

# CONTINENTAL BRITONS

## JEWISH REFUGEES FROM NAZI EUROPE



AN EXHIBITION BY THE JEWISH MUSEUM, LONDON  
SPONSORED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES

THIS EXHIBITION RELATES THE UNIQUE AND EXTRAORDINARY STORY  
OF JEWISH REFUGEES WHO FLED FROM NAZI PERSECUTION  
TO ARRIVE IN BRITAIN BEFORE WORLD WAR II





# WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND

## JEWISH LIFE IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

Jews had lived in Germany and Austria since Roman times. However, they had only been allowed to enter German society fully after the Enlightenment. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Jews made an enormous contribution to German and Austrian cultural and economic life.

Jews were prominent by their success in certain fields, though they formed only a tiny proportion of the overall population. They proved to be loyal and patriotic citizens, fighting in large numbers as German or Austrian soldiers in World War I. They tended to cluster in the cities and also in certain commercial and professional occupations. The assimilated Jews from urban, middle-class backgrounds were often those best equipped to overcome the numerous obstacles to emigration to Britain after 1933.

During the nineteenth century the Jews of Germany and Austria had been granted civil and political rights and had integrated into mainstream society. But in the 1930s a change in political conditions radically altered their situation for the worse. The upheavals following the First World War, the instability of the Weimar Republic and the mass unemployment caused by the Great Depression paved the way for a reactionary backlash and for Hitler's rise to power in 1933.

The decades of gradual integration into gentile society had made the Jews of the German-speaking lands feel secure in their position, despite anti-Semitic manifestations. The abiding impression left by Jewish home and family life in the period before the Nazi onslaught was its peaceable normality.



Jewish family in Vienna, 1935.

# WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND



Hans Seelig with his classmates, Mannheim, c.1936.

*'My early childhood memories are really very happy. We lived a relatively comfortable life, without being wealthy. We had holidays in a country house which we shared with friends of ours. I went to a German primary school quite near to where we lived, in a district of Berlin called Wilmersdorf. We had a comfortable flat, we had – as most people did – live-in domestic help, my parents had a very good social life, with many friends, and quite a large number of relatives as well. My father, fought in the First World War, and after the War opened a photographic business.'*  
Walter Wolff

*'Our father had a simple, trusting disposition in the essential goodness and decency of his fellow citizens and firmly believed in traditional German virtues. He combined hard work, scrupulous fairness and a strict sense of discipline with a quick temper, which made him flare up occasionally.'*  
Peter Perry [Pinschewer]

*'My father was 'ein Deutscher, aber ein Jude' ('a German, but Jewish').*  
Margarete Hinrichsen, née Levy



The Halberstadt family on holiday in Kolberg, 1913.

Lore Sulzbacher's parents on honeymoon in Venice, 1910.



Gerschon Simon, with other leading Berlin businessmen, 1920s.



Bessi, Ludwig and Ruth Halberstadt, Halle, 1917.



Gertrude Landshoff's first day of school, c.1902, holding the traditional Schultüte, a cone full of sweets.



Isidor Kaufman with his army unit, Christmas 1915.



Jacob Malz, German champion amateur boxer with his Maccabi team mates. He also boxed for the German club Teutonia.



Salomon Zeichner (centre), a German soldier in the First World War, and here a prisoner of war in Russia.

# WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND



Friday night at the Birken family home, Berlin 1938.

*'Dinner on Friday nights was a cross between a family meal and a religious rite. My brother Leo and I still observed the house rule that no dates might be made which would prevent our appearance. Our Gentile friends were welcome provided they didn't mind the ritual and were willing to forego smoking. Father, fresh from the synagogue and in festal mood, recited the benediction over his glass of wine and we repeated it after him and sipped from our glasses. He then said the blessing over the two Sabbath loaves of white bread which were plaited in the traditional style and covered with an embroidered napkin.'*  
Fanny Stang, née Knesbach, Vienna 1932



The tobacconist's shop belonging to Johnny Blunt's father, Kappeln.

*'Every summer my mother took an apartment somewhere at the seaside where all the staff, the housemaid and the governess came along and we lived there for, four weeks possibly, and as we were a kosher household all cooking was done in the flat and the family came, the relations came from Berlin or Hanover or wherever to spend the summer with us.'*  
Margarete Hinrichsen, née Levy



Ludwig Halberstadt, Purim party with colleagues at Munich University, 1932.



Rudolf Peierls and other physicists, Leipzig, 1931.



Rabbi Ignaz Maybaum with batmitzvah girls, Bingen am Rhein, 1927.



Gerda Kaufman in carnival dress, 1927.



A summer bathing party, the Birken family, Berlin, 1927.

*'One of our favourite destinations was the Grunewald, a beautiful, densely-wooded forest on the city's outskirts. These leisurely rambles tended to culminate in a feast of fizzy lemonade and cream cakes at the Alsengrund Restaurant, set in a clearing in the forest. Sometimes, as a special treat, dad used to allow us to take a sip from his glass of Weisse mit, a typical Berlin drink consisting of light ale with dash of raspberry juice. At other times, in the summer, we went swimming at Wannsee, whose sandy beaches along one of the Havel Lakes on the city's western edge brought the joys of a seaside holiday right to the Berliners' doorstep.'*  
Peter Perry [Pinschewer]



# NAZI PERSECUTION

## 1933 - 1939

After Adolf Hitler took power in January 1933, the Nazis implemented measures to give effect to their racial hatred of the Jews. On 1 April 1933, the regime organised a boycott of Jewish-owned shops and businesses. Jews in public sector positions and in certain professions were dismissed from their jobs. Some forms of Jewish life remained possible, though Jews were exposed to random brutality and cruel discrimination.

However, under the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935, Jews were officially degraded to the status of second-class citizens, and marriages between Jews and 'Aryans' were declared illegal. These laws provided the basis for the total exclusion of Jews from German society.

In March 1938, the Nazis marched into Austria, unleashing an orgy of looting and violence against the Jews. The Jews of Germany underwent a similar ordeal in November 1938, during the terrible state-inspired pogrom known as 'Crystal Night'. Jews now grasped in desperation at any means to escape abroad. Thousands tried to secure visas in a life-or-death bid to gain entry to any foreign country that would admit them.

The ship St Louis, for example, left Hamburg for Cuba with 907 Jewish refugees, but the Cuban authorities would not let them enter. Having repeatedly failed to land its passengers at various ports, the vessel on its nightmare voyage was heading back to Germany when the governments of Britain, France, Belgium and Holland eventually agreed to admit them.



# NAZI PERSECUTION

*'Our parents decided to take us on a short holiday to a quiet boarding house in the Mark Brandenburg, near Berlin. It did not quite turn out as planned. Each night we were kept awake by crowds of storm troopers rampaging through the streets and screaming anti-Jewish slogans. The risk of physical attack seemed very real, and so we returned to the comparative anonymity of our flat in Berlin.'*

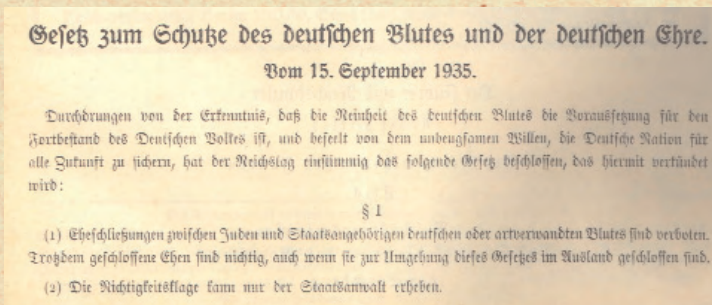
Peter Perry [Pinschewer]

*'We heard all the terrific shouting on the radio when Hitler came in to the Heldenplatz [in Vienna, March 1938], but we didn't go out. No. We stayed in. Kept well away. But of course very soon after you had house searches for weapons, as though we had any weapons. What they did manage to do was swipe my collection of double Schillings, like florins. They swiped that straight away, you know, 'hoarding money'. Things like that. Nothing actually happened to us directly until the Kristallnacht, when we did of course, like everybody else, we lost the place, within days of the Kristallnacht we lost our flat.'*

Ernst Flesch



Official Nazi boycott of Jewish shops, Kappeln, 1st April 1933.



'Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour', one of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws degrading Jews to the status of second class citizens.



Nazi daubing Jewish shop during *Kristallnacht*, 9th November 1938.



Courtesy Wiener Library

Burning synagogue, *Kristallnacht*, Essen, 9th November 1938.



Courtesy Wiener Library

Jewish man forced to clear up broken glass after *Kristallnacht*.



Courtesy Wiener Library

Jewish home ransacked by Nazis during *Kristallnacht*.



Courtesy Wiener Library

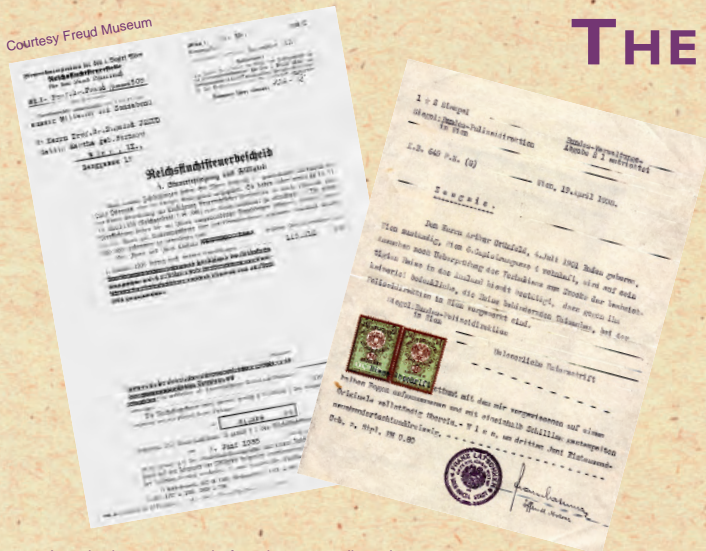
Jews being marched away to detention after *Kristallnacht*.

*When I got to school, the school had been blown up, and the only children going home from school that day at that time were Jewish, and I suppose I must have looked a bit Jewish. So I was chased through the streets by the Hitler Youth, but I was rather agile in those days – rather more so than now! – and got away, got home. We went upstairs, where our maid, who'd been allowed to stay although she was non-Jewish, had her little room in the attic, and she prepared it for us, put some food up there for us, and then she went round the town [Mannheim] watching the progress of *Kristallnacht*, when they were looting and smashing the buildings.'*

Hans Seelig

# THE SEARCH FOR REFUGE

Courtesy Freud Museum



Jews had to pay a tax before they were allowed to leave the Reich. This certifies that Sigmund Freud paid the Reichsfluchtsteuer before fleeing Vienna in 1938.

Certificate of good conduct permitting Arthur Grünfeld to leave Austria, April 1938.

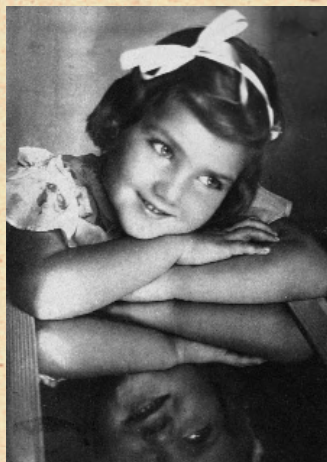
*'And all this time my parents were now making strenuous efforts to get out of Germany, too late, as it turned out. There was talk of Palestine, of America, of England, even of Shanghai which was considered a desperate last resort, of visas, and quotas, and numbers. But nothing came of it. I was sent to the Post Office to dispatch cables to Sao Paulo where my uncle lived – please send visa. Our relations were by no means sitting back all this time, they did loyally what they could, but it took a long time to save money from the earnings of waiters and Fuller brush salesmen as they had become. It took too long.'*  
Marianne Elsley, née Josephy

*'None of us ever left home before the postman had made his morning call. Mid-March a letter arrived for me with an English postmark and stamp. It was the first letter from England we had ever received and was from the wife of a vicar in the North of England. She offered me a post as a children's nurse and domestic help. My work would consist of helping generally with the housework and looking after her two boys aged seven and nine.'*  
Fanny Stang, née Knesbach



The Café Rotunde in Vienna, regular meeting place for the Finkler family. This photograph was taken the day before Evelyn Kaye's (nee Finkler) grandmother left Austria.

*'Well, let's first of all say what we could not take with us. No jewellery of any kind, not even the wedding rings. And no more than ten Reichsmark each. And my husband would not have hidden anything, he really did not have anything. But we had brand new clothing, of course, and suitcases full with a supply of stockings we were not expecting to afford for quite a while.'*  
Ilse Wolff, née Zorek



Evelyn Kaye (nee Finkler) before leaving Vienna on a Kindertransport in 1938.

**SITUATIONS WANTED**

Will any kindhearted people help bring husband out of Vienna? Wife already here: first-class cook and dressmaker; desire post together anywhere.—Write, Mrs. Grunbaum, 19, Christchurch ave., Bronesbury, N.W.2.

**WOULD** kindhearted person help Viennese orphan to come over. Possesses visa; experienced in all domestic work.—Apply, 55, Marylands-road, Paddington, W.9.

**YOUNG** lady, normal, highest references, speaks Engl., French, German, driving licence, trained housekeeper, surgery assistant, seeks post; doctor's household preferred.—Address, 4,903, Jewish Chronicle.

**SITUATIONS - VACANT**  
Minimum 4 lines 8/-  
Each succeeding line 2/-

Adverts from Jewish Chronicle, 1938.



The last photo of the Birken family taken before the daughter, Sally, left Germany, 1938.



Boarding the St Louis, and mementoes from its ill-fated journey, 1938.



## ARRIVAL IN GREAT BRITAIN

Most Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria found it very difficult to enter Britain. However, by September 1939 about 70,000 Jews had been granted refuge in this country. The main area of settlement was North-West London.

Among those who obtained entry visas were many women who came as domestic servants. Almost 10,000 Jewish children were admitted without visas on Kindertransports. Several thousand men arrived on transit visas, which allowed them to re-emigrate to other countries.

The Jewish community in Britain responded actively to the desperate plight of Jews in the Third Reich. The Central British Fund for German Jewry was set up to raise funds. The CBF guaranteed the government that it would bear all costs of maintaining the Jewish refugees. The Jewish Refugees Committee and other Anglo-Jewish organisations found homes for the children and accommodation and jobs for the adults.

In February 1939 these organisations and their Christian and charitable counterparts were housed in Bloomsbury House, London, a lifeline for many a desperate refugee. Initially, many refugees were destitute and faced a desperate struggle to maintain themselves and their dependents, while also coping with the emotional and psychological aftermath of enforced emigration.

Some sections of public opinion, and some organisations, remained hostile to the refugees. For many refugees, their cruel separation from homes and loved ones and their flight to a strange land was a bitter and traumatic experience.



Refugee girls, Windermere, 1942



# ARRIVAL IN GREAT BRITAIN

*'My parents had already made arrangements for me to go to the Quaker school, and in fact decided to send me – as the school was in the North of England – by boat from Hamburg to Hull, where my brother would meet me, and I came over on a small boat carrying a load of plums. I got pretty sick of plums by the time we landed in Hull, thirty-six hours later. There were only twelve passengers, some of whom were regarded with great suspicion, because they looked like spies, and possibly even were. But I was befriended by a young Scottish teacher, who was just leaving Germany, where he had been teaching English, and he took good care of me, and actually, during the thirty-six-hour trip to Hull, attempted to teach me a little bit of English.'*

Walter Wolff

*'When I saw the famous cliffs of Dover, I got terribly excited. Inside me I had a feeling that a new era was about to start. I made up my mind there and then to start afresh.'*

Fred Pelican

*'My brother had arranged for a family to invite us. And this was a very nice couple and a daughter who awaited us at the station. They looked very British, sort of very casually dressed, and expected these poor refugees to arrive. And out came two elegant people, dressed from head to foot in all new clothing, with new suitcases. Afterwards we laughed a lot about this first encounter, but we were not what they expected and they were not what we expected. But they were wonderful people.'*

Ilse Wolff, née Zorek



Courtesy of World Jewish Relief

Jewish children arriving in Britain from Germany on a Kindertransport, 1939.

**FEUD ARRIVES IN PARIS ON HIS WAY TO LONDON**



Courtesy Freud Museum

Sigmund Freud on his journey to Britain from Vienna, 1939.



Ken Ambrose and his sister with the trunk he had been given for his barmitzvah in 1932, and in which he would bring his possessions to England four years later.



Susan Gruner (now Suzanne Ben-Yehuda), Tunbridge Wells Youth Hostel for Refugee Girls, 1939. Susan is sitting next to the dog, and her foster mother Mrs Reynolds is at the back in a striped dress.



Kindertransport children housed at Dovercourt, a holiday camp near Harwich, December 1938, (above) inside the dining hall.



Lore Sulzbacher (now Lorraine Allard) with her foster family in Lincoln, April 1939.



Refugee boys hostel, Minster Road, NW London, 1946.

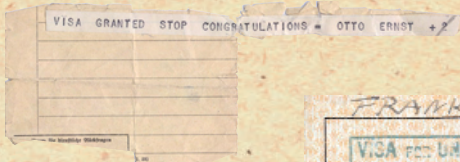
*'It wasn't easy. It happened very quickly. On the 1st of March you were an Austrian schoolboy, and on the 1st of June you were a refugee in England.'*

Anton Walter Freud

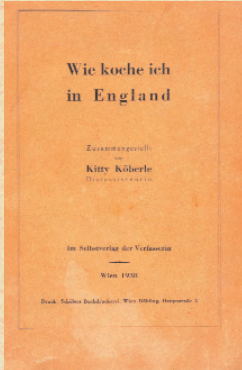
*'All I wanted to be was an English schoolgirl. I had no regrets, I didn't feel homesick, and I didn't want to speak German. All I wanted to be was an English schoolgirl, in my school uniform, riding my bicycle.'*

Daisy Hoffner

# ARRIVAL IN GREAT BRITAIN



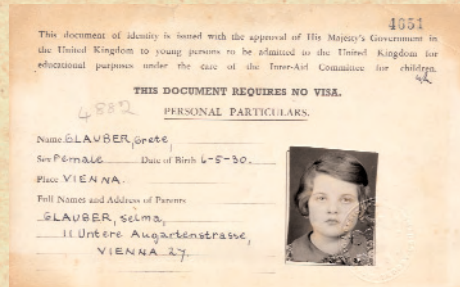
Fragment of a telegram bearing good news to the Kohnstamm family.



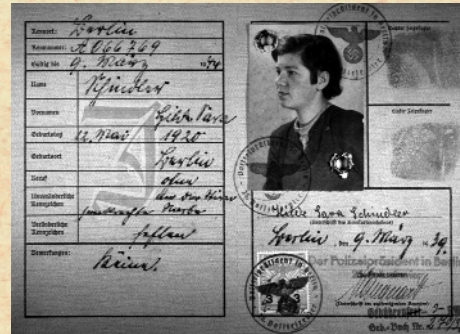
A booklet brought by refugee Hansi Winkler giving advice on cooking in England.



Visa to enter England granted to refugee Carl Frankl.



Kindertransport identity document for Grete Glauber.



Hilda Schindler's identity card, issued in Berlin 1939. Like all Jews, she had been given the middle name Sara by the Nazi authorities.

**Betrachten Sie sie bitte als Ehrenpflichten:**

- Verwenden Sie Ihre freie Zeit unverzüglich zur Erlernung der englischen Sprache und ihrer richtigen Aussprache.
- Sprechen Sie nicht deutsch in den Straßen, in Verkehrsmitteln oder sonst in der Öffentlichkeit, wie z.B. in Restaurants. Sprechen Sie lieber schwach englisch als flüchtig deutsch, und sprechen Sie nicht laut. Lesen Sie keine deutschen Zeitungen in der Öffentlichkeit.
- Kritisieren Sie weder Bestimmungen der Regierung noch irgendwelche englischen Getränke. Sprechen Sie nicht davon, "um wieviel besser dies oder das in Deutschland getan wird". Es mag manchmal wahr sein, aber es bedeutet nichts gegenüber der Sympathie und Freiheit Englands, die Ihnen jetzt gewährt werden. Vergessen Sie diesen Punkt niemals.
- Treten Sie weder einer politischen Organisation bei, noch nehmen Sie sonst Anteil an politischen Bewegungen.
- Bezeichnen Sie sich nicht auffallend durch kurze Sprechern, durch Ihre Manieren oder Kleidung. Dem Engländer missfallen Schwermütigkeiten, auffällende oder nicht-konventionelle Kleidung und Manieren.

Extract from the booklet Helpful Information and Guidance for every Refugee given to each new arrival by the German Jewish Aid Committee at Woburn House.

My first impression of England...

Dear Frau Landshoff

Dec 4 & 10. 7 Christ Lane Cambridge.

Thank you for your letter. I am doing all I can to get your permit through as quickly as possible, but the Home Office is so much pressed with similar requests from so many people, that they will not give any guarantee as to how long each case may take to arrange. I will write again as soon as I have any news for you.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret E. Ross

An essay by child refugee Grete Glauber on her first impressions of England.

Letter to Gertrud Landshoff on the difficulties of obtaining a domestic visa. Gertrud was eventually given a permit to leave Berlin and work for the Raven family in Cambridge.

*'I think what must head the list is tripe and onions. I don't think we got it that often at school, but it's something I never got used to. But I did very much like steamed suet puddings, not only because they were very tasty, but they were also very filling, and of course one of my memories of the school, mainly after 1939, was that one was always hungry and never had enough to eat. Until the war broke out, I received food parcels from Germany, which usually contained chocolate and exotic things like pumpernickel, which, when the English boys actually saw it and tasted it, they thought it was the most barbaric thing that anyone could ever eat. To me it was a great delicacy, and in any case I wasn't all that fussy.'*

Walter Wolff

*'Incidentally, that first English winter in a cold English country house! I had never felt so cold in my life. My chilblains, I didn't know what they were. I described what I'd got on my feet: 'Chilblains, chilblains', and they offered me a hot water bottle. In Germany, invalid old ladies had those, nobody else had hot water bottles, and I would start dressing to go to bed, and you had a jug of water to wash yourself with – that size – and deciding, which bits am I going to wash. You had a bath once a fortnight if you had the energy to pump the water, and then it would be fairly rusty.'*

Hilde Ainger, née Salomon

*'Heinz showed me his new home city with obvious pride. One of the odd things which surprised me was the way buses on identical services overtook each other in the turmoil of traffic. They seemed to personify the organised chaos which appeared to govern life here. In Berlin the buses, like everything else, obediently followed each other in strict compliance with their timetables. In wide-eyed wonder I took in the surging traffic, the huge, crowded stores, the Royal Palaces, the great parks, the Tower, the Albert Memorial, Piccadilly Circus, and all the other marvels which impress a 15-year-old on his first visit to a great metropolis.'*

Peter Perry [Pinschewer]

*'I knew virtually no English. When I arrived on the train from Dover, I was in these carriages which said 'Smoking'. In German, 'Smoking' is a dinner-jacket. So my first impression was that on these trains where it said 'Smoking' you actually had to wear evening dress.'*

Peter Singer

# ARRIVAL IN GREAT BRITAIN



Young woman refugee working as a domestic outside her employer's house, London, 1941.



Material from the Kitchener Camp, Richborough, Kent, which housed thousands of male refugees on transit visas in 1938-39.

**DOMESTIC BUREAU**  
ENQUIRY REQUEST FORM

All people not already vouched for by Continental Organizations have to be interviewed by their Local Authorities.

I, the undersigned William J. Chalk

Name Hilda Schindley

Address 43, Fontenay Avenue, Murrell Hill, N.10.

Telephone number Sudor, 6024

Wish to have Miss Hilda Schindley

Name Alt-Waikat, 83a, Berlin, N.W. 9.

Address

Vouched for, as

(a) I want to employ her.

(b) I have found a job for her with

(c) I would like a post found for her in England.

Please show authorities which you prefer (a), (b) or (c) in the form in duplicate.

WJ Chalk

Date: 16.2.39



Hansi Winkler working as a maid after leaving Vienna with a domestic visa.

The form completed by Hilda Schindley's prospective employer guaranteeing her a job in Britain.

*'Having seen pictures of my foster mother dressed in a fur coat, I expected to be taken to, if not a stately, then at least an imposing home. However, my first view of my new home – as far as the condition of my stomach allowed me to register anything – was of a low soot-blackened house in the middle of a row of similar dwellings with iron railings, funny bulging windows and steps down to a sunken part. I expected to be met by a maid, but the hall echoed eerily to our solitary footsteps.'*

Martha Blend, née Immerdauer

*'Of course, au-pair jobs were totally against the law. You were only supposed to work if you had a labour permit, which you couldn't get, and so if you had an au-pair job, you would say you came over as a student of the English language and therefore lived with an English family, who didn't tell anybody how they exploited you. They could do what they liked, because you had no rights. I had a few au-pair jobs even without pocket money, you see, and no regular time off or anything. You were incredibly exploited.'*

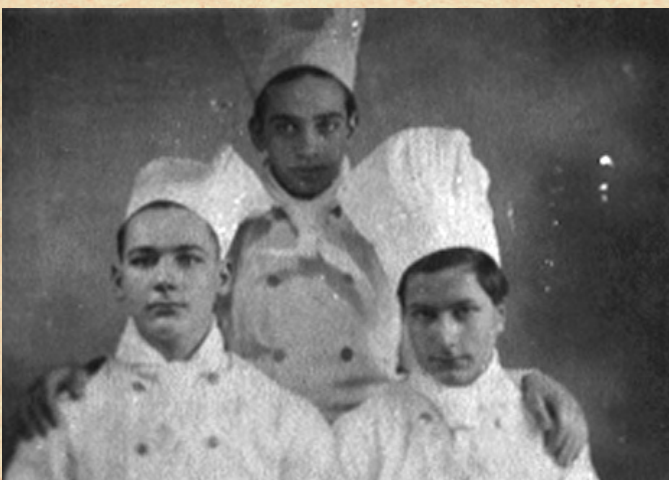
Hilde Ainger, née Salomon

*'When we docked, some kindly folk from the Red Cross handed us each a lunch packet. An English sandwich, a bun and a bar of milk chocolate. Then we were marched to the boat train and started for London. I remember being conscious of the fact that I was now on an island and vaguely surprised that the countryside was not bobbing up and down, as though afloat on the Atlantic.'*

Marianne Elsley, née Josephy

*'I arrived at Harwich, then went by train with my luggage to Oxted, and the lady met me, with a big car and a chauffeur, and took me to her house. And so I stayed there about two weeks, over two weeks, and then I said: 'But now I really must get to the hospital [to take up a job], I can't stay here', and she said to me, this rich old English lady, this ailing old lady: 'To you it happened today, it might happen to us tomorrow.' And I dedicated my poem 'Nach der Flucht' to that lady.'*

Stella Rotenberg. Translated from the German



Johnny Blunt arrived in England on the first Kindertransport. Here Johnny (centre) is training as a chef, Glasgow, 1941.



# WARTIME

When Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, refugees from Germany and Austria became 'enemy aliens' and were subject to a curfew and other restrictions.

In the summer of 1940, when France fell, the British government ordered the mass internment of enemy aliens. Some 27,000 were interned, mostly on the Isle of Man. Some were deported on to Canada and Australia. A German submarine sank one of these transports, the Arandora Star, with great loss of life, and the resulting public outcry caused the government to initiate a change of policy.

Many refugees were eager to fight Hitler. At first they were only allowed to join the non-combatant Pioneer Corps, which had several 'Aliens Companies', but in time both men and women refugees were accepted into many branches of H.M. Forces. Some gave their lives fighting for their adopted country against Nazism.

Refugees served with distinction, and there were even special German-speaking Commando units manned by refugees. Civilian refugees contributed to the war effort in munitions factories, in civil defence and by performing other essential tasks. They shared the terrors of the Blitz and the privations of wartime life with the British.

Refugee families were frequently split up by internment or war service, and many women were left to fend for themselves and their children. The Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain (AJR) was founded in June 1941, to safeguard the interests of the refugees in these dark days.



Robert Parker (previously Werner Cohn from Berlin), Holland, January 1945

# INTERMENT

'As in most cases, my father was interned as an enemy alien, he went to Onchan camp on the Isle of Man. My mother started doing the only job that was allowed to her, that was cleaning floors, housework. With his usual Prussian efficiency, my father got himself a job there as Welfare Officer, and they didn't want to release him because he was so efficient. Anyway, strings were pulled and my father came out after nine months in interment and joined us in Headington, Oxford. His first job was as a baker's roundsman. He got himself a hernia, so he had to stop that, and then he got a job making blackout fittings in a carpentry firm – very different from selling soft furnishings and curtains, of course, but he didn't mind.'

Hans Seelig

'I remember walking down Oxford Street after my husband had been interned, in a real paranoid attack. I felt that everybody was looking at me and I was a real pariah, an outcast. It was a dreadful experience. Nothing like being in a concentration camp, but even so, psychologically it was very bad.'

Adelheid Schweitzer, née Schoenewald

'The following morning I collected my father, and we were taken to Huyton [internment camp] in a Black Maria, would you believe it? I mean, it was an insult. Then he collected his things, and he'd obviously been very popular. One of the things that haunted me for years was that when we came out, there were a lot of these wonderful Jewish refugees, lots of really distinguished-looking people, and they stood behind the barbed wire and waved to him as we went off in the Black Maria.'

Hilde Angier, née Salomon



The plight of the interned refugees was reflected in songs like Homeless, written and performed by internees at the Central Promenade Camp, Isle of Man in October 1940.



Courtesy Hans Schneider

Four refugees interned on the Isle of Man, summer 1940. All were friends from Edinburgh, (left to right), marine biologist Willy Gross, doctor Max Sugar, composer and musicologist Hans Gal and dentist Hugo Schneider.

| PROGRAMME FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 3, 1940 |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| hr   | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
| 10   | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 11   | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 12   | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 1  | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 4  | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 5  | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 6  | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 7  | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |
| 8  | 45     | 52      |           |          |        |          |        |

The English Hour:  
 TO-DAY MONDAY:  
 HOUSE 52  
 8pm  
 Otto Liebreich:  
 Anglo-Saxon Humour

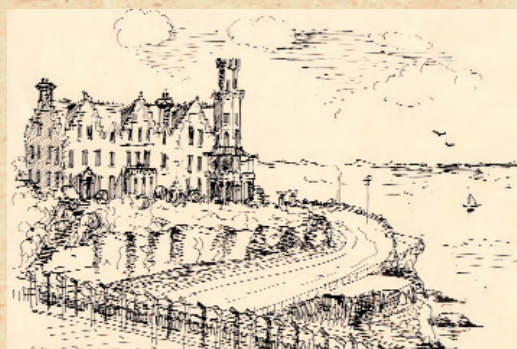
CONCERT IN THE CASIN

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 23rd 8pm

J. SCHIDLÖFF  
 VIOLIN  
 DR. SALOMON  
 PIANO

Concert in A for Violin & Piano  
 Fandango in C minor for piano  
 Unaccompanied Violin  
 And-Flageolet in A minor  
 Scherzo

The interned refugees included many professional and creative people. Days at the camps were filled with cultural and educational activities, as these pages from a scrapbook kept by former internee Theo Marks testify.



Drawing of Onchan camp, Isle of Man, by an internee, June 1940



Some interned refugees were sent overseas. This drawing is of an internment camp in Australia where 2,550 men were sent after a voyage on HMS Dunera in appalling conditions.

# 'ENEMY ALIENS'



Josephine Bruegel had studied medicine in Prague and worked as a nurse during the war.

'I was at the window the next morning [after reaching Britain from France via Gibraltar in July 1940], the sun was shining, and I looked out the window and I saw a soldier with, obviously, his wife and a pram, walking. It was so quiet, the sun was shining, and I kept on thinking, "Don't they know there is a war?"'  
Eva Sommerfreund, née Oplatek

'As we left the house, the night sky was lit up with the criss-crossing beams of searchlights. In the street, other people, similarly equipped, were also hurrying in the direction of the shelter. We had hardly settled ourselves on the slatted benches with our blankets draped around us for warmth when we heard a succession of bangs which became ever louder and more violent. It was the anti-aircraft guns in action. To this was soon added the sound of aircraft with the staccato engine noise that betrayed their German identity and then the crash and rumble of exploding bombs. I sat there transfixed with terror in that cacophony. Finally the steady note of the all clear released us from our prison.'

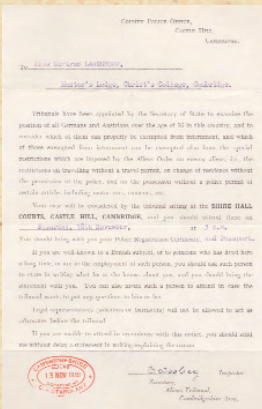
Martha Blend, née Immerdauer

'We hardly ever went out in the evenings. In the first place we had to be back at the nurses' home by 10 p.m. That made it impossible to get to the pictures and back in time, especially on foot. We sometimes did go into Alton and bought chips – fish was rarely to be had during the war – and ate them out of newspaper on the way back in the street, but this was about all one could do in wartime in such a small town.'

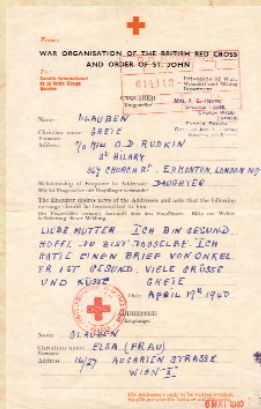
Marianne Elsley, née Josephy



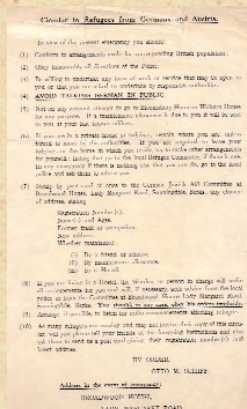
Aliens Registration Certificate for Bernhard Friedmann. Like all 'enemy aliens' he had to attend a police tribunal to determine his status. In 1940 Bernhard Friedmann was interned and sent to Onchan Internment camp, Isle of Man.



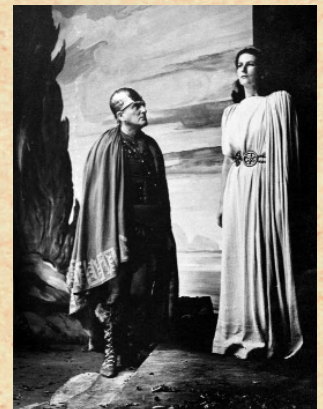
Instruction for Gertrud Landshoff to attend the Aliens Police Tribunal in Cambridge.



After September 1939 correspondence with relatives still in Germany was confined to short messages sent via the Red Cross.



Guidance given to refugees after the outbreak of war by the German Jewish Aid Committee at Woburn House.



Production of Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* by the Laterndl, a theatre company set up by Austrian refugees and based in Swiss Cottage.



Refugees classed as 'enemy aliens' being marched to internment camps, summer 1940.

'We went to the theatre, we went to concerts, we went to Myra Hess at the National Gallery. They were beautiful concerts, and it was just an hour and you had a Blitz [air raid], but it didn't disturb you, you just went and it was beautiful.'  
Klary Friedl, née Heilmann

'Just to come back to the early school days, I was of course terribly teased, for two reasons. First of all, my lack of English, and the second thing of course, schoolchildren called you names like 'Nazi' and 'Jerry', that sort of thing. So it took quite a while for me to be accepted.'

Walter Wolff

# WAR SERVICE



219 Company Pioneer Corps, autumn 1940, marching through Ilfracombe High Street. Many male refugees joined the Pioneer Corps.



Passover seder service for men of the Pioneer Corps, March 1945.



Ernst Reichenfeld, a doctor from Vienna, (seated, front row, 2nd from left) with his Home Guard unit in Birmingham, December 1944.



Johnny Blunt (stabbing the swastika) serving with the Pioneer Corps in Brussels 1944.

*'On 29 July 1940, at the crowded Recruitment Centre in Euston, I took the oath of allegiance to 'His Majesty King George VI, His Heirs and Successors in Law', swore 'to obey the lawful commands of the officers set over me', and was paid 'The King's Shilling' which confirmed my agreement to serve, both at home and overseas, to the end of 'the present emergency'. Like all 'non-British' recruits, I was posted to the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. It was the Jack-of-all-Trades of the British Army, performing a wide range of unskilled tasks, like building ammunition dumps, erecting fortifications and putting up prefabricated Nissen huts.'*

Peter Perry [Pinschewer]

*'My unit embarked on D-Day plus five. We landed on the specially constructed Mulberry Harbour leading to the Arromanches beaches, which had been cleared of mines and enemy resistance. We established ourselves in an open field between Caen and Bayeux. We dug trenches which we converted into sleeping quarters, and also laid on water supplies for our field kitchen. Every one of us carried arms, we would guard prisoners, ammunition depots, vital supplies and installations. I was attached to a Canadian division engaged in some of the heaviest fighting in the Falaise gap, confronting some of the most vicious Nazi fighting units, including the SS Totenkopf'.*

Fred Pelican

*'I got myself a job, and this lasted for several years during the war, in an aircraft engine plant belonging to a firm called Napiers, and what we were doing was overhauling aircraft engines that had been in service and had come out of the line to do their routine overhauls or possibly because of war damage, fighting damage, depending on what it was. I spent about three years there, and it was a time when I felt I was doing something useful.'*

Peter Singer

*'And so my parents were deported in May 1942 from Vienna, from Aspang Station, to the East, to a place called Izbicka, somewhere near Sobibor; it seems, as far as my brother was able to find out after the war, that they were probably taken off the train on the way there and shot in a wood.'*

Stella Rotenberg. Translated from the German



Lorraine Allard, nee Lore Sulzbacher from Nürnberg, serving with the ATS.



Robert Parker, originally Werner Cohn from Berlin, serving with the 7th Armoured Division.

# BECOMING BRITISH

## ASSIMILATING AND TAKING ROOT

### AFTER 1945



In the post-war years most refugees took British nationality, and many took new British names. They settled down, married and had families, and created a recognisable refugee environment.

Refugee organisations like Club 1943 and the AJR Club flourished, and landmarks like the Cosmo Restaurant and the Dorice became refugee meeting-places. The AJR Information commenced publication in 1946 as the mouthpiece of the community.

The refugees became integrated into British economic life. Life was hard for many in the post-war years, especially those who had to start with little or nothing. Nevertheless, a disproportionate number of the refugees made their way in middle-class commercial and professional occupations, achieving a distinct degree of prosperity and success.

The refugees had an impact out of all proportion to their numbers in a wide range of occupational areas, such as science and medicine, psychoanalysis, art history and publishing. Scientists like Francis Simon, Hans Krebs, Ernst Chain, Rudolf Peierls and Max Perutz were of inestimable value to Britain. Institutions like the Wiener Library, the Warburg Institute, the Freud Museum and the Leo Baeck Institute are living evidence of the creative impulse that the refugees injected into British cultural and intellectual life.

Refugees began to receive restitution payments from West Germany in the 1950s. Though these could never compensate for the human losses suffered by the Jews, they did alleviate the position of many refugees and enabled the AJR to provide essential social services to its members.





# BECOMING BRITISH

*'The problem arose because my husband Ernst Lowenthal went back [to Germany] shortly after the war with the Jewish Relief Unit. With my blessing, obviously, because he was looking after Displaced Persons. But this was really the reason for our drifting apart. When his job was more or less finished, he found another one in Germany, and I was married to the Wiener Library and had my mother and brother here, and did not want to go back to Germany for good. I mean, we always met, he came to England and I went to Germany, but I did not want to uproot myself completely.'*

Ilse Wolff, née Zorek

*'Ernst's brother arrived one Saturday [from Hungary]. We lived at that time at Chiswick, and we had tea, and he said: 'My goodness, nice china and laid table and good food, it's marvellous and wonderful.' Then he looked at me and he said: 'But I must tell you something. Your father is dead, your mother is dead, your brothers are dead. Ernst, your sister Eva is dead, her husband is dead and the child is dead.' So I looked at him and I said to him: 'Help yourself, have another coffee.' And he looked at me and he said: 'Oh Klary, you grow up.' But I needed to go out because I fed the child, I needed to get the milk out of my breast because I thought I will explode.'*

Klary Friedl, née Heilmann

*'At the end of the war my parents got to know someone who put my father in as managing director of an export agency, and when she went to the States in 1946, my father simply inherited the business, got a very favourable contract from her – five per cent of the profit for a maximum of, I think, five years – and then the business was his. And he built that up, and that's where both my parents worked, eventually concentrating again on soft furnishings.'*

Hans Seelig

*'That firm was owned by a Viennese handbag designer who had started in a small way during the war, doing various fabric items for the war effort, and then went back to his original handbag business and managed to start selling handbags to Marks & Spencers. So the firm I was working for from 1953 was basically a Marks & Spencers supplier. I stayed with them for 35 years and retired at 65. The owner's much younger brother-in-law worked there as well, and we've been good friends ever since. He in fact took over the firm when the old man died. After that – I had by this time become a director and I was rewarded suitably. The firm had about 120 employees. I had a nice big office and finished up with a computer on my desk.'*

Peter Singer

*'I met my wife [Hanna] through the Hyphen. The Hyphen was started by some Jewish refugees who felt that the Hyphen was the connecting link between our former state as refugees and becoming full British naturalized citizens. We got married in 1955. We had two children in 1958 who have been the joy of our life.'*

Peter Singer



The interior of the Cosmo Restaurant in the Finchley Road.



Doris Balacs (centre), with her husband George, both refugees, in their restaurant the Dorice.



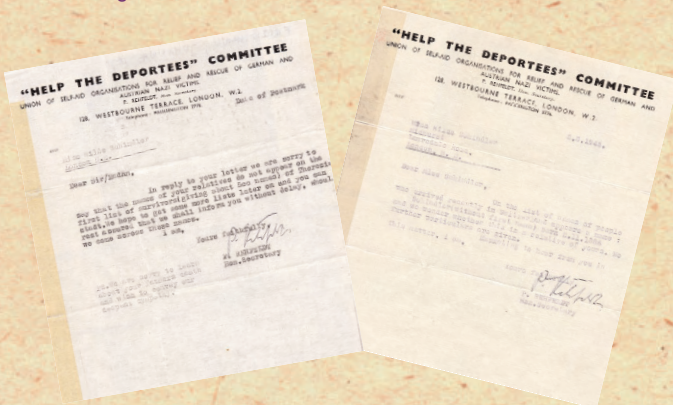
The Grenville family (formerly Grunfeld) enjoy a family outing to the races, 1950s.



Edith Rothschild working as a dressmaker in Covent Garden in 1986.



Rosa Gordon working in Bond Street



After the war, there was a desperate search for relatives and friends who had not been able to escape from Nazi-controlled countries.

A.E.R. INFORMATION, April 1946

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MANAGED BY JEWISH REFUGEE

**BRADFORD**  
Since the Chairman of the Bradford Branch of the Jewish Relief Unit, Mr. J. Goldstein, and Mr. J. S. Greenbaum, were named to London, a new Jewish Committee consisting of Mr. H. G. Heymann (Chairman), Mr. F. Hoffmann (President) and Mr. J. Goldstein (Secretary) were elected. The Committee will be holding the next meeting of the Bradford Branch of the Jewish Relief Unit on Monday, 11th April, at 8.30 p.m. at the Bradford Jewish Centre, 11, St. James' Street, Bradford. The topic will be 'The Jewish Refugee Problem in Britain'. The topic will be discussed by Mr. J. Goldstein, Chairman, Mr. H. G. Heymann, and Mr. J. S. Greenbaum.

**GLASGOW**  
The "Society of Jewish Refugees" Glasgow, an organization affiliated to the A.R.U., arranged a reception for the new year and some other from the Glasgow Branch of the Jewish Relief Unit. The new year dinner was held at the Glasgow Jewish Centre, 11, St. James' Street, Glasgow, on Monday, 11th April, at 8.30 p.m. The topic will be 'The Jewish Refugee Problem in Britain'. The topic will be discussed by Mr. J. Goldstein, Chairman, Mr. H. G. Heymann, and Mr. J. S. Greenbaum.

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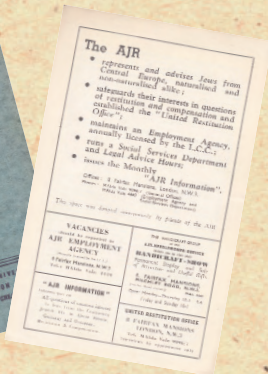
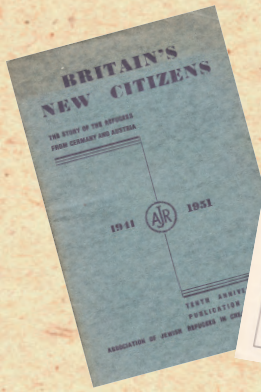
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Glasgow, W.1.

Jewish refugees started new businesses in and outside London.

# BECOMING BRITISH



The AJR marked its first ten years in 1951.

*'Salisbury was much more to my liking [than Alton], especially as after my training there, a young man turned me into a real Englishwoman with a genuine British passport, by marrying me!'*  
Marianne Elsley, née Josephy

*'I am an Austrian-born Jewish British citizen.'*  
Elly Miller, née Horovitz

*'One of the highlights was my first British passport.'*  
Ilse Wolff, née Zorek

*'By this time the Americans had also started their Civil Censorship Division which they were recruiting people for, to go and do censorship work. It started off as postal work, postal censorship, based in Offenbach near Frankfurt. I got myself transferred to the technical unit of the telephone surveillance side. The technical people were called wire chiefs. The 'wire' referred to the fact that you were dealing with telephone wires, basically. One of the first jobs I went out on was looking for Martin Bormann in Bad Tölz, which was some way south in southern Germany, where our unit went into the telephone exchange, which we took over to install our surveillance equipment, and then there were monitors who monitored telephone calls. Needless to say, we didn't find Martin Bormann.'*  
Peter Singer



Two refugee families in West Hampstead 1943.



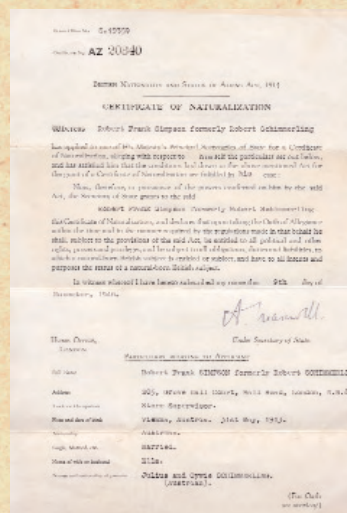
Home from home? Skiing on Primrose Hill, London, 1942.



The wedding of former refugee Paul Eckhaus from Vienna to British born Corelie Rebeck in 1942.



Rabbi Bruno Italiener and his wife Hedwig in England in 1954. The Italieners escaped from Germany in 1939 with the help of the Chief Rabbi, and Bruno Italiener then served as rabbi of West London Synagogue from 1941 until 1956.



Naturalisation certificate granting Robert Simpson British citizenship.



Chanukah show by the Bar Kochba Habonim at the Embassy Theatre, Swiss Cottage.



Trude Grenville and Klary Fried walking down Regent Street, 1950s.



# CULTURE AND IDENTITY

The assimilated, German-speaking Jews brought their culture with them to Britain, enriching their new homeland immeasurably. In the immediate post-war years, the refugees from Central Europe were almost the only recognisable immigrant group in Britain, which was still a largely homogeneous, monocultural society. Their accents, dress, tastes and customs became part of public life in North-West London.

The refugees transformed the British arts scene. In music, refugees created Glyndebourne and played a key part in establishing the Edinburgh Festival, while the Amadeus Quartet became the leading string quartet in the land and refugees thronged the Wigmore Hall.

Famous artists from Central Europe included the writers Arthur Koestler and Elias Canetti, the painter Lucian Freud, the actor Anton Walbrook and the singer Richard Tauber. The philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Popper, the historian Geoffrey Elton, the sociologists Karl Mannheim and Norbert Elias and the art historians Ernst Gombrich and Nikolaus Pevsner added lustre to British intellectual life.

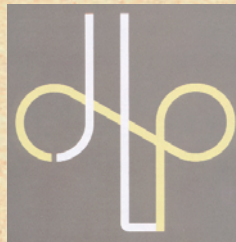
Paul Hamlyn, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, André Deutsch, Thames & Hudson and Phaidon Press reinvigorated British publishing. There were refugee art galleries, bookshops and music publishers. Stefan Lorant created a new dimension to British journalism with Picture Post, and Vicky was the outstanding political cartoonist of his day. Hans Keller and Martin Esslin became arbiters of culture at the BBC.

In the 1950s the modernising, cosmopolitan impact of the refugees on British culture was unmistakable. The old insularity had gone forever.



Amadeus Quartet, 1950s.

# CULTURE AND IDENTITY



Hans Schleger, originally from Germany, was a prolific and successful graphic designer. He was responsible for many of the best known corporate designs of the post-war years, including two quintessentially English symbols, the London Transport bus stop and the John Lewis logo.



George Him, another outstanding designer, at work in his studio, 1966.

*'My uncle had given me Margaret Morland's address, you see, because he had been to see her when he was in England. He'd been down to Somerset to see her and absolutely loved it, and he looked out of the window and he said: 'I'd much rather be a cow in Somerset than a professor of East European history in Hamburg.'*  
Hilde Ainger, née Salomon

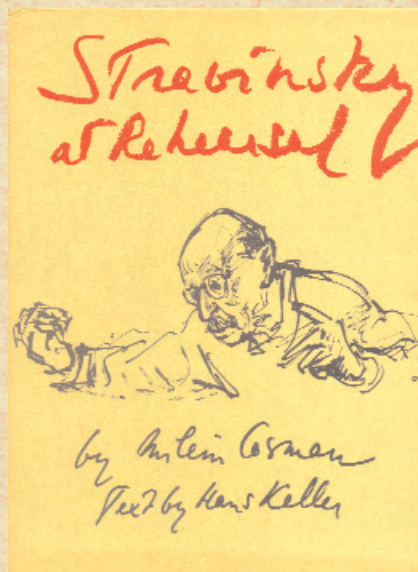
*'I cannot say I feel totally English. All kinds of things make me feel just that little bit foreign. This is neither a matter of complaint, nor boasting. It does not indicate rootlessness or insecurity. It is part of personal life, that one is what one is.'*  
Claus Moser

*'I'm not English, I'm British by adoption. And I'm certainly not German.'*  
Kenneth Ambrose

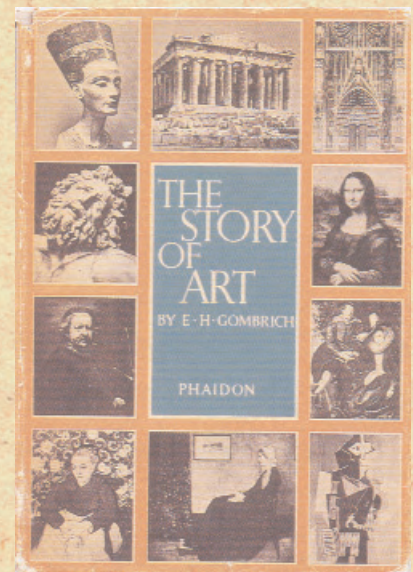
*'Looking back, I would say I don't have a 'Heimat'. If somebody asks me, 'Are you English, German, Jewish?', I would always say, 'I am a Jew born in Germany living in England and feeling at home in Hampstead'. That is all I can say.'*  
Lucie Kaye, née Schachne



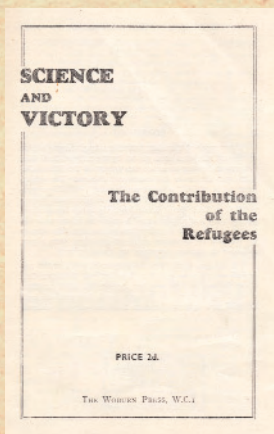
Penguin Classified List, designed by George Him, 1960.



Stravinsky at Rehearsal, a collection of drawings published in 1952 by émigré artist Milein Cosman, with text by her husband, eminent musicologist Hans Keller.



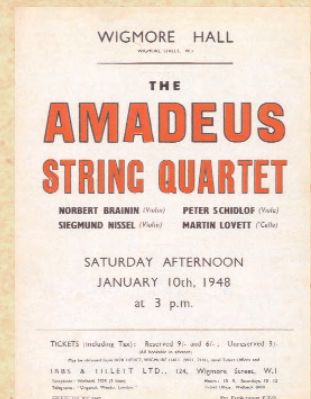
The first edition of Sir Ernst Gombrich's hugely successful book The Story of Art. Both the author and the founders of the publishing house, Phaidon Press, were refugees.



A booklet published by Woburn Press in 1946.



The Amadeus Quartet in the 1950s. Three of the four members were originally from Vienna.



The debut concert of the Amadeus Quartet at the Wigmore Hall, the first of many around the world.

# CULTURE AND IDENTITY

*'I have a Jewish identity, and I have a British one. I don't have a Continental identity. When I make music I am Viennese. Yes, I am Viennese. I don't live in Vienna, and I don't need to live in Vienna, because the Vienna that I need I have right here inside me. My credo is the music.'*

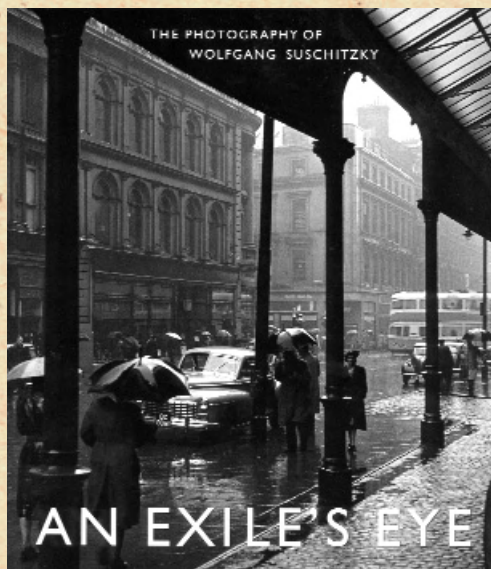
Norbert Brainin

*'I probably belong to three cultures, German, Jewish, and British, mainly. There have been fringe editions of other cultures. For some years I was perhaps over-anxious not to be seen as a German-Jewish refugee. That was part of a – complex is too strong a word: I did not want to feel like an outsider. Having been an outsider in my childhood, I wanted to be an insider.'*

Hans Seelig

*'I feel very much at home here. I live in one of the nicest parts of London. I am considered a British photographer now, I should think. I managed to save enough to last, I hope, unless I have to go into a home, because I was able to do a lot of commercials. The films I worked on never made much money. Some of them were very successful, like Get Carter, Ulysses, Entertaining Mr. Sloane, Ring of Bright Water.'*

Wolf Suschitzky



Catalogue for exhibition of work by photographer Wolf Suschitzky, National Portrait Gallery, Scotland, 2002.

*'When we were in school, we had to go to the opera or the theatre because that's what we talked about at school. Whereas here they can't go to the opera so often, or to concerts. We knew all about it, not because we were particularly highbrow – we were just naughty little brats as they are here, too – but our interests were all the same, we all of us were interested in music, arts.'*

Eva Sommerfreund, née Oplatek

*'I am more at home in England than anywhere else. In Germany I certainly feel a foreigner. I can't even say I would describe myself as international or cosmopolitan, I am not. More English than anything else. Here, I do feel at home more than anywhere else. Residual gratitude for being here, that's always with me. Not being Jewish and not being not Jewish, being partly left-handed and partly right-handed made me sort of feel that I am somewhere on the fence. That is very useful as an actor, particularly in comedy.'*

Andrew Sachs



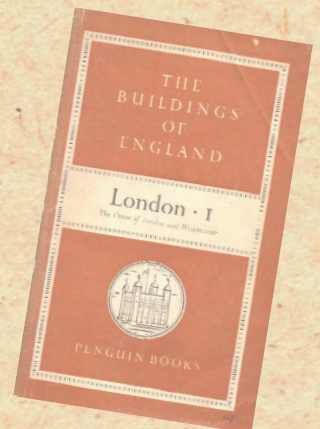
Gertrude Bing of the Warburg Institute receives her doctorate from the University of Reading.



George Him marries Shirley Rhodes, 1968.



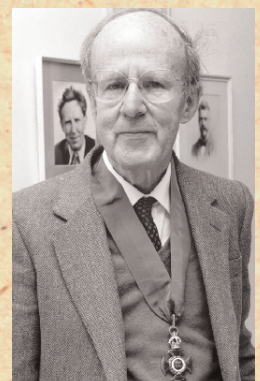
Sculpture of Salome by Fred Kormis.



The London edition of Nikolaus Pevsner's Architectural Guides, 1957.



The investiture of Sir Rudolf Peierls, (2nd from right) with colleagues, 1946.



Max Perutz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, 1962.



# THE GERMAN-JEWISH HERITAGE TODAY

After over sixty years of settlement in Britain, the refugees from Central Europe can look back with pride on what they have achieved. They have built communal institutions, like the Association of Jewish Refugees, Belsize Square Synagogue and the Wiener Library, which are firmly established in British public life and yet retain the link with the German-Jewish past.

Club 1943, now nearing its sixtieth anniversary, functions as a literary and political forum devoted to preserving the Central European cultural heritage. The refugees have spread across Britain. To the long-established regional associations of former refugees in cities like Manchester and Glasgow, the AJR has added local groups in many towns and cities. Homes for the elderly and a network of social services cater for the needs of an aging generation.

In recent years it has become easier to confront the traumas of the past and the losses suffered in the Holocaust. Refugees have written memoirs, taken part in programmes of interviews and appeared in documentaries dealing with the years of persecution and exile. Commemorating and recording the past has come to be seen as a priority.

The children of the refugees have largely assimilated into British life. The direction of organisations like the AJR is now largely in their hands, as are the organisations run by and for members of the second generation. The legacy of the Continental Britons is passing to them.



# GERMAN-JEWISH HERITAGE



Reunion of internees from HMS Dunera.

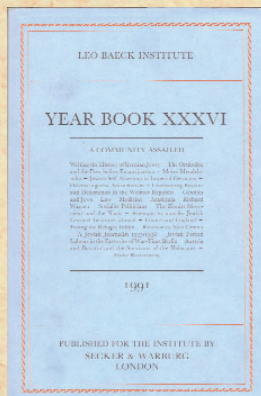
*'I never went to the extreme of being more British than the British, holier than the pope. I was prevented from that by my studies in German literature and by the fact that I quite happily went to synagogue, provided it was not more than twice a year, the annual nod to God, so to speak. That is different now. I go most Friday evenings. I feel part of it and I feel it is part of me, stronger than it was for a time.'*  
Hans Seelig

*'We weren't very successful at making our son bilingual. There were so many theories. Whenever a refugee child was born, when we were at the BBC, the German Section usually had an enormous table in the canteen and all the intellectuals were discussing, should one speak German to them first. I wanted my mother to speak German to him because that usually worked. But she always spoke bad English and then she'd turn to me and say something quickly in German. We weren't good enough at it. He has some sort of grasp, but he can't read a German book'*  
Hanne Norbert-Miller



50th anniversary Reunion of Kindertransport in 1989.

*'If I go to Central Europe, I'm crying out for England. If I am wherever, I am so happy to come back, come back to my home. As the English say, my home is my castle. I like to be here, I am different from the English people, my language, my food, all sorts of things, but we are such good friends, because we tolerate each other.'*  
Klary Friedl, née Heilmann



The Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute.



Former *Kinder* compare notes at the 50th anniversary reunion.



Sir Ernst Gombrich and the HM The Queen Mother at the Warburg Institute, 1973.

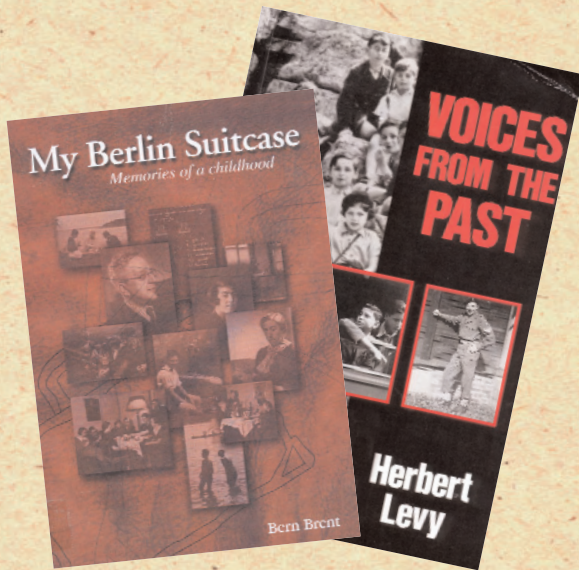


Residents at Otto Schiff House, a home for elderly refugees in Hampstead.



Werner Rosenstock, General Secretary of the AJR from 1941-1982, pictured with his wife Susanne in the Wiener Library.

# GERMAN-JEWISH HERITAGE



Memoirs published by former refugees.



An art class at the AJR Day Centre.



Tea and musical entertainment for AJR members.



Lord Moser and Kenneth Ambrose reminiscing on their days in the RAF.

*'But I know that I wouldn't be alive if I hadn't landed up in England. I know that England saved my life. And not only mine, other people's lives too. And one can of course criticize, everyone's free to do that, it's a free country, in that respect the English are very generous. But I don't want to forget that I am alive because I am in England.'*

Stella Rotenberg. Translated from the German

*'I talked to my daughter about it and now to you, because I never told anybody anything. Because, first of all, nobody is interested to start with, and secondly, it's very much inside of you and every word hurts when it comes out. All right, my parents would be very old now, they wouldn't be alive, but there would be a place where they were, where your thoughts can go. But here it is somewhere where I don't know how many thousand people died. You know, a mass grave. And you can't weep, because it hurts much more than weeping.'*

Klary Friedl, née Heilmann

*'The fact of the matter however is that we [members of Second Generation Network] are all different – sometimes extremely so – but we share two things in common: Jewish or not, our close relatives were directly affected by persecution during the Holocaust and – we either have things to say, things to find out or things to do about our shared family history.'*

Editorial in Second Generation Voices, January 2002



Professor Edward Timms, Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, congratulating Max Kochmann on his honorary doctorate



Belsize Square Synagogue celebrating its 60th anniversary.