



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Poles apart in reality



Refugees by Josef Herman c. 1941

In 1938 my father, Josef Herman, left Warsaw. Years later, he described the scene: “On the platform to see me off, besides my mother and father, there were only two of my closest friends... First my mother, then my father, then my two friends somehow managed to get near my window. Even so, I am sure that they did not hear my last good-bye. I did not hear theirs.” He never returned and never saw any of his family again.

A few weeks ago, I went to Warsaw. A painting of my father’s was to be shown at The Zachęta National Gallery of Art in the centre of Warsaw, just a few minutes from the Old Town. It was the first time a painting of his had been shown in a major museum in

Warsaw since he fled eighty years ago. The painting is called Refugees. It shows a Jewish family fleeing for their lives and was one of his first paintings after arriving in Britain in 1940. The day before the exhibition opened
Continued on page 2

PRESERVING THE PAST

For anyone interested in writing their memoirs or safeguarding their archives, the articles on pages 10 & 11 will make a very useful read.

We also carry several interesting commentaries on living with and learning from the past, as well as a lovely account of a statuette reunited with its rightful owners.

Thank you for all your letters, which include some lively contributions to our monthly debates. Please keep them coming.

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Poles apart in reality (cont.)

I went to POLIN, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews which opened in 2013. It is a magnificent museum, dedicated to telling the thousand-year history of Jews in Poland. It does not pull its punches when it comes to covering the terrible Cossacks in the 17th century to the dark mid-20th century.

It bravely chronicles the history of Polish antisemitism before and after the war. In 1934 a Jewish professor at the University of Warsaw was murdered. In 1936 there were more than 150 antisemitic incidents in Poland and Jewish shops were boycotted. "Ghetto benches" were introduced in universities, separate seats for Jewish students, and the *numerus clausus* restricted the number of Jewish students. It was because of this mounting antisemitism that my father left Warsaw, a year before the Nazi invasion.

The exhibition makes clear, however, that this antisemitism continued *after* the Nazi occupation. From 1944 there were attacks on Jews by Poles on trains and at railway stations. Jewish shops were looted. There were numerous pogroms, most famously at Kielce in July 1946 when more than forty Jews were killed.

There were further outbreaks of antisemitism in the mid-1950s and between 1956-60 around 50,000 Jews left Poland. There was another round of state-sponsored antisemitism in the Sixties and a further 13,000 Polish Jews left, mostly for Israel.

In 1985, the French documentary-maker, Claude Lanzmann, released his masterpiece, *Shoah*, perhaps the greatest film made about the Holocaust. Much of it was filmed in Poland and the most controversial scenes showed that antisemitism was still alive among Polish Catholic peasants. This sparked huge controversy in Poland.

The issue has not gone away after the fall of Communism. If anything, it has intensified in recent years. The charge by some Polish historians has been that not only were Polish villagers aware of the mass murder of Jews, but they even participated in it. In 2001 the Polish historian Jan T. Gross published his book, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. In 1941, writes Gross, about half the men of Jedwabne's Catholic community were involved in the massacre of their Jewish neighbours. They didn't just

kill their neighbours. Poles, he argued, took everything from their Jewish neighbours, from boots and pillows to their homes.

Gross was imprisoned in Poland for five months during the antisemitic purges in 1968, left with his parents in 1969, and now teaches in America. Since *Neighbors* he has published two further books on Polish antisemitism: *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland After Auschwitz* (2006), in which he examined Polish antisemitism after the war, in particular the pogrom at Kielce in 1946, and *Golden Harvest* (2011), co-written with his wife, about how Poles looted and stole from Polish Jews during the war. This wholesale robbery, Gross makes clear, often went hand in hand with violence as Jews were tortured to reveal where they had hidden their 'gold' or were brutally killed by Polish lynch mobs before their belongings were taken and shared out.

In 2011, in his book, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland*, another Polish historian, Jan Grabowski, alleged that in one area of rural Poland hundreds of Jews were betrayed and murdered in direct or indirect ways by their Polish neighbours. In an article published in *Ha'aretz* in 2017 he told the interviewer that perhaps as many as 200,000 Polish Jews were killed by Poles.

This is the background to the current debates about Poles and the Holocaust. For some years historians have accused Poles of antisemitism, during and after the war. At first, the Polish government faced up to the charges. In 2001 Poland's president and prime minister were among 3,000 people who attended the unveiling of a monument at the site of the massacre at Jedwabne. President Kwasniewski issued an apology: "For this crime, we should beg the souls of the dead and their families for forgiveness. This is why today, as a citizen and as president of the Republic of Poland, I apologise."

But President Duda, elected in 2015, takes a very different view. He has gone on the offensive and the whole atmosphere in Poland has changed. A recent poll found that Poland has the highest rate of antisemitism in eastern Europe, with 42% saying that Jews have too much control over global affairs. In a very short time, Poland has criminalised questioning Polish culpability in the Holocaust, restricted recovery of Holocaust-era property and alleged that there were "Jewish perpetrators" of the Holocaust as well as Poles.

At the beginning of February, President Duda approved a bill which outlaws blaming Poland for Holocaust crimes committed by Nazi Germany. This may seem reasonable enough. Who could argue that Nazi concentration and death camps in Poland should not be called "Polish camps"? They were German camps on occupied Polish soil. As the Israeli Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer has written, "No serious organisation or government will disagree with that position."

However, critics argue that the main purpose of this new law is to stifle debate about Polish atrocities against Jews. The Polish government, wrote Bauer, is "threatening freedom of speech, research and publication."

In addition to this new legislation there is a growing atmosphere of antisemitism in Poland. In a recent article, *Algemeiner* wrote on February 26, "Antisemitic images and cartoons continue to flood the Polish press".

What surprised me on my visit to Warsaw was that a number of young professional people I spoke to, liberal in every other respect, defended their government's position and argued that Poland was under attack from the west on this issue. Once again, Polish Jews are talking of leaving for Israel, a fourth wave of emigrants since the war.

I was deeply touched to see my father's painting exhibited in the city of his birth. But I am sorry to see the general lack of recognition of a remarkable generation of Polish Jewish refugee artists in their homeland and, more worrying still, signs of an increase in Polish antisemitism.

David Herman



RITA'S BOOK CLUB

We are relocating from
Josephs Book Store to
The Bungalow at Clara Nehab House

Come and join us for discussion,
refreshments and good company

2pm – 3.30pm
Wednesday 18th April 2018

Any queries please speak to
Karen Diamond
karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

CROYDON CARED



Croydon in 1938

The AJR has recently been sent a report containing details of approximately 30 Kindertransport children who were educated in the London Borough of Croydon from 1938 onwards.

The report was compiled in 2011 by former Consultant Education Archivist, Dr. Ron Cox. Tantalisingly sparse snippets of information emerge, such as that the Borough's Education Officer instructed teachers to allow Jewish children to leave school at 3.45 pm on Fridays, in order to observe the Sabbath. Schols were also given advice on helping the children settle in.

Dr. David Cox is now in possession of his father's archival papers and is happy to be emailed by any former Kinder who were sent to the Croydon area, at davidcox357@btinternet.com

DEBATE OF THE MONTH



Chelsea players Charly Musonda, Eden Hazard and Ross Barkley helped launch the club's "Say No to Antisemitism" campaign in January.

ANTISEMITISM IN FOOTBALL

Last month the FA Chief Executive had to apologise "for any offence" after comparing the Star of David with symbols such as the Nazi swastika. A few days later an Arsenal supporter was video'd singing 'gas them all' in relation to Tottenham

Hotspur supporters. Is antisemitism simply endemic in football and what else can be done about it?

Email editorial@ajr.org.uk with your thoughts.

100 NOT OUT!

The AJR wishes a hearty mazeltov to our member Robert Ehrenstein, who recently celebrated his 100th birthday.


Robert was born in Vienna in February 1918, during the closing months of WW1. He studied Medicine but was forced to give this up in 1938 when the Nazis marched into Austria. He fled via France to England, where after the war he became the manager of the Candlelight Club.

Within dancing distance of the Dorice restaurant, the Candlelight Club was a popular haunt for Jewish refugees near the "Finchleystrasse". It was owned by a Mrs Lechner, apparently a distant relative (in fact Robert had married her daughter in 1943 though it was not to last). In 1947, when Robert took over, the club had a huge following with dances every weekend, afternoon teas and a restaurant serving dinners seven days a week. Customers queued to buy cakes made by a Viennese pastry chef. Robert managed the club for over 10 years, and met Helen in 1956 who he went on to marry. Their wedding reception was in the Candlelight Club, before the club was eventually closed in 1958.


From the early 1960s Robert worked for the fashion house Dereta, rising to become Export Director. Sadly, Helen died in 2015 after a long illness during which Robert devotedly cared for her. Robert has two children, nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

When asked to what he attributes his longevity Robert replied 'a healthy diet with fresh garden produce, permitting the occasional indulgence in sweet things - notably on important birthdays'.






Kindertransport
A special interest group of
The Association of Jewish Refugees



LUNCH

Wednesday 11 April 2018
At Alyth Gardens Synagogue
12.30pm

We are delighted to be joined by
Marion Trestler
Author of From Vienna to London



The book is a selection of photographic portraits and biographical essays of Austrians who fled to the UK during the 1930's, many of whom arrived via Kindertransport

Call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070
or email susan@ajr.org.uk

Booking is essential
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£7.00 per person

“Will we ever learn?”

Kurt Marx (91) survived the Holocaust thanks to his school Director. He has just visited the death camp near Minsk and this article is based on his visit.

“I understand that it is planned to build a memorial in the death camp in the woods, so that people will come here to remember.

But no! They cannot remember, they were not there at the time. I was there when it began, not here in Trostenets – a suburb of Minsk, where 206,500 people were murdered by the Nazis - but in Cologne, where I went to school and just managed to avoid being sent to the camp in Minsk.

We attended the normal local schools and suddenly the order came, all Jews had to leave and go to a Jewish school. That was my luck. The Director of the Jawne (pronounced Yavneh) school, Dr Erich Klibansky, said after Kristallnacht in 1938 ‘one cannot live in Germany any more’. He wanted to transfer his school to England. But then war broke out and it was not possible. Approximately 130 children came to England after January 1939. We were the first ones - 20 boys and 20 girls. I was 13 years old. The British Jewish community had given a guarantee of £50 for each child, and promised that

the money was available. At that time the annual wage for a working man was about £100. That was a lot of money.

I lived in a very small house with a working class family for a couple of years, lovely people. There were letters via the Red Cross. The last letter from my parents was dated 24 June 1942. They were allowed to write 25 words including the address. ‘Dear All! Before our departure all the very best, dear son best wishes for your birthday. Work hard and give pleasure to your friends, Vati and Mutti.’

This letter took nearly three months to arrive. By then they had already been murdered. They had been deported to Minsk, also Dr Erich Klibansky and his wife and children. Two days after their arrival in Minsk they were shot dead.

Only in the 1980s when archives were discovered it was learned what had actually happened. It was known that about 1200 men, women and children were deported together with my parents but where or when one did not know. Nobody came back. I would have been one of them if Klibansky had not been there.

Trostenets (Trascianiec), is hardly known in Germany – or anywhere else. It was one of the largest Nazi extermination camps. I have come from London to attend the opening of the Exhibition in



Kurt Marx, addressing an audience of dignitaries

Minsk in memory of these events. It is a travelling exhibition. It will also be seen in Germany. It is wonderful that the people of the IBB, the International Educational and Exchange Institute in Dortmund have organised this event.

After the war I had no wish to have anything to do with the Germans. Hate? I don't hate. But one cannot forget. I was asked can you forgive? It has happened, one cannot forgive. The people one cannot forgive are not alive any more. It is a very strange situation. The Germans I have met here are all very kind and nice people. Two or three generations have passed by. Friends of mine say that if one hates someone, one hurts oneself. Hate is not a good feeling, you destroy yourself. One can still not believe that it was possible that people could behave like this. Our family had lived in Germany for at least 500 years.

My wife was in Auschwitz for almost three years. When we visited Germany she said after two days, I can't stay here, when I hear these voices. She spoke very good German and was a German teacher. In Germany, she could not speak the language, her heart would not let her.

Will all this happen again? Have the world and people learned anything? It seems to go on everywhere. In Africa people kill each other, also in Syria. In France you have Le Pen, in USA Trump - will we ever learn?

Whether my parents were gassed or shot I do not know. It does not change anything. It should not be forgotten. One hopes perhaps that the world will learn.”

*This article was originally written by Dirk Planert for **Publik Forum** magazine in Dortmund. It has been translated by Michael Marx.*



Maly Trostenets new memorial

Living with the past

The Polish Senate's recent bill outlawing allegations of Polish complicity in the Holocaust has prompted a wide response. David Herman's insightful analysis on pages 1 and 2 is just one of a number of documents we have received on the subject. AJR member Maria Chamberlain, based in Edinburgh, recently set herself the task of amassing her parents' and grandparents' stories, and here shares her own perspective based on their experience.



Marek & Emilia Bieberstein and their children Ludwik, Artur and Lula taken in 1922.
© Maria Chamberlain

Antisemitism was rife in Poland long before the German occupation. In 1933 my father was excluded from studying medicine by the *numerus clausus*. My parents both took other courses at the Jagiellonian University of Krakow, where they were relegated to the "ghetto benches" at the back of the lecture halls. In 1936 shops had to display the name of the owner, with the result that Jewish businesses were identified and their premises vandalised. In 1937 the Polish Medical Association, the Bar Council, the Polish Bank and the General Assembly of Journalists excluded qualified Jews from their professional organisations. In 1938 the Polish Government enthusiastically explored with the French the possibility of shipping Poland's Jews to Madagascar. In the Polish city of Lwow, Simon Wiesenthal, later famous as a Nazi hunter, experienced attacks using razor-blades fastened to the end of sticks and also celebrations of "days without Jews", where Jewish students were prevented from taking their examinations.[1]

Nor was antisemitism unknown after the War. In 1950s Poland, I was followed by a gang of children taunting "You killed Christ", while my friend's newly painted front door was daubed with a Star of David and a swastika. A quick look at Polish social media today shows that the problem has not gone away. "My granny said that Jews are an infection, I say they are a cancer" said one tweet. The Holocaust is even still called the "Holofoax" - and not just in jest.

My father survived eleven concentration camps; my mother narrowly escaped a train destined for a death camp, surviving the rest of the war in hiding, on false papers. They owed their survival to luck and also to a few Poles, Ukrainians and Germans who stood out from the crowd to extend a helping hand. But their experiences before and after the War, alongside mine and those of many others later, make me unwilling to confer on the Polish State what the Polish journalist Konstanty Gebert referred to as a "certificate of virginity".

My grandfather, Marek Bieberstein,

whose position as the first Chairman of the Krakow Judenrat earns him a place in history, perished in Plaszow, as did my grandmother. My aunt Lula attempted to hide on false papers but was denounced and shot. My other grandmother, Kazimiera, was killed at Belzec. She remains a ghost without a face, for no photographs of her remain. The research I have undertaken over the last year has been a harrowing spiritual journey back into a toxic world, but it has brought a measure of resolution for, as Jonathan Freedland wrote: "No law can protect the truth of the Holocaust"[2]. The truth can only be protected by fragments of memories stitched together to make a tapestry of the past. I have a duty to put a few more stitches into that tapestry.

Maria Chamberlain

- [1] Simon Wiesenthal (1998) *Sunflower: on the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*. New York: Schocken Books.
- [2] The Guardian Opinion page 4, (3rd February 2018).

Letters to the Editor

Due to the very high volume of letters received this month we have had to abbreviate them considerably, which we feel is preferable to leaving letters out completely. We have tried very hard to retain the sense of all the original correspondence.

WHITE WASHING THE HOLOCAUST?

One of my granddaughters is taking GCSE History this summer, covering 1918-1945. To learn about the Third Reich, her class has been recommended the films *Schindler's List* and *The Final Days (Die Lezten Tage)*. No film depicts the Holocaust more vividly than *Schindler's List* but, having not heard of *The Final Days*, I discovered it is about the anti-Nazi students' movement called *The White Rose* and one of its members, Sophie Scholl. Reading about the group, I wonder why they are the subject of GCSE examination papers? Are the examiners trying to even out the students' thinking about the Germans after they had seen their evil portrayed so frighteningly in *Schindler's List*? Perhaps Daniel Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners* should be included too?
Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts.

GUN CONTROL

The use of guns in the course of everyday life in America started to get out of hand in the last century. The latest horrible event took place in a Florida school, where 17 children were slaughtered by a former pupil. President Trump's answer to this latest multiple killing is to suggest giving guns to teachers.

A teacher's job is to educate his pupils. He is unlikely to be able to draw his gun faster than the attacker who is surprising him. A placard held up by a girl on TV asks: 'Will I be next?' which heartbreakingly says it all.

The only answer to saving our world for the future of mankind is to outlaw the presence of weapons. The manufacturers of weapons would need to be subjected to global prohibition in the same way as the producers of nuclear weapons: only the five permanent members of the Security Council are exempt.
Fred Stern, Wembley, Mx.

THE WATERS OF LETHE

In January 11 schools sent pupils to Essex University to compete for the annual Dora Love Prize for Holocaust education. 15 schools had signed up but funding and

logistics were against them. In Suffolk nearly all schools which converted into academies have stopped Holocaust Education. Let us not pretend that schools are queueing up to learn Modern European History.

The local interfaith group organised an HMD meeting at Suffolk University. A short reading from Anne Frank's Diary was followed by a talk by a charity about a Syrian refugee camp, and an on-screen talk by an African who had made it to Ipswich. Afterwards a history teacher wrote: "I feel that some of the recent HMD events did not really focus on the Holocaust itself". Too true.

The first HMD in 2001 commemorated only the six million. Subsequently the HMDT included Darfur, Rwanda, Cambodia and Bosnia. So we are now reduced to just 1 out of 5. Why still call it Holocaust Memorial Day when any organiser can just mention us in passing? There can be a Cambodia Day, a Darfur Day and a Rwanda Day but not on the day reserved for the Jewish dead and the generations of Jews who were never born.

Frank Bright, Ipswich, Suffolk

'NEVER FORGET'

I see plans are in hand for the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport. I hope all young adults arriving in Harwich in 1938/39 (not just the Kindertransport refugees) will be given A Big Day Out.

November 2018 also sees the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht and the arrival of refugee elders at Kitchener Camp in Kent. A new study group led by Clare Weissenberg (www.kitchenercamp.co.uk) is making great strides into understanding this underpublicised rescue project. Please share any personal stories (my own father was released from Dachau in January 1939 – did his 59 year old mother really trek to Dachau from Vienna to sign the release papers?)

By all means let us have festivities but we should use these anniversaries to enhance

what has been documented in the past 80 years, fulfilling the 'Niemals Vergessen' objective.

Eric Elias, London N3

THE POWER OF WORDS:

'El Male Rachamim' was recited at the AJR's own HMD service and the UK national event in Westminster. The English translation appeared in both programmes with one crucial difference. At the AJR event, the words ask for rest to be granted to those killed "by the hands of the German murderers and their helpers from the other peoples". But at the national event the words were: "by the hands of the Nazis and their helpers". Which is the more accurate? If the former, today's Germans must presumably bear national shame. But if the latter, Germany can blame those terrible Nazis.

Hitler's Nazi Party came to power in 1933 after achieving 37.3% in the general election. The entire population then had no choice but to fall in line with the new laws and policies. The Nazis were not a group of outsiders who infiltrated the country.

When the proposed Memorial next to the Houses of Parliament is eventually unveiled, will German representatives bow their heads in shame at what their country did during the Nazi era?

The Power of Words indeed ...

David Wirth, London SE21

THANK YOU, DR. GRENVILLE

I am sorry to see Dr. Anthony Grenville retire from his regular articles and hope at least to read many 'occasional' ones in the future. His breadth of knowledge provides a good historical, political or other context to a specific subject and leads to new perspectives.
Rabbi Dr. Walter Rothschild, Berlin.

80 YEARS AFTER THE ANSCHLUSS

David Herman might have mentioned

in his article Hella Pick's excellent *Guilty Victim: Austria from the Holocaust to Haider* (I.B.Tauris, 2000). Second-hand copies are available on Amazon and I gave it a five star review.

Ralph Blumenau, London W11

I first visited Austria in 1963, which was also when I first visited Germany (where I had been born in 1937). While my father kept his vow never to set foot on German soil again, I felt a constant need to return, especially to Berlin, and have done regularly for 45 years, including living there for two years. But Austria always felt uncomfortable and still does. In the 1990's, when I was asked by the American Friends of Bezalel in Israel to lead a tour of European museums of modern art I suggested Germany. "Never!" was the response. "OK," I replied, "how about Austria, Hungary, and Czech Republic?" and that's where the tour went. The cleansing of Austria's reputation, even for Jews who still won't set foot in Germany, has always puzzled me. I wonder if "The Sound of Music" has unwittingly cleansed Austria?

Tom L. Freudenheim, New York

I am an avid reader of your wonderful journal and also was on the Kindertransport in March, 1939. If anyone thinks the Austrians were victims, they must have lived in another country. Perhaps the approval was not that high, but the vast majority were super content. Does anyone not remember: "*Heil Schischnig, unser Fuehrer, / Das Volk wird immer duerer, / Die Juden immer fetter. / Heil Hitler, unser Retter*".

Henry Herner, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

The majority of Austrians supported the Anschluss; pre-Anschluss antisemitism was rife; sympathy with Nazi policy in Germany was obvious, with acts of terrorism in support. Later the number of perpetrators in war crimes was considerable.

The real victim was the State of Austria,

as distinct from its population. In its inept way it tried to preserve the country's independence. Had it succeeded and foiled Hitler's Anschluss, history might have been different

Frederick Hirsch, Pinner, Mx.

(RE)-CLAIMING A GERMAN PASSPORT

What audacity of Andrew Nelson (March) to compare Britain's colonial record with a country that murdered millions in gas chambers and by other methods. He owes his life to Britain since it gave a safe haven to his parents. What ignorance and bias. I have been to Burma, India etc. where locals always told me that life under the British provided laws and justice and the development of transport. Now many are ruled by despots and corruption. I am forever grateful to this country for saving the lives of my mother, my sister and me.

Gisela Feldman, Manchester

Similar views were expressed by other correspondents, including Gordon Spencer, of Barnet, who wrote: "I feel that there is a vast difference between the UK and its treatment of the colonies and the Nazi German aim to exterminate if possible every Jew in Europe".

Born in Vienna, I acquired a German passport featuring a large swastika and letter J in 1939, to permit my emigration. Although my family regard it as a mere curio, I treat it with the greatest respect and affection, for it helped me in the best move of my life. No new German passport could take its place.

Dr. H.L.Eirew, Manchester

My deceased father recovered his German nationality through restitution in 1957. I inherited it, as did my three children. My son now works in California but keeps strong links to the UK and Germany. He took out US nationality a few years ago, to safeguard his job and because of US tax discrimination against non-citizens.

This was fine from the UK standpoint (he also has UK nationality). However

the Germans confiscated his passport and made us spend two years putting in a detailed case for citizenship (his grandfather fought in WW1 and made a major contribution to German science until locked up by the Nazis. We ourselves have repeatedly been back, and own restituted property there).

The German administrators now say my son is no longer eligible for German nationality unless he passes a language exam at pre-business level. He had no idea that he had to apply for German permission before getting his US citizenship.

Dr Charles Enoch, Oxford

DEBATE OF THE MONTH

Poland's past

It must be galling for Poland to be blamed for what took place in their land. Other countries, especially France, have a worse record for aiding the Nazis. But the Polish government went too far with their recent law.

Poland has more Righteous Gentiles at Yad Vashem than any other nation. My father lost all his family in the Radom ghetto, but a Catholic Polish nurse saved seven Jews and provided Jewish people in hiding with food and other necessities. Only one member of my father's family survived, because he was in the Polish army, and retreated into Russia.

Evelyn Shamash, Sutton, Surrey

I wonder if there is any country on this planet that does not have some unsavoury elements in its past. The only way forward is to find, accept and preserve the truth, however unpalatable. Failure to do so delays the progress of humanity towards a better life for all. Re-writing history is not an option.

Perhaps Poland's difficulty is in response to Trump's slogan "Make America Great Again!" Poland wants to 'feel great' and perhaps does not yet realise that this slogan leads to "make Poland hate again".

Ruth Barnett, London NW6

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

I was looking forward to Francis Bacon, Chaim Soutine, David Bomberg and perhaps a lesser favourite, Lucien Freud at the opening of Tate Britain's All Too Human, Bacon, Freud and a Century of Painting Life exhibition, which connects generations of figurative artists from the 20th and into the 21st centuries. Yet I was more attracted to work by women artists, Paula Rego and notable younger women like Celia Paul.

Each room at the Tate denotes aspects of loneliness or introspection. **Frank Auerbach** and **Leon Kossoff** describe the cityscape of London. Auerbach is, of course, noted for his views of north London and his *Chimney in Mornington Crescent: Winter Morning 1991* is placed near Kossoff's *Christchurch Spitalfields Morning*, painted a year earlier. Auerbach's *Chimney* rejoices in ochres, reds and greens, a celebration of the love he bears for his home environment. Kossoff's monochromatic view of the well known city landmark is bleaker, sketchier, but both share a tumbledown, asymmetrical sense of looking up at something that still remains slightly alien. Both artists were students of Bomberg who encouraged an intense physicality in their work, exemplified here by Auerbach's thickly impasto, almost sculptural painting – his *Head of EOW*.

Freud's über realism in painting the body in all its pallor, flaws and imperfections seems the starting point for Bacon, working with photographer John Deakin, to go deeper, to break up the body spaces, to present raw emotion. All Freud's subjects are painted in a similar deathly, pale pink with white blotchy faces. We recognise them; we have seen them on buses and on the tube, and they stare out at us, not seeing us. My problem is his lack of vibrancy and tonal variety. In Bacon's famous triptych, in homage to his lover George Dyer, shielded by a black umbrella on a deserted sunny beach, there is so much metaphor and so much anguish. But his physical contortions also suggest constant movement; that ultimate truth cannot be captured in any moment. His large portrait of Freud reclining on a green sofa is shown for the first time in over half a century. Bacon's

post-war isolation finds an echo in one of **Giacometti's** slender sculptures which seem to touch both sky and earth.

But the theme of isolation is most movingly represented by women artists such as **Paula Rego** whose vivid pastels show a warts and all dedication to her art in her dramatised and largely narrative paintings of women. In *The Company of Women* we see many moods, soulful, reflective, fatalistic, a candid view of women, down to their bunions. It is the same strong legs that speak for her; the same ageless, indomitable faces, black hair drawn back severely and nowhere is this more moving than in *Bride 1994*, in which the white bridal finery accentuates the anguish of inevitable female destiny. The triptych *After Hogarth's Marriage à la mode* shows a fatalistic Rego nursing her sick husband. Among younger women artists I was particularly impressed with **Celia Paul** whose self-portrait, originally based on her mother, wears a look of haunting fragility.

Until August 27.



The Wedding, by RB Kitaj 1989-93



Bride, by Paula Rego 1994

Annely Juda Fine Art

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

CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

A story of hope and generosity

In 1936 Hitler's Blackshirts were on the march. My family, like all Jewish families in Germany, was in grave danger.

My grandfather Paul Wertheimer was a cultured man who loved music and the arts. Among his prized objects was a little blue and white Japanese porcelain statue, which he proudly displayed on his mantelpiece. After much difficulty he and his brother sold their rayon and silk weaving factory (for a pittance, like all sales by Jewish owners). He was nevertheless able to get a few paintings and some furniture out of the country before emigrating to the UK but the blue and white lady got left behind, and just before my grandfather's final departure he gave her to his neighbour – a friend who shared his love of art.

My children and I have been busy over the last years, reconnecting with our roots. In 2012, with local support in Bielefeld, a plaque was erected to honour the Wertheimer family on a corner of the land where our family's

factory once stood. I had the honour of unveiling the plaque in front of many people spanning several generations, with my husband and children also present. A piece of personal history had been reclaimed and some family honour restored.

In 2015 we helped lay a Stolperstein outside the last home of my great-uncle Eduard, who committed suicide in 1941, just before deportation. Many people came to honour him including a whole bevy of cousins from England. This was our first ever meeting. Bielefeld, which had tried to annihilate our family in the 1930s, was instrumental in bringing us all together. A transformative reunion.

Imagine my surprise upon receiving a letter last year from a Birgit - the granddaughter of my grandfather's 1936 neighbour. She had heard the story of the little Japanese statuette as a child and had inherited her upon her mother's death. She did not feel she was the rightful owner and resolved to track down a Wertheimer to return her to "her own family" which she did by travelling a long way in a camper van to deliver her to me personally.



The porcelain statuette has pride of place on Sonia's mantelpiece

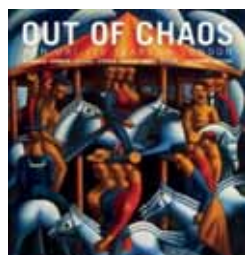
So now, 80 years later, the little lady sits on our mantelpiece, next to a photograph of her taken in 1936 on my grandfather's Bielefeld mantelpiece. The photo was taken just before emigration so that the family could always remember what their home looked like.

What kindness on Birgit's part to take the trouble to seek me out three generations later. Truly a personal statement of remembrance/ refusal to forget the past, and a desire for restitution and reconciliation.

Sonia Lauber Sampson



BOOK SALE



Out of Chaos

Ben Uri: 100 Years in London

240 pages, extensively referenced and illustrated, hardback

RRP £35 – SALE PRICE £25 – Free P&P

+ Special Offer – FREE COPY 80 pages
Highlights from the Ben Uri Collection
 alixs@benuri.org | www.benuri.org

EXODUS FROM VIENNA

The University of Glasgow annual Holocaust Memorial Day lecture was given by 94 year-old Professor Otto Hutter. The sell-out audience included a good number of first and second generation AJR members, including at least one who (like Prof. Hutter) had come from Vienna.

Prof. Hutter left for the UK on a Kindertransport in 1938. He had been a pupil at the only Jewish Gymnasium in Vienna and showed a list of his former classmates, some 38 boys and girls, that he had kept from then. He tried to track each one of them down. Ten

classmates managed to get out before Kirstallnacht, six boys escaped by Kindertransport and others ended up in various parts of the world. Two boys never made it out of Vienna and were murdered by the Nazis.

Prof. Hutter read a poem in German, written by Kurt Mezel, about Kurt witnessing the deportation of 1000 Jews; he himself was given away to the SS and was in the last group to be murdered. Otto Hutter's granddaughter, Rebecca, who had accompanied him to Glasgow, gave a reading of it in English.
Anthea Berg

Want to record your story

Memoir and life story can take many different forms. Diaries, letters, photo stories, genealogy, biography and autobiography... in written, audio, picture or even video format. Through nearly 20 years of working on personal histories, and hundreds of clients, Tony Gray says he has yet to find someone without a story.

But how do you go about doing this? Not all of us are accomplished biographers, and it can seem even harder when it comes to your own life or family.

Very simply, grab a pad of paper and a pen (or a computer and a keyboard) and start. ... Don't put it off any longer, and don't worry too much about the end result... Just start! Here are some tips to help along the way:

1. Know how you work best; it might be 10.00 am with a cup of tea or sitting up in bed at 1.00 am. Write at those times of the day when you feel most relaxed and inspired.
2. If you are easily distracted, book time in your diary for writing.
3. If there are areas of your life you feel uncomfortable about, you can explain in the introduction that this is a selective autobiography.
4. Use all your senses by introducing smells, textures, tastes and sounds into your writing. If the sound of the cricket ball smashing through the kitchen window still haunts you, describe it.
5. Draw on your emotions – outrage, fear, infatuation, embarrassment etc. Even years later, we might cringe or feel embarrassed about some trivial event from our childhood. This could

make an excellent anecdote and allow you to set the record straight.

6. Don't include too many dates. It is easier for your readers to know that you were nine years old than if you write 'in 1941' and expect them to remember that you were born in 1932. Of course, from time to time you will need to include the year.
7. A thesaurus is great to increase your vocabulary, but if you then have to use a dictionary to discover the meaning of that word, don't use it in your book.
8. It's more important to get the story down than worry about spelling and grammar – it can always be tidied up later.
9. It's also important just to get it down, even if it seems random and unorganised. You (or someone else) can organise it later.
10. Write down everything initially; often the smallest details are the most fascinating, and the fact that you remember them after decades must mean something.
11. Acronyms and abbreviations abound in various circles, such as the military and corporations. The usual practice is to write it in full on the first occasion, followed by the short version in brackets. Thereafter the acronym or abbreviation may be used.
12. Many of your readers (especially the younger generations) may not be familiar with specialised terms and titles that were commonplace in your childhood. Try and explain these.
13. Context is helpful. You don't have to be a qualified historian, but explaining a little of what was happening and why it was significant can help.
14. If you're struggling to remember parts of your life, look at key dates

of the 20th century to remember what you were doing, eg when JFK was shot, when Charles and Di were married etc.

15. Speech can embellish a good story. Artistic licence is allowed where you cannot remember the actual words spoken, always ensuring that they are not libellous.
16. Whilst not wanting to miss out on a good story, take care with the emphasis and avoid being malicious.
17. If appropriate, ask your partner to write about their early life or a special shared occasion to complement your book, especially if it is for the family. In such cases, try not to confer... as it is fascinating to read who has remembered what!
18. If writing about a special person in your life who is no longer around, consider including a favourite photograph as a respectful conclusion to that part of the book.
19. Don't worry if you find that you have less to write about the later years. Unless you have had a particularly dynamic later life, this will often be the case. The earlier years are likely to be more detailed, simply because so much has changed since that time.
20. Remember, there are many ways to record your memoirs. If writing is not your thing, modern technology makes it so easy – you could make an audio recording, ask a friend to interview you on video, or have your grandchildren come and look through your photographs to help you make a photo book.

Tony Gray

Tony Gray lives in Oxfordshire, has a doctorate in theology, and runs a small publishing consultancy, Words by Design (see advert on page 19). Watch out for his second article in this series, which will cover how and where to get your life story published.

or donate your archives?

AJR members often wonder what to do with all their personal documents and photographs.

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Director of the AJR Refugee Voices Archive, curated a discussion on this topic during our Holocaust Memorial Day activities.

Q: Should one keep original material in the family or give it to an institution?

This is entirely up to you and your family. Your relatives may have emotional ties to all your memorabilia and wish to keep it. However, if you would like to make your materials available to a larger audience and ensure the preservation of your personal archive, there are institutions (in the UK and abroad) who may be interested.

Q: How can you tell if something is historically important?

If you have kept it this long it's obviously important to you and probably to your family. The institutions listed (below) can advise on its significance to them.

Q: If one wants to give something, which institution is most appropriate, and should material go back to one's country of origin, should it go to Israel, or should it stay in the UK? Should it all be kept together?

Again, this is really an emotional decision. You may feel more comfortable about keeping objects in the UK or be happy to deposit them with institutions in Germany, Austria or Israel. Choosing an institution is also a matter of personal rapport and here in Britain you can easily speak to or even meet with representatives of the different organisations. As a guideline, documents are probably better lodged with an

archive, while museums are very adept at storing objects.

Q: Should materials be digitised?

Yes, wherever possible. It will protect and preserve them for eternity. Your chosen institution can help you with this, don't feel you have to scan everything yourself.

Q: How should one keep documents and photographs best at home?

The lower the temperature the longer your items will last, because cooler temperatures slow the rate of chemical decay and reduce insect activity. Keep the temperature below 75°F and keep the relative humidity below 65%, although you should also avoid very low relative humidity as it can cause brittleness. The National Archives publish lots of useful advice on www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/

ORGANISATIONS TO CONSIDER DONATING YOUR ARCHIVES TO:

The Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies

Established in 1995, the Centre focuses on the history of German-speaking émigrés who found refuge in Britain, their personal recollections and experiences, their reception in British society, and their enrichment of the life of their new country. The collection comprises materials relating both to refugee organisations and to individual émigrés. The archive is housed and managed by the University of London Library.

Contact: Clare George
clare.george@sas.ac.uk
 020 7862 8961

The Jewish Museum, London

Seeking to reflect the diverse roots of the Jewish community in Britain, including Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions, the museum collects material dating from the medieval period through to the present day.

Contact: Kathrin Pieren
Kathrin.pieren@jewishmuseum.org.uk
 020 7284 7355

Imperial War Museum, London

In 2020 the IWM will open a new set of Holocaust Galleries which will explore the relationship between WW2 and the Holocaust and recent research into the Holocaust. IWM will be focusing on the very human dimension of this history and is keen to hear from anyone with items – particularly objects – that will facilitate this.

Contact: Rachel Donnelly
rdonnelly@iwm.org.uk / 020 7091 3145.

London Metropolitan Archives

Run by City of London Corporation on behalf of London and the nation, the LMA is responsible for 100 kilometres of the capital's documentary heritage dating from 1067 to the present day. Their archivists include a specialist in Anglo-Jewish collections who is involved in numerous outreach events.

Contact: Daniel Albon
Daniel.Albon@cityoflondon.gov.uk
 020 7332 3820

The Wiener Library, London

Formed in 1933, the Library's unique collection of over one million items

includes published and unpublished works, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimony, all supporting research, learning, teaching and advocacy about the Holocaust and genocide, their causes and consequences.

Contact: Howard Falksohn
hfalksohn@wienerlibrary.co.uk
 020 7636 7247

Recording a testimony

Some collections can assist you with recording a testimony of your experiences. If it is a video testimony, your photographs and documents will often be digitised. You will also receive a copy of your interview.

The AJR Refugee Voices Archive (video and oral)

Contact: Dr Bea Lewkowicz,
bealewkowicz@gmail.com
 07879 441 893

Holocaust Survivors' Service (oral only)

Contact: Helen Norman
hsc@jcare.org / 020 8203 9033

REVIEWS

**JOURNEYS FROM THE ABYSS.
THE HOLOCAUST AND FORCED
MIGRATION FROM THE 1880s TO
THE PRESENT**
by Tony Kushner (Liverpool University
Press, 2017)
ISBN 978-1-786-90463-6

This book highlights Jewish and other refugee movements from the 1880s onwards, of which escapees from Nazi Germany and Austria are the most obvious examples. The *Kindertransport* remains the most publicised and commemorated instance, for the case of lone children being separated from their parents and sent to an unknown land obviously pulls at the heartstrings to an unmatched extent. Kushner, however, wishes to redress the imbalance of this focus and, embarrassingly or otherwise, inform us of Jewish emigration for purposes of prostitution and for domestic service. By 1939 there were 20,000 Jewish refugee domestics in the United Kingdom, double the number of refugees who came on the *Kindertransport*. For their employers there was an interesting ambiguity between the humanitarian gesture of helping Jewish women escape and the economic opportunism of gaining cheap domestic labour. For many of the domestics there was the difficulty of adjusting their middle-class background to their 'below stairs' position, let alone the physical demands of a 12 hour day with only half a day off per week.

Of course most refugees were immensely grateful to Britain for saving their lives, yet, among other instances, the chilly reception of Jewish refugee children in the Lake District and the fate of the few Jewish people under Nazi occupation in the Channel Islands does not confirm the image of this country as a Land of Hope and Glory, fair play and justice.

Kushner then turns to the British imposed limitations on the number of Jewish refugees allowed into Palestine. 'Even as late as 1939, what was still missing was any bureaucratic

recognition of the increasing desperation of Jewish migrants in Europe'. An obvious but under-recognised link is made with current refugees from Syria and with those fleeing from north Africa. So it all continues: refugee children isolated in a foreign land, boat people desperate to reach safety, exploited foreign domestic labour and governments and people suspicious of outsiders. Kushner, then, wishes to put Jewish migration stories into a wider context both in terms of earlier migrations and of the current refugee crisis and is critical of what he calls 'the self-contained nature of Holocaust studies'. His earlier publications indicate his exemplary qualifications for this task. For almost thirty years he has been researching on the holocaust, racism and refugees. So this work is vastly well informed, highly readable and occasionally controversial.

Page 1 mentions the *St. Louis* on which my father escaped from nazi Germany. Part 1 discusses refugee domestic servants, of which my mother was one. I imagine that many readers of this journal will, like me, have connections with the fascinating and important topics discussed in this book.
Michael Levin

**INTERMENT DURING THE SECOND
WORLD WAR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE USA**
by Rachel Pistol
Bloomsbury, 2017
ISBN 978-1-350-00142-8

So much has been written about the internment of 'enemy aliens' in Britain during World War II that it comes as a pleasant surprise to find a book that opens a new perspective on the subject. There are very many well-known studies of wartime internment which all focus exclusively on internment in Britain. Rachel Pistol, however, has introduced a... new dimension, by comparing internment in Britain with that of Japanese Americans by the US in the wake of Pearl Harbour.

Pistol covers a large amount of ground in a short space. To write the history of two complex and controversial cases of wartime internment in 140 pages (plus endnotes and bibliography) is a tall order. Consequently, many readers will find that they learn a great deal about the

internment of Japanese Americans, but less about that of Germans and Austrians in Britain. Pistol uses interviews from standard sources, including the Imperial War Museum and the Manx National Archives, but seems unaware of the AJR's Refugee Voices filmed interviews collection, which contains a very large amount of new material on internment.

Pistol's comparative approach does succeed in throwing fresh light on aspects of internment not previously researched. She highlights the sharp differences in the ways in which two generations of Japanese Americans experienced internment: the first generation immigrants, the Issei, who had learnt to live with prejudice and discrimination, and the second generation, the Nisei, born in America, who considered themselves as American citizens and to whom internment came as a terrible shock. As Pistol points out, the internment of stateless German and Austrian refugees, unjust and inhumane as it was, did not represent a breach of constitutionally guaranteed rights, as the internment of American citizens of Japanese origin decidedly did.
Anthony Grenville

**INVOLUNTARY GUESTS:
ENEMY ALIENS AND POLITICAL
DETAINEES ON THE ISLE OF MAN IN
WORLD WAR TWO**
by Alan Franklin
Lily Publication IoM 2017
ISBN 978-911177-33-3

Many AJR Journal readers have good cause to be grateful to Britain for enabling them or their parents or grandparents restart a new life here. There is, however, a darker side to the story, relating to the treatment of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria after the fall of France in 1940. Because of the hysteria about potential fifth columnists among the refugees and resident enemy aliens, many thousands were interned. There was little discrimination, at least in the early stages, between Jews who had fled for their lives and German and Austrian nationals resident in the UK. This book recounts the story of over 10,000 people who were interned on the Isle of Man after May 1940.

Its author, Alan Franklin, was the Manx Museum Librarian for 20 years. He draws on extensive public and private archives as well as personal contacts with past internees or their descendants. The introduction describes the historic and current relationship between the Isle of Man and the United Kingdom. The IoM is a Crown Dependency with its own government and parliament.

Although the title of the book refers to WW2 it also covers the use of the IoM during WW1. The IoM depends on its tourist economy and saw a massive decline in visitors after war broke out in 1914, so welcomed the admission of enemy aliens and prisoners of war, funded by the UK government. Similarly in 1940 visitors fell to 23,000 from 552,000 the previous year, so large numbers of boarding houses were again requisitioned by the Manx Government.

Nine separate camps were set up, eight for men only. Rushen Camp was for women and children and unlike the men's camps, the proprietors were not evicted and the internees were billeted with them. They were paid one guinea per adult with smaller sums for juveniles and children. At a later stage married quarters were also established.

There are detailed accounts of each camp, covering accommodation, facilities, religious care and ministry. Education was important with talks often given by fellow detainees who had been prominent professors and lecturers at British and Continental universities.

The book is beautifully produced. The large format makes the most of the illustrations, which include cartoons, drawings and photos, maps, plans, portraits and reproductions of actual documents. There is also a large amount of detailed information, very useful to academics and researchers, and for people wishing to visit any of the camps.
George Vulkan

Have you read any books recently which you think are worthy of a review in these pages? If so please email our editorial team on editorial@ajr.org.uk

FLYING HIGH

Last month AJR member Leslie Kleinman flew on Ryanair from Stansted to Krakow, to visit Auschwitz. It's a journey that he has made several times since he first started giving talks at the camp to students and other visitors on behalf of JRoots and the HET.

As Leslie boarded the plane he was recognised by one of the air hostesses, who had served him on a previous flight. She went to fetch the Captain, who happened to be Israeli. They chatted for a while and during his tannoy announcement to the passengers the Captain paid homage to the "distinguished guest" on board. At the end of the flight the Captain sent an invitation to Leslie to join him in the cockpit and even let him sit in his seat.

Romanian-born Leslie, who was awarded a BEM in the recent New Year's Honours list, was just 14 years old when he boarded one of the trains to the Auschwitz-Birkenau. He was separated from the rest of his family who were all taken straight to the gas chamber with the exception of one sister. Leslie survived the camp and two death marches (the first to Sachsenhausen, the second to Dachau) and after liberation spent eight months recuperating in an American-run hospital and then a convent. Sadly he learnt that his 17 year old sister had died soon after liberation.

While at the convent, Leslie was told that the British government were allowing 1,000 child survivors to come to the UK. He was one of this group who became known as 'The Boys'. He went on to marry, raising his daughter



Leslie in the flying seat



The Kleinman family before the Holocaust. Leslie (bottom left) was the only one to survive.

Rosalind and son Steven in England and then when he retired he and his wife emigrated to Canada. After his wife passed away in 2004 he returned to the UK, eventually settling down in Westcliff. He joined the AJR and met Miriam and this month they celebrate their seventh wedding anniversary.

In 2011 Leslie revisited Auschwitz for the first time. It was a very emotional experience for him, evoking memories of his father, an eminent Rabbi. He has since returned half a dozen times to talk to different groups, and to help lead them in reciting kaddish for the million souls who died there.

"Auschwitz is full of very sad stories but I try to give people something positive to take away," says Leslie. "The consequences of hatred are horrific and I want future generations to realise how important it is to appreciate everybody with love and care.

Like many AJR members Leslie now regularly shares his experiences in schools and colleges across the country. His journeys lead him to meeting people from all walks of life, and he says that his encounter with the Ryanair Captain was certainly one of the memorable ones! "It's a shame I was not qualified to actually pilot the plane," jokes Leslie. "Otherwise I would definitely have done so!"

Around the AJR

Most of these reports are summaries of much longer reviews which, due to lack of space, we are unable to include in their entirety. If you would like further information on the actual event please contact either the author or the AJR regional co-ordinator.

PINNER

Rabbi Leah Muehlstein spoke of her background and scientific studies in the UK and Germany before training for the rabbinate in London. Her philosophical remarks made us all sit up and think.
Henri Obstfeld

EALING

In conjunction with HMD, Peter and Marianne Summerfield gave an excellent address about their pre-war experiences in Germany and subsequently.
Leslie Sommer

ILFORD, ESSEX

David Barnett discussed the Balfour Declaration: the right people were there at the right time – Chaim Weitzman, Sir Herbert Samuel and, of course, the Prime Minister Arthur Balfour. A wonderful history lesson and great research.
Meta Roseneil

WESTCLIFF, ESSEX

Charlotte and Tony Balazs spoke of their mothers who worked at the Cosmo and Dorice restaurants where, for half a century, German and Austrian refugees gathered to savour the food and atmosphere of the world they left behind.
Susie Barnett

BRIGHTON

We saw a film about the persecution and expulsion of Jews from Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, etc. Their losses and plight were never recognised.
Ceska Abrahams

MUSWELL HILL

Les Spitz gave a magical display of photographs and audio-visuals (known as AVs). He is nothing less than a genius with the camera!
Kathy Cohen



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Susan Harrod
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

Child Survivors' Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld
020 8954 5298 h.obstfeld@talk21.com

APRIL GROUP EVENTS

All AJR members are welcome at any of these events; you do not have to be affiliated to that particular group. As the exact timings of these events are often subject to last minute changes we do not include them in the AJR Journal and suggest you contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

Essex (Westcliff)	10 April	Claude Vecht-Wolf – his Rabbinic Journey
Kensington	10 April	Social get-together
Hull	10 April	Fish-and-chip lunch
Glasgow Book Club	12 April	Social
Pinner	12 April	Helen Fry "The Secret War of Trent Park" – Bugging the Nazis in WW2
Wessex	12 April	David Barnett – "Life of Prof. Edith Morley OBE, champion of Jewish refugees"
Bath/Bristol	16 April	Colin Davey – "Holocaust Denial"
Edgware	17 April	Bring a photo or object that has special significance for you
Oxford	17 April	Lunch and Social get-together
Liverpool	17 April	Eric Cohen – "Anecdotes of my Life in Teaching"
Radlett	18 April	Jo Briggs – Editor of the AJR Journal
Book Club	18 April	Book Club
Cardiff	23 April	Colin Davey – "Holocaust Denial"
N.W. London	24 April	Marcus Ferrar – "The Budapest House" <i>(Places must be booked for lunch)</i>
Edinburgh	26 April	Vivien Anderson: "Scandinavian Jewel"
Muswell Hill	26 April	Philippa Bernard: "The History of Religion in London"
North London	26 April	Nick Dobson – "Agatha Christie, Famous Crime Writer"
Glasgow	29 April	An afternoon with Dr Maureen Sier, Director of Interfaith Scotland
Brighton	30 April	David Barnett – "The Balfour Declaration"

AT YOUR SERVICE: Communications

Last month the AJR launched our new website, designed to be easy on the eye and easy to navigate.

The project was managed by Debra Barnes, who oversees all our different communication channels.



The new website is the result of months of re-design and development, working in partnership with our agency Graphical, who have created websites for several Jewish charities. There were two key objectives for the new site: easy for our members to navigate, and easy for AJR staff to update.

Debra explains: "The previous AJR website was 15 years old and thus out of date in terms of style, functionality and content. The new website brings us bang up to date and includes several features that will be very useful for our members, including buttons to increase the text size and the contrast, thereby making it easier to read on the screen."

As well as helping to convey essential information to members, the AJR website – in particular the AJR Journal archive – is also used extensively by

academics and students researching Holocaust refugees – in fact we received numerous alarmed calls during the two days that the migration to the new website was being completed. PhD students from Royal Holloway, Essex and Potsdam universities were all relieved to hear that we would soon be back online.

Relaunching our website is just one of the many ways we are bringing the AJR's communications up to date. We are now very active on social media, with our Facebook page and Twitter feed attracting lots of interest. We have a video on YouTube and, as a result of increased PR activity, achieve greater editorial coverage in the wider Jewish media.

"As the AJR's audience broadens to second and third generations, and we become increasingly involved in educating future generations about the Holocaust, we need to reach a wider audience," says

Debra. "We are taking full advantage of the different digital communications channels now available."

Traditional communication techniques have also intensified, starting of course with our new logo and re-design of this Journal. We are attending more community events, with a range of display materials and leaflets. We will advertise in the Jewish News' charity supplement and, for the second year running, have a stand at the Maccabi Fun Run.

"The AJR is one of the most important organisations established anywhere in the world by the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria, and we now play a critical role in Holocaust remembrance and education," Debra explains. "We have always punched above our weight and will continue to make our voice heard for many years to come."

GATHERING THE VOICES

Glasgow AJR member Steven Anson, together with his wife Hilary and 20 other members of his family, recently attended the centenary celebrations of the Augsburg synagogue, one of the few synagogues to have survived the Nazis and WW2.

The stories of Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution is very close to Steven's heart: he, Hilary and four other volunteers initiated the project "Gathering the Voices", which records the testimonies of Shoah survivors who settled in Scotland.

So far 40 survivors and former Kindertransportees have told their stories, which can all be accessed at www.gatheringthevoices.com. When you listen to the voices of the survivors their accents will tell you a lot about their journeys. There are Scottish accents, continental lilt and sometimes a mixture of both.

The team has also created a mobile exhibition, which is available to hire for schools and other organisations. It contains a wealth of fascinating images and visual material that brings to life the particular experiences of Jewish refugees who came to Scotland.



Steven Anson in Kriegshaber, suburb of Augsburg, Germany, pointing to a remembrance band that honours his maternal grandparents. In Augsburg they use these Erinnerungsband (Remembrance Bands) instead of Stolpersteine.

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



A VISION OF HARMONY



To mark Family Day, which is the Israeli version of Valentine's Day (don't ask me why), my husband and I

were invited to visit the kindergarten which our granddaughter attends.

The kindergarten is rather special. It is situated in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Abu Tor, which was once divided into Arab and Jewish parts by the border with Jordan. After the Six-Day War the two areas were no longer separated and people could move freely between them, as was the case when I lived there some thirty years ago.

The building that contains the kindergarten is set in what was once a park on the edge of the two neighbourhoods. With the help of the Jerusalem Foundation and various donors, the building was erected by the Micha Organisation which extends aid and education to deaf and hearing-impaired children in Israel. On the ground floor of the building is a kindergarten for those children, as well as offices housing speech therapists and other professionals whose task it is to help these children.

But on the second floor is the Harmony Kindergarten, where Arab and Jewish children learn and play together, and where the ethnic composition is made up of equal numbers from each population. Three times a week the two kindergartens get together for joint activities, so that what happens in that environment is a three-fold mingling of children from two different cultures as well as those who can hear and those whose hearing is impaired. The activities of the Harmony Kindergarten are conducted in two languages, Arabic and Hebrew, with attendants drawn from both segments of the population.

The Family Day which I attended started with an introduction and welcome proffered by the two main teachers, Dafna, who spoke in Hebrew, and Randa, who spoke in Arabic. The idea of the bilingual kindergarten had been incubating for a long time, and it was emphasised that its existence represents the fulfillment of a vision for all those involved. Then we watched as our grandchildren all sang songs in both Arabic and Hebrew, beating time by means of little plastic spoons. A light breakfast was served and together with our grandchildren we all partook of the delicacies that had been prepared.

For the rest of the morning we were divided into small groups and were directed to several stations where, together with our grandchildren, we painted, made sock-puppets and baked biscuits (wearing special hats). As was only to be expected, the Israeli and Arab grandparents all displayed

equal pride in the achievements of their offspring, and it was heartening to sit side-by-side with our fellow-grandparents and work together to help and encourage the little ones. Although we were not always able to communicate verbally with one another, our smiles and gestures spoke volumes. Two of the stations were situated in the spacious and airy library, where children can sit and enjoy looking at books from the well-stocked shelves.

Children's songs in both languages were played in the background as we worked at our various tasks and the atmosphere of genial co-operation was palpable. A great deal of thought and preparation had evidently been invested by the staff, and I think they were pleased with the result of their efforts. They certainly deserve a lot of credit for what they have achieved. As we left, after a period of free play in the open-air with a variety of toys and games, we were handed a little bag of toys for each child which we were told was 'a gift from Moussa's grandmother'.

Children do not hate. That is something that they are taught by their elders and 'betters' somewhere along the way. If only the atmosphere of mutual cooperation that a small group of people experienced last week could prevail more widely, the world – and Israel – would be a better place. But it is encouraging to find that there are some young parents out there who are doing their bit to overcome prejudice and encourage coexistence and cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Israel.

AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB



Please join us at our Card and Games Club

Monday 9th April 2018 at 1.00pm

at North Western Reform Synagogue,
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN

Open to all levels Bridge players – come and join us

We also offer card games, backgammon, scrabble. You decide.

Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient – the more the merrier

A sandwich lunch will be served upon arrival with tea, coffee and Danish pastries.

£7.00 per person



FANCY A CRUISE?

Carol Rossen is planning a cruise for AJR members this Autumn and would love to hear from people interested in coming along. The suggested dates are in October/November for 11 or 12 nights and proposed destinations include Portugal, Spain, Gibraltar and the Canary Islands. Departure would be from Southampton with coach travel included.

Contact karenmarkham@ajr.org.uk or
020 8385 3070 for more info.

LOOKING FOR?

The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and others looking for people or for help in particular subjects. Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you can help.

QUAKER QUEST

My mother (then Margot Rust) came to England with a Quaker transport from Berlin to Manchester and was at a hostel on Cheetham Hill Road, a Miss Phillips was in charge. Does anyone have information on this place or on refugees coming over with the Quakers?
sa.yosef@gmail.com

SEEKING: ISAAK ZAJAC/IZAK JACKSON

Ralf Kaupenjohann is searching for information about a gentleman named Isaak Zajac (later Izak

Jackson). Born October 1, 1900 in Pacanów, Poland. Lived in Herne (Germany), from 1938 or 1939 in Kitchener Camp, served in the British Army and married Paulina Bass/Salka 1948 in London.
ralf@kaupenjohann.de

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For further details,
please telephone Lorna Moss
on 020 8385 3070



KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH

The guest speaker at our recent Kindertransport lunch was Mona Golabek who wrote the play **The Pianist of Willesden Lane** telling the story of Mona's mother Lisa Jura's survival and the strength her music brought her throughout her traumatic youth.

Year 6 Pupils from Akiva School together with over 50 Kinder heard Mona speak about the writing of the book and perform the music that meant so much to her mother. Mona took a number of questions from the children who have been studying the book as part of the project with HET. Three members of the audience knew Mona's mother personally and lived with her at the hostel in Willesden Lane upon arrival in the UK.



KT lunch with Mona Golabek, © Graham Chwiedan



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OBITUARIES

Dr Frederick Kurzer

Born 29 May 1922 in Karlsbad,
Czechoslovakia
Died 11 October 2017 in London



My friend Dr Frederick Kurzer was Reader in Chemistry at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry for over seventy years.

The son of Jacques Kurzer and his wife Rosa (nee Löwy), Friedrich Kurzer was born in the spa town of Karlsbad (now Karlovy Vary) in the German-speaking area of what was then Czechoslovakia. He lived with his mother and sister Dorothy in Karlsbad and attended the local *gymnasium* (grammar school) until 1939, when the family fled to London to escape the Nazis.

In England he attended the independent Clark's College and from there went to Regent Street Polytechnic (now part of the University of Westminster) to study chemistry. However, in 1940 this was interrupted by internment on the Isle of Man as an 'enemy alien'. While there he wrote a revealing diary about his internment experiences.

He resumed his degree at the former Chelsea College of Science and Technology in 1941, gaining his doctorate at King's College, London in 1947. He then became assistant lecturer at King's College Hospital School of Medicine (1946-49) and was subsequently appointed lecturer, senior lecturer and, finally, Reader in Chemistry at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine in London until his retirement in 1987. He was awarded a DSc in 1957. As well as lecturing to medical students in chemistry, biochemistry and pharmacy, Dr Kurzer was responsible for a research laboratory specialising in heterocyclic chemistry that attracted many British and overseas doctoral students.

Fred, as he was universally known, was modest and possessed of warm human attributes, having a wry sense of humour and being kind and tolerant with his research students. Not only was he highly respected as a chemist, but he also had interests outside the laboratory, particularly in the history of science. In retirement he published significant papers on the chemical work of Samuel Parkes, Charles Tomlinson, William Hasledine Pepys, Arthur Church (the Palace of Westminster frescoes) and the lexicographer, Samuel Johnson, as well as on the scientific activities of the 'lost' Surrey and London Institutions. Dr Kurzer also possessed a great love of classical music, books and ornithology. He especially enjoyed long walks by the Thames and in the Lea Valley.

He is survived by a nephew, William, and cousin, Heinz. His sister pre-deceased him.

Stanley Langer

A version of this obituary has already appeared in the Jewish Chronicle.

Charlotte Michaels MBE

Born Danzig 23 March 1917,
Died London 20 January 2018



Charlotte Michaels was born in Danzig, then Prussia, which became the Free City of Danzig, a tiny republic of 430,000, wedged between Poland and Germany on the Baltic, in 1920.

In 1933 the Nazi Party took control of the Danzig government and Jews came under increasingly draconian treatment. Forced to leave school, Charlotte took up a dressmaking apprenticeship. Her Jewish sports club closed and non-Jewish clubs would not admit her. Fortunately her family's summer home was close to the border with Poland, and they were able to walk there using their Danzig passports. Charlotte and her friends became increasingly Zionist, and many made aliyah. The Danzig railway station was legally Polish so they were sent off with the Hatikvah ringing in their ears.

Charlotte came to England in 1935, where her sister already lived. Her parents and brother joined her in 1938. Charlotte became a youth leader at Stepney Boys and Girls Club, experiencing real poverty for the first time, which left a profound impression.

Her father purchased a farm in Bedfordshire as a Hashara to train young Jewish refugees in agricultural skills before they emigrated to Palestine. During WW2 the farm was taken over by the Government, returning it after the War.

In 1941 Charlotte married fellow refugee Michael Michaels. When Hendon Reform Synagogue was built opposite their home in the early 1960's they became very active members. Cheder classes were held in their home and they were involved in almost every aspect of the community. Michael sat on the Board of Deputies and they were both active on the Council of Christians and Jews.

After Michael died in 1986 Charlotte threw herself into charitable work. She organised weekly meals for the homeless, was the local administrator for Macmillan fundraising, and was very active in the League of Jewish Women. For years she led Kabbalat Shabbat services at Hammerson House and other Jewish care homes. She also volunteered at St Johns school in Hendon, teaching children to read despite her strong middle European accent. She played tennis until she was 90 and enjoyed exotic holidays.

When she was awarded an MBE for charitable services her initial reaction was disbelief, followed by "not bad for a refugee!"

Charlotte is survived by her children Leslie, Tony and Juliette, 7 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

Leslie Michaels



AJR FILM CLUB

Our next film showing will be at Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone N20 9EZ

on **TUESDAY 22nd May 2018**
at **12.30pm**

Lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be served first.

MY COUSIN RACHEL



Philip is a young Englishman who finds his cousin Ambrose dead after traveling to Florence, Italy. He vows revenge against Ambrose's missing wife Rachel, blaming her for his untimely demise. When Philip meets Rachel for the first time, his mood suddenly changes as he finds himself falling for her seductive charm and beauty. As his obsession for her grows, Rachel now hatches a scheme to win back her late husband's estate from the unsuspecting Philip.

£8.00 per person

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

Please either call Kathryn Prevezer on 07966 969 951 or email kathryn@ajr.org.uk

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VISIT TO SALOMONS ESTATE AND TUDELEY CHURCH MONDAY 11 JUNE 2018

Salomons Estate on the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells has a rich and eventful history covering the three generations of the extraordinary Salomons family: Sir David Salomons, the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London, who courageously campaigned for the political rights of religious minorities; Sir David Lionel Salomons, a scientist, engineer, photographer and inventor; and Captain David Reginald Salomons, whose heroic self-sacrifice during the First World War has been dramatised in 'The Dreamers', a West End musical.

Accompanied by Rachel Kosky, Blue Badge Guide, our visit will incorporate the Museum, the House and the gardens, and a delicious two course hot lunch in The Conservatory.

We will then drive onto Tudeley Church, the only church in the world to have all its twelve windows decorated by the great Russian artist **Marc Chagall**.

There is some walking involved in this outing and the coach trip is slightly over an hour each way.

For details and a booking form please contact Susan Harrod susanharrod@ajr.org.uk or call on 020 83835 3070

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YOM HASHOAH 2018

As the countdown to Yom HaShoah begins, dozens of local, regional and national events are being organised, to enable you to mark and remember Yom HaShoah wherever you live in the UK. Attendance is generally free as long as places are booked in advance. Most of the events will be listed on the main www.yomhashoah.org.uk website - here are a few highlights:

NATIONAL HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION

Date: Sunday 15 April, 11.30 am – 1.00 pm
Venue: National Holocaust Memorial Gardens in Hyde Park
Theme: Remember Together, We Are One
Book online:
www.yomhashoah.org.uk/nationalevent
Telephone: 020 7543 5448

MANCHESTER

Date: Thursday 12 April, 7.45 pm
Venue: Audacious Conferencing, Trinity Way, Salford, Manchester M3 7BB
Theme: Law and Disorder
Book by email:
yomhashoahmanchester@gmail.com
Telephone: 0161 925 7515

PINNER

Date: Wednesday 11 April, 8.00 – 10.00 pm (doors open 7.15pm)
Venue: Pinner Synagogue, 1 Cecil Park, Pinner HA5 5HJ
Theme: Commemoration of 80th Anniversary of the Kindertransport
Book online:
www.pinnereshul.org
Telephone: 020 8868 7204

FINCHLEYSTRASSE: THE EXHIBITION



Klaus Meyer, Girl in Red, 1990, Ben Uri Collection © Klaus Meyer Estate

The Ben Uri Gallery and Museum in partnership with the German Embassy has curated a new exhibition called **Finchleystrasse: German artists in exile in Great Britain and beyond 1933-45**. It brings together paintings, drawings and graphics by a number of primarily German-Jewish artists, who made forced journeys, mostly to Great Britain, but also further afield to Australia, China, Palestine and the United States, during the era of National Socialism. The title, Finchleystrasse – as bus conductors used to call out at the Finchley Road stop – recognises the influx of German-speaking émigrés to North London during the Nazi era, and their important contribution to the local community.

Other Exhibitions & Events

PASSAGE TO SAFETY

The Austrian Cultural Forum is presenting an exhibition of emigré portraits in photographs and words, based on Marion Trestler's book which highlights the life stories of 21 Austrians who fled from Vienna to London.
www.acflondon.org
Until 28 April

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

Agnes Grunwald-Spier will talk about her new book *Women's Experiences in the Holocaust* at Edgware United Synagogue.
www.edgwareu.com
10 April



PREMIERE OF LOST MUSIC

Join us in London for the live screening of a unique concert in Jerusalem, being staged by the JNF, at which music salvaged from Holocaust concentration camps will be played publicly for the very first time.
www.jnf.co.uk/event/notes-of-hope-london/15 April

HOLOCAUST CONSCIOUSNESS

The Wiener Library is hosting 'Holocaust Consciousness, German Jewish Refugees and the Civil Rights Struggle in Post-War America' which will explore the participation of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in the African American Civil Rights Movement.
www.wienerlibrary.co.uk
24 April

WHAT PRICE JUSTICE?

Ruth Barnett's play depicting the story of one family fleeing Nazi persecution and daring to return to their homeland after the war will be performed in Liverpool by the Reformed Allerton Drama Society.
ruthclb@gmail.com
9 – 13 May

GRANTS AHEAD



AJR is delighted to announce the permanent appointment of Alex Maws as Head of Educational Grants and Projects.

The AJR is the largest benefactor of Holocaust educational projects in the UK. Alex has been working with us on an advisory basis since last year and his permanent appointment will help us boost opportunities for future generations to study and learn about the Holocaust.

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Telephone 020 8385 3070 e-mail editorial@ajr.org.uk [AssociationofJewishRefugees](https://www.facebook.com/AssociationofJewishRefugees) [@AJR_London](https://twitter.com/AJR_London)

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

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