



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Writing for Children

This month sees the centenary of Judith Kerr, one of the most popular children's writers of her time. She was born on 14 June 1923 in Berlin, the daughter of Alfred Kerr, one of the leading theatre critics of Weimar Germany and Julia Kerr (born Weisman). Her parents were both from German Jewish families. The story of how the Kerrs fled from Germany to Britain, via Switzerland and France, is told in one of Judith's most famous popular children's books, *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*.



Book covers

Perhaps it was the title that made the book so popular. It was her husband, the writer Nigel Kneale, who thought of it though the stuffed rabbit barely appears in the book. But that choice – the pink rabbit – spoke to generations of young children. Part of Judith's genius was her sense of using the relationship between children and toys or animals (like the famous tiger who came to tea) to address questions about safety and

menace that lie at the heart of her most famous books.

I have already written about Judith Kerr's writing and "Two Sides of Exile" in the July 2019 issue of the *AJR Journal* but her centenary is an opportunity to think about some of the less well-known refugee children's writers and illustrators.

Continued on page 2

HERALDING SUMMER

Here at the AJR we are getting ready for summer with a number of lovely outings and events, see details on p17 and elsewhere.

We also bring you a four page report from our recent International Forum on Holocaust testimonies, an unmissable event for anyone working within or interested in this field.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this month's magazine. We hope you enjoy reading it and would be delighted to receive any feedback.

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

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Writing for Children (cont.)

Klara Biller (1910-89), was a graphic designer and children's book illustrator. Born in Pressburg (now Bratislava), she grew up in Budapest. Klara started working as a designer, drawing advertisements, but in the 1930s she left for England and later began illustrating children's books, including the picture book *Paul and Mary* (1941) and four collected volumes of Grimms' fairy tales. Biller's most outstanding achievements include receiving the commission for the 1961 revised edition of the *Oxford Nursery Song Book*, which featured a black-and-white illustration by her on every page. You can see some of her work in Robert Waterhouse's book, *Their Safe Haven: Hungarian artists in Britain from the 1930s* (2018).

Val Biro (1921-2014), also from Budapest, came to England in 1939 and studied at the Central School of Arts & Crafts in London. He started out by illustrating war books and books by émigré authors but went on to design covers for books by famous authors such as C. S. Forester's *Hornblower* novels, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Geoffrey Household. Between 1940 and the late 1960s Biro designed about 3,000 book covers and in his last years he focussed on retelling and illustrating classic fairy tales.

Bettina Ehrlich (1903-85), was born in Vienna and came to the UK in 1938. She wrote her first English language children's book in 1943 and published her first commercially successful book, *Cocolo*, in 1945. In *Cocolo*, we see many of the themes that run through all of Bettina's books: exile, social hierarchy and the clash of rich against poor. Her books are all set in Italy, which for Bettina was her place of escape in real life.

Susan Einzig (1922-2009) was born in Berlin and left Germany in 1939 on one of the last Kindertransport trains to reach Britain before the outbreak of war. After the war Einzig took on numerous illustration commissions,

and developed a distinctive black-and-white drawing style. You can also see a lifelong love of theatre in the stage-like construction of many of her drawings. When she died *The Guardian* called her 'one of the 20th century's key British book illustrators, and a central figure in the postwar London art scene.' Best known for her illustrations for the children's novel *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958), by Philippa Pearce, she illustrated for a range of authors and publishers.

Eva Ibbotson (1925-2010) was born in Vienna, the daughter of the novelist Anna Gmeyner. She came to England in the 1930s and wrote nearly twenty books, several of which (including *Which Witch? The Secret of Platform 13* and *The Star of Kazan*) were shortlisted for children's book prizes.

This group of children's book writers and illustrators were all refugees from central Europe, from Budapest, Berlin and Vienna. Secondly, they were all women apart from Val Biro. Thirdly, and perhaps most interestingly, only Judith Kerr wrote about fleeing Nazism. Of course, she addresses this explicitly in her famous trilogy but there has been an intriguing debate about whether *The Tiger Who Came To Tea* (1968) is about her childhood experience. The Tiger is polite but also invasive and threatening. He intrudes into domestic space, has a voracious appetite and leaves mayhem in his wake. Michael Rosen wondered if the tiger could be based on Kerr's memory of the past threat. Judith knew about dangerous people who come to your house and take people away. She was told as a young child that her father could be grabbed at any moment by the Gestapo – he was in great danger. He's a jokey tiger, says Rosen, but he is a tiger. However, Kerr said more than once that the tiger was just a tiger and had nothing to do with the Nazis.

Anthony Grenville, on the other hand, once wrote, 'I see Judith Kerr's tiger as standing more in the tradition of British children's stories where animals act almost act like humans, appearing so to speak as half walrus, half carpenter. That tradition goes

back to Beatrix Potter, to Jemima Puddle-Duck and Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, as well as to Lewis Carroll, encompassing AA Milne's Winnie the Pooh and Michael Bond's Paddington Bear.'

My own take is different from both of these. I see Kerr's story as part of a post-war British tradition about Englishness and domesticity, a very safe world of milkmen, grocery delivery boys, housewives, Tea (sandwiches, buns, milk served in a milk jug, sausages, chips and ice cream). The white middle-class family (Mummy, Daddy and daughter), is more like the Janet and John books (first published 1949-50 and reached their heyday in the 1960s) and the Paddington books (1958-).

Michael Bond, author of the *Paddington* books was not Jewish but Paddington was a kind of refugee. In an interview with *The Daily Telegraph* in 2014, Bond said Paddington was partly inspired by Jewish refugee children he had seen arriving at London's Reading train station during World War II. 'I remember their labels round their necks and then I remember going to the cinema and seeing on the newsreel that Hitler had moved into some new country and seeing footage of elderly people pushing prams with all their belongings in them. Refugees are the saddest sight,' he said.

Bond also told *The Telegraph* that 'I've such a clear picture of Dr. Gruber. He was based on my first agent, a lovely man, a German Jew, who was in line to be the youngest judge in Germany, when he was warned his name was on a list, so he got out and came to England with just a suitcase and £25 to his name.'

From a toy pink rabbit and a bear from darkest Peru to Mr. Gruber, *Cocolo* and *Tom's Midnight Garden*, some of our favourite children's books have more to do with Jewish refugees than we might think.

David Herman

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THEY CALLED OUR MIDWIFE

On 5 July 1939 sisters Ingelore (15) and Marion (11) Czarlinski arrived from Berlin on the Kindertransport. Just nine years later, Ingelore (now Susan) was the first person in the world to hold the future King Charles in her arms.

Susan, who had coincidentally changed her surname to Charles, had followed in the footsteps of two of her aunts and trained to become a nurse. She got a job working for obstetrician Sir William Gilliatt, who was chosen by the young Princess Elizabeth to attend the birth of her first baby, by caesarean.

This story first broke in the *AJR Journal* in September 2005 when Susan's sister Marion wrote: "On 14 November 1948 I invited my sister to tea at my flat in Clapham. The phone rang and an official voice asked her to ring a Whitehall number immediately. Soon after a car came for her. When she arrived at Buckingham Palace she prepared the Princess for delivery. The senior nurse assisted Sir William with the operation and Susan waited in an ante room with Prince Philip, who told her she reminded him of the beautiful Greek

girls he had known when he was young. Eventually she was called into the delivery room and given Prince Charles to hold until his grandmother, the Queen Mother, took him from her."

Charles was born at 9.14pm in the music room, which had been converted into an operating theatre. He weighed 7lb 6oz. Obstetrician Sir John Peel and midwife Helen Rowe were also in attendance.

Marion explained that Susan was chosen for this role because not only was she a dedicated nurse, she was also incredibly discreet. So discreet in fact that her two daughters, Rebecca and Debra, didn't know anything about their mother's important role in the future king's life until she and their father were invited to Princess Anne's wedding in 1973. "We were naturally surprised and very curious as to why our parents were invited to a royal wedding, so our mother sat us down and explained," says Debra.

Susan died in 1994 so when Prince Charles hosted a reception at Clarence House on 5 July 2005 for Kindertransport children Marion had to go alone. "I told him I was lucky to arrive in England 66 years earlier, but that my sister was even luckier as she was the first person in the world to hold him," wrote Marion. "He seemed fascinated, so I told him the whole story. At



Prince Charles' midwife story as it first appeared in a 2005 issue of the *AJR Journal*

the end of the reception he said, 'What a small world it is. Here is the sister of the nurse who looked after me when I was born. She even saw me being bathed. What a sight I must have been!'"

Carers Week is an annual event highlighting the role of unpaid carers and the challenges they face daily.

The challenges of caring can take its toll emotionally and physically, but there is help available. At the AJR, we are here for you and we hope you'll get in touch and access our support. Details of our events for Carers Week will be in the weekly e-newsletter.



AJR Outreach workers Karen Diamond & Ros Hart wheel out the goods at Forman's smoked salmon factory during a recent visit organised for AJR members

A DANGEROUS LIAISON

Given the assimilated status that Jews enjoyed in Weimar Germany it is not so surprising that inappropriate friendships emerged occasionally between Jews and supporters of the extreme right. The love affair between the political theorist, Hannah Arendt, and the philosopher, Martin Heidegger, is a case in point.

In this article **Howard Falksohn, Senior Archivist at the Wiener Holocaust Library**, focuses on another meeting of minds of two leading 20th century thinkers: Carl Schmitt (1888-1985), the brilliant but controversial legal theorist, Nazi Crown Jurist and antisemite and Jacob Taubes (1923-1987), the maverick erudite, radical, Jewish scholar and rabbi. What drew them together was a disdain for liberalism and a mutual interest in political theology.

The library is in possession of an extraordinary document: a dossier produced by the office of the *Sicherheitsdienst der Reichsführung SS*, 1936-1937, which contains correspondence and reports denouncing Schmitt's alleged anti-Nazi stance. The Nazi security service claimed that any professed antisemitism on Schmitt's part was purely opportunistic and that Schmitt's commitment to the cause could therefore not be relied upon. The file was rescued from imminent destruction at the end of the war (half of the 300+ pages are burnt around the edges) and donated to the library in 1963. The report effectively brought Schmitt's career to a halt and he remained in relative obscurity until the end of the Nazi era. Had Schmitt known of the existence of

this dossier after the war he would almost certainly have squeezed maximum capital out of it. When he emerged from custody at Nuremberg, where he had been investigated but never tried, he continued to publish articles and books on political and legal theory but was permanently excluded from establishment academia on account of his tainted past. He cultivated the persona of an *éminence grise* and attracted interest from a range of thinkers and writers, not all of them sharing his views.

What then, were his views?

Carl Schmitt was a lapsed Catholic (excommunicated after divorcing his first wife), brought up in an enclave in Protestant North Rhine Westphalia. Schmitt's Catholicism such as it was, wasn't faith-based but utilitarian, which partly explains the roots of his antisemitism. Assimilated Jews and protestants fared relatively well in the modern liberal democracy of the Weimar era. This was a source of resentment and envy by some Catholics who adhered to traditions which held them back.

As a great admirer of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Schmitt believed that it was essential that a state has a strong leader equipped with all requisite powers to ensure full control: "Sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception". In practical terms the most important decision that a head of state can make is the timing and form of action to be taken in the event of a breakdown in the political system. Schmitt was given the opportunity to put this theory into practice when shortly after Hitler's seizure of power he was called to serve as Prussian Councillor of State and drafted legislation which effectively helped bring about the Nazi dictatorship and



Jacob Taubes (1923-1987)

where Schmitt earned the title, Crown Jurist.

Schmitt developed his ideas in the treatise *The Concept of the Political* (1927) along with his notion of the Friend-Enemy dichotomy, which posits that nothing in politics can be achieved by discussion and compromise – these are weak liberal concepts. On the contrary, states can only progress once the Friend-Enemy distinction has been established. Politics is therefore a permanent struggle, if necessary, to the death. The enemy is defined as any individual or group who threatens the integrity of the state. ie non-citizens (slaves, barbarians, outsiders...Jews)

Schmitt also believed that all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularised theological concepts. This notion was expounded in his other famous work first published in 1922: *Political Theology*, in which the sovereign is equivalent to God and the state of exception equates to a miracle. Here is where his ideas had an appeal to even Jewish thinkers e.g. Leo Strauss, Walter Benjamin and... Jacob Taubes.

Jacob Taubes was first exposed to the writings of Carl Schmitt during his student days in Switzerland in the 1940s. It was clear that he regarded Schmitt as one of the most brilliant minds of the 20th century yet refrained from approaching him, it is assumed, on account of his documented antisemitism. It would

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Carl Schmitt (1888-1985)

be some 30 years before they actually met. In the meantime, they exchanged an increasingly amicable correspondence.

Jacob Taubes was born into a lineage of distinguished rabbis. His father, Zwi Taubes, was the modern orthodox rabbi at one of the largest synagogues in Vienna. The high regard of the Taubes family within the Viennese Jewish community, is evidenced by a full report of Jacob Taubes' Bar Mitzvah published in the Viennese Jewish community newspaper, *Die Wahrheit*, 7.3.1936.

In January 1949 having recently received his rabbinic ordination and PhD in Zurich, Jacob was groomed at the Jewish Theological Seminary to become a Jewish theologian.

His life took a very different trajectory and after a circuitous route he became embroiled in the radical student movement in Berlin in the 1960s, counting amongst his friends and associates Herbert Marcuse, Rudi Dutschke, Jürgen Habermas and Theodor Adorno. Jacob's views were often controversial and provocative. Whilst he published relatively little, he demonstrated a deep and expansive knowledge of a range of disciplines from hermeneutics to philosophy and politics and was fluent in multiple languages. He was renowned as a brilliant lecturer who could captivate his audience, often speaking without notes and quoting from memory from a huge range of texts. He never lost sight of his Jewish roots and cultivated an interest in early Christian/ Jewish relations. He would have described himself as a Gnostic i.e. spiritual but rejecting orthodox teachings and traditions and the authority of religious institutions. He was an Antinomian i.e. 'against the law', hence his attraction to revolutionary movements. Lastly, he was an apocalypticist i.e. one preoccupied with interpretations of the cataclysmic end of civilisation. All of which explains his fascination with the Apostle Paul.

The substance of their first meeting, which took place at Schmitt's home in 1978, when Schmitt was already 90, was political

theology: specifically, the significance of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans (9-11). Neither were interested in morality or the study of the Divine as such. Political power was their focus. Implicit in Paul's letter is a challenge to the supremacy of Rome and an exhortation to Jews and Gentiles alike to adhere to God's new covenant in the form made manifest by Christ's sacrifice – as experienced by Paul in the now legendary nocturnal revelation on the road to Damascus. Taubes reminded Schmitt that Paul (originally Saul of Tarsus) was a Jew, in fact, like Jesus, a Pharisee, who zealously adhered to the Law and was an enthusiastic persecutor of the early Jesus followers (the term Christians hadn't been coined yet). Paul's so-called conversion can therefore be regarded as a Schmittian 'State of Exception' (*Ausnahmezustand*). It appears that Taubes was mesmerised by Schmitt's reception of his thesis: "you have to tell people about this before you die", he was told. Several meetings ensued and ever more convivial correspondence in which they addressed each other 'honoured and dear'.

Schmitt's propensity to curry favour as a means to rehabilitate himself had precedent. In the immediate post-war years he flaunted a letter which Walter Benjamin had sent him in 1930 (whilst still relatively unknown) effusively praising Schmitt for the influence *Political Theology* had on his *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. This wouldn't be the first time that Schmitt could claim that even the Jews liked him.

Taubes confronted Schmitt's antisemitism and questioned how the German churches could have accepted the 'political theozoology' of Nazi racial theory. Yet clearly he didn't regard it as sufficiently serious to preclude engagement with him and his writing. Then Taubes never got to read *Glossarium: Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947-1951*, (Duncker & Humblot 1991), a posthumously published volume of Carl Schmitt's private thoughts and ideas never intended for publication. Here Schmitt shows his true colours and states (after the war) amongst numerous other such observations: "Jews will always be Jews whereas a Communist can change. ...The assimilated Jew is the true enemy. There is no point in denying the words of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion".

Carl Schmitt's thoughts and ideas on legal

PANEEM LETTER

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On receipt, please contact the AJR so we can arrange when and how to meet you to certify your signature, and then submit the certificate.

Please only contact us if you have received the letter, as they will not issue a life certificate for the third payment to anyone who has not already had the letter.

and constitutional theory have retained an enduring fascination for scholars even of the Left. Some have argued for their continued validity despite public knowledge of Schmitt's antisemitism partly because these unsavoury views have been rationalised, relativised and contextualised.

Others have sought to read into all Schmitt's writings an ever present all-pervasive antisemitism, which would be a convenient way of undermining his overall influence. A more recent critique focussing on Schmitt's postwar output identifies the true danger of Schmitt by suggesting that his antisemitism wasn't always obvious or even present and that his erudition, originality and ability to adapt his theories to a modern context in relevant and challenging ways maintained his continued influence.

One suspects that Jacob Taubes along with other scholars would have revised their views in light of the revelations in the latest re-publication of Schmitt's Nazi era writings.

Carl Schmitt died in 1985 and Jacob Taubes in 1987.

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.

TRIBUTE TO THE KING

Thank you AJR for the little floral gift (at first I thought they were matches!); it's a lovely gesture....a small but fitting tribute in recognition of "His Majesty's longstanding advocacy for Holocaust remembrance".

AJR members are indeed most fortunate to be living in this country.

Hanne Freedman (North London Group)

"UNSERE AMERIKA"

Margarete Stern questions the spelling of *Unseres* as in the title of the book *Unseres Amerika* (April). But surely "unsere" is yiddish, not German. It means "one of us", i.e. a colloquialism for a Jew. When going to a theatre one might look out for other "unseres"! Read *The Times* and you will see many obituaries to "unseres".

Also in April, Cameron Woodrow mentions that his mother did not refer to herself as a refugee. My recollection is that the "refugees" from Germany often referred to themselves as "Continental".

Leslie Michaels, London N3

RECLAIMING CITIZENSHIP

Your article *A Funny Debate* (March) 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, when I was eleven (and could still get

half-priced air tickets) my father decided it was time to introduce me to the family left in Europe. He took me to the German Embassy in Lima so that I would be present when he formally requested the German citizenship for me too, but I was unaware of what this procedure involved. 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.

Fast forward to the year 2000. My daughter had finished her BA and had a work opportunity in Barcelona but was unable to obtain a work permit. I began considering the practicality of the German citizenship to help her. By then I understood that having more than one passport was not a bad idea. So I filled out the required paperwork, but somehow was still not overly comfortable with the idea. It was a hard decision; nevertheless, I wrote to the German consulate in Boston, MA, which was the closest to our home. Some weeks later we were both summoned to the consulate where I was 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.

In April 2002 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

Some years ago my in-laws thought my husband and I should reclaim our citizenship (we were both born in Germany). We were not at all keen but went along with it. Over the years we just let it lapse. However, recently our elder son, who lives partly in France, applied and got his citizenship and passport. I was perfectly happy with this as it was done for purely pragmatic reasons. He, like us, has no feelings of attachment to Germany.

On the other hand, a cousin of my father, Ernst Cramer, who became Editor of *Die Welt* and right-hand man to Axel Springer, said that by going back to Germany, although an American citizen, he was reclaiming his citizenship which Hitler had taken away. His wife, though, made sure that even though their children were born in Germany they would be American and not German.

Hannah P. Gummers, Cumbria

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

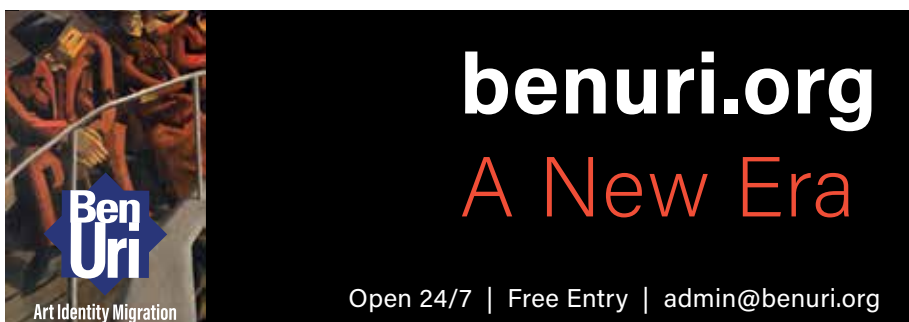
I endorse Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's views about the political right in Israel (April) which, supported by many conservative and orthodox groups, has over the past two decades gradually chipped away at democracy and human rights.

The pace is accelerating and Dorothea, as the AJR correspondent in Israel has, not merely a right but a duty to express her opinion and observations about the brutality that is infiltrating the leadership of Israeli society. Given her history as a reliable journalist I think that Dr Goldmeier's response (May) is entirely misguided.

Most refugees flee from nations where democracy and law have broken down. We, of all people, should remember that! I am a first-generation descendant of a German Holocaust survivor/victim.

Anthony Levi, London N2

I am grateful to Dorothea Shefer-Vanson for



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daring to tell it like it is. I am a 2G descendant of German parents and I find the current Israeli political scene not only disturbing but extremely unbalanced. We are witnessing increasingly extreme opinions masquerading as normal democratic viewpoints. I am ashamed to see fellow Jews being aggressive in speech and action, and finding it quite normal to express overtly racist views. It concerns me what is going on in settler areas – the level of intolerance is rising.

Jews have always punched above their weight in the UK as far as concern for social justice and the rights of minorities go. The kabbalah teaches us to be truthful, but above all to be kind. Where is the kindness and human decency here? Shame on Netanyahu for linking up with people such as these, presumably to hold on to power, and shame on him for bending/changing the law to ensure he gets out of being charged for any misdeeds. These people don't look like democrats to me; they are demagogues.

Where will all this lead? Aggression generally leads to further aggression, and I fear for the future. Can we continue to stand up proudly and support Israel when this is going on?
Sonia Sampson, Portugal

As a recently joined 2G member I really enjoy reading the *AJR Journal* which does an excellent job on bringing reports and features on Holocaust and refugee related issues, content which is not readily available elsewhere.

As such, I really don't see the point of the *Letter from Israel*. I was rather hoping that this would be a focus on Israel and relevant news about its large number of survivors including many UK ex-pats.

On the contrary, it seems that this series of articles is predominantly a vehicle for Ms Shefer-Vanson to voice, sometimes quite forcefully, her politically left-wing and secular views of Israeli society. This has little relevance to the readership and only serves to antagonise many who might not share her views.

It's quite possible to read on the discourse of

Israeli politics in many other sources. Please can I ask you to reconsider this feature.

Jonathan Weissbart, London NW11

Note from Editor: *We always welcome debate on these pages and we respect all our contributors' rights to share their opinions. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson has written for the AJR Journal for many years and we immensely value her contributions. We are always interested to hear from other people living overseas, including in Israel, and we will shortly be introducing a new column from the AJR's counterparts at the Association of Israeli Citizens of European Origin, which will bring even greater balance to these pages.*

NAZI BOOK BURNING

I was surprised to see you mention Professor Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science in your article on book burning (May). My great Uncle Felix Abrahams was a doctor there from 1929 until its closure in 1933.

Felix was head of the sexual forensic department, reporting on the first surgical genital changes. His specialised field included indictable "sexual offences" as well as infantilism, exhibitionism and flagellatism.

The Institute was a sought-after address for local and foreign scientists, academics and politicians. For Berlin residents, it became known as an institution providing counselling and treatment for "physical and psychological sexual disorders" as well as, in particular, for "sexual transitions", Hirschfeld's term for homosexuals, transvestites and hermaphrodites.

More than 40 people worked at the Institute in research, sexual counselling, treatment of venereal diseases and public sex education. It also housed the Scientific Humanitarian Committee – the first homosexual organisation – and the World League for Sexual Reform.

From the outset, the Institute was denounced as "Jewish", "Social-Democratic" and "offensive for public morals" and it was shut down by the Nazis in 1933. Its buildings in

LOOKING FOR?



ARTISTS ON ISLE OF MAN

Researcher Alan Morgenroth seeks more information about Erich Bertram, who was born 22 November 1903 in Coblenz and died in 1977. He married Irmgard Sachs (1914-1995) in 1944 and they had one child. Erich was the main illustrator of the camp newspaper *The Onchan Pioneer* and created the 'Three-Legged Postman' artwork which featured on the 2010 Isle of Man 35p stamp.

a.morgenroth@hotmail.com

BERLIN 1930s MEMORIES

Author Gaby Koppel, whose first novel *Reparation* was runner-up for the Paul Torday Prize, is keen to speak to anyone who has first-hand memories of growing up in 1930s Berlin. As research for her second novel Gaby hopes to find people who actually saw swastika flags hanging from buildings or were taught the 'science' of racial purity at school. She wants to find out what school was like, how school friends talked, and what films, books and games were popular, as well as how Jewish children felt walking down the street.

gaby_koppel@hotmail.com

Berlin were destroyed by bombing in 1943.

Felix continued working in Berlin as a doctor, but changed addresses several times, and was unable to continue working with transvestites. After a failed attempt to emigrate to Sweden, Felix travelled in 1937 to Florence, Italy where he took his own life. There is a commemorative plaque in the Jewish Cemetery; I do not know who erected it.
Geoffrey Marx, London W14



Lord Pickles, Mike Karp, Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Eva Clarke, Michael Newman, Renate Collis, John Dobai, His Excellency Miguel Berger, Kurt Marx, Jackie Young

Remembering a

THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF

AND DISSEMINATING HO

In April over 200 people gathered in the magnificent setting of Lancaster House to consider the ways in which Holocaust Testimony is gathered, stored, and used in educating about the Holocaust. Dr Jaime Ashworth shares his account.



Evening reception at the German Embassy

Steeped in political history and magnificently preserved, Lancaster House provided the perfect backdrop for 50 speakers, representing 32 separate organisations, to discuss how eyewitness testimonies from one of the world's darkest periods can serve to safeguard the future of humanity.

Supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, the conference was an extraordinary gathering of the talented, passionate and curious individuals who work to ensure that, in the words of Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon's opening address, the Holocaust remains part of our memory. The German Ambassador, His Excellency Miguel Berger, and the AJR's own Michael Newman drew on similar themes in their opening remarks.



Delegates on Day 1 of the conference

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, co-founder and director of the *AJR Refugee Voices Archive*, outlined the themes of the conference in the context of the archive's 20th anniversary. Recordings of some of the 285 survivors the project has reached, speaking about the need to remember, gave her ideas human form. The words of Anita Lasker-Wallfisch MBE echoed with particular urgency: "Have we made any progress? This is what I'm asking myself." The moral imperative to remember, to extract moral value, was almost palpable, the plaintive recorded words of John Izbicki – "Think of the past, but don't let it become the future" – were both a challenge and a command.

Day One focused on how testimony has been – and is – collected, and what it offers us in terms of evidence and meaning. Lord Pickles began by announcing that the government and the AJR is convening a working group to establish a UK Holocaust Testimony Portal. Several organisations present at the conference had already agreed to participate and other institutions would also be invited. This conference would be setting the direction for the work ahead and, as many presentations made clear, the work of extracting historical information from testimonies is ongoing. This was brought out particularly strongly by Professor Dan Stone of Royal Holloway, who used examples from the ITS Archive in Bad Arolsen to draw out experiences of survivors and victims contained in that vast archive, only properly opened to researchers in 2007.



Anita Peleg, Hannah Goldstone, Dr Noemi Lopian, Hephzibah Rudofsky, Danny Kalman

Professor Tony Kushner of Southampton thought about the reflexive nature of testimony and oral history, asking who testimony belongs to and what could or should be done with it.

This question was embodied in a powerful panel about the collection of testimony, including survivors Jackie Young, Eva Clarke BEM, Kurt Marx

and Rethinking: ON COLLECTING, PRESERVING, OLOCAUST TESTIMONIES

BEM, and interviewers Dr. Rosalyn Livshin and Natasha Kaplinsky OBE. It is vital to remember that the testimonies we watch and listen to are human products. Whether they are taken *from* the witness or co-created *with* the witness is the result of how interviewee and interviewer connect and work together. Rosalyn Livshin clearly argued that the approach of Henry Greenspan – to create testimony together – was her preferred strategy in a 30-year career. Jackie Young helped give this human significance by explaining, with great emotion, that giving testimony was a core part of “picking up the puzzle pieces of my life.” Testimony constitutes a unique record both of what happened and of the experience of having survived it.

This dual nature of testimony was the focus of Day Two, with many representatives from museums and educational organisations present. Alex Maws, Head of Educational Grants and Projects explained the need to move from asking how to teach in a world without survivors to answering. Presentations made clear that Holocaust Education in the UK is working hard to find new, creative, and effective uses for Holocaust testimony, matched by institutions in Canada, Australia, continental Europe, and the USA. The brilliant keynote by Dr Robert Williams of the USC Shoah Foundation challenged any easy pessimism about the future, arguing that a wider understanding of the audience for education was needed: people need to revisit and re-examine what they learn at school as professionals, as adults, and above all as parents.

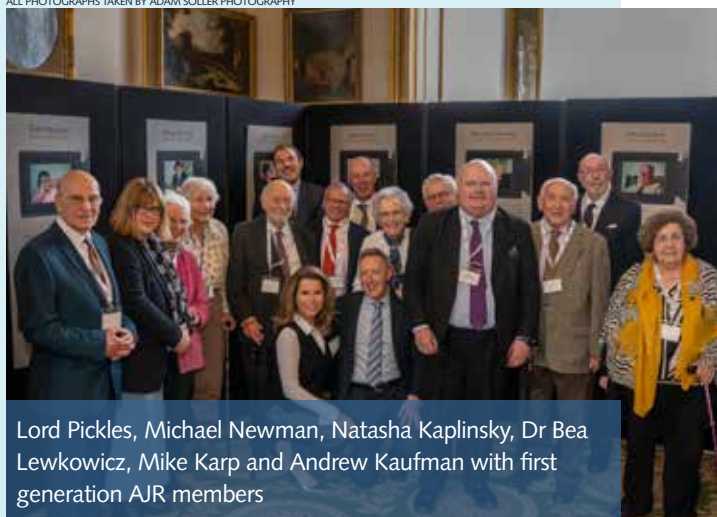
An impassioned question by Anita Peleg of Generation 2 Generation set the scene for the ensuing panels, firstly asking three authors (Jonathan Freedland, Karen Baum Gordon and Lord Daniel Finkelstein) how they used testimony in their published works, and another on how second – and third-generation witnesses are using the stories and testimonies of their parents and grandparents in education. Noemie Lopian’s passionate question “How can I carry it forward?” will echo well beyond the conference chamber, reminding everyone present of the truth that the historical as well as the political is deeply personal.

After a final session on Testimony in the Digital Age, notable for Jaya Pathak’s moving account of the importance of testimony in her personal encounter with Holocaust Education, it was left to Mike Karp OBE, Chair of the AJR, to conclude. He noted the breadth of talent, creativity, and innovation which had been so obvious. But he also noted that the future must be collaborative. “Let’s get things done together,” he said, “because we will accomplish so much more.” It was a beautiful note on which to end a stimulating, rewarding and challenging conference.

Dr Jaime Ashworth is an experienced researcher and educator, passionate about Holocaust education and the representation of the past in popular culture.

Recordings of all the conference sessions are available to view on <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheAssociationofJewishRefugees>

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY ADAM SOLLER PHOTOGRAPHY



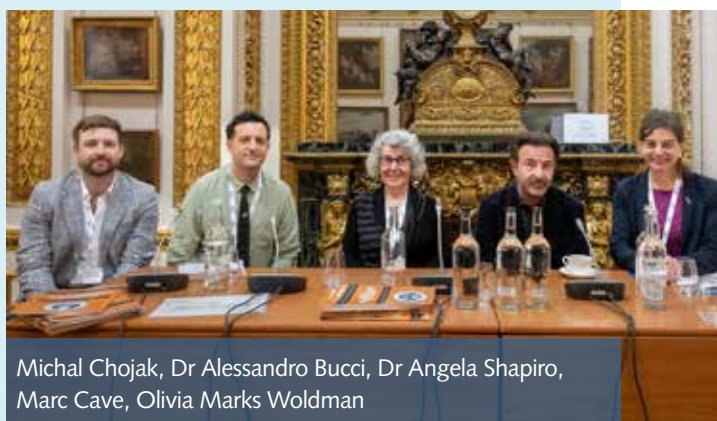
Lord Pickles, Michael Newman, Natasha Kaplinsky, Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Mike Karp and Andrew Kaufman with first generation AJR members



The magnificent conference room



Delegates on Day 2 of the conference



Michal Chojak, Dr Alessandro Bucci, Dr Angela Shapiro, Marc Cave, Olivia Marks Woldman

Giving voice to the silent

David Herman is a regular contributor to the AJR Journal and chaired a session at the conference. Here he captures some of the key outtakes of the proceedings.

The burgeoning interest in Holocaust testimony has coincided with dramatic changes in digital technology. There are now huge quantities of testimonies, over 100,000 gathered by 39 institutions in 21 countries. On the one hand, people are worrying about how to engage younger audiences by using new technology. On the other hand, and more disturbing, are issues of digital manipulation.

The AJR's conference addressed many of these issues and was full of surprises and insights. For example, during a session on *Producing Holocaust Testimonies*, Rosalyn Livshin pointed out how few Orthodox Jews had been interviewed before she began interviewing Holocaust survivors. In a private conversation, James Gilmore, from the US Holocaust Museum, agreed that this had been a worrying gap in their collection. Was this, I wondered, because of a secular bias among liberal, college-educated curators? He disagreed. The Orthodox community, he replied, was not always easy to break into.

Listening to survivors like Jackie Young and Kurt Marx and interviewers like Livshin and Natasha Kaplinsky, I wondered about the importance of language. How important is it to interview survivors in their own languages and how many interviewers speak fluent Yiddish, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish or any of the languages from what Timothy Snyder famously called "The Bloodlands"? Even fluent speakers can miss subtle nuances.

And, of course, the Iron Curtain played a crucial role in preventing western historians or interviewers gaining access to archives and to survivors. This has only begun to change since 1989/1991. The result has been a dramatic transformation



From L to R: Dr Barbara Warnock and Dr Christine Schmidt, David Herman, Dr Sara Jones, Dr Joanna Michlic

in our understanding of Holocaust history.

In an interesting paper, Christine Schmidt from the Wiener Holocaust Library explained how her colleague Eva Reichmann had hired Holocaust survivors to interview other Holocaust survivors. Were they an asset or a liability? Might they have allowed their own traumatic experiences to influence the way they heard other people's narratives? Were men like Boder open to asking women about their terrible experiences of rape and abortions in the camps?

Andrea Hammel quoted a German historian who said: "The eyewitness is the enemy of the historian." In a recent book, *After the Annex*, on Anne Frank's family and the others who hid with them in the annex in Amsterdam, Bas von Benda-Beckmann points out that the testimony of eyewitnesses who met his subjects is sometimes contradictory and not always reliable. "People's memories are both fallible and subjective," he writes. One witness recalled that at Westerbork the Franks "stood around my table quietly and controlled." Another, however, thought they seemed lost and bewildered. Did eyewitnesses who met the Franks in various camps feel obliged to have

some kind of memory of them when they became so famous?

In his acclaimed book, *The Final Solution*, the historian David Cesarani wrote that survivors "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." We should remember this when we read famous survivor-writers like Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel.

These are just some of the intriguing questions raised by this important conference. We are indebted to the speakers and especially to Bea Lewkowicz and her colleagues at the AJR.

A full version of this article can be seen on <https://www.thearticle.com/holocaust-testimony-giving-voice-to-the-silent>

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

One of the highlights of the two-day conference was the announcement of plans to establish a UK Holocaust Testimony Portal.

In recent decades some 2,500 separate testimonies from UK-based Holocaust survivors and refugees have been recorded in some way. These include large collections, such as the AJR's own 300-strong Refugee Voices Archive and the 112 interviews that were carried out by Natasha Kaplinsky for the Holocaust Commission (now the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation), and smaller, less public initiatives.

The portal will provide a gateway to readily

access all of these, enabling family members of interviewees, researchers and the wider public to cross reference interviewees by name and find out when and by which archive they have been interviewed. It will enable a user to find a theme, topic or even a place, such as Berlin or Auschwitz, for specific areas of research or interest, and it will allow the sharing of documents relating to an interviewee's life story.

As custodians of these precious testimonies of survivors and refugees who made new lives in the UK, the portal will facilitate better access and dissemination of UK Holocaust testimonies and help us to fulfil the wish expressed by most interviewees, to use their testimonies in order to learn from the past, so that history does not repeat again.

Announcing plans for the portal, Lord Pickles, UK Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, said: "In the fight against current Holocaust distortion and false equivalence, the Portal can play a vital role in helping us to learn as much as we can about the lives of all the survivors and refugees from Nazism, who had the courage to share their story. Above all, the Portal will ensure that their stories will be heard in the present and in the future and reflects our collective determination to pass on these stories for future generations."

The AJR is now convening a working group to fully scope out the UK Holocaust Testimony Portal. For more information please contact Dr Bea Lewkowicz at bea@ajr.org.uk.

WHAT DELEGATES SAID

"The opportunity to listen to excellent speakers in such a magnificent setting was a delight. It was good to hear that the concerns of all the delegates are similar, whether from a big or small organisation and the desire to do the best for our survivors and their testimonies is paramount.

The two days managed to reflect the diversity of disciplines and interests within the fields of Holocaust testimony, and simultaneously to create a sense of shared purpose and cohesiveness."

*Lynda Landsman and Sue Krasman
Holocaust Learning UK*

"It was a real learning experience and tremendous opportunity to liaise with so many people from such diverse organisations all concerned with Testimony. It was also interesting to see the different uses of these interviews in the Museums represented and, in the session on "Testimonies to Books" (with Daniel Finkelstein, Jonathan Freedland and Karen Baum Gordon) it was thought provoking to hear of their reliance on written testimony. So much scholarship at one venue."

Helen Norman, Jewish Care

"Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to go, though I attended only the second day. I learned that there is much more going on than I realised, was impressed also by the 2nd Gen speakers and have made useful contacts."

*Dr Martin Stern MBE,
Holocaust survivor*

"The topic was both extremely pertinent and timely. It was such a pleasure and a privilege for me to attend the conference with like-minded people, and even to meet one of my former 3rd generation interviewees."

*Jana Buresova, interviewer
for Refugee Voices*

"You pulled together a terrific range of speakers; some of the sessions were particularly outstanding."

*Olivia Marks-Woldman OBE,
Holocaust Memorial Day
Trust*

"The event was fascinating, with great speakers. I was not aware that so many institutions and individuals are dealing with the question of Holocaust testimonies in UK. It was really an eye-opening event for me."

Michał CHOJAK, YAHAD – IN UNUM



IN SAFE HANDS

AJR's Testimonies conference was the brainchild of Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Director of the AJR Refugee Voices Archive. Here Bea reflects on two remarkable days.

I was honoured, together with my colleagues from the AJR, to have been able to bring so many people together to discuss the importance of testimony.

There were many emotional moments. For example, during our session on 'Producing Holocaust Testimonies', one survivor, Jackie Young, became quite overwhelmed. As chair of

that session, I decided to simply wait for Jackie to continue. As Natasha Kaplinsky OBE commented after the session: "Sometimes silence says everything".

It was also very moving to hear Kurt Marx's son Michael tell us how his father only started to talk about his own experiences after the death of his wife, an Auschwitz survivor.

Emotions rose to the fore again when we heard authors Jonathan Freedland, Lord Daniel Finkelstein, and Karen Baum Gordon, read extracts from their respective books. Daniel Finkelstein

told us that he still feels emotional when sharing his parents' testimonies out loud (his new book *Hitler, Stalin, Mum and Dad* is being published this month).

At the end of these two days, I felt inspired by the many people I spoke with and felt reassured about the future path of Holocaust remembrance and Holocaust education in local, national, and international contexts. The hard work of the interviewers and interviewees in creating testimonies, manifested in the many hours of recordings captured in the last 50 years, will hopefully be in safe hands.

AJR FUNDING PARTNER

In April, thirty teachers joined the Holocaust Educational Trust's four-day Exploring the Holocaust: UK Residential Course in Leicester, courtesy of a grant awarded by the AJR.

Led by HET's teacher training team, the course gave those new to teaching about the Holocaust the confidence to teach, and helped those already teaching to advance their subject knowledge and to explore pedagogical challenges.

Several sessions were delivered by experts in the field. Mike Levy spoke about the history of the Kindertransport and the educational work of the Harwich Kindertransport Memorial and Learning Trust. Martin Winstone, Senior Historical Advisor to the Holocaust Educational Trust and Project Historian for the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial, led sessions on ghettos and the development of the 'Final Solution'. Teachers heard the testimony of Eva Clarke and engaged in a Q&A about her family story, and her experiences of sharing her testimony in schools. A few participants had never heard an in-person survivor testimony, teachers described the session as 'powerful' and 'riveting'.

Holocaust Educational Trust



AJR's Alex Maws addressing the course delegates

Teachers also visited the streets of Leicester to explore the pedagogy of site education. Led by Alex Maws, Head of Education and Heritage at the AJR, teachers were introduced to the UK Holocaust Map before visiting three sites connected to the story of Kindertransportees Irene and Helga Bejach, who stayed with the Attenborough family in Leicester. Teachers engaged with historical sources at each location, to explore how they might use www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk with their students.

The final day focused on the pedagogy of teaching about the Holocaust. Teachers heard from Dr Jess Kempner and Dr Alasdair Richardson from the University of Winchester. Dr Kempner spoke about her research exploring the engagement of refugee students in learning about the Holocaust. Dr Richardson presented his AJR-funded research project, which considers how educators can support the emotional learning of students at authentic Holocaust sites.

AJR's funding allowed the Trust to offer this course free of charge and also supported the provision of travel bursaries, ensuring that the course was accessible to all. Every teacher attending the course received a full set of adaptable teaching resources, suitable for students in upper primary, secondary, and further education. Attending teachers said that the course had exceeded their expectations: 'I've come away with resources, connections, reassurance and more confidence. It's been brilliant. Best CPD I've ever had'.

Many reported that the course had encouraged them to continue their professional development in teaching and learning about the Holocaust. Five of these teachers went on HET's four-day site-based Teacher Study Visit to Munich and Nuremberg in May and two will attend the Trust's Advanced ten-day Annual Teacher Training course at Yad Vashem in July.

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

You could be forgiven for thinking that for Czech-born sculptor **Maria Bartuszova**, life seemed to begin and end with a circle. Working under the totalitarian restrictions of the Soviet regime, many artists like her struggled to reveal their creativity in face of the genuine political hazards they were forced to negotiate. But in many ways her achievement came about as a virtual accident, discovered when playing with an inflatable balloon with her daughter.

Between working on commissions and bringing up her family, Bartuszova discovered a circular world she could explore, develop or break, as society around her narrowed. In her case the solid yet delicate structure of the round shape opened up exciting new perceptions in the natural and rediscovered world. Her inspiration was totally spiritual and emblematic and followed the laws of the universe and gravity itself. These works, whether perfectly rounded or shattered into dozens of ensuing shapes, retain the innocent whiteness of an egg – a story of birth and regeneration.

Working mainly in the Slovak city of Košice, Bartuszova was influenced by Chinese art and culture and Taoist and Buddhist philosophy but she was always guided by her love of nature and a sculptural sense of the tactile and the sensual. Virtually unknown until 2007 – she died in 1996 – in her quiet, undemonstrative way she produced an oeuvre of around 500 sculptural pieces.

In its current exhibition, **Maria Bartuszova** which runs until June 25, **Tate Modern** presents 50 of her delicate plaster works with bronze casts and aluminium reliefs, many seen for the first time in the UK. The exhibition spans 30 years of her practice to the late 80s. Her delicate looking yet solid sculptures morph into various forms without ever losing their purest essence.

By the early 1960s, her more abstract sculptures were inspired by universal shapes, from the human body to the weather,

reproductive systems, and even death and decay. Her interest in the natural world is reflected in her larger plaster forms, said to resemble wheat grains and raindrops.

Her technique was a true journey of discovery. She was playing with an inflatable balloon with her daughter, and then thought she would try casting with balloons, a process she called “gravistimulation”. The technique involved pouring liquid plaster into a small balloon and shaping it. The process enabled her to model abstract forms using a combination of gravity, air pressure and touch, often placing the forms in water before repeating the process quickly, producing artworks that were at once solid and delicate.

Later, in the 1980s, she began to pour plaster over the inflated balloons and as the material hardened the balloon would burst. She called this “pneumatic casting” and described it as “a tiny void full of a tiny infinite universe”. The finished result could be as surprising to her as to her audience. What is innovative about her white plaster abstracts is the traces left by her own hand, either pressed and formed by gravity or under water, or even shaped by her breath as she cast plaster with inflated balloons.

Most of her images are sensual and pleasing to the eye, and some are definitely sexual. But as they seem very much an expression of the

Maria Bartuszova
in her studio in
Kosice, Slovakia
1987-88



accident in art, it is hard to read what design she had in mind or what meaning she would ascribe to them. The smaller pieces are very delicate yet nonetheless invite you to touch them and turn them over in your hand.

There is a child-like playfulness and innocence about these sculptures. But they are also influenced by therapy and meditation. Some are known as “folded” sculptures of multiple parts, which can be put together like a puzzle. They have proved particularly attractive to blind or partially sighted children in workshops which allow them to explore the sculptures using movement and touch, and in this her art proved very successful.

Towards the end of her life Bartuszova placed her artworks in the trees in her garden and then photographed them, providing an eternal link between nature and art.

Annely Juda Fine Art

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(off New Bond Street)
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**CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

A MEMORY OF JERRY SPRINGER

Jerry Springer, taken during his 2014 meeting with Anthony Grenville in Golders Hill Park

Jerry Springer, the controversial TV host famed for his eponymous and provocative talkshow *The Jerry Springer Show*, passed away on 27 April, aged 79.

After getting his start in politics as the mayor of Cincinnati, Springer transitioned to television news. His daytime talk show was originally intended as a serious journalistic endeavour, but quickly evolved into a showcase of some of the more dysfunctional and unsavoury elements of American life. Complete with fights, blurred nudity, and bleeped profanity, the show was a ratings juggernaut, even eclipsing *The Oprah Winfrey Show* during its prime.

After hosting the show for almost three decades Springer went on to host *America's Got Talent* and *Judge Jerry*, a spinoff of the popular *Judge Judy* show. He was a popular if controversial character who even inspired an opera. What is perhaps lesser known is that Springer was born in London during WW2 to Jewish refugees escaping the Holocaust. It was in this guise that he met up with **Dr Anthony Grenville**, former Consultant Editor of and still regular contributor to the *AJR Journal*, who takes up the story:

In 2008, I was asked to act as historical adviser to the BBC TV series *Who Do You Think You Are?* for the episode on Jerry Springer, who has died aged 79. I had no idea that the brash, abrasive American talk show host was the son of German-Jewish refugees who had fled to Britain in 1939, nor that he had been born here and brought up in East Finchley. As it happens, I was also born in 1944, and I was brought up in Temple Fortune, north of Golders Green, just the other side of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. So when I was summoned to Golders Hill Park to meet Springer, freshly arrived from



Heathrow, I knew that we had a certain amount in common.

Jerry Springer turned out to be completely different in private from his TV persona: an intelligent and sensitive man, very concerned about his family story but with very little information about it. As I was an experienced interviewer, thanks to my part in directing the AJR's *Refugee Voices* project, the *Who Do You Think You Are?* team soon realised that I did not need their direction in conducting what was effectively an interview with Jerry Springer. It lasted a good hour, though only a few minutes were included in the TV programme. That was mainly concerned with events in Germany and in occupied Poland, to where both Springer's widowed grandmothers had been deported and murdered. He was deeply moved by the experience of visiting the sites of those events and learning what had happened to his relatives. I would recommend watching the programme for that reason: the impact of the Holocaust on a descendant of murdered victims over sixty years after the event.

One memorable exchange occurred when I asked Jerry Springer about his parents' experience of Britain. He replied that they had been very content here: his father had started a small business, his mother had friends to play bridge with, and they both greatly admired the resilience of the British civilian population during the war. I was

puzzled: why then, if his parents were happy here, had they emigrated to the United States in 1949? Springer replied that his father had told him that they had gone through two world wars in Europe and did not want to experience another. He illustrated his point with a story. When his father had grown old, he had become unsafe to drive, and every time he got into the car, his mother had grown anxious. So Springer had a talk with his father. 'Dad', he said, 'whenever you get into that car, mom gets anxious. You really should give up driving and sell the car.' 'Jerry', his father replied, 'I'm never going to sell that car. You never know when you're going to have to run away.' Upon which Jerry Springer burst into tears.

At first, I was disconcerted. 'What have I done?', I thought, 'I've reduced Jerry Springer to tears!' But in reality my questions had uncovered a hidden trauma, a combination of fear and distress that had been transmitted from the generation of the victims of Nazi persecution to the generation of their children; it sometimes lived on beneath the surface of even the most outwardly self-assured of them.

To my astonishment, that exchange was cut from the version of the episode transmitted to the world. It would have made excellent television.

Anthony Grenville

MEET THE KINDER

AJR representatives are holding 1-2-1 meetings with various Kinder this year in preparation for the more formal commemorations surrounding the 85th anniversary of the Kindertransport in November. These are four of the Kinder Danny Kalman (Chair of the Kindertransport group) and Michael Newman (AJR's CEO) recently met.

KURT EICHNER



Kurt was born in Vienna. His family lived opposite a police station and his father was friendly with many officers. He recalls seeing a synagogue on fire during Kristallnacht and knows that his father tried to leave Austria afterwards but was picked up in France and sent to Auschwitz, which he miraculously survived. Kurt's mother and many other family members were sadly murdered in the camps.

Kurt himself came to the UK via Kindertransport in July 1939 from Vienna with his older sister. He was aged 12 and spoke very little English and his only memory of the journey was crossing the border into

Holland, where he was given sweets and drinks by smiling Dutch women.

After a few weeks in the East End he was evacuated to Old Welwyn when war broke out. He remembers being in a hospital in Hertford, having had his appendix out, and being surrounded by injured soldiers.

After the war he and his sister went to Lyons, France, to be reunited with his father and meet his father's heavily pregnant new wife. Kurt returned to the UK to become an apprentice diamond polisher and remained in the diamond business for all of his career.

LIANA LESSER



Liana was born in Sudetenland, an area of Czechoslovakia which had a majority ethnic German population. Her parents were divorced and Liana had a happy childhood living with her mother and seeing her father at weekends.

In June 1939 eight year old Liana travelled by Kindertransport from Prague and stayed with a schoolteacher on the Isle of Anglesey

in Wales. She continued to get letters from her parents which then stopped and she later found out that both had been murdered in camps.

Liana was educated in Anglesey and soon decided she wanted to be a nurse. She moved to Birmingham to study and remained there and her two daughters both live nearby.

EVA LING



Eva was born in East Prussia (now Poland) to a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, which initially gave the family some protection. Tragically, her mother was killed in a bombing raid in Germany not long after Eva and her older brother travelled on Kindertransport from Dusseldorf. Her father remarried and went to live in Australia after the war; sadly, Eva never saw him again.

Eva and her brother had been sponsored by a Yorkshire businessman who bought a house in Bradford and employed a housekeeper to look after them. Eva stayed in Bradford until she left school, when she moved to London to study botany and chemistry. She met and married Noel, a doctor, and they eventually settled in Birmingham. She has two daughters and three grandchildren.

FRANCIS WAHLE



Francis travelled on a Kindertransport in January 1939 with his younger sister. She was 7 and he was 9. No parents were allowed on the platform "to avoid scenes".

Although all four of his grandparents were Jewish Francis had been raised as a Catholic, and it was the Catholic Refugee Committee who helped them come to London. Francis was taken to a Catholic-run hostel in Crawley: his sister was looked after by the Sisters of Zion.

Their parents managed to stay in open hiding in Vienna, moving from address to address. Their father was a Judge who after the war drafted first restitution laws. Their mother interpreted at a UNESCO conference in Paris and travelled on to London to see her children.

Francis studied Accountancy and then worked for the John Lewis partnership but yearned to go into the church. He became a priest in Enfield and then Queensway, and he still helps out at various parishes.

REVIEWS

THE LIGHT OF DAYS: THE UNTOLD STORY OF WOMEN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS IN HITLER'S GHETTOS

Judy Batalion
Virago

Author Judy Batalion has dedicated this book "In honour of all the Jewish women of Poland who resisted the Nazi regime". It tells the story of "ghetto girls" who paid off Gestapo guards, hid revolvers in loaves of bread and helped build underground bunkers. They flirted with Nazis, bought them off with wine, whisky and pastry and shot and killed them. They dressed up as non-Jews, worked as maids on the Aryan side of town, facilitated daring escapes, bribed executioners and were bearers of the dreadful truth about what was happening to Jews.

In addition to ghetto fighters, Jewish women – witnesses to the brutal murder of families and neighbours – fled to forests and enlisted in partisan units, carrying out sabotage and intelligence missions. Stories of their bravery are hair-raising and their ingenuity spellbinding.

The book's central character, Renia Kukielka, emerged as an 18-year-old orphaned warrior in the underground resistance youth movement in Będzin, southern Poland in 1943. As deportations started, groups sprung to action from hideouts in bunkers, sabotaging Nazi efforts throughout the country, arranging escapes and forging documents. Although betrayal was a constant hazard they were sometimes shown great compassion by unlikely people but could never stay in one place long. Always on the lookout for problems, they had frequent narrow escapes and employed great stealth with their incredibly brave exploits, throwing "Molotov cocktail" bombs, using false identities and hiding in sewage canals.

They had the satisfaction of aiding ghetto uprisings, including most famously in Warsaw, and thwarting the Nazis but life remained extremely tough and precarious. Food was scarce and unpalatable and bugs and disease abounded. Prison, concentration

camps and torture were an ever-present nightmare and this is a very gruelling and difficult aspect of the book. They undertook arduous border crossings from country to country guided by smugglers over hazardous snowy mountains. A great many of the warriors failed to survive the war and those that did suffered from death marches, starvation and disease and Renia's own story is harrowing. Throughout this time secret memoirs were written. In fact, Judy – who had four Polish grandparents – was inspired after finding an anthology penned in Yiddish in the British Library entitled *Frauen in die Ghettos* (Women in the Ghettos) published in 1946.

Miraculously there were happy endings and Judy visited survivors in Israel who not only got through the war but led fruitful lives including producing children and grandchildren. This is a particularly uplifting and thoughtful part of the narrative. It brings to the fore the stories of those women, aged only about 20, whose stories had all but vanished from history. A gallery of old photos shows some of the courier girls during the war and afterwards. Renia, always feisty and glamorous into old age, is pictured on the front cover in Budapest in 1944 while making aliyah. Inside you can read about her sister Sarah who looked after Jewish orphans, as well as Zivia, Frumka, Hantze, Tosia, Vladka, Chajke, Gusta, Hela, Bela, Chasia, Ruzka, Vitka, Zeldia, Faye and Anna. It is a very energetic and fascinating memoir.

Janet Weston

ZEV'S CHILDREN by Kenneth Collins Valentine Mitchell

Kenneth Collins tells the family history of his great grandfather, Zev Kagarlitsky's 15 children (from his two marriages) and their descendants, from the family's origins in Kovshevata, Ukraine up to 2021 when the book was published.

Kenneth, who was born in Glasgow, now lives with his wife Irene in Jerusalem. He is a former GP, a Senior research fellow for the Centre for the History of Medicine at the University of Glasgow and Visiting Professor, History of Medicine, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is also a past President of Glasgow Jewish Representative Council and currently the

Chair of the Scottish Jewish Archive Centre located at Garnethill Synagogue, Glasgow.

The book is an incredibly detailed and personal narrative. By means of painstaking research, communication and discussion with numerous family members and location visits, the author has accumulated a carefully constructed history of his family spanning more than 160 years.

Zev was born in 1854 and passed away in Tel Aviv in 1931. The book takes us on a journey from Russia (Zev's birthplace at the time was in the Russian Empire) to Scotland, the USA, Argentina, London and Israel. The family's life experiences, religious, cultural, educational and social, are widespread and varied. They encompass pogroms in Russia, WW1 and WW2, the Holocaust and Israel's War of Independence. The contributions made by the author's family to the countries in which they resided were, in most instances, memorable. There were a number of sad endings to the lives of some of his family members which, perhaps, was to be expected given the size of the extended family and the times in which they lived.

His story of the Collins family's life in the religious social and business life of Glasgow resonates with me personally as a Glaswegian whose early years were lived in the Gorbals, which was the beating heart of the Glasgow Jewish Community for over half a century. His recollections of the characters within the Great Central Synagogue in Glasgow brought back to me some fond childhood memories.

The book is a respectful and warm tribute to a family whose history has now been preserved for future generations.
Edward Isaacs LLB NP
Past President
Glasgow Jewish Representative Council

THE HOLOCAUST: AN UNFINISHED HISTORY Dan Stone Penguin Random House

There is such an immense literature on the Holocaust that one might now think there is nothing left to say. Dan Stone proves this supposition wrong by indicating that 'there are still many topics which remain understudied' and that a shift of emphasis

in the public understanding is necessary. As background to the Holocaust he points out that the age of nationalism furthered the idea of the nation as constituted by one homogenous people. This produced a 'narrowly defined national belonging' in which the Jews were always placed among the outsiders, for they were 'the traditional Other of the Christian West'. Furthermore, in the early twentieth century racist thinking was normal and eugenics was widely accepted.

The title to Chapter Six – 'A continental-wide crime' – is particularly significant. Stone wishes to emphasize that 'Europe as a whole was susceptible to the "collective intoxication" of Nazism.' He points to the 'willing participation of so many collaborators across Europe...In Norway, France and Hungary, local police rounded up, guarded and deported Jews'. In eastern Europe the Nazis also found willing members for the auxiliary police forces


they created. Furthermore, the Holocaust was not just a European affair "for Jews in North Africa were subject to French and Italian racial laws, had their property stolen, and were interned and made to perform forced labour".


Another main point is that the industrial killings in the gas chambers are only half of the story. "The first new purpose-built gas chamber and crematorium in Birkenau did not become operational until March 1943, when the large majority of the Holocaust's victims were already dead'. Almost half of the Nazi's victims either died of starvation in the ghettos "or were shot in face-to-face killings".

The book's sub-title – 'An Unfinished History' – suggests that it's not all over. Firstly, it didn't all end in May 1945. "Liberation", then, needs to be understood in inverted commas; many survivors died soon afterwards, too ill to be helped, and many more.....were shocked to discover

that they remained captive, unable to go where they wanted'. They also suffered the immense loneliness of the loss of their relatives and friends and the destruction of the whole communities in which they had grown up. Secondly, Stone is not happy with the current state of the world. Antisemitism and other fascistic ideas have not gone away: "We live in an age of increasing nationalism, right-wing populism and xenophobia". What might this lead to? "Fascism is not yet in power. But it is knocking at the door."

Stone has published extensively on the Holocaust, so this well-written, powerful, persuasive and very clear-minded analysis is the product of immense research. In conclusion Stone suggests that "In many ways we failed unflinchingly to face the terrible reality of the Holocaust". But who could face the reality and not flinch before the staggering inhumanity?
Michael Levin


**Boat Trip
with
Afternoon Tea**
THURSDAY 13 JULY 2023



Please join us for a riverboat trip and afternoon tea on the Thames from Henley

Coach pick-ups in Finchley Road and Edgware

For full details and a booking form please contact Karen Diamond at karendiamond@ajr.org.uk or Ros Hart at roshart@ajr.org.uk


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£18.00 pp

Please contact Agnes Isaacs for details on agnes@ajr.org.uk or 07908 156 361


JOIN US FOR A HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR OF LONDON'S JEWISH EAST END
TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023



Join us for a 90 minute active walking tour of London's Jewish East End starting from Liverpool Street station

Followed by a delicious lunch of vegetarian Middle Eastern sharing plates at a local restaurant.

Spaces are extremely limited so enquire now!

Please email Karen Diamond for a booking form and full details on karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

OBITUARIES

Gerald HELLMAN

Born: 1 July 1925, Nuremberg

Died: 27 February 2023, London



Gerald's early childhood was happy and comfortable, with his older brother Paul and his parents Leonora and Fred. His father owned a large basket weaving factory, with its own railway sidings, in a small village near Coburg.

Life changed dramatically in 1933 when the Nazis came to power. One day, his father was tipped off that the Nazis were waiting to arrest him and take him to Dachau. His father left Germany that evening for London, with one suitcase, warning the entire family to get out. When his mother phoned for plane tickets to London, the Gestapo phoned to say they had listened in and would arrest them if they tried to leave. Instead, they left by train and crossed the border on 1st April 1933.

Gerald came to Britain as a young refugee, living with his family in a boarding house in Swiss cottage. In 1939 he was evacuated to Minehead in Somerset. Returning to London in 1942 he witnessed the bombing, destruction and damage to homes. Life was hard, living with rations, air-raids, travel restrictions, whilst doing important war-work.

As the artist Charles Moxon, who painted a prize-winning portrait of Gerald, commented "Gerald Hellman is a story of optimism. Despite his past, he emanates a jovial spirit, inspiring all those he encounters." Gerald was very proud that this portrait was hung alongside paintings of the late Queen at the Royal Society of Portrait Painters exhibition in London's Mall Gallery.

Gerald's first job, with a firm manufacturing office machinery, lasted for 15 years. He attended evening classes to qualify as a Cost and Works Accountant and went on to lecture on Business Management, to evening class students, at Hendon Polytechnic. His career culminated in becoming Managing Director of the second largest photographic studio in the UK and a printing business for the arts, music and theatre world. He retired at 70.

At the Venture Lawn Tennis Club Gerald met his love match in Marianne, at the age of 28. They married and settled in Kingsbury, their home for 65 years. He enjoyed and took pride in seeing his three children, their partners and his four grandchildren develop their own lives and careers. Gerald also took a keen interest in tracing his family roots. He communicated with family across the world – Australia, Singapore, Europe and USA, to create his family tree dating back to 1778.

In 1952 Gerald and Marianne joined B'nai B'rith and in 1983 Gerald became President of the B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge. For the AJR he regularly organised panels of speakers, lit candles for Chanukah and said Friday night prayers at Heinrich Stahl House. He listened patiently to people's history, always had a friendly word and helped staff when there was a shortage.

Gerald's mother was a Cohen and was keen that her children had a religious upbringing. Paul, his brother, was the first refugee to be Bar Mitzvah at Hampstead Synagogue in 1933. Gerald was honoured by the Synagogue to carry a scroll around the newly inaugurated Junior Hampstead Synagogue. After his father died in 1966, Belsize Square Synagogue featured largely in his life.

Gerald was keen to impart his extensive

knowledge of Jewish culture, particularly to the younger generation. He visited schools and also mentored Ruby, a Bat Mitzvah girl. Advice he gave her on her Bat Mitzvah captures his positive attitude to life: "Learn your parsha, then just enjoy the day. Be proud that you are entering Jewish adulthood and remember that life is what you make of it. Be a good person, be honest, make people happy; get through the tough times and be grateful for the good".

Gerald embraced change. During Covid, he learnt how to use Alexa so he could talk to family and friends, and how to use Zoom for Friday night Shabbat and to join AJR events. He kept his body and mind active right until the end. The week before he passed away, he went to the Holocaust Centre to play Rummikub on Monday, attended the art club on Tuesday and went out to lunch at Giacomo's with members of Belsize Square synagogue on Thursday – exhausting for someone half his age!

Gerald was a man of character, incredible warmth and contentment, with a real zest for life, leaving a lasting legacy for those dear to him. He will be so deeply missed by family and friends, but his memory will live forever in their hearts.

Anthony, Yvonne and Susan Hellman



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Benjamin FERENCZ

Born: 11 March 1920, Transylvania

Died: 7 April 2023, Florida, USA

When Benjamin Ferencz died the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington tweeted: “Today the world lost one of the leaders who led the pursuit of justice for the victims of the Holocaust.” He was the last surviving prosecutor of the Nuremberg Trials.

Born into a Jewish family in Transylvania, Benjamin Berell Ferencz came to New York before his first birthday, graduated from Harvard Law School, witnessed the liberation of several concentration camps, was a prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials, pioneered the return of property to Holocaust survivors after the war, led reparation negotiations between Israel and West Germany and fought for an International Criminal Court.

His life was a classic rags to riches story which he later told in his memoir, *Parting Words: 9 Lessons for a Remarkable Life* (2020). He was born in a peasant cottage without any running water, toilet or electricity. His family fled antisemitism and came to New York. His father, ‘a one-eyed shoemaker,’ worked as a janitor in Hell’s Kitchen. Benjamin got into City College without a high school diploma and was then awarded a scholarship to Harvard Law School.

After Harvard, Ferencz enlisted in the US Army and in 1945 began investigating war crimes for General Patton’s Third Army. He visited ‘about ten camps,’ including Buchenwald and Mauthausen, and describes the scene: ‘Bodies lying all over the ground, some dead, some wounded, begging, weak, pleading with their eyes for something... . They were scenes of indescribable horror.’ His job

was to track down any evidence he could find. He knew the Nazis would deny everything. In a 2005 interview in *The Washington Post* he said,

‘You know how I got witness statements? I’d go into a village where, say, an American pilot had parachuted and been beaten to death and line everyone one up against the wall. Then I’d say, “Anyone who lies will be shot on the spot.”’

He was then appointed as the chief prosecutor for the United States Army at the Einsatzgruppen Trial (1947-8) at Nuremberg. His main breakthrough came in finding key evidence against the *Einsatzgruppen*, who had killed countless Jews on the Eastern Front. ‘[W]e had in our hands clear-cut evidence of genocide,’ he wrote later. All of the 22 accused were convicted; 13 of them received death sentences, of which four were eventually carried out. ‘I was twenty-seven years old,’ he wrote in his memoir. ‘It was my first ever case.’

Ferencz was also a special counsel in prosecuting a dozen directors of the Krupp company, including the owner, Alfred Krupp, accused of enabling the Nazis to wage aggressive war by manufacturing armaments, and of working slave labour, mostly Jews from Auschwitz, to death. In 1948 the court found eleven defendants guilty and sentenced them to prison terms of three to twelve years but by 1951 all had been released, and by 1953 Alfred Krupp had resumed control of his company.

After the Nuremberg Trials ended, Ferencz remained in West Germany and helped Jewish groups negotiate a reparations settlement in 1952 under which West Germany agreed

to pay \$822 million to Israel and to groups representing survivors of Nazi persecution. But only \$125 million of the compensation went to victims; IG Farben, for example, gave only \$825 per victim for years of horrific treatment.

In 1956, he returned to New York and entered private law practice as a partner of Telford Taylor. In the late 1960s and early '70s, he gradually withdrew from private law practice to write books and to campaign for a permanent international criminal court. He published a number of books on international law including *Defining International Aggression: The Search for World Peace* (1975), *An International Criminal Court: A Step Toward World Peace* (1980), and *Enforcing International Law* (1983).

In 2016, he gave \$1 million and pledged millions more to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington for its Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide.

In 1946 he married Gertrude Fried. They had four children and were married for 73 years until her death in 2019. He is survived by his four children and three grandchildren.

David Herman

www.fishburnbooks.com

Jonathan Fishburn

buys and sells Jewish and Hebrew books, ephemera and items of Jewish interest.

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

Contact Jonathan on
020 8455 9139 or 07813 803 889
for more information

IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	TIME	IN PERSON MEETING	CO-ORDINATOR
Thursday 1 June	2.00pm	Pinner	Karen Diamond
Monday 5 June	2.00pm	Hampstead <i>Jonathan Bergwerk, on Jerome Robbins</i>	Ros Hart
Wednesday 7 June	12 noon	Bristol	Ros Hart
Tuesday 13 June	11.30am	Wembley	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 14 June	All day	Scotland & Newcastle	Agnes Isaacs
Wednesday 14 June	2.00pm	Brighton	Ros Hart
Thursday 15 June	2.00pm	Bushey <i>Nick Dobson, on an Underground Guide to 1950's London</i>	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 21 June	12.30pm	Edgware	Ros Hart
Tuesday 27 June	10.30am	Ealing	Ros Hart
Wednesday 28 June	2.00pm	St Albans	Ros Hart

CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY DETAILS TO FOLLOW

Monday 7 August	Special screening of <i>The Tiger who came to Tea</i> , to celebrate the centenary of Judith Kerr
Tuesday 8 August	Fish & Chips in Southend
Tuesday 5 September	Brighton Royal Pavilion and walking tour with a Jewish twist
Wednesday 13 September	Trip to Sandwich

Books Bought

MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

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ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk

ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 12 June @ 4pm	Monique Rubens Krohn – <i>The Road to Freedom</i> https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82371241025	Meeting ID: 823 7124 1025
Wednesday 14 June @ 2pm	Rachel Meller, author – <i>The Box with the Sunflower Clasp</i> https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88204357050	Meeting ID: 882 0435 7050
Monday 19 June @ 4pm	Mark Lewis – <i>The social history of cutlery</i> https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87840195254	Meeting ID: 878 4019 5254
Wednesday 21 June @ 2pm	AJR Book Discussion (no speaker) <i>All About Me: My Remarkable Life in Show Business</i> by Mel Brooks https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87284201467	Meeting ID: 872 8420 1467
Thursday 29 June @ 3.30pm	Kinder Contact Project https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86964357591	Meeting ID: 8696 435 7591

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	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	Dance Yourself Fit with Jackie Turner https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86302485494	Meeting ID: 8630 248 5494



Published by The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), a company limited by guarantee.

Registered office: Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, Finchley, London N3 1HF

Registered in England and Wales with charity number: 1149882 and company number: 8220991

Telephone 020 8385 3070 e-mail editorial@ajr.org.uk

For the latest AJR news, including details of forthcoming events and information about our services, visit www.ajr.org.uk

— Printed by FBprinters | Tel: 020 8458 3220 | Email: info@fbprinters.com —

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