



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

The importance of testimony

In a few days' time, the AJR will be holding a two-day conference at Lancaster House on the subject of Testimony. It is an important subject and the testimony forum could not be more timely.



The splendid entrance hall at Lancaster House

Recording the testimony of refugees and Holocaust survivors has been an important aspect of the AJR's work for some years now. The *My Story* project allows refugees and Holocaust survivors to publish their lives as books and later this month Nick Barlay will be starting a six-week Family History Writing Course to help people learn to write their family history.

Last September there was a launch event at the Wiener Holocaust Library to celebrate the publication of *Émigré Voices: Conversations with Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria*, a special issue of *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*. The book, just over 300 pages, consists of interviews with twelve refugees. Some, such as the actor Andrew Sachs (most famous for

playing the luckless Spanish waiter Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*), the writer Judith Kerr, Lord Claus Moser and Norbert Brainin, the violinist from the Amadeus Quartet, are very well known, others less so, but nevertheless have fascinating stories to tell.

The book is edited by Dr. Bea Lewkowitz, the director and co-founder of the AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive, together with Dr. Anthony Grenville, a familiar name to readers of the *AJR Journal*. All twelve interviews were conducted in 2001 and 2002 as part of an exhibition at the Jewish Museum (May-September 2002), *Continental Britons: Jewish Refugees from Nazi Europe*, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the AJR in 1941. This project had an important
Continued on page 2

SPRING ACTION

The first few months of 2023 have been incredibly busy for AJR and this is reflected in many of the activities covered in this month's magazine as well as in our very high media profile – see p.13.

The coming month will also be busy, with our International Forum on Holocaust Testimony on 19 & 20 April being an undoubted highlight.

Meanwhile we are preparing a special 'Coronation issue' for next month's magazine, which will also contain our 2022 Annual Report.

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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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The importance of testimony (cont.)

legacy. Because of the impact of these filmed interviews, the AJR funded a much larger project, the AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive (www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk) which now contains almost 300 filmed interviews with Jewish survivors and refugees who fled Nazi persecution.

It is important to put *Emigré Voices* and the larger AJR project in its historical context. During the 1980s and '90s there was a wave of interest in the Holocaust. Museums were opened, most famously the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC (1993), The Holocaust Exhibition at The Imperial War Museum (2000) and the Jewish Museum in Berlin (2001). There were countless novels about the Holocaust including *The White Hotel* (1981), *Schindler's Ark* (1982) and *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), and films such as *Sophie's Choice* (1982), *Shoah* (1985) and Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993).

At the same time a number of major video archives were founded. Perhaps the best known are The Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (1987) at Yale which contains more than 4,400 recorded testimonies and started as the Holocaust Survivors Film Project (HSFP) in 1979, and the USC Shoah Foundation (originally the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation) which recorded over 50,000 interviews with Holocaust survivors and other witnesses, founded by Steven Spielberg in 1994.

The dates are crucial. The *Emigré Voices* interviews in 2001-2 and the AJR's Refugee Voices project began at the highpoint of this new interest in the Holocaust and in the testimony of refugees and Holocaust survivors.

The timing is important for another reason. The interviewees in *Emigré Voices*, all born between 1912 and 1930, are sadly no longer with us. Few child refugees and survivors are still alive. It is increasingly urgent to record their accounts of their experience.

There is another issue which is more controversial. Some historians are concerned about the reliability of testimony. In his acclaimed book, *The Final Solution* (2016), the distinguished Holocaust historian David Cesarani raises this issue in his Introduction.

'Survivors may only be able to illuminate a tiny corner of the sprawling historical tragedy from their own experience, but they were there, so their every word is highly charged. However, the use of survivor testimony in educational and commemorative settings swerves comprehension in the direction of a small cadre whose experiences are unrepresentative.'

He goes on, 'they could only have experienced the Nazi years as children, teenagers or young adults. They observed the dilemmas of adults and can report on how things were for their mothers, fathers, grandparents and older relatives, but they cannot testify to what it felt like to be a middle-aged [or elderly] person confronted by persecution and unnatural death. ... They witnessed but did not feel the emotions of adults trying to protect children and loved ones, the despair and rage that accompanied helplessness and, ultimately, loss.'

Cesarani points out that commemorative events, especially those with survivors present, 'are naturally constructed to avoid sensitive and conflicted subjects. They steer around phenomena like the corruption of life in the ghettos and the moral degradation of camp inmates. They skirt awkward questions of forced cooperation with the German authorities or acts of premeditated revenge. They maintain a discreet silence over instances of voluntary infanticide, sexual exploitation amongst the Jews, rape and even cannibalism.'

It is worth remembering that most of the interviewees in the greatest Holocaust documentary, *Shoah*, were men. They didn't talk about rape, miscarriages or infanticide. Women survivors might have addressed very different issues. This is one reason why Gisella Perl's memoir, *I was a Doctor in Auschwitz*, is so revealing. Dr. Perl's account is full of stories of sexual violence, rape, prostitution, selling sex in exchange for necessities. This is very different from the famous accounts of famous male writers like Wiesel, Levi and Borowski, all young men when they were in Auschwitz.

Gender is important to the experience of Jewish refugees as well. In Judith Kerr's famous trilogy, she describes how her mother had to become the breadwinner, supporting the family 'with a series of secretarial jobs.' Her father, the famous theatre critic, Alfred Kerr, was too old and his English was not good enough for him to earn a living. The mother's frustrations

finally erupt in the third book in the series, *A Small Person Far Away*. 'I had to look after everybody else,' she tells her children. When her son, Max, says "'it wasn't easy for the rest of us either'", she cries out, "'But you were young...It didn't matter. You had all your lives to come. Whereas I... It should have been the best time of my life, and instead I spent it scraping pennies together...'" As I read these words I think of my grandmother, a German Jewish refugee, who fled to Britain in 1938, having to bring up two children on her own when she was almost exactly the same age as Judith Kerr's mother. I now realise it should have been the best time of her life as well.

Then there is the question of the reliability of memory. The interviewees in *Emigré Voices* were in their 70s and 80s. The youngest, Andrew Sachs, was 71 when he was interviewed. The oldest, Wolfgang Suschitzky, was 88. How reliable is the testimony of people in their 80s, trying to recall experiences and feelings from seventy years ago, when many of them were still young children?

It will be fascinating to hear how speakers at the AJR International Forum on Holocaust Testimony address these issues. Some of the most electrifying moments at the AJR's 2019 conference on the Kindertransport at 80 came when speakers broke with conventional wisdom. What is certain is that the AJR continues to make an important contribution to recording and discussing the vital issue of testimony, both of refugees, of Holocaust survivors and now of members of the Second Generation.

Remembering and Rethinking: The International Forum on Collecting, Preserving, and Disseminating Holocaust Testimonies will be held at Lancaster House, 19-20 April. Book via www.bit.ly/TestimonyConference

David Herman

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GERMAN PRESIDENT PAYS HER RESPECTS TO KINDER

The President of the German Bundestag, Bärbel Bas, visited the Kindertransport Memorial at Liverpool Street Station in February, to pay her respects to the Kinder of the first generation and Holocaust survivors.



Bärbel Bas, whose visit coincided with the 85th anniversary of the Kindertransport, laid a commemorative stone beside the famous statue, in the presence of Kinder and their families. Also in attendance were representatives from the AJR and World Jewish Relief, as well as Lord Eric Pickles, Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues of the UK Government.

The President commented: "We must never lose sight of the past, that is my firm conviction. When we talk about the future, we must be conscious of history. That is why it was so important

to me, amidst the many current political discussions, to also come here during my visit to London in order to remember the persecution of the Jews by Nazi Germany, and at the same time to thank the UK for having saved nearly 10,000 persecuted Jewish children from the prospect of being murdered. We remain indebted and immensely grateful to organisations such as the Association of Jewish Refugees and World Jewish Relief for the important contribution they continue to make today. I am deeply moved to stand at the Kindertransport memorial with some of the children who were rescued 85 years ago,

to talk with them, and to remember what happened to them."

AJR member Kurt Marx, who arrived from Cologne via Kindertransport in 1939, commented: "It seems incredible that I'm standing here, alongside the President of the German Bundestag, 85 years after being forced to flee my home, to seek refuge in Great Britain. In a climate of rising Holocaust distortion, it is so important that the first generation stand alongside today's German Government to remember the atrocities of Nazi genocide".

VIENNA EMBASSY PLAQUE

The AJR has unveiled a special commemorative blue plaque, at the British Embassy in Vienna, in memory of consular staff who courageously helped many thousands of Jews escape Austria following the March 1938 Anschluss.



The new AJR plaque at the British Embassy in Vienna

Dignitaries at the unveiling on 7 March included Her Excellency Lindsay Skoll CMG, British Ambassador to Austria, herself the grand-daughter of a German Kind, Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the Austrian National Council, the UK Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues Lord Pickles, Reverend Canon Patrick Curran, Chief Rabbi Schlomo Hofmeister and AJR Chairman Mike Karp, whose mother

came to Britain on a Kindertransport and who spoke at the unveiling ceremony.

This is the sixteenth plaque in AJR's commemorative scheme and only the second to be unveiled outside the UK.

The Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles said: "This plaque marks the courage of diplomats and consular officials who worked together in defiance of their instructions and in danger to their own

lives to provide travel documents and baptisms for Jews desperate to cross borders to safety. Without them, the AJR may never have existed and gone on to serve the Jewish community of Great Britain, as it does today, with pride, and to do such important work as a leading advocate for Holocaust refugees and survivors and their families."

Gemma Blane

ROYAL BUTLER ENTERTAINS

AJR members were spellbound by a most enlightening talk by William French – Butler to the Royal Family and Hollywood Stars – at a special lunch in February.

William French joined the Royal Navy and served in the Falklands conflict in 1982, being involved in rescuing veteran Simon Weston who suffered severe burns. He described movingly the bravery shown by colleagues and showed the medal presented to him by Margaret Thatcher.

He served on the Royal Yacht Britannia and told affectionately of life on board this beautiful vessel. He also showed the slightly eccentric sailor's uniform.

The first time he waited on Queen Elizabeth II he was very nervous, which she intuitively realised. Prince Philip had quite a robust nature. Whilst on the ship the family loved to relax and he described the then Prince Charles painting on board. William French thought the world of Princess Diana, and the black and white picture she allowed him to take of her on deck is a prized possession.



Former Royal butler William French

He moved on to work for others, including the Rothschild and Rothermere families plus Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

Janet Weston



Shelley's keep fit sessions take place on Zoom every Tuesday morning

SHELLEY'S KEEP FIT

AJR members have the opportunity to take part in three different online fitness classes a week, one of which is Shelley's Keep Fit, which takes place every Tuesday at 11am on Zoom.

Shelley is a qualified fitness instructor who tailors all her exercises to suit different levels, so they can even be done from the comfort of a chair.

"I was born in Manchester and spent

many years living in Israel and London," explains Shelley. "I found a passion for the fitness industry later in life, when I returned to Manchester. My focus is on good health and wellbeing through functional fitness, mobility, balance, flexibility, cardio and strength.

"As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, it brings me great pleasure to be able to work with AJR and support this fantastic organisation and its members."

Please email naomi@ajr.org.uk if you would like to receive the log-in details and recordings of the classes.

IN CONVERSATION

On Sunday 23 April the broadcaster Jonathan Freedland will be live in conversation with Auschwitz and Terezin survivor Lydia Tischler.

Lydia was 16 when she arrived as one of 'The Boys' from Prague. After studying nursing and teaching, she trained in psychotherapy under Anna Freud, becoming a pioneer in the field. Her career has touched the lives of thousands and, at 93 she is still deeply involved in the profession as a practitioner and a teacher.



At the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood at 3pm Jonathan will talk to Lydia about her remarkable life, and ask how the trauma and loss of her early childhood determined its trajectory.

Their conversation will be followed by a recital of music that was performed and composed in Terezin, the Czech garrison town transformed by the Germans into a propaganda "show camp", where numerous acts of inspiring courage and



resistance provided a cultural lifeline to prisoners such as Lydia.

For more information contact Antony Lishak at antony@learningfromtherighteous.org or book via Eventbrite <https://tinyurl.com/mr2kxjx6>

NOTE FROM EDITOR: A profile of Lydia Tischler will appear in the May issue of the AJR Journal.

DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON'S LETTER FROM ISRAEL



WHO IS TAKING OVER THE ASYLUM?



When Binyamin Netanyahu emerged victorious from Israel's last general election no one imagined

the trail of dissent and devastation that he was about to launch upon the unsuspecting populace. It is common belief that the salient motive behind his current political approach is to do all he can to stymie the judicial process in which he is standing trial for a series of offences, primarily bribery, fraud and breach of trust.

Till now no one, not even a former president (Moshe Katzav) or a prime minister (Ehud Olmert), was considered as above the law, so they were punished in accordance with the law (i.e. jailed). For some unaccountable reason Netanyahu wants to avoid that fate and, it seems, will stop at nothing to achieve it.

And so, as Netanyahu struggled to form a cabinet, the country witnessed the wholesale dismantling of one government ministry after another to appease his coalition partners. We watched as entire chunks of

officialdom were handed over to ever-more extremist elements.

Who could have imagined that a blustering bully like Itamar Ben-Gvir, who delights in provoking dissent and disorder and claims to represent extremist right-wing orthodox Jewry, could be put in charge of the Ministry of Homeland Defence? Or that another representative of the same party, Bezalel Smotrich, could be made Minister of Finance as well as being given part of the Ministry of Defence, bringing him into direct conflict with the actual Minister of Defence, Yoav Galant? It sounds crazy, but that is what was done. The horrendous consequences can be seen around us currently, with the wholesale acceleration of violence on all sides. Ben-Gvir and Smotrich are only part of the messianic elements that seek to repress the Palestinian population and rebuild the Jewish Temple. Like others who hold similar views, they seem intent on sowing discord and hatred at every turn, causing many people, myself included, to fear for Israel's future.

The so-called judicial reforms that Netanyahu is in the process of introducing, in a legislative blitz that shows total disregard for the rule of law and the principle of checks and balances, are another obvious device to prevent his trial from taking its course and his being convicted (or even exonerated).

Israel's Declaration of Independence

stresses the equality of all its citizens, irrespective of gender, ethnic identity, or religion. The current reforms are designed to remove the restrictions on discrimination, whether they be against women (in accordance with the orthodox version of Judaism) or non-Jews (ditto). Israel's founders were secular Jews who were prepared to tolerate the views and practices of orthodox Jewry, but now that segment of the population has managed, by dint of its high birth rate, to get a foothold in the machinery of government, syphoning-off huge sums of the national budget to its constituents, most of whom do not contribute to the economy or serve in the military. The situation looks bleak for Israel's secular character, and the current wave of demonstrations proves that no matter how great the government's majority in the Knesset, the general population is not prepared to accept the proposed changes without demur or let the extreme fringe dictate the future of our children and grandchildren.

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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.

ZIGI SHIPPER z"l

After reading the lovely obituary to Zigi Shipper by his daughters (March) I thought I would add that, having presented British Empire Medals to a number of Holocaust survivors in Hertfordshire, the presentation to Zigi was something I will never forget. He was full of humour and fun and when I pinned the medal on his jacket he said that he would never take it off.

Some months later I met Zigi and his delightful wife Jeanette at another Holocaust event and asked her if he had indeed ever taken the medal off. She replied that she had found it pinned to his pyjamas...!

True or not, Zigi was a real character and I am not at all surprised that meeting him had such an impact on Prince William. He certainly made an impression on me and the impact he surely had on so many young people, along with his message not to hate, will be his everlasting legacy.

Robert Voss CBE CStJ,
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

RECLAIMING CITIZENSHIP

Following the article on German passports (March) I am also able to give similar pro bono guidance to the families of former Czech refugees and their descendants, seeking to reinstate their Czech citizenship. Readers may be interested to complete an online survey for the EU Passport Project, hosted by the Jewish Historical Society, on how they and their families may feel about applying for Austrian, German and other European citizenships. The survey can be found at:

<https://www.jhse.org/passports>.

Simon Albert, London NW3

Thank you for the articles about acquiring German citizenship and passports. In common with many others, my father would not have anything German in the house – not even a pencil made in Germany. I remember my emotional shock when I first saw a Rabbi driving a Mercedes!

I obtained my citizenship and, in common with your other correspondents, the personnel at the AJR and German embassy were most helpful. However, it was in the context of the pernicious antisemitism of Corbynistas and the xenophobic jingoism of Brexit that convinced me that I had a duty to my sons to offer them alternatives for their future. I am not sure without this generational obligation I would have made the choice.

Arthur Oppenheimer, Hove

I read with interest the article *A Funny Debate*, which stirred in me so many mixed emotions of the time in 2002 when I finally became a naturalised German citizen.

I was born a Peruvian citizen, yet during my parents' first sixteen stateless years in Perú, their only identification was a Peruvian alien card known as *carnet de extranjería* . They were much relieved when in September 1953 their German citizenship was reinstated and they soon also obtained passports. In 1963 my father took me to the German Embassy in Lima so that I would be present when he formally requested German citizenship for me too. The consul asked me some questions and informed me that when I became a German citizen, I would have to renounce my Peruvian citizenship. I love Perú, the country of my birth where I was very happy, and so for the first time

in my life I stood up to my father and refused this offer of citizenship, much to his and the consul's disbelief.

In 2000 my daughter had a work opportunity in Barcelona but found that she could not obtain a work permit for Spain through her birth passport. I began considering the practicality of requesting German citizenship to help her. By then I understood that having more than one passport was not a bad idea. It was a hard decision; nevertheless, I wrote to the German consulate in Boston, MA, which was the closest to our home. We were both summoned to the consulate and were shown a copy of a letter written in 1963 by the German consul in Lima, in which he informed his office in Germany that I had refused to accept German citizenship. I was stunned, but marvelled at the enduring German efficiency of *Ordnung muß sein* (there must be order). This time I was asked, quite politely and reasonably, to explain my change of heart nearly forty years later and I explained our circumstances.

Last April my daughter and I were once again invited to the consulate where we became German citizens and were then invited to a celebratory lunch. I believe my father would have been pleased.

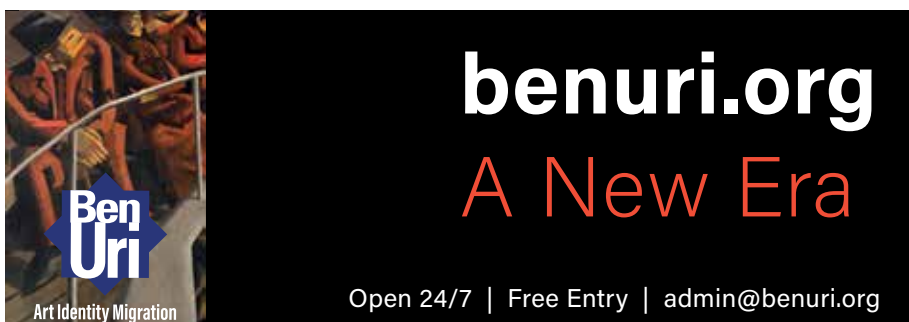
Gaby (née Klehmann) Winter, London NW11

HANNAH ARENDT

Having just read the March edition of the *AJR Journal* I am particularly impressed with David Herman's article on Hannah Arendt. What he writes is very unfashionable, and there are people who would be quite upset by it, but what he writes is accurate and needs saying.

Michael Levin, London SE23

David Herman's article reminded me of something odd that my late mother once said. She and her elder sister came to England in 1935, on domestic visas, from Kassel, Germany. Their younger brother Willi followed them but then promptly emigrated to the USA.



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Fifty years later, on returning from a visit, she said: "I was annoyed when I heard Willi refer to himself in public as a 'German Jewish refugee'. We were not German. We were not Jewish. And I for one never regarded myself as a refugee. Nobody forced me to leave. I left of my own free will."

I understood why Willi might have described himself as such for the sake of simplicity. I also understood my mother's first two objections (their family acquired the Roman Catholic faith in 1911 and Czech citizenship in 1918). I have always struggled to understand her last objection. It was literally correct but it defied reality. Perhaps that was the point.

Cameron Woodrow, Birmingham

NOT THE HYPHEN

We were interested to see the letter from Marion Koppel (January) about the use of the name 'The Hyphen' for a next generation group, and Debra Barnes' reply. We are all daughters of members of the original Hyphen. Marion is now 99 and it was sad to see that her well-made points were not really heard.

We wrote to the AJR supporting Marion and it was suggested that one or two of us meet the committee of the new group. We welcomed this opportunity to make these points:

- We welcome the AJR setting up this new group for the third generation and wish it all the best for the future. We appreciate the work the AJR continues to do.
- We grew up with the Hyphen. Our parents met and socialised there. They developed a huge circle of friends that lasted their lifetimes.
- Although the *AJR Journal* referred to the original Hyphen as the 'AJR youth club', the Hyphen was an independent organisation that ran from 1948 to 1968. The Hyphen committee papers are in the Wiener Holocaust Library and the catalogue record states 'for the members it fulfilled a very important function by

giving them a sense of belonging during a difficult period of settling in to a new society'.

Three surviving members, now in their 80s and 90s, have asked us to represent them. They say:

- "The name has a very special meaning which does not apply at all today and is a misnomer for the new youth group." *Marion Koppel*
- "The Hyphen was more than a club and more like a family. Members had all faced traumatic experiences including hearing the fate of their loved ones. I think it is wrong and insensitive not to give the new club a new name." *Barbara Ashley*
- "The use of the name Hyphen for a new group by the AJR would feel like removing part of my history." *Erwin Plaut*

We understand that the Hyphen name is currently being used 'as a tribute to our parents and grandparents.' We are confident that having had time to consider their views, the Committee will listen to the voices of the original members and find a more suitable name.

Debora Singer, Helen Singer, Ruth Teddern, Sue Teddern and Monica Gort

I want to thank this group for bringing my attention to the fact The Hyphen was a separate entity to The AJR, something I misunderstood from the article in the 1949 Journal which states "The Youth Club has adopted the name The Hyphen." Our committee will now use the title, AJR Next Generations 3G and we look forward to welcoming the third generation to our future events and activities.

Debra Barnes, AJR Next Generations Manager

THE WIZARD OF OZ

You may remember my article on the Jewish connection with the Wizard of Oz (September 2022). I have just discovered that the original singer was a Jewish lady, Bea Wain, who in 1939 was a major Big Band singer and apparently more famous

LOOKING FOR?

DR. GUSTAV OPPENHEIM

Dr. Anthony Ness is a Canadian researcher at the University of Alberta, working on the biography of a German neurologist from Frankfurt a/M, Dr. Gustav Oppenheim (1882-1937). Dr. Ness seeks information from people with knowledge of Dr. Oppenheim or his wife Alice (Liesel) Oppenheim (1889-1975) who later resided at the AJR Heinrich Stahl House in London.

amness@ualberta.ca



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than Ella Fitzgerald. She died in 2017, aged 100.

You can hear the song online but with illustrations from the film. Other songs are available with Bea singing. *David Dobson, Cambridge*

UNSER/UNSERE AMERIKA

It's amazing how a grammar mistake can find its way even into just two foreign words! In the March issue there is a review for a book entitled *UNSERE AMERIKA*. However, 'Amerika' is neuter, i.e. 'das Amerika', and therefore it should have said 'UNSER AMERIKA'.

Margarete Stern, London NW3

NOTE FROM EDITOR: *We double checked the title of the book with the publisher before printing the review and were informed that the error was intentional. Perhaps one will have to buy the book to find the reason.*

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

The Impressionist Berthe Morisot struggled, like so many female artists, to be taken seriously because she was a woman. Her paintings were often smugly derided as being full of “feminine charm” by male critics, for their elegance and lightness.

In 1890 Morisot wrote an irascible entry in her notebook: “I don’t think there has ever been a man who treated a woman as an equal and that’s all I would have asked for, for I know I’m worth as much as they.”

Constrained like many of her gender by the times in which she worked, Morisot, like her fellow Impressionist Mary Casatt, painted the domestic life familiar to her; family, children, women and flowers. She preferred the intimate to the public images of society embraced by contemporaries like Renoir, or the munificent grandeur of Monet’s gardens. Critics dismissed the lightness of her brushwork as “effleuré” (to touch lightly). But the flowers that often hovered in the background of her paintings were powerful metaphors for womanhood, and suggested the passage of time which she vainly longed to hold back. Taught by Corot, her subjects included her daughter Julie and her beloved sister Edma. She herself had sat for Edouard Manet, whose drawings inspired her and who painted glamorous portraits of her in ball gowns. She married his brother Eugene Manet.

This spring **Berthe Morisot – Shaping Impressionism** at the **Dulwich Picture Gallery** is the first major exhibition of her work since 1950. Partnering the Paris Musée Marmottan Monet, the gallery has collated over 30 of the artist’s major works, many seen here for the first time. They trace the routes of her connection with 18th century culture, but new research reveals the original vision which set her apart from her predecessors and from her contemporaries.

What distinguishes her is a sense of fleeting delicacy and intrepid honesty, which also betray her initial love of drawing. Her honeymoon portrayal of her

husband, *Eugène Manet on the Isle of Wight*,

gives an introspective profile of a bearded man in a straw hat gazing out beyond colourful flowerpots to the women passing and beyond them the sea. And yet, while this portrait is totally in tune with Impressionist convention, *Apollo Revealing his Divinity to the Shepherdess Isse* (after the rococo version by Francois Boucher’s 1750 original) is a winsome portrayal with its mythic, restless landscape of swirling aquamarine colours.

This is in complete contrast to her more strident *At the Ball*, in which she paints a striking lady with flowers in her upswept dark hair, wearing the sort of ball gown in which she herself was painted by Manet. But in this case her subject shows a troubled, introspective glamour, the pallor of her dress upstaged by the brilliant colours of the floral background.

The portrait of Morisot’s daughter Julie with her greyhound Laerte, shows a young girl in a blue dress with long, blonde hair starting up suddenly from her sofa or chaise longue. This painting is closer in style to her Apollo painting in its immediacy, its sense of now, one of the hallmarks of Impressionism. Her ethereal painting *Resting*, shows a young sleeping nude girl, eyes closed, flowing red hair, red lips parted, with her head on a cushion reflecting the colours of her lips and hair and evoking the passive innocence of sleep.

Her self-portrait is a complete contrast. Her grey hair tied back and high-necked jacket come as a bit of a shock. It is a rather masculine, almost military self



Eugène Manet on the Isle of Wight, by Berthe Morisot, 1875

view, in which she appears to be turning towards us unaware of our presence. The beauty which caught the eye of contemporaries who sought to paint her is all but gone; reflecting perhaps the way in which she wanted to be seen; as a serious woman artist outnumbered by men.

In 1874 Morisot joined the so-called “rejected” Impressionists in their first exhibition, which included Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Alfred Sisley, at the studio of the photographer Nadar.

Yet it was not all doom and gloom for women artists of this era. She was described by art critic Gustave Geffroy in 1894 as one of “les trois grandes dames” (the three great ladies) of Impressionism, with Marie Bracquemond and Mary Cassatt. Morisot herself was descended on her mother’s side from the Rococo painter of the *ancien regime*, Jean-Honoré Fragonard.

Berthe Morisot; Shaping Impressionism at the Dulwich Picture Gallery until September 10.

Annely Juda Fine Art

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

CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Northern Lights

Judith Hayman reports on the formal launch of a group seeking to enrich and personalise Holocaust education throughout the North of England.

'The first generation have done a wonderful job but they cannot continue forever! We aim to manage the transition from first to second generation.'

This call for action came from Northern Holocaust Education Group, NHEG, founder Ernie Hunter speaking at the group's launch at Manchester Jewish Museum in February.

During its first year NHEG has held over 118 sessions for more than 7,300 people. The year started with the group having only three accredited speakers. It now has six. Ernie told me: "Feedback from our hosts has been uniformly positive. And with about 95 percent of our events being to non-Jewish audiences the impact in the wider community has been significant."

NHEG has provided keynote speakers at Holocaust Memorial Day, HMD, events in St Annes, Bolton, Cheshire, Salford and Aberystwyth. Its speakers have also visited schools, colleges, universities, The Prince's Trust, and remand hostels. The group now aims to 'extend its geographical footprint' and to increase the number of accredited speakers.

NHEG-accredited volunteer speakers, including first, second and third generations, tell their family stories of the Holocaust in an engaging and age-appropriate manner. Ernie says: "NHEG's aim is to spark and inspire our audience to stand up against hatred, discrimination and persecution of any kind."

NHEG works closely with its sister national charity Generation 2 Generation(G2G), which is London-based. It also works cooperatively with



NHEG chairman Ernie Hunter with NHEG founder members Tomi Komoly, Judith Hayman, Leah Burman, Hannah Goldstone and Fran Horwich

other Holocaust charities such as the Holocaust Education Trust, as well as the AJR, whose Head of Volunteer Services, Fran Horwich, was instrumental in setting up NHEG.

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman sent a congratulatory message to NHEG, speaking of the group's "huge achievement". He said: "We are so thrilled to be partnering with you as we embark together on an important journey of Holocaust education and remembrance."

Manchester Jewish Representative Council's Chief Executive Marc Levy and Education Officer Jeremy Michaelson were also present and actively involved in working with the new group.

Ernie stressed that NHEG speakers seek to 'enrich' the history of the Holocaust by offering varied family stories.

Third generation Holocaust educator Hannah Goldstone, whose grandfather, Martin Wertheim, came to the UK on the Kindertransport, emphasized the importance of "bringing the personal connection to the table." She said: "Our talks are something you cannot get from a textbook."

First generation survivor Tomi Komoly was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1936 and survived the Holocaust with his mother. His father and two-thirds of his relatives perished. He was inspired to

speaking about his boyhood experiences after hearing Polish survivor Zigi Shipper, who sadly passed away recently.

Although Tomi appreciated that first generation speakers were "a rapidly diminishing force" he also believed "the delivery of parents' stories is only a fraction less powerful". He added: "There is no comparison between a history lesson compared to someone giving live examples."

Ernie concluded: "The need continues to counter antisemitism and other racisms and to challenge Holocaust denial and distortion."

The event was chaired by founder NHEG member Leah Burman. Leah's Polish-born father survived three concentration camps and forced marches. Her mother was in a Russian labour camp during World War II.

NHEG are now looking for more children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors to join the group and make a difference to young lives in particular. They would also like to reach more areas outside the Jewish neighbourhoods. They also need help with website development, fundraising, and PowerPoint and technical support.

To find out more contact Ernie at administration@northernholocausteducationgroup.org.uk

Our final trees

In 2021 – our 80th anniversary year – the AJR began a nationwide tree planting project to mark places that were important to Jewish refugees who found sanctuary here during and after the war and to pay tribute to their immense contribution to British society. Here are the stories of some of our final trees.



Lea Primary School in Wiltshire

LEA, WILTSHIRE

Tree planted at Lea Primary School by Tanya Novick in honour of her mother Marion Lesser

Born in 1925 in Berlin, Franziska Marion Lesser arrived in 1939 via Kindertransport. She was then evacuated with her school to Lea where she was taken in by the Ford family and became a pupil at the village school. Marion, whose parents were murdered in Auschwitz, stayed in Lea for two years before returning to London where she volunteered for the Women's Land Army.

Her daughter Tanya and other relatives joined members of the Ford family, who they had never met, for the tree planting ceremony.

In her testimony, recorded for the AJR's Refugee Voices archive, Marion said: "My headmaster at Lea was Mr Silverstone. He was a very kind, understanding man who had an impossible situation, because he had continental Jewish children and the village people didn't accept us very well. As far as they were concerned, we were Germans or Austrians, so we were the enemy. I think there were 16 of us from Austria and Germany and we used to gabble away in German until the headmaster separated us and put us into English speaking families, where we soon learned English."



Coronation Gardens in Dudley



Highams Park in Waltham Forest

WALTHAM FOREST, LONDON

Tree planted in Highams Park by Gretta de Ferry in honour of her father Francis Deutsch

Francis came in July 1939 on the Kindertransport at the age of 13. He spent his first days a few hundred yards away from Highams Park, in Crealock Grove. Daughter Gretta has a photo from that time and reports that Francis was able to identify the house when he revisited the area in 2020, some months before his death in Whipps Cross later that same year.

Gretta herself came to live and work in Waltham Forest in 1985. She worked for the local authority for almost 35 years and still lives in the south of the borough. Her sister also lived locally for many years and their parents were regular visitors.

Speaking at the tree planting ceremony Gretta said: "I wish this episode could be confined to history, but it's not. Today people continue to flee persecution, conflict and violence. My father was welcomed with kindness, justice and compassion and this remains as vitally important today as it was then."

DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS

Tree planted in Coronation Gardens by Lord Ian Austin in honour of his father Fred Austin

The tree planting ceremony took place immediately after the town's official Holocaust Memorial Day service. Lord Austin was joined by the Mayor, the leader of the council, the Lord Lieutenant, AJR representatives and – most important of all – Holocaust survivor Eva Clarke BEM and some children who came to the UK as refugees from Syria and Afghanistan.

At the ceremony Lord Austin – whose father Fred came via Kindertransport from Ostrava and went on to become the youngest Headmaster in the UK – said: "When we

A GREAT MATHEMATICIAN

Exactly 80 years ago work began on building the world's large-scale computer to run at electronic speed. ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator And Computer) was commissioned by the U.S. Army, who needed it to calculate complex wartime ballistics tables, and was designed by the Hungarian physicist John von Neumann.

listen to you and other survivors tell us how their families were torn apart, we learn that the Holocaust didn't start with gas chambers and the industrial slaughter of six million people, but with hatred being spread, communities being divided and religious freedoms being restricted.

"So when people try to divide our diverse, harmonious multi-faith community on the basis of what people look like, where they were born or how they worship, remember that it is because of who we are as a people and what we are as a country that British people – people from towns like ours – stood up to the Nazis to fight for freedom, democracy, tolerance and fairness – and provided a home to refugees fleeing persecution."

The citizens of Dudley have always worked to help those in need and build a tolerant community and the tree planting coincided with the launch of a project and exhibition about refugees that have been welcomed to the town and the contribution they have made there.

"This is who we are in Dudley and this is what we do," concluded Lord Austin.

He was born **János von Neumann** in Budapest in December 1903 and the honorific of 'von' in his name derives from the fact that nobility was bestowed on his father, who was a lawyer for a large bank. John was a child prodigy with an unbelievable memory but his path in life followed a similar pattern to other refugees: from Hungary to Germany and thence to America. Nothing very unusual there: his private life was not unusual either. He married his childhood sweetheart, divorced, married a second time, and emigrated to America with his new wife until his death at the early age of 54.

It was said of him that he was 'The man from the future.' 'One of the greatest geniuses in human history.' 'He had the fastest brain on the planet'.

His achievements include creating the first ever programmable computer and inventing Game Theory. In the 1950s he predicted that the Earth was warming.

Robert Oppenheim begged him to join the Manhattan Project, which produced the first nuclear weapons during WW2. Von Neumann was instrumental in inventing the American atom bomb, together with Szilard and Wigner. He then

worked on developing the hydrogen bomb, with Edward Teller, and also the first intercontinental ballistic missile.

Enrico Fermi once told one his students: "You know how much faster I am in thinking than you are? That is how much faster von Neumann is compared to me".

His friend, Wigner (a Nobel prize winner, said): "I have known many intelligent people in my life, such as Leo Szilard, Edward Teller or Einstein, but none of them had a mind as quick or as acute as 'Jancsi'. I have often remarked this in the presence of those men and no-one has ever disputed it".

Having had to flee from Hungary, he has now been recognised there by having a university named after him as well as a secondary school in Kecskemet. Hungary is also holding a 'Year of Von Neumann' to honour him.

Colleagues who knew Einstein and Neumann said: Neumann had the sharper mind, and yet it is astonishing and sad, how few people have heard of him. He deserves a wider recognition, I believe.

Janos Fisher



Postal stamps issued in Hungary and the USA to commemorate John von Neumann

ARNHEM LIFT

The 2013 edition of *Arnhem Lift*

Our January 2023 issue carried an announcement from the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek, Holland, about an exhibition devoted to the Jewish refugees from Nazism who fought with the British 1st Airborne Division at the Battle of Arnhem. Dr Anthony Grenville presents an account of that battle by a refugee combatant.

Louis Hagen's *Arnhem Lift: Diary of a Glider Pilot* tells the story of the author's experiences during the Battle in September 1944. The feats of arms performed by 1st Airborne Division, notably the defence of the bridge over the Lower Rhine by a small force of paratroopers under Lieutenant-Colonel John Frost, passed almost immediately into legend; in the characteristically British mythology of heroism in defeat, Arnhem came to rank next to Dunkirk, and is one of the best-known land battles fought by British forces in the war. Hagen's book, published in January 1945, barely three months after Operation Market Garden, rapidly became a bestseller.

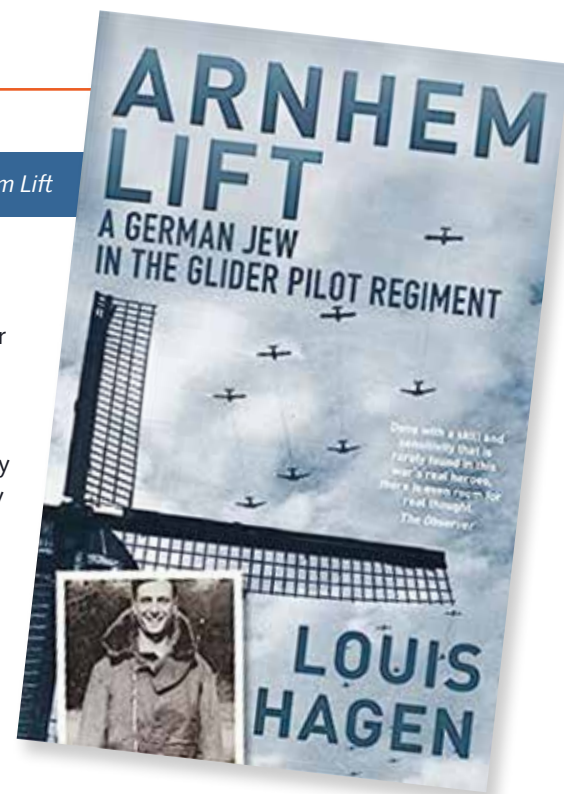
Hagen was born in Potsdam in 1916 and fled to Britain in 1936. He was accepted into 1st Airborne, changed his name to Lewis Haig, and trained as a glider pilot. It was in that capacity that he took part in the desperate defence of the pocket at Oosterbeek, west of Arnhem, by lightly armed and heavily outnumbered British troops. His account is divided into eight sections, each covering one of the eight days from the glider lift on Monday, 17 September, to Monday, 24 September 1944, when British paratroopers made their escape from the Arnhem area, in Hagen's case by swimming across the Rhine.

Arnhem Lift gains much of its impact from its simplicity and directness, giving it the immediacy and authenticity of a day-by-day report on a military action. Although Hagen had never written anything before, he completed *Arnhem Lift* with remarkable speed. His publisher described the process in a 'Prefatory Note': 'When

the author arrived home after fighting right through the Arnhem action, everybody wanted to hear his story. After telling it several times, he began to find the repetition irksome. So he spent the rest of his leave writing it all down, while the events were still vivid in his mind. Any more friends who asked him for the story would get a type-written document!' Hagen's slice-of-life realism takes the reader straight to the heart of the battle experience. *Arnhem Lift* is written from the perspective of the fighting man at the front; it records the apparently spontaneous reactions of an ordinary soldier: 'This is the story of one man's battle. It doesn't purport to describe the action as a whole. It gives instead a series of ultra-vivid images and experiences. Like real life, it is inconsequent and surprising.'

The book begins by catapulting the reader into the start of the action, the departure of the gliders for Arnhem: 'We knew it was coming off this time as the first glider lift had left on Sunday morning. We were waiting in the mess for the tug pilots to return and give us the Gen. All seemed well. They had found the L.Z. – Landing Zone – quite easily, with no flak to complain about.' The narrator presents himself as an anonymous representative of a clearly defined collective, the crews of the Glider Pilot Regiment who transport the men and equipment to Arnhem. Although he employs idiom of the military, eg 'Gen' (information), he is at pains to explain to civilian readers the pilots' terminology. He makes frequent use of British slang and colloquialisms: his comrades are 'blokes', the pilot who tows their glider across the Channel gives them a 'wizard ride'. He refers to his comrades as an insider who knows them so well that he does not need to introduce them: he acts as second pilot to 'Mac' (Sergeant Mac Wheldon), while other men are known simply by their first names or nicknames ('Smithy' or 'Fearless Frank').

This all adds credence to the note placed immediately after the title of his book: 'Anyone who went to Arnhem could have told this kind of story.' But Hagen, a Jew from Germany who had been in Britain for only eight years, was anything but a typical British soldier, although he preferred to depict the British around



him as if he were one of them. We learn almost nothing about his German-Jewish past, while his perfect command of English adds to the impression that the narrator is British. Only a few small details, relating to his knowledge of German, betray his background: he can understand what enemy troops within earshot are saying, and proves useful in the interrogation of German prisoners; with difficulty, he convinces his hungry comrades to eat Dutch preserves, 'Continental concoctions' in their view, which he, as a 'Continental' himself, knows to be eminently edible. Otherwise, Hagen appears to be accepted without reservation by his fellow soldiers. There is no national, cultural, or linguistic distance between him and his comrades; his narrative perspective could be theirs.

The superiority of that British fighting collective over the Germans forms one of the principal themes of the book. The Germans' low morale and reluctance to fight is evident in the failure of an SS Panzer Division to wipe out the vastly inferior British force; instead, Hagen and his comrades repeatedly repel their attacks, with only a hand-held anti-tank weapon at their disposal. The British troops maintain their discipline and order under extreme pressure, fighting with selfless solidarity as part of a unit that believes in its collective cause. Their quiet, understated heroism, reflecting their inner confidence in their superiority, infuses the book with a spirit of optimism that turns defeat into a stage on the path to ultimate victory.

Hitting the headlines

The AJR has received unprecedented amounts of media coverage in recent months, with our members, events and activities all sharing the spotlight.

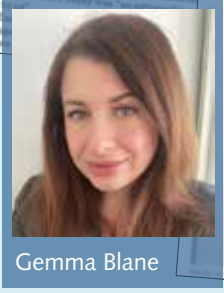
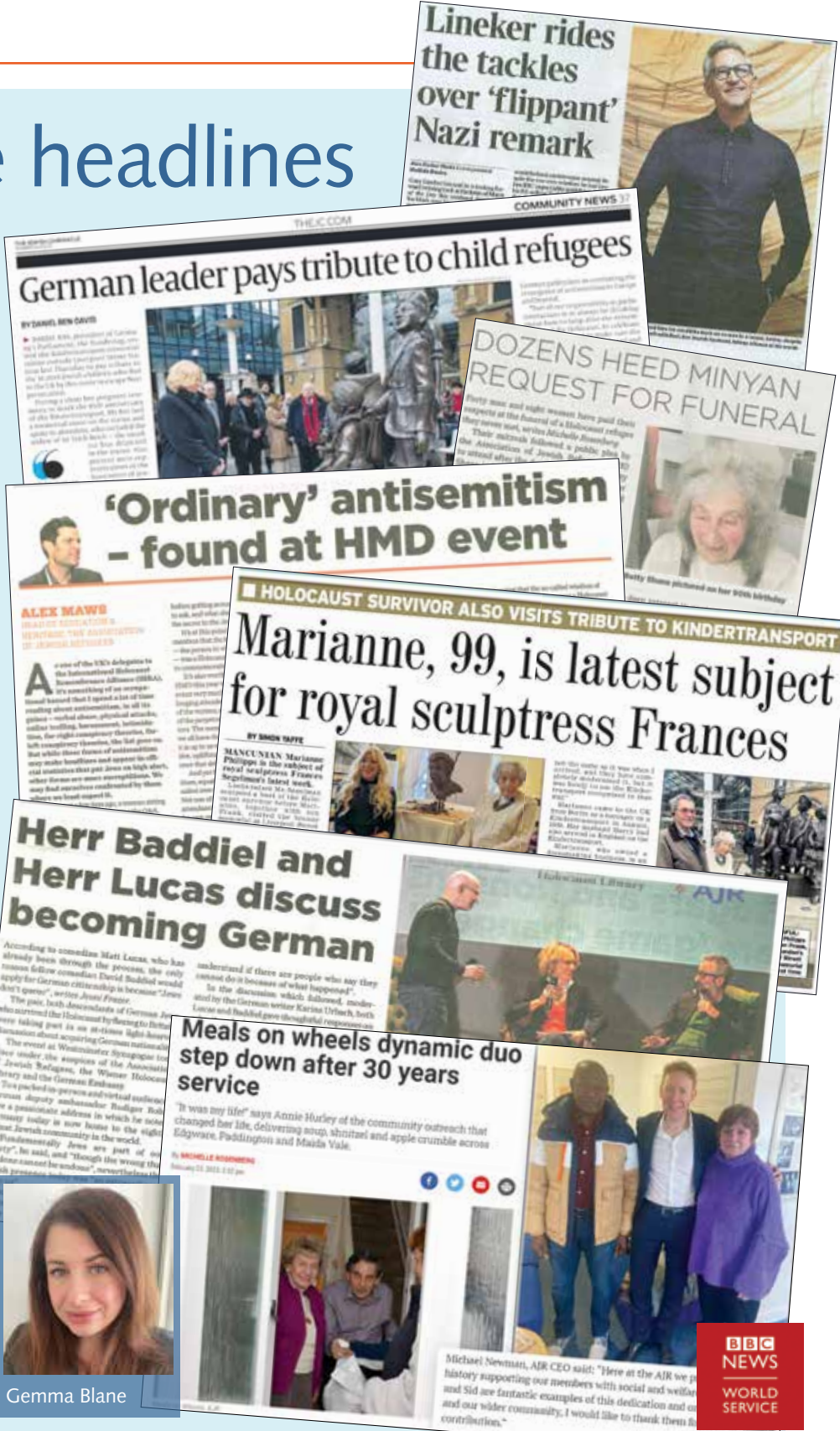
The increase in media coverage comes with the appointment of Gemma Blane, who joined us in January as PR & Communications Manager.

Gemma, who has worked for leading Communications agencies in London and NYC across numerous sectors, said: "Joining the AJR is an opportunity to bring my big brand experience to a cause very close to my heart. My grandmother came to this country as a refugee from Hamburg and many of my family members perished at the hands of the Nazi regime."

Gemma says her mission is to bring the AJR further into the media's radar. "As the first generation dwindles, ensuring their stories are heard becomes even more critical. The AJR possesses a vast and unique bank of first person testimony and historically important resources, including *My Story*, *AJR Refugee Voices* and *www.UKHolocaustMap.org.uk*. I aim to harness this evocative content to reach audiences on a national scale".

Gemma is also working to build on the AJR's profile as thought leaders. "By shining a light on our extraordinary in-house knowledge we can stay on the front foot of the media agenda," she explains. "For example, our statement in response to Gary Lineker's recent comments on *Twitter* was featured on p.5 of *The Times* and shared widely on social media." AJR commentary was also featured on *BBC World Service* and *BBC Radio London* following the President of the Bundestag's visit to the Kindertransport Memorial and the unveiling of the AJR's plaque at The British Embassy in Vienna.

"I will be nurturing our relationships with Community News Editors to promote the



Gemma Blane

interests of our members and AJR events," Gemma said. "When our member Betty Shane tragically died in a fire in February, for instance, we issued a social media appeal for people to attend her funeral and make up a minyan. Belgian-born Betty died at the age of 91 leaving very few surviving family members. The campaign captured the hearts and minds on social media and saw widespread pick up across key Jewish newspapers.

"It's the human stories that make the AJR's work so appealing," explains Gemma. "Spotlighting community events and news, as well as the incredible work of our volunteers and social workers, will always be a core focus. We have exciting plans in the mix, especially as we move towards the 85th anniversary of the Kindertransport – watch this space!"



AJR FUNDING PARTNER

On 17 April yellow candles will be lit in Jewish households throughout the UK to commemorate the Holocaust, thanks to a partnership between the AJR and Maccabi GB.

The Yellow Candle Project is an annual initiative, led by Maccabi GB, which provides an opportunity for the community to join together, either physically or symbolically, in collective commemoration of the lives of all those lost in the Holocaust. AJR's support is crucial in helping Maccabi GB to reach a wider audience and raise awareness of the importance of Holocaust remembrance. The two organisations share a vision of committing to the education of future generations about the Holocaust.

The act of lighting a candle acts as a stand against all forms of antisemitism: past, present and future. Lighting the candles on Yom HaShoah encourages participants to reflect also on the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish culture and identity, and to honour the bravery of those who resisted Nazi oppression, whilst serving as a reminder of the

Maccabi GB



dangers of intolerance and the need to fight against hatred and bigotry.

The power of the Yellow Candle Project is that it makes the vast horror of the Shoah relatable by connecting us with individuals who were murdered at the hands of the Nazis. Each Yellow Candle is accompanied by a biographical card containing information about a person whose life was tragically cut short in the Holocaust; their name, age, date and place of death are taken directly from the archives of Yad Vashem.

This year each yellow Candle will be accompanied by two dwarf sunflower seeds. Maccabi hopes that rather than throwing the used candle tins away participants will instead plant a seed for the future, to help remember the past.

Participants will also be encouraged to share an image of their lit candle and name card on social media, tagging #yellowcandle; this will create a virtual memorial that will unite the Jewish community across the world behind a single message: Never Forget. The Yellow Candle website (www.yellowcandleuk.org) also contains practical and age-appropriate resources as educational tools to increase awareness, understanding and knowledge of the Holocaust, including AJR's Refugee Voices archive.

Maccabi GB is extremely grateful to all its supporters who help make Yellow Candle 2023 possible. Alongside the AJR this includes the Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation, The Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust, *The Jewish Chronicle*, We Are All Making A Difference (who are funding Yellow Candles for Jewish Residential care homes), Yad Vashem UK Foundation and Yom HaShoah UK.

Hundreds of cross-communal organisations, schools, community centres, youth movements and synagogues are expected to participate, and thousands of Yellow Candles have already been distributed. Please visit www.yellowcandleuk.org to order your own candle, at a cost of £4.00 inc p&p.

This Yom HaShoah, let's remember together as a Community and Never Forget.

A screenshot of a social media post from Rachel Riley (@RachelRileyRR) dated April 7. The text of the post reads: 'I lit this #yellowcandle in memory of Ilonka Licht of Hajduszoboszlo, Hungary, who was just 16 when she was murdered in Auschwitz. Time will pass but we will never forget @YellowCandleUK #YomHaShoah'. Below the text is a photograph of a lit yellow candle in its tin, with a biographical card in front of it. The card is partially visible and shows the text 'I AM LIGHTING THIS YELLOW CANDLE IN MEMORY OF' and 'NOKHIM FELDMAN of USSR'.

In addition to the Yellow Candle project, the National Yom HaShoah UK Commemoration will be broadcast live on Monday 17 April from 7.15pm and there will be a nationwide two-minute silence at 11.00am on Tuesday 18 April.

See www.yomhashoah.org.uk for more details.

Yakity-Yak

A team from AJR recently met online with our counterparts from the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin (AICEO), which recently celebrated its 90th anniversary. We found remarkable parallels in our work, including the publication of a highly-respected magazine, as the AICEO's Editor Michael Dak explains.



Michael Dak, the editor of Yakinton



The bilingual, Hebrew German, magazine *Yakinton* began appearing 90 years ago after the foundation in 1932 of the association of Jewish immigrants from Germany in Palestine, then under British Mandate. It appeared as the *Mitteilungsblatt*, a duplicated stencil newsletter of news and announcements concerning the newly arrived OLIM (immigrants) from the old Vaterland that harassed and betrayed them; even before persecution. The *Mitteilungsblatt* ran news and information about the newly rediscovered land of the forefathers and their re-adopted, and adapted for modern use, biblical language, Hebrew. In short Zionism in action and expression.

It was a kind of newsletter including news, analyses and adverts concerning what was called then the fifth Aliya (wave of Zionist immigration mainly from Germany and central Europe).

Looking for a Job? Looking for workers? Partnership? Investors? Professionals? Hebrew lessons? Piano lessons? Sometimes the piano itself. The *Mitteilungsblatt* was where to look.

The legendary LIFT – a kind of wooden container – was offered for sale, though sometimes relocated in the back yard and rented out to newer immigrants. A way of making financial ends meet in the new-old homeland.

Many of these personal adverts included reference to the announcer's former address in Germany; a matter of credibility and sign of reliability and good faith. Next to these commercial sections were articles analysing the political situation in Palestine and in Europe, from a compatriotic point of

view. This was an organ of Zionist Liberal core values, dealing with the great rift between the former Fatherland and Mother tongue, and the lives of the new immigrants in the scorching heat and dazzling oriental desert sun. These were the years of accumulating grey clouds over Europe and the pre-WW2 world and the great catastrophe, the Holocaust.

Not all prospective new immigrants were welcomed, let alone encouraged, by the British Mandate authorities.

Strict restrictions were imposed. More often than not immigration requests were rejected.

Joseph Grünthal, born in Posen, filed in an immigration request. Occupation? Composer and concert – pianist. Nothing like the truth, thought Mr. Grünthal, an orderly Jew. At the moment there is no shortage or need for composers, came the answer. Mr. Grünthal, a diligent German Jew, took up a course in Photography and, after two years tried again. Occupation? Photographer. Change of name: Joseph Tal. Permission granted.

To make a long story longer the photographer was hired to document a wedding. Alas the pianist of the band did not show up so the photographer stood in, or rather sat down, at the piano and that was the end of his photographic career in Palestine Eretz Israel.

Over the years the *Mitteilungsblatt* turned into *Yakinton*, a weekly community magazine under the editorial leadership and talent of my predecessor, Captain (res.) Micha Limor. Its title *Yakinton* was a word-play between yekke (a German Jew) and Iton (newspaper); adding to it the *Yakinton*

Hyacinth, a flower endemic to the east Mediterranean.

Now, ninety short years after the first issue, the issues are somewhat different: The communal identity, the heritage, commemoration, cultural issues, and mainly questions of how to reach out to the next generations to take interest and embrace the core values of liberalism, human rights, respect for all, political decency, human rights and civil behaviour.

All these are considered by our community as lessons from the past, to ensure a decent, multicultural, humanistic future.

The great challenge is to recruit the younger generations to take interest in their heritage and embrace the core values, in a world of urgent tasks and shorter attention span.

The language courses offered in the first issues of the *Mitteilungsblatt* still exist, but now they offer courses in German, as a foreign language, for the Hebrew reader.

JOSEPH PEREIRA
 (ex-AJR caretaker over 22 years) is now available for DIY repairs and general maintenance.
 No job too small, very reasonable rates.
 Please telephone
 07966 887 485.

REVIEWS

KINO AND KINDER: A FAMILY'S JOURNEY IN THE SHADOW OF THE HOLOCAUST

By Vivien Sieber
i2i Publishing

This fascinating memoir tells the remarkable story of how an indomitable Viennese cinema owner reinvented herself when forced to flee Austria, becoming a hostel matron for Kindertransport children in Windermere.

Vivien Sieber's narrative follows her diminutive but resourceful grandmother Paula. She was born in the Moravian city of Brno – now in the Czech Republic – but after leaving school helped in her father's increasingly prosperous drapery business. Before long she was accompanying him on the direct rail link to cultural Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire. After an early marriage failed the young mother aged only 20 returned home but soon persuaded her family to buy a cinema, which she ran with her sister Selma and lived in Leopoldstadt.

As a glamorous, astute businesswoman she was very much the public face of *The Palast Kino* which prospered until the Nazi era. By then Paula had remarried well and produced a second son Peter – Vivien's father – but was tragically widowed. As clouds gathered, Peter was sent to join his half-brother Erich in London. Paula at 54 and speaking no English was eventually able to follow. Other relatives were much less fortunate.

In England money was short and when seeking work Paula became involved with organisations helping Jewish refugees. But when her good friend and Viennese cuisine writer Alice Urbach was chosen to cook and run a hostel for children in Tynemouth, she recommended Paula as matron. After war broke out the hostel for 20 girls aged three to teenagers was forced to move to Windermere. The two women bravely coped with often traumatised children who mostly

never saw their parents again. Although sometimes severe, they worked tirelessly to ensure the children – who helped with household chores – were properly looked after and had the best upbringing possible in difficult circumstances.

Meanwhile Peter was interned on the Isle of Man as an enemy alien and then shipped to Canada. Extracts from his diaries are a captivating read as is the account of his distinguished wartime service and aftermath including intelligence work. Just before he died in 2020, he contacted as many hostel girls as he could, to find out about their experiences.

Vivien traces the tragic fate of relatives in Vienna and Brno where she meets a surviving second cousin as well as detailing complicated restitution and ownership claims for the cinema. She writes candidly about her formidable grandmother and describes soirées hosted with other Jewish continental friends. Throughout, each situation is placed in historical context and is wonderfully evocative of old Vienna, particularly the architecture. She vividly describes London apartments where her family lived, including Erich, deeply affected by his army experience working in liberated camps, who died at 53 just as his professional star was rising.

The book is illustrated with over 80 photos and includes a wealth of historical details, describes postwar hardships and attitudes in Germany and Austria, touching on the Nuremberg trials as well as Paula's continuing efforts to make a living. The author cleverly avoids getting too bogged down on any one aspect and writes extremely well

Janet Weston

ENDLESS FLIGHT – THE LIFE OF JOSEPH ROTH

By Keiron Pim
Granta

Years before Hitler came to power, the Galicia-born writer Joseph Roth foresaw the dire threat posed by the advancing National Socialists. Born in 1894, he had left Brody, on the eastern fringe of the Habsburg empire (today in the Ukraine), for Vienna; there he rapidly developed

his career as a journalist. After the paper for which he worked closed in 1920, he moved to what was turning into the culturally vibrant, if politically and economically febrile, German capital. In Berlin, he reported and travelled widely, mainly for the leading liberal daily, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and published a series of novels, such as *Hotel Savoy* and *Job*, culminating in his masterpiece, *Radetzky March*, in 1932.

By 1933 he had produced enough incriminating material: the Nazis burnt and banned his work, and forced Roth to find refuge in Paris; in 1939 he died there, in the paupers' Necker Hospital. Those remaining years were wretched ones. A restless and rootless Roth would now lose his German royalties and related income, becoming constantly obliged to importune his publishers and his friends such as Stefan Zweig for financial relief. His marriage turned into a near disaster; the beautiful but schizophrenic Friderike spending years in mental homes in Berlin and near Vienna until 1940, when she was consigned, for 'disinfection', to the gas chamber of Hartheim Castle, near Linz, one of six notorious Nazi euthanasia centres.

Relations with subsequent companions were difficult – the fascinating German-Cuban journalist and artist Andrea Manga Bell and the novelist Irmgard Keun, like Roth on the Nazi 'index' of banned writers. Roth was now ruining his health by drinking more heavily than ever, and living precariously out of suitcases in modest hotel rooms – in Ostend and Amsterdam as well as in Paris.

Roth might have lived longer, had he followed through his agreement to attend a writers' congress in New York in May 1939. He could have started a new life there, helped by Dorothy Thompson, the fiercely anti-Nazi American journalist who had translated his novel *Job*, and extended the invitation. Perhaps Roth was too attached to France; perhaps he was too debilitated to act. Even as he ailed in those final months, Roth nevertheless showed concern for the plight of the new wave of refugees. As evidence,

we have a letter telling him that the Jewish migration society HICEM had not been able to help his acquaintances, Leopold Goldner and his wife, emigrate from Nitra, in Slovakia. And there is a poignant article describing how, in Paris, he looks after and converses with a savvy eight-year-old Austrian boy, while his refugee father is at the police station trying to sort out his status. The boy is well aware of his father's plight: he has a Jewish wife. Roth ends the sketch by telling us he has seen a newspaper photograph of an English girl who has waited hours to greet Neville Chamberlain. He hopes God will protect her from the boy's knowledge.

Shortly before his death, Roth himself bemoaned the fact that 'I have no great public and no great income.' The situation had not changed much almost half a century later: in 1987, the *New Yorker* could note that 'Roth's dim view of his prospects has been confirmed by a shortage of posthumous fame outside Europe.' If the Parisian refugee had been only 'narrowly known and respected for his work,' that is hardly the case today. In the English-language literary world he is far from underrated, thanks largely to Michael Hofmann, who has translated many of his works and correspondence.

And it is partly thanks to reading Hofmann's translations that Keiron Pim, a former journalist on the *Eastern Daily Press*, decided to write this first biography in English of Roth, after *The Guardian* made him aware of the gap. Like Roth, Pim has a shtetl background: his mother's ancestors migrated to Vienna from Mostyska, a small town in Galicia. Her parents fled from Vienna to London in March 1939. Perhaps that is why Pim manages to bring out so well the contradictory facets of Roth's complex personality. Roth yearned for a restoration of the Habsburg monarchy. He wrote sympathetically and nostalgically about Galicia's *Ostjuden*, while not hesitating to make antisemitic remarks. And he struggled to come to terms with his own identity, spreading myths about his background; it is not surprising, therefore, that a priest buried Roth in the Catholic section of Paris' Thiais cemetery.

Martin Mauthner



De Dokwerker

Monumentally speaking

AJR Trustee Gaby Glassman has shared details of The Dokwerker (docker) – a monument on the Jonas Daniël Meijerplein (in front of the old Portuguese Synagogue) in Amsterdam, in memory of the February strike of 1941.

The general strike was organised by the outlawed Communist Party of the Netherlands in defence of persecuted Dutch Jews and against the anti-Jewish measures and the activities of the Nazis in general.

If you have details or photos of a lesser known monument please send them to editorial@ajr.org.uk

NEW MEMORIAL AT BUSHEY

On Sunday 23 April at 3pm a new Holocaust memorial will be unveiled at Bushey New Cemetery by the United Synagogue. The organisers are very keen for AJR members, including any survivors and/or their descendants, to attend and will make sure there is parking, seating and water available. Please email memorial@theus.org.uk if you would like to go.



WINDSOR BOAT TRIP/EXCLUSIVE TOUR OF ETON COLLEGE

TUESDAY 16 MAY



Please join us for a day trip to Windsor.

A coach will depart from and return to north London, with the full day's outing including:

- A 3 hour boat trip down the River Thames, with a fish & chip lunch
- A private tour of Eton College, not normally open to the public.

£40 per person

For more details please contact Ros Hart on roshart@ajr.org.uk



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SOCIALLY WORKING

The AJR's core function is providing social and welfare services to Holocaust refugees and survivors in the UK. Our team of experienced social workers are dedicated to the daily needs of our members and are committed to offering the best possible service. Team member **Florina Harapcea** reports on a recent team building exercise.

"Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved" Mattie Stepanek.

This quote comes to mind when I think about our Social Work team – and indeed the whole of AJR – which functions effectively by bringing together individuals with varying skills and experiences. Our team might not be perfect, but we are truly passionate about our work.

As part of our nationwide social welfare programme, social workers provide support and guidance on a wide range of social welfare and care requirements. Where appropriate, we also assess our members' eligibility for different financial support schemes, to enable them to continue to live with dignity, comfort and security in their own homes for as long as possible. The function of an AJR social worker requires a unique combination of knowledge and skills.

In January our team held an 'away day' in Edinburgh. It was the first time our whole team had met out of the office, let alone out of London. As I come from Romania it was also my first time travelling by train in the UK. It was amazing!

During the past couple of years there have been a few staff changes, so our objective was to consolidate the new team and agree strategy for social work going forward, away from ringing phones, interrupted conversations and pinging emails.



Some of the AJR Social Workers enjoyed an open-top bus tour of Edinburgh before the main meeting

Before knuckling down to the hard work, we had the chance to explore the city on an open top bus. It was quite a cold day but the sun kindly chose to join us. We saw all the major tourist areas, and learned the stories behind each attraction.

Edinburgh itself is majestic, with grand architecture across much of the city, and classic stone buildings which turn black in the rain. Beautifully preserved Medieval and Georgian architecture, a world-renowned art and literature scene, awe-inspiring views, a rich cultural history and of course, lip-smacking good food. We are not AJR if there is no food involved, as we all know! After our tour we needed a hot drink and found a lovely coffee shop on the top floor of a building where we enjoyed a glorious Edinburgh sunset.

At dinner that evening, conversations covered everything in the world, with jokes, advice and a lot of laughs. I could see we were getting to know and understand each other and, most importantly, deepen our emotional connections.

The next day was devoted to our strategy meeting, with formal discussions and small group work about all aspects of social work and team development. The casual conversations of the previous day had helped to build camaraderie and

trust among us. This is essential within the team, enabling us to feel comfortable approaching each other for support.

By the end of our meeting, the team felt more cohesive, working towards a shared goal, and having adopted an "us" mentality. Being a social worker is not easy, but to be a social worker in this team is truly exceptional.

We frequently acknowledge accomplishments and achievements as a team. In Edinburgh we began an amazing exercise, highlighting at least one thing that each of us are grateful for. We realized there are so many things that make us feel appreciation and gratitude.

I view our away day as maintenance for an already great functioning team and most importantly, it gave me a great sense of pride and belonging to this dream team within the AJR.

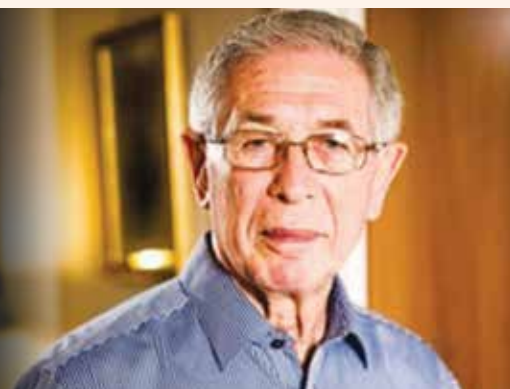
Florina is the social worker covering North-West London, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire. For more information on the work of our Social Work department see www.ajr.org.uk/social-services/#the-social-workers. If you, or someone you know, could benefit from our services, please contact us on 020 8385 3070.

OBITUARY

Ernst (Ernest) SIMON

Born: 26 May 1930, Eisenstadt, Austria

Died: 5 February 2023, Middlesex



Ernest Simon lived in the Judengasse of the Eisenstadt ghetto with his parents and younger brother, Kurt, until he was about five.

The family experienced antisemitic violence in Vienna and Ernest, aged 8, was sent to Britain on a Kindertransport; his parents and brother were able to follow a few months later but many family members perished, including both parents of his mother, two of her sisters and two brothers.

In Britain, Ernest was fostered by a Jewish family in Leeds, his parents were employed elsewhere as cook and general handyman by two doctors and Kurt was also fostered in Leeds. By the end of 1941 the parents were able to rent a house to which they could bring their sons and where they let out rooms to supplement the family's income. Ernest attended the Cockburn High School, specialised in languages (English, French, Latin, German, Spanish) and graduated from Leeds University having studied Economics & Commerce with modern languages. After university came compulsory military service in the RAF and an intensive language training course (including Russian): the RAF posted him to Cambridge University's Department of Slavonic Studies for interpreter training, where he achieved a high degree of fluency, learning to interpret at military conferences, to interrogate prisoners of war and to listen to Russian pilots in the air.

In 1952 he met Anita Weinstein, a teacher in London, and they were married in 1954. The following

year he joined Marks & Spencer as a management trainee. Tragically, his father died suddenly, aged 54, and his mother never remarried, though she lived to be almost 99 in 2002.

At Marks & Spencer Ernest was put in charge of the ladies' lingerie department. One day the manager asked him "How many languages do you speak, Ernest?" When he answered "Six" the manager said "So why are you selling knickers in M&S?" It was a moment of truth for Ernest who, after some consideration, applied to ICI Fibres for a post in their export department and was accepted in 1957. He was with ICI for 33 years, first in Scandinavia, then in Austria, Israel and Switzerland. When, in 1966, he was offered the post of European Marketing Manager with ICI in Germany he felt it presented him with a personal dilemma: Did he, a refugee from Nazi oppression, want to work in Germany? He decided to accept the offer, as the people with whom he would have contact would be too young to have been involved personally in Nazi atrocities and could not be held responsible for their parents' actions or inactions.

Ernest and Anita's son Martin was born in 1964 and grew up to be bilingual; Martin then also became fluent in French when Ernest was transferred to Paris for two years in 1971, followed by a stint in the Benelux countries.

The last posting with ICI was for three years in Hungary (then behind the Iron Curtain) so he learnt Hungarian as well. After the fall of Communism, ICI asked him to run a training programme entitled *Managing Change* in Eastern Bloc countries. Late in life he took a new working role as a tutor in the field of

Negotiating Skills Training.

Retirement finally came in 2001, with a move to a flat in Pinner, Middlesex. In 2004 he became President of the local B'nai B'rith Lodge and was also elected to the Executive Committee of B'nai B'rith Europe, as well as becoming a 'befriender' at the AJR. Then tragedy struck when his only son Martin developed heart trouble and died in 2016 aged 51.

Ernest began a new career as a dedicated voluntary speaker, sharing his Holocaust story in schools, prisons, the U.S. air force base at Mildenhall and many other locations. He was immensely gratified to be awarded the BEM by the late Queen in 2019.

The HET wrote "Ernest was a kind and gentle man who inspired thousands of students each year telling his incredible story across the UK week in, week out." Michael Newman, AJR CEO, said: "We are deeply saddened by Ernest's passing. He was a loyal and popular AJR member, who served on our Austrian Fund committee, to support fellow refugees and survivors in need."

Lilian Levy

Ernest's full story can be read on www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Ernest-Simon

Books Bought

MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

020 8364 3554 / 07855387574
ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk



COME FROM AWAY

IS COMING TO NORTH LONDON (sort of)

Tuesday 30 May 2023

Hear the remarkable story of how the rabbi from 'Come From Away' (Rabbi Leivi Sudak) spent Shabbat in the small town of Gander in the wake of 9/11

Taking place in a North London venue followed by a Kosher lunch

£20 per person

For more information contact Ros Hart
roshart@ajr.org.uk




VISIT TO FORMANS

Thursday 27 April 2023

We are delighted to be able to take a group of AJR members for a tour of the world famous Formans Smoked Salmon Factory to include a light lunch of a smoked salmon bagel

For more information contact Ros Hart
roshart@ajr.org.uk

SECOND GENERATION GROUP ON ZOOM

On Tuesday evenings, for 12 weeks from 25 April – 11 July

Facilitated by Gaby Glassman, psychologist and psychotherapist, to explore the impact of the Holocaust and our parents' experiences on our own lives.

For more information contact Gaby on 020 8421 1609 or gaby@glassman.com

CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

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IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	TIME	IN PERSON MEETING	CO-ORDINATOR
Monday 3 April	2.00pm	Edgware	Ros Hart
Wednesday 19 April	11.00am	Glasgow 1st Generation	Agnes Isaacs
Monday 24 April	2.00pm	Hampstead – Journalist Peter Kellner in conversation	Ros Hart
Monday 24 April	10.30am	Manchester	Michal Mocton
Tuesday 25 April	10.30am	Bournemouth	Ros Hart
Tuesday 25 April	12.30pm	Liverpool	Michal Mocton
Tuesday 25 April	11.30am	Central London	Karen Diamond

ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 24 April @ 4pm	Ruth Schwiening – Ruth's Art https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84205481788	Meeting ID: 842 0548
Wednesday 26 April @ 2pm	AJR Book Discussion (no speaker) – A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88512289932	Meeting ID: 885 1228 9932
Thursday 27 April @ 6pm	Clare Weissenberg – Refugees to Internees. Creative Response: Kitchener and Beyond https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81554265000	Meeting ID: 815 5426 5000

KEEP FIT WITH AJR


All AJR members & friends are invited to take part in these online exercise and dance classes throughout the coming month.

Every Monday @ 10.30am EXCEPT 10 APRIL	Get Fit where you Sit (seated exercise) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Every Tuesday @ 11.00am	Shelley's Exercise class https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88466945622	Meeting ID: 884 6694 5622
Every Wednesday @ 10.30am EXCEPT 5 & 12 APRIL	Dance Yourself Fit with Jackie Turner https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86302485494	Meeting ID: 8630 248 5494

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