



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

100 years after the March on Rome

The years immediately after the First World War were some of the most extraordinary of the 20th century. Hunger, inflation, strikes and revolutions were everywhere, and Italy's response was to bring in the Fascists.



Filippo del Giudice, who co-produced this 1942 box office hit, was one of the Italian Jewish refugees who came to Britain

There were more than a thousand pogroms in Ukraine between 1918-21 and a bitter war between the new Soviet Union and Poland, chronicled by the great Jewish writer Isaac Babel, in his stories, *Red Cavalry*.

There was hunger and terrible inflation in post-war Germany and Austria, and the German Foreign Secretary, Walther

Rathenau, was assassinated by the Far Right in 1922, one of a number of political assassinations which anticipated the rise of political extremism in Germany.

One of the most dramatic places in post-war Europe was Italy. Between 1919-20 there were two years of strikes and factory
Continued on page 2

SHANA TOVAH

The start of Autumn and the Jewish new year herald some busy months for the AJR, with numerous meetings, commemorative events and another major conference on our horizon.

In this issue you will find articles on subjects ranging from the treasured historian Alfred Wiener to the wonderful Wizard of Oz, and many things in between. We also report on some of the work we are doing with partners to counter Holocaust distortion and better equip teachers with the facts.

We hope you enjoy the magazine and wish you a happy and healthy new year.

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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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100 years after the march on Rome (cont.)

occupations, the so-called *Biennio Rosso*. At a time of mass strikes and terrible inflation it looked as if the Communists might take power. Instead, it was the Far Right who seized power. In October 1922 fascist demonstrators and Blackshirt paramilitaries entered Rome, the so-called *March on Rome*. On 29 October, the King appointed Benito Mussolini as Prime Minister, thereby transferring political power to the Fascists. It was the beginning of Fascist rule in Italy. It was also the beginning of the flight of Jewish and left-wing refugees from Italy.

Mussolini's treatment of the Jews can be divided into three periods. The first period can be called "The Honeymoon" and lasted for ten years, until 1932. During this time the civil and religious rights of the Jewish minority were respected, and Mussolini even publicly denounced racism and antisemitism.

The second period may be called "The Chameleon Phase," and began in 1933, when Hitler came to power, and ended in 1938. During this phase Mussolini began to prevaricate. On the one hand, he gave out statements and issued laws favouring the Jews, and on the other hand, he voiced support for antisemitism in Germany.

The third phase, "The True Face Period," began in 1938, when the race laws against Jews were issued. Mussolini committed Italy to the Berlin-Rome axis and launched an unprecedented antisemitic attack in the press, aimed at all Italian Jews. Despite this an extraordinary 85% of Italian Jews survived the Holocaust.

When the racial laws of 1938 were introduced, the Italian Jewish population of almost 50,000 was overwhelmingly urban and solidly middle class. 43% of Italian Jews worked in trade, 22% in industry, 11% in public administration, 9% in the liberal professions, and almost none in agriculture, whereas about half of the general population in 1936 was employed in agriculture and only 0.6% in the liberal professions.

As a result of Mussolini's antisemitic policy, 5,000 Italian Jews emigrated and more than 4,000 converted to Christianity. The Jewish population of Italy fell to just over 35,000.

What is striking is how few famous Italians sought refuge in Britain, a small fraction of the number of German, Austrian, Czech and

Polish refugees who came here. But these included some very distinguished refugees. Among them was Joseph Cremona (1922-2003), a Romance linguist, who came to London at seventeen, studied medicine, served in the Royal Navy and after the war studied French and Spanish. He was the first lecturer at Cambridge in Romance philology and was a Fellow at Trinity Hall for more than twenty years.

The film producer, Filippo del Giudice (1892-1962), fled to England because of his antifascist views, got involved with the British film industry and worked with Noel Coward on the famous war film, *In Which We Serve*, the top British box-office film of 1942. Critically and commercially successful films followed, such as Leslie Howard's *The Gentle Sex* (1943), Carol Reed's *The Way Ahead* (1944), David Lean's *This Happy Breed* (1944) and *Henry V* (1945) and *Hamlet* (1948), both starring Olivier. He returned to Italy in 1950, where he spent the rest of his life.

Sir Arnaldo Momigliano (1908-87), grew up in a prominent Jewish intellectual family. He became Professor of Roman History at Turin and was then dismissed on racial grounds in 1938. In 1939 he fled to Britain. Nine members of his family died in the Holocaust including both his parents. He was Professor of Ancient History at UCL from 1951-75 and when he died, he was buried in a Jewish cemetery near his birthplace in Piedmont. Another distinguished refugee historian was Roberto Weiss (1906-69), who taught at UCL for more than thirty years.

Guido Pontecorvo (1907-99), brother of the famous film director, was a Jewish-Italian geneticist. Like Momigliano, he was dismissed from his university job in 1938 on racial grounds and left to teach at Edinburgh University, then Glasgow, and then the Imperial Cancer Research Fund laboratories in London. He was one of the founding fathers of modern genetics in Britain.

Perhaps the greatest Italian refugee thinker was the economist, Piero Sraffa (1898-1983), a close friend of Wittgenstein and the famous Marxist thinker, Antonio Gramsci. It was Sraffa who preserved Gramsci's hugely influential prison writings. Sraffa left fascist Italy in 1927 and came to Trinity College, Cambridge. For almost thirty years, he was the assistant director of research in economics, a job Keynes invented to keep him at Cambridge. Together with the brilliant mathematician Frank Ramsey and

Ludwig Wittgenstein, Sraffa joined the so-called cafeteria group, an informal club that discussed Keynes's theory of probability and Hayek's theory of business cycles.

These Italian refugees were few in number but their impact was extraordinary, from ancient history and modern genetics to economics and cinema. Perhaps most interesting of all was their range. Between them they covered so many important subjects.

Many years later, in the mid-1980s, the Jewish-American novelist Philip Roth visited Primo Levi in Turin. Their conversation was published in one of Roth's best books, *Shop Talk* (2001). They discussed rootedness and impurity. This tension, Roth says, 'makes me think of something that Professor Arnaldo Momigliano wrote about the Jews of Italy, that "the Jews were less a part of Italian life than they thought they were." How much of a part of Italian life do you think you are? Do you remain an impurity, "a grain of salt or mustard" ...?' Levi replied, 'To feel oneself a catalyst, a spur to one's cultural environment, a something or a somebody that confers taste and sense to life, you don't need racial laws or antisemitism, or racism in general; however, it is an advantage to belong to a (not necessarily racial) minority. In other words, it can prove useful not to be pure... To possess two traditions, as happens to Jews but not only to Jews, is a richness for writers but not only for writers.'

This extraordinary exchange between Roth and Primo Levi says a great deal about both writers. But it also says a great deal about Jews and Jewish refugees and their impact both on the culture they grew up in and on British culture, where they became such an important 'catalyst'. This underrated group of Italian Jewish refugees were an 'impurity' that had an enormous effect on British wartime and post-war culture.

David Herman

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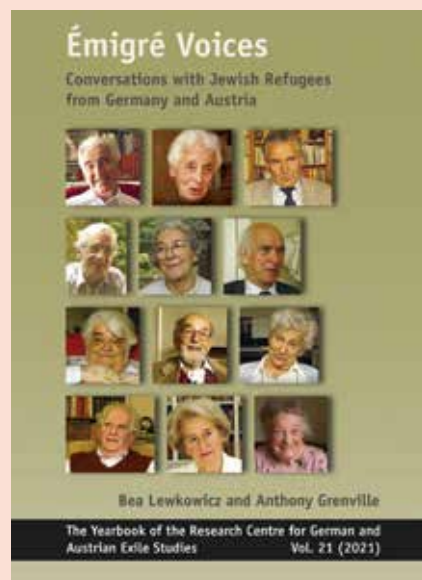
Émigré Voices: launch event

This month sees the launch of a new volume of oral history interviews with men and women who came to Britain as Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in the late 1930s.

Many of the interviewees rose to great prominence in their chosen career, such as the author and illustrator Judith Kerr, the actor Andrew Sachs, the photographer and cameraman Wolf Suschitzky, the violinist Norbert Brainin, and the publisher Elly Miller.

The book is jointly edited by the AJR's Dr Bea Lewkowicz and Dr Anthony Grenville, who will both speak at the launch event on 15 September. The event will also feature a short film screening and live interviews with some of the children of the refugees featured in the volume.

The launch event is taking place at 6.30pm at the Wiener Holocaust Library. You can either attend in person or online – more details on <https://wienerholocaustlibrary.org/event/hybrid-book-launch-emigre-voices-conversations-with-jewish-refugees-from-germany-and-austria>



MAZELTOV EDITH

York member Edith Jayne was delighted at last to be presented with her MBE last month, having been awarded it during the pandemic. She is pictured here with HM Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Johanna Roper.

Edith, who was born in 1936 in Vienna, is the daughter of a Jewish doctor, Rudolph Kurcz, and Roman Catholic mother, Maria Rixner. The family initially fled to Portugal, where her father worked with a Jewish welfare agency helping other refugees. Then in 1941, when even Portugal was becoming too dangerous for Jews, the family was able to travel to America and settled in New York.

In the 1960s Edith's late husband's George's work took them to Brussels, where Edith wasn't happy, feeling like a refugee again. They moved to London, where Edith worked for the education authority, before retiring and moving to York over a decade ago. Since then Edith has visited scores of primary and secondary schools in the local area to share her experiences with the pupils.



A Jewish women's football team in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s

They think it's all new!

The incredible recent achievement of England's Lionesses has been heralded as the start of a new era for women's football. But before the Holocaust Jewish women participated in and competed in many different types of sports activities, including football.

This wonderful photo, which features in a visual retrospective on www.yadvashem.org, shows a group of Jewish women footballers in Czechoslovakia in 1930 – yet another facet of Jewish life that was extinguished during the Holocaust.

EXPLORING LOCAL CONNECTIONS

The Holocaust Educational Trust (HET), best known for its educational visits to Auschwitz, has created a powerful new site-based course much closer to home.

This summer, HET launched a new Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course for teachers, backed by grant funding from the AJR.

Exploring the Holocaust: Sources and Sites consisted of four one-day study tours aimed at examining the educational potential of sites across the UK. Over 70 teachers attended a tour in Glasgow, Manchester, London or Cardiff.

The course was designed to explore Britain's relationship to the Holocaust

by engaging with regional histories to develop discussions about pre-war Jewish migration and examine community stories of refugee life in wartime Britain, including histories of internment. This focus on regional stories also provided scope to discuss collective community action, as well as the experiences of Anglo-Jewish communities.

Encouraging teachers – and, in turn, their students – to consider topics such as the response of the British Government to the threat of Nazism, the plight of Jewish refugees, and the impact of British antisemitism on pre – and post-war migration to the UK is a goal that is shared by both HET and the AJR.

In December 2021, the AJR launched the UK Holocaust Map, a digital platform intended to highlight these same topics and themes (www.ukholocaustmap.com) AJR is now working with HET to

introduce the map and some of its content to teachers.

One teacher who participated in the Glasgow study tour commented that the course helped them to “learn more about the history of my home city that was ‘hidden in plain sight’” as well as learning about “the positives as well as the negative ways that the Jewish community was treated as it is still relevant and can inspire as well as warn us of the dangers of complacency”.

Alex Maws, the AJR's Head of Education and Heritage, commented: “It shouldn't be the case that an educational visit to a site associated with the Holocaust necessitates getting on an airplane to Poland or Germany. We hope that schools in every village and town across the UK will take up the challenge to learn about their local connections to this history.”

NEW 2ND GENERATION SUPPORT GROUP

Wendy Davis writes: The horrifying crisis in Ukraine has evoked comparisons with WW2. For the 2nd Generation this has prompted reflections about our own parents' wartime trauma and how this has affected our lives, relationships and sense of identity. Ongoing antisemitism across the UK has made this even more acute.

Some people have recently contacted me, looking to find a safe and supportive space in which to explore these matters. I have therefore decided to form a 2nd Generation Group, which will run for a series of 12 weekly therapeutic support meetings in NW London. It will be independent and chargeable with concessions available.

I have been running 2nd Generation Groups for almost 30 years and it has been fascinating to find that, although everybody's story and experience is unique, there is a common constellation of issues. For example:

- A high proportion of 2nd Generation have become carers of one sort or another, often because they felt they had to fit in with, look after and

try to make up for, the losses of their traumatised parents (“I tried so hard to make her smile but she never did.”)

- Some 2nd Generation describe the feeling of exclusion, believing that their parents' losses – often never talked about but keenly felt – were not their losses. This has been described as living with ghosts.
- What has been described as a Hierarchy of Suffering, could make the 2nd Generation believe that their own feelings didn't count and that expressing them could profoundly upset the delicate balance.

The feeling of not quite belonging to their parent's world, often coupled

with overprotection from the world outside, can leave 2nd Generation with not knowing where they belong and struggling to embrace their own story, history and voice.

The beauty of a group is that other members might mirror and reflect aspects of our own experience, which we may not have seen in this light before. The creation of a supportive, understanding group environment will allow us to discuss objectively how to handle, integrate and carry forward these formative aspects of our lives. In so doing, we are not alone.

Wendy Davis MAHPP UKCP is a Psychotherapist who is 2nd Generation herself. Please contact her on 07962 262081 or wendymdavis21@gmail.com

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



A WEEKEND IN TEL AVIV – THE NATION'S PLAYGROUND



To start with, there's the Mediterranean Sea, with its long sandy beaches, kept relatively clean

by the municipality, with designated areas for people to play games (ah, the dreaded 'matkot' with their constant noisy batting to and fro of a ball against wooden bats), another area for dogs off the leash (but they must be well-behaved) with a special shower for dogs, and the wonderful kilometer after kilometer of the promenade. Anyone venturing out early in the morning (say, 6 am, even on a Saturday, supposedly the day of rest) as I did, encounters throngs of other like-minded people, whether singly, in pairs, small groups or even large groups, walking, jogging or running along it. Some people even manage to conduct a conversation as they jog, which seems almost superhuman to me. There are couples or groups who wear matching outfits bearing slogans or designs aimed at attracting attention, but most people wear modest sports gear, and of course the ubiquitous sports shoes.

And naturally, there are also people walking their dogs, though always on a leash. I didn't notice any dog-poop on the promenade, so presumably their owners were dutiful about cleaning up after their pets.

Always accompanying us as we made our way past the enticing sandy beaches was the constant sound of the waves as they crashed onto the sand. Even if one just stands and looks at the sea, with the azure sky above and the occasional palm tree or scrubby bush breaking the monotony, we feel that the salty sea air is doing us good.

It all takes me back to the summer holidays of my childhood, when my family would decamp to a rented house in Bognor Regis, on England's south coast, where the chilly waves of the English Channel would embrace us children as we bravely waded into it, trying to avoid getting entangled in the ubiquitous seaweed. I haven't ventured into the sea in Tel Aviv, so don't know if there's seaweed there or not. What I did notice, however, is that at various points along the promenade Beach Libraries have been set up, where books may be borrowed and users are requested to return the books after using them.

The city of Tel Aviv itself is awash with eateries, pubs and places of entertainment of all kinds, though we mustn't forget that it is, after all, a city where real people live – and

that house prices there are among the highest in the country.

Our long weekend there was occasioned by a concert of the Israel Philharmonic orchestra and a performance of Handel's opera *Alcina* within the space of three days. While on this occasion we didn't use the opportunity to visit the impressive Tel Aviv Museum, we were able to enjoy the delights of the city in various other spheres. For example, as we ate breakfast in our hotel overlooking the sea we could witness people running and playing on the promenade and the beach, and nearby nets had been set up on the sand enabling people to play energetic games of volleyball. The sight was a veritable *perpetuum mobile* of active energy and sporting prowess.

The one jarring note was a notice at the side, indicating a path leading up towards the town bearing the message 'Tsunami evacuation route.' A sobering thought in the midst of all that seaside pleasure.

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Letters to the Editor

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

SEARCH SUCCESS

A couple of months ago you kindly included a search notice for the relatives of two sisters who came on the Kindertransport and arrived in Glasgow. We acquired a set of postcards addressed to them from family members still in Germany. The postcards came to us via an antiquarian bookshop in Norfolk. Nothing about the provenance or contextual history was known.

Within days of the *Journal* being published, and with the assistance of someone who volunteered to undertake research via social media and family history platforms, I was put in contact with one of the granddaughters of the sisters who both ended up in Toronto, Canada.

We sent scans and translations of the cards to her. Her response: "*What a wonderful surprise to find this email in my inbox this morning! Thank you so much for translating the postcards for me! These are all both beautiful and heartbreaking. I am incredibly grateful for everything you have done.*"
Howard Falksohn, Wiener Holocaust Library

QUAKERS

May I correct a brief omission from my article in August? During the Northern Ireland Troubles in 1970-1990, Quakers were key to helping families in distress from violence from both sides, with a Night Shelter and a Safe House. The appalling facilities at the Lonh Kesh/Maze prison were improved for visiting families, with a canteen serving 500 cups of tea a day.

A little-reported informal, neutral place was created for both sides, leading to off the record meetings of politicians that resulted in the Good Friday Agreement. Today a Quaker charity continues vital work with mothers, children and teenagers at a cottage in the Black Mountains.
David Dobson, Cambridge

JOHANNA THAL

The obituary for my father, Frederick Hirsch, (June) had a small but important

omission regarding his mother's professional name. At birth she was called Martha Johanna Wulkan, a surname she never used again. At the beginning of her career as a fashion journalist in Vienna, she was briefly Johanna Taussig. In Berlin, writing for *Die Dame* and the *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, she was known as Johanna Thal. For a short time after leaving Berlin for Vienna, she also managed to find work writing as Helga Friedrich. Deported to Terezin and afterwards Auschwitz, she is listed as Johanna Hirsch. Johanna Thal had many colleagues in Berlin, some of whom, like Elsa Herzog, Ruth Goetz and Stephanie Kaul, managed to find refuge in London. In Berlin, they had called my father 'der kleine Thal', and I think that is one name he would not like forgotten.

Yael Hirsch, Philadelphia, USA

BIRMINGHAM

My native city, Birmingham, has indeed been much in the news of late (August) although I confess to a minimal interest in sporting activities.

However David Herman's mention of Johanna Selig-Simmons offers me the opportunity to reminisce that she married a distant cousin of mine, Bernard Simmons. They had three children and their daughter, Ruth (married to Ernst Wolf, another émigré from Nazi Germany), was a worthy follower of her mother. When I was an assistant to the late Zoe Josephs and we were working on putting together *Survivors*, without Ruth Wolf's invaluable help our efforts would have been much less productive. Ruth was also instrumental in providing much practical assistance to many of these people.

Birmingham did indeed host numerous settlers fleeing from Nazi persecution and it was my privilege for some of them to become my patients although I fear that my "Anglo" personality was an inadequate qualification for understanding all their needs. I can but belatedly apologise now for my failings.

Dr Anthony Joseph (retired GP and Emeritus President Jewish Genealogical Society of GB), Birmingham

MARCH OF THE LIVING REPORT

Note from Editor: Karen Markham's report from the 2022 March of the Living (August issue) was unfortunately entangled with a report from a previous March. For example, it was survivor Arek Hersch (not Ivor Perl, who spoke during the 2019 March) who shared his personal Auschwitz experiences with the participants.

Also, the speaker at the closing ceremony was not the remarkable child survivor Israel Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel, but his son David Lau, Israel's current Chief Rabbi.

We apologise for this oversight and would urge you to read the correct report, which is now available online via

<https://ajr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/6379-AJR-Journal-August-2022-v12-WEB.pdf>

OPTIMISM FOR VIENNA

Following on from the article last month about the AJR trip to Vienna, of which I was lucky enough to be a participant, I would like to add that however depressing it was to hear our tour guide's reports about flower pots and bicycle racks being deliberately moved to cover the brass memorial stones, I was not personally surprised. The antisemitic attitudes of many older Viennese inhabitants do not appear to have changed over the years. However, I suspect (although I have not seen any data) that the position is quite different among the younger Viennese inhabitants and I believe that the old attitudes will die out over time. My own experience is limited to German cities where I have spoken to many younger individuals who are very open, friendly, and keen to discover more about Judaism and Jewish people.

So, for the long term, I am optimistic; particularly so given the belated change of approach from the Austrian government and the City of Vienna who are now leading the way.

Michael Brandman, London



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Get the Children Out: Unsung Heroes of the Kindertransport with Mike Levy

Who exactly were the key players behind the Kindertransport?

Although the rescue of more than 10,000 Jewish children from Germany and Austria during 1938-39 is well-documented, what's far less known are the stories of those who cared for the children once they reached Britain.

Mike Levy, author of the newly published book *Get the Children Out: Unsung Heroes of the Kindertransport*, uncovers the gripping stories that lie behind this unprecedented act of mass rescue. These stories are brought to life by actors portraying some of the forgotten heroes.

Mike will also be joined by an expert panel involved in refugee welfare, who'll discuss what lessons the Kindertransport can teach us about how to support refugees today.



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LOOKING FOR?

OSCAR FRIEDMANN

Yael Hirsch seeks information on Oscar Friedmann, who ran a hostel for refugee boys at Nightingale Road, E5 in 1942 and acted as guarantor for her father, Friedrich Hirsch. She wonders if this is the same Oscar Friedmann who worked with the Windermere children after the war.

yaelhirsch329@gmail.com

HEILBRUNN/CAREY/SHARPE family

Dr. Stefan Cramer of Goslar, Germany, seeks Michele (daughter of Kenneth Carey) and her children, Jonathan and Daniel Sharpe. He is planning to place a *Stolperstein* in front of the Heilbrunn family's former home in Goslar and would like to invite them to the unveiling.

stefancramer@gmail.com

HENSCHEL/OPPENHEIMER

Tom Freudenheim is seeking information about the Henschel-Oppenheimer family, including Gladys Smith, who lived at 5 Atkins Rd, Clapham Park, London SW12 in 1944, and Stanley Henschel, who lived in the London area but then moved to Jerusalem.

tom@freudenheim.com

ROBERT STERN/ERICH MARKS

The City of Bad Kreuznach seeks descendants of Robert Stern (born Obermoschel 15.09.1894) and/or Erich Marks (born Bad Kreuznach 16.10.1920) in order to place a *Stolperstein* at their former home. In 1948 Robert Stern was living at 6 Templars Avenue, London NW11.

Franziska.Blum-Gabelmann@bad-kreuznach.de

KINDER DESCENDANTS

See-Saw Films is making a film about Sir Nicholas Winton. It will include the recreation of the 1988 episode of *That's Life!* when Esther Rantzen invited former Kinder and their families to stand up. The producers would love to feature actual descendants of Kinder in the 'audience' for that moment. Please read the full story on <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/families-of-sir-nicholas-wintons-kinder-invited-to-recreate-tv-history/> and contact the producers on the below email address.

familyofnickywinton@gmail.com

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

There are many abstract lines and concentric circles but also something flowing and romantic emanates from the hand of artist Celine Condorelli – and it often involves greenery, too, although whether she is hinting at climate change or simply the natural world, it's hard to say. Certainly there is a sense of delicacy and texture in her work. The London-based French-Italian artist has just been selected as the National Gallery's new Artist in Residence for 2023, the third to be chosen to fill that role since the launch of the Gallery's new Modern and Contemporary Programme, in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Society.

Condorelli's work addresses the boundaries between public and private, art and function, work and leisure, in order to reimagine the role of artists within them. Using architectural and sculptural objects, there is a definite sense of interior design in her work, a softening of spaces and the way people move around them. This applies to any space, public, private or even a children's playground.

So what does artist in residence mean? It usually means responding to works in the collections of the National Gallery. Condorelli begins her awesome task this month and will work over the course of a year in the National Gallery's on-site artist's studio, benefiting from the close proximity to the collection and archives. This will culminate in a publication and a display featuring Condorelli's work at the National Gallery (13 September 2023 – 7 January 2024). With the support of the Contemporary Art Society, one of the works relating to the residency will enter the Royal Albert Memorial Museum's collection.

Condorelli is interested in how materials can

Céline Condorelli,
Prologue Zanzibar,
2022



be cultivated from their raw state through labour and industry to their uses in society. Referencing the work of international 20th century modernist architects, her work reinterprets the boundaries between work and leisure, inner and outer, political, imaginary and societal realities, in order to foster enquiry and discussion. Condorelli is one of the founding directors of Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK and regularly teaches. She is the author and editor of *Support Structures*, published by Sternberg Press (2009) and *The Company She Keeps*. She was shortlisted for the Max Mara Art Prize for Women in 2017.

Host, her large curtain installation at the Talbot Rice Gallery in Edinburgh this year is an example of the gentle fluid quality of her work, blending artwork with architecture. Here, in long soft green fabrics suspended from a high atrium, translucent colours of pink, brown and blue emanate through the light which filters down. The fabrics seem to sway as they reflect these other colours, suggesting patterns of changing light and the concept of nothing being as it seems.

Her *Prologue Zanzibar*, from the same gallery seems more interior décor than installation. With its intriguing circular centrepiece on a tiered floor and stones and greenery creatively dotted around the area, it looks like a lounge anyone would want to live in!

This element persists in so much of her work. Everywhere there is this sense of space being carefully curated; emerald green bowed screens, plants dotted around in curvilinear plant pots, everything designed to arch around a space. Tiered plants are very much in evidence, and it all reveals an artist of grace and sensitivity; nothing expresses

clangour in her work. Even abstract paintings are created from a gentle layering of textures and fabrics.

Sometimes she will surprise you, as with her 2021 *Outdoor Décor*, which consists of a grey slatted gate opening and covered by luminous slates in mustard yellow, or her *Flash Art* in which a giant latex gloved hand holds what looks like an ice cream spiked with tiny flaglets on a giant screen. Fabrics, layers, textures criss-crossing each other mark Condorelli as an artist of form and taste.

All Our Tomorrows features a square of black chairs overlooked by a black curtain opened to reveal a white curtain beneath and poles with black discs. Or sometimes the work is more granular – for example a rough obelisk, partially painted red to denote texture. Sometimes she is bolder and blends industrial-looking pipes or pillars, covered in red cloth with a centrepiece of globular shapes, suggesting fruit, suggesting vegetation, or any abstraction you care to imagine. Or her apparent favourite, drapery changed by reflective light. She is also fond of simple things, like painting a rail in uneven tones of red white and blue. It will be interesting to see what this artist generates from her year at the National. Will she focus on one work or choose a theme? It's all to play for.

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CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

ALFRED WIENER IN LETTERS

A new collection of correspondence to and from the founder director of the Wiener Holocaust Library offers fresh insights into his legacy.

After WW2, the Jewish Central Information Office came to be known as The Wiener Library (now the Wiener Holocaust Library). All the materials which had been amassed until then during its existence as an information gathering bureau were, for the first time, systematically catalogued and made available to readers in what became a research library and archive repository open to the public.

From the end of the war until Wiener's death in 1964 the library generated a significant corpus of correspondence files documenting the activities of the library and demonstrating the wide-ranging interests and connections of its director, Alfred Wiener. These files have now been made available to researchers as part of a National Archives grant award in 2016.

From the extensive correspondence it is apparent that Wiener was held in high esteem and regarded with great warmth and affection by friends and colleagues from B'nai B'rith, the Centralverein and survivors of the Nazi era.

The following select few correspondents give a flavour of this material.

There are politicians including Theodor Heuss (1884-1963), first president of the Federal Republic of Germany; former German Chancellors, Konrad Adenauer (1867-1967) and Willy Brandt (1913-1992); James Callaghan (1912-2005), who developed a close friendship with Wiener and remained an active supporter of the library.

Most of the leading historians of the Holocaust and the Nazi era are represented: Saul Friedländer (1932 –), Gerald Fleming (1921-2006), Yehuda Bauer (1926 –), Ernst Nolte (1923-2016), AJP Taylor (1906-1990) to name a few.

Dr Hans Günther Adler (1910-1988) was a Czech intellectual and Holocaust survivor. Born into an assimilated Jewish family, he was deported to Theresienstadt in 1942, and later to Auschwitz and Buchenwald. After the war Adler moved to London, campaigned for survivor organisations like the International Auschwitz Committee and started publishing novels. His study *Theresienstadt 1941-1945*, published in 1955, is regarded as a foundation work of Holocaust Studies. He worked as an interviewer on the library's eyewitness testimony project.

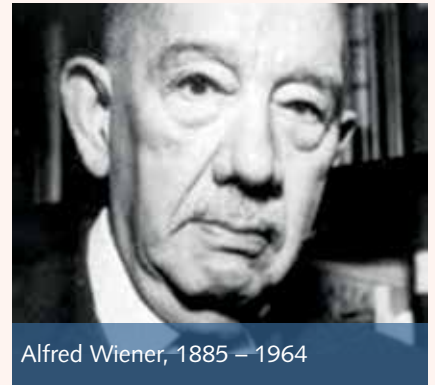
Leading theologians represented in the correspondence include Martin Niemöller (1892-1984), who started out as a supporter of Hitler but became one of the founders of the *Bekennende Kirche* (the Confessing Church) which was ideologically opposed to Nazism. The correspondence touches on his ideological transformation and meetings he and Wiener had in Hildesheim.

Also represented is Hermann Maas (1877-1970), a German protestant minister, Nazi opponent, and life-long supporter of Jewish-Christian dialogue. In 1950 he was the first gentile German to be formally invited by the newly founded state of Israel.

Wiener's old friend and colleague, Dr Leo Baeck (1873-1956) was an eminent German rabbi, scholar and international leader of Liberal Judaism. He was deported to Theresienstadt in 1943. Upon liberation he moved to London and became president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. A highly regarded figure, he served as namesake for numerous organisations such as the Leo Baeck Institute with branches in New York, London and Jerusalem as well as several B'nai B'rith Lodges.

Other notable individuals represented include: Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), German Jewish philosopher and sociologist, famous for his work on critical theory and leading representative of the Frankfurt School of social research. The correspondence documents the eyewitness testimony project and publication of the library's collections.

Nelly Wolffheim (1879-1965), the German



Alfred Wiener, 1885 – 1964

Jewish social worker and pioneer of psychoanalytic pedagogy, whose correspondence deals with her research on child survivors of the camps.

Robert Weltsch (1891-1982) former editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau* in Berlin during the Weimar era, later correspondent on *Haaretz*, where he covered the Nuremberg War crimes trials, founding member of the Leo Baeck Institute and former editor of its yearbook.

Of particular interest is correspondence with relatives of notable characters such as Thomas Harlan (1929-2010), a German author and film director. He was the son of Veit Harlan (1899-1964), director of the antisemitic propaganda movie *Jud Süß*. Harlan worked intensively on a book project about German war crimes and war criminals.

Likewise Otto Frank (1889-1990) discusses the growing popularity of the published version of the diary of his daughter, Anne Frank.

Caesar Aronsfeld, a long-time friend and colleague, deputised for Alfred Wiener after the latter retired. In 1966 Walter Laqueur (1921-2018) took over the directorship of the library for the next 25 years, heralding a whole new era and another name change. The library became known as The Wiener Library and the Institute for Contemporary History to reflect broader, more up to date scholarly interests of the new incumbent.

Alfred Wiener's legacy lives on in these letters.

Howard Falksohn



Jewish refugees in Chislehurst

The village of Chislehurst, in the south east London borough of Bromley, is steeped in history. It was once home to the famous Walsingham family, was visited by both Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria, and played host to Louis Napoleon III who died there in exile in 1873 – one of many refugees who have been sheltered in Chislehurst over the past 250 years.

In May, I was privileged to attend the planting of an oak tree by the Association of Jewish Refugees as part of its 80 trees for 80 years programme. The event also celebrated the remarkable life of Professor Robert Shaw, a Chislehurst resident who escaped Vienna aged 6 in 1939 on a Kindertransport and who sadly passed away just two months after this event.

The tree was planted by Michael Newman OBE, Chief Executive of the AJR, and topped off by Lord Pickles, Special Envoy for post-Holocaust Issues. The event was hosted by Chislehurst Golf Club at Camden Place.

I was invited to speak to the guests about Chislehurst's response to the crisis in Europe. Chislehurst's role in sheltering refugees is long-standing. Back in 1914, families in our large houses were quick to offer refuge to those Belgian families who had been displaced by the German offensive.

Patricia Waters writes in her book *Built on a Bowling Green*: 'At the time of the Second World War, there was an immediate response to the humanitarian crisis. The Chislehurst Refugee Association was hastily set up and a public meeting organised in the village hall. Canon Holland, a missionary of ecumenical views, and the headmaster of the newly opened Belmont Central School, Mr Maw, were on the organising committee. They were specifically concerned with those 'who happened to have a proportion of Jewish blood in their veins but

people who are not strictly pure Jews'. The proposal was that the Association should provide a home in Chislehurst for 12 non-Aryan Christian boys for about a year. This relatively modest objective was not met with wholehearted approval by the villagers, but they were urged to look to their Christian consciences and consider how they could help financially or in kind.

Within only a few weeks, Walter and Erna Zedner, themselves newly arrived in Britain at the end of 1938 as refugees, had been employed as house parents and a property, Seafield (now Camden Gate), had been leased. Once the children were settled in the house, the public were invited to an open day to see for themselves that the boys were not living in luxury and that their donations

had been spent wisely to create a simple, comfortable and secure home. The boys all attended Belmont Central School under the particular care of Mr Maw.

In July 1940, Walter and Erna were arrested as enemy aliens and sent to an internment camp on the Isle of Man. Internees were gradually released and, by the summer of 1941, most had been freed, including Walter and Erna. On their release, they first lived in Cumberland and then in Northwest London and in 1944 they returned to Kent to live in Shortlands. It seems that new house parents were found for the refugee boys who continued to attend Belmont Central School and several moved on to Sidcup School of Art.

The refugee story continued. There is a bench at the corner of the junction of Lubbock Road with Old Hill which was installed in gratitude to Rev and Mrs Ian Davidson for their part in rescuing 68 children from central Europe. In 1938, when Hitler had marched into Czechoslovakia, the Barbican Mission for the Jews had a centre in Prague. Rev Davidson went there in early 1938 and was besieged by hundreds of families, eager for an interview, in the hope that their children, who had claims to British nationality, could gain the necessary authority to come to England. It was agreed that 50 children could be taken to England but permits had to be arranged. There were weeks of delay, but the 50 permits were eventually granted.

It was Nicholas Winton, the humanitarian later knighted for his



Nicholas Winton holding three-year old Hans Neumann on his way to Chislehurst



Chislehurst tree planting in May. Professor Shaw is seated in the front row.

work with the Kindertransport, who arranged the safe passage of these children out of Prague. He remembered putting them on a flight to Croydon Airport on 12 January 1939. The only photograph of Sir Nicholas with rescued children is of him holding three-year old Hans Neumann, whose name was later changed to Beck. Hans came to Chislehurst but unfortunately died of measles soon after.

The problem of housing the children required considerable effort. Chislehurst was known to the Mission as having many large houses which were dilapidated, having been empty for years. Seven Trees, in Lubbock Road, was identified as suitable accommodation. Fortunately, another large house in the road also became

empty. This was the former home of Sir John Lubbock, from which St Hugh's Preparatory School for boys had just been evacuated.

Rev Davidson brought a further 12 children out of Prague to Chislehurst and the children were looked after in the newly renamed house, Mount Zion. In total 57 boys and 42 girls were rescued and cared for by the Barbican Mission in Lubbock Road. The children went to school locally. The boys were housed at Mount Zion and the girls at Seven Trees. They were looked after by staff whom they called 'Aunties'. The rescued children were christened at Christ Church and several continued to keep in touch. They held reunions and in 1989 some of the children came back and gifted the commemorative bench at the

end of the road.

Chislehurst's reputation as a safe haven continues to this day as many Ukrainian families are hosted here, some even at Seven Trees where the legacy continues.

Coincidentally, in the same week as the tree planting, I was delighted to be able to help a PhD student from the Czech Republic, Lenka Skardova, who was conducting research into the family memories of the Barbican Mission. There are those who disliked the Mission due to its proselytising zeal, though Nicholas Winton's mantra was that he was simply saving lives.

Joanna Friel
Chairman, The Chislehurst Society

A Tribute to Professor Shaw

The AJR's tree in Chislehurst was sponsored and planted by Professor Robert Shaw, who sadly passed away just two months later, aged 98.

A full obituary for Robert, who was born in Vienna and arrived in Britain via Kindertransport, will appear in our October issue. In the meantime we are honoured to include part of this foreword from Robert's 2015 autobiography *A Life in Science*, written by Lord Ian Austin.

"Few have made as great a contribution to Britain's scientific advancement than Robert Shaw.

His is an extraordinary story of a teenage Jewish boy from Vienna who was put on the Kindertransport by his mother, when Nazi rule after the Anschluss in 1938 made life increasingly unbearable for the city's Jewish community.

It relates his experiences as a refugee, a farm labourer in Suffolk, as an errand-boy in London during the Blitz and as a volunteer in the British Army. He studied whilst serving in the jungle in the India and South East Asia Command, and was then able to go to university when he returned.

He came to Britain with only a very basic knowledge of the English language but became a lecturer at Birkbeck College in the 1950s, a professor in the 1960s and

was appointed professor emeritus for his scholarship and research in 1990. He has led numerous international research projects and authored more than 350 publications, mainly on chemistry, but also on education, developing countries and the history of medicine.

So he teaches us one more crucial lesson: that hard work pays off, and that with dedication, effort and a willingness to make the most of opportunities that arise, you can arrive in our country with absolutely nothing but climb to the very top of your profession and make a huge contribution."

Nazi Crimes on British Soil

UK SCHOLARS SEEK THE TRUTH

Caroline Sturdy Colls and her partner Kevin Simon Colls, both scholars at Staffordshire University, are 'conflict archaeologists': they investigate the evidence of modern genocides, especially the Holocaust.

The couple have carried out pioneering work at Treblinka death camp, and on Alderney; there, after London evacuated its inhabitants, Hitler's forced labourers turned the Channel Island into a Nazi fortress. Caroline and Kevin recently published a book on the topic, *Adolf Island* – the name the Nazis bestowed on the territory. Caroline told **Martin Mauthner** more about their work.

What is so special about your 'decade-long project,' Alderney?

Like our work on Treblinka, Alderney began as part of my PhD research in 2009. I came across a book in the university library called *Alderney Death Camp* by Solomon Steckoll, and this was the first time I had heard about concentration and labour camps on British soil. I realised that the evidence of the crimes committed against forced and slave labourers had never been adequately recorded, and that many of their stories had been lost.

Including Alderney as a case study in my PhD, I gained permission to examine Lager Norderney and the former cemetery on Longy Common. I focussed on these sites first, as the terrible acts of violence in Norderney were not well known; the camp had been almost entirely demolished after the war, and it remained unrecorded and unmarked.

My research indicated that post-war exhumations had likely not located all the bodies, and that mass graves might remain there. We decided that examining archival and archaeological evidence was

the best way to reveal the experiences and identities of the forced and slave/near-slave labourers.

Later, we investigated the other camps and fortifications built by these labourers. Relating Alderney's occupation via their experiences, our book shows that at least 600 murdered labourers remain in unmarked graves. Using 'non-invasive' methods such as drones and radar, and thereby avoiding excavation, we locate some of these burials. We also demonstrate that the death toll on the island was much higher than previously thought, with at least 701 to 986 victims. Mass graves were used; the British government even marked a mass grave in 1945, although this marker was later removed and information about the grave was lost.

Identifying more than twenty camps and internment sites and detailing life there, we reveal that mass violence was part of the daily lives of most inmates – in the camps run by both the SS and, a fact not fully acknowledged hitherto, by the Organisation Todt, the Nazi agency headed by Fritz Todt that used forced labour to build the 'Atlantic Wall,' of which Alderney was a part.

We locate and analyse the names and marks etched into the fortifications by the men who built them. Charting the labourers' journeys before, during and (if they survived) after the war, we show that it was not only Russians who lived and died on Alderney, but people from all over Europe.

Finally, we demonstrate how much the British government knew about the crimes, and how the occupation-era events have been downplayed, neglected and sensationalised in the years since.

Alderney, and especially your TV documentary on your work there, aired in 2019, seems to have been a 'can of worms' for you.

The occupation of Alderney has long been a controversial topic. Our book describes the many efforts to create an 'official war history' that avoided discussions about



Caroline Sturdy Colls on 'Adolf Island'

the forced and slave labourers. Likewise, others have sensationalised the events.

Much evidence of the atrocities remained classified for decades. When we made the TV programme in 2017, we did face much hostility. Many people did not want us to present the labourers' stories to a global audience. Others feared that archaeological work was, physically and metaphorically, digging up the past. Although our work was non-invasive, for many people removing vegetation and seeking evidence through survey methods was controversial. Others helped us to carry out our research.

We hope our book will help Alderney's government and residents better understand what happened during the occupation, and that the awful crimes do demand further investigation and adequate commemoration.

(*Adolf Island* is published by Manchester University Press).

Editor's note: *We hope to follow up this article with a feature about Caroline and Kevin's current research. This includes possible war crimes committed in the present Ukraine conflict, and excavations at the former Lake District Calgarth Estate, where orphaned Jewish 'Windermere Children' were housed in August 1945.*

Martin Mauthner was also the author of last month's review of *Without a Home* – Kindertransports from Vienna. (*Apologies to him for omitting to attribute the article*).



The Jewish connection to The Wizard of Oz

“Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high
 There’s a land that I’ve heard of once in lullaby,
 Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue
 And the dreams that you dream,
 Really do come true.”

In 2013 I watched Simon Schama’s stunning BBC documentary, *The Story of the Jews*. In it, Simon travels to a village called Plunge in Lithuania where his mother’s family originated. He meets the sole Jewish survivor, Jakob Bunga, from a local massacre of Jews in July 1941 in which 2134 Jews were killed. Jakob’s mother and three sisters had managed to emigrate to Israel. Jakob escaped because he fought in the Russian Army against the Nazis with his father and brother, but they were both killed.

Since 1947, Jakob carved a remarkable collection of traditional wooden memorials for Jews. One for the Plunge massacre near the village of Kausenai and ten other mass murder sites. He rescued the Jewish cemetery and created a museum. Then he carved small Jewish figures representing the lost Shtetls’ culture. He died in 2014.

The mood of the documentary moves from darkness to hope. Schama describes the enormous contribution made by Jewish composers in America. They included Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, George and Ira Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Richard Rogers, Stephen Sondheim and Kurt Weil. Yet the composers for the *Wizard of Oz*, Harold Arden and Yip Harburg, are barely mentioned, despite this film being regularly voted the most popular film of the twentieth century and *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* the best song. The composition has always been more firmly associated with Judy Garland, who played Dorothy, the central character in the film.

Edgar Yipsel (Yip) Harburg, 1896–1981, was born Isidore Hochberg on the Lower East Side of New York. His parents were Yiddish speaking Orthodox Jews who had emigrated from Russia. His father was a cantor. Yip Harburg was famous for writing the lyrics of *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime* during the Great Depression. Yip was a socialist and sometimes joked that “Yip” referred to the Young People’s Socialist League. Like many Hollywood artists he was also a member of the Hollywood Democratic Committee involved in politics, including the re-election of Franklyn Roosevelt in 1944. Under Senator Joe McCarthy’s witch-hunt he was blacklisted as a communist, something he vehemently denied, but he was banned from radio, TV and Hollywood from 1950–1962.

Harold Arlen, 1905 – 1986 (born Hyman Arluck in Buffalo, New York) was the child of Lithuanian Jews whose father was also a cantor. He left home at 16 and progressed, playing the piano, singing, acting (including films) and writing music for the Cotton Club. Harold’s early hits included *Get Happy*, *Let’s Fall in Love* and *Stormy Weather*. He married a gentile wife, Anya Taranda, despite his parents’ objections. She died of a brain tumour in 1970 after many years in hospital. He never remarried and at his death was buried next to her in New York. His later songs included *Blues in the Night*, *That Old Black Magic* and *One for my Baby and One More for the Road*.

The inspiration for the melody for *Over the Rainbow* came suddenly to Harold on his way to Grauman’s Chinese Theatre as

he passed Schwab’s drugstore on Sunset Boulevard. He stopped driving and wrote the music onto the music paper he always carried with him. Later the last line was rewritten by his close friend, Ira Gershwin, who also speeded up the tempo.

Simon Schama feels *Over the Rainbow* has a very special significance for Jews. He believes it represents a deep longing to live in a place of safety, free from persecution. It is not just a beautiful song in a magic film. For many Jewish immigrants, America could be Oz, where the Shtetl was recreated in New York. Some Rabbis believe it refers to the Passover or the state of Israel.

I recently came across an article in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency about a Saturday Night Seder; it explored the writing of this song, which came out less than two months after Kristallnacht, by “...the sons of Jewish immigrants whose parents escaped the pogroms to a land they only imagined in their dreams. Hear the lyrics in this context and suddenly, the lyrics are no longer about wizards and Oz but about Jewish survival...”

David Dobson

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Countering Online Distortion

Our Head of Education and Heritage, Alex Maws, writes about how the AJR looks to research and partnerships to address the challenges of the digital world

In our efforts to promote teaching and learning about the Holocaust, the AJR and our partner organisations face several challenges, ranging from curriculum time pressures to lack of professional development opportunities for teachers. A recent report from UNESCO and the United Nations highlights yet another phenomenon which cannot be ignored: the prevalence of Holocaust distortion on social media platforms.

Holocaust distortion, which includes making false equivalencies, justifying or making light of the Holocaust and misattributing blame, has been a pernicious problem for decades, but its impact has multiplied exponentially as a result of online behaviour and the corporate policies of digital platforms.

The Unesco/UN report *History under Attack: Holocaust denial and distortion on social media* analysed 4,000 posts related to the Holocaust, on five major platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok and Twitter. Although content on most of these sites – with the exception of Telegram – is moderated, posts denying or distorting the Holocaust are still present. Perpetrators have learned to evade content moderation, by using humorous and parodic memes to normalise antisemitic ideas and make them appear mainstream.

Holocaust distortion is merely one manifestation of antisemitism, many other forms of which are also rampant

online. Another recent report, this one by the CST, recorded 786 anti-Jewish hate incidents nationwide from January to June 2022. On one hand it contained some positive news: the number of incidents of reported *online* antisemitism fell after the pandemic. On the other hand, the statistics prove that online abuse doesn't *stay* online. It can have horrible, violent, real world consequences as well.

This is the context in which the AJR is trying to make a meaningful impact on knowledge and understanding about the Holocaust. But we are not throwing our hands up in despair; in fact we are increasing our engagement with the digital world. We aim to serve as a counterweight to these negative trends and to amplify the important work of colleagues across the education and remembrance sector who are using digital platforms for good.


At our October 2021 event *International Forum: Connecting Next Generations*, one of the most memorable sessions was a discussion with survivor Lily Ebert and her 17-year old great grandson Dov Forman, who has amassed 1.9 million followers on TikTok by posting insightful and moving video clips of Lily speaking about her experiences during the Holocaust. One of our funding partners, the Huddersfield-based Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association, has similarly been creating content on that same platform, demonstrating that it can be a space for real learning and not just for the spread of disinformation.

We are also increasingly disseminating content from our own resources, such



as the Refugee Voices testimony archive and the UK Holocaust Map, on social media platforms. And because social media knows no national borders, we are making efforts through our international partnerships to combat these problems as well. We are supporting and encouraging the uptake of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) #ProtectTheFacts online campaign. In June, I chaired a discussion at the IHRA Education Working Group that was aimed at getting its 35 member countries to agree on a coordinated set of guidelines for the positive use of social media in teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

Holocaust related content is going to exist on social media whether we like it or not. Our task is to harness its viral potential to spread knowledge and understanding rather than distortion and antisemitism. I strongly believe that it can be done and am pleased that AJR is able to play an influential role in this effort.



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THE SCHOOL THAT ESCAPED THE NAZIS

In July the AJR and Insiders/ Outsiders co-presented a wonderful event at the Wiener Holocaust Library focusing on the unique story of the German-Jewish educator Anna Essinger.

Author Deborah Cadbury discussed her book on Bunce Court school – the school founded by Anna – which features moving first-hand testimony, letters, diaries and present-day interviews. The School That Escaped the Nazis is a dramatic human tale that offers a unique child's-eye perspective

on Nazi persecution and the Holocaust. It is also the story of one woman's refusal to allow her beliefs in a better, more equitable world to be overtaken by the evil that surrounded her.

We also heard from former Bunce Court pupil Ruth Boronow Danson, supported by her daughter Jacqueline Boronow Danson, speaking about her memories, based on her letters from the school. Also Evan Oliner, the grandson of survivor and former pupil, Sam Oliner, talked about how Bunce Court helped his grandfather.

The event can be watched again on the AJR's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1wl-el8HzA>



From L to R: Gabriele Foti (who lived in Bunce Court with her father, the teacher Ludwig Rosenberg), Evan Solinger, Monica Bohm Duchon, Ruth Boronow Danson, Jackie Danson, Deborah Cadbury, Dr Bea Lewkowicz, and Dr Toby Simpson

You can also read about the AJR blue plaque at Bunce Court on <https://ajr.org.uk/latest-news/tante-anna-remembered-at-bunce-court/>

REVIEW

THE SCHOOL THAT ESCAPED THE NAZIS

Deborah Cadbury
Two Roads

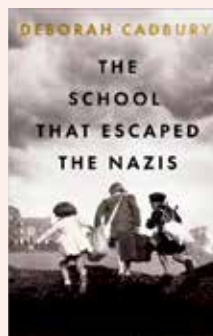
The herculean efforts and far-sighted vision of one woman were instrumental in helping her war-traumatised Jewish refugee pupils rebuild their lives after escaping Germany. So many remembered with great affection their headmistress "Tante Anna" and her dedicated team of well-chosen staff at Bunce Court, Kent, the school she founded in 1933.

Anna Essinger grew up as part of a large family living in the shadow of the Minster at Ulm, birthplace of Einstein. She absorbed progressive educational philosophy in the USA, studying at Wisconsin University, and corresponded with British radical educationalist AS Neil. But as life at home become increasingly difficult under the Nazis she devised a plan to smuggle the school she had founded at Herrlingen, Baden-Württemberg, to England. Daringly Anna, her nursing sister Paula and teacher Hanna Bergas gathered everyone together, heading for England where a dilapidated manor house near Faversham was turned into a boarding school.

Teaching here was inspirational and Anna proved compassionate, wise and far seeing, with little escaping her attention. But the school attracted the attention of inspectors whom Anna worked hard to appease and they soon admired the "spirit" of Bunce Court. Pupils blossomed, staging a wide range of inspirational plays and musical concerts.

More persecuted children arrived and money remained tight as many parents could no longer pay. Youngsters had to give practical help with housework, gardening, growing vegetables and looking after chickens. Anna worked tirelessly to extend the school and keep going as the European situation worsened. She also established a reception camp at Dovercourt, near Harwich for Kindertransport children, taking many into her school. But as bombing began, the buildings were requisitioned and the school had to be hurriedly packed up. With great difficulty alternative premises were found at Trench Hall, Shropshire. These proved dire with a great shortage of accommodation, and heating was almost impossible. Undaunted Anna pressed on, including plans to create more space.

Finally, after a long war, the school could at last move back to Bunce Court. Children who had survived concentration camps, in hiding



or displaced persons camps now joined too. They were often deeply traumatised, with sometimes challenging behaviour after tragically losing parents and families. Anna worked hard to minister to their needs, providing a loving home, bringing even those who initially spoke no English up to a good educational standard.

She acted as the central hub of information in tracing families and old pupils returned in their free time. There were many distinguished alumni such as artist Frank Auerbach, scientist Leslie Brent, cartoonist Gerard Hoffnung and Nuremberg trials interpreter Richard Sonnenfeldt.

The author traces the history of Anna's inspirational and unique efforts, interspersed with historical eye-witness accounts from pupils from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. This is extremely interesting although Nazi violence is very graphically described. As her 70th year approached Anna – who suffered from failing eyesight – closed the school in July 1948 and retired to premises in the grounds. Two schools are now named after her in Germany and she was always remembered with much affection by former pupils with whom she kept in touch for the rest of her life.

Janet Weston

REVIEWS

Cities of Refuge – German Jews in London and New York, 1935-1945
Lori Gemeiner Bihler
State University of New York Press, 2018

A couple of decades ago the author, who teaches history in the US, was doing a Ph. D. at Sussex University's Centre for German Jewish Studies. That enabled her to meet former refugees in London. As a child, Bihler had spent weekends with her grandparents who, like other refugees, had settled in 'Frankfurt on the Hudson' – Washington Heights, a district in north-west New York City. She compared the two groups – and wondered 'why German Jews in London felt pressure to appear British, but did not self-identify as such, while German Jews in New York looked and sounded German Jewish, but identified as American.'

Curious to find out more, Bihler scoured publications as well as letters and diaries, and this book is the result of that quest. She started by pouring 'through current and back issues of (where else?) the *AJR Information*' (as this publication was titled in earlier days). She concluded that the 'discrepancy' was more than the US being a 'melting pot:' it was the result of different immigration policies, and the way the war affected each country.

As a proportion of population, the UK's refugee intake was more generous than that of the US. But London granted only temporary visas, and it restricted the number of visas granted to Jews, not least during the critical years between 1938 and 1941, when they were desperate and still allowed to leave Nazi-controlled Europe. Moreover, until the war began, it limited the jobs refugees might take. That grudging attitude curbed refugees' initial enthusiasm, according to Bihler.

The US also throttled the number of refugees permitted to enter, but it granted them permanent immigrant visas, with the prospect of US citizenship, as well as free access to the labour market. For refugees, that gesture signalled that they had found a new home, says Bihler. In Britain, the war created fear of a Nazi invasion and consequent deportation. Internment, air raids and evacuations disrupted family life

and integration. Surrounded by anti-German sentiment, German Jews downplayed their German background. As trade with Germany ceased and food rationing came into force, it became hard to buy German food products, and so maintain a German Jewish table. Work restrictions hindered refugees from opening stores that stocked typically German Jewish fare. Meanwhile, refugee domestic servants and fostered children, separated from the German Jewish community, became used to typical British food such as porridge, and toast and marmalade.

Bihler says New York German Jews felt less need to disguise their origins. She speculates that this was because many worked within their own communities. Their lives were more stable: no internments, air raids and evacuations. Families were more likely to remain intact, apart from those men who joined up. A housing shortage obliged them to stay in the same apartments during the war. The elderly tended to live with their adult children and grandchildren, where they could speak German, and pass on aspects of German Jewish life. Typical German food was available in New York shops, partly because there was the gentile German community in Yorkville, on the east side. With limited exposure to 'typical' American homes, refugees adopted American food and furnishings slowly, says Bihler.

What refugees in London regarded as Britain's unspoken rules regarding understatement, modesty and politeness made them want to sound and appear English, according to Bihler. The widely distributed pamphlet *When You Are in England* urged refugees not to make themselves conspicuous by speaking loudly, and dressing and behaving ostentatiously. English Jews, who feared an upsurge in antisemitism, favoured that low-profile attitude.

While London's German Jews saw themselves as 'refugees,' and distinguished themselves from Anglo-Jews, those in New York called themselves 'immigrants,' and differentiated themselves from those of East European descent. They felt less need to hide their German background, for example by learning accent-free English or Anglicising their names. Bihler says they were more likely to speak German in their daily lives than refugees in London, and took pride in what they considered as their own refined

European tastes. Without the disruptions of internment and evacuation, and with few employment restrictions, New York refugees found jobs in offices and shops at a faster rate than their counterparts in London.

Bihler's book will help understand the background to that hybrid British identity – 'Insider Outsider.'
Martin Mauthner

NEVER TELL ANYONE YOU'RE JEWISH: My Family, the Holocaust and the Aftermath
Maria Chamberlain
Valentine Mitchell

The author was born in Poland just after the war, to parents who had both survived the holocaust, and in her book she tells of their experiences and family background. Her paternal grandfather, Marek Bieberstein, was an able man in an academic family, living in a city where many Jews worked in the professions. Waves of antisemitism had hit the city between the wars and, once the Nazis invaded in September 1939, life became increasingly impossible, with ever greater restrictions for Jews. Only her gifted uncle Ludwik had the foresight to leave.

Marek was immediately chosen for the unenviable position of first President of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Kraków, implementing Nazi orders. Resigned to his fate, he chose colleagues wisely, trying in vain to protect the community from persecution. But he was imprisoned after a bribery scandal and, when finally released, joined his family in their ghetto room. Ultimately he and his frail wife Mila perished, as well as their beautiful, vivacious daughter Lula, shot aged 21.

But it is their son Artur and his wife Jadwiga – Maria's parents – who are the real heroes of the book. Artur's profession as a chemist helped save him but he endured an extremely harrowing time in multiple concentration camps, finishing at Auschwitz at the end of the war. Then came a horrific death march which he miraculously survived against all odds, forcing him to spend three months recovering in a Red Cross Hospital.

Jadwiga also grew up in the Kraków area, a cheerful optimistic girl with many friends. During the war she worked at a glass factory until one day she was rounded up. After

horrific experiences she daringly escaped while boarding a 'resettlement train'. Ever-resourceful, she survived the next two-and-a-half years under an assumed Aryan identity in Warsaw, scratching a living and even hiding in sewers during raids.

She and her father Alfred Reiner – Maria's beloved grandfather – survived the war and returned to Kraków, where she married Artur in January 1946. In October their only child Maria was born and they lived under the communist regime until Alfred died. Her parents then found work in Edinburgh and Artur achieved some international distinction as a biologist. Jadwiga was astute and could always read people – qualities which saw her through the war. They had a difficult marriage and the shadow of the Holocaust hung over them. The front cover features a hauntingly beautiful picture of the couple on their wedding day. Maria explores the psychological damage their experiences caused, including the trauma they suffered. Throughout the story she questions objectively how and why things happened as they did.

There is also a moving account of her mother's cousin Kuba Weissman, a prodigiously talented musician and principal pianist in the Lwów Philharmonic Orchestra, tragically killed at 23. Meanwhile the Yad Vashem entry for Marek Bieberstein honours his integrity. The book is a tour de force with amazing detail – sometimes disturbing – but always interesting and it sheds real light on ghetto life and survival. Almost any one of the characters would merit a volume of their own.

Janet Weston

GERMAN JERUSALEM
Thomas Sparr
Haus Publishing, 2021

Like London's 'Finchleystrasse,' Jerusalem's Rehavia – Hebrew for 'the vastness of God' – is an area linked to the German-Jewish professionals who established homes there. First came the Zionists, whose idealism led them to emigrate to Palestine in the 1920s; the refugees followed, forced to flee Central Europe in the following decade.

Over a century ago, Rehavia was part of the Greek Orthodox Church's extensive landholdings around the holy

city. The Russian Revolution had left the church in financial difficulties, as its income from devout Russian pilgrims and others had dried up. The British conquerors, meanwhile, having blessed the idea of a Jewish homeland, were busy bringing up to date the landownership registries; that was part of their plan to develop what was then primarily countryside. They wanted to overcome the years of relative administrative neglect that preceded the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

The stage was set for a formal ceremony that took place in June 1922: with the blessing of the Greek patriarch Damian, but against the protests of the Roman Catholic Church and the Arabs, the land was auctioned off and passed into Jewish hands. An émigré architect, Richard Kauffmann, was tasked with designing a European-style 'garden suburb'; that would be more likely to attract immigrants from Central Europe than the narrow alleys of old Jerusalem. From Berlin he recruited as his assistant Lotte Cohn, asking her to bring out in her luggage copies of German building regulations. In that way, a barren neighbourhood became a leafy 'Grunewald im Orient' (the book's German title), populated exclusively by Jews. Until the 1960s, apparently, you could still see men wearing ties and jackets (the Jeckes, of course) in the streets or reading their newspapers in the cafés.

Thomas Sparr is a German writer who went to Israel in 1986 to spend a few years at the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem. His anecdotal *German Jerusalem* is the fruit

of that sojourn. He's like one of those highly-qualified 'blue' guides who know so much about London – and can make every detail interesting. Weaving together, in a pleasing straight-forward narrative, anecdotes based on books, letters, diaries and illustrations, he tells us mainly about the twentieth-century writers associated with Rehavia: those who visited the area, such as Hannah Arendt, and those who lived there or nearby, such as Amos Oz and Gershon Scholem, the scholar of Jewish mysticism. He spent 45 years there, and was among the immigrants who in 1925 founded a 'covenant of peace,' with the goal of a bi-national Palestine. It was dissolved in 1933, after riots had left dead more than two hundred. In that same year, schools stopped teaching German.

Inevitably, Rehavia has changed, and Sparr's work is something of an elegy. The area is today less secular, but still prosperous: one of Kauffmann's houses has become the prime minister's official residence. Part of congested down-town Jerusalem, some of Rehavia's original buildings have been extended, others demolished, to make way for bigger edifices. Perhaps the biggest change is the least obvious. If Jerusalem has become less German, Berlin has surely again become far more Jewish. And the new immigrants are not only those from the former Soviet Union. The lively, easy-going capital attracts Israelis, too. They are not bringing along building plans; they're importing Middle Eastern food and life-style.

Martin Mauthner



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OBITUARIES

MARINA SMITH née Fleming

Born: 16 November 1934, Kolkata

Died: 26 June 2022, Nottinghamshire



Marina Smith was the co-founder and first education director of the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Nottinghamshire, Beth Shalom.

Born in India, the-then Marina Fleming moved with her family to Ireland at the age of four. She attended Wesley College in Dublin, whose Methodist foundations set the tone for her life of faith. She moved to England at the age of 14 and trained as a teacher. She was head of religious education at Spondon Park Grammar School in Derbyshire when she met and married Rev Eddie Smith, the Methodist minister at Ilkeston.

In 1978 the couple founded a small Christian retreat and conference centre in nearby Newark. In 1991 they decided to take their two teenage sons on a trip to Israel, including a visit to Yad Vashem. This conscientious, thoughtful and considered Christian family were stunned and challenged by the information gathered during their journey. James and Stephen believed that their education of the Holocaust at school and university had been lacking as there had never been an opportunity to consider what the Holocaust might mean for them as individuals.

The trip changed their lives. Determined to help British children learn the truth of the Holocaust, the family decided to dedicate the former Christian retreat as a place of memorial and education about the Holocaust. Beth Shalom's declared aim was to combat racism, antisemitism and every kind of discrimination that leads to the exclusion of 'the other'.

Marina's background as a teacher made her perfectly placed to design the education programming at Beth Shalom, encouraging children from all over the UK to meet and talk to Holocaust survivors, and developing a singular speakers' programme of survivors, at the centre itself and around the country.

Recognised in the Queen's 2005 New Year's Honours List with an MBE for services to Holocaust remembrance and education, Marina stepped down from her formal role later that year. Yet she never really retired, but continued to host visiting survivor speakers, writing and responding to correspondence and providing love, wisdom, prayer – and afternoon tea.

Described by Kindertransport refugee Bob Rosner as "the engine in the boiler room keeping everything going", she was in every sense the spiritual mother of the Holocaust Centre.

In the words of her friend Raya Kalisman, founder of the Centre for Humanistic Education in Israel: "Marina was in charge of making the world better." At her death, Holocaust survivors and community leaders joined her family in paying tribute to the character and dedication of a woman who gave her life to this intention: of making the world better. She spent her last days surrounded by her family, husband, sons and seven grandchildren, who survive her.

Jo Briggs, using content from the National Holocaust Centre and the Jewish Chronicle.

RENÉE MOSBACHER (Barron/Bloom) née Brainin

Born: 18 May 1929, Vienna

Died: 2 May 2022, Manchester

My mother was born into a very educated and gifted family. One of her brothers founded and played the violin in the world-famous Amadeus String Quartet.

She herself was very proficient at playing the piano and enjoyed many musical afternoons. She also admitted that at many times in her life music kept her sane.

Sadly, by the age of 8 she has lost both her parents to illness. She always maintained that at least she knew where her parents were buried. She was taken in by her uncle and aunt and for the rest of her life regarded her cousins as her sisters.

In March 1938 she watched the Anschluss take place and would often tell of some of the dreadful scenes and near misses she and the family survived. They eventually escaped Austria owing to the fact that her uncles were abroad at a fur-buying fair for their furrier business in London and were able to obtain visas for everyone. The journey over to England was both terrifying and arduous but they arrived safely at Harwich in December 1938.

The family eventually settled in Hampstead Garden Suburb where my mother later met the friend of her sister's boyfriend – Jeffrey Bloom. They married in 1950 but sadly, after I and my brother Mark were born, our father passed away in 1954 at the age of 28. A few years later our mother met and married Isaac Barron, who brought with him our new brother and sister, Moishe and Aviva. The arrival of Shloime and Philip completed our family.

Renée and Isaac together set up Renée Barron Caterers. As our mother had had a life of being taken in and loved – she took in orphaned neighbours from earlier days – Michael and



Vivien. We also welcomed Ruth and Gloria into the family to learn about Judaism. The family bonds remain to this day.

When Isaac suddenly passed away on their 24th wedding anniversary our mother was left alone again. She was asked to be a cook at a new Yeshiva – Shaare Torah – which she took on with relish. When she met and married Leo Mosbacher and moved to Switzerland we were all thrilled for her. Tragically, after just 4 years, our mother was left on her own again when Leo passed away. She returned to England.

Ill health took its toll in recent years but her constant religious belief gave her the strength to stay positive and carry on. In recent years she was looked after by Barbara. We truly could not have done without Barbara and for that we thank her.

My mother had children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and even great-great grandchildren – a fantastic and wonderful legacy for a lady who led such a traumatic and eventful life.

Zena Jane Field



PROFESSOR MICHEL MILLODOT

**Born: 27 May 1938, Chelles, near Paris
Died: 28 October, 2021, Penarth, South Wales**

Like many of his generation, Michel Milodot's childhood experiences in wartime were traumatic and affected him greatly but he overcame them to build a happy marriage of 58 years and a distinguished academic career.

He was born Michel Miodovski, his grandparents having left Eastern Europe for France in the early 1900s. He was two when Germany invaded France and, in 1942, his father was arrested and transported to Auschwitz where he died shortly after. His mother, her sister Marie, Michel and his older sister Lili fled south to Vichy France, but were betrayed by the people who had promised to smuggle them to safety. Michel's mother's Jewish identity was discovered but her relationship to her sister and the children and their religious identity was concealed and Marie persuaded a guard to release the children to the care of a non-Jewish friend. His mother, his maternal grandparents and many other relatives did not survive. He spent the rest of the war hidden with various people and when France was liberated, returned to Paris to live with his aunt Marie who had also survived.

Michel trained as a technical optician in Paris, then studied Optometry in Toronto before moving to Britain to acquire a British qualification. There, he met Susan – love at first sight and soulmates for life. Opting for an academic career, he took his Masters in the USA and lectured in Montreal before

returning to America to take his doctorate at Brown University. In 1974, he became Professor and Head of the Department of Ophthalmic Optics at Cardiff University. Renaming it as the Department of Optometry to emphasise that it was a centre for scientific research as well as professional training, he turned a failing department into one of the best in the UK in both teaching and research. After 16 years, he moved to Hong Kong and achieved the same success with their Optometry Department. In 1996, he retired to Israel, where he assisted voluntarily at the new Department of Optometry at Hadassah College, advising on course content and continuing his research career. In 2004 he and Susan returned to Wales and settled in Penarth, to be closer to their children, Anne Marie, an ophthalmic nurse in Cardiff with three sons and André, a restaurateur in London.

Although he was not religious, Michel loved his cultural roots and Israel. His legacy is his considerable academic achievement – ground-breaking research, numerous journal articles and a *Dictionary of Optometry and Visual Sciences*, now in its 8th edition – and, of course, his family and many friends around the world. He is remembered as a loving husband, father and grandfather, and “a Gentle Giant of Optometry”.

John Minkes



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IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	TIME	IN PERSON MEETING	CO-ORDINATOR
Thursday 1 September	10.30am	North London	Ros Hart
Thursday 1 September	2.00pm	Pinner	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 7 September	12 noon	Edinburgh (Portobello Art Week visit and Lunch)	Agnes Isaacs
Wednesday 7 September	12 noon	Liverpool	Michal Mocton
Monday 12 September	2.00pm	North Manchester	Michal Mocton
Monday 12 September	2.00pm	Edgware	Ros Hart
Tuesday 13 September	12 noon	Ilford	Karen Diamond
Tuesday 13 September	1.30pm	Leeds	Michal Mocton
Wednesday 14 September	12.30pm	South Manchester	Michal Mocton
Thursday 15 September	2.00pm	Muswell Hill	Ros Hart
Thursday 15 September	12 noon	Wembley	Karen Diamond
Thursday 15 September	2.00pm	Glasgow Book Club	Agnes Isaacs
Monday 19 September	2.00pm	Bromley	Ros Hart
Tuesday 20 September	10.30am	Hendon	Karen Diamond
Thursday 22 September	10.30am	Bushey	Karen Diamond
Thursday 29 September	10.30am	Ealing	Ros Hart
Thursday 29 September	12 noon	Birmingham	Karen Diamond

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ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 5 September @ 10.30am	Get Fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	MEETING ID: 8524 688 9439
Tuesday 6 September @ 2pm	Michael Kushner – The life and times of Winston Churchill, part 2 https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86252665861	Meeting ID: 8625 266 5861
Thursday 8 September @ 4pm	Judy Russel – Ernest's Daughter https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81582702295	Meeting ID: 815 8270 2295
Monday 12 September @ 10.30am	Get Fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Monday 12 September @ 4pm	Jenni Calder – Finding the right words: living with poetry https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81628529931	Meeting ID: 816 2852 9931
Wednesday 14 September @ 2pm	AJR Book Club Discussion (no speaker) – The Lost Daughter by Elana Ferrante https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86295925500	Meeting ID: 8629 592 5500
Thursday 15 September @ 11.30am	Kinder Contact Project https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83301723847	Meeting ID: 833 0172 3847
Monday 19 September @ 10.30am	Get Fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Monday 19 September @ 4pm	September Quiz https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87085087158	Meeting ID: 870 8508 7158
Tuesday 20 September @ 2pm	Nick Lampert – The Amazing Story of Alexander Glasberg https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84214168774	Meeting ID: 8421 416 8774
Thursday 22 September @ 2pm	Debra Barnes and Tony Gray – Ways to keep your family story alive https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83072028270	Meeting ID: 8307 202 8270

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