

Bombs and ethics

The bombing of Libya, following on from the 'Shock and Awe' bombardment of Iraq in 2003, has reopened the question of the morality of bombing when civilian lives are at stake. The moral issues raised by the Allied air offensive against Germany during the Second World War are still very much alive today, more than 60 years later, not least because of the scale of the casualties: it has been reliably estimated that some 600,000 German civilians were killed in the raids.

Attention today has tended to focus on the bombing of Dresden by the RAF and the USAAF. In four raids between 13 and 15 February 1945, involving some 3,600 planes including 1,300 heavy bombers, over 3,900 tons of explosive bombs and incendiary devices were dropped on the previously intact city, destroying its historic centre and causing large civilian casualties, now estimated at up to 25,000. The horrors of the raid, and especially the lethal firestorm that engulfed parts of the city centre, had an impact almost immediately. Winston Churchill, distancing himself from a raid that he had previously pressed for, ordered the cessation of the mass bombing of large German cities, thereby coming into conflict with the architect of the strategic bombing offensive, Air Marshall Sir Arthur Harris, known as 'Bomber' Harris.

It is often argued that the bombing of Dresden so late in the war contributed little of military value to the defeat of Germany, and that the toll of civilian lives and the destruction of the glorious city on the Elbe were in any case out of all proportion to any advantages that the Allies gained through the bombing. Such arguments have, however, been weakened by their use by unscrupulous commentators on the far right, including David Irving. At the most recent commemoration of the raid, a German neo-Nazi spokesman referred to



Bombed buildings, Hamburg, 1943

Harris as 'Butcher' Harris, with the plain implication that the western Allies were as guilty of war crimes as the Nazis. This is all part of the far right's long-standing and discreditable campaign to relativise the Holocaust – Dresden cancels out Auschwitz, as it were. Such contemptible exercises in political manipulation masquerading as moral outrage merit little further attention.

However, there is a moral case to be made against the bombing of German cities, and not only in the case of Dresden. By 1945, the bombing offensive seemed to have acquired a momentum of its own, being pursued almost for its own sake and irrespective of the military benefits that the raids might bring, which at that stage of the war were relatively small. How else can one explain the raid on Würzburg, the jewel of Franconia, on 16 March 1945 (almost a month after Dresden), which killed up to 5,000 people and destroyed the Residenz, the magnificent palace of the former Prince-Bishops? Or the lethal raid of 23 February 1945 on Pforzheim, a target of equally minor importance, which killed some 17,000 people, a full quarter of the town's population?

Depictions of the Dresden raid in novels like Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* have reinforced its image in the public mind as the raining down of an apocalyptic hail of destruction on a largely defenceless city. Bombing from

a height of many thousands of feet bred a kind of moral indifference to its effects; it is hard to imagine British land forces attacking the city and killing thousands of civilians at close quarters. Bombing was a technological solution to the problem of destroying the enemy's productive capacity, and one which tended to dehumanise the victims of the raids as secondary casualties, 'collateral damage' in the current euphemism.

On the other hand, it is harder to dispute the military justification of the bombing of Hamburg, which took place throughout the last week of July 1943 and killed some 46,000 people, making it the most costly of all in terms of the loss of life. Though the firestorm provoked by the raid of 27 July 1943 caused appalling scenes of carnage among the civilian population, memorably conveyed in Martin Middlebrook's classic study *The Battle of Hamburg* (1980), the city's industrial potential and its contribution to the German war effort were also hard hit; Hamburg contained essential armaments industries, as well as its port facilities, shipbuilding yards and submarine pens. Berlin, the nerve centre of the Third Reich and its military operations, was another obvious target for attack: apart from the damage to key facilities, the dislocation of systems by continuous air raids severely disrupted the smooth functioning of the Nazi machine.

A reasonable judgment on the Allied bombing of Germany can only be reached if one considers the military and strategic situation in which it was decided on and implemented. If, to take a fantasy scenario, the RAF had bombed Germany without declaration of war, raining bombs on a peaceful land governed by a democratic, non-Nazi regime, outright moral condemnation would be justified. But the real situation confronting Britain

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BOMBS AND ETHICS *cont. from page 1*

from 1940 on was very different. Once the Germans had occupied France and the Low Countries and had expelled British forces from mainland Europe, there was until D-Day in June 1944 no major land front on which British and German forces faced one another. The campaigns in North Africa, Greece and Crete, and Italy were, despite their strategic importance, not comparable to the Western Front of 1914-18 as the crucial land front on which the outcome of the war would be decided.

As the British could bring neither land nor sea power to bear on Germany itself, Churchill was forced to turn to air power, especially as in the Lancaster and Wellington bombers Britain had the necessary capacity to bring the war home to the enemy. The strategic air offensive aimed to destroy the enemy's capacity to prosecute the war, as well as sapping the morale of the German population. Since accurate bombing of specific industrial targets was impossible in the 1940s – the British could only bomb by night, as their bombers were too vulnerable to fighters by day – the only way of achieving the strategic aim of the air offensive was to target larger areas, and that in turn inevitably meant incurring civilian casualties.

The killing of civilians was and is morally repugnant, but there has been no modern war (and precious few ancient ones) in which no civilians have died. War is in itself immoral; it is therefore only to be undertaken when clearly justified, and that was plainly the case with the war against Hitler. To equate the Allied bombing campaign morally with crimes like the Holocaust is for that reason alone completely misguided. Whereas the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews was conducted largely outside the German war effort, and indeed to some extent in conflict with its priorities, the Allied air offensive was a military campaign conducted as part of the war effort and intended to bring the war to a victorious conclusion as speedily as possible. The 'Final Solution' was conducted primarily by the SS and, though the German army was certainly involved in the mass murders, the machine of genocide was controlled by Himmler, to the virtual exclusion of the military high command.

The strategic bombing offensive, by contrast, was conducted on the British side by Bomber Command, an arm of the

Royal Air Force, which was under the political control of the Air Ministry and the War Cabinet and whose operations were controlled militarily by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Bomber Command carried out the bombing offensive as a military campaign. The offensive was not a battle between highly armed aircraft and defenceless civilians, for the British bombers had to fight their way to their targets against formidable forces of night fighters (the Kamhuber Line) and anti-aircraft guns. This was a military campaign, and the losses prove it: together, the RAF and the USAAF lost some 140,000 men in the bombing offensive. To kill millions of defenceless, almost entirely unarmed Jews required little more than units of highly trained cowards. To carry out sorties against German cities required fighting men and courage.

How much the bombing contributed to the ending of the war has been hotly debated. Plainly, it greatly hampered Germany's essential war production. The strategic air offensive also effectively destroyed the German air force. This ensured the Allied air superiority that was crucial to the success of operations like the Normandy landings. To defend German cities against the aerial onslaught, the Germans were also forced to withdraw vital weaponry from the Eastern Front. The 88-millimetre gun, used with deadly effect as an anti-tank weapon in the East, was by late 1943 principally deployed as an anti-aircraft gun in Germany. As a defence against Allied bombers, Germany was forced to build fighters, thereby sacrificing the production of the bombers that had wrought such havoc on the Soviet forces in 1941/42. The air war over Germany contributed very significantly to the defeat of Nazism, and that must be taken into account alongside the civilian casualties it cost.

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AJR 70th Anniversary Celebrations

20-26 June 2011

The AJR and the London Jewish Cultural Centre are delighted to present a week-long programme of events to celebrate the AJR's 70th anniversary and the remarkable contribution to British society of the Jewish refugees who escaped Nazism.

The programme features lectures, discussions and debates highlighting the refugees' experiences, films about their history, and interviews given to the AJR's *Refugee Voices* testimony project.

Details of the programme are enclosed in an insert in this month's Journal. They include a 'Question Time'-style event and a panel of speakers offering the contrasting perspectives of different generations of Holocaust refugees.

In scheduling the sessions for both afternoon and evening, it is hoped to attract different audiences and to welcome all ages. Please do pass on these details to anyone you think may be interested in coming along. The full programme also appears on the AJR's website at www.ajr.org.uk



Former Kindertransport Chairman Hermann Hirschberger with his wife Eva at Buckingham Palace on receiving an MBE for services to the Jewish community and Kindertransport evacuees

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of THE ASSOCIATION OF
JEWISH REFUGEES
MONDAY 20 JUNE 2011
AT 11.00 AM
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members retiring by rotation
and being proposed
for re-election are
Mr A. C. Kaufman
Ms Karen Goodman
Mr Tim Schwarz

Anyone for tennis?



Not me, thank you very much. Nor for any other sports-related games. I would never willingly watch, listen to or read *anything* to do with sport, but there is no escape from it. It appears on all news bulletins on radio and TV and it makes headlines in the national press.

I realise that I am in a minority – possibly of one – in a society that is obsessed with sport.

I daren't phone some of my best friends during Wimbledon fortnight lest I interrupt their viewing at a critical moment of the game. As for football After enduring weeks of jingoistic claptrap and at the risk of scandalising many of my readers, I confess to some *Schadenfreude* at England's premature and ignominious departure from South Africa last summer. Nor could I enter into the spirit of national jubilation when the 'flannelled fools'

(at least Kipling was on my side – pity he's dead!) brought home the Ashes early this year from a devastated Australia. I was introduced to cricket by some enthusiast towards the end of the war in Maidenhead and watched my first – and last – game on a lovely sunny afternoon. Although I didn't disgrace myself by falling asleep I certainly had trouble staying awake. I do enjoy a quiet swim – preferably in an alpine lake before breakfast – or a walk at as brisk a pace as my advanced years will permit, but blench at the very word 'games'.

My negative attitude to sport goes right back to my childhood and our PE teacher at the *Gymnasium*. Beastly Bondy (or BB for short) is how I think of her now but, since there is no alliterative equivalent in German to describe her, I must have found plenty of similarly derogative, albeit non-alliterative epithets. Although Jewish, she was, it grieves me to report, more poisonous than all the teachers rumoured to be Nazi sympathisers put together.

We didn't wear uniforms for any other lessons, but for PE a certain outfit was required. All I remember is that

it was pale blue and that my parents couldn't afford it. I must have worn shorts and something resembling a T-shirt instead. BB rarely missed an opportunity to humiliate me by asking me in front of the class when I was going to get the regulation kit.

Bondy, formidable in navy blue trousers and a starched white shirt, was said to suffer from a heart condition and therefore, unable to instruct us by example, used her powerful voice and a whistle instead.

The gymnastics part wasn't too bad. I didn't mind running, bending knees and climbing ladders. It was the *Völkerball* that I abhorred. In winter we had an hour of it every week in the gym, but in spring and early summer we had to traipse to some godforsaken field in Erdberg, a part of the third district in Vienna, every fortnight and sacrifice two hours of our precious afternoons that were normally free to what was called *Jugendspiele*.

Don't ask me what the game was all about. It must have involved throwing and catching a ball, at both of which I was woefully incompetent. Two girls appointed by BB elected their teams and, to my mortification, I was invariably the last one to be called. Who wants a girl who hovers forlornly during the whole of the game, clearly indifferent to the success or failure of her team? I wouldn't have chosen me either.

I got out of those afternoon games as often as I could by inducing my ever-obliging father to write notes attesting to non-existing illnesses that prevented me from attending. What I lacked in team spirit I made up for in ingenuity in finding reasons – from headaches and upset stomachs to ice cream poisoning and bruised ankles – for my frequent absences. And although BB accepted these notes with a sardonic smile, she was powerless to question my father's word.

Tennis, you said? I think not. How about a game of bridge instead?

Edith Argy

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

A moving week in Vienna

In the early autumn of 1938, Austrian Nazis forced our family, along with the other 400-500 Jews of Eisenstadt, to leave behind our homes and belongings. Eisenstadt, and indeed the whole of Burgenland, was to be rid of its Jews. We moved to a small flat in the 2nd District of Vienna until we left Austria early in 1939.

In February 2011, Gaston Mariotti of Jewish Welcome Service Vienna (JWS) invited my brother and me to visit Vienna from 27 March to 3 April as guests of the Viennese authorities. JWS, founded in 1980 at the initiative of the then mayor of Vienna and Leon Zelman, a Shoah survivor, is financially supported by the City of Vienna and the Austrian government, as well as by a number of major Austrian industrial and financial entities. Some of its objectives are clear and understandable, some less obvious. About 130,000 Jews were expelled from Vienna in the late 1930s and over 65,000 murdered in concentration camps. In 1945 only about 1,000-1,500 were left from the once flourishing Jewish community of Vienna.

Very few Jews who had been expelled were willing or able to return after the war, so JWS began to invite small groups to visit their former home city. Since 1989 thousands have accepted their invitation. It goes without saying that the entire exercise is tinged with a strong PR element designed to counter Austria's former reputation for anti-Semitism, yet there is a strong feeling that JWS is genuinely succeeding in building bridges, particularly in their activities concerning schools and young people.

I was not prepared for the fact that we were about 90 people from all parts of the world, with 55 coming from the USA, 20 from Israel, 2 from Argentina, 1 from Australia and 11 from the UK. Of these 90, only 40 were the actual ex-Austrians; the remainder were accompanying family. The outstanding group was the nine-member family of Stella Dubey from California, who came with three generations of supporters, from husband to granddaughters – a wonderful happy and lively family.

An introductory dinner in the hotel on the first evening was followed the next day by a guided city tour, in beautiful sunny weather, ending at the Vienna City Hall for a reception hosted by a member of the city council. On the following day, Wednesday, we were invited to a reception at the Bundeskanzleramt, where our host was Dr Manfred Matzka, Head of the Presidential Section. He addressed us in impeccable English, alluding to the pains many of us had suffered at the hands of Austrian Nazis, bidding us welcome back



The author and his wife Anita at the reception in the Bundeskanzleramt

to Vienna but not actually saying 'sorry'.

Wednesday evening, free of formal organised activity, became our private evening of culture – we went to see *Rigoletto* at the Volksoper, an excellent performance at affordable ticket prices.

It is unthinkable to visit Vienna without an evening at a *Heuriger* in Grinzing. Such an evening was organised for our group, many of whom were in good voice and remembered the songs their parents had sung in times gone by.

Friday turned out to be a busy day. A visit to the enormous Zentralfriedhof of Vienna had been planned, and the organisers had gone to great trouble to locate the graves of parents and relatives of the visitors.

The group were invited to the main Vienna Synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse for an Erev Shabbat service and dinner in the community centre. The synagogue was constructed in 1825-26. The luxurious Stadttempel was fitted into a block of houses and hidden from plain view of the street due to an edict by Emperor Joseph II that only Catholic places of worship could be built with facades fronting directly on to public streets. Ironically, this edict saved the synagogue from total destruction during Kristallnacht as it could not be destroyed without setting on fire the buildings to which it was attached. The Stadttempel was the only synagogue in the city to survive the war as the Nazis destroyed all the other 93 synagogues and Jewish prayer-houses in Vienna. Paul Chaim Eisenberg, Chief Rabbi of Austria, welcomed us and this was followed by the familiar tunes of the Kabbalat Shabbat service led by an excellent *chazan* with choir.

No official programme had been arranged for the Shabbat. Some went to synagogue, some went shopping, some went on the Danube or to the Prater with its iconic big wheel and some visited one or other of the superb Viennese museums. We strolled along the Kärntnerstrasse and the Graben in the warm sunshine, marvelling at the crowded streets and riches of the shop windows and wondering how this small

country had succeeded in achieving such a high standard of living.

Back home and able to take a more distant view of the week in Vienna, I tried to put my finger on what was the highlight for me. I concluded it was not the various ceremonies, or the sightseeing, or the excellent coffee and Sachertorte. What stands out absolutely clearly in my memory is the character of the people in the group – not only the 'survivors' but also those who accompanied them. There was a certain dignity which indicated a willingness to forgive but never to forget what happened to them and their families, and there were stories which should never be forgotten.

I spent some time chatting with Stella Dubey and her husband Michael and two granddaughters, 23-year-old Rachel and 14-year-old Jasmine. In March 1939, the six-year-old Stella arrived with her mother in Brooklyn, not speaking a word of English. Her mother found work in a local sweat shop and they struggled. Stella made progress, as so many refugees did, and eventually found Michael. She tells the story that some 20 years ago, she and Michael were on a business visit to Vienna and she felt the urge to visit the flat in the 2nd District which they had occupied as a family in 1938. They knocked on the door and found a young couple living there. They explained the situation, were invited in and treated most hospitably. The young Austrian lady suddenly asked why Stella and her mother had left Vienna. It turned out that this lady had absolutely no knowledge of the Holocaust or of the manner in which the Jews had been treated. It appeared that this aspect of Austria's past had simply been air-brushed out. I was interested to hear what Jasmine felt about this visit with her grandmother – what had impressed her most was the mental strength of the survivors.

Space does not permit me to go into detail on the many moving conversations I had during the week, such as the story of Professor Eliezer Robinson, a leading Israeli oncologist, or that of Edith Cord, now an American academic and writer, whose father and brother were betrayed to the Nazis by the French and murdered in Auschwitz, or that of Arthur Bergner who, at the age of 11, was already working for the Haganah, stealing ammunition from British soldiers in Palestine and who fought in five wars between 1948 and 1982.

These were just a few of the fascinating conversations we had during a very moving week which will remain in my thoughts for a long time.

Ernest Simon

British Quakers and the rescue of Jewish refugees

Contrary to contemporary public perception, the doors of the world were usually firmly closed to refugees desperate to escape the fascist regimes of Franco and Hitler in the 1930s. The British government, worried by unemployment, anti-Semitism and xenophobia among the British population, refused visa applications from anyone who could not meet one of the following criteria: prove they were financially self-supporting; produce a valid offer of work, usually as a domestic servant; or provide evidence they had been offered a £50 guarantee by a British benefactor to ensure they would not be a drain on the British economy.

The exact number of refugees who reached Britain by these means is unknown, but it is estimated that up to 80,000 refugees, including up to 20,000 domestic servants, of whom three-quarters identified as Jewish, were living in Britain in 1939.

The one exception to the government's policy was the Kindertransport, which was arranged after the horror of Kristallnacht in November 1938 as a special case to allow 10,000 unaccompanied children into Britain. The success of the Kindertransport has rightly been commemorated. What has not been fully acknowledged is the role of the British Quaker community in organising, financing and administering both the Kindertransport and a range of services designed to rescue and support refugees.

The events of Kristallnacht made it very clear that Jews were in immediate danger if they remained in the Reich. As it was not safe for British Jews to travel to Germany to assess the situation, the Friends' Service Council, which had been working closely with Jewish refugee organisations, immediately sent a team of six volunteers to Berlin. Based on the Quaker report, a delegation of Jewish leaders pleaded with Neville Chamberlain to allow unaccompanied children into Britain. He refused. Undeterred, on 21 November, a joint Quaker and Jewish delegation which included Bertha Bracey, Ben Greene, Norman and Helen Bentwich, Wyndham Deedes and Lord Samuel, successfully lobbied Home Secretary Samuel Hoare, who was from a Quaker family, to allow unaccompanied children to enter

Britain provided the Home Office's only responsibility would be 'to give the necessary visas and to facilitate their entry into this country'.

The Kindertransport brought nearly 10,000 children to safety in the next eight months, with Friends from the Quaker centres in Berlin and Vienna working with local Jewish organisations to draw up lists of children, fill out reams



Young girls who were part of the Kindertransport from Hamburg, 1939. Without Quaker help, many of the 10,000 Kindertransport children would not have escaped. Photo by kind permission of Voices Education Project, Bainbridge Island, Washington, USA

of paperwork, supervise departures and chaperone journeys.

Forbidden to take funds out of the Reich, many adult refugees were almost destitute on arrival in Britain. In order to enable them to earn a living, the Society of Friends established a number of retraining camps in which refugees were provided with board, lodging and training in agriculture to assist them to find work. Scores of free or subsidised hostels across the country provided small communities of refugees a base from which to build new lives.

The unaccompanied children of the Kindertransport were placed mostly with families for foster care, in small hostels or in boarding schools. Many schools offered full or partial scholarships to refugee children, with additional bursaries towards clothes and books. Quaker boarding schools were particularly active in supporting children and up to 1,000 refugee children attended Quaker schools before the end of the war.

The fundraising, administrative and caring responsibilities undertaken by Quaker volunteers during this period were overwhelming. There were only around 20,000 members of the Society of Friends in Britain in the late 1930s and evidence suggests that nearly every Quaker household contributed towards refugee relief in some way; whether

serving on a local refugee committee, fostering a child, contributing to a local hostel, or donating funds.

Peter Kurer, a retired dentist in Manchester and formerly a child refugee from Vienna, credits Quakers with saving his life and the lives of nine members of his family, including his 91-year-old great-grandmother. He has spent many years researching the role of Quakers in rescuing refugees and has estimated the total number of Jews saved by Quakers as 27,000. This figure has yet to be substantiated – and, owing to the lack of documentary evidence, it may not be possible to determine an exact number – but it stands as a compelling testament to the work of the Friends. It is thanks to Peter Kurer's dedicated work that Yad Vashem last year added the Society of Friends to its archive.

British and American Quakers were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work with refugees and relief in 1947. It was accepted on behalf of the Friends' Service Committee by Margaret Backhouse, whose acceptance speech sought to sum up the attitudes of the Quakers: 'There is not peace in the minds of men and there will not be until we have replaced misunderstanding by sympathy – fear by trust – jealousy and hatred by love. This is a very difficult job when thought of on the world-wide scale, but it is not so difficult when we think in terms of individual responsibility. This is the task before us, not only of the Society of Friends but of all mankind. Love is very infectious and if Quakers have started the infection they will rejoice.'

A new research project at the University of Sussex is examining the involvement of Quakers in refugee rescue and relief. The three-year project was generously funded by Dr Alfred Bader, in testament to the contribution of Professor Edward Timms to the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex.

Any memories, documents or observations would be very welcome. Please contact Rose Holmes, post-graduate researcher, at r.holmes@sussex.ac.uk or telephone me on 01273 877178 or write to me C/O Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9QN.

Rose Holmes

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

BOMBAY SEDER, 1944

Sir – My mother (about to celebrate her 100th birthday) and I read Walter Bergwerk's article in the May issue with interest, even though I was a child at the time he was describing. My mother, incidentally, remembers him.

My father, Alfred Rosenfeld, was one of the professional people already in India as the war approached. He had emigrated from Germany some years previously to take up a senior managerial post and was already a British subject. More to the point, he was the prime mover behind the Jewish Relief Association to which the article referred and worked tirelessly to help new arrivals. My mother has told me that he spent many nights at the docks in order to meet and help Jewish refugees. I would attribute his early death after the war at least in part to these efforts. Nor were they confined to India. His passport bears several entry and exit stamps for Austria and Germany, the last dated 1938. He was also actively involved there in helping people to emigrate to India. Some, at least, expressed their gratitude to us in later years.

In case Walter Bergwerk and others with an interest in the subject have not come across it, a book was published in New Delhi in 1999 and reprinted in 2005 (I was easily able to order a copy from an Indian bookseller) entitled *Jewish Exile in India 1933-1945*. The publisher was Manohar in association with Max Müller Bhavan and the editors were Anil Bhat and the German academic Johannes Voigt. In large part, the work consisted of papers presented at an academic symposium in India in 1995. It contained many references to people we knew well – an entire chapter was devoted to one of them – and it also contained a quotation that was particularly poignant for me from a circular sent round by my father in 1939 and extracted from the archives. In it he warned new arrivals to behave 'with the utmost circumspection' and not to speak German in particular (advice I don't think was always heeded at home!): '[I]t would be better to speak only English.' Such warnings may seem exaggerated today, but the book also contained documentary evidence that the arrival of Jewish refugees was hardly greeted with unalloyed enthusiasm in certain British quarters in India.

Peter Roland, Bognor Regis

'BECAUSE OF OUR SINS'

Sir – In our prayers on Rosh Hashanah we recite 'Because of our sins we were exiled from our country and banished from our land.' If that event had not occurred, we would not have suffered persecution, including the Holocaust. Why is it then that so many who rush to commemorations of Holocaust Memorial Day, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and Yom HaShoah are not to be found in synagogue on Tisha B'Av?

Henry Schragenheim, London N15

A LOST GENERATION

Sir – Leslie Baruch Brent observes in his commentary on the *Kent Messenger's* commemoration of Anna Essinger's school in Kent, 63 years after its closure, that this was due to its main task (giving a home and education to Jewish children from Nazi Germany, Austria and occupied Czechoslovakia) having been fulfilled. This is correct up to a point, but it is by no means the whole story. Anna Essinger was, by general agreement, a remarkable and farsighted humanist but, like all of us, she had her weak points. One of these was an inability to conceive of Bunce Court School being run by anyone other than herself.

In a brief post-war experiment, she had agreed to Dr Fridolin Friedmann taking up the post of headmaster. Dr Friedmann had been the director (Schulleiter) of the renowned Jewish school Landschulheim Caputh. Before that he had taught at the Odenwaldschule. He was a man of outstanding intellect, great experience and profound humanity. Bunce Court School benefited greatly from his short stay, which was characterised by his overriding belief in the influence of the arts, particularly music, in the education of children. Alas, Anna Essinger's consistent interference in his function made his position ultimately untenable. By 1948 it was evident that she herself could no longer run the school (as Professor Brent observes, she was very nearly blind) and this was undoubtedly one reason for its closure.

Did the school, as is often maintained, effectively run out of children? In 1948 there were thousands of deprived, disadvantaged and under-educated children populating Europe's displaced persons' camps. As it was, it was left to another German-Jewish refugee, Dr

Henry Alexander, to give a home and an education to some of these children in his Pestalozzi Children's Village near Hastings, which, in its early days, was very nearly a copy of Bunce Court School. As Jews, we are naturally on the side of the persecuted, the underprivileged, the impoverished and the forgotten. Bunce Court School could have upheld this tradition (with possible funding from agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO) for many more years and thus made its contribution to ameliorating the great tragedy of a lost generation that was post-war Europe.

Eric Bourne, Milldale, Alstonefield, Ashbourne

GRATEFUL TO THE UK

Sir – In August 1939, my late mother was granted a Domestic Service visa to come to England. I was nearly ten years old and I was not on the visa. My mother would not leave me behind as my father and brother had already left Vienna. She went to the British embassy and pleaded for them to include me on her visa. A consular office took pity on her – plus the fact that they saw what was going on in Vienna – and gave permission for me to be included, so we arrived in London three weeks before the war started. I have been grateful to this country for saving my life ever since.

Blanche Marks, Edgware, Middx

STIFF UPPER LIP

Sir – I read with great interest Edith Argy's article on her 'Blitz experience' during the war (February). It reminded me of an anecdote I was told by Ruth Schulze-Gaevernitz, a prominent member of London's emigrant community.

She was sitting in an air raid shelter during the Blitz and expressing a certain amount of embarrassment. There she was, a German sitting in a bunker together with British people as German bombs fell all around them. But a woman next to her simply replied: 'Oh don't worry, our boys are doing the same!'

I think this reference to the RAF's raids on Germany is a true expression of the 'stiff upper lip' and the English sense of humanity. Such statements could have got you into big trouble here in Berlin, where the *Bunkerwart* Nazi kept a watch on people and would quickly charge them with *Wehrkraftzersetzung* for unwanted remarks.

Niko Rollmann, Berlin

WONDERFUL MODEL SEDER

Sir – I would like to thank Susie Kaufman and the dedicated staff at Cleve Road AJR Centre for the recent wonderful Model Seder. Rabbi Steven Katz again made it very enjoyable and interesting and a happy emotional experience. The meal was absolutely delicious. Thank you for the hard work involved to all concerned.

Josie Dutch, London NW2

OBSESSION WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Sir – Your journal is like a treasure trove. It never fails to evoke in me memories of days long gone. In your April issue, it was Czechoslovakia that was given substantial coverage. My sister, when in her late teens, was obsessed with Czechoslovakia and its democratic regime under President Jan Masaryk. After her matriculation in the summer of 1938 at the *realna gimnazija* in Maribor, Slovenia, then part of Yugoslavia, she wanted to go to university in Prague, but our mother dissuaded her, rightly assuming that Czechoslovakia was likely to be the next on Hitler's list. London was a much safer option and we had relatives here.

Not long afterwards, we were all expelled from Yugoslavia at very short notice and so found a safe haven here as well. Visiting my sister in her room in her London boarding house for the first time, my mother and I saw a modest, framed picture of Jan Masaryk on the wall above her bed which her landlady believed was a picture of her grandfather. The picture is still here, in this very flat – but in a drawer, not on the wall.

(Mrs) Margarete Stern, London NW3

BULGARIANS AND JEWS

Sir – Kurt Winter's picture of Bulgaria's attitude to its Jews in the Second World War (April, Letters) is very positive: almost all Jews were saved because of the attitude of all sections of the population.

This makes it all the harder to explain the action of the Bulgarian occupation of Greek Thrace and Macedonia after the German defeat of Greece. There, almost the entire Jewish community was deported to Auschwitz and Treblinka. Of about 11,000, 11 survived.

Peter Block, London SE24

LOVE AFFAIR WITH MAHLER

Sir – Reading 'My love affair with Mahler' by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson (March) brought back my own childhood in Berlin. As a very young boy, I frequently sat on the floor under the grand piano listening to my parents playing duet arrangements of classical symphonies. That helped me to learn by heart the tunes which ten years later I was to hear performed on the radio and on scratchy records by orchestras in my new home, London. Indeed, my first live orchestral concert was in 1940 in the Queen's Hall, which, a few nights later, was destroyed by a direct hit. My memory is of Sir Henry Wood and Moisewitch, later translated to the Albert Hall for many nights of Promenade Concerts. And that was when I first experienced – not heard – a live performance of a Mahler symphony.

It immediately brought back the memory of sitting under the piano in 1930 and hearing a kind of music quite unlike that of Haydn or Beethoven, which

nevertheless affected me in a strange, emotional way, nowadays referred to as the 'Jewish experience'. And these were also the harmonies and dissonances that were to open the gates to the development of twentieth-century music. My mother had died soon after my first under-the-piano Mahler experience, but, as a teenager, my piano-playing was of a sufficiently high standard to tackle the duet arrangements with my father. He also taught me how to read complex scores and to transpose and simplify the music for a ten-finger piano rendering. This ability has helped me to study what makes the Mahler songs and symphonies so special and my love has grown. It was, however, only after reading Norman Lebrecht's recent book *Why Mahler?* that I learned more about the complexities and sufferings of this genius. I guess they are all part of the 'Jewish experience' and we of the Kindertransport or 'survivor' generation should be familiar with some of the symptoms.

My love affair with Mahler had later to be shared – but not diluted – with another musical love affair, not at all Jewish. My father remarried before emigration, and my new mother's love was J. S. Bach, with whom I share a birthday. I caught this love from her. It involves many emotional stirrings that are similar to those I experienced earlier from Mahler's music. So I might ask 'Why Bach?' And why just Mahler and Bach? My personal musical activities are devoted to string chamber music, in which neither of them excelled, compared to Mozart or Beethoven. Lots of questions, few answers – probably also part of the 'Jewish experience'.

Felix Franks, London N3

Sir – Dorothea Shefer-Vanson omitted to mention that, in addition to performances of Mahler's music, a film show – a skit on Mahler's life – sponsored by the Leo Baeck Institute was shown at the Cinematheque here in Jerusalem. I say a 'skit' as it showed that, after his conversion from Judaism to Catholicism, Mahler bit into a pig's head with great relish. He was forced to convert to become conductor of the Vienna Court Opera.

Some years ago, the Jewish playwright Ronald Harwood wrote a play entitled *Mahler's Conversion*, but this was not a success: apparently Mahler was rated more highly as a composer than as a convert to Catholicism.

Max Sulzbacher, Jerusalem

Sir – On a visit to Vienna in 1976, I went to the Grinzinger Friedhof to see whether Mahler's gravestone was still standing after the Nazi era. When I enquired at the cemetery office as to its location, the official responded: 'What is Mahler the Jew doing in my Catholic cemetery?'

Meir Fleischer, London N16

ISRAEL AND THE CHARGE OF APARTHEID

Sir – Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's 'Letter from Israel' (April) is timely. Apartheid, like Holocaust and Nazism, is a term that conjures up such unbearable images that we tend to deal with them by watering down the term itself. These three terms have been used so frequently in the media, and often totally inappropriately, that our minds have become inured to them. Their dilution in this way anaesthetises us to the uneasiness we try to suppress about our own part (or our government's part in our name) in all the suffering caused today by greed for wealth and power – or *realpolitik* as its perpetrators prefer to name it.

Arabs and Jews are locked in a conflict going back to misrule by Ottoman Turks and the British Mandate long before the state of Israel was created. The UN's creation of the state of Israel intended a parallel Palestinian state which didn't happen. Instead, Israel has been forced to fight for its existence against heavy local odds. The prime enemy for both sides, as I experienced it in my latest visit to Israel, is not 'the other' but fear accompanied by suspicion, mistrust and, in some cases, loss of belief that peace is possible.

Shefer-Vanson is right to remind us that the Arabs in Israel and the West Bank have better living conditions and greater freedom than the Kurds in Turkey or Muslim women in France. She might have added that the treatment of Roma/Gypsy/Travelers in Britain – and right across Europe – is closer to apartheid than the experience of Israeli Arabs and West Bank Palestinians. Many Gypsy communities are totally excluded from our government's much-vaunted 'community cohesion' and have no means of claiming their voice, let alone their rights.

Something more akin to apartheid is developing in Britain. Deep-seated and repressed feelings of helplessness and guilt about what Britain did, in our name, in the run-up to the state of Israel and is doing to people in Iraq, Afghanistan and now Libya, are becoming unbearable. We are driven to try and find the 'good side' to support against the 'bad side' so that we can feel 'good' and locate all the 'bad' out there in the 'other side'. The media have done a pretty good job of presenting the Palestinians as the 'under-dog' – Brits have always loved the 'under-dog' and this sells papers and hypes up TV ratings. Hence the rise of anti-Zionism in all its forms and inability to see the conflict as, in Amos Oz's words in *How to Cure a Fanatic*, between right and right and between wrong and wrong.

There is no 'good side' or 'bad side' and we are deluded if we create such 'sides'. We need to stop playing blame games and turn our energy and money to supporting projects that benefit both Arabs and Jews and help them to negotiate a peaceful solution.

Ruth Barnett, London NW6

continued on page 16

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

If there is a poignancy to **Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World**, which opened at the **British Museum** (until 17 July) just two months before Osama bin Laden was killed by US forces, it is its war zone status. Most recently, America invaded its cavernous territory in quest of the fugitive mass murderer of 9/11, who honed his Al-Qaeda strategy in the embers of the last Soviet invasion in 1979.

If Afghanistan has become the world's cigarette butt, the home-grown iconoclasm of its Taliban has also destroyed many of its ancient artefacts. Yet these upheavals tell a mysterious tale of buried treasure – intricate ivory inlay carvings, brilliant

years searching for it until, in 1964, Afghan King Zahir Shah noticed a Greek capital sticking out of the ground. A model of this stupendous, low-rise city of Ai Khanum, the second site, with its Corinthian capitals, made of sun-dried bricks on a stepped base, was founded by one of Alexander the Great's generals but inhabited by locals. In 200 BC the Greek historian Polybius warned against the invasion of 'vast hordes of nomads ... bound to drag the country down into barbarism'. His prophecy came true with its subsequent destruction by Chinese-Central Asian nomads and its final looting, even after excavation in 1965, by antiquity seekers.

The third site, the ancient city of Begram in the shadow of the Hindu Kush mountains, represents a creative fusion from China to the Mediterranean. In the late 1930s, French archaeologists discovered two sealed storerooms in the city's palace containing Roman glass, Indian ivory furniture and Chinese



© Musée Guimet / Thierry Ollivier Photograph: British Museum

gold nomadic crowns, sensuous figurines, Roman-Egyptian glass-enamelled vessels. Poised on the silk route which brought the fusion of many cultures to Afghanistan, its awesome history and geography concealed for centuries the provenance of its art.

In four sites, the exhibition displays some 200 distinctive objects belonging to the National Museum of Afghanistan, found between 1937 and 1978 and hidden by Afghan officials during the Soviet invasion. In 1966 Afghan farmers found and divided between them richly decorated gold and silver vessels dating back to 2200 BC near a hill known as Tepe Fullol, the first site, suggesting a wealthy Bronze Age civilisation and representing the earliest gold objects found there.

Greek-Hellenism took root in the 3rd Century BC, but archaeologists spent

lacquerware.

But the fourth site at Tillya Tepe reveals an elite nomadic cemetery discovered by Russian archaeologist Viktor Sarianidi in 1978, just before the Soviet invasion. Dazzling gold objects including amulets, dress ornaments, bracelets and bangles and a tinkling, foldable, filigree gold crown, which might have been worn by a nomad queen on a camel, accompanied the dead to the afterlife.

One of the tragedies of this broken country is the vandalism of its own people. In May 2001 the Taliban destroyed the 6th-Century rock-cut Buddha sculptures in Bamiyan which once towered 55 metres above the valley floor. Today, African and Japanese archaeologists are excavating this UNESCO project. More collaborative initiatives are underway exploring and restoring the region's history.

REVIEWS

The 'German malady'

EIN VOLK EIN REICH: NINE LIVES UNDER THE NAZIS

by Louis Hagen

Stroud: The History Press (tel 01453 883 2332) 2011, 288 pp. paperback, illustrated, £14.99

The author was born in 1916 into a wealthy Jewish family in Berlin. His father was a banker who moved in high circles and had many influential friends. Hagen emigrated to England in 1936 and most of his family subsequently succeeded in leaving Germany. He acquired the name Haig during the war, in which he served with distinction and courage in the Glider Pilot Regiment, earning the Military Medal.

After the war Hagen wanted to get to grips with the great enigma of 'what it had felt like to suffer from the German malady' and to explode the theory that it had been the leaders and not the German people who had been responsible – a theory that 'had been convenient for Germans and the Allies' alike. To this end, he selected nine people he had known before 1936 and interviewed them in depth by recording their testimony word for word, in an attempt to reconstruct their lives. He was convinced from his own knowledge of them and by consulting archives and friends that their recollections were genuine.

This book was first published in 1951 under the title *Follow My Leader* and has now been reissued by his daughter. It is not a book for the fainthearted for some of the recollections are stomach-churning and distasteful. The nine people, who were given pseudonyms, comprise four out-and-out Nazis, three fellow travellers who were content to gain materially from the Third Reich without ever actively collaborating, and two who were opposed to the-Nazi regime. One of the latter was so by default: his mother, who died before he had reached the age of two, had been Jewish and so he was lumbered with the label *Mischling*. It is a wonder that he survived the war, but he did so with great difficulty and trauma. Two of the fellow travellers were members of the aristocracy. Once Hagen had gained their confidence, they were only too ready to talk about their experiences, and even the Nazis were remarkably frank about their attitudes to Hitler and the Jews.

One of the fellow travellers, Baroness Mausi von Westerode, is of special

interest in that she had Communist leanings and friends, married a Jew (who was exiled to the mountains as he suffered from TB), left for France in 1938 with a passport engineered by her friend and admirer Herman Göring (sic), but returned after a short time because she was shocked by the dismal life of the German refugees there and persuaded herself that her place was in the Fatherland. For some years she lived the good life with her elitist friends – lobsters, caviar, tennis, riding and sailing – but eventually her Communist leanings and her Jewish husband led to Gestapo interrogations and her dispatch in 1943 to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Her experiences there were horrific, as one would expect, and her description of the state of the Jewish inmates hair-raising. Later she was put in charge of the many children and did her best to keep them alive with food that should have gone to adults, though batches were sent 'east' at regular intervals. After liberation by the Russians and all manner of trials and tribulations, she returned to war-torn Berlin, where eventually she and her surviving friends established a 'salon' for intellectuals and artists.

One of the Nazis, a woman who had been brought up to detest Jews and who adored Hitler, volunteered for the infamous Aryan stud farm Lebensborn, where she was duly impregnated by a young blond SS man. She was quite content to give up her baby after two weeks to be brought up in a special children's home, and never saw it again. Many of her experiences during and after the war were wholly degrading and she finished up living with a Polish Jew who looked after her even though she despised him.

Hagen comes to certain conclusions. 1. That the Nazi Party 'appealed irresistibly to the German character' and encouraged envy. 2. It had encouraged 'the worship of strength for its own sake ... the bully was someone to be admired, envied and respected'. 3. It encouraged mass hysteria. 4. '... 80% of ordinary Germans who now blame fate and their leaders for the rise of the Nazis supported the movement wholeheartedly and were in fact the party's source of strength'. 5. Five out of the nine were guilty of allowing and supporting an evil government. 6. To claim that they were merely pawns – innocent and powerless – was a dangerous delusion. Hagen concludes that 'we might have to look for the disease of Nazism not only in Germany but in the world – perhaps in our own hearts. Now, gentle reader, is the time for you to look.'

This collection of personal histories

may not wholly explain why the German people embraced Hitler and his vile ideology, but it is a commendable attempt to shed some light on a disastrous period of German history.

Leslie Baruch Brent

Journeys of the *netsuke*

THE HARE WITH AMBER EYES: A HIDDEN INHERITANCE

by Edmund de Waal

Vintage Books, 2011, 368 pp.
paperback

Netsuke are Japanese wood and ivory carvings of animals, plants and people which can be held in the palm of the hand. Edmund de Waal's collection of 264 of these ornaments has a long history, a history intertwined with that of his family. An acclaimed potter and currently Professor of Ceramics at the University of Westminster, he took five years off to travel to Paris, Vienna, Odessa and Tokyo in order to trace his roots and the journeys of the *netsuke*.

The Ephrussi family made their fortune as grain merchants in Odessa, where they established their first bank and built their first Palais. Like the Rothschilds, the patriarch, Charles Joachim Ephrussi, sent his sons to Paris and Vienna to establish banks. The author visits Paris, where the Hotel Ephrussi in the rue de Monceau is still standing. We are immediately drawn into the colourful lives of the Ephrussi brothers. Charles, a connoisseur of the arts, buys the *netsuke* and becomes the friend and patron of the famous artists and writers of the time. Marcel Proust was at one time his secretary, and Charles is recognisable as the model for Swann in *Remembrance of Things Past*. Life goes well for the French Ephrussis although they suffer anti-Semitism at the time of the Dreyfus affair.

In Vienna, Charles's cousin Viktor marries Emmy and for their wedding present Charles sends them his entire collection of *netsuke*, which find a home in Emmy's dressing room at the equally luxurious Palais Ephrussi, facing the Ringstrasse. Viktor, although an able banker, is happiest in his study, surrounded by books and pictures. Emmy, much younger, goes to balls, parties and the Opera. The vivid details of Vienna in this period will be of particular interest to former inhabitants of that city.

The Ephrussis never lose their Jewish identity but they are assimilated and many have intermarried. This does not help them in March 1938, when Austrian anti-Semitism is finally let loose. After pillaging mobs have run through

their house, the Gestapo, polite and methodical, demand the keys to all the cupboards, wardrobes and cabinets: 'And all these things, a world of things – a family geography stretching from Odessa, from holidays in Petersburg, in Switzerland, in the south of France, Paris, Kövecses, London – everything is gone through and noted down. Every object, every incident, is suspect. This is a scrutiny that every Jewish family in Vienna is undergoing.' Viktor and his son Rudolf are arrested and Emmy is relegated to two small, dark rooms at the back of the Palais.

Viktor secures his and his son's release by signing away everything he owns: '[O]n the 27th April it is declared that the property at number 14 Dr Karl Lueger Ring, Vienna 1, formerly the Palais Ephrussi, has been fully aryanised. It is one of the first to receive such an accolade.' The contents of the Palais are meticulously appraised, catalogued and packed. The bank too is 'aryanised'. Their sons escape and Viktor and Emmy are left alone. There is a poignant picture of this elderly couple living in two rooms of their former splendid home. They flee to Kövecses, their former holiday home near the Czech border, where Emmy, on the verge of escape, like Stefan Zweig, commits suicide. Viktor is eventually brought to London by his daughter, Elizabeth, Edmund's grandmother.

Edmund's final journeys are to Odessa and to Tokyo, where his great-uncle Iggy now has the *netsuke* and where Edmund learns more of his family history.

This is a fascinating account, sensitively recorded and richly deserving the Costa Prize for biography this year.

Thea Valman

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY JUNE

Wed 15 'The Last Jews of Libya' Spiro Ark. Venue: West London Synagogue, 8.00 pm, £10 + £1 internet booking. Tel 0207 723 9991 or contact education@spiroark.or

Mon 20 Michael Faulkner MSc, 'The International Brigades in Spain, 1936-1938: An Appraisal with a Recital of Songs from the Thaelmann Brigade' Club 43

Mon 27 Martin Page, 'Unite Against Fascism (UAF) and Its Enemies: A History' (Dedicated to the memory of Hans Seelig) Club 43

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Ernst Flesch on 020 7624 7740 or Leni Ehrenberg on 020 7286 9698

'Jewish Refugees from Austria in Britain' Exhibition, film, panel discussion

The exhibition 'Double Exposure: Jewish Refugees from Austria in Britain', a photographic display of portraits of 25 refugees from Austria who settled in the UK, will open at the **Austrian Cultural Forum**, 28 Rutland Gate, London SW7, on 14 June 2011 at 7.00 pm. The photographic material is taken from the AJR's audio-visual testimony projects 'Refugee Voices' and

'Continental Britons'. Showing till 2 September 2011. Contact Austrian Cultural Forum on 0207 225 7300.

In conjunction with the AJR and the Austrian Cultural Forum, the **Freud Museum** is hosting a showing of the short film 'Double Exposure: Jewish Refugees from Austria in Britain', based on material from interviews with refugees from Austria

in the AJR's 'Refugee Voices' and 'Continental Britons' exhibitions. This will be followed by a panel discussion, chaired by Dr Anthony Grenville, with four interviewees who appear in the film. 20 June 2011, 6.00 pm for 6.30, charge £10. Contact Freud Museum, 20 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX, tel 0207 435 2002, email eventsandmedia@freud.org.uk.

Remember me?

In March this year, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM, <http://www.ushmm.org>) launched the 'Remember Me?' campaign to help identify 1,100 children who were orphaned, displaced, or separated from their families during the Holocaust and the Second World War.

The project is designed to raise public awareness of these young victims of Nazi persecution, to seek help in piecing together information about their wartime and immediate postwar experiences, and to facilitate renewed connections among them, their families, and other individuals who were involved in their care during and after the war.

The campaign's website features a photo gallery and an easy-contact system if someone sees a photo of an individual

they recognise. As well as attempting to identify the children in the photos, the campaign seeks to increase awareness of the Museum's Survivors and Victims Resource Center and the services it provides to Holocaust survivors, their families, and other victims of Nazi persecution.

A genealogy researcher friend at the USHMM has told me that many of these children came to the UK. This article therefore has been written to encourage you to look at the website and maybe, just maybe you will see a photo of someone you know.

The photos on the website were taken at the end of the Second World War by aid workers at refugee centres throughout Europe and are the only record of the children's identities available to try to

help the children to find their families.

The USHMM is attempting to discover what became of the children and perhaps reconnect them with family members and those who provided care at the end of the war. As the Museum learns more about each individual, its website biography will be updated.

If you have information about any of the children pictured, please contact the USHMM via its website. Even if you don't know any of the children, anything you can do to help publicise the 'Remember Me?' website is very much appreciated. The 'Remember Me?' website can be found at <http://rememberme.ushmm.org>.

Jeanette Rosenberg
Convenor, German Special Interest Group,
Jewish Genealogical Society
of Great Britain

Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship 2011-2012 'The Great War in the Middle East'

The Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship for 2011-2012 has been awarded to Dr Eugene Rogan of St Antony's College, Oxford, to carry out research for a history of the First World War in the Middle East and North Africa. The Fellowship, which is awarded by the British Academy, was originally funded by donations from the Jewish refugees from Hitler. The fund-raising was organised by the AJR and the proceeds were handed over to the British Academy in 1965 as a token of the refugees' gratitude to Britain, to be used for research in the humanities and social sciences.

While on the Thank-Offering to Britain Research Fellowship, I will be writing a comprehensive study of the Middle East and North Africa in the First World War. The book, provisionally entitled *The Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920*, will be published in 2014 (by Penguin) to coincide with the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. This book will combine military, political and socio-economic

history in a work of synthesis. Drawing on new archival research in Middle Eastern and Western sources, the book will also be based on an extensive literature of published primary sources in English, French, Arabic and Turkish, including memoirs, diaries and official histories. The book aims to provide accounts from all sides to demonstrate how the Middle East turned a European conflict into a world war and how the war created the modern Middle East.

The Great War brought widespread suffering to the citizens of the Ottoman Empire, often overlooked in studies of the Great War. These were years of war requisitioning, famine, mass exile and, in the case of the Armenians, genocide. This study will examine the background to Ottoman-Armenian conflicts in the nineteenth century, the Armenian-Russian alliance, Ottoman measures against Armenian citizens and the makings of the genocide, as well as the Ottoman tribunal convened in 1919 to judge those responsible for crimes against the Armenian community. This remains a

source of great tension and controversy down to the present day. The study will draw on a growing body of literature by Turkish scholars who have faced intense criticism at home for acknowledging war-time measures against Ottoman Armenians as a genocide.

I decided to extend the scope of the study beyond the Ottoman surrender in 1918 to include the immediate postwar years, when the political consequences of the war became apparent. The Ottoman retreat from Arab lands opened the Eastern Mediterranean to imperialism, the introduction of the state system, and a range of national movements that would shape the modern history of the Middle East. Of those national movements, the rivalry between Arabism and Zionism would take shape after the Balfour Declaration and the award of Palestine to Britain as a mandate. The political settlement made the Great War one of the turning points in the political history of the modern Middle East.

Eugene Rogan

Ottlie Schoenewald: Jüdische Frauenbund chairwoman, refugee and school 'patron'

Born in 1883 into a well-to-do merchant's family in Bochum during the period of the German Kaiserreich, Ottlie Mendel took an early interest in women's rights. Her marriage to Bochum lawyer Dr Siegmund Schoenewald led her to give free legal advice to women.

As a result of the political changes taking place in Germany after the First World War, women were finally granted the right to vote. Consequently, Ottlie Schoenewald was asked to become one of the first female members of Bochum's City Council. However, in 1926 she was obliged to withdraw from that position due to anti-Semitic agitation by local Nazis, and instead became active on the board of the Jüdische Frauenbund, becoming its chairwoman from 1934 until its dissolution in 1938.



On Kristallnacht, Ottlies's flat was demolished and her husband was briefly imprisoned in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Having decided to leave Germany, in the summer of 1939 they arrived in England. There Ottlie became a member of the AJR. In 1949, three years after her husband's death,

she left England for the USA, where she lived with her adopted daughter up to her death in 1961.

Although Ottlie failed to obtain financial compensation from the German state, one may see a certain moral justice in the way in which she is remembered in Bochum today. In 1998 a street, and in 2005 a school, were named after her. The Ottlie-Schoenewald-Weiterbildungskolleg, which offers students a second chance to obtain their diploma, takes a special interest in Ottlie's life. Projects about the

school 'patron' include essays, readings recalling Kristallnacht, and her memoirs. A permanent exhibition is on display in a case next to the school office (see photo).

Dr Anja Wieber, Ottlie-Schoenewald-Weiterbildungskolleg
www.weiterbildungskolleg-bochum.de
www.frauenruhrgeschichte.de

The history of a photo

I occasionally browse the internet and I came across a headline in an October 2010 issue of the Czech newspaper *Lidove noviny* which caught my eye. The article was about a Jewish girl in the Czech city



of Jihlava (to which, incidentally, the Mahler family moved soon after their son Gustav was born). The girl, 18, had had her photograph taken in Zdar nad Sazavou, in southern Moravia, in 1942, shortly before she and her family had been transported to Theresienstadt. She had told the photographer, Vilem Frenzl, that she would pick up the photo when she came back. But she never did come back: shortly after their arrival in Theresienstadt, the family were sent to Auschwitz.

Deeply moved, I wrote to a school in the village of Velky Beranov referred to in the newspaper article, mentioning that I myself had been in Terezin.

Some time later, I received a letter from an archivist in Jihlava to whom the school had forwarded my letter. He wrote, among other things, that a group of volunteers were attempting to keep the local Jewish cemetery in order. Similarly, several years ago, volunteers from Germany had come to the town of Miroslav, where I and my family had lived for generations, to carry

out good work under the title 'Sühneaktion'.

In 2005, when Vilem Frenzl, then aged 94, was going through his archives, he found a photo of a pretty Jewish girl whose name he couldn't recall.

Believing that even after so many years there must be somebody who could remember this young girl, he put a search notice in the local paper. The search notice was seen by Jaroslavna Zadrazilova, a teacher, who had a particular interest in Jewish matters. It gave her the idea that the children under her care should put together a history of the Jews of the area. This was no easy task: they could find no lead in Velky Beranov and all records pertaining to the Jewish community had been lost.

By sheer chance, the children met an elderly lady, Mrs Oranova, who had no memory of the Jewish community of Velky Beranov but *could* remember a photo of her school friend, Helena Boehmova. That was exactly what Vilem Frenzl had been looking for.

The school children found in the records of Jihlava that Helena had lived with her parents and brother in Zdar, where her father had had a thriving leather business. At the beginning of the war, the Boehmova family had had to leave their luxurious flat in Zdar and move

Yom HaShoah 2011



AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman addresses some 700 people at this year's Yom HaShoah service in London's Hyde Park

PHOTO: JOHN RIFKIN

to Jihlava. Helena had had to leave the gymnasium and transfer to a high school for girls, where she met Mrs Oranova. The latter never heard anything further from Helena.

Finally, *Lidove noviny* reported earlier this year, Prague inhabitant Zuzana Ledererova, 86, the only member of Helena's family who had survived the Holocaust, saw the newspaper photograph and recognised her cousin. Vilem Frenzl's grandson said his grandfather would have been delighted that someone from the family finally had the photo.

Felix Winkler

INSIDE the AJR

Harrogate/York CF



Tom Winter, Sylvia Winter, Marc Schatzberger, Eugene Black, Ken Little, Suzanne Rapaport Ripton, Susanne Green, Rosl Schatzberger, Inge Little

Having sadly lost some of our Harrogate members and been joined by some from York, we have amended our name. Nine of us gathered for an afternoon which turned out to be verbally animated. Susanne asked for further contributions to the recipe book currently under construction: information or short stories or even a picture about the origin of the recipes would be an enhancement. We spent some time reminding each other how we first met and we make the effort to continue our very pleasant get-togethers.

Ken Little

Next meeting: 20 June, at home of the Ruffs in York

Ealing 'Jews on the Golden Road to Samarkand'

Much of Gerald Curzon's enthralling talk concerned two famous Hungarian explorers of Jewish descent – Joseph Woolf and Aurel Stein. They rediscovered the old Silk Road in the 18th and 19th centuries, producing clear maps and researching the peoples and customs of the towns and places along the routes.

Leslie Sommer

Next meeting: 7 June. Rob Lowe, 'The Music of Gilbert and Sullivan'

West Midlands/Birmingham Albanian protection of Jewish refugees

We were privileged to view the documentary film 'Rescue in Albania', which told of the thousands of Jewish refugees from Nazism saved by the government of King Zog. We are grateful to our chairman, Fred Austin, for making the showing of this documentary possible as it needed great technical know-how.

Ruth Schweining

Ilford A heart-wrenching film

We watched *Watermarks*, the remarkable documentary on pre-war Vienna's Hakoah prize-winning swimmers. These ladies, now scattered all over the globe and well into their 80s, were persuaded to return

to Vienna, get back into their swimming costumes and enjoy their pool again. A heart-wrenching film.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 1 June. Israel Embassy Middle East update

Bath/Bristol Earlier Jewish immigrants

David Barnett gave a scholarly talk on the wave of Jewish economic immigrants initiated by Cromwell, which gathered momentum in the 18th century and reached its peak in Regency London. We also said a sad farewell to Kitty and Gabriel Balint-Kurti, whose generous hospitality we have enjoyed for some six years. Alas for us, they are moving to London.

David Hackel

Pinner A good job for a Jewish boy?

Rabbi Alan Plancey traced his career from his father, a baker, and his Russian mother. His wife was instrumental in the phenomenal success with which he developed the Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue over 31 years. Always adhering to strict orthodoxy, he met and befriended many influential people and, of course, had an invitation to the royal wedding. A good job for a Jewish boy?

Walter Weg

Next meeting: 2 June. George Layton, 'An Actor's Life for Me'; 16 June. 13th Birthday Party Tea (rescheduled)

Welwyn GC Film family

Howard Lanning spoke about his family's 80 years' involvement in the film industry: from the early 20s, when his father Philip started as a 'grip' (mover of cameras), to Howard himself, the force behind TV's *Candid Camera*, and to his son, Steve, who was in command of a quarter of a million extras for the funeral in *Gandhi* – not forgetting the next generation, heavily involved with *A Bridge Too Far* and, of course, *Harry Potter*.

Alfred Simms

Next meeting: 2 June. Andrea Cameron, 'The Story of Pears Soap'

Brighton and Hove Sarid Roman Britain

Historian Mark Perry-Nash gave an interesting talk about Roman Britain, explaining the pros and cons of the occupation. The Romans built roads and cities but also exploited Britain's natural resources, especially the mining of tin.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 20 June. Dr Sam Barsam (Board of Deputies), 'Not As Bad As It Seems' – an update on Israeli affairs

HGS A most unusual lady

Alfred Simms read to us from the diaries of Gluckel Manein, a most unusual lady born in Hamburg in 1646, married at 12, mother of 10, housewife and businesswoman. She died at the age of 78, having lived through the 30 Years' War and the second siege of Vienna.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 13 June. Darren Welsted, Bank of England

Liverpool



Back row Tamar Samson, Naomi Brown, Eric Goldrein, Eric Cohen, John Goldsmith
Front row Hana Eardley, Inge Goldrein, Kay Fyne

We are grateful to Naomi Brown (daughter of AJR member Kay Fyne) for making her home available for our meeting and providing such excellent refreshments, which set us up for watching 'Churchill's German Army'. This extremely interesting film shows how German-Jewish refugees came to join the British Army and their various experiences, good and bad. A very lively discussion followed.

Guido Alis

Next meeting: 5 June. Annual lunch. Guest speaker: His Honour Judge Henry Globe QC, Recorder of Liverpool

Oxford The rescue of Hungarian Jews

Prof Ladislaus Löb told us how thousands of Hungarian Jews were saved by various means throughout the Second World War. One camp set up a cultural life (like the Isle of Man internees in the UK). A different aspect of life.

Anne Selinger

Next meeting: 21 June. Natalia Benjamin, 'Basque Children Refugees of the Spanish Civil War in the UK'

Hull CF



Back row David Low, Ian Le Boutillier, Erika Sykes, Ralph Black, Rose Abrahamson
Front row Dina Le Boutillier, Olive Rosner

We were delighted to welcome David Low, a nephew of the late Sir Leo Schultz, Lord Mayor of Hull during the Blitz. He had come over to be present at the unveiling of a statue to Sir Leo the following day. We watched the film 'Churchill's German Army' and, although this was interesting, we found the abrupt presentation and the constant flashing of cameras rather distracting. Among topics we discussed was our recent visit to London. This had several highlights, including the visit to the Houses of Parliament to meet the Speaker, John Bercow.

Rose Abrahamson

Next meeting: 14 August, at home of Rose Abrahamson

Book Club A lively group

This is such a lively group and we spent a most enjoyable afternoon at Costa discussing *The Hare with Amber Eyes*.

Margarete Weiss

Next meeting: 29 June at Costa, Temple Fortune. Book for discussion: Hans Fallada *Alone in Berlin*. Do come and join us even if you haven't read the book.

Wembley double celebration

It was both our group's birthday and that of Trudie Basto. As usual, Myrna made sure these events were partied in style. The conversation flowed and, as always, the atmosphere was warm and friendly.

Ingrid Morland

Next meeting: 15 June (not 8 June). Social get-together

REGIONAL GET-TOGETHER

Kingston (South London)

Wednesday 13 July 2011

All-day event including lunch and transport

Peter Suchet will be talking about his famous family. Peter is the brother of David, the actor of 'Poiret' fame, and John, former ITN newsreader and campaigner to raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease.

Places limited – be sure to book early

For further details, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Fausta Shelton 01273 734 648

Bristol/Bath
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

Cambridge
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Cardiff
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Cleve Road, AJR Centre
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Dundee
Agnes Isaacs 0755 1968 593

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edgware
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3077

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

Glasgow
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

Harrogate
Inge Little 01423 886254

Hendon
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Hertfordshire
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

HGS
Gerda Torrence 020 8883 9425

Hull
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Ilford
Meta Rosenell 020 8505 0063

Leeds HSFA
Trude Silman 0113 2251628

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

Cambridge Musical roots

The derivation from their klezmer roots of many mid-20th century dance tunes, jazz themes and even some classical pieces was most attractively demonstrated by Jane Rosenberg. Yiddish folk music of 50 years earlier had travelled across the Atlantic to the Big Bands and Hollywood musicals.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: 16 June. Mark Davies, Lewis Carroll Society

ALSO MEETING IN JUNE

Norfolk 6 June. Lunch and social get-together

Wessex 14 June. Annual outing

Temple Fortune The music of Gilbert and Sullivan

Having wished everyone a Happy Pesach, Esther introduced our speaker, Rob Lowe, who entertained us with an afternoon of Gilbert and Sullivan musical history: their early years, golden years, sometimes stormy relationship, and enduring operas, which began in 1875 with *Trial by Jury*.

David Lang

Next meeting: 23 June. Andrew Moorhouse, Bank of England

Weald of Kent A family history

Eleven of us attended a very interesting talk by Anthony Gimpel, who delved into his family history as far back as the 16th century. This research was made possible by the internet with a tremendous amount of help from the German authorities and much tenacity on his part. Very enjoyable.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: 22 June. John Guyatt, 'India and Its History'

Leeds A good cup of Yorkshire tea

Edith Goldberg told us about the recent Yom Hashoah event in Leeds, then we discussed experiences of returning to our countries of origin. One member had been invited several times to official events, but then the city council changed: though the new council didn't want to pay any more, the citizens insisted that their town carry

continued on page 15

Norfolk (Norwich)

Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

North London

Ruth Jacobs 020 8445 3366

Oxford

Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)

Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Radlett

Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Sheffield

Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London

Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)

Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Surrey

Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Temple Fortune

Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Weald of Kent

Janet Weston 01959 564 520

Wembley

Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)

Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)

Fred Austin 01384 252310

Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6
Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 15 June 2011

Myra Sampson
'Fashion in the Fifties'

PLEASE NOTE THAT SPEAKERS START AT 12 NOON

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the *AJR Journal*, to phone the Centre on 020 7328 0208 to book your place.

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 6 June 2011

Howard Falksohn
(Archivist, Wiener Library)

'The History of the Wiener Library'

KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH

WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 PM ON MONDAYS

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am – 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

June Entertainment

Wed	1	Guyathrie Peiris & Bill Patrick
Thur	2	Jen Gould
Mon	6	KT LUNCH – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	7	CLOSED
Wed	8	CLOSED – SHAVOUT
Thur	9	CLOSED – SHAVOUT
Mon	13	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	14	CLOSED
Wed	15	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	16	Harvey Manning
Mon	20	Minouche Kaftel - Singer
Tue	21	CLOSED
Wed	22	Mike Marandi
Thur	23	Friends of Israel Scouts
Mon	27	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	28	CLOSED
Wed	29	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur	30	* B I N G O *

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

Myrna Glass, London South and Midlands Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

Agnes Isaacs, Scotland and Newcastle Co-ordinator
0755 1968 593

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Black, Trudi (Gertrude) passed away peacefully at Eastwood Court, Glasgow, on 27 April aged 98. Will be sadly missed by her family and friends.

Grunfeld, Ella passed away on 28 April 2011 at the Royal Free Hospital aged 98. A kind and gracious lady who will be sadly missed by her family, Elisabeth, Roman, Andrew, Peter and Tony, and friends.

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For rent in July and August: large, comfortable house near Jerusalem, kosher kitchen, all mod cons. Phone: 972-25345910.

'BRIEF ENCOUNTER' ST PANCRAS

Group outing

Wednesday 29 June 2011, 1.30 pm

Visit this unique station and hear its history with an official guide - Visit Foyles, London's oldest family bookshop
Enjoy a luxury cream tea at the St Pancras Grand - which boasts the longest champagne bar in the world
£30 - All welcome

**For further details, please contact
Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070**

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13-19 Leaside Crescent, London NW11

OUR ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY AND OPEN DAY

will take place on
SUNDAY 5 JUNE 2011, 2.30 - 5.00 pm
Afternoon tea will be served
Everyone welcome

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Telephone: 020 8455 2286

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

**Sunday 26 June
to Sunday 3 July 2011**

At the Inn on the Prom
11/17 South Promenade, St Annes
Tel 01253 726 726

Cost, including Dinner,
Bed and Breakfast
£632.50 per person

For booking, please contact
**Ruth Finestone
on direct line 020 8385 3082
or mobile 07966 886535**

HOLIDAY IN EASTBOURNE

The AJR are doing another holiday at
the **Lansdowne Hotel**

Monday 11 July to Monday 18 July
£520 per week dinner, bed and breakfast
plus £40 per week single room
supplement
to include transport from Cleve Road,
lunch on outward journey
Book early to avoid disappointment
*Please contact Carol Rossen or
Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070*

'THE JOURNEY' A TRIP TO BETH SHALOM Sunday 12 June 2011

**An opportunity to see
'The Journey', the latest addition
to the Centre**

Leaving Stanmore at 8.30 am,
returning at approximately 6.00 pm
(Parking available at Stanmore)

£25.00 per person, including travel,
buffet lunch, afternoon tea

**For further details, please contact
Lorna Moss or Carol Rossen
on 020 8385 3070**

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A DAY BY THE SEA Trip to Brighton

Thursday 23 June

After lunch at Ralli Hall, we will visit the sea front before returning to Ralli Hall for tea.

The coach will leave the AJR Centre in Cleve Road at 9.30 am, returning at approximately 6.30 pm.

Cost £8*

**For further details, please contact
Carol Rosen or Lorna Moss
on 0208 385 3070 or telephone
the AJR Centre on 020 7328 0208.**

*An anonymous donor has kindly made a sum of money available to the AJR so that we can offer members outings and special events at a reduced price. The first event of this kind was the Model Seder at Cleve Road.

TRIP TO ISRAEL

We are hoping to arrange a trip to Israel from 29 November to 8 December 2011 staying half-board at the King Solomon Hotel in Netanya.

£1,300 pp in twin/double room, £200 supplement for single room

Price includes El Al flights from Heathrow, transfers to and from hotel, sightseeing most days, entrance fees where necessary.

We have been able to book the excellent guide we had on our last trip.

**For further details, please contact
Carol Rossen or
Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070.**

**This will be a fairly full itinerary
which will involve some walking.**

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Email: hornungbooks@aol.com
Tel: 020 8998 0546**



Israel bank settlement

In a settlement announced earlier this year, Bank Leumi agreed to pay to the Company for Location and Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets (CLRHVA) NIS 130 million (£23m) to heirs of Holocaust victims who held accounts in the bank. The agreement marks the end of a NIS 300m lawsuit against the bank over funds deposited in 3,577 accounts before the Second World War by Jews who died in the Holocaust.

The suit was filed in accordance with the provision of the 2007 Law for Holocaust Assets, at which time Leumi transferred NIS 20 million to the Company. CLRHVA was created to assist claimants applying for assets of individuals who died in the Holocaust

held by banks or other organisations in Israel, plus interest and currency revaluations. CLRHVA is also required to locate beneficiaries and return the lost assets to them. Further details may be found at www.hashava.org.il/eng/

HEART

In a separate initiative, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Government of Israel have announced the creation of the Holocaust Era Asset Restitution Taskforce (HEART), which aims to gather data from Holocaust survivors and their families about outstanding claims for restitution.

The information collected – specifically on immovable, movable and intangible

personal properties – will be used by the Israeli government to negotiate bilateral agreements with countries and to recover and return, among other assets, looted art, land (real estate), Judaica and bank accounts. According to HEART, their objective also includes assets such as dormant Swiss bank accounts, for which previous deadlines for filing claims have expired.

At this stage, HEART is encouraging individuals to submit questionnaires (not claim forms) by **1 December 2011**. The forms can be downloaded from HEART's website at www.heartwebsite.org which also contains further information about the project.

Michael Newman

SEARCH NOTICES

Bass, Salo b. c 1875, died 1949 in Brighton, believed born in Czechoslovakia. Came to UK c 1937 with daughter **Bass, Marianne Mathilda**, b. c 1916, who married Jack Bringeman in Epsom in 1940. Any info please to Rob Alexander at rob.alexander@ntlworld.com

Compensation and restitution claims As a historian at the University of Vermont researching the politics of compensation in Anglo-German relations, I would like to talk to Holocaust survivors living in the UK about their experiences on this subject. Please contact Dr Susanna Schrafstetter at susanna.schrafstetter@uvm.edu

Kahn, Emma (née Feibelmann) All her family emigrated to Milwaukee, USA. Her children: Robert (married Alice Wendel), Sophie (married May), Else (married Sommer). Any info please to Georg Schneider, Feuerbachstr. 39, 65195 Wiesbaden, Germany, tel 611 940 6010, mail@georg-schneider.de

Klein, Gideon, pianist and composer, b. Prerov 1919, died Furstengrube c Jan 1945; his mother **Kleinova, Ilona (née Marmorsteinova)**, d. Auschwitz October 1944; his sister **Kleinova, Liosa (Eliska)**, d. Prague 1999; his girlfriend **Edelsteinova, Franziska (Francka)**, d. Auschwitz, date unknown; his cousin **Kulka, Arnost**, b. 1920, died Majdanek 1942. All were interred in Terezin. Any info please to Dr David Fligg, Principal Lecturer in Classical Music in Leeds, at d.fligg@lcm.ac.uk

Rabbis from Germany in British Exile from the 1930s Doctoral student at Sussex University

seeks info (personal experiences, anecdotes, papers, sermons, photos, etc). Please contact astrid.zajdband@hotmail.com

Seagull, Eva was at school in Darjeeling and Mussoorie, India. Later studied nursing in Edgware, London. Any info please tel Gabrielle Millen (known to Eva as Gaby Helms) on 020 8866 1059

Weitzmann, Siegfried, born 1924 (?), parents Chana (Blumfeld) and Hirsh Weitzmann. Kindertransportee from Vienna to England. His brother, Maximilian Moshe Weitzmann, lived with my family on a moshav in Israel in 1940. Any info please contact Adva Magal-Cohen at advamc@bezeqint.net

Weltmann, Lutz (1901-67) was theatre critic and reviewer for *AJR Information*. Information sought for academic study. Please contact Dr Anthony Grenville at the AJR or at tony@ajr.org.uk

Child survivors from Bytom, Poland

The following are child survivors who attended the Hebrew School in Bytom, Poland, searched for by scholars working on an English edition of Yiddish child Holocaust testimonies collated by Shlomo Czam, teacher at the Hebrew School, in the mid-1940s.

If you have information on the school, teacher, or any of his charges, please contact Dr Beate Müller, Newcastle University, at b.s.muller@ncl.ac.uk

The children whose testimonies Czam collected were (surname, first name, place, age):

G., Shmulik, from Rozhishche, 16
 Perlmutter, H., Lokachi, 17
 Rab, Tzila, Lvov, 12
 Prifer, Sheindel, Potek near Chortkiv, 13
 Leibish, Gomulko, Rokitno (Rokitnoye), 13
 Markus, Salia, Berezhany near Ternopil, 14
 Weisman, Yehoshua, Radekhov, near Lvov, 16
 Motele, G...r, Zdobunov, 12
 Duranska, S., Sofiovka, Volyn, 14
 Teper, Maniem, Tluste near Ternopil, 12
 Zeltser, Efraim, Melnitsa on the Dniester, 14
 F...g, A., Derazhnya near Rovne, 15
 Feldman, Salie, Ostrovts, near Lutsk, 17
 Schwarzbach, Sara, Skala Podolskaya, near Ternopil, 16
 Witlin, Hershel, Zholkov near Lvov, 17
 Brenner, Sonik, Lvov, 14
 Koch, Rachel, Horodenko near Kolomey, 13
 Reibel, Dora, Korolevka near Ternopil, 12
 L., V., Stepen, Podlese, 16
 Prifer, Lucia, Horodenko near Kolomey (Kolomyia), 12
 Wiener, Buzha, Rokitno (Rokitnoye), 9
 Mandelkern, Gershon, Melinov, 11
 Wechsler, Miriam, Lutsvipol near Ostrog, 14
 Frenkel, Rita, Skala Podolskaya, 10
 Suchowitz, Lyuba, Berezhany near Stoln, 14
 Gelman, Rachel, Rovne, 11
 Gelerand, Sima, Dubno, 14
 Grinzeid, Mina, Podkamen near Brody, 14
 Kurland, H., Kolki, 17
 Katz, Esther, Ignatovka, Volyn, 11
 Vatinger, S., Kremenets, 14
 D., G-n, Ludmir, 16
 A., B., Baranavich, 16
 Bochlinski, M., Klevan, 14
 Bikman, Asher, Stoln, 14
 Tabachnik, P., Varkovich, 15
 Mishalov, M., Davidgrudok (David Gorodok), 15
 Durchin, Batya, Pinsk, 17
 Trastman, Miriam, Rokitnoye, 10
 Dora, Hazan, Lutsk, 17
 Manis, Miriam, Tuchin, near Rovne, 13
 S., Sh., Senkevichevka Volyn, 16

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

on inviting the survivors back. As always, the discussion contained humour and emotion – and was followed by a good cup of Yorkshire tea.

Barbara Cammerman

Next meetings: 20 July. Grand Theatre outing to Blood Brothers; 10 August. Annual Garden Party

Sheffield CF 'Enemy aliens'

We watched a DVD of the excellent

'Churchill's German Army', on 'enemy aliens' who served in the British armed forces in the Second World War. Later we reverted to our usual lively discussion, with recollections from members of their own experiences fighting for Britain. Our thanks once again to Dorothy Fleming for her warm hospitality in hosting the meeting.

June McLeod

Next meeting: 31 July



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



A case of cognitive dissonance

We watch the news on TV, where we are informed that murder and mayhem, death and destruction are raging all around us. Regimes are changing in the wake of mass demonstrations, some more violent than others, in several countries nearby.

But we look out of the window and see blue sky, trees and plants, peaceful homes, happy families. Our lives continue along their customary pleasant paths, made even more enjoyable by occasional outings to plays and concerts, visits from children and grandchildren, full stomachs, and the constant entertainment provided by the various media in our homes and at our fingertips. It seems to me like a classic case of cognitive dissonance.

How do we manage to live like this? Here in Israel, it is particularly acute, but I believe that in an age of global communications it must – or should – concern every person in the civilised world. Is this what it was like for ‘the man in the street’ in Hitler’s Germany or Stalin’s Soviet Union? But under those regimes the element of intimidation and fear was an integral part of the potent mix.

On the whole, we in Israel do not share that experience except when we read or hear of acts of terrorism perpetrated just a few miles away from where we are living. Probably our greatest fear is of being caught by a policeman for speeding on the highway or getting a parking fine.

We elect politicians and pay taxes so that others can deal with the major issues that overshadow our lives. What is going to happen in Egypt? What is going on in Libya? How will things end in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen? Not to mention Lebanon and Iran. Is it good for the Jews, or not? Is it good for the civilised world? Who can tell? Presumably – hopefully – there are experts out there who are examining the situation, analysing the facts and offering scenarios as to where the various upheavals are going and what their consequences might be.

What’s the use of worrying, as the song goes. We can, if we want, stay awake at night wondering what is the right course of action to take as an individual and as a country, but what would be the good of that? Here in Israel, it feels as if we are an island of stability and sanity in a world that is in turmoil. But to what extent can

one trust the media?

Not so long ago, our TV screens were full of the violence wreaked in London by rampaging groups who broke, damaged and ravaged shop-fronts, ATMs and buildings. It was not a pretty sight; nor was the violence of the police as they attempted to restore order. A visitor from Mars might have thought that that’s the way things go in Britain, just as people who don’t live in Israel or are not familiar with life here might think that every night people are butchered in their beds or blown to smithereens on buses.

Perhaps the way the events in the Middle East are portrayed in the media has helped to make them a self-fulfilling prophecy, providing fuel for the incendiary inclinations of a few extremists, distorting the true picture of what is happening. But of course we have no way of telling, and all we can do is sit back in our armchairs, sip our whisky or tea, as the case may be, and wait and watch as developments unfold.

Let’s just hope that the people who are supposed to be looking after our interests are not quite as confused as we are.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

PREPARING FOR THE WORST

Sir – A number of your letter-writers continually blame Israel for the elusive peace. But how does one achieve genuine peace in a notoriously unstable part of the world?

Israelis live in a region where an agreement counts for little. Egypt is a case in point. That ‘cold peace’ has become shaky, which is not of Israel’s doing. According to a recent poll, most Egyptians are in favour of annulling the peace treaty with Israel, although Israel doesn’t occupy one inch of Egyptian soil. Land for peace anyone?

Turkey, which denies the genocide of

the Armenians, has chosen to align itself with the Iranian Holocaust deniers, who are threatening the next one.

Israel finds itself in a locality where withdrawals and compromise are viewed as weakness and countered with rocket fire – you cannot make peace with those who seek your destruction. And yet, one reader states that no Palestinian leader wants to eliminate the Jewish state. On this, I would rather take the word of Abbas, who vowed that not a single Jew would be allowed in their future state. Did anyone cry apartheid?

The era of strong Arab leaders who can be ‘bought’ by Uncle Sam to keep

the peace seems over. Now that the Arab ‘street’ has flexed its muscles, it also calls the tune: any leader who wants to keep his throne has to play to the street.

Peace sounds all too easy to the sanctimonious with a universalist *Anschauung*, who naively apply Western parameters to a volatile and brutal region. The ideal of ‘In Defence of Doves’ (your December 2010 issue) is fine if you live in Belsize Park, but in a tough neighbourhood one must hope for the best but prepare for the worst. In the final analysis, it’s the Israelis who are best placed to be the judge of this.

Rubin Katz, London NW11