

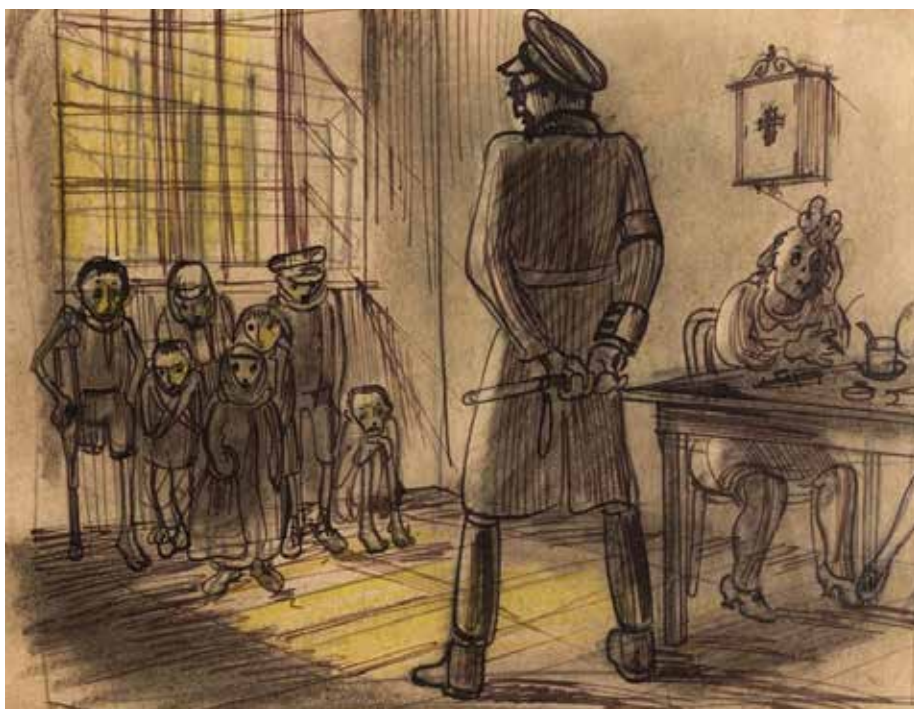


# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Remembering the Ghettos

In November 1940, eighty years ago this month, the Warsaw Ghetto was officially sealed, cutting off 380,000 Jews from the rest of the world. It was the largest ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland. "When the ghetto was finally separated from the rest of Warsaw," writes Bryan Cheyette in his book, *The Ghetto*, published in September, "it covered 452 acres and was surrounded by 11 miles of roughly built wall... Thirty per cent of Warsaw's population were jammed into 2.5 per cent of the city..."



Rozenfeld, *Punkt etapowy* (Etap point) - one of the very few surviving drawings from the Warsaw Ghetto, courtesy of Poland's Jewish Historic Institute

There are deeply moving accounts of the Polish ghettos by those who never survived. But some of the most powerful accounts of the Nazi ghettos in Poland are by refugees, offering very different perspectives, as witnesses, survivors,

the children of those who died. Some escaped during the war, but a surprising number stayed on in post-war Poland but fled the Communist regime in the 1950s and '60s.

*Continued on page 2*

### BACK TO BASICS

November is always one of the AJR's busiest months but this year we are busy in different ways, as Michael Newman explains on page 4.

For example, we are commemorating Kristallnacht in different formats, including an online memorial service (see page 3) and a moving testimony by Kurt Marx (page 13).

Equally moving are stories of how AJR members are giving something back (Pages 10-11) and a Korean third generation refugee's perspective (page 14 - 15).

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

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## Remembering the Ghettos (cont.)

The Polish poet, Czeslaw Milosz, wrote two of the greatest poems about the Warsaw Ghetto from the point of view of an observer. Both were written in Warsaw in 1943 and are about testimony and the guilt of the survivor. The final verse of *A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto* reads:

“What will I tell him, I, a Jew of the New Testament,  
Waiting two thousand years for the second coming of Jesus?  
My broken body will deliver me to his sight  
And he will count me among the helpers of death: The uncircumcised.”

His most famous poem, though, is *Campo dei Fiori*, named after the square in Rome where Giordano Bruno was burned for heresy in 1600. Milosz continues,

“I thought of the Campo dei Fiori in Warsaw by the sky-carousel one clear spring evening to the strains of a carnival tune. The bright melody drowned the salvos from the ghetto wall, and couples were flying high in the cloudless sky.

At times wind from the burning would drift dark kites along and riders on the carousel caught petals in midair. That same hot wind blew open the skirts of the girls and the crowds were laughing on that beautiful Warsaw Sunday.”

In 2009, the Polish refugee filmmaker, Mira Hamermesh, returned to Łódź, where her parents had been locked up in the Ghetto. She wrote about her experience in *The Guardian*. She and her brother left Łódź soon after the German invasion and after an extraordinary journey, described in her memoir, *The River of Angry Dogs*, crossed east Europe and joined their sister in Palestine in 1941, before finally settling in Britain in 1947. By then she had discovered the fate of her parents. “Mother,” she wrote, “Fajga Hamermesz (née Lerer), died of starvation in May 1943. And Father, Josef Meir Hamermesz, who had miraculously stayed alive until the end,

was deported to Auschwitz with the last transport from Łódź in 1944.”

Like Hamermesh, Janina Bauman (née Levinson) grew up in a middle-class Jewish family, but she was born and grew up in Warsaw. Her family was assimilated. “No one in my large family spoke Yiddish,” she later wrote in her remarkable memoir, *Beyond These Walls: Escaping the Warsaw Ghetto – A Young Girl’s Story*, “wore beards, skullcaps or traditional Jewish gaberdines. Nobody was religious.”

Bauman describes life in the Ghetto: the fear of typhus, “the homeless, tattered, undernourished people we brushed against in the streets”, rumours of a war between Germany and the Soviet Union, “shops with luxury goods, cafés and restaurants” in the Ghetto, Germans hunting people who traded on the black market, naked bodies buried in “a huge, deep, rectangular hole in the ground” and, worst of all, the mass deportations. On Sunday 6 September she and her family were suddenly woken. They had less than four hours to get ready. “Anybody found in the block after 10am would be shot dead.” On 25 January 1943 she escaped from the Ghetto with her mother and sister and after some extraordinary adventures managed to survive the war. Her father didn’t survive. She later discovered that he had been shot at Katyn.

Towards the end of the book she describes returning to a flat. “I explained that in that flat, under the rubble of a half-ruined room, I had buried my manuscripts just after the Warsaw Uprising... It still looked as I remembered it, one leg of the piano dangling over the precipice. And here they were, all my exercise books and loose sheets covered with my untidy handwriting, hidden safely in a hole in the floor, under a few bricks.”

The imagery is fascinating. Everything is in ruins and destroyed: “rubble”, “a half-ruined room”, one leg of a piano “dangling over the precipice.” Perhaps this is how she saw it or even how it was. And perhaps this is how *she* was, at the end of the war, “half-ruined”, partly destroyed.

These are all moving, powerful descriptions of different experiences of

the Polish ghettos. There are two things which stand out from these very different accounts. First, we are not seeing the ghetto as through a transparent windowpane. Bauman’s closing image reminds us that what seems to be a description of a room could also be a description of herself after her terrible experiences over six years.

Claude Lanzmann’s masterpiece, *Shoah*, raises a similar question. It ends not in 1945, like Bauman’s account, but in 1943 with the Ghetto Uprising and it ends not in Warsaw but in Israel. These are the last words of the film: “I didn’t meet a living soul. At one point, I recall feeling a kind of peace, of serenity, when I said to myself, ‘I’m the last Jew. I’ll wait for morning and for the Germans.’”

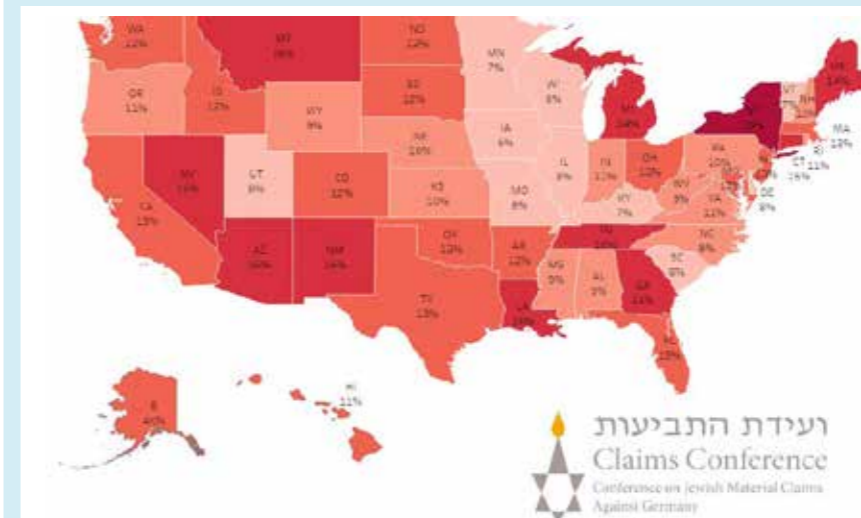
Lanzmann’s film begins with Simon Srebnik, one of the few survivors of Chelmno, and ends with the testimony of two of the survivors from the Warsaw Ghetto. It is about the terrible isolation of the last Jews, the few who survived. It ends, crucially, with Jewish survivors in Israel. It is as carefully structured as Milosz’s poems or Bauman’s memoir. Second, all these acts of testimony remind us of the devastation of these experiences, whether the guilt of the witness or survivor. One of the survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto tells Lanzmann, “If you could lick my heart, it would poison you.” Mira Hamermesh begins her memoir after the war, in London in 1959. She has gone to see Wajda’s film, *Generation*, at the Academy Cinema on Oxford Street. The film, she writes, “had torn open old wounds. My feet carried me through London streets, but my head remained in Poland, unable to part from the characters, and, by association, from my own family. It exploded my defence system, a makeshift survival kit devised to release me from my accountability to the dead.”

Films and writings about the ghettos in Poland seem so clear and straightforward. They are not. Like so much testimony the more closely you read them, the more dark and complicated they become.

### David Herman

David Herman will be in conversation with Bryan Cheyette about his new book, *The Ghetto*, on the AJR Book Club at 4pm on November 16.

## YOUNG AMERICANS UNAWARE



The deeper the red, the higher the percentage of young Americans in that state who, according to the survey, believe that Jews caused the Holocaust

15 percent of American Millennials and Gen Z think it is acceptable to hold neo-Nazi views and almost a quarter of them believe that the number of Jews who died in the Holocaust has been exaggerated.

The results of the first ever 50-State survey on Holocaust knowledge were published by the Claims Conference in September. The state-by-state analysis

revealed that nearly 20 percent of young New Yorkers feel the Jews caused the Holocaust. The state of New York has one of the lowest levels of Holocaust awareness, alongside Alaska, Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

The full report can be seen on [www.claimscon.org/millennial-study/](https://www.claimscon.org/millennial-study/)

## Mazel Tov Mindu

AJR member Mindu Hornick has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pride of Birmingham for her educational work on the Holocaust in the Midlands and beyond.



A special ceremony for the award, which is sponsored by TSB and the *Birmingham Mail*, had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead Mindu’s trophy was presented to her in her own home during a virtual televised ceremony, which included a recorded tribute to her from actress Maureen Lipman (now Dame Maureen).

Having survived Auschwitz, Mindu arrived from Prague in 1948 on a stateless passport, as part of Doctor Schoenfeld’s last transport out of Eastern Europe, to the care of her uncle Zolly and Hetty Szymovics in Birmingham. Seventy-two years later she sees this award as the icing on the cake and proof that she truly now belongs here.



## KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE

MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER, 2PM

Please join us for our Annual Service which will be led by Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg and live streamed from Belsize Square Synagogue.

Our guest speakers will be AJR member Professor Robert Shaw, Austrian Ambassador Michael Zimmerman, and Hannah Lessing, General Secretary of the Austrian National Fund.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ajr-annual-kristallnacht-service-tickets-124989758733>

## GREAT HONOURS

The AJR warmly congratulates all members who were included in HM The Queen’s recent Birthday Honours list for their services to Holocaust Education and Awareness, including:

**Lilian Black - OBE**  
**Ellen Davis - MBE**  
**Eve Glicksman - OBE**  
**Renate Inow - BEM**  
**Hana Kleiner - BEM**  
**Lady Zahava Kohn - MBE**  
**Tomi Komoly - BEM**  
**Marcel Ladenheim - BEM**  
**Elfriede Starer - BEM**  
**Lili Stern-Pohlmann - MBE**

Congratulations also to Jeffrey Pinnick, former Chair of the Yad Vashem Forum UK, Karen Pollock of the Holocaust Educational Trust, and Olivia Marks-Woldman of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, who receive an OBE, CBE and OBE respectively.



# Why is this November different?

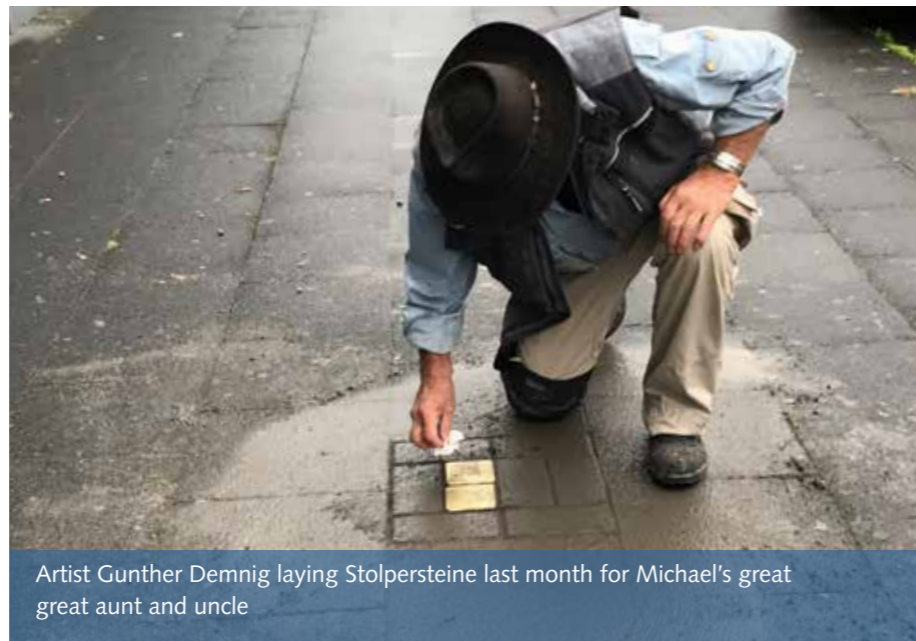
The question, "Why is this night different from all others?" is not usually one I think about during Succot, but with the summer behind us, our thoughts turn to the different ways we will be commemorating the series of events this autumn that intersect our history and activities, writes AJR's Chief Executive Michael Newman.

As you might have seen from this month's Journal, for the first time in living memory there will, sadly, be no physical AJR gathering to mark the anniversary of Kristallnacht, a key date in our annual calendar. While we will miss the opportunity to invite – in person – our candle lighters and speakers on to the bimah at Belsize Square, and to invite the congregation to join us for refreshments, we continue to adapt to the virtual world, a transition proving that even venerable 80-year-old organisations are capable of learning new tricks.

And, while we continue to monitor closely the prevailing guidelines for Covid-19, it is gratifying to know that our efforts to keep in touch continue to be appreciated, as embodied in this heartfelt message from one of our members: "Thank you so much for putting together the seminar this morning, as well as the entire programme of seminars from AJR. AJR is doing so much in these difficult times. The hosts for AJR are always lovely and make everyone feel very welcome and part of the meetings."

So, if you can join us for our online Service of Remembrance for Kristallnacht this year, please do register via the Eventbrite link – see details on page 3.

While Kristallnacht represented the dawning realisation for Jews living under the Reich that they were unwelcome, it was the deportations that began two weeks earlier, on 27 October, that have greater personal poignancy, and which are sometimes overlooked. On this date, Jews of Polish extraction living in Germany were deported to the German-Polish border town of



Artist Gunther Demnig laying Stolpersteine last month for Michael's great great aunt and uncle

Zbaszyn. Among these 17,000 souls were the family of Herschel Grynszpan, but also included my grandmother's brother, Max, after whom I am named but of whom I have never seen even one photograph.

Although *Stolpersteine* were laid last month for a recently discovered great great aunt and uncle – the Gepperts - regrettably, the rescheduled unveiling of a *Stolperstein* for my grandmother in her home town of Cologne was again postponed. Although disappointing on a personal level, that thousands of these memorials now exist across Germany – and beyond – is testament to a culture of remembrance and desire to memorialise, to reflect and to heed the warnings of history.

It was no coincidence that the unleashing of the antisemitic violence occurred on 9 November as it marked the anniversary of the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch. Curiously, this date also marks the anniversary of the proclamation of the German Republic in 1918 and the fall of the Berlin Wall, and demise of the GDR, in 1989 – a date I remember well, excitedly waking up my parents with the news.

And, as we kindled the lights to usher in Succot this year, we also marked the thirtieth anniversary of German Unity Day. Just as we built and sat in our Tabernacles – temporary fragile shelters – we remember the tearing down of a divisive structure of a failed state.

We are all now living in a state of flux, watching the news, eagerly awaiting the numbers to abate and a vaccine to be rolled out. One thing is for sure: that the AJR will continue to deliver our mission to represent and care for you, and to commemorate your experiences. We all miss the *Kaffee und Kuchen*, and schmoozing, and greatly look forward to those face-to-face encounters. In the meantime, please look out for our weekly e-Newsletters featuring daily opportunities to connect and interact.

I can only loudly echo the sentiments expressed in this note sent by another of our members: "I don't know how you all constantly come up with such a wide range of speakers. You and your team are really keeping us so busy we don't have time to feel isolated."



**KEEP A LIGHT ON**

AJR is once again encouraging the illumination of all synagogues and households on the night of 9 November. AJR's *Keep a Light On* campaign will help create awareness within and beyond the Jewish community that Kristallnacht, and all it stands for, will never be forgotten.

## LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



### A NAME TO CONJURE WITH



The name of England's Foreign Secretary in 1917, Arthur Balfour, has been given to one of the more prestigious streets in Jerusalem, as is only fitting. After all, the official statement known as the Balfour Declaration, in which the Zionist leadership, as represented by Lord Walter Rothschild, was informed therein that "his Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..." helped to give a seal of official approval to what had till then been a collection of piece-meal efforts to establish a Jewish presence in the Holy Land.

It did not do the trick, but it helped, and with that encouragement Jewish settlement in the region continued, being bolstered subsequently by the British victory over the Ottoman forces in the region. Despite Arab opposition and many setbacks, the Jewish settlement project persisted, culminating in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

So it seems rather ironic to hear in the press these days that the name

of Balfour is used to represent two contradictory phenomena in the context of modern Israel, depending on one's point of view.

First, the fact that the fine building at the top of Balfour Street now houses the official residence of Israel's prime minister and his family has taken on an additional meaning. The behaviour, some would say shenanigans, of the first lady, Sarah Netanyahu, with regard to the staff of the official residence – even leading to court cases being brought against her by former employees – has led to the term 'Balfour' being used to represent the actions of the first family. Somehow 'Balfour' has become synonymous with 'misbehaviour' of various kinds on the part of the various members of the first family (there is also an adult son, Yair, who lives with his parents, has no known occupation and seems to spend his time attacking the media and defending his parents on social media).

A few months ago a handful of people started demonstrating outside the prime minister's residence on a constant basis. Then it became a regular Saturday night event, eventually snowballing into gatherings of many thousands of dissatisfied citizens. There were calls for Netanyahu to resign in the face of his pending trial on several counts of misuse of his office, demands for compensation from small business-people who had lost their livelihoods, calls from artists, actors and musicians

to reinstate public performances, and other groups with complaints of various kinds. Speeches were made, noisemakers were brought into action, the police tried unsuccessfully to break up the demonstrations – sometimes doing so violently – and an attempt at a counter-demonstration failed miserably. And still they demonstrate each week.

The demonstrators simply won't go away, and since they're located, you guessed it, outside the official residence, they're also known as 'Balfour.' So, depending which side of the political divide you're on and which particular section of the spectrum you're referring to, the epithet 'Balfour' is bandied about to mean pretty much anything and everything.

As is often the case, it is important to pay attention to the context of what is being said, by whom and to whom it is addressed. Sometimes, in the fast-moving world of today's electronic media, it isn't always possible to work out exactly who is the object of opprobrium of any given report, article or interview, but there's nothing wrong with making a little effort to try and understand what it is and why.

What is really saddening is that the name of the illustrious statesman Arthur Balfour is being maligned in this way.

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# Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

## THE LIBRARY OF EXILE

My own "library of exile" (October) is a collection of empty, stamped addressed envelopes, sent from far-flung places. It has taken a long time for some of them to tell their tales.

One of them was sent in 1934 to a man named Hendrik de Waal, at an address in Paris. So I was intrigued, ten years ago, when I read a review of Edmund de Waal's book *The Hare With Amber Eyes*. I bought a copy and sent it to my late mother. My covering letter asked "Is this the same de Waal family that you used to know". And so it was.

Her elder sister had settled in Tunbridge Wells before the war. My aunt had obtained a job as the German-speaking governess of two young English children. She subsequently married their father. They became friendly with a couple named Hendrik and Elisabeth de Waal, whose children were of a similar age. The two families often spent Christmas together and were joined by my mother.

In 2010, my mother was astonished to learn of Elisabeth's family background. Elisabeth had spoken such perfect and unaccented English that neither my mother nor my aunt realised that her first language was German or that she had been born in Vienna (where their family also originated). Elisabeth did not volunteer any biographical detail and they had been too polite to enquire. Likewise, Elisabeth had been too polite to ask why they both spoke English with central European accents.

This mutual reticence was typical of the period and was particularly pronounced in Tunbridge Wells, given attitudes in certain circles. This now seems sad but it also had a comical aspect. When Elisabeth's elder son, Victor, embarked upon his vocation as an Anglican priest, my mother and aunt amused themselves with the observation that it was an ironic choice of career for someone who had grown up to look so peculiarly Jewish.

As to that envelope. It is postmarked

"Hinterbrühl" and signed on the back with the surname "Motesiczky". The signatory was probably Henriette von Motesiczky, the then dowager head of another wealthy and aristocratic Jewish family. It was sent from the Villa Tedesco, the family's country home near Vienna. The de Waal and von Motesiczky families are distantly related. Hendrik had acted as a financial adviser to the von Motesiczky family during the 1930s. The two families maintained a friendship when Henriette and her daughter, the painter Marie-Louise Motesiczky, also settled in England.

Accordingly, following Victor's appointment in 1976 as the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, Marie-Louise Motesiczky was commissioned to paint his portrait. It is evident from the portrait that the artist shared a sense of irony with my mother and aunt, which Victor also understood when it was unveiled. In his words: "The portrait, when it was finished....was very revealing....Though of a Christian clergyman, it showed my Jewish roots, to the extent that in it I appeared positively rabbinic".

Cameron Woodrow, Edgbaston, Birmingham

## PLAUDITS

I have just finished reading your October issue and am overwhelmed at the superbly interesting content! I ALWAYS find it absorbing, but this one is head and shoulders over the usual. My heartfelt compliments to all who contributed the articles.

One Question: - How would you continue the AJR after all in my situation have gone? I know you have a lot of members interested in the 2nd and later generations. Keep it up!  
Werner Conn, Lytham St. Annes

The work that the AJR has been doing these last six months is quite amazing and must be of great help to many members.

I am very fortunate: my daughter and grandchildren all live close by and look after me very well.

When I look back on how the AJR started, in a small office in Swiss Cottage, and the influential international organisation it has become, it is quite amazing.

Victor Garston, London NW11

## THE ORIGINS OF RACISM

Ruth Rothenberg's letter (October) accurately describes the status quo of racism. I prefer to take a different approach to the source of racism.

The human race has made great progress since our ancestors descended from tree-dwelling to standing on two feet and living in caves. However, we have a very long way to go to become fully civilised. While our physical and cognitive development has been exponential, our emotional and spiritual development is increasingly far behind. This has made the human race 'out of sync' with internal development and unstable in its behaviour towards each other and the biological balance of the planet.

Every baby is born with greater potential than is possible to develop in one lifetime! So there is inevitable selection according to circumstances and by choice. In our highly developed physical and cognitive style of living, greed and aggressiveness has become accentuated while we have not developed "the better angels of our human nature", as Steven Pinker calls it.

Rothenberg is correct to highlight the hierarchical nature of human society, but this is not inevitable. Superior and inferior individuals and groups of humans are created by us, not by biology or by God. To reach true civilised status we need to accept that every human life is of equal worth and to be cherished fairly. The obscene gap in status, privileges and life-style between the 10% who own half the world's wealth and power and the half that owns less than 10% and struggle to make ends meet, proves how far we still have to go to become a civilised race.  
Ruth Barnett, London NW6

## ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING

The Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at **3pm on Wednesday 2 December 2020** at AJR, Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF.

Anyone wishing to stand for election must be nominated by at least ten associate members of the AJR together with a notice signed by the nominee indicating their willingness to serve as a trustee should they be elected. This must be duly received in

writing by Monday 23 November 2020 at the AJR offices.

Anthony Spiro and Philippa Strauss have been nominated for re-election as Trustees. Danny Kalman and Miriam Kingsley (appointed during the year as trustees) have been nominated to be elected as trustees.

If you wish to attend please contact **Karin Pereira** on **020 8385 3070** or at **karin@ajr.org.uk**

Joint to go to Europe and persuade four countries to save us. My sister, mother and I were lucky to get to England as the other three countries were soon invaded by Germany. About two years ago my sister and I were invited to Hamburg, where Captain Schroeder had lived, to be part of Germany's recognition of his good deeds. A film was made for German TV about the sad journey of the SS St Louis and his part in saving our lives. A park was also named to honour him.

Gisela Feldman, Manchester

## EU FUTURE

I fully sympathise with David Kernek's reluctance (October) to fall back into the maw of the EU by applying for Austrian citizenship, but may I offer a different perspective?

Around two years ago, I acquired Austrian citizenship (or, more accurately, received confirmation that I have been an Austrian citizen from birth, although neither I nor Austria had been aware of the fact), my father having been born and brought up in Vienna. I look forward to trying to persuade my fellow Austrians to follow the UK's example of reclaiming national independence. It won't be easy, but that makes it all the more fun.

Richard S. Henderson (or, in Austria, Hecht), Isle of Arran

## WHO REMEMBERS THE NEWS CHRONICLE?

I was interested to read that Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, in her Letter from Israel (October), remembered that the newspaper put through her parents' letterbox was the *News Chronicle*. This was also the newspaper put through my

parents' letterbox in the late '40s and '50s. What's more, it was the newspaper that first employed me. I had been Editor of *Cherwell*, the Oxford University undergraduate newspaper. Though I had read Law, I wanted to be a journalist. My father was particularly aghast, but since it was the *News Chronicle* - a newspaper he read - he relented. So in 1956 I joined - as a columnist on the gossip column! The *News Chronicle* had a big circulation - well over a million - what could go wrong? Suez! Our editorial policy disagreed strongly with the government, but our readers didn't. Circulation fell. In 1957 the editor, Michael Curtis, left along with me, and in 1960 the *News Chronicle* was taken over by the *Daily Mail*. Just think. Our biggest circulation newspaper today is *The Sun*. Its circulation is about equal to that of the *News Chronicle* when it folded. Will it be remembered in 60 years' time? After all, who remembers the *News Chronicle* in 2020, other than Dorothea and me?  
Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

## FROM DOOM TO ZOOM

Coronavirus is continuing to cause havoc in the world. For good or bad, we follow the rules, and we view with horror the demise of hundreds of thousands of people.

In the midst of this all-embracing commotion, trying to pursue our lives as best we can, we are not cut off from one another altogether. We are given a means of communicating at the very same time, as if by divine inspiration or interference by an entirely new process - the Zoom. It could not have happened at a more appropriate time. We owe our respects to the inventors, developers and technicians of the system.  
Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx.



# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

She once wrote to a patron: “With me Your Lordship will find the spirit of Caesar in the soul of a woman.” This sums up the extraordinary Italian baroque artist Artemisia Gentileschi, whose long delayed exhibition *Artemisia at the National Gallery* delivers the promise of her unusual strength and feminine power.

When Artemisia painted her first version of the Old Testament story, *Susannah and the Elders* in 1610, she was only 17. A year later she was raped by the artist Agostino Tassi and to prove her innocence she was subjected to judicial torture in the papal court. She won her case and Tassi faced exile – which was never enforced. Her painting was prophetic and she created two more in the course of the next 40 years. It is interesting to see how her treatment of this haunting subject has evolved.

In her first version, Susannah is gripped with palpable terror as two, lecherous men peer at her while she takes a bath. In the 1622 version she is terrified but resigned. But in the third, in 1652, everything has changed. Susannah has the upper hand, gesturing to her assailants as though engaged in some philosophical discourse. (In the Book of Daniel, Susannah, a married woman, rejects the men's advances, who then threaten to accuse her of adultery. She faces the death penalty but is saved by the young Daniel who manages to disprove the men's allegations).

It is easy to read the effect of the rape on Artemisia's art. There is even an original transcript of her 1612 rape trial. The show is loaded with biblical violence, sometimes with Artemisia herself as the model. It is visceral and shocking, and the unusual fact that the artist was a woman attracted patronage. Most graphic of all are the two paintings of Judith beheading the Assyrian general Holofernes, but there is also Jael driving a nail into the skull of Sisera. Female martyrology is rife – as is suicide – but never victimhood. Cleopatra is shown dying, the asp at her breast, and

Artemisia  
Gentileschi,  
*Judith  
beheading  
Holofernes*,  
1612-13,  
National  
Gallery



Lucretia chooses to kill herself after being raped. And then there is St Catherine, a much more subtle selfie of the artist beside the spiked wheel on which the saint was to die had it not been for divine intervention.

Male artists, particularly Caravaggio, who influenced her in terms of light and its effect on detail, have painted similar subjects, but what makes Artemisia's work so intense is the attention to detail, the quality of the painted flesh and the deep expressiveness.

In the Holofernes death scene, we see the determination in Judith's face, the muscular tension of her arms as she drives the sword through the victim's neck. In *Judith and her Maidservant*, showing their escape with the head of their victim in a basket, they could be two women about to hang out the laundry! Despite the horrific nature of these acts, the artist succeeds in demonstrating the everyday womanliness of the protagonists.

Artemisia may well be taking revenge on a male dominated society. Her own courage shines through these works, like some avenging angel. But is there another side to her? The painting I loved

most is a playful and human *Madonna and Child*. Were it not for the subtle halo above the Madonna's head it could be any indulgent mother whose child touches her face with tender curiosity.

The exhibition brings together some 30 of her works from private and public collections in chronological order from the time she studied under her father Orazio Gentileschi in Rome, to Florence where she learned to read and write and sought patronage from the ruling Medici family, to Naples, where she set up studio with her artist daughter Prudenza, and finally to London, where she was reunited with her father, court painter to Charles 1, and painted her masterpiece *Self Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, c 1638. She is clearly the better painter, able to capture an emotion which eludes her father.

Gloria Tessler

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

# LEARNING TO SWIM THE AMERICAN WAY

Billy Wilder in Hollywood, Henry Kissinger in Washington and Hannah Arendt in New York were among the 130,000 German-speaking Jews - *Jeckes* - who found refuge in the United States between 1933 and 1945.

How the publication *Aufbau* helped those émigrés Americanise themselves is the major theme of Peter Schrag's readable chronicle. He quotes Andreas Mink, one of its later editors, who affirmed that it helped shape a common US identity for Jews who had been rooted in various regional cultures.

Founded in 1934, *Aufbau* started as an occasional newsletter - mainly in German - of New York's German-Jewish Club, later renamed the New World Club. As a monthly and then a weekly, *Aufbau* went on to become the most significant publication in the field, with a circulation exceeding 30,000 on its tenth anniversary. That figure peaked around 41,000, just after the war ended, reflecting the new wave of immigrants, about 140,000, who had survived the Holocaust.

*Aufbau's* prestige was such that it could attract features from eminent refugees, including Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann. By the early 1980s, however, the original refugees were passing away, their descendants had joined the mainstream, and there were no longer new arrivals. *Aufbau's* circulation and income were shrinking steadily; it carried less news, and more comment and reviews; it solicited donations; the West German government for a time took out many subscriptions.

*Aufbau* faded away in 2004. None of its last editors had a refugee background; one was not even Jewish. A Jewish media concern in Zurich acquired the title and today *Aufbau* is a glossy monthly, with contributions in both languages. The Leo Baeck Institute has put the original publication online.

*Aufbau's* editor, in the crucial years from 1939 to his death in 1965, was Berlin-born

Manfred George. As Manfred Georg Cohn, he had in the Weimar era worked for both the great Berlin media empires, Ullstein and Mosse. George fled to Prague in 1933, and to the United States in 1938.

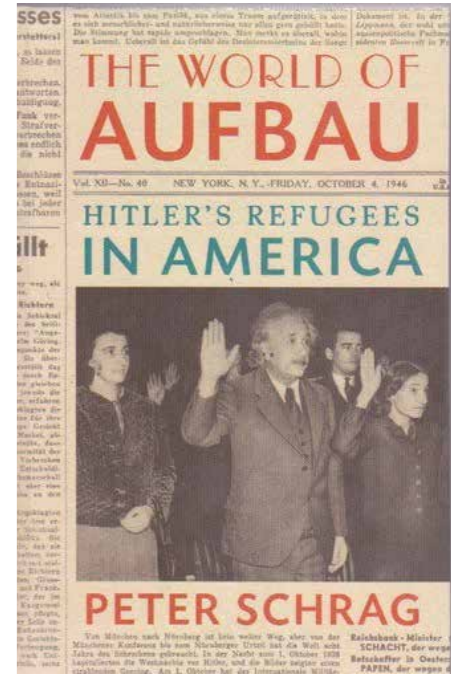
It was George who said the history of *Aufbau* is the history of the German-speaking Jews who found refuge in the US. That is the approach adopted by Schrag, who arrived in the US with his parents in 1941. Reviewing *Aufbau's* coverage of the major political issues, he shows how at first it paid relatively little attention to the impending disaster in Europe. After it received smuggled accounts, *Aufbau* began in the mid-1930s to report in detail on the intensifying persecution in Germany.

The publication generally adopted a cautious editorial line, while criticising antisemitism in the US and attacking Nazi sympathisers such as Charles Lindbergh. It wanted to avoid a backlash from the country's isolationist forces, including gentile German immigrants who espoused the Nazi cause. Until the US entered the war, it was reluctant to protest too loudly on behalf of Europe's desperate Jews, and urge US intervention. As refugees idolised President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor, *Aufbau* pulled its punches over his administration's harsh immigration and 'enemy alien' restrictions.

It was in *Aufbau's* pages that readers could debate momentous issues such as Nazi war crimes and Israel's statehood. *Aufbau* guided readers through complicated topics such as reparations claims. It helped them find their feet: many had arrived penniless, with little English and even less knowledge of the American way of life.

So *Aufbau* detailed synagogue services, and offered recipes - for kosher chow mein, for example. And it provided advice: don't say 'Please borrow me five dollars'; don't speak German loudly on the streets; learn to keep calm, in the Anglo-Saxon way; donate blood, preferably to the League of Alien Blood Donors; and learn to swim the American way - crawl rather than breast-stroke.

Advertisements for Christmas cards and



articles about the Nativity vexed some readers: they complained about assimilation madness. Others inevitably hankered nostalgically after the 'good old days' in Europe. Schrag believes that when it comes to evoking fond memories of Schmalz, Schubert and Schlag, 'the Viennese had long been second to none.'

Peter Schrag, *The World of Aufbau: Hitler's Refugees in America*, University of Wisconsin Press.

Martin Mauthner

## YET AGAIN

Spare a minute or two to look up  
YetAgainUK.com on the internet.

Modern atrocities that are totally unacceptable are happening because good people are doing nothing to stop them. A group of activists invite you to contribute to raising awareness of what should not be allowed to happen and to move from passive bystander to active upstander by doing just a little something. Joe Collins, the founder of YetAgainUK, is determined to make 'Never Again' a reality by challenging the international criminal laws that have so far failed to protect us from further genocides since the Holocaust.

Ruth Barnett



# GIVING SOMETHING BACK

## A LIBRARY FOR SHANGHAI



Kurt by the wall of names at the Shanghai Jewish Museum, during his 2019 return visit



Staff at the Shanghai Jewish Museum starting to fill up their new library with Kurt Wick's donated books

**The Shanghai Jewish Museum now has its own Jewish History Library thanks to a donation of 8,000 books by AJR London member Kurt Wick, whose family spent 10 years in Shanghai as refugees from Nazi-annexed Austria.**

In September 1939 my family, desperate to get out of Vienna, was fortunate to secure passage on the *Giulio Cesare*. We knew nothing about Shanghai except that Jews were being offered a refuge and we didn't need a passport. We had no money and were allowed just a small crate for our possessions, although we still managed to bring a sewing machine and a tin bath.

Shanghai was one of very few places in the world that would accept Jewish refugees from Nazi occupied countries, and some 20,000 Jewish people arrived in the city between 1938 and 1941, including nearly 5,000 of us from Austria. We lived in the Hongkou district and it became a ghetto where both Jews and Chinese shared years of hardship.

The Japanese were in charge of half of Shanghai, and the other half was a French, American and British concession. The concession didn't recognise the Japanese and vice versa. So arriving off the boat we somehow slipped down the middle – nobody asked us for a visa, we just got on the lorries and were taken to the Jewish

refugee camp.

Our living conditions were very primitive. We stayed first in a warehouse, with curtains dividing us from other families. But the local Jewish aid agency was very good and helped everyone. My father was able to set up a workshop making fine handbags.

I was just 18 months old when we left Vienna so most of my childhood was spent in Shanghai. There were special Jewish schools and synagogues and we were able to play volleyball or other games every afternoon. At home we spoke only German, but in the school we had to speak English. I learned a few Chinese words as well, but my Chinese was never very good.

We were very poor but I never knew any different. Nobody had anything, so we were the same as everyone else. But we never went hungry and there was always help when we needed it. Considering that almost everyone we left behind in Austria ended up being killed in Auschwitz, we were very well off.

Like many of the 'Shanghai Jews', we left China in 1948, immigrating here to London. But that place of refuge and our life in the Shanghai lanes forged deep impressions that have stayed with me throughout my life.

Last February I returned to Shanghai for the first time in 71 years. I was amazed by how the city had changed and yet there were still so many places that held fond and vivid memories for me and which matched the photographs that we took with us when we eventually moved to London.

We spent a wonderful day at the Shanghai Jewish Museum, which is located in the former Moishe synagogue where we used to regularly pray and study. I particularly remember sitting at long tables in the courtyard for our seder nights.

At the museum we found lots of fascinating memorabilia and a wall on which the names of all the Jewish refugees have been inscribed. It was incredibly moving to see my own name inscribed there, along with those of my parents and my older brother.

When I went round the museum I noticed that they didn't have a library, although they told me that they always have lots of scholars visiting. I have always been mad on books and I must have about 40,000 of them stored around my house, much to my wife's chagrin. Lots of them are devoted to Jewish history, including the Holocaust, and for a while I have been looking for a permanent home for them. I mentioned this to the museum management during my visit and in August the first consignment of my books arrived in Shanghai.

The new Jewish History Library is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Moritz & Josefina Wickelholz, which is very fitting. My family, along with 20,000 other European Jews, will always be eternally grateful to the people of Shanghai for offering us sanctuary. It's wonderful to be able to give something back to this very special city that literally saved our lives.

**AJR will shortly publish a *My Story* book on Kurt Wick.**

## A DISPLAY FOR BERLIN

**Memorabilia brought to Scotland by the late Martin Ansbacher now has pride of place in the newly remodelled Core Exhibition of Berlin's Jewish Museum, as his son Steven Anson explains.**

After my father passed away my sister and I began clearing out my parents' house and were unsure what to do with his large collection of German books. We were sure they had no monetary value but we didn't know if they had any historic value.

So we typed up a list and circulated it to various Jewish-interest organisations and people.

Our friend Dolf, who is based in Leeds, forwarded it to his good friend Aubrey Pomerance in Berlin, who called us up, amazed that there were Jews in Scotland!

We soon put him wise, and explained about the Scottish Jewish community and, most importantly and relevantly, the numerous refugees from Nazi persecution who were fortunate enough to find sanctuary in Scotland and settled here.

I remarked on Aubrey's excellent English, which he attributed to growing up in Calgary, Canada. But of course he also speaks perfect German.

A trip to Glasgow was soon organised and we hosted Aubrey at our home and introduced him to fellow members of the AJR's Glasgow group. Aubrey reviewed my parents' boxes of memorabilia and translated the difficult to read 1930's German gothic text. We were fascinated with the information he revealed.

Aubrey also explained the historical importance of several of the items we held and asked us if we would be willing to donate any items to the Jewish



In this cabinet Martin Ansbacher's photo is on the left

Museum, Berlin.

I am delighted that a small selection of these items are now on display in Berlin, along with some items collected from other families in the UK during his visit. We have been great friends with Aubrey ever since, and are indebted to him and the Berlin museum for helping us to honour and memorialise Martin's remarkable life.

In the above picture, Martin's photo taken on his release from Dachau is shown on the far left, alongside those of Siegfried Kirschner and Josef Hochfeld, who were interned at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen respectively. Also in this cabinet is a card game that was made and played by Siegfried Kirschner while he was at Buchenwald.

The cabinet shown bottom right features four objects from Martin's memorabilia. The top photo shows antisemitic graffiti daubed on the front of the Ansbacher family's business in Leutershausen in 1932. Shortly after this the family moved to the Lower Bavarian city of Landshut, believing they would be safer, where Martin and his cousin opened up their own textile business – the bottom left object is from an advent calendar advertising their store. After Kristallnacht the store was taken away from them and Martin was interned at Dachau. When he was released the family fled to Scotland.

Another photo shows Martin and his then future wife Beate (which was later

anglicised to Pat) near the Jewish Sports Club in Augsburg about 1938. At the time they were just good friends, and both engaged to other people. The war and emigration ended those relationships and the couple married in Glasgow in 1946. The final photo shows Martin wearing the traditional German Lederhosen and Tracht Jacket. He brought this with him to Scotland, even wearing it at shul for fancy dress at Purim.

An interview with Martin, featuring his life story, can be both listened to and read on

[www.gatheringthevoices.com/martin-anson-childhood-and-school-days/](http://www.gatheringthevoices.com/martin-anson-childhood-and-school-days/)



Four items from Martin's memorabilia



# It's the way we tell 'em

*Two Jews go to the cemetery. They come across the grave of an old friend and read the inscription: 'Here lies Samuel Schwartz / A Faithful Husband / An Upright Citizen.' One Jew turns to the other and says, "Poor Sammy, they've buried him with two complete strangers."*



*A guest in Bloom's kosher restaurant compliments the Chinese waiter on his fluent Yiddish. "Hush," hisses the manager, "He thinks he is learning English."*

The best jokes have something in common: reasonable propositions set up and then upset by confrontation. Sammy is one of the lads and faithful husbands abound but putting them together in the same grave pulls the trigger. Likewise, Jewish pragmatism and Chinese ambition are made to clash in the person of a Yiddish speaking waiter in a kosher restaurant. Bang! (The explosion is laughter.)

Many Jewish jokes play against a dark background as metaphors or parables. A joke can shrug off homelessness, humiliation, ill health:

*A Jew falls ill, is taken to hospital. The nurse helps him into bed, tucks him in and asks, "Are you comfortable?" The patient says, "I make a living."*

But this joke exposes a problem. A lot of Jewish jokes lose out on paper. 'I make a living,' has to be spoken with a shrug of resignation. The right gestures, intonation, even facial expression are critical. Take this statement: 'He is a good friend' and raise your voice at the end of the sentence as you say it. Tribute has turned into question, positive into negative. Jewish comedians are good at getting the tone

right. It's the way they tell 'em.

Great minds have tried to analyse what makes a joke funny. Sigmund Freud devoted a book to *The Joke and its Relation to the Unconscious*. He thought that jokes gave access to forbidden territory and that laughter signalled the release from repression.

If jokes provide an outlet for repressed feelings, we know what feeds the marvellous, uniquely English sense of humour. There is no end of material in sex, class, race. What keeps the kettle from boiling over are rules about words that must not be used, questions about money and religion that must not be asked. And the best comedians, Peter Cook, John Cleese, Rowan Atkinson, Sacha Baron Cohen et al, tear up the rule book. *The Pythons, The Office, Spitting Image* stopped at nothing in their mockery of religion, class, even of those lacking a limb.

Jewish wit pervades American culture. Joseph Heller and Philip Roth are part of the mainstream. Hollywood has seen to it that American comedy is Jewish comedy. When you hear laughter at the cinema, the chances are that a refugee from the Continent has had a hand in writing, producing, directing or distributing the film. If you are lucky, you will have shared the golden years of Woody Allen, Barbra Streisand, Michael Douglas, Lauren Bacall and Gwyneth Paltrow (the versatile Gwyneth, an Oscar winner, is included here not just because she is talented - Charlie Chaplin's fate - her father is a Jew).

Have I got a favourite joke? What I have is a perfect illustration of incongruity: a request and a response, both reasonable in themselves, yet ridiculous in conjunction, what Sholem Aleichem called 'reason made mischievous'.

Back to Bloom's for the last laugh:

*Two customers sit down at a table and order lemon teas. "And in a clean glass," says one. The waiter goes to the kitchen and comes back with two teas. He asks, "Who's with the clean glass?"*

Victor Ross

There are many kinds of joke, from one-liners to funny stories. The Jewish joke occupies a special place in the repertoire. It goes back as far as the first antisemite and is as up to date as this morning's headlines. It is global, having spread as Jews have spread in their Diaspora. It gets told in a hundred countries and languages, from Chile to China.

A distinct genre deals with the immigrant, the refugee's struggle to be accepted, the desire to be 'nationalised', passport in hand, ready to take the ultimate step: tackling the idiom.

Listen to the husband whose wife is trying for a baby:

*"She's inconceivable, quite impregnable. No? I mean she is unbearable!"*

Then there is the generation-gap:

*The aspirational refugee mother leans out of the window to shout to her son in the street, "Plantagenet, shtop playing mit dirt!"*

And there is always the struggle for existence:

*Two refugees, Cohen and Levy, open a shop in a posh district and decide they had better trade as O'Neil and O'Neil. A customer enters the shop and asks to speak to Mr. O'Neil. "Which Mr. O'Neil do you want? Cohen or Levy?"*

The hapless foreigner is meat and drink to the joker:

# A Kristallnacht Tale

**We are grateful to Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Director of the AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive, for sharing this personal reflection of an interview she conducted with German refugee Kurt Marx about his memories of Kristallnacht, among other things.**



Kurt Marx and classmates at the Jawne School in Cologne

In March 2019 I was fortunate to be able to interview Kurt Marx for the Archive. I vividly remember his description of his experiences of Kristallnacht. When he described how he cycled from his home to the Jawne school and then to his uncle's shop near the Neumarkt, I could perfectly visualise the route, as this is also where I spent my childhood and where I myself cycled, in the late seventies and early eighties. Growing up in Cologne, of course we learnt about Kristallnacht. But the abstract knowledge is very different from listening to Kurt's personal testimony, in which he retraces his movements on the 10 November 1938. His story is a chilling reminder that Kristallnacht affected ordinary citizens, owning ordinary shops, going to ordinary schools, and living in ordinary streets. This is what he recalls:

*I went to school as normal on my bike. On the corner of our street was a toy shop, which was there until fairly recently.*

*On my way to school I noticed that one of the glass windows of the toy shop had been smashed. I thought it was an accident. I could just see the game Mensch Ärgere Dich Nicht - in English it's called Ludo - flapping in the wind through the broken window. Anyway, I carried on to school and when I got there I found a commotion and smoke was coming out of the building. A teacher standing outside simply said, "No school today, go home" without giving any other explanation.*

*Well, you didn't have to tell a boy twice, "Go home. No school." It was a pleasure, as a day off school was always very good.*

*So I thought, before I go home I'll visit my uncle, the butcher, which was quite near. But when I got there I found the large shop completely destroyed. All the windows had been smashed, while inside the marble had been smashed into small pieces.*

*First the toy shop on the corner where we lived, then the school, now this. Suddenly it dawned on me that something was obviously wrong. We didn't have mobile phones in those days so it took me a half an hour to get home on my bike.*

*When I arrived my mother told me "Your father isn't at home." He had been warned the night before by friends: "Don't stay at home tonight. Something is going to happen." They couldn't tell him what exactly, but he had taken their word and stayed away. I hadn't been aware of that. Then we found out that my other uncle, a dentist, his place had also been smashed up.*

*We were ordinary people, you know. We weren't prominent in any particular way. We didn't have a shop ourselves. But I remember on the corner of our street was one of the SS offices, which in all probability stopped them from doing anything to the houses nearby. Although it seemed all very spontaneous, it didn't appear to be officially planned in any way.*

*My mother phoned around everyone we knew to check whether they were alright. Nobody was hurt or anything, although I think one of my uncles was arrested for a couple of days. But he wasn't sent away. He was well connected. He was the butcher, and*

*he knew somebody who knew somebody, so he came home again. Nothing happened to him. So in our immediate family nobody got hurt in that sense. And eventually - I don't know how much time later - we went back to school.*

*At the school we had a little synagogue and it turned out that that it was that which had been burning. And although they'd thrown out all the desks and a lot of other stuff the building felt very damp.*

*Straight after the pogrom our head teacher, Dr Erich Klibansky, started organising to get Jawne students on the Kindertransport to England. It was amazing that in a matter of weeks he managed to organise us all to leave, and to get our parents to do whatever they needed to prepare, to decide what to take and what not to take. By January we were gone. I remember my family saying our good-byes in the belief that soon we would meet in England when my parents got the necessary documentation.*

*Kurt arrived in England by Kindertransport on 18 January 1939, one of 130 Jawne pupils whose lives were saved that way. Kurt stayed with some of his fellow pupils at a hostel in London, sponsored by the Walm Lane Synagogue. Many years later he found out that his parents were deported to Minsk and shortly after murdered in the forests of Maly Trostenec (now Belarus).*

**See Kurt's full testimony on <https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/RefugeeVoices/Kurt-Marx>**



# Kitchener through the eyes of a stranger

**Hyunjae Kim has recently graduated from Cambridge and is also a third generation Korean War refugee. Having completed his postgraduate thesis on the Kitchener Camp in Kent, which played home to many Jewish refugees during WW2, he shares his research journey with us here.**

My goal was to study a significant historical event of Jewish rescue history. My research took place from March to August 2020 and it is my hope that the history and heritage of the Kitchener Camp will be recognised as an important historical event in human history. I would like to express my gratitude to the descendants of the Kitchener refugees and to the AJR for helping me with this study.

I am of the third generation of Korean War refugees. The story of refugees continues to this day; it is a history triggered not only from the Korean War, but also from different forms of violence. These painful histories allow many people to look, with a cosmopolitan perspective, at the history of suffering that Jews experienced during WW2. In other words, the history of Jewish refugees created humanitarian empathy for other communities.

My research journey about the Kitchener Camp began with a visit to the town of Sandwich in Kent in early March of this year. Between 1939 and 1940, approximately 4,000 rescued Jewish men were accommodated there. The Central British Fund (CBF) for German Jewry arranged this rescue by persuading the British government to accept some German Jews.

My research consists of two motivations. Firstly, during my search for details about the Kitchener refugees, their stories evoked various emotions in me. These stories were unknown to the public. One story reminded me of my grandfather, who had escaped from North Korea during the Korean War in a time when a man had to break from his family, overcome trauma, and then struggle

to meet his family again. As people may know, many descendants of the Korean War refugees still do not know if their ancestors or family members in North Korea are still alive. For this reason, the Kitchener Camp seemed a historically significant place to me, and it raised a profound curiosity about how the descendants of the Kitchener men think about the Kitchener Camp site. This was my personal motivation to begin research.

Secondly, my academic motivation is to connect the memories of the Kitchener Camp to a large trend of heritage studies in which memory began to be read as significant in terms of discussing places of memory instead of history. The place of memory is often dealt with in heritage discussions by looking at the place where the memory of pain and suffering is implied. While traumatic events occurred, such as WW2, this study anticipated finding a meaningful discussion about historical places with memories, also to overcome victims' trauma. My main research question is how descendants transform a place that was traumatic for their ancestors into heritage.

For Jewish refugees or readers of this Journal, the history of the Kitchener Camp may be recognised as an important event in the history of Jewish rescue. The online archives of the Kitchener Camp Project, led by Dr Clare Weissenberg, is a valuable memory archive where people can learn about the memories and history of the Kitchener Camp. However, it is difficult to find physical traces of memories within the Kitchener Camp site. Nevertheless, the descendants of the Kitchener Camp have attempted to transmit their fathers' and grandfathers' memories over subsequent generations, and a blue plaque was unveiled with the support of the AJR at the Bell Hotel in Sandwich in September 2019.

Sandwich is a lovely, classic, historic town. On my way there from London, I wondered if the remains of the Kitchener Camp would be well preserved. Upon my arrival, I first visited the Sandwich Guildhall Museum to see the exhibition of the Kitchener Camp history. Based on the data that I had gathered through asking museum staff and local townspeople, I searched



Hyunjae Kim

for the original location of the Kitchener Camp. Amid concerns and anticipation that even a single building would remain, the moment that I found the location is still vivid in my memory. Unfortunately, no buildings remained, and only some of the buildings that belonged to the Haig Camp, which is next to the Kitchener Camp of the period, were used for other purposes. It led me to question if the Kitchener men who were able to stay here were subsequently forgotten by the British or by the public. With regret and in the hopes of learning more about the Kitchener Camp, I spent the night investigating the data during my stay at the Bell Hotel. As the blue plaque is installed there, it brought me a curious joy to think that some people engaged in the Kitchener Camp must be somewhere in my hotel.

After a short fieldtrip, my immediate plan was to interview the descendants of the Kitchener refugees. Although the COVID-19 pandemic created obstacles to my physically meeting my interviewees, I was fortunate enough to meet the descendants online through contact with members of the Kitchener descendant group. I would like to express my great appreciation to Ms Judith Elam and Ms Monica Lowenberg for their special assistance in this process. I would also extend my gratitude to Professor Clare Ungerson, who contributed to the research into the history of the Kitchener Camp, for her endless wisdom.

It surprised me that the second generation of the Kitchener refugees were actively conducting their own genealogical research and sharing their records. This was an opportunity for me, a stranger, to learn about the experiences and memories of



The site of the Kitchener Camp, photographed by the author in March 2020

the Kitchener men. From June to July in 2020, I conducted interviews with a total of 12 people, using an open-ended, qualitative interview approach, which is an interviewee-oriented type of interview. During the interviews, I obtained historical data about the Kitchener Camp, information about the genealogical research methods by the Kitchener descendants, and their commemoration activities. Furthermore, my informants shared valuable opinions on what they would like to convey as a historical asset for the Kitchener Camp. Based on the data, the research findings could be organised into three chapters in my thesis: the site biography of the Kitchener Camp, the heritage activism, and the second generation's desire for heritage presentation.

As a result of this study, I found that the descendants of the Kitchener refugees viewed the Kitchener Camp as a place of ambivalence both in terms of the refugees' trauma resulting from the abrupt separation from their families and of the hope for a better future after rescue. Furthermore, it could be concluded that the descendants have a willingness to show their gratitude for a friendly relationship with the locals at that time who provided the refugees with opportunities for survival and cultural exchanges. However, it cannot be assumed that all descendants share the same opinion. Nevertheless, their commonly shared memories were that their fathers experienced several cultural exchanges and amicable relationships with the local people of Sandwich.

By analysing the narratives of the descendants of the Kitchener refugees, I examined various places with memorability

of the Kitchener men's experiences as 'a place of grateful memory' for the refugees. These places include the Manwood Sports Ground, where they could play football and where the Kitchener Orchestra offered performances for local residents, the Golden Crust Bakery, which was the first to sell real coffee (as the Kitchener men had enjoyed in their hometowns) to the Kitchener men, and the Empire Cinema, which provided them with complimentary tickets. I believe that such places are considered historically valuable properties in relation to the concept of a place of memory. Places of grateful memory can become evidence to commemorate the historical significance of benevolent acts, which take place amid violent history such as war, as one of the people that I interviewed so eloquently put it:

*It is a history of kindness more than . . . of violence. It is a history of people who helped other people, the fact of what the Kitchener Camp was . . . It was the help of one country [Britain] for a group of other people [Jewish refugees]. It is worthwhile as a contemporary resonance of history.*

I explored how the second generation descendants interpret their parental past by examining the heritage presentation by the Kitchener descendants of the Kitchener Camp. For the Kitchener descendants, their fathers' experiences were moments of survival and a time culturally shared with a cooperative local community, and a history of proudly enlisting in and dedicating themselves to the army of those who supported them. This humanitarian approach throughout the history of the Holocaust is evaluated as the memorability



A group of Kitchener Camp inmates in 1939

of the Kitchener Camp. By examining the histories and the narratives of the descendants, I proposed the concept of the *heritage of gratitude* to imply humanitarian and cosmopolitan work for survivors even during the traumatic history of war.

As an extension, the concept of 'heritage of gratitude' can be used to evaluate the discourse whereby Britain has created Holocaust heritage. This can be done by remembering the Jewish rescue from the perspective of transnational consciousness of humanitarian steps. For example, the plaque scheme promoted by the AJR, such as the blue plaque of the Kitchener Camp, represents the installation of memorials in honour of people or places with a deep connection to Jewish refugees in the UK. The narratives that the blue plaques create connect to the concept of a 'heritage of gratitude' by representing positive aspects within the history of Jewish refugees. By creating an opportunity to discuss the legacy of Jewish refugees, places that incorporate grateful memories may become archaeological metaphors for connecting cosmopolitan narratives of the past with contemporary needs of historical resonance. I hope that places of Jewish rescue will become significant mediums for people like me, who have familial backgrounds of refugeehood from other continents, to discuss the cosmopolitan significance of refugee rescues that occurred even during the painful past.

**The Kitchener Camp Project is led by Dr Clare Weissenberg, a Kitchener descendant, to share the history of the Kitchener Camp and to make a memorial archive of Kitchener refugees. The website is available at [www.kitchenercamp.co.uk](http://www.kitchenercamp.co.uk)**



# THE NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

The Public Enquiry into the National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, which is proposed for Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster, opened on 6 October. Here we summarise two presentations that have been made to the Planning Inspector. An artist's impression is shown right, and you can see more details and submissions at [www.westminster.gov.uk/holocaust-memorial-inquiry-documents](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/holocaust-memorial-inquiry-documents)



## A MATTER OF UK HONOUR

By AJR Bradford member **Rudi Leavor BEM**

I was born in Berlin in May 1926, and I am one of the lucky ones. My immediate family and I fled from Berlin and came to England, arriving in Bradford in November 1937 – exactly one year before the infamous Kristallnacht.



stand alongside the growing number of monuments and museums in so many other countries around the world.

Not only that, it must stand out and make its mark loud and clear. The siting of the proposed memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens makes a bold statement, which cannot be missed and would proudly stand to expose the shame, depravity and darkness of the Holocaust for as long as the Houses of Parliament will stand.

The question of security is rightly debated. Though a terrorist threat cannot be denied, a decision not to build this memorial would present potential terrorists with a free gift - they would have won without lifting a finger. Sadly, we are used to facing this problem every time a synagogue or Jewish school is built.

I firmly, passionately believe that this proposed Memorial and Learning Centre will frame the story of the Holocaust in public consciousness. It will bring awareness of the greatest tragedy in the history of mankind and act as a warning as to the evil that mankind can do. But, above all, it will stand to the permanent honour of the United Kingdom and as an eternal memorial for those who perished so needlessly.

That I could come to England was fortunate, my parents being able to secure visas. Subsequently, my father got permission to work as a dentist, having qualified in Germany.

But, although we were fortunate, my family lost 13 of our closest relatives in the Holocaust. Persecuted by a regime and a twisted ideology, but murdered by conscious and willing human beings.

It is both for the memory of those who perished and the opportunity to learn about their experiences that I feel it is imperative that there is a Memorial and a Learning Centre.

The Holocaust was a once-in-a-world life-time event, surpassing even the Crusades in its cruelty, being not only cruel but with unnecessarily obscene meanness, making death even more horrible than it needed to be.

It is essential to commemorate these heinous crimes and to reflect and recognise the growing number of memorial events that are held across our country and worldwide annually.

This is a matter of honour for our country. We must have our own statement to

## FIND A BETTER LOCATION

By **The Baroness Deech DBE QC**

There may well be a place for a sixth Holocaust memorial in the UK but this is the wrong site.

The claim that it must be sited next to Parliament to make the point that democracy protects against genocide is not evidenced by history. The Holocaust did not take place because Germany was undemocratic but because of many centuries of racial and religious hatred across Europe. Governance was less to blame than religious teaching and ethnic or nationalist claims of superiority. Democracies across Europe have been powerless to stop the rise of antisemitism and extremism in recent years – on the contrary.

If it were a simple tourist attraction there might be a case for siting it in central London, but it is designed to be much more than that. As a quiet place for reverence and a learning centre there is no need for it to be in Westminster.

The Board of Deputies' original 2014 submission to the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission noted the inadequacy of Holocaust education (a problem not yet resolved); the urgency for restitution for victims of the Holocaust, primarily from Poland (also not yet resolved); and that modern antisemitism often takes the form of excessive attacks on the state of Israel. It concluded that the Imperial War Museum exhibition on the Holocaust should be expanded with a "Central London" memorial.

Another report, by the University College London Centre for Holocaust Education



in 2016, manifested the need for accessibility by schools throughout the country. The National Holocaust Centre in Newark and others in the North could, if better resourced, extend information to a broader section of the population.

One of the stated objectives for the Memorial is to counter Holocaust denial. Yet the rate of Holocaust denial in the UK is low (6% according to the David Baddiel programme on BBC in February 2020). If there are particular difficulties in teaching children in remote parts of the UK about the Holocaust, or sensitivities surrounding teaching Muslim children, then centralisation in London will not assist.

Note also that increase in memorials around the world has not served to put an end to Holocaust denial; hate speech laws and regulation of social media may be more useful in this regard.

Victoria Tower Gardens is a popular yet peaceful breathing space for local residents as well as for workers in the parliamentary estate; it will be unusable for such purposes if the memorial is built.

Another issue is security. The current design for the memorial stands in isolation. Unless it is protected with a fence (which would reduce its impact) its proximity to Westminster will likely make it a focus for possible terrorist attacks and protests, especially related to Middle East issues.

Despite all of this, evidence of any consideration of alternative sites is sparse. Rather than allowing this to become political, the Public Enquiry should consider the genuinely practical merits of other locations.

## OBITUARY



### KITTY SCHAFER (née Kaufmann)

Born: 10 April 1921, Vienna

Died: 20 January 2020, Toronto

**Kitty was born in Vienna and had an idyllic, protected childhood. Her father and brother left before the Anschluss but it took until April 1939 for Kitty to obtain a visa for England.**

In London her only option was to become a trainee nurse. Despite being terrified by the strict discipline of British nursing she passed her first year exams, but with the enforcement of the 'Enemy Aliens Act' she had to leave.

Suddenly her German was an asset! Finding a job with the BBC Monitoring Service she spent the rest of the war at Cavesham Park, translating messages from the Front. She loved the work and being surrounded by brilliant Austrian and German professionals.

In 1946 she met my father in London. He was living in Aden, then a British protectorate, and stars in her eyes they married. What a shock the life there was! She hated the heat and only learning bridge saved her.

In 1947 they had to flee with just a few possessions, escaping the Arab riots (after the partition vote on Israel), and returned to London where I was born.

They started a business importing children's wear, working long hours, but life was also *gemütlich* with

friends, laughter, and the weekly trip to John Barnes and Dorice on Finchley Strasse (so well described in the AJR Journal). She loved the Journal, reading each copy diligently, often writing letters to the editor.

In spite of her interrupted education, my mother frequently recited entire poems by heart that she had learned in school. Operatic arias and songs from musicals accompanied conversations; jokes and stories were as important as tea and "something sweet" after dinner!

Her other passion was soccer. She was a lifelong Arsenal supporter and she and my father were founding members of the Supporters' Club.

In 1987 they joined my family and me in Toronto. They joined Habonim synagogue, volunteered, took courses and entertained. Her baking skills were amazing, although she only liked food that she thought Kaiser Franz Joseph enjoyed.

In her eighties she became a computer wiz and loved emailing. She maintained that friendships were like flowers and needed to be nurtured. She was an excellent listener, with ready advice on any topic. She had a love of life, enthusiasm, wit, and a hugely engaging demeanour. Her grandchildren adored her and she and my father had 68 wonderful years together.  
*Susan Walsh*



# REVIEWS

## THE LIVES OF LUCIAN FREUD: FAME 1968-2011

By William Feaver  
Bloomsbury Publishing

Exploring somebody else's mind is an impossible feat but art expert and close confidant William Feaver does an amazing job in this second volume of his biography on Lucian Freud. The first volume – *Youth* – was reviewed in this Journal in February.

Freud was born in Berlin in 1922. His family fled to London in 1933 where he became one of the most colourful characters in town during his long painting career of 70 years. More stylised early paintings evolved to great sprawling nudes, perhaps most famously *Benefits Supervisor* series and the performance artist Lee Bowery. These unforgettable works fetched millions of pounds and brought him world fame.

Freud was a complex personality by any standards with a plethora of women friends – whom he pursued to the end of his life – and numerous children, by various mothers. The book starts with his relationship with Jacquetta Eliot; he shinned up a wonky drainpipe to woo her and she was mother of his son Freddy.

Feaver curated several of Freud's world-renowned art exhibitions after meeting him in 1973. There followed near daily phone calls which he painstakingly recorded. They show incredibly perceptive, erudite but curiously formal and concise opinions. This is utterly fascinating and indeed what 'makes' the book. The subject speaks for himself.

Fond of good living, driving dangerously, dodging bailiffs and bankruptcy, bohemian and yet prodigiously hard working, Freud painted the famous – Kate Moss, Jerry Hall plus uniformed Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles. He portrayed other painters including Francis Bacon, David Hockney and his great friend and fellow-Jewish refugee and Berliner, Frank Auerbach.

Well connected, his friends included the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and the Duke of Somerset, with whom he stayed at Badminton. As well as self-portraits he also painted his children, often naked, including several of his daughters. After his architect father Ernst died in 1970 his mother Lucie – after whom he was named – attended over a thousand sittings before her death in 1989. Most famously he portrayed the Queen but he fended off overtures to paint Tony Blair, the Pope, Madonna and Princess Diana.

Punctuality was paramount for sitters – who needed the patience for many hours over prolonged periods. Perhaps his most well-known feud was with his brother, Clement but he also fell out with sitters, art dealers and bookies although he could show great kindness, consideration and generosity. An inveterate gambler, he made and lost fortunes. Grandson of the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud, he was highly intelligent, articulate, well versed in literature and poetry and phenomenally well informed about other artists.

He worked to the last, with some of his most famous work produced between 1996 – 2005. In later years he was helped and looked after by his assistant David Dawson. Even when Freud's powers were fading, he still made astute comments about art until he died in 2011, aged 88. Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams conducted his funeral service, followed fittingly by a memorial gathering at the opening of the National Portrait Gallery's *Lucian Freud Portraits*.

Nobody was ever his own man more than Lucian Freud and nobody could have portrayed him better than his close confidant William Feaver has done in assembling so much diverse material.  
*Janet Weston*

## GEORG HERMANN: A WRITER'S LIFE By John Craig-Sharples Legenda

Even before 1933, success could prove a mixed blessing for German-Jewish writers. All too easily, authors like Lion Feuchtwanger (see the review of his novel *The Oppermanns* in our September 2020 issue) or Jakob Wassermann,

hugely popular in his day for *Das Gänsemännchen* (The Goose Man), *Christian Wahnschaffe* (The World's Illusion) and *Der Fall Maurizius* (The Maurizius Case), could be dismissed as mere 'Erfolgsautoren' whose success could be explained by a superficial facility lacking in 'true German' depth and seriousness. This had been the charge first levelled by Richard Wagner in the nineteenth century against the allegedly frivolous 'Jewish' music of composers like Giacomo Meyerbeer. Conversely, the more difficult, experimental prose works by modernist writers of Jewish origin, like Franz Kafka, Alfred Döblin or Hermann Broch, could be dismissed as the 'bloodlessly intellectual' creations of authors not racially rooted in the 'blood and soil' (*Blut und Boden*) of German national culture. Either way, Jewish authors could not win.

Among the successful Jewish authors of the early twentieth century whose works have fallen into oblivion is Georg Hermann, born Georg Borchardt in 1871 and murdered in Auschwitz in November 1943. Hermann is best known for his novel *Jettchen Gebert*, which tells the story of a beautiful young Jewish woman who falls in love with a writer, unfortunately both Christian and impecunious, but is forced into an unsuitable arranged marriage. The novel's main claim to fame is its vivid depiction of Berlin in the 1840s, the quiet years before the city's transformation into the capital of a united Germany and a great industrial metropolis.

Hermann was a prolific writer; many of his other prose works enjoyed considerable success, but his flight from Germany to Holland in 1933 and his death in the Holocaust largely removed him from public view. It is an unexpected pleasure to learn that his oldest daughter Eva was able to reach Britain with her husband and children before war broke out, and an even greater pleasure to discover that John Craig-Sharples, the author of this study, is the writer's great-grandson. The book is a thoroughly researched account of Hermann's life and works. It examines Hermann's changing attitudes to such themes as life in the modern city, the relationship of assimilated German Jews to the fatherland that was to betray them, and the ties that continued to

bind secularised Jews to Judaism in face of rising antisemitism. The handling of German quotations is occasionally faulty: *ermordert* for *ermordet* (p. 118), and 'ein schnappender Fisch', 'a fish gasping for breath', translated as 'a snapping fish' (p. 66). A more serious slip is the statement that Eva and her family were released from internment on the Isle of Wight, not the Isle of Man (p. 272). But overall this is a most enjoyable and informative introduction to a neglected figure.

*Anthony Grenville*

## THE PEOPLE ON THE BEACH: JOURNEYS TO FREEDOM AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

Rosie Whitehouse  
Hurst, 2020

Between 1945 and 1948 over 70,000 Holocaust survivors crossed into Italy. Thirty four boats sailed from Italy, smuggling Jewish refugees into Palestine, when the British refused to lift the monthly quota of Jews allowed to enter the country. It is a compelling story which has attracted writers like Leon Uris and Aharon Appelfeld.

Rosie Whitehouse focuses on one ship, the *Wedgwood* (named after the former Labour politician) and how it illegally took over a thousand Jewish Holocaust survivors to Palestine in the summer of 1946. But instead of telling the story of how it escaped the British blockade, she focuses on its passengers and their stories, their experiences of the Holocaust, how they came to Italy and how she tracked many of them down, years later.

Whitehouse divides the story into four

parts: east Europe during the Holocaust, German DP camps and hospitals immediately after the war, Italy and how it played such an important part in helping survivors escape across the Mediterranean and, finally, Palestine. Many of the people and places are famous. Ben-Gurion, Ernest Bevin, Primo Levi and General Patton all make brief appearances. There are chapters on Auschwitz, Dachau and Vilnius. Some chapters are about places which are barely known: Rivne, the first city in Poland to be liberated by the Red Army, Landsberg, where the Nazis brought almost 4,000 survivors from the Kovno Ghetto to build underground factories and the monastery at St. Ottilien, the first Jewish hospital in Bavaria for survivors from the camps.

Whitehouse is a powerful storyteller. She tells some desperately moving stories. How Dr. Grinberg from Kaunas was reunited with his little son in Munich, after the end of the war. When Jack Bursztain's family arrived at the ramp at Birkenau, his little brother was condemned as unfit for work, and his mother chose to stay with him even though she had been deemed fit to live. Rivkale, whose family was burned alive in the synagogue of her home town. Sometimes the photographs tell their own story. One black and white photo shows the orphaned Yechiel Aleksander in his striped uniform after liberation. Below there is another photo of him, at home today in Israel, with his grandson beside him.

*The People on the Beach* is full of fascinating historical detail. Only twenty one of those who sailed on

the *Wedgwood* were over forty. They were mostly aged between 18 and 30. 'Women, children and the elderly,' she writes, 'had been the first to die in the Nazi camps.' They came from fourteen different countries, but the vast majority were from Poland, and many of them had undertaken extraordinary journeys across east and central Europe to get to Italy. Some told terrible stories of witnessing pogroms in their home towns after the war, before they decided to leave Poland for good.

Through the story of one ship's journey, Whitehouse has written a book about endurance and survival, telling the stories of young Jews who ended up on a beach in Italy in June 1946.

*David Herman*

[www.fishburnbooks.com](http://www.fishburnbooks.com)

### Jonathan Fishburn

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

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## ZOOMS AHEAD

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

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Tuesday 3 November @ 2.00pm    | Rami Sherman – My role in the Raid on Entebbe <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88653048779">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88653048779</a>  |
| Wednesday 4 November @ 2.00pm  | Nick Dobson – Swinging London (the '60s) <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81494824476">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81494824476</a>   |
| Thursday 5 November @ 2.00pm   | Paul Anticoni – How World Jewish Relief supports victims of crisis <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87352184079">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87352184079</a>                     |
| Tuesday 10 November @ 2.00pm   | Lola Fraser – The Armistice: the end of the war to end all wars <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88583245737">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88583245737</a>                        |
| Wednesday 11 November @ 2.00pm | Dame Helen Hyde & Michael Mail – Saving Jewish heritage <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87898902168">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87898902168</a>                                |
| Thursday 12 November @ 2.00pm  | David Barnett – Herbert Samuel: Statesman, Philosopher & First Jewish Cabinet Minister <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87861601804">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87861601804</a> |
| Monday 16 November @ 4.00pm    | The Ghetto – with Bryan Cheyette & David Herman in conversation <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87490106519">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87490106519</a>                        |
| Tuesday 17 November @ 2.00pm   | Nathan Abrams – A Golden Age of Jewish Television <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83238814628">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83238814628</a>                                      |
| Wednesday 18 November @ 2.00pm | Book Club Discussion <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86033111379">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86033111379</a>   |
| Thursday 19 November @ 2.00pm  | Helen Fry – The Secret Listeners <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87410382708">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87410382708</a>   |
| Tuesday 24 November @ 2.00pm   | Judy Karbitz – Behind the scenes at the Movies <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82023934587">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82023934587</a>   |
| Wednesday 25 November @ 2.00pm | Yael Ciro – The history and traditions of the Roman Jews <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83920177950">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83920177950</a>                               |

## LOOKING FOR?



### KINDERTRANSPORT HOSTS

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, through its Oral History project, is seeking British families who took in Kindertransport children. If your family or friends welcomed children to their home or if you are a Kindertransport child yourself and still have contact with your host family, please contact Carolin Lange.

[clange@ushmm.org](mailto:clange@ushmm.org)

### ARTUR FINKIELS

Robert Marks would like information on Artur Finkiel, born in Poland in February 1912, who came to Britain as a refugee. Artur is

buried in the Cambridge Jewish cemetery.

[robert.marks@cantab.net](mailto:robert.marks@cantab.net)

### FRED GRAETZER/PETER GRAY

Friedrich (Fred) Graetzer, later Peter Frederick Gray, was born in Berlin on 14 July 1921. He was deported from Britain to Australia on the SS *Dunera* as an 'enemy alien' and returned to Britain c. 1950-54. He married in 1955, in 1959 he took British citizenship and probably worked as an architect.

[seumas.spark@monash.edu](mailto:seumas.spark@monash.edu)

### FAMILY KOHN from ROSENHEIM

Stolpersteine are to be placed for members of the Kohn family by Dr. Tom Nowotny on behalf of the city of Rosenheim; information on their fate would be very welcome, as well as information on other Jewish families from Rosenheim.

- Kohn Heinrich, born 9 November, 1910

in Rosenheim, escaped to USA

- Kohn Salo, 5 October 1900 in India, escaped to London, 1937
- Kohn, Margot (née Spielfoch) born 13.May 1909 in Duisburg

[t.nowotny@onlinehome.de](mailto:t.nowotny@onlinehome.de)

[www.stolpersteine-rosenheim.de](http://www.stolpersteine-rosenheim.de)

### HENRY J. ELWIS (HEINZ LEWINSOHN-ELWITZ)

Jeremy Antrich is researching the later career of Henry J. Elwis, producer of animated films. Born Heinz Lewinsohn-Elwitz in Berlin, he moved to London in the 1930s and produced short animated instructional films, e.g. for the Ministry of Information. He moved to Rio de Janeiro with his young family in 1949 and in the early 60s to Israel. He died in 1966. Any information about his professional life in Brazil or Israel would be appreciated.

[antrj1@talktalk.net](mailto:antrj1@talktalk.net)

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