devoted organisers and helpers for a beautiful memorial service and the fantastic reception which followed. It was greatly appreciated not only by me but, quite

obviously, by everyone who attended.
Heinz Grünewald, Pinner

Thank you AJR for a wonderful and poignant afternoon at Belsize Square Synagogue commemorating Kristallnacht. As a member of the second generation I felt that the speakers, candle lighting and singing by Cantor Heller, along with the programme put onto each seat, brought those dreadful events close to home. May your future be bright, along with the Wiener Holocaust Library, in educating those who blight the planet with racism.
Helen Grunberg, London NW10

KRISTALLNACHT IN LJUBLJANA

I found the article on Eli Abt (November) highly interesting. I was fortunate not to have witnessed what went on during Kristallnacht, having spent that night at a cinema in Ljubljana. (It was a German film with the Nazi sympathiser Beniamino Gigli, the world-famous Italian tenor, as its hero).

Erich Klibansky, who saved Eli's life, was my husband's headmaster at the Jawne in Cologne. My husband never got over the fate that befell Klibansky and his family.
Margarete Stern, London NW3

GERMAN PASSPORTS

David Herman's enlightening article (November) is about a subject to which I have given much thought. I had a sister ten years older than myself who emigrated to Israel and who was employed in Germany for just two years beforehand. On the strength of this she received a full German Old Age Pension and encouraged me to make my own application in the 1990s. I had been a school girl when I emigrated at the beginning of 1939 and, without employment evidence, did not think there was any hope of success. In any case, I was utterly opposed to the idea of taking up German nationality in order to receive a German Pension. German Passports were of course far from my mind. However, she hammered away at me, and eventually I applied and was asked to make a small payment for entering the German Pension



SAVE THE DATE

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2020

This year's theme is **STAND TOGETHER**

AJR's Annual Commemorative Service will be on Thursday 23 January 2020

Full details to follow in January edition of AJR Journal

System. Thereafter, I received a very modest pension paid out at three monthly intervals. The certificate of proof was entitled *Einbürgerungsurkunde* meaning 'certificate of naturalisation'. Seeing this German expression in 'black and white' only heightened the horror of my action. I felt ashamed and disloyal. Uppermost in my mind was the picture of the thousands of German Jewish victims before WW2 who, unlike my family, were unsuccessful in completing emigration and the tragic end that awaited them.

Now back to the present day. One of my daughters is currently applying for German citizenship in order to assist my grandchildren should they wish to travel more easily across Europe and have future work opportunities in Europe. At first, I was deeply shocked by the very idea but now I see it more pragmatically as a consequence of impending Brexit. I wonder, though, whether other elderly members of the AJR share my feelings regarding the current movement of second and third generation children obtaining German nationality and now latterly Austrian nationality, especially since the rules have been changing to increase the numbers who are eligible. I am obliged to end by saying that I try to cast away my philosophical feelings about this matter, the amount of my German Pension over the years has achieved a tidy sum and is appreciated.
Eva Evans MBE, London NW3

SWITCH ON ELECTRICS
Rewires and all household electrical work

PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518
Mobile: 0795 614 8566

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

He cut a handsome, dashing figure in his youth, with his goatee beard and penetrating eyes, but Paul Gauguin could easily be considered narcissistic. He believed his work could only be fully understood from his personal viewpoint; that his vision and art could not exist beyond the frame of his memory, cultural heritage and dream.

Paul Gauguin, *Self-portrait dedicated to Carriere*, 1888-9



In the first exhibition of his portraits at the **National Gallery**, many of them self-portraits, we see him, thumb in mouth, poking fun at western standards of portraiture, and from then on the works veer unsteadily between Impressionism and Symbolism. He cast himself as a tormented Christ in *Self Portrait near Golgotha*, and a reflective *Christ in the Garden of Olives*, with crimson hair and beard, and a very Modernistic *Self Portrait with Yellow Christ*.

Gauguin's visits to Brittany, Polynesia and Tahiti persuaded him to become a full time artist in the 1880s, abandoning his wife, Mette, and their five children and his job as a Paris stockbroker as he travelled, both physically and emotionally towards the imagination and memory that became his hallmark. He even developed a new style of art known as Synthetism.

Gauguin longed for simple, unspoiled and indigenous cultures, but then infused them with his own ideas, as a Frenchman. In Brittany and the South Sea Islands he recoiled from the primness and the drab missionary dresses his subjects had to wear, in contrast to the Parisian sophisticates he had known before. He ignored contemporary traditions of accuracy, painted out the drabness in favour of bright yellow, as in *Young Christian Girl*, portraying her in a

Polynesian missionary dress, or *Young Breton Woman*, wearing a blue dress.

Much has been made of Gauguin's friendship and falling out with Vincent van Gogh and Meijer de Haan, both keen influences on his work. Long after their friendship ended, he would subtly and pithily re-introduce de Haan, who looms as a malign force in some newer portraits, or place token images of departed friends into mysterious still lifes. He planted sunflower seeds from Paris and painted them as homage to Van Gogh. But Gauguin was not above using his art to weaponise old grudges.

Gauguin was a man of many parts and many aspirations. His style might range from Impressionistic portraiture (*Mette in Evening Dress*, 1884) or *Portrait of Madame Roulin*, 1888) to the exotic freedom which he found in his Tahitian retreat where he painted and seduced local beauties and became a Symbolist. His portrait of one of his lovers, *Tehamana Has Many Parents* is one of his most popular works. In these islands he found the freedom to live the way he wanted.

Gauguin never returned to Europe, but spent his final years on the Marquesian island of Hiva Oa, painting and entering politics, where he vehemently opposed colonialism. Depressed and poor, the

news of the death of his daughter, Aline, drove him to attempt suicide. And it was at this point that his later work reflected the impact on his life of old friends who seemed to return to haunt his mind and art.

The Credit Suisse Exhibition; Gauguin Portraits continues at the National Gallery until January 26, 2020.

There is still time to see Mark Gertler: Paintings from the Luke Gertler Bequest, at the Ben Uri, featuring important paintings by Mark Gertler from the estate of his son Luke Gertler, and other UK collections. Five important works are being showcased, representing the major themes of Gertler's early portraits, including members of his own family. The loans have been facilitated by the Luke Gertler estate and the Art Fund. The exhibition ends on 13 December and is open until late on Wednesdays.

Annely Juda Fine Art

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

CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Germany expresses solidarity

This October, two days after the horrific attack on a synagogue in Halle on Yom Yippur, the AJR received a welcome letter from the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Peter Wittig, who wrote the following:

“Antisemitism, extremism and terrorism must have no place in Germany. They must be fought implacably by all of us at every level of society – by government, by the



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
London

security forces and above all by every community across our country.

“In recent years we have seen, with wonder and deep humility, more and more Jews retracing their steps towards Germany – by reclaiming their German identity, spending their holidays in Germany or even moving there. This is a truly wonderful gift for which Germany is immensely grateful. And this together with our historical

responsibility must and will continue to be our encouragement to combat antisemitism in whatever form we come across it.

“Please rest assured that we will continue to stand in solidarity with our Jewish friends in Germany and across the world and that we will do everything we can to safeguard the trust that you have put in our country.”

British, Jewish or European – What do YOU feel?

Since the end of WW2 there has been little contradiction between identifying not just as a ‘British Jew,’ but as both British and Jewish. Now, however, British politics have prompted many British Jews to seek the citizenship of countries which their families fled.

For some, this may be simply an act of convenience, a document ensuring continuing EU citizenship rights, with no emotional or other consequences. However, given the number of people in public life who have spoken about the dilemmas they faced in doing so, particularly for those seeking German citizenship, the emotion has been all too real, especially for those whose

applications had fallen foul of the strict German laws requiring paternal ancestry for applicants born before 1953.

The Jewish Historical Society of England (JHSE) is launching a new website to collect individual thoughts. The site will act as a ‘post-box’ through which individuals can submit as much information as they feel comfortable in sharing, including both text and photos. Their content will be arranged into 27 different countries which will be developed into a permanent online resource. A range of specialists will read the submissions and write analytical pieces for the 2020 issue of the JHSE’s journal *Transactions*.

The Times columnist Daniel Finkelstein comments: “I’m right behind what I think is a great initiative and I look forward to seeing what the organisers can do. It seems to me really important”.

The new JHSE website will be launched at 6.30pm on Monday 9 December



Journalist Daniel Finkelstein says he is right behind this JHSE project to collect individual thoughts about citizenship.

at the Wiener Library. Speakers will include Richard Aronowitz-Mercer, Head of Restitution at Sotheby’s; Dr David Hirsh, sociologist, Goldsmiths; Dr Keith Kahn-Harris, sociologist, Birkbeck; and Dr Ruvi Ziegler, Associate Professor in International Refugee Law, University of Reading and Chair of New Europeans. All are welcome and, following the event on 9 December, more information about the project can be found at www.jhse.org.

Every life tells a story

Someone has died. A blank piece of paper. It is very late. If you are a close family member or friend you are exhausted, shocked, grieving. You might be a rabbi or cantor who has visited the newly bereaved to console and gather some history about their loved one. The funeral is tomorrow and there is a eulogy (hesped) to write.

This is a unique moment, and you carry a significant responsibility to try and encapsulate the essence of a person in a speech lasting just a few minutes. In most circumstances a hesped needs to be crafted to honour their life, and the good they brought to the world, to encourage the listeners to consider their own legacies and, as the Talmud suggests, to make the mourners feel the pain of their loss and offer some comfort too.

I have heard countless hespedim delivered at funerals, shivas and stone settings, and have always been struck by the way the mourners, or officiating clergy, manage to fulfil this weighty obligation (mitzvah) of delivering a eulogy with dignity and composure, and even raise a smile. Sometimes hespedim are simple, but often and surprisingly in the most difficult of circumstances, they are powerful and moving.

I have written two hespedim myself, for my parents who died within eight months of each other in 2013. My relationship with my father was complicated. In his later years I had wondered what I might feel when he was no longer here and how I would face the task of writing his eulogy. But as I sat at his hospital bedside during his final days, I found the more difficult feelings began to fade.

Hespedim are different from obituaries. They are written in the raw time following a death, and say more about a person's inner character and qualities



than a mere curriculum vitae of what they did. Not all lives are deemed to merit an obituary in a national newspaper although every life tells a story. There are many nuances in eulogies, but the writers of all these tributes seek to create the most fair, rounded, respectful and loving portrait of the person they have lost. This can be challenging, but at the end of a life we realise what really matters.

Over a number of years I had a growing sense that we should preserve these precious pieces of writing which tell the stories of people's lives, capturing the intrinsic nature of each person. So I set out to create a treasury of hespedim which were delivered at Jewish funerals and in the following days in the homes of mourners. I decided to build this in the form of a website so that the collection could develop and grow over time and would be accessible to all.

I am fascinated by all these stories and hope that as well as holding the hespedim of those close to your own heart, you will find many other interesting and inspiring people to meet in the collection. I hope that this archive will become an important addition to the cultural and social history of our Jewish community, and will illuminate the part we have played in British society and beyond. As a child of two refugee parents I am acutely aware that there are many people who started their lives somewhere else and for a variety

of reasons made their homes here in the UK. Their eulogies tell of their journeys and the big and small contributions they have made to their adoptive home.

My father wrote books about his own life and what became of the Jews of his home town of Bamberg. He was a passionate genealogist, constructing a huge family tree and researching the many branches of his family. His Masters and Doctorate studies involved the economic contribution of refugees to industries in the North of England. After a long career as an engineer, an entrepreneur and industrialist my father became an archivist of sorts and now I find that I have inadvertently followed in his footsteps, ensuring that we hold on to the eulogies which tell the stories of ordinary and extraordinary lives. I think he would have approved of this project, and might even have given it his blessing.

www.hesped.org is a place of tribute and memorial. It has been developed and will be maintained with the intention of dignity and holiness. I invite you to visit the website to contribute a hesped to the collection, or to read those of others and be inspired.

If you would like to get in touch with me, please email contact@hesped.org.

Miriam H Grabiner

A Trip to Vojvodina

Novi Sad is the second largest town in Serbia and belonged to Hungary until the Treaty of Trianon, just after WW1. In 1941, with the encouragement of Hitler, the Hungarian army invaded and of the thousands of Jews only 650 are left today.

Our hotel with a quirky interior was right in the centre of town, on Jewish Street (Jevrejska). Next to it was Moische the jeweller, selling expensive jewellery, and nearly opposite was the large secessionist-style synagogue; in good condition outside, but not restored inside and unguarded: one can just walk in. It is now used as a concert hall.

The Jewish community is active, hosting annual Israeli Film Days, Holocaust Memorial Day, and *Solet*, a gathering of Jewish communities from the former Yugoslavia.

Novi Sad is a university town with lots of young people wherever you look.

The lovely Bishop's Palace is in a prominent position and on the opposite side of the river is the Petrovaradin fortress, dating from 1682. The town has several wide avenues, maybe to copy the boulevards of Paris.

A short distance from Novi Sad is the lovely small town of Karlovci. Well worth seeing is the old pharmacy, from the reign of Franz Joseph. After an hour's drive from Novi Sad, you arrive at the very different Subotica: much smaller, nicer and quieter than Novi Sad. The town centre is quite compact and mostly pedestrianised.

Among many lovely buildings in town, three stand out. The newly renovated synagogue is magnificent. According to our guide it is the third largest synagogue in the world. It is built in the Hungarian art nouveau style. The stained glass windows have motifs of peacocks' feathers, lilies and rose petals. The ceramics are all made in the famous Zsolna factory in Hungary. It seats over 1500 people. Jews had a golden period in Subotica when, although they only made up 3% of the population, they owned a lot of



The Old Pharmacy

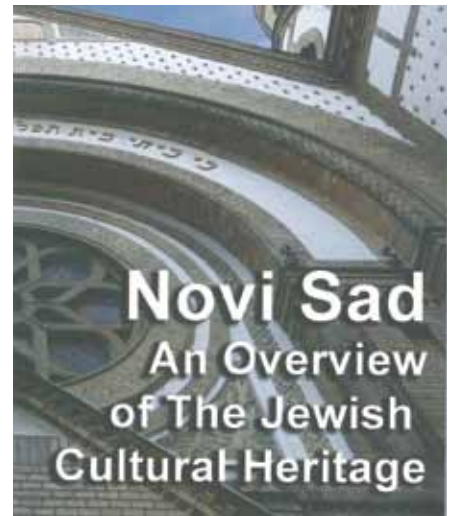
land and most of the industry. Renovations were completed about 18 months ago, some of the money towards it coming from the Hungarian state. (Hungary is granting citizenship to the sizable Hungarian minority in Serbia). The president of Serbia and the prime minister of Hungary opened the newly renovated synagogue. It now belongs to the town as the upkeep is well beyond the capabilities of the 150-member Jewish community. We were shown the little synagogue where services are held now. We came away with presents of books on the Holocaust in Subotica and other interesting leaflets.

The large town hall is also impressive and is also in the art nouveau style, with motifs from Transylvania. The large council chamber is decorated with stained glass windows all around, showing Hungarian historical figures.

The third building is the rather beautiful Raichle Palace. Built by the architect Ferenc Raichle for his own use, it is situated opposite the exit of the railway station to impress people arriving in Subotica. The short street between it and the station is lined with notable houses also in art nouveau style. The palace is full of interesting details; even the wrought iron door handles are lovely. The palace is now an art gallery.

The town has many "tenement palaces". These were all owned by Jews. Part of them used to be occupied by the owners and the rest were rented out. Most of them are unrestored as yet but the restored ones are remarkable and lovely. For a small town, there is a lot to see. The mile long market sells mostly fruit, vegetables and fake Calvin Klein underwear.

Most tourists are from China as Serbia does



not charge visitors for visas. In our hotel was a football team of 40 Chinese teenagers; staff told us that their behaviour was perfect, not like locals would be.

Not far from town is Lake Palic, which is like a holiday resort, with restaurants, park, lido and some unusual buildings, again in art nouveau style. It is very peaceful and charming.

During our stay we had outstanding service in the hotels, some acts of kindness from strangers, surly service from some waiters, mostly indifferent food, but large portions, in nice restaurants and wonderful cakes in a new patisserie in Subotica.

Vojvodina is not at all like, let's say, the Costa del Sol, and I am grateful for that.

Janos Fisher

Tackling prejudice and discrimination

In September Birmingham AJR member Mindu Hornick took part in a ground-breaking conference aimed at helping Primary & Secondary teachers empower their students to reject all forms of religious, race, gender & LGBT discrimination.

The conference was one of three poignant Holocaust education events organised and hosted by Solihull School as part of its *Solihull Speaks* progressive conference programme for primary and secondary school teachers, featuring speakers and organisations who lead the way in actively tackling discrimination and hate crime in all its forms.

Mindu joined fellow Auschwitz survivor Eva Schloss - step-sister to Anne Frank - Professor Sara Jones of Birmingham University and other keynote speakers from Remembering Srebrenica, the Anne Frank Trust UK, and the Holocaust Educational Trust to speak to an audience of over 100 educators about one of the biggest educational issues of the day.

The *AJR Journal* spoke to the organiser of the three day event Mark Penney, who is Head of the Junior School at Solihull School, to find out more about this initiative. Here are his answers:

Why have you chosen Prejudice & Discrimination as a topic?

The rise of the far-right globally, the fear-mongering of many public leaders, the deliberate stoking of community tensions to court political favour and the everyday abuse of ordinary people, is all the incentive we needed. Education has a critical role to play in tackling discrimination.

What were the main challenges in putting together this event?

Logistically there are very many different pieces to the jigsaw of such events, so it

took a great deal of thought and time to fit them together seamlessly. Another main challenge was promoting the event.

What were the common themes that emerged from the event?

The main theme was that more needs to be done in schools. Too often it is only addressed reactively in response to incidents and terrible events – which might not occur if tackling prejudice and discrimination were taught proactively.

Why do you think it is important for today's school children to learn about the Holocaust?

The Holocaust represents the nadir of human suffering and the culmination of centuries-old antisemitism, hateful stereotyping and unchallenged prejudice. But it is dangerous to assume that today's school children know what they need to know. Through the Internet, they have unfettered access to content that denies and obfuscates the truth. We have to accept that this can be very distorting and counteract it with education.

Did having a 'real' Holocaust survivor among your speakers enhance the event?

When you see and hear from a survivor in person nothing clouds the experience. Their first hand testimony is laid bare and you weep for their loss. Mother Teresa, in a different context, said, 'If I look at the masses I will never act; if I look at the one I will.' Empathy can be a very powerful driver.

The event was described as 'ground-breaking'. In what way did it break ground?

The event brought together Holocaust and Taliban atrocity survivors, academic speakers and leading organisations. The outcomes have been hugely encouraging – June Trask, the Director of the play *And Then They Came for Me*, is now planning to take the play to eight different schools who had staff here on the day, and all the organisations present have since been invited into schools to work with their students.

What are the main differences between primary and secondary schools when it comes to teaching about the Holocaust and genocide?

Exposure to the abhorrence of the Holocaust needs to take account of the prior learning of the children, as much as it does their age. In the upper primary age range there are some excellent books and resources that can be used very effectively but only after they are first vetted by their teacher. As a general rule, Holocaust and genocide education is best avoided with primary aged children and essential for secondary school children.

In this digital age, children are bombarded with messages from many different sources. Surely it is up to their parents to control and tackle this, not the schools?

Even the most vigilant parents cannot control what happens when their child

Mark Penney with Mindu Hornick (centre) and Eva Schloss



in schools

is outside the home. Prohibition is the understandable instinct but education, I'm certain, is the only answer.

What else do you think schools should be doing?

All schools should enlist the support of the wonderful organisations whose entire reason for being is to tackle prejudice and discrimination. Funds should be prioritised by those schools that can afford it and made available for those that can't.

There should be many more opportunities for students from different socio-economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds to get together. If they could spend even modest amounts of time together in structured and supportive settings, they would quickly discover that we are all a lot more alike than we are different.

Thank you Mark Penney and all the staff involved in organising this significant event which I understand took nine months to arrange. Such events are very important to me and all survivors and their families in ensuring that the memory of our suffering should not erode with the passage of time. I was honoured to be part of that very special program and support this historic initiative by Solihull School.

**Dr Mindu Hornick,
Keynote speaker and
AJR member**

AJR FUNDED EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

The AJR is the UK's largest dedicated funder of programmes and projects which promote teaching and learning about the Holocaust (TLH) in the United Kingdom. Although the over-riding priority of the organisation is to provide social, welfare and care services to Holocaust refugees and survivors, we also allocate a portion of our annual budget to support innovation in TLH because we are committed to preserving the memory of those who perished and ensuring that history does not become distorted.

Here are details of just a few of the educational projects that we are currently supporting:

Council of Christians and Jews

The Council of Christians and Jews led its 13th seminar for Christian clergy and church leaders at the International School of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in September 2019. The seminar was supported by a Project Support Grant from the AJR.

Twenty church leaders participated in the 10-day seminar, alongside a number of education officers for dioceses/cathedrals who are responsible for HMD activities and training of teachers in church schools. Seminar participants engaged in a series of lectures and workshops delivered by academics from Yad Vashem, covering pre-war Jewish life; a history of antisemitism; life in the ghettos; the origins of the Final Solution; post-Shoah Christian and Jewish thought; and a workshop on contemporary antisemitism.

The clergy also took part in a workshop in November to help them plan local HMD events. This component of the programme helps to ensure that their learning can be spread widely throughout a range of faith communities.

Vision Schools Scotland

On 7 November the Vision Schools Scotland programme hosted its annual awards ceremony at the Scottish Parliament, featuring guest speaker Barbara Winton and attended by numerous MSPs. Vision Schools Scotland is an initiative of the University of the West of

Scotland's School of Education, and receives an AJR Project Support Grant.

The programme promotes excellence in Holocaust teaching and learning by identifying and rewarding schools which demonstrate innovation and good practice and encouraging the sharing of good practice of school-based Holocaust education. Participating schools and teachers have access to Continued Professional Learning (CPL) sessions, developed in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust.

The Vision Schools Programme supports primary and secondary teachers in their teaching of the Holocaust and in addressing antisemitism, through its CPL and award process. By awarding schools that have achieved the required criteria, Vision Schools Scotland creates and develops a schools' network of good practice in Holocaust education.

Habonim Dror

The AJR was pleased to award a Catalyst Grant to Habonim Dror to support a period of expansion for its annual Sayarim Camp in Holland. The camp took place over two weeks in August. Seventy-nine 15 year olds and 22 youth leaders took part in an intensive informal educational experience on the subject of the Shoah and antisemitism.

A critical component of this programme is the extensive training that the youth leaders take part in prior to delivering the educational sessions.

AJR's Head of Educational Grants & Projects, Alex Maws, had the opportunity to travel to Holland to observe the programme first hand. His visit was an important part of our commitment to monitoring the programmes that we fund and also an opportunity to learn more about pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in informal Jewish educational settings – as opposed to the formal educational work that we typically fund.

For more information or to contact Alex see ajr.org.uk/remembrance/grant-giving/ or email alex@ajr.org.uk.

Around the AJR

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

EDINBURGH



AJR's Sharon Mail told us about her career as a journalist, including her biography of the actor Ian Richardson. A staunch advocate for human rights. Sharon also worked with the Romanian Jewish community. *Miriam Vickers*

GLASGOW

19 first and second generation members enjoyed a leisurely lunch at The Corinthian Club, a magnificently restored Grade A building that was formerly a bank. *Joann Lipsey*

HULL



Hull members enjoyed a delicious lunch followed by a fun quiz at the home of Veronika Keczkas. *Wendy Bott*

PINNER



We had a great turnout for our expert visitor from *The Antiques Roadshow*. *Ros Hart*

HERTFORDSHIRE



The inaugural meeting of our new Hertfordshire group was attended by 40 people, who all enjoyed the talk by BBC cameraman Jonathan Sumberg. He explained how a short news clip can sometimes take hours to film, depending on the light/angle/weather etc. The Hertfordshire group meets on the third Wednesday of the month in Bushey. *Karen Diamond*

ILFORD

Susan Kikoler spoke about the Jews of Italy and Sicily; a wonderful slice of Jewish history and her research is astounding. We highly recommend her. *Meta Roseneil*

NORTH WEST LONDON



Royal cake maker Dawn Blunden showed us pictures of her intricately detailed cakes, including the wedding cake for Prince Charles & Camilla Parker-Bowles, and Prince Charles' 60th and 70th birthday cakes. *Ros Hart*

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

CONTACTS

Susan Harrod
Events and Outreach Manager
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

Wendy Bott
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator
07908 156 365 wendy@ajr.org.uk

Agnes Isaacs
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator
07908 156 361 agnes@ajr.org.uk

Ros Hart
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator
07966 969 951 roshart@ajr.org.uk

Karen Diamond
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator
07966 631 778
karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

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

Child Survivors' Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld
020 8954 5298 henri@ajr.org.uk

AJR AGM

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.

The following have been nominated for re-election as Trustees: Andrew Kaufman MBE, Stephen Kon and Mark White.

If you wish to attend please contact Karin Pereira on 020 8385 3070 or karin@ajr.org.uk

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

FORTHCOMING NATIONAL EVENTS

TITLE	DATE	VENUE	DETAILS	CONTACT
CHANUKAH PARTY	11 December	New North London Synagogue, N3	Wonderful musical entertainment and a delicious hot lunch (see advert on pg 2).	Susan Harrod
CARDS & GAMES	16 December	North Western Reform Synagogue, NW11	Join us at 1pm for a deli lunch before playing Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble or Rumikub.	Ros Hart
OTTO SCHIFF PLAQUE	18 December	Woburn House, London WC1	Unveiling of an AJR commemorative plaque in honour and memory of Otto Schiff.	Susan Harrod
HMD	23 January	Belsize Square Synagogue	The theme will be 'STAND TOGETHER' - full details in the January issue.	Susan Harrod

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. 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 co-ordinator for full details.

GROUP	CO-ORDINATOR	DATE	TIME	EVENT
Cardiff	Ros Hart	2 December	12.30pm	Gareth John from Chiltern Music Therapy
Harrogate/York	Wendy Bott	2 December	2.00pm	Social get-together
Bradford	Wendy Bott	3 December	2.00pm	Social get-together
Newcastle	Agnes Isaacs	3 December	12.30pm	Pre-Chanukah lunch & Magic with Martin Duffy
Ilford	Karen Diamond	4 December	10.30am	Nick Dobson & Friends - A Viennese programme celebrating Chanukah
Pinner	Karen Diamond	5 December	2.00pm	Chanukah Party
Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs	5 December	12.30pm	Chanukah Lunch
Manchester	Wendy Bott	8 December	2.00pm	Chanukah Party
Wessex	Ros Hart	9 December	12.30pm	Rabbi Michaels
Glasgow Book Club	Agnes Isaacs	12 December	2.00pm	Book Club
Leeds	Wendy Bott	12 December	2.00pm	Chanukah Party
Glasgow	Agnes Isaacs	15 December	12.30pm	Chanukah Lunch – The High Five Swing Band will entertain
Liverpool	Wendy Bott	17 December	2.00pm	Chanukah Party

REVIEWS

PERSONAL NAMES, HITLER, AND THE HOLOCAUST. A SOCIO-ONOMASTIC STUDY OF GENOCIDE AND NAZI GERMANY.

Nick, I.M.

Lexington Books, 2019
ISBN13: 9781498525985

The author is an academic with degrees in linguistics and psychology from universities in the United States and Europe. If I learned one word, it is 'onomastics' which refers to the study of the history and origin of proper names, especially personal names. The purpose of this book is "commemoration and prevention through awareness-building of the significance of names and naming in genocide" and the author feels that the best way to achieve this is by telling the personal stories of the people concerned, and then to determine their significance during the Holocaust.

Name-based data may be used to identify individuals as well as groups and can be used to affect personal liberty. Originally, the introduction of inheritable surnames had been seen as a positive sign for Jews. However, soon the inability to differentiate between them and gentiles was seen as a threat to national security, in particular by the National Socialists.

The Nazis formed so-called *Lebensborn* institutes with the aim of producing racially "pure" children according to Nazi racial hygiene ideology. There is more to this than meets the (blue) eyes, as is explained: on many occasions the involuntary participants - the mothers - circumvented the restrictions, so that the outcome was not quite as had been desired by the Nazi instigators.

Meanwhile, Jews were finding it more and more difficult to live under the discriminating steps gradually introduced by the Nazis. Their official documents were showing the added second name Israel or Sara which set the person aside as a Jew or Jewess. This identification was followed by tracking and concentration, then deportation and finally, killing.

After the War, the Allied Forces had to control the chaotic state of affairs in Germany and Austria. There is reference to the persecution of Shoah survivors and the protection of Holocaust perpetrators. Many Nazi war criminals tried to hide behind new names in the hope of remaining undetected. Because females tend to adopt the surname of their male spouse it was much more difficult for the authorities to find women who had committed crimes than men.

The last chapter deals with continuing efforts to recover and preserve the names and identities of Holocaust victims, such as by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem. In the face of renewed right-wing extremism in Germany the book ends: "The keys to prevention are vigilance and action. By monitoring the ways in which names and naming policies are being used within our communities it may just be possible to intervene before the killing begins – again".

Henri Obstfeld

SHOULD WE BOMB AUSCHWITZ?

The BBC broadcast on 19 September, *Should we Bomb Auschwitz?*, reported the heroic escape of two prisoners, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, in April 1944. The information provided by the two escapees to the Jewish authorities in Slovakia, about the organised killings of those deported to Auschwitz, shocked the civilised world and raised the question whether bombing the gas chambers in Auschwitz might stop the killing. This question was particularly relevant since the escapees reported that the Nazis were preparing to exterminate the 800,000 Hungarian Jews still surviving in Hungary.

Although the report was completed by the end of April 1944 it did not reach the Allies until July. The testimony of the two eyewitnesses stirred the conscience of both the American and British authorities. It led to discussions as to whether the bombing of Auschwitz Birkenau might put a stop to the killing of Hungarian Jews. Finally, when considering all the arguments for and against, no decision was reached.

The discussions whether to bomb Auschwitz by either the American or British air forces were well researched and described in the programme. They highlighted the importance of Vrba and Wetzler's reports but also acknowledged the other factors and the feasibility of such an operation which made the decision so difficult. The documentary was well presented and the arguments clear.

In fact Vrba and Wetzler's hope for sharing their stories was not to encourage the Allies to bomb Auschwitz but rather to alert the intended victims (i.e. the Hungarian Jews) so they could decide whether to rebel, escape or find other ways of resistance to avoid death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz Birkenau.

Gerta Vrbova

BERLIN TO LONDON. AN EMOTIONAL HISTORY OF TWO REFUGEES.

Esther Saraga

Valentine Mitchell, 2019
ISBN 978-1912676163

Esther Saraga's parents came to the United Kingdom as Jewish refugees in 1938. Both were born in Berlin. Her father, Wolja, was a highly regarded physicist who was denied a Ph.D. from the University of Berlin on racial grounds. He was then offered a position in Zürich, but the Swiss government refused him entry as he was officially stateless. Her mother Lotte had her medical studies in Germany terminated 'for being friendly with communists' and got to England on a domestic permit.

After their deaths in 1980 and 1984 Esther found 'many boxes and envelopes full of papers and photographs. They were in sideboards and cupboards, in the loft and in the garage' and included five hundred letters covering the years 1938-47. This was quite a treasure trove and very fortunately their daughter had both the ability and the determination to put together their story of persecution, emigration and adjustment to a new life in a foreign country. An initial task was to learn the German language which she previously 'had hated the sound of'. Much of the documentation she then read consisted of enormously protracted

and frustrating battles with various bureaucracies in both Germany and the United Kingdom. First there was the task of escaping Germany, then that of trying to get Wolja's parents from Romania into this country, which his father eventually managed after his wife had died, and then the attempt to get their furniture and other belongings sent from Germany and finally the restitution claims.

The early years in England were not easy. Wolja was interned on the Isle of Man and later granted the absurd label of 'friendly enemy alien'. Among further difficulties we learn that Wolja had to negotiate permission to send photos of his son to grandfather Ado in Romania for fear of contravening the 1939 Trading with the Enemy Act. Refugees were often mistrusted. It was feared they might prove disloyal and help invading German forces. This of course added to the enormous difficulties of getting work.

There are many books about the refugee experience. This one is broader than most in that it explicitly records a member of the following generation trying to come to terms with the family history and legacy. It is a story that will resonate with other children of refugees. Here are two aspects that I totally identify with: 'We had underestimated what our parents had gone through' and 'As a child, I envied my friends who had grandparents'. In this book I found echoes of my own family situation. I recommend that you read it. It might be the same for you.

Michael Levin

LET HIM GO: A DANISH CHILD IN RAVENSBRÜCK AND THERESIENSTADT

by **Ib Katznelson**

Vallentine Mitchell

ISBN 978 191 2676088

Ib Katznelson's second birthday was spent detained at Horserød after his family were betrayed fleeing from their Danish home and he went on to spend 18 months imprisoned in concentration camps. Now, more than 70 years, later his impressive book has told his story for his children and grandchildren and explored the circumstances that led to this terrible situation.

In October 1943 his young parents had taken him with his grandparents to catch a boat to safety in Sweden when they were betrayed and arrested. They ended up at concentration camps – Ib eventually went with his mother to Ravensbrück while his father went to Sachsenhausen which, apart from the hard labour, was bitterly cold. Both Ib and his mother were desperately ill and she was urged to let the toddler die. Later he was miraculously left in his cot at Theresienstadt when all the other children from the hospital disappeared and, it was presumed, were transported on.

Ib draws on testimony from his parents to tell how it was for them and their bleak lives in captivity. He has also carried out extensive research to discover what really happened, with handy information boxes giving the details of the people mentioned including officials who sealed the fate of Danish Jews.

The family was eventually reunited in Theresienstadt where members in the end lived together in the ghetto. The camp was famously dressed up by the Nazis to give a false impression of a good life for the Red Cross visit in June 1944. The role of the organisation is explored extensively, including the enormous benefit of life-saving food parcels. Ib stresses Theresienstadt was essentially a transit camp and he explores the horror and fear that people lived in daily that they might be transported away to certain fate.

Just before the end of the war the Katznelsons were freed and taken on White Buses to Sweden. Here they were "quarantined" for six weeks before being finally allowed home to find their old Copenhagen apartment "totally in order". Unlike so many Jewish families all Ib's direct relatives survived although when he took his grandchildren back to Theresienstadt he found his name on the memorial. The book's cover shows a picture of Ib drawn by a Dutch artist who also survived the camp. Approximately 15,000 children under 15 passed through the camp. All but about 100 were killed.

His maternal grandmother was never imprisoned and her tireless efforts to get them free probably helped save

her family. Possessions were stolen but with German thoroughness a receipt was issued to his mother for confiscated rings which, amazingly, she got back after the war.

This is a powerful, extensively researched book by somebody who had the hardest start to childhood imaginable, leaving him with a legacy of health problems. It portrays all the chaos, cruelty, ambiguity and treachery interspersed with acts of kindness, luck and fortitude. Ib became a distinguished civil servant and economist. When recently asked if he had had a good life after all he said: "I could, and still can, answer that positively."

Janet Weston

PillarCare

Outstanding live-in and hourly care in your home at flexible, affordable rates.



020 7482 2188 pillarcare.co.uk



JACKMAN SILVERMAN

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

Telephone: 020 7209 5532
 robert@jackmansilverman.co.uk



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

Contact Alf Buechler at alf@buechler.org or tel 020 8554 5635 or 07488 774 414

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.

KURT TO CLAPTON

Stanley Katz would like to trace Kurt from Germany who came with his mother (the surname is possibly "Sloper") to London in 1938 and lived with the Katz family at 78 The Terrace, Clapton Common. On 1 September 1939 the boys were evacuated to 47 Hitchin Street, Biggleswade, to live with Mrs Butcher before being re-housed at Youngs Hotel, Market Square.
pauline@paulinesymons.com

SHROPSHIRE REFUGEEES

Kathleen Jones is writing a book about Shropshire and would like to hear from anyone connected with Kindertransport refugees who came to Shropshire, especially an Austrian doctor called Dr Sternberg who practised at Oakengates Surgery in Slaney Street between 1944 and 1947.
kathleencountyshropshire@gmail.com

FEMALE REFUGEES

PhD student Abi Axelby would like to hear from any Jewish women who



Cardiff Reform Synagogue Memorial Tablet

came from Europe from 1939 onwards. Abi would like to interview them about their lives after they arrived in London
abiexelby@gmail.com

CONNECTIONS TO APOLDA

The Prager House Organisation in Apolda, Germany, wishes to contact any family or friends of Judith Paisner, daughter of family Rechtman. Also families Storch and Aber, who also came from Apolda.
peter.franz.taubach@gmx.de

ARABIC LESSONS

AJR member Frederick Hirsch is keen to refresh his knowledge of the Arabic language and would like to hear from anyone willing to give him lessons.
fredrickhirsch@btinternet.com

CARDIFF LINKS

The Jewish History Association of South Wales works to uncover, document, preserve, and share the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Jewish

communities of south Wales. The Association is currently researching the stories of people named on the Cardiff Reform Synagogue Memorial Tablet (pictured above), which was erected in memory of relatives of synagogue members who died in the Holocaust and whose graves are unknown. There are 102 names on the Tablet and the full list can be seen on <https://jhasw2018.wixsite.com/news/post/our-new-project> – please get in contact if you have any information about any of the people listed or their relatives.
klavdija.erzen@jhasw.org.uk
or 07972 113952

RAMON GARDNER / GAERTNER

Sue Gardner is researching the ancestry of her father Ramon, who arrived via a Kindertransport on 2 September 1939. She is particularly interested to trace whoever placed a notice in AJR Information in March 1988, listing her father as a missing person.
sukygy14@googlemail.com

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.

Books Bought
MODERN AND OLD
Eric Levene
020 8364 3554 / 07855387574
ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk

**Write Your Life Story
Record a Family History**
Whether you have begun writing, researched your ancestors, or never put pen to paper, we offer a personalised service to help you preserve your precious memories for future generations.
www.wordsbydesign.co.uk
tony@wordsbydesign.co.uk
01869 327548

OBITUARIES

RITA ROSENBAUM née HAUSER

Born: 19 February 1927, Essen

Died: 18 October 2019, London

The youngest of four, my mother's two older siblings emigrated to Palestine in the 1930s and she only saw them again in 1955. She came to England in 1939, never underestimating how fortunate she was to be accompanied by her parents and, later, her brother, Martin.

On arrival the family lived at the Jews' Temporary Shelter and then in Stamford Hill and Willesden. My mother was educated under the auspices of Dr Solomon Schonfeld whose school was evacuated to Shefford. Later the family was interned on the Isle of Man.

Unable to follow her chosen career of nursing, Rita undertook a number of secretarial roles until marrying my late father, Werner, in 1956. As a housewife and mother she displayed her customary independent streak, working part-time for several companies. She was an early adopter of the computer, applying these skills to her paid and voluntary work. After my father's death in 1998, she became a full time volunteer for 20+ years.

Rita complemented her role with Jewish Care, recording, editing and administering the distribution of audio versions of the Jewish Chronicle and other resources for the visually impaired, by carrying out a similar service for AJR members. She chose the excerpts of the AJR Journal to be read, arranged the studio and volunteer readers, sent out memory sticks and liaised with our members. Her *raison d'être* was to give all her 'customers' the best possible service. She



Rita Rosenbaum (left) recording the AJR Journal in 2017

worked tirelessly, five days a week, until just before her death. At 92 she was active and independent, continuing to shop and cook for herself, meeting friends and attending annual events such as HMD and Yom Hashoah.

One of her last acts was attending her great-nephew's wedding in Israel in September. Shortly after, she received a terminal diagnosis and reacted with her trademark strength of character, continuing to smile and think of others. Her passing is a tremendous loss to me as her immensely proud daughter as well as to her many friends and those she helped throughout her life.

Jane Rosenbaum

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: On behalf of all the AJR members who benefited from receiving a recorded version of the AJR Journal over the years, the AJR would like to pay tribute to the massive contribution that Rita made. She was a vital member of our volunteering team and her commitment and attention to detail was legendary. She will be sorely missed and we will endeavour to maintain her high standards of service in her honour.

DR IAN LOWIT

Born: 10 August 1919, Vienna

Died: 20 August 2019, Aberdeenshire

Dr Ian Lowit, who died peacefully at the age of 100, had a remarkable life. Born Hans Lowit, his father died while he was a young child.

During Ian's medical studies he met Sigmund Freud and his mother was an acquaintance of fellow psychotherapist Alfred Adler. This early exposure to Viennese psychotherapy undoubtedly influenced Ian's later career choices. Being Jewish, he was expelled in 1938 and he and his mother were forced to flee to the UK. After working as a butler and a plumber's mate, Ian was interned as an enemy alien; he was transported to Canada and braved the perilous re-crossing during the Battle of the Atlantic, to join the British Army after D-Day.

Resuming his medical studies at Aberdeen University in 1948, he married Sheila, the love of his life, in 1951. In Edinburgh he specialised in child psychiatry, becoming Aberdeen's first consultant child psychiatrist in 1960.



In 1963 he was an expert witness at the trial of Henry Burnett, the last man to be hanged in Scotland. But his opinion of Burnett as requiring treatment rather than punishment was ignored by the Court and rubbished by the press, in a drive to press ahead before the death sentence was repealed.

Shortly before his retirement in 1984, the in-patient unit for child psychiatry was named the Lowit Unit. Always appreciated for his wry wit and gently eccentric manner, Ian will be fondly remembered by many colleagues, ex-patients, his children, grand- and great-grandchildren.

Mike Maas Lowit

AN INVITATION TO DEBATE THE ZEITGEIST

We write as two daughters of refugees from Nazi Germany. We understand ourselves to be part of the “second generation” (broadly defined) and are exploring how we see this as affecting our lives, both positively and negatively. How does it tie in with our commitment to equality, human rights, anti-racism and support for refugees?

The rise of fascism in parts of Europe, often linked with antisemitism, and the growing legitimacy of a form of authoritarian populism here, fill us with dread and we are aware of often feeling disproportionately fearful. How do all these factors link in?

We are both in our 70s but it is only in the last couple of decades that we have begun to think seriously about how our backgrounds influence our identities and political actions. Perhaps it is because we are reaching the twilight of our lives, and are now reflecting on what might be our personal and social legacies.

We have both had very busy professional and personal lives, and reflecting upon diverse influences was never top of the agenda. We were also brought up not to reflect or talk about the past, but to become good English women who fitted in. Talking about what had happened to our families before, and during the war,



Marilyn Moos (left) and Miriam David

was largely taboo within our families. Of course, there were exceptions. We knew that our families had been exiled from Nazi Germany; exile is a strong and harsh term. Miriam witnessed some continuing contact with Germany, such as letters dropping through the letter box, but was forbidden to use things made in Germany. To talk of the past would have been terrifying.

Miriam's father came to England in late 1936 to an engineering job in Manchester because he feared the impending war. Aged 28, he wanted to make a new life for himself and quickly got involved in Jewish and Zionist politics. His future wife was the daughter of immigrants from Russia in the late nineteenth century. What their three daughters did not know was the struggle their father had to get his brother, parents, aunt and grandmother to leave Germany and secure the financial guarantees and visas to do so. They only learned this two decades after their father had died, in 1980, when they found a locked box in their mother's effects containing Nazi passports and other information.

Marilyn's parents were political refugees, her father an active anti-Nazi who fled for his life on the night of the Reichstag fire. That much she knew and it gave her a lifelong sense of pride and source of identity. But what she did not know - which her parents refused to speak of - is what

happened to their families. She grew up sensing death around her. That her family were killed as Jews was never mentioned and would have been denied. But her parents were laden with the past. The front door was triple locked. When she reached the age when her friends went out in the evening, her parents barred her way out of the house. Only in her late 50s/early 60s, once her father was long dead and her mother in a hospital, then a home, did she start the long hunt for their secrets. Later, she wrote a novel: *The Language of Silence*, 2010, and a biography of her father: *Beaten but not Defeated. Siegfried Moos: A German anti-Nazi who settled in Britain*, 2013.

We would like to talk to others about how they have pieced together their stories, with a view to producing a collection. We are especially (though not exclusively) interested in the interrelationship between the personal and the political in an increasingly nationalistic and racist zeitgeist. What are the meanings for us of being children of refugees, émigrés or exiles? As people who are British and who recently acquired German passports, do we see ourselves as being distinct?



We invite anybody interested to join us in further discussion. Please email Miriam.david@ucl.ac.uk or Merilynmoos@blueyonder.co.uk

Readers are also invited to take part in AJR's own survey for the Second Generation, which can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/AJR2G>

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  AssociationofJewishRefugees  @TheAJR_

For the latest AJR news, including details of forthcoming events and information about our services, visit 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

The AJR Journal is printed on 100% recycled material and posted out in fully recyclable plastic mailing envelopes.