



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Happy 80th birthday to us!

This month marks exactly 80 years since the AJR was created, serving the unique interests of thousands of Jewish people who had fled to Britain from Nazi Europe. Their journeys, both to and within the UK, were far from easy and the support provided by the AJR would be critical.

Eighty years on we like to think that the AJR still plays a vital role, not only in continuing to serve the needs of the smaller number of Holocaust survivors and refugees, but also in recognising the massive contribution that this generation has made to every aspect of British life and providing a focal point for their children and grandchildren.

This special issue of the *AJR Journal* looks back at the foundation and early years of the Association and the context in which it was created. It also includes some poignant family stories from people whose lives have been touched by the AJR in some way.

We are also taking the opportunity to introduce readers to two extraordinary projects that the AJR is undertaking to mark this milestone anniversary. The first is the creation of an online map which will draw together aspects of Holocaust-related history, activity and impact across the UK into a groundbreaking reference source.

The second initiative feeds directly into the map and will also provide a living legacy for the AJR and our members. Very simply, this winter we will be planting 80



native oak trees throughout the UK, at places that were significant to the AJR community in some way. This is a very exciting project which will allow us to engage directly with hundreds of members and local community organisations. You will find the full details on pages 11 – 13.

Oak is actually one of the globally recognised symbols for 80th anniversaries which is why, in addition to planting oak trees, we have incorporated an oak leaf into our special 80th anniversary logo.

We are also organising two special online events to mark this anniversary, to which every reader is welcome. On Monday 19 July there will be a full-day seminar to present various aspects of the AJR's work and give the audience the chance to ask questions. And on Sunday 12 September we will be hosting an online UK-wide tea party, with special guests and musical entertainment. We will even send a box of teatime treats to all participants who register early enough. Please see the advert on page 5.

Meanwhile we hope you enjoy this very special issue of the *AJR Journal* and look forward, as always, to receiving any comments.

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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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1941: The world of the AJR

What kind of world was the AJR born into when it was founded in 1941? Crucially, the AJR was born in wartime. Churchill had been Prime Minister for a year, clothes rationing had just been introduced, the heaviest air-raid of the year had been unleashed on London and German forces had invaded the Soviet Union. These were dark times.

But there was another side to wartime Britain in 1941. Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* had just opened in the West End, the first Ronald Searle cartoon to feature St Trinian's School was soon to be published and *Dangerous Moonlight* with its famous theme by Richard Addinsell was showing in the cinemas. A few months later, *Desert Island Discs* was first broadcast on the BBC Forces Programme and Vera Lynn recorded *The White Cliffs of Dover*.

For Jews there was another side to the 1940s, not least the antisemitism which permeated British culture. In 1941 Patrick Hamilton wrote *Hangover Square*, which featured a character called Montague, a 'vast, burly, rich-voiced appalling Jew.' In January 1944 the young Isaiah Berlin, based in Washington, sent a particularly informative cable to Churchill. Churchill asked the Foreign office who had sent it. They described him as a 'Mr. Berlin of Baltic Jewish extraction.' Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary, commented, 'There is perhaps a too Oriental flavour.' In 1945, Evelyn Waugh published his new novel, *Brideshead Revisited*. Early on, Charles Ryder meets Anthony Blanche, 'part Gallic, part Yankee, part, perhaps, Jew; wholly exotic.' He seemed to Ryder 'to be burdened with the experience of the Wandering Jew. He was indeed a nomad of no nationality.' That summer, Ryder returns home, short of money. He turns to his father who tells him, "'Your grandfather once said to me, 'Live within your means, but if you do get into difficulties, come to me. Don't go to the Jews.'" In 1948 in David Lean's film, *Oliver Twist*, Alec Guinness played Fagin,

with a huge prosthetic nose and a thick foreign accent. This was the Britain the AJR was born into.

What about the Anglo-Jewish community? In 1940, the year before the AJR was founded, Selig Brodetsky was the first east European Jew to become President of the Board of Deputies. The Jewish population in the East End was down to 60,000, half what it had been in 1900. By 1945 it had halved again, down to 30,000.

British Jews increasingly entered professions and the new service industries. By the end of the 20th century little remained of the inner-city Jewish working class. Most striking of all, British Jews were appointed to high-profile positions in government, universities and public life. Jews became cabinet ministers, entered the House of Lords and became masters of Oxbridge colleges.

But perhaps one of the most dramatic changes after 1941 was the huge impact of Jewish refugees on every aspect of British life and certainly on British culture. During the war, Emeric Pressburger joined Michael Powell to form a new film production company, The Archers, and made masterpieces like *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* and *Black Narcissus*, Ludwig Guttmann was appointed director of the new centre for spinal injuries at Stoke Mandeville, which revolutionised the treatment of paraplegics, the young Lucian Freud had his first one-man show and Karl Popper published *The Open Society and*



A 1941 poster for the Homefront

its Enemies. In 1947 Rudolf Bing became the founder and director of the Edinburgh Festival and Max Perutz became director of the famous MRC Unit for Molecular Biology, Cambridge, where Crick and Watson famously discovered the structure of DNA. A year later, the Amadeus Quartet gave their first performance at The Wigmore Hall and Hermann Bondi, Hoyle and Gold formulated their "steady-state" theory of the universe. That was just the 1940s, the beginning of a new Golden Age.

1941 was not just the beginning of the AJR. In the same year, the Romanian refugee Miron Grindea founded *Adam International*, a new cultural magazine that was to last late into the 1980s. From the 1930s to the 1950s a number of new Jewish institutions and publications appeared alongside the AJR: The Jewish Museum in 1932, the Wiener Library, which opened to the public in 1939, *AJR Information* (now *The AJR Journal*), founded in 1946, and in 1953 Jacob Sonntag, born in Bukovina, founded *The Jewish Quarterly*, now almost seventy years old.

The AJR was founded in terrible times but has flourished since the war, just as Jewish refugees have assimilated and British Jewry has found its place in British society.

David Herman

Message from the Chairman and CEO



Dear Friend,

When we wrote to you last April none of us could have imagined how events would have unfolded, with the devastating impact of Covid-19 claiming lives and livelihoods and resulting in the global disruption we have all felt.

It has been a long time coming but we now feel confident and comfortable to share our plans for the return to 'normal' working and the reinstatement of many of our core services. With the government hitting milestones on the roadmap and making good progress with the vaccine roll out, several Head Office staff have returned to work at Winston House. As we move toward 19 July, when we hope the final restrictions will be lifted, we have re-instated home visits from social workers and volunteers, providing a huge timely and psychological boost to many of our members especially the more isolated. Exercising caution, for the time being these visits will be arranged in accordance with our own protocols, including checking that all involved in the visit are comfortable to do so.

In a further development, we are planning to restart some members' meetings. As this will be a first tentative step, we envisage holding a limited number of small gatherings over the coming weeks which themselves will help us see what additional measures we might need to put in place.

All of this coincides this month with the AJR's 80th anniversary, which is reflected elsewhere in this *Journal*. It is testament to our founding fathers and all those who have contributed to the advancement of our great organisation, and, above all, to you, our members, that the AJR has reached this amazing milestone in relatively rude health. As part of our celebrations we are delighted to share details of two commemorative legacy projects – *The UK Holocaust Map* and *80 Trees for 80 Years* – which will perpetuate both the memory of the refugees and the mission of the AJR, and which you can also read about in this month's *Journal*.

We are also excited to invite you to attend a special gala afternoon tea event on Sunday 12 September when we will celebrate the wonderful history, culture and heritage of the AJR. Even though it will be virtual there will be refreshments (what else would you expect from The AJR) and stellar entertainment – please see the notice on page 5 for more details and how to join us. Please do also join us for our day-long seminar on 19 July when we will be showcasing the history, activities and resources of the AJR.

Our colleagues and I greatly look forward to seeing you all soon.

With our very best wishes,

Andrew Kaufman
Chairman

Michael Newman
Chief Executive



OBE for CEO

The AJR is delighted that our Chief Executive, Michael Newman, has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours, for Services to Holocaust Remembrance and Education.

Announcing the award to the AJR team, our chairman Andrew Kaufman MBE said: "Michael is an excellent and invaluable Chief Executive, hard-working, dedicated and enthusiastic and has made an immense contribution to the refugee community in the UK and, in my opinion, is highly deserving of an honour. It has been my great pleasure to work closely with Michael at the AJR during the past 20 years."

Commenting on his award, Michael – who joined the AJR in January 2001 and has been CEO since July 2012 – said: "Serving the unique community the AJR supports is a passion and an honour, and I am so thrilled to accept this award on behalf of our members and those who champion our cause. As the grandson of a refugee who fled Nazi oppression in Germany, I have a personal connection to the lives and stories of our members. These testimonies form part of the AJR's mission to develop resources that teach about the Holocaust. I am especially grateful to all those who have supported me and from whose wisdom I have benefitted, and to my wonderful colleagues who consistently demonstrate their commitment to furthering our work."

FROM WHENCE WE CAME

In the summer of 1941, eighty years ago, the community of the Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe in Britain could perceive, if perhaps only faintly, signs of an upturn in their fortunes. Before the outbreak of war, many of them had been made to feel that they were in Britain only on sufferance; though grateful to Britain for offering them a place of refuge, they were aware that the welcome extended to them by parts of the population was at best conditional. In September 1939, they became 'enemy aliens' who from May 1940 were subject to internment; many thousands were detained in internment camps, principally on the Isle of Man, and several thousand were deported overseas.

But by summer 1941, almost all the interned refugees had been released. A small group of public-spirited refugees decided to establish an organisation to represent the Jews who had sought refuge from Nazism in Britain. They named that organisation the Association of Jewish Refugees, a title that it still proudly bears today. The AJR appealed to its community specifically as Jews; it aimed to distinguish itself from the existing refugee organisations, the Free German League of Culture and the Austrian Centre, which sought to appeal to the refugees as German and Austrian nationals respectively, not by what truly united the majority of them: their status as victims of the Nazis' relentless persecution of Jews.

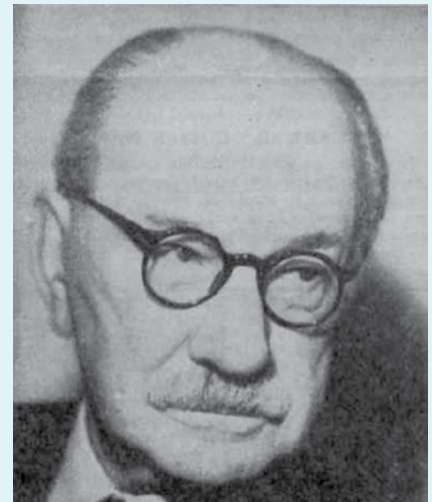
Two meetings were held, one at 26 Belsize Park on 6 July 1941, and one on 20 July, at which the AJR was founded. According to a note dated summer 1941 and signed 'W.R.', the organisation had offices at 279A, Finchley Road; its



Werner Rosenstock (W.R.), the first Secretary of the AJR

Executive Committee consisted of Adolf Schoyer (Chairman), Adolf Michaelis (Vice-Chairman), Walter Breslauer, Salomon Adler-Rudel, Kurt Alexander and Eugen Mittwoch. The Secretary was the invaluable Werner Rosenstock, the 'W.R.' to whom we owe the preservation of the early records of the AJR and so much more. For Rosenstock was to serve as General Secretary of the AJR, and from January 1946 as Editor of its monthly journal, until his retirement over forty years later, in December 1982. By the summer of 1942, the Committee of Management had been joined by Rudolf Bienenfeld, the sole Austrian, and Ernst Lowenthal. Adelheid Levy, the first of the dedicated social workers to head the AJR's social services department, was added to the secretariat. Soon the AJR moved to the first of its long-term offices, at 8 Fairfax Mansions, just off Finchley Road.

The AJR was a distinctly Jewish organisation that appealed to all Jewish refugees, from the devoutly orthodox to the largely secularised. Originally, it was also the organisation of the German-speaking Jewish refugees from the lands of *Mitteleuropa*; it displayed the character and ethic associated with the German Jews, often known – sometimes less than flatteringly – as 'Jekkes', for their devotion to culture and education, their industry and efficiency, and their punctilious sense of order. Only later did the AJR come to represent the Jews from other countries in Europe who had survived the Nazi terror and emigrated to Britain.



The AJR's first chairman, Adolf Schoyer

Compared to the nearly 70,000 refugees who had fled to Britain before 1939, the number of Jews who were admitted after 1945 was quite small. Unlike the situation in countries like the USA, Israel or Canada, where survivors of the Holocaust predominated, in post-war Britain the community of the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution was still dominated by the German-speaking refugees who had arrived before the war. After 1945, some of those from eastern European countries had their own representative organisations; only as these were wound up did Jews from those countries gravitate to the AJR, as did some of the Jews who fled to Britain from Czechoslovakia after the Communist takeover in 1948 and some who fled Hungary after the suppression of the uprising of 1956.

The refugees from the German-speaking lands retained both their own organisation and their own communal identity, which initially distinguished them clearly from Anglo-Jewry, the majority of which had emigrated to Britain from Tsarist Russia before the First World War and had retained more of the lifestyle, values and practices of eastern European Jewry. By contrast, the majority of the German-speaking refugees – though by no means all – had undergone the process of assimilation into German-speaking society and of secularisation, to varying degrees, in the great cities of Berlin, Vienna, Frankfurt, Breslau, Cologne, Hamburg or Leipzig. It was

AJR Annual Tea Celebration

80 YEARS OF AJR

Sunday 12 September 2021 at 2.30pm

Come and join our Zoom celebration of 80 Years of AJR

The programme will include:

- A warm welcome from AJR Chairman, Andrew Kaufman MBE
- Sing-a-long with Sidney Austin to a selection of popular music from the 50s and 60s – song sheets will be provided

Tickets are £5 per person, which includes the cost of a delicious tea box to enjoy during the entertainment.

To book please go to www.ajr.org.uk and click the link or call the AJR office.



ONLINE
EVENT

from these urbanised, middle-class sections of German and Austrian Jewry that the bulk of the refugee community in Britain stemmed, for they had been, by and large, more successful than the poorer, more orthodox Jews in surmounting the obstacles to emigration before 1939 and securing admission to Britain.

These differences contributed significantly to the continuation of the AJR as an independent body distinct from the organisations of Anglo-Jewry. In countries like the USA or Israel, the refugees were absorbed more quickly into the mainstream of Jewish life. Whereas around the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the Jews from eastern Europe had settled in working-class areas like the East End of London, the refugees of the 1930s congregated in areas like Hampstead, Belsize Park or Swiss Cottage which, though far from the up-market, des-res districts that they have since become, were plainly middle-class in character. The later refugees were also socially upwardly mobile, integrating predominantly into the middle class in Britain, and ensuring that their children followed the same path by giving a high priority to education; education functioned, as it were, as the escalator that carried much of the second generation up into secure professional positions. But since the post-war decades, relations between the AJR and Anglo-Jewry have been thoroughly cordial, as the number of British Jews working happily for the AJR testifies.

Typically, the chairmen (they have so far all been men) of the AJR came from the

German-Jewish professional classes, from the law or finance. The founding chairman of the AJR, Adolf Schoyer (1941-53), was a lawyer, and his successor, Hans Reichmann (1953-63), had also studied law before working for one of the organisations of German Jewry in Berlin. With their successors, Alfred S. Dresel (1963-74) and Werner M. Behr (1974-76), who came from the world of banking and finance, they were responsible in those early years for directing what was called the AJR's 'political' work. The first task was to secure the status of the Jewish refugees in Britain. That was largely achieved after the end of the war, when the government rejected the proposal to repatriate the refugees to their countries of origin and resumed the process of naturalisation, which allowed the great majority of the refugees to become British citizens. The AJR continued to campaign against any manifestations of antisemitism and to press for the resolution of such outstanding issues as the registration of refugee doctors and dentists by their professional bodies and the ending of taxation on *Renten*, the monthly payments that refugees received as restitution from Germany and Austria.

During the tenure of Ludwig Spiro (1976-87), the AJR definitively shifted its focus to social work, though it had been involved in the administration of old age homes for elderly and infirm refugees since the 1950s. Ludwig Spiro's successor, C.T. (Theo) Marx, was the last of the chairmen from the first generation of refugees, before our present chairman, Andrew Kaufman, assumed office in 1996. Since then, the services that the AJR offers its members

have greatly widened in scope, as its weekly e-Newsletter, introduced during the lockdown of 2020, shows: these now include a rich range of social and welfare services; volunteer and outreach work, including befrienders and the *My Story* life story books; the network of regional groups; assistance with restitution claims; and grants distributed through Self-Aid. The AJR is also committed to projects that commemorate and record the experience of its members: the *Refugee Voices* testimony archive of filmed interviews; the AJR plaque scheme; and the *Continental Britons* exhibition. Through such projects and through its active involvement in Holocaust Memorial Day, the AJR aims to educate present and future generations about the Holocaust.

In recent years, the AJR has also achieved recognition as one of the leading Jewish organisations in Britain, and beyond. It has been consulted by government, for example on the UK Holocaust Memorial; it has initiated events at the Houses of Parliament; others of its events have been honoured by the presence of royalty; and it plays a significant part in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Even as the generation of the refugees is leaving us, the AJR has entered a highly active and successful era. Under the day-to-day direction of Michael Newman, Chief Executive since 2012, the Association's work for its members can even be said to recall, under very different conditions, the great days of Werner Rosenstock.

Anthony Grenville

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.

SUDETENLAND

In "Bloch-ed by Czech Mate" (May) Mr. Mauthner rightly refers to "wholesale ethnic cleansing of millions of people" but he falls for the old propaganda: "German and Nazi sympathising majority of *Sudetenlanders*".

This disgraceful episode is little known here but widely known in Germany. We are talking about civilians, mainly women and children under 16. Few men were involved.

Despite protests by international humanitarian organisations, this atrocity was permitted by the Allies. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland acted with the consent of the victorious Allies, Romania and Yugoslavia joined in without permission. Twelve to fourteen million were booted out of their homes, attacked by fellow citizens, some detained in concentration camps (yes – Auschwitz), transported in locked trains without food, water or heating. They were dumped on a chaotic and defeated Germany and mainly left to fend for themselves. More than half a million victims (please, not "Nazis") died.

Erica Preat, Isle of Wight

ERNEST KOLMAN

It was with deep regret that I read your obituary of Ernest Kolman (May). As it said, he flew tail gunner over Europe on VE Day and his log book and photograph in flying gear were displayed in the German Historical Museum. At one time we corresponded and I have two photos of him from those days which he sent me, one in uniform and the other in flying gear. He flew a B-17G over Cologne with grim satisfaction. The "K" on the rear rudder stood for Kimbolton, an American airfield not far from where I live. The "G" stands for a later version of the Flying Fortress which had a forward armament that was missing on the original version, something which the Luftwaffe exploited.

Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath

WE! ARE! HERE!

The article *We! Are! Here!* (April) reminds me of the Israeli Maccabi football club when they played a few years ago in the

Olympic Stadium, built in Berlin in 1936. The symbolism of this did not escape a reporter who ended her review of the game thus: We are here and they are not.

Rudi Leavor BEM, Bradford

GREAT SURVIVORS

THE TIMES

Letters page, 7 June 2021

GREAT SURVIVORS

Sir, As chairman of the Association of Jewish Refugees, I read with great appreciation the obituary of Victor Ross (*Readers' Lives, Jun 5*), one of our "polymath" members who died in March aged 101. It was stated, however, that Victor was one of the last of the Germans and Austrians of Jewish origin who came to Britain as refugees from the Nazis in the 1930s. Our organisation still has almost 1,000 members from this incredible generation, 446 of whom are in their nineties and another 39 over 100. They are not known as survivors for nothing.

Andrew Kaufman
London NW3

How interesting to find this letter by the AJR Chairman in *The Times*. I recall my husband saying, many decades ago, that being a member of the AJR promises a long life judging by the ages given in the death announcements of the (then) *AJR Information* in which almost everyone was in their 90s!

Margarete Stern, London, NW3

NOTE FROM EDITOR: The AJR's Twitter followers also liked Andrew Kaufman's letter. In its first few hours it was seen by almost 40,000 people.

NOT EVERYONE WAS MIDDLE CLASS

Why should there be "class awareness" in survivors' stories? It made no difference to Hitler whether his victims were rich or poor, paupers or kings – they were to be exterminated. So what evidence does Gaby Weiner have (June) that middle class children had preference over poorer children when it came to deciding who was to be saved by the Kindertransport?

Gaby Weiner continues by outlining the hardship suffered, even before Hitler, by those living in Leopoldstadt – the Jewish district of Vienna. Some did, some didn't. The Jews who had fled from Galicia to Vienna were

mainly uneducated. They had to learn – and they did. *Bildung* was all important in pre-war Vienna. More than half of the *Ostjuden*, once trained, found themselves important jobs in Vienna and, indeed, became the backbone of the city. My own father, Marcus Pfeffer, qualified as a medical doctor, had his own surgery, and became Medical Officer to Hakoah, the all-Jewish Championship-winning Viennese football club. The tale Mrs Weiner tells of Fanny Isenstein, who lived in England and helped rescue some of her relatives, is very sad but not that unusual. English Jews were frightened that an influx of Continental Jews would cause more antisemitism. Mosley was already on the march. My parents-in-law were English-born Jews. They, too, had feared the coming of the Jews from across the Continent, for the same reason – a belief that antisemitism would increase.

Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

REVVING UP VOLKSWAGEN

I read with great interest Ruth Barnett's article (June) and would add that the use of slave labour was, sadly, common in German industry during WW2, including with BMW and Daimler Benz. Indeed most of the major names of German industry were involved in this shameful practice. Very few have paid any compensation or addressed the question of *Vergangenheits Bewältigung* (dealing with the past). Rare are the cases where respected historians have been given access to companies' archives and produced scholarly accounts of those companies' activities.

My late father, an accomplished automotive engineer in pre-war Nazi Germany, developed a revolutionary clutch prior to fleeing to the UK, which became a component of virtually all German cars, including the VW Beetle from its inception. It is a sad irony that thereafter almost all German tank and other armoured fighting vehicles were similarly equipped.

John D. Goldsmith, Basel, Switzerland

BOY 30529

I had always been told that my father, Walter Kurt Hayman, was the youngest person to be elected to the Royal Society in 1956, at

LOOKING FOR?

WHO ARE THEY?

This photo (right), taken in 1940 in Sandwich, shows Eduard Elias (born 1905) and his brother, Hans, who both travelled from Dachau to Kitchener Camp, then to Mooragh on the Isle of Man and then to Canada, returning to the UK in 1942. Eduard's son, Eric, would like to know the names of the other two people in the photograph. elias2000@totalise.co.uk

RELATIVES OF SILVIA AND PAULA OHRENSTEIN

Paul Rothkopf's father, Ernst, emigrated to the USA from Vienna in 1939 and corresponded with his childhood friend Eduard Ohrenstein in the UK; Eddie was killed on active service in 1945. Paul would like to give their correspondence



to any descendants of Eddie's sister Silvia (born 1932) or cousin Paula (1923). pauldrothkopf@yahoo.com

LOTTE (CHARLOTTE) FRIEDMANN from Breslau

Harvey Kaplan of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre seeks any information on Lotte (Charlotte) Friedmann. In 1937 she was employed as 'English correspondent' in Aberdeen, where she lived with a Mrs Benson and was convenor of the Aberdeen Refugee Centre. info@sjac.org.uk

BRITISH FOSTER FAMILIES

Do you have contacts with surviving members of a foster family who looked after you during the war? Do you know of other children of those foster families who might remember the help their families gave to the Kind? Mike Levy is keen to interview British family members who have those memories. mike.levy82@gmail.com

the age of 30. At his death in 2020 he was also the longest serving FRS. In 1956 he was also appointed as the first professor of pure mathematics at Imperial College. So I am sure his paths would have crossed with Felix Weinberg, author of *Boy 30529: A Memoir by Felix Weinberg* (June).

My father was also a refugee but had a happier story, being sent to the UK in 1938. He managed to get his parents out of Germany in 1939 and they survived the war in various locations in England. *Daphne Wassermann (née Hayman), Glasgow*

POWERFUL IN ITS ABSENCE

NOTE FROM EDITOR: Both [Arthur Oppenheimer from Hove](#) and [Michael Hilsenrath from London N3](#) wrote in response to [David Herman's article about the Eastern Front](#) (June) to recommend *Holocaust by Bullets* by Father Patrick Desbois, first published in 2008.

Apparently Father Desbois was one of the first to highlight the plight of the millions of Jews who were murdered and massacred in small unrecorded villages, towns, forests and ghettos. He also realised that many of these events would be quickly forgotten as there were no survivors and, in most instances, no

Jews left. Moreover many of the countries in which these crimes occurred are more than reluctant to unveil the past.

Patrick Desbois founded an organisation called *Yahad in Unum* whose mission is "to unsilence a chapter of history that has remained silent for far too long." In the former Soviet Union, they seek out eyewitnesses to the executions of Jews and Roma, combining oral history and fieldwork, research and historical analysis. An extract from a recent work in Lithuania reads: "During a recent research trip the *Yahad in Unum* team interviewed 42 witnesses and identified 20 mass graves – six of them without a memorial"

More information can be found at www.yahadinunum.org and we also hope to include an article about the organisation's work in a future issue. *Jo Briggs*

DEFENDING ISRAEL

Is Israel allowed to defend itself? It is unbelievable, that this question actually arises. Never before have we been asked to support such a self-demeaning question. Had England been asked that question when the Nazis overran Europe within sight of our coast, we would be their servants. Instead, we

withstood the attacks and built our defences.

Israel is finding itself in a similar position. The stone throwing has been transformed into rocket attacks which were defeated by the Iron Dome. Israel's enemies, who started that war like all the others before, had to give up their reckless endeavours and revert to stone throwing again.

Rather than demeaning ourselves, by asking if Israel is allowed to defend itself, we should remember that attack is the best form of defence. Israel vanquished all the nations surrounding it. If it were not for the superior intelligence of the Jewish nation, the world would have ceased to exist for all time. Israel, one of the smallest countries in the world, produced the brains which developed the antidote to the coronavirus which threatened to annihilate all of us. We owe the future of mankind to the Israeli Pfizer CAO and the scientists who saved the world as we know it. I recognised the value of that company several decades ago and acted accordingly.

An atrocious act by an American policeman upon a black citizen is repeatedly evoked, whilst the world stood by when 6 million of our brethren were slaughtered by the Nazis. Moreover, the ignorant multitude don't want us to dwell on our sorrow!
Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx

THE ADS THAT SAVED LIVES

The birth of the AJR was of course prompted by the huge number of Jewish refugees who began arriving in the UK from central and eastern Europe after 1933. As Nazi persecution became a reality, Jews across Europe resorted to desperate measures to gain entry to Britain, even advertising themselves and their children in British newspapers. The father of Julian Borger, World Affairs Editor of *The Guardian*, arrived from Vienna this way. Julian – who recently wrote an article on this subject for the 200th anniversary edition of *The Guardian* – shares his family's story.

By late summer in 1938, many Viennese Jews were advertising themselves in the *Manchester Guardian's* "Situations Wanted" column as butlers, chauffeurs and maids. There was a shortage of domestic workers in the UK at the time, with the expansion of prosperous suburbs and the opening up of other work opportunities for British women creating vacancies for outsiders.

By scrolling through the classified ad pages, you can see the wave of panic gather pace. Prior to May 1938, the only references to Vienna concerned tourism and opera. But as Jewish families under Nazi rule scrambled to get their children out of the Reich, scores of children were "advertised", their virtues and skills extolled in brief, to fit the space. The columns read as a clamour of urgent, competing voices, all pleading: "Take my child!"

On Wednesday 3 August 1938, a short advertisement appeared on the second page of the *Manchester Guardian*, under the title *Tuition*.

"I seek a kind person who will educate my intelligent Boy, aged 11, Viennese of good family," the advert said, under the name Borger, giving the address of an apartment on Hintzerstrasse, in Vienna's third district.

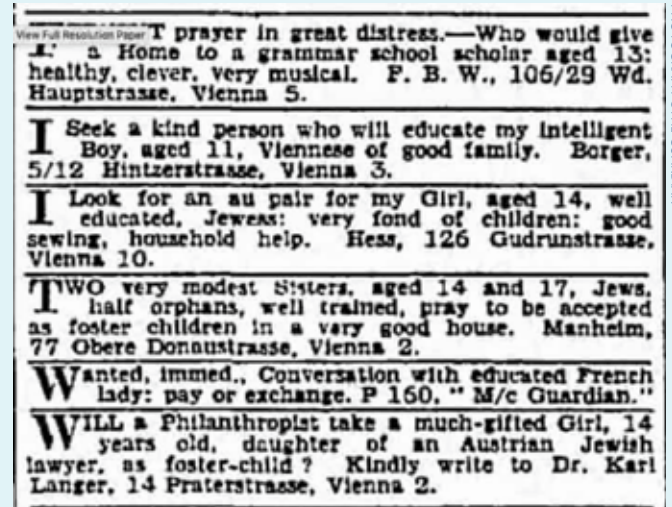
The ad, costing a shilling a line, was placed

by my grandparents, Leo and Erna. The 11-year-old boy was my father, Robert. It turned out to be the key to their survival and the reason I am here, nearly 83 years later, working at the newspaper that ran the ad.

The *Anschluss* had taken place five months before my father's ad was placed, while the Nuremberg race laws had been imposed in May, stripping Jews of basic rights. Groups of Nazi *Sturmabteilung*, the brownshirted SA, had free rein in Vienna to beat and humiliate Jews.

My father had been identified as a Jew by his classmates and at one point was grabbed by an SA gang, who locked him inside the local synagogue. My grandfather Leo, who owned a radio and musical instrument shop, was summoned to Gestapo headquarters to register. He was ordered, like other Viennese Jews, to get down on his hands and knees and wash the pavement, in front of jeering crowds. The next time my grandfather was called, he was held overnight.

My father was one of 60 Viennese Jewish children who were advertised in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1938, rising to a peak in August, September and October and then falling off after November when the UK launched the Kindertransport scheme for groups of unaccompanied minors. This brought 10,000 Jewish children to Britain in the months leading up to the outbreak of war.



Small ads in the *Manchester Guardian* on 3 August 1938, including one for Julian Borger's father.

The *Guardian* ads in early 1939 reflect the plight of those left behind. On 14 January, under the new section "Refugee Advertisements", there is a three-line plea: "Father in concentration camp, three boys, 8-12 and three girls, 13-16, have to leave Germany. Is anybody willing to help?"

On 11 March, another ad issued an "urgent appeal. Who will help to get out of concentration camp two Viennese boys, age 21 and 23, by offering trainee posts."

Similar appeals were placed in the *Times* and the *Telegraph*, but the *Manchester Guardian* was seen as more sympathetic by those seeking to flee. The city was home to the biggest UK Jewish community outside London; it had ties to Vienna through the textile trade, as well as an energetic Quaker community that set up a refugee committee after *Kristallnacht*, which helped resettle large numbers of central European Jews.

The *Guardian* also focused more than the rest of the British press on the plight of Jews under Nazi rule and the hardships of those in the UK. It ran an anonymous column about a Jewish maid in a British home, by a writer identified only as "J", giving the view from below stairs.

"The *Manchester Guardian* had a justified reputation for being supportive of the Jewish plight and especially being pro-refugee, so



Erna, Robert & Leo Borger in Austria in the 1930s



Radio Borger, the family shop in Vienna

it would be a natural place to advertise in, especially if there were commercial agencies and also refugee organisations at either end," says Tony Kushner, a University of Southampton professor and the author of *Journeys from the Abyss*, a book about the Holocaust and forced migration.

"Certainly, the way the *Manchester Guardian* reported Nazi antisemitism and supported the entry of refugees – and then their protection in Britain – during the Nazi era can be regarded as one of the proudest moments in the newspaper's history," adds Kushner.

A couple of *Guardian*-reading Welsh schoolteachers, Nancy and Reg Bingley, responded to the ad for my father and fostered and educated him through his teen years in Caernarfon.

My grandmother Erna (Omi to us) got a job as a maid for a family in Paddington, so was able to get a visa and make the train and ferry journey to the UK with her son, but not to live with him once they arrived.

In March 1939, with the help of the Bingleys, a visa was also secured for my grandfather Leo, as well as a job as a cutter at Silhouette, an underwear factory run by a German Jewish family that employed refugees, first in London, then in Shrewsbury, after the war started.

Leo stayed in the same job the rest of his working life; there were always bales of offcut knicker elastic in our cellar. My father would speak German with his parents, but if they reminisced much about the old days in Vienna, they rarely told us.

For my recent article in *The Guardian* I decided to look into what had become of the other children who had appealed for help alongside my father. He had been

relatively lucky, it turned out. Many of the children did not settle happily and spent their first years in Britain, at the age of 12, 13 or 14, searching, with little help in a foreign language in a strange land, for ways to save their parents.

Speaking to other descendants of refugees, fellow children of the *Manchester Guardian* small ads, some common themes emerged. Most of us had been taken, at some point in our lives, on melancholic visits to Vienna. We went in the mid-70s, when I remember staring up at the apartment block where the family had lived; the nearby park, with its huge concrete gun emplacements, too big and solid to destroy; and the site of the old shop, Radio Borger, which became a stationer's shop and now sells discount women's clothing.

Another common strand was the lifelong burden our parents had carried, from the experience of separation from their parents in a foreign land to the weight of surviving while countless relatives, left behind in Vienna, perished.

When my father took his life, it was my task to call his foster mother, Nancy. After a sharp intake and a pause, Nancy said he had been the Nazis' last victim. There were certainly other factors: his career did not work out as he had hoped, and he had made a mess of his family life. But she always saw the 11-year-old boy who had arrived in Caernarfon, so scared they had to take the whistle off the kettle as it reminded him of the SA doing their roundups.

The longest-surviving child of the classified ads died in February. Karl Trommer, and his sister Hella, appeared in an ad on 11 November 1938, their parents calling for "any kindhearted family" to take them in. They survived and moved to Palestine after the war. Karl, as Akiva Trommer, fought in

the *Palmach* – the Jewish special forces – before the creation of Israel.

Hella died in 1980, but online records showed Akiva was still alive, with a home telephone number. When I called in late March, his son answered. I was a few weeks too late. I offered my condolences and sent a copy of the *Manchester Guardian* ad.

For most of the descendants to whom I spoke, the ad was a poignant footnote in family history, a reminder of the delicate chain of events that made the difference between survival and obliteration.

It held particular sway for me, as the reverence for the *Guardian* in our childhood home no doubt shaped my ambition to work here. At the time my dad's ad appeared, my mother, his future wife, was growing up in the Rusholme district of Manchester. Her father would bring the *Manchester Guardian* home from his job as a railway shipping clerk and tell her the newspaper offered a reward for readers who could find any spelling mistakes.

In August 1938, she would have been a bit young for spellchecking, but I like to think of her running her finger over those lines on the second page: "I seek a kind person who will educate my intelligent Boy."

Julian's article "I seek a kind person": The *Guardian* ad that saved my Jewish father from the Nazis appeared in *The Guardian* on 6 May 2021 and includes the stories of several of the children who escaped the Reich thanks to the adverts. The article can be read in full on <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/may/06/guardian-200-ad-that-saved-jewish-father-from-nazis>

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Fiddling while Rome burned, matricide, the murder of his first and probably second wife, Nero's reputation precedes him. But in Nero: The Man Behind the Myth, the British Museum challenges historians' "biased history" of Rome's fifth Emperor.

They claim new research and archaeological evidence reveal a different picture. The historians Tacitus and Suetonius were responsible for our popular view of Nero as a tyrant, but the BM say: "We now know that this Nero is a fabrication and that ancient sources stand between us and the historical character."

In fact two emperors emerge. One was a 17-year old who rose to power during a period of turbulent social change, widely admired among ordinary Romans for his popular policies, and grand building projects. He was the first Roman emperor to act on stage in Naples and Rome and he competed in gladiatorial combat as a charioteer. There are gladiatorial weapons from Pompeii on loan from the Louvre and frescoes depicting actors and theatrical masks lent by Naples' national archaeological museum.

The other Nero is the mad tyrant, whose legacy was vilified to legitimise the new ruling élite. But then there's the graffiti. Many a Banksy of his day etched his likeness into a shop or tavern wall on Rome's Palatine Hill, featuring chin stubble and very small features.

So, did the Roman historians fake his image? He is seen in a charming statue aged 13.

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But also a 17th century restoration of his head gives him an air of debauchery. There is a miniscule bronze of him in uniform, and – ironically given the alleged matricide to come – a panel of him being crowned by his mother Agrippina. Politically speaking, we are familiar with national leaders rubbing their predecessors' heritage.

Relics of Nero and his reign have cropped up throughout Britain. The BM's *pièce de resistance*, a bronze head, previously mistaken for that of Claudius, was found in the River Alde in Suffolk in 1907, part of a statue which may have stood in Camulodunum (Colchester) before being destroyed during the Boudica rebellion.

Treasure was discovered beneath a shop floor on Colchester's High Street, hidden by a Roman veteran and his wife fleeing Boudica's attack in AD 60-61. Known as the Fenwick hoard, they show Roman republican and imperial coins, military armlets and fashionable jewellery similar to finds from Pompeii and Herculaneum. Also found in Colchester are the shattered bones of Boudica's victims – one of the most devastating periods of Nero's reign. There are objects destroyed in the fire of Rome, priceless jewellery, but also an iron gang chain for shackling slaves, neck on neck found in Wales – hardly the work of a philanthropic emperor.

Among some 200 artefacts, sculptures of Nero show a striking, youthful figure, with large ears and bowl-cut curls. The more imperial view of the emperor is seen in a wood engraving from *Le Monde Illustré*, 1862, *Nero After the Burning of Rome*, in which he surveys the damage among swooning women and grim soldiers. There are sound effects of the fire, but the curators


The emperor Nero as a boy, ca. 51-54 of the common era



dispute his involvement in it, claiming he actually led the relief and reconstruction efforts. Either way, from its ashes grew his opulent new palace, the *Domus Aurea*, inspired by Naples' luxury villas.

Perhaps Nero's story, true or fake, matters less as you pass through the enrobed and magisterial statuary and the other artefacts, including an etching of the 12 Caesars (1770-1830), while a marble relief of the Praetorian Guard in plumed helmets is a virtual conversation piece. He is portrayed favourably by contemporary artists, in contrast, for instance with a miniature bronze bust of Caligula with a very small, cruel mouth.

No revisionist historian can truly claim altruistic motives for Nero. But there is one interesting fact: he had no grudge against Jews. Encouraged by his wife Poppaea, he tended to favour Jews in disputes. Her last wish, to be buried according to Jewish customs, was granted by Nero who, himself, according to Talmudic tradition, became a proselyte just before his death by suicide, aged 30. **Exhibition continues until October 24**

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80 trees for 80 years



80 YEARS
1941-2021

This winter, to mark our 80th anniversary, the AJR will be planting 80 native oak trees around Britain in honour of people and places that symbolise the enormous contribution of Jewish refugees. And we would love you to get involved.

This exciting and high profile project has already caught the imagination of dozens of communities around the UK, who will be organising local activities around the tree planting ceremonies.

As well as helping to mark the heritage of our members these trees will enable the AJR to give back to and create a living legacy within the country that became our home. Britain's native oak trees are in decline and new trees are desperately needed. Our 80 trees will be appreciated by future generations and provide natural habitats for other native species for many decades to come.

Each tree will also act as a platform for telling the story of Britain's Jewish refugees and celebrating the remarkable contribution that we have made to every walk of British life. Local publicity activity will focus on this and we will also be planting a time capsule alongside the roots of every tree, containing the life story of one or more AJR members.

Logistically, this is an enormous project which requires significant resources and support. So we are delighted to be working with a number of key organisations, including **The Tree Council, The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, The Jewish Small Communities Network and The Holocaust Educational Trust.**

80 Trees for 80 Years has also been welcomed by the organisers of **The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC)** – the

unique tree planting initiative which will mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Its Head of Communications has described the AJR's own project as a "wonderful initiative".

Overleaf are more details about how to get involved. And here is just a small selection of some of the other feedback received so far.

"We would be very proud and honoured to take part in the 80 Trees project. I think this is a great living memorial idea."

– Teacher at a large secondary school in Horndean, Hampshire

"We are 100% behind this exciting project and are sure we can find a perfect location"

– Tourism manager in the Peak District town of Buxton

"This is a really excellent concept and we would definitely like at least one oak tree"

– Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Essex

"This seems to me a project very much worthy of support"

– Councillor in Haslemere, Surrey

"What a fantastic idea! We would be thrilled and honoured to host a tree!"

– Chief Executive of The Fed, Manchester

"We are delighted that you have chosen Shefford. Planting this tree will be the start of the Town Council's new tree planting programme"

– Town Clerk, Shefford in Bedfordshire

"I have just heard that Leicester City Council has been in touch with you about planting an oak tree. I can't tell you how happy I am that this is going to happen."

– AJR member, Leicester

"This is a fantastic project and we in Millisle would certainly want to be part of it."

– Leader of Millisle Community Association, Northern Ireland

"The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation is delighted that the AJR is marking its 80th anniversary by creating a living legacy for its members."



There are very few aspects of British culture and society that have not positively benefitted in some way from the thousands of Jewish refugees who found refuge here from Nazi persecution. Their arrival and contribution is a hugely important part of Britain's own narrative surrounding the Holocaust. The planting of these 80 trees will help to convey this story to audiences throughout the UK, prompting deeper understanding of the Holocaust, and of Britain's responses to it.

The Foundation looks forward to helping the AJR to share its members' stories with communities around the country and, eventually, through the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre."

THE RT HON LORD ERIC PICKLES,
UNITED KINGDOM SPECIAL ENVOY
FOR POST-HOLOCAUST ISSUES

"I can think of no finer blessing than this, with which to honour the legacy of those who sought refuge in this country, made it their home and have contributed so much to its success. May the symbol of these 80 Oak trees, marking 80 years of the AJR, inspire us all to be just like them."



CHIEF RABBI EPHRAIM MIRVIS

80 trees for 80 years

WHY OAK?

Britain's native oaks are under pressure like never before. They are declining at an unprecedented rate due to drought, flooding, pollution, pests and diseases.

Oak trees are such an important part of our past and future heritage, living for centuries and supporting thousands of species of precious wildlife. A 200-year-old oak has around 260,000 leaves, providing shade, releasing oxygen and helping tackle flooding to make our cities healthier places to live and work. For all these reasons (and more) it is tremendous that 80 new oak trees will be planted between November and March this winter and cared for.

The Tree Council is a small but influential national charity which, for nearly 50 years, has been bringing people together for the love of trees. The charity inspires and empowers organisations, government, schools, communities and individuals with the knowledge and tools to create positive, lasting change at a national and local level. It is helping the AJR to bring our **80 Trees for 80 Years'** vision to life by providing expert advice and guidance during the initial stages of our project.

For Tree Council Chief Executive, Sara Lom, this project is also a remarkable example of how tree planting can bring people together: *"Trees are not only vital to tackle climate change and improve biodiversity, they also play an important role lifting our spirits and bringing communities together. We are delighted to have provided early guidance to the AJR on sourcing suitable trees, with additional advice on planting and aftercare. We look forward now to seeing your bold vision come to fruition to mark your 80th anniversary."*



www.treecouncil.org.uk is advising us on the sourcing, planting and maintenance of our trees

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

We hope that every AJR member will engage with our tree planting initiative, whether by sponsoring one of the trees or the time capsules or by providing some time and enthusiasm to support the project. Please contact 80Trees@ajr.org.uk or call the AJR office to register your interest. Please note that all sponsorship packages will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Sponsor a tree in the name of your loved one(s)

Each tree will be dedicated in the name of an AJR member, and the name of that member will be featured on the plaque that accompanies the tree – see example.

The cost of sponsoring a tree is £250. The member's family will be invited to attend the tree planting ceremony and will also be presented with a certificate. The member will also be listed on the project's own webpages and in the new UK Holocaust Map.



An example of the plaque that will go alongside the tree. The words in red can be replaced with 'especially' if the person who is being honoured is still living.

Sponsor a time capsule

We will be burying a time capsule close to the roots of each tree, to help

share details about this project with future generations. As well as generic information about the AJR and the contribution of Britain's Jewish refugees these time capsules will each contain the life story of an individual AJR member.

The cost of having you or your loved one featured in one of these time capsules is £80. You will also receive a certificate and the member will be featured on the project's own webpages and in the new UK Holocaust Map.

A time capsule containing the life story of one AJR member will be buried near to the roots of each tree.



Donate towards extending the project

We appreciate that not all AJR members can afford to sponsor a tree or a time capsule. But even the smallest of donations can help to extend the reach of this project, for example by allowing us to develop educational resources for local schools.

The minimum donation is £15. Members making a donation can choose to either have their name included on the project webpage or remain anonymous.

Care for one of our trees

We are recruiting a network of 'AJR Tree Guardians' whose role, as volunteers, will include:

- Liaison between the local community and the AJR's Project team
- Overseeing the logistics of the planting





Many of Britain's native oak trees are dying

- and the tree planting ceremony
 - Regularly checking the tree during the first 18 months to ensure it has enough water and photographing its progress
- The appointment of the volunteers will naturally depend on the final location of the 80 trees and we are happy to hear from anyone who wishes to be considered.

WHERE WILL THE TREES BE PLANTED?

The full list is still being finalised but the map below shows most of the locations that have already been agreed - see examples below.



Tendring, Essex

Tendring is close to the port of Harwich and the site of the Dovercourt camp, both of which played a crucial role in the Kindertransport.

Mousehole, Cornwall



During World War II dozens of evacuees from London's Jewish Free School – many of whom were refugees – were taken in by Mousehole residents.

Buxton, Derbyshire

The Peak District spa town of Buxton provided refuge for approximately 300 Jewish families during WW2 until 1946.

Gwrych Castle, Wales

Famous as the location for the 2020 series of *I'm a Celebrity, Get me out of Here!* Gwrych Castle was a training centre for hundreds of Jewish refugees during WW2.

For further information on our locations please contact Karen Diamond at karendiamond@ajr.org.uk or 07966 631 778

GET INVOLVED – AT A GLANCE

Category	What's involved?	Cost	Availability	How
Sponsor a tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of loved one on tree plaque Certificate Invitation to Tree Planting ceremony Inclusion on project webpage 	£250	80	Call the AJR office or email 80Trees@ajr.org.uk as soon as possible
Sponsor a time capsule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life story of a loved one in a time capsule Certificate Inclusion on project webpage 	£80	80	Call the AJR office or email 80Trees@ajr.org.uk as soon as possible
Donation only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion on project webpage (if wanted) 	£15 minimum	Unlimited	Call the AJR office or make a donation via the 'Donate' button on the AJR website
Become a volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help to plant and care for one of our oak trees by liaising with the local community on the AJR Project Team's behalf 	Time only	80	Call the AJR office or email 80Trees@ajr.org.uk and please make it clear that you are seeking to volunteer

Mapping Britain's response to the Holocaust

As we mark our 80th anniversary year, The AJR is developing a significant new educational resource, **The UK Holocaust Map**, which will help communities across the country to learn about their local connections to the Holocaust, Jewish refugees and British responses to Nazism.

This online platform, which will be formally launched later this year, is co-funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the government department which oversees the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

Sites all across the UK help to tell the story of the Holocaust and British responses to Nazism, yet many of these are shrouded in obscurity. *The UK Holocaust Map* will inspire users of all ages to discover the places, personal stories and archival records which highlight that Holocaust history is – without a doubt – British history.

Recommendations for teaching and learning about the Holocaust published in 2019 by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) encourage the study of the local dimension of the Holocaust. This is perhaps much easier for teachers to accomplish in countries that were occupied by the Nazis or which collaborated. In Britain, this guidance is often overlooked, in large part because teachers themselves are not aware of the many local aspects they could be including in their lessons. Research has shown that over the years, this has contributed to a problem in Britain's conceptions about the Holocaust, that it was something that happened elsewhere, and that our country's only roles were as rescuers and liberators.

Teachers in the UK often lament that a student in their class will raise their hand and ask "Miss, what's this got to do with us?" By making the process of historical enquiry



more local, *The UK Holocaust Map* will help students to understand the relevance of the Holocaust in a way that other resources have not been able to.

The map will bring together content from a range of different sources, including extracts from our own *Refugee Voices* video archive and other UK testimony archives, information about Holocaust and refugee-related monuments and memorials, and historical accounts relating to sites relevant to Britain's engagement with the Holocaust and Nazism. On each map location, curated content will be found, such as excerpts of interviews, photos, documents and links to relevant institutions today.

This content will be sourced from numerous archives, museums and institutions across the country and will expand over time. One of the key aims of our educational work in recent years is to encourage partnerships amongst organisations in the sector, and we

are keen to see the map as one significant manifestation of that spirit of partnership. Critically, the map will complement – rather than seek to replace – existing educational resources and programmes.

The involvement of one partner organisation in particular, The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, is significant. As the foundation continues to plan for the anticipated Westminster-based national Holocaust memorial, which will focus on Britain's responses to and relationship with Nazism and the Holocaust, it is also making a powerful statement by partnering with The AJR on *The UK Holocaust Map* to ensure that its work extends far beyond central London, into every other region of the country.

Suggestions about lesser-known sites which might be appropriate for inclusion on the map are welcome. Please contact map@ajr.org.uk if you have information to offer.

LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM



About three years ago my husband and I rescheduled our flight back to Israel from London, at

considerable financial and personal cost, because Netanyahu had called a snap general election. We were determined to cast our votes in order to get rid of the party in power and especially the man at its head.

That election was won by Netanyahu and his party, despite all our efforts. But the coalition government he cobbled together did not last long, and so for the past three years Israel has had to go through another three general elections, in all of which we voted for rival parties and all of them resulting in political deadlock.

The cost to the country in political, financial and social terms has led to a downturn in general morale as well as in its international standing. During that period Israel has managed to weather the storm of the Covid 19 pandemic and the attack on its population by rockets fired from Gaza, but its ministries have been unable to take any positive action or initiate fresh policies because of the political stalemate and the inability (whether

genuine or deliberate) to approve the budget.

Political gridlock is almost inherent in the nature of Israel's electoral system, in which parties are elected on the basis of proportional representation rather than regional constituencies, thus making coalitions almost inevitable. This was the system that was used to elect delegates to the pre-State's representative bodies, and so, although palpably unmanageable and inefficient, no government, once in power, has ever felt inclined to change it.

Thus, anyone who feels they have a cause worth fighting for sets up a party and tries to garner support. It was hoped that the introduction of a minimum threshold would improve the situation, but that does not appear to have been the case. Political parties have split and splintered. Personalities have sought to express themselves and their views. Ideas, interests and ideologies have emerged or become more entrenched than before. As the results of the latest (fourth) election show, the situation has remained much as it was.

But something has changed now, nonetheless. Yair Lapid, the leader of one of the parties that opposes Netanyahu and advocates more liberal, centrist ideas, has managed to bring together a disparate – and ostensibly impractical – collection of right, left, centre and even Arab parties to form a coalition. As I write this the two-headed

coalition government, known here as 'Bennet-Lapid', is to be ratified by the Knesset and sworn in.

This certainly gives rise to optimism among those who have had enough of Benjamin Netanyahu and his minions, and feel that he has run the country for far too long – twelve consecutive years at the last count. He has certainly chalked up several achievements, but no democracy should be expected to put up with the same leader – no matter how gifted – for so long.

The new government, if allowed to come to fruition, comprises both new and old faces, some who have been in previous governments and some who have not. The fact that so many politicians adhering to such differing views have been able to come together in order to achieve the objective of finally replacing the government and providing Israel with a leadership that is focused on new ideas and the good of the country as a whole, rather than being based primarily on the cult of personality, is certainly a cause for cautious optimism.

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Finding independence at the age of 97

Our member Evelyn Lipmann turned 97 on 18 June. Her son, Anthony Lipmann, has written this touching story about his mum, who was born Evelyn Guttman in Vienna, and is a survivor of the Leopoldstadt Ghetto, Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Belsen, and the munitions factory at Salzwedel. She owes her life, she says, to luck and youth. Luck and ingenuity also allowed Evelyn (A-25466) and her mother Lily (A-25465) to stay together during their camp odyssey, after Lily lied about her age on arrival at Auschwitz.

My mother's story, I know, is not unique. She received no post-war counselling, and her method of coping was to lock everything away. For this reason, my sister and I were unaware of our family's past until our teens. When I was a young child I asked my mother, as she was getting out of the swimming-pool, about the number on her arm. Her reply was, 'It's just my number', and I assumed that all mothers came marked in this way.

My own journey to some understanding of these matters has been long and arduous. At home I am surrounded by family letters, documents, and old black and white sepia-coloured photos of life in the 1930s and before. My mother is now one of few alive to have seen and experienced the horrors of the Holocaust. She even saw Hitler while she was being marshalled across town by her aunt during the *Anschluss*. The enthusiastic cheering of the crowd who turned out to welcome their *Führer* is still vivid in her memory.



Evelyn in 1937

A courageous Austrian tutor would visit the family apartment in Hietzing in the 1930s to teach my mother English with the aid of A.A. Milne's *When We Were Very Young* and *Now We Are Six*. This lady believed that simple children's stories were a wonderful way to teach a language. My mother recalls her as an elderly maiden aristocrat, who had learned English in Ireland and dismissed the Nuremberg laws as nonsense.

Thanks to this kind lady my mother was able to obtain employment after she was liberated and returned to Vienna. Utilising her knowledge of English she went to work for the 'Property Control Sub Section' of the U.S. Army involved with post-war property restitution. Mum modestly claims the Americans only employed her as an act of kindness, but her income enabled her to support herself and her mother in post war Vienna.

But that was to be the only official employment my mother ever had. She met my father, a refugee from Vienna who had been interned in Australia for most of the war as an enemy alien, shortly after arriving herself in the UK in 1947. Dad was of a generation of men who regarded themselves as the provider, so Mum had to find other means to obtain self-esteem.



Evelyn Lipmann with her great-grandson

This included enrolling as one of the first cohort of the Open University and obtaining a BA in Humanities about the same time as I got my degree.

When my father died in 2004, Mum had to come to terms with the fact that she had never had an income since leaving Vienna. At her great age, the ability to advocate for support would have been limited, so it came as a significant morale boost to her that, thanks to the AJR, she now receives financial support which allows her to get the help she needs to live in her own home. The support she gets from the Homecare Scheme has given my mother her independence back.

Note from AJR

The AJR has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to provide support and assistance to Holocaust survivors and refugees eligible for grants as a result of the successes of the Claims Conference. This work has continued during the pandemic and could be of critical value to those who are left.

Michael Newman, AJR Chief Executive, said: "The AJR is in the fortunate position to be able to help defray the costs of Homecare for Holocaust survivors and refugees with funds negotiated by the Claims Conference from the German government. This exclusive funding comes at a critical time and enables this unique community of people to live in dignity, security and comfort in their own homes. We urgently want to hear from survivors and refugees, and their families, how we can help from this generous fund."



NEXT GENERATIONS

The Association of Jewish Refugees

UNDERSTANDING OUR HOLOCAUST LEGACY

Psychologist and AJR Trustee Gaby Glassman explains the common issues experienced by her second generation clients in relation to their heritage.

In spite of the enormous contribution survivors and refugees have made to the UK, they did not always do as well in their personal relationships. Their experiences of persecution and loss impacted on their families in different ways. "We did our best" parents used to say.

My comments are based on my observations among children of survivors and refugees who have self-referred for psychological help, either individually in my private practice, or in second generation groups. My comments highlight common themes but should not be regarded as applicable to all second generation.

Intergenerational protection

Many parents avoided speaking openly about their Holocaust experiences in order not to burden their children – and perhaps also not to rake up old wounds for themselves. Children, for their part, were afraid to ask questions for fear of upsetting parents who had suffered so much. A wall of silence had grown between the generations and yet parents still communicated their feelings and fears unconsciously, often through the silence. Sensitive children connected with what their parent(s) had suppressed, learning from an early age to avoid anything emotionally charged in order to shield their parent(s).

Identity

Feeling different from their Anglo-Jewish peers has probably been the most common impact. Not only did second generation feel different, they felt neither British nor anything else. This left a lacuna in their identity which some found hard to fill.

Some parents hoped that by not telling their children they were Jewish, their offspring's safety was ensured in case of renewed antisemitism. Some children only found out later in life and realised why, unconsciously, they had felt drawn to their best school friend being Jewish.

Memorial candles

Usually, only one member of the second generation per family sought help. Often, that particular child, without knowing it, was designated to be the *memorial candle* to carry the burden of the legacy for the family. Being an only child or being the first born or having the same gender or the same physical appearance as a dead relative were all factors that determined the identification of the survivor parent with that child in particular.

My clients felt that their parent's legacy did not affect their siblings as much as it impacted them. Siblings tended to be less emotional and

better able to distance themselves from the parent's experiences.

Hierarchy of suffering

Hierarchies of suffering, established by the first generations according to their Holocaust experience, determined a type of status for the second generation. This left some children feeling unable to match their survivor parent's suffering and survival. As their own pain was often not accepted as legitimate, they learned to subjugate their own needs.

Expectations

Many clients felt pressure from their parents to achieve academically and professionally. Those who had the ability became high-achievers: others did not and were left feeling inadequate. Children were not allowed to learn by trial-and-error, as parents were mindful that mistakes could be fatal.

Separation

For sensitive children it was particularly hard to separate from their parents, both physically and emotionally. They found themselves almost automatically sucked into their parents' mindset and ambiguities. They would rather compromise than rock the boat, aware of the anguish the latter would cause.

They tended to be overaccommodating and avoid conflict, not only with their survivor parent(s) but also within their own familial, social and professional circles. Consequently, they often saw themselves as having failed as children, partners, parents, friends, and workplace colleagues.

It seemed that their sense of guilt and disloyalty in opposing their parents was too unbearable a price to pay for thinking and acting independently. Thus, emotional separation would often not happen in the usual, gradual way or timeframe.

Conclusion

As a therapist I hold up a straight mirror for second generation clients to examine themselves in absolute confidence and gain insight into how certain behavioural patterns evolved. By learning to express their feelings they can break the existing family dynamic, find their own voice as separate from their survivor parent(s), and determine their own destiny so that they need no longer feel haunted by this legacy.

Gaby's next Second Generation group will take place on Zoom from mid-September to mid-December. Please contact gaby@glassman.com for further information.



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HE DID IT HIS WAY

We are grateful to AJR member Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines MBE, for sharing this article which was recently sent to her by a relative in New York; its contents are not so well known on this side of the Atlantic and make very touching reading.

Francis Albert Sinatra was born on 12 December 1915 in an upstairs tenement at 415 Monroe Street in Hoboken, New Jersey, the only child of Italian immigrants Natalina "Dolly" Garaventa and Antonino Martino "Marty" Sinatra. As both his parents worked, the young Frank was often left in the care of a Jewish neighbour, Mrs. Golden, who spoke to him in Yiddish.

One of the most precious gifts that Sinatra ever received was a small *mezuzah* presented by this same Mrs. Golden. He eventually thanked Mrs. Golden by buying her a quarter of a million dollars of Israeli bonds.

In 1942, when information about Nazi crimes against Jews finally came to America, Sinatra bought hundreds of medals commissioned with the image of Saint Christopher on one side and the Star of David on the other. He handed these medals out at concerts.

In 1943, he joined the national tour "We Will Never Die," a four-month dramatised performance in six cities hosted by Ben Hecht, to draw public attention to the Holocaust.

In 1944 Sinatra insisted that his Jewish friend, Mani Sachs, should be a godfather at the baptism of his son, despite loud protests by the Catholic priest.

In the late 1940s, he left the golf club, which did not accept Jews. One day at a party Sinatra overheard a reporter call someone a "Jewish bastard" and knocked him down.

There is a 1945 short film, *The House I Live In*, in which Sinatra sings a song with



the following words: "...Children of all races and religions in the playground are America for me..."

In 1947, Frank Sinatra participated in a benefit concert in support of the Zionist movement. He spoke at a Hollywood Bowl action rally that drew 20,000 supporters.

In 1948 he helped in the illegal delivery of weapons to Israel. The representative of Hagana in the United States was then the future Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek. Sinatra was to hand over a bag full of cash to the captain of the ship on a wharf in New York... to confuse the federal agents who had long hassled Kollek... The ship departed and arrived safely. Sinatra told his daughter Nancy: "It was the beginning of a young nation. I wanted to help, I was afraid they might fail".

In 1962, the eleven-time Grammy winner gave seven concerts in six Israeli cities, handing over fees for the construction of the International Youth Centre in Nazareth, which was named after the singer.

In 1964, Sinatra was officially barred from entering Lebanon because of his 'moral and material support for Israel.'

In 1970, under the patronage of Sinatra, a million dollars were raised for the construction of the student centre of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and in 1978 the centre was named after him.

Sinatra first met Simon Wiesenthal in 1979 when he told the Nazi hunter that "he had been his hero for many years." When he learned that the Simon Wiesenthal Centre was trying to make a documentary, Sinatra told them, "Although I'm not Jewish, the Holocaust is important to me," He also became a member of the Centre's Board of Trustees. In the months that followed, Sinatra appeared four times on behalf of



This kippah that belonged to Frank Sinatra sold at Sotheby's in December 2018 for close to £10,000



Sinatra with some Israeli children in 1962

the Centre, raising hundreds of thousand dollars to fund the film *Genocide*, which won an Oscar for best documentary in 1981.

In 1976, a Hollywood banquet honouring Sinatra organised by the American Union of Friends of the Hebrew University raised \$1 million to build a student centre on the campus of Mount Scopus. In 1978, the university named the *Frank Sinatra International Student Centre* in his honour.

In 2014, *NBC News* reported that Sinatra's CD collection had been exhibited at Lebanon's March office in Beirut, with the note saying they had been banned for 'Zionist tendencies'.

In December 2018, Sotheby's auction in New York sold art, jewellery, books and other personal belongings of Frank Sinatra and his wife Barbara for millions. The proceeds were earmarked for the Barbara Sinatra Children's Centre. Frank and Barbara had founded this non-profit organisation in 1986 to support victims of child abuse. The auctioned items of 'Mr. Voice' included a handmade kippah with embroidered musical notes and the inscription *Frank*. It is not known who made this kippah, but the description of the lot emphasised that Sinatra all his life sympathised with Jewish values.

ANATOMY OF 'FINCHLEYSTRASSE'



This map of 'Finchleystrasse' adorns the wall of the AJR's head office

The AJR's first offices were situated just off 'Finchleystrasse' – as apocryphal bus conductors were supposed helpfully to have exclaimed. Two scholars have recently published a new study of Jewish refugees' presence in the zone that stretches from NW8, St Johns Wood, through NW3, Swiss Cottage, to NW11, Golders Green.

In the 1940s about 25,000 *Mitteleuropa* 'aliens' lived in North-West London. Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall – both well-known for their joint work in promoting the work of refugee artists in Britain – point out that we are familiar with Hampstead refugees such as Sigmund Freud and the writer/artist Fred Uhlman. We know less about those who found sanctuary around the 'cultural spine' that was Finchley Road.

One explanation is that, apart from the artist Oskar Kokoschka and possibly the writer Elias Canetti, the refugees who lived in that area were less well-known at the time.

In their anatomy of the area, Dickson and MacDougall highlight places of worship such as the Belsize Square synagogue and the popular restaurants, *Cosmo* and *Dorice*. They recall small businesses such as Werner Ackerman's chocolate shop and the bookshop in Boundary Road run by the brothers Willy and Josef Suschitzky – today the site of the Ben Uri Gallery. Among the artists who had studios in that part of London, besides Kokoschka, was Marie-Louise von Motesiczky. Literary figures linked to Finchleystrasse include the art historians Ernst Gombrich and Nikolaus Pevsner, and the publishers Eva and Walter Neurath, co-founders of Thames and Hudson.

The AJR – whose first office was in Fairfax Mansions, in the Finchley Road – features



The Cosmo Restaurant on Finchley Road, popular for its continental food, ambience and clientele

prominently in Dickson and MacDougall's chapter. They cite it as a primary source for their research, and reproduce the detailed map the AJR prepared for an exhibition in 2002. They note that from its clothing depot in Broadhurst Gardens, behind Finchley Road underground station, the AJR distributed thousands of garments to needy Jews overseas. It supported restitution claims, campaigned for the lifting of restrictions on 'enemy aliens', and backed the naturalisation of refugees (today it helps those descendants who seek to acquire German or Austrian passports).

Mapping Finchleystrasse: Mitteleuropa in North West London by Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall is a chapter from *Arrival Cities: Migrating Artists and New Metropolitan Topographies in the 20th Century* (Leuven University Press). The chapter is accessible online at www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv16qk3nf.15

Martin Mauthner

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REVIEWS

THE JEWS OF NAZI VIENNA, 1938-1945

Ilana Fritz Offenberger
Palgrave Macmillan

An American of Jewish ancestry, Ilana Fritz Offenberger was spending a year at Salzburg College. During a college trip to Vienna she visited the country's state archives, and found family documents covered with red swastika stamps. They were the official papers that legalised the robbery of the family home in Fasangasse, in the capital's third district. For her, it was a kind of epiphany that drove her to spend years researching the rescue and ultimate destruction of Vienna's Jews.

Whereas Germany's Jews emigrated over several years, as the Nazis stepped up persecution after 1933, Austria's Jews – and that meant mainly those in Vienna – on the whole watched, but did not react until the abrupt and traumatic *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht* in 1938.

As Prof. Offenberger points out, less than 2,000, out of an estimated 191,000 Jews, left in the four years before 1938. In her view, those who stayed 'were not naive, nor were they ignorant or passive, in the face of the looming Nazi threat. Rather, they were filled with hope and a false sense of security.'

That attitude changed dramatically, following annexation in March; there was a desperate *saue qui peut*, ignited by eight weeks of terror and humiliation: Jews' homes and businesses were pillaged, individuals were forced to kneel and clean pavements with brushes. The Nazis temporarily restored order in May, after Adolf Eichmann in April reopened the Jewish community's main organisation, the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (IKG) – it usefully registered births, deaths and marriages. He reinstated Dr Josef Loewenherz, who had been imprisoned, as head of the IKG. The organisation now had to help Eichmann and the Gestapo expel – or rescue – the Jews.

Many Jews aided Loewenherz. They had mostly lost their jobs and wanted to serve

their community; it might also bring them higher on the emigration list. That summer thousands applied to leave, while the new rulers started rounding up 'criminals' and deporting them to Dachau. The November pogrom ushered in a new wave of terror. Working not just with the Nazis but also with organisations abroad, the IKG enabled another 70,000 Jews to escape, bringing the total to some 136,000.

What of those who stayed, either because they tried and failed to escape, or because they were unwilling even to try? Drawing upon archives and individual memories, Prof. Offenberger tells the ghastly story, with a wealth of grim details. At first, after the war had begun, the Nazis said that, for every Jew the IKG helped to emigrate, it would have to cooperate in 'resettling' another in Poland.

Emigration from the enlarged Reich, however, ended in October 1941; from then on, the occupiers forced the IKG to cooperate in deporting some 45,000 Jews, including IKG staff, to the death camps; by 1943 they had dissolved the IKG – mission accomplished. In Prof. Offenberger's view, the IKG "had no choice other than to cooperate...they should not be judged by their part in the Nazis' final attempt to destroy their community."

Martin Mauthner

THE REMNANT: ON BURNING WINGS

By Michael G. Kesler
Valentine Mitchell

In July 2015 Michael Kesler, living in New Jersey, USA, suffered a heart attack just as his wife was preparing pancakes for his 90th birthday. He recovered and decided it was time to record his wartime memories. His home town was Dubno in Poland, from where he and his older sister had fled east just before the 1939 Nazi invasion of the country. By walking, and jumping onto moving trains, they ended up in Uzbekistan three thousand miles away. There they lived and worked on a farm for two years until Michael was drafted into the Red Army, from which he then fled in April 1944. This part of the story is dealt with relatively briefly as it was the subject of an earlier book, *Shards of War: Fleeing to and from Uzbekistan*, which was published in 2010.

At the end of the war Michael and his sister,

Luba, returned to Poland. It was not a happy experience. At their home they were confronted by a man with a pitchfork: "Get out of here, you dirty Jews, or I'll kill you". Then they learned that their parents and other relatives had been killed in 1942 and that there were pogroms against returning Jews in other parts of the country. Poland no longer seemed safe, so they sneaked over the border to the US occupation zone of West Germany. There the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency assigned them to a displaced persons camp in Landsberg, a town famous as the place where Hitler had written *Mein Kampf*. Conditions in the camp were very poor with over half the inmates confined to bed due to lack of clothing. Unsurprisingly, they appeared 'demoralised beyond hope of rehabilitation'. Fortunately, Michael did well to win a scholarship to the United States of America where he obtained a doctorate in chemical engineering and had a distinguished career in the petroleum industry.

The most striking and worthwhile feature of this book is how well we are taken back to the mood of the time with the news of the extermination camps; the fear that the end of the war against Germany would soon lead to a war between Russia and the USA; the torment of trying to reconcile the idea of God with the Holocaust; coping with depression and loneliness and fearing for the future. Finally there is more than one would normally expect on his love life.

Michael Levin

INVISIBLE INK: A FAMILY MEMOIR

By Martha Leigh
Matador

Who could have imagined that piano lessons in Paris would lead to a wartime romance by letters involving several countries and end with a family life centred round Trinity College, Cambridge? More was of course going on below the surface. Author Martha Leigh has pieced together the intriguing story of her gifted parents. Ralph was a brilliantly clever but poor Jew from London's East End and Edith from a bourgeois central European family whose existence was threatened by the Nazis and Soviet rule.

Edith was born in the cultured city of Czernowitz, then the farthest eastern

outpost of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and went to Vienna to study for a music diploma for six years. She led an ascetic, solitary life until moving to Paris for more training, enjoying a wealth of musical and social opportunities. Here she gave Ralph music tuition while he was at the Sorbonne researching a thesis on Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

While Ralph was home for the holidays, war broke out and he was unable to return. The couple always hoped to meet up but ended up keeping a correspondence through thick and thin. Letters were vetted by the censor, sometimes taking months to arrive. He was affected by childhood tragedy and a secret that burdened him for most of his life. Martha stayed on in France but with the German invasion life became increasingly precarious. So she fled to stay with her brother Reinhold and his wife Fa, both doctors in Bussières, near Lyon.

When this became unsafe Martha had a dangerous and tricky escape into Switzerland where despite internment and restrictions she continued her concert pianist activities. Reinhold joined General de Gaulle's Free French forces and had a distinguished career in anaesthetics, despite initial resistance from French surgeons. His bravery shines through, particularly his daring and difficult rescue of his mother, also called Martha who had miraculously

survived the war – despite great privations – from Soviet life in Czernowitz.

Eventually Edith came to England and the couple married in July 1945. Despite proving impractical in household affairs she combined a musical career with bringing up two children, John born nine months after the wedding and the author in 1954. By then the couple were living in Cambridge where Ralph – a distinguished linguist – was a Fellow of Trinity College. Edith gave concerts, mainly in Switzerland, before her early death in 1972. As Professor of French at Cambridge and visiting Professor at the Sorbonne, Ralph survived his wife by 15 years, being awarded a CBE at Buckingham Palace and the Légion d'honneur from France. When he died he left behind a legacy of 49 volumes on Rousseau's correspondence.

The author is to be congratulated on piecing together the story from a large family archive and her research, including visiting her mother's birthplace now in the Ukraine. She is very good at social history and describing European turmoil during the war and the legacies the conflict left on her family. She also shows insight in exploring her parents' feelings and the difficulties they faced throughout their lives.

Janet Weston

NEW BOOK

GROWING UP WITH ISRAEL
By Chaim Klein
Starhaven Books

His parents left Slovakia for Israel in 1949. They lived in a moshav where Hungarian was the language. Housing was spartan, conditions rough – a thin strip of land, one cow, a lone tree. School was primitive; fun was what children could make for themselves between study and agricultural work. Locusts, water shortages and fedayeen came; military service, university. He meets a girl from the diaspora, marries, has children, travels, works. His tale is of an individual growing up at the same time as his country, told from the inside, without polemic or artifice. Past disaster and future hope frame a figure in a landscape, etched with humility and a fine eye for detail.

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The History and Culture of the AJR

80TH ANNIVERSARY ONLINE SEMINAR Monday 19 July 2021

As part of our activities to mark our 80th anniversary the AJR is holding a special seminar focusing on the history and culture of the organisation. The seminar is free to attend and will include the chance to hear speakers from every aspect of the AJR's activities.

The programme will run throughout the day, as shown below, and you are welcome to join us for one, two or all sessions – whatever takes your interest and depending on how your day goes.



To register please go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/80th-anniversary-online-seminar-the-history-and-culture-of-the-ajr-tickets-159407071843>

PROGRAMME

TIME	TITLE
10.00 am	Welcome, intro and overview
10.15 am	The foundation and first decades of the AJR
11.15 am	How Social Services transforms lives
12.00 noon	How our volunteers enhance the success of the AJR
12.45 pm	Social outreach programme and events
2.00 pm	Refugee Voices
2.40 pm	Teaching and learning about the Holocaust
3.35 pm	Commemorative project: 80 trees for 80 years
4.10 pm	The Next Generations
4.45 pm	The impact of Jewish Refugees on modern Britain

SPEAKER
Michael Newman
Dr Anthony Grenville
Nicole Valens
Carol Hart
Susan Harrod
Dr Bea Lewkowicz
Alex Maws
Jo Briggs
Debra Barnes
David Herman

ONLINE EVENT

A tale of two refugees

The 80th anniversary of the AJR puts me in mind of the fate of my late mother and uncle, Ruth and Raimund Neumeyer, who came via Kindertransport from Germany. For them and some 9,300 others, the British government was a life-saver. Their parents, Hans and Vera, were stranded in Germany: they faced eventual deportation to concentration camps; they did not survive.

For 15-year-old Ruth and 14-year-old Raimund, life would never be the same. They had the great fortune to be sponsored by an immensely supportive family. Ruth enjoyed attending the private Hall School in Weybridge, but when the school was evacuated to the West Country Ruth opted to stay with another branch of the family in Cambridge. There she positively blossomed among the sizeable refugee community and made lifetime friends.

Those dark days of persecution under the Third Reich seemed far off and I think she increasingly blotted them out. The Cambridge Refugee Children's Committee arranged reduced fees for her to attend Wellgarth Nursery Training College, in its wartime location in rural Wiltshire, though she would really have preferred to paint stage scenery. After returning to her beloved Cambridge she worked at the Shirley War Nursery, where mothers working in the war effort paid a shilling a day to have their children looked after.

In 1949 Ruth left Cambridge to undertake teacher training, where she met my father, Ronald; they married in 1951 and settled in south London.

Meanwhile Raimund had a much tougher time of things. From the



Refugees in Cambridge, 1940s – Tim's mother Ruth Neumeyer (centre) with twin sisters Lore and Erika Weiss, who fled from Vienna

comforts of Weybridge he had been sent to work on a training farm in Hambleton, in Buckinghamshire, and then to a bicycle factory in Birmingham. This wasn't a happy time for him and he really wanted to go to university. Just after his 18th birthday in December 1943 he signed up for the British army. His identity book was marked 'exempt from registration': for the first time he felt accepted by his adopted country despite being obliged to change his name to Raymond Newland.

Scarlet fever probably saved his life: he was due to go on the D-Day invasion with his regiment, who in the event suffered very heavy losses while he remained in hospital. After that he always made a special point of remembering his colleagues on Remembrance Day.

In February 1945 he transferred to the Intelligence Corps in Brussels and Paris, before working as an interpreter for the Special Branch of the Military Police in Germany. His many letters to Ruth during that period reveal a touching closeness between the siblings, but also a sense of isolation and depression as Raymond becomes haunted by what has happened to the parents, Hans and Vera. When it emerged after the war that both had perished in concentration camps he became increasingly bitter. 'I just could not believe everything we were told about the atrocities and now that I have concrete proof, I utterly fail to understand it. Furthermore I feel no more ties of



Raymond Newland, while working for the British Army military police in Germany, around 1946

kinship to any German and hope that once I have left this country I have left it once and for all.'

He settled in England and, after studying at LSE, took up a career in teaching. His love for some aspects of Germany never diminished – particularly the Alps and classical music. In 1963 he married a German woman, Ingrid, whose father had been a chief of staff in the German navy and was on the *Bismarck* when it was sunk.

Both Ruth and Raymond made postwar visits to friends in Dachau. In 1987 Hans Holzhaider interviewed them for his book *Vor Sonnenaufgang*, about the Jewish families thrown out of Dachau. Both siblings warmed to Holzhaider, who rather exorcised some of their trauma – Ruth subsequently found it much easier to talk to us about her past and even encouraged me to visit Dachau.

I know Ruth and Raymond – who died in 2012 and 2011 respectively – would love to know that I am keeping their testimony alive through my blog (<https://ephraimneumeyer.wordpress.com/>) and also through Generation 2 Generation (G2G) www.generation2generation.org.uk, which enables descendants of Holocaust survivors to tell their family stories to audiences.

Tim Locke

OBITUARIES

FRIEDA ('ELFI') JONAS

Born: 6 September 1928, Klagenfurt, Austria
Died: 2 March 2021, Birmingham

In a very different world and time, Anna Reinert gave birth to Frieda in a Klagenfurt hospital.

Home was Leoben. It was here that Anna and Marcus set about teaching Frieda the skills they had expected to pass on to a son: how to ride a bike, ski, skate and climb trees. They paid scant attention to the rising populism and antisemitism. Marcus and Anna continued to work at their ladies and gents' outfitters. Frieda attended the local school and spent lots of time playing with her best friends, Greta and Evi.

One day in 1938 Frieda arrived at school to find the desks re-arranged. The environment soon became hostile and dangerous. Marcus had to give up his shop and the family moved to Vienna. With a pretence of joy and false promises, they put Frieda on a Kindertransport. They assured her they would follow shortly. They knew they would not. They were murdered.

Frieda went to a girl's hostel in Tynemouth and then to a hostel in Windermere, where she remained until 1946. Frieda formed lifelong friendships with many of the girls and always remembered her time in Windermere with fondness and gratitude.

Frieda went to London, where she worked and went to teacher training college. She joined a club for Kindertransport refugees in 1948. Another member of the group, George Jonas, set about wooing Frieda with cricket and concerts.

They married on 23 December 1951. Shortly after George qualified as a solicitor, they moved to Birmingham in 1952. I arrived in 1956. My sister Helen joined us in 1959. Frieda became a full time mother and later bookkeeper for my father's firm, until they both retired.

It is difficult to describe how close George and Frieda were and how supportive Frieda was to George. My father was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in December 2004. He died the following July.

Throughout her life, Frieda was the gentlest of people, only seeing the good in others. She loved engaging other people and she retained her interest in current affairs up until the end.

Steven Jonas

ROBERT BERGMAN

Born: 9 January 1926, Ludwigshafen
Died: 25 May 2021, Manchester

Robert was born in Germany in 1926. He often described how he had to fight his way through childhood.

At the age of 10 he had to collect money owed to his shoemaker father, which often meant walking alone at night, encountering Nazi Youth. When all the Jews were rounded up after Kristallnacht his father told the Gestapo they had lost their passports and would report to the station in the morning. By some miracle, the Gestapo forgot about them and, six weeks later, Robert and his younger brother Leo managed to secure a place on the Kindertransport.

He was given the choice of Holland or England, choosing the latter because he had read about Britain at school. The decision probably saved his life, as his family – including his younger brother – although escaping to Holland, later died in Auschwitz. His two older brothers had already emigrated to then-Palestine and Robert often visited them there.

Arriving here in January 1939 he was first sent to Dovercourt camp before spending a few years with various foster families. On his 18th birthday he joined the Pioneer Corp, stationed in Italy. After the war he travelled widely throughout Europe and South America and living briefly in Lisbon.

Moving back to the UK, he met his first wife Jeanette. They married in 1960 and had two children — Philip (1966) and Suzi (1968). Unfortunately, in 1977, Jeanette passed away. The following year Robert married Adele Klass, who had three children from a previous marriage.

Despite missing out on a formal education, Robert secured a job as an accountant at a textile firm, staying until he retired. He then set up on the markets, specialising in butchers' aprons and crushed velvet.

Robert was a lifelong supporter of Arsenal FC and was deeply interested in politics. His other great loves included Israel, chess and horseracing. His zest for life was contagious, and nothing more exemplified this than his dancing. Even in his 90s he was the last to leave the dance floor.

Robert was always an incredibly positive person and his infectious smile and laughter will be missed by all his family and friends.

Robert is survived by wife Adele, children Suzi, Philip, Annette, Susan and Phillip and 13 grandchildren.

Philip Bergman

ZOOMS AHEAD

Details of all meetings and the links to join will appear in the e-newsletter each Monday.

Thursday 1 July @ 2pm	Julius Green – STARS AND SPIES: an entertaining and original history of the interplay between spying and showbiz https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86814000349
Monday 5 July @10.30am	Online Yoga: Get fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85077398948
Tuesday 6 July @2pm	Bob Sinfield – THE GREAT UNWATCHED: tales from 35 years in radio https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85167502152
Wednesday 7 July @2pm	David Barnett – Lily Montagu and the West End Girls Club https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83036308878
Tuesday 13 July @2pm	Stephen Horne – My life at Harrods https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88615524134
Wednesday 14 July @2pm	AJR Book Discussion (no speaker): <i>The White Tiger</i> by Aravind Adiga https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83424635093
Monday 19 July @10.30am	Online Yoga: Get fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83560085547
Tuesday 20 July @2pm	Tony Zendle – Jews & Jazz https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83865149101
Wednesday 21 July @2pm	Sean Blyth – The incredible history of Ragley Hall https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81574974516
Thursday 22 July @2pm	Pam Fox – Bournemouth's Kosher Hotels https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82347484633
Tuesday 27 July @2pm	Jonathan Bergwerk – The life and music of Irving Berlin https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83492072166
Wednesday 28 July @2pm	In conversation with Peter Sarsfield, winner of Stars in Your Eyes 2015 as 'Frankie Valli' https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89927647408
Thursday 29 July @2pm	Elkan Levy – British Jewry part 4: The road to emancipation https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83550432181

AJR FILM CLUB

The AJR is pleased to launch a new monthly film club partnership with UK Jewish Film.



Each month AJR members will be given free online access to a film, which you are free to watch any time during the month, and each month will culminate with an online event relating to the film. Our first film, in July is the documentary *Café Nagler*. Details for how to access this film as well as a discussion with its director Mor Kaplansky will be published in the weekly email newsletter, or you can contact susan@ajr.org.uk.

MANCHESTER REOPENS

Manchester's Jewish Museum reopens this month following a £6 million redevelopment, which includes a new gallery, café, shop and learning studio & kitchen as well as complete restoration

of its stunning 1874 synagogue. We are looking forward to visiting the museum soon and will share a virtual tour in a future issue of the *AJR Journal*.

www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com



benuri.org

DISCOVER



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